

**NBSA Softball Rules**  
**NORTHVILLE BASEBALL - SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION**  
revised March 2006

**PRIMARY, INTERMEDIATE, & ADVANCED SOFTBALL LEAGUE RULES**

**NOTE. THESE ARE THE SOFTBALL-LEAGUE-APPLICABLE RULES EXTRACTED FROM THE UNABRIDGED VERSION OF THE NORTHVILLE BASEBALL-SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION LEAGUE RULES. BECAUSE THIS IS AN ABBREVIATED VERSION OF THE RULES, THE ALPHABET AND NUMBER SEQUENCES MAY NOT ALWAYS FOLLOW IN CONVENTIONAL ORDER.**

**Except** for those variations contained herein, the Official USSSA (United States Specialty Sports Association) Fast Pitch Softball Rule Book as released through the Office of the United States Specialty Sports Association, shall be the Northville Baseball-Softball Association official set of rules for softball.

**I. PLAYER PARTICIPATION**

A) All uniformed players in attendance at the start of a game will:

- 1) Hit according to a batting order submitted to the official scorer prior to the start of the game. Irrespective of whether individuals are playing in the field, all players will bat in a rotational order that will remain the same for the entire game.
- 2) All uniformed players in attendance at the start of a game will be scheduled to play in the field at least 4 innings of a 6 inning game, 3 innings of a 4 or 5 inning game, which 2 innings must be in the infield for Primary and 1 inning must be in the infield for Intermediate and Advanced. There will be no variance greater than 2 innings between all girls in the starting line-up. Coaches should make every attempt to ensure even playing time among all players.

B) Uniformed players arriving after a game starts, but before the 3rd inning, will be inserted into the batting order after the last hitter at the bottom of the order and will play in the field as outlined in Rule I.A2.

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- C) Uniformed players arriving after the start of the 3rd inning of a game will be inserted into the batting order after the last hitter at the bottom of the order and, at the discretion of the head coach may (but do not have to) play in the field the number of innings specified in Rule I.A2.
- D) A player cannot be removed from a game for disciplinary purposes. However, a head coach may discipline a player by submitting written notification to the league commissioner and the player's parents at least 24 hours prior to the start of the next scheduled game.
- E) Permissible deviations to Rules I.A through I.C are for:
- 1) **THE PROTECTION OF PARTICIPANTS FROM POTENTIALLY INFECTIOUS DISEASES.**  
Any player who is bleeding, has an open wound, or has blood on her uniform, clothing, or body may not practice or participate further in a game until appropriate treatment has been administered; secretions on the body are covered or removed; and the bloody clothing is removed. If these protective measures can be accomplished in what the umpire in chief would consider a reasonable amount of time the individual does not have to leave the game.
  - 2) **INJURY - prior to or during a game:**
    - a) **INJURED BATTER**
      - (1) **INCOMPLETE TURN AT BAT** - If a player cannot complete a turn at bat because of injury, she will be removed from the game. No official at bat will be recorded, and the next hitter in the order will become the batter with a count of no balls and no strikes. When/if the injured player is able to reenter the game, she will be placed in her original position in the batting order.
      - (2) **HIT BY PITCH** - If a player is hit by a pitch, but cannot continue as a base runner. The turn at bat is official and will be recorded. The status of the player who was hit by the pitch will be determined by referring to Rule I.E2b.
    - b) **INJURED BASERUNNER** - When it is necessary to remove an injured base-runner from a game, the replacement runner will be the teammate who made the last out. When/if the injured player is able to reenter the game, she will be placed in her original position in the batting order.
  - 3) **ILLNESS** - prior to or during a game: Use the guidance outlined in Rule I.E2.

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- F) Each head coach will inform the official scorer whenever there is a change in the status of a player during a game.
- G) An unlimited number of free substitutions is authorized in the field.

## II. OFFICIAL GAME

- A) A regulation game is 6 innings.

NOTE: If the score is tied at the end of a regulation game, extra innings will be played if the time limits for the game (Rules II.C and/or II.D) have not been reached.

- B) An official game consists of a minimum of 4 full innings of play unless the home team is ahead after 3 1/2 innings.
- C) The official start time for a game (which is when the "timing" of a game begins) is when the first pitch is thrown. After the first pitch is thrown, the umpire in chief will announce the start time to the official scorer who then will record the time. The time when the last out of an inning is made is the "start" time for the next inning. No inning may "start" after 1 hour and 20 minutes.

EXCEPTION: For House Semi-Final and Final Tournament games, there is no time limit.

- D) Under no circumstances will an inning in league play start after 10:30 pm.
- E) PRIMARY: A half-inning consists of 3 outs or 5 runs, whichever occurs first. The game can end in a tie.

INTERMEDIATE & ADVANCED: A half-inning consists of 3 outs or 5 runs (see exceptions noted), whichever occurs first. The game cannot end in a tie.

EXCEPTION: In the last inning of regulation games (see Rule II.A) and in all extra innings of extra-inning games, 10 runs are allowed.

EXAMPLE: After 1 hour and 15 minutes of play, the 3rd out of the bottom of the 4th inning is made. Even though it appears likely that the 5th inning will be the final inning to be played (because of the 1 hour and 20 minute time restriction of Rule II.C), a maximum of only 5 runs is allowed each team because it is not the 6th inning (i.e. the last inning of a regulation game) or an extra inning.

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- F) To avoid unnecessary delays and to keep games moving along, the following SPEED UP rules apply:
- 1) The time between innings will be no more than 1 minute. If a batter is delayed in being ready to hit, the umpire may call a "STRIKE" on the batter; and if the fielders are not ready to play, the umpire may call a "BALL" on the batter.  
NOTE: Before assessing a penalty, an umpire should use good judgment in determining whether a delay is caused by extenuating circumstances (e.g., injury, broken equipment, etc.). The intent is not for umpires to be looking to assess penalties, but to keep games moving along given the time constraints in each league.
  - 2) Once a player enters the batter's box to hit, she may not step out of the box until completion of the turn at bat unless an injury, the need to avoid being hit by a pitch, or other safety measure (such as dirt in one's eyes) dictates leaving the batter's box. The intent is to move the game along and avoid unnecessary delaying tactics.
  - 3) Intentional walks will be indicated to the umpire who then will direct that the batter take 1st base without having the pitcher throw 4 balls.
  - 4) When the catcher for the next inning reaches base, a replacement runner be used when there are 2 outs. The replacement runner will be the player who made the last out. Using a replacement runner for the catcher when there are less than 2 outs is optional.
- G) A MERCY RULE will take effect when a team is ahead by 12 or more runs when the specified time limit (Rule II.C) is reached or at the end of 5 or more innings of play --4 1/2 or more if the home team is leading.
- H) A SUSPENDED GAME shall be declared if the mercy rule (Rule II.G) is not in effect and the required innings (Rule II.B) have not been reached OR if the score is tied and the specified times (Rules II.C and/or II.D) for the game have been reached. A rescheduled suspended game (see Rule IV.B) will resume at the exact point of suspension. The official scorer is responsible for maintaining the score sheet, indicating the point of suspension of the game as well as the count on the hitter if one were at bat at the time of suspension.
- I) Teams must begin play if they have 7 or more uniformed players. Any team that does not have enough uniformed players to begin play will have a forfeit recorded. Head coaches cannot waive this rule. Teams should complete forfeited games as scrimmages. Umpire(s) may, but do not have to, work forfeited games.

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## III. GAME REGULATIONS

### A) PLAYERS

- 1) The recommended number of players per team is 12 or 13; but a maximum of 15 players may be assigned to each team.
- 2) No team may play any individual who has not been placed on the team roster through the league draft procedure or through assignment to the team by the Northville Baseball-Softball Association Board of Directors (which could be done to complete a team roster).
- 3) In games, all players shall wear all parts of the uniform supplied by the Northville Baseball-Softball Association. For safety reasons, no jewelry or watches may be worn. Players not wearing all parts of the uniform may not play.  
**EXCEPTION: If a player removed part of her uniform to comply with Rule I.E1 (i.e., blood on the uniform.) and no uniform replacement part is available at the game, she may continue to participate.**

### B) BATTER

- 1) Every hitter at bat and in the on-deck circle must wear the designated batting helmet.
- 2) The on-deck hitter must stand in the on-deck circle that is behind the batter at home plate (i.e., when a right-handed batter is at the plate, the on-deck hitter will stand in the 3rd-base-side on-deck circle and with a left-handed batter, the on-deck hitter will stand in the 1st-base-side on-deck circle.) Caution must be exercised to insure that an on-deck hitter does not run behind the home plate area when a pitch is being thrown.
- 3) Hitters may use aluminum or wooden bats that do not exceed 42 inches in length or 2 3/4 inches in diameter at the thickest part.
- 4) Hitters must not throw their bats. The first time a bat is thrown, the batter will be warned not to do it again. If the player does it again, she will be ejected from the game at the next stoppage of play. If the ejected player reached base safely, she is not out. The replacement base runner will be the teammate who made the last out.
- 5) **PRIMARY & INTERMEDIATE - Irrespective of whether the ball is caught by the catcher, the batter is out on the third strike.**

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- 6) **PRIMARY & INTERMEDIATE - Bunting is not allowed.**
- 7) **PRIMARY - A batter hit by a pitch will not be awarded 1st base;** instead. only a "BALL" will be called.

## C) BASERUNNER

- 1) All base runners must wear the designated batting helmet during the entire time they are running the bases. If a runner intentionally removes her batting helmet while running the bases, she is out.
- 2) For safety reasons. a double 1st base (white base in fair territory and orange base in foul territory) will be used. The following rules apply:
  - a) Base runners should use the orange base when running to 1st.

EXCEPTIONS:

  - (1) If a runner rounds 1st rather than running straight through the bag, the white base should be touched.
  - (2) If a fielder is drawn to the orange side of the bag while making a play. the runner should go to the white base and the fielder should use the orange base. The objective is to try to avoid a collision.
  - b) Base runners are never out for touching the white base rather than the orange base.
  - c) Once base runners reach 1st base, they must use the white base.
- 4) **Leading off is not allowed. Runners may not** leave a base until the batter has made contact with the ball. The first time a runner leaves a base early, her team will be warned. Any subsequent early lead off's by a runner of the warned team will result in the base runner being called out.
- 5) Runners must attempt to avoid being tagged by sliding, stopping quickly. etc. If a fielder has a ball under control and a collision occurs, the runner is out. However, if a fielder without the ball blocks a base and thereby prohibits a runner from advancing. the base-runner will be awarded an extra base.
- 6) Concerning PLAY STOPPAGE, the following rules apply:
  - a) **PRIMARY -** When, in the umpire's judgment, a particular play is over and the ball is in fair territory on the infield under the control of an infielder (which includes the pitcher and catcher). the umpire will call "TIME;" and all play will stop. Base runners who were stopped when the umpire called "TIME" will return to the last base touched; those who were still running when "TIME" was

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called will stop at the next base unless it is occupied by a preceding stopped base runner.

## **b) INTERMEDIATE & ADVANCED - When the ball is:**

- (1) ON THE INFIELD in fair territory under the control of an infielder (which includes the pitcher and catcher) and the player with the ball requests time. the umpire may call "TIME" when, in his/her judgment, the play is over.
- (2) IN THE PITCHER'S CIRCLE under the control of the pitcher. play will stop. If a base runner is off base, she may not stand still and must commit immediately to going to the next base or back to the last base touched. If the runner stands still, she will be called out by the umpire. The pitcher may attempt to get an out on a base runner who is not on a base. If a throw or fake of a throw is made, the runner is allowed to go in either direction with the risk that she may be put out by doing so.

**NOTE: PLAY STOPPAGE is a judgment call. Any discussion about it should occur only between innings with both head coaches and the umpire present.**

- 7) PRIMARY & INTERMEDIATE - There is no infield fly rule.

## D) FIELDERS

The defensive team will consist of 1 catcher, 1 pitcher, 4 infielders and 4 outfielders.

## E) CATCHER

Anyone catching must wear at all times the complete set of catcher's equipment provided for the team.

## F) PITCHER

**NOTE:** It is assumed that head coaches and their assistants always will act in a pitcher's best interest. The overriding desire always should be to avoid injury to a player's arm and/or body. Furthermore, the throwing of any pitches not properly taught is discouraged.

- 1) Any team member may pitch. **EXCEPTION:** ADVANCED - players who have celebrated their 16th birthdays may not pitch.

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- 2) A player removed from pitching may return as a pitcher in the same game as long as she has not reached her "Per Day" limit of "outs.
- 3) A pitcher shall be allowed 5 warm-up pitches between innings.
- 4) A relief pitcher shall be allowed 5 warm-up pitches.
- 5) Primary will use pitching machine.
- 6) A head coach or his/her assistant may visit each pitcher 1 time each inning without penalty. A 2nd trip to the same pitcher in the same inning will result in the pitcher's removal from the mound. A visit to tend to an injured pitcher does not count as a trip to the mound.
- 7) Intermediate / Advanced - Pitchers are limited to maximum 9 outs or 3 innings per game.

## G) COACHING

- 1) **SPORTSMANSHIP** - Head coaches must at all times insure that the highest levels of sportsmanship are displayed by themselves, their assistant coaches, their players, and their team supporters. Rule 111.13 out-lines remedies available to umpires when dealing with unsportsmanlike conduct.
- 2) Head coaches, assistant coaches, and players must remain in the dugout area when not actively participating. Non-participants in a game are not permitted in the dugout area.
- 3) Uniformed players or designated adults may be used as 1st and 3rd base coaches. If uniformed players are used as base coaches, they must wear the designated batting helmets.

## H) GENERAL

- I) The type of ball and the base and pitching distances to be used are:

<u>SOFTBALL LEAGUE</u>	<u>BALL TYPE</u>	<u>BASES</u>	<u>PITCHING</u>
PRIMARY	girls 11" softball	60'	35'
INTERMEDIATE	girls 11" softball	60'	40'
ADVANCED	girls 12" softball	60'	40'

- 3) A full circle, 8 feet in radius, will be laid out around the pitcher's mound.

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4) 1st baseman's gloves and catcher's mitts may only be used at their designated positions. Fielders gloves may be used at any position.

5) Only rubber-soled or rubber-cleat shoes may be worn.

## I) UMPIRES

1) Except for the variations contained in these League Rules. each umpire's actions will be governed by the official softball rules adopted by the Northville Baseball-Softball Association for its leagues.

2) All ball/strike and judgment calls made by an umpire are final and may not be disputed. Head coaches may, however, ask for clarification of a call or calmly discuss the interpretation of a rule. The intent is for sportsmanlike conduct to prevail. ANY HEATED ARGUING SHALL NOT BE TOLERATED.

3) CONSEQUENCES FOR UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT - As outlined in Rules III.GI and 111.12, sportsmanlike conduct is expected. The penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct (e.g.' throwing equipment in anger, obscene or abusive language or gestures, fighting, disputing ball/strike or judgment calls, etc.) by a coach, player, or spectator may be a warning or ejection from the game and playing area, depending on the severity of the incident. A second occurrence of an unsportsmanlike act by an individual should, under most circumstances, result in the ejection of the offender from the game (if applicable) and playing area. The intent is not for umpires (whose conduct must also be above reproach) to be looking to issue warnings or ejections, but that the coaches, players, and spectators should act appropriately as the participants develop their human skills while learning to play baseball.

## J) OFFICIAL SCORER

1) The home team will provide the official scorer. The visiting team also will provide its own scorer who will compare score sheets throughout the game with the official scorer.

2) The official score sheet must be signed by the umpire(s) and both head coaches. Within 48 hours of completing a game, the winning head coach must inform the league commissioner of the score of the game. The home team head coach will keep the official score sheet for review, if requested, by the league commissioner.

3) As a minimum, an official score sheet must contain the:

- a) Names of the teams that played and the final score.
- b) Date, time, and place of the game.

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- c) First and last names and uniform numbers of all players.
- d) Number of innings pitched by each pitcher.

## IV. SCHEDULES

- A) All games must be played on the dates indicated in the published league schedule. The league commissioner is the only person authorized to reschedule a game.
- B) Each league commissioner is responsible for rescheduling and coordinating the time for any cancelled or suspended game in his/her league with the Scheduling Coordinator of the Northville Baseball-Softball Association Board of Directors. Commissioners should strive to reschedule games within I week of the original dates and shall notify the Recreation Department and the Director of Umpires of the new dates and times. A rescheduled game date is binding on both teams. Failure of either team to comply with the new schedule will result in a forfeit.

### C) RAINOUT PROCEDURE and FIELD PLAYABILITY

- 1) UNTIL 4 PM - The Northville Community Recreation Department will make the initial decision each day as to the playability of the ball diamonds. If they feel inclement weather will preclude play. they will cancel games on the affected fields and announce their decision via a telephonically recorded message. If it is possible that some or all of the fields may be playable, the Recreation Department will not cancel the applicable games. If games are not cancelled, the teams and umpires will report at the appropriate time to their assigned fields.
- 2) AFTER 4 PM UNTIL GAME TIME - The two head coaches and the umpire(s) together will decide on the playability of their particular diamond prior to the handing over of the lineup cards. SAFETY shall be the overriding factor considered when deciding whether to play a game.
- 3) AFTER THE HANDING OVER OF LINEUP CARDS - Once the umpire in chief has received the lineup cards. the umpire(s) are solely responsible for deciding whether a field is playable. The umpire(s) should take the head coaches' advice and opinions into account. Again, SAFETY shall be the overriding factor considered when deciding whether to continue p lay.

## V. PROTESTS AND PENALTIES

League games (which include House playoff and tournament games) may not be protested. However, official complaints may be written to the Northville Baseball-Softball Association Board of Directors. The Board will consider action on complaints about such

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items as player eligibility, player participation, pitcher eligibility, etc. For complaints involving umpire decisions, the Board will rarely, if ever, revise calls. Repeatedly bad decisions and poor performance by a particular umpire should be brought to the attention of the applicable league commissioner and the Director of Umpires for their prompt consideration.

## VI. PITCHING MACHINE RULES

7 pitches maximum (unless 7th pitch is fouled off. Then batter gets another pitch).

If batter swings and misses on 3 pitches, she strikes out.

If batter does not hit ball fairly within 7 pitches, she strikes out. No walks.

Foul ball counts as strike and pitch if not 3rd strike AND not 7th pitch. If 3rd strike but not 7th pitch, pitch counts as 1 of 7, but not as a strike. If 3rd strike and 7th pitch, batter gets another pitch, until she hits ball in fair territory or strikes out.

Pitching Machine (PM) will be located 35 feet from the back of the plate. A 16' diameter chalk circle will be around machine. The Umpire loads the machine.

Pitcher MUST wear helmet with face cage. The pitcher MUST begin her defense position to the 1st base side of the machine and be no closer to the plate than even with the machine. (In other words, pitcher must be in the back quadrant of the circle.) After the ball is hit, she may field the ball anywhere.

If batted ball hits (PM) (or any part affiliated with it, such as extension cords or coach feeding machine) before or after defensive player touches ball, it is an automatic single and base runners advance one base.

Speed of (PM) will be set at the beginning of the game and agreed to by both team coaches and umpire.

Typically – Primary league will be around 30 – 33 mph, but many machines have “efficiency ratings”, not “mph ratings”.

Adjustment to (PM) will occur only at the top of each inning, with the exceptions noted below, and with both teams' coaches agreeing on final adjustment, which will be set by umpire.

Exceptions:

If PM is hit by batted ball and disturbs machine, umpire can readjust machine before the next pitch.

If PM dramatically falls out of control, umpire can readjust machine before next pitch. (Gross batter height differential is included.)

Catchers MUST wear full equipment (Helmet, Chest/Throat Protector, Shin Guards, Glove)

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Play stops when any infielder (1st, 2nd, SS, 3rd, Pitcher, Catcher) has control of the ball in the infield.

An official game is 6 complete innings, or the last complete inning prior to the time limit of 1 hour 20 minutes. No new inning may be started after 1 hour 20 minutes.