



## SOFTBALL MINOR LEAGUE RULES

*The GBSA Softball Rules are based on the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Softball Rules. Events requiring rulings not covered here will revert to the High School rules. Many rules already covered in the High School rulebook are repeated here for convenience.*

### **FIELD DIMENSIONS:**

1. The distance between all bases is 55 feet.

### **REGULATION GAME:**

1. A regulation game is 5 innings.
2. A completed half inning consists of three outs or one completion of the batting order unless injuries prevent completion of the order.
3. A game called for rain or curfew is also a regulation game if 3 innings, or 2 ½ innings with the home team leading, have been played.

### **GAME TIME LIMIT:**

1. All games end at 1 hour, 30 minutes regardless of where game is.

### **EQUIPMENT:**

1. Bats should be marked as softball bats with either a USSSA or ASA official stamp.
2. Steel-spiked shoes are not permitted.
3. 11-inch softballs must be used.
4. For GBSA players, face masks must be on all batters' helmets and protective face masks are required while fielding for pitchers, third base, and shortstop.

### **PLAYERS and COACHES:**

1. Each team consists of at least 7 players and a coach or an adult designated by the coach.
2. A team unable to field 7 players for a game may use no more than two players from other teams in the league to fill out a starting line-up.
3. Borrowed players must bat at the bottom of the order and play in the outfield. A team must field at least 7 players ten minutes after game time or forfeit the game, unless the coaches agree otherwise.
4. COACHES ON THE FIELD: A defensive coach may be on the field for the purpose of instruction only.
5. NON PLAYERS: Non-players are not allowed on the playing field or in the dugout or bench. Non-playing GBSA team members who do not obey this rule will be ineligible to play the remainder of the season.



Playing Time:

1. Each player plays at least 2 complete innings or half the game in the field with free substitution.
2. Catcher can only be counted as an infield position once per player per game. Each player must play at least one inning in the infield. UPDATE: due to COVID, catchers will not be used. A coach will collect the ball(s) and return to the pitcher.

Substitutes:

1. Substitutes must be grade level equivalent or lower. Substitutes can only play in the outfield and bat last.

**BATTING:**

2. The batting order for each team will consist of 8 batters in order per inning, or three outs.
3. **All players present are to be placed in batting order.**
4. Players arriving after the start of the game are put at the bottom of the order.
5. The batting order should be rotated from game to game.
6. BUNTING AND STEALING: Bunting and stealing are NOT allowed.

**FIELDING:**

1. Team Defense consists of up to 9 players with four outfielders.
2. Players should remain in their normal defensive positions until the ball is batted.
3. Normal infield positions are considered behind base path unless there is a play at home (runner on third base).
4. Normal outfield positions are considered in the outfield grass area.
5. Players may not "creep" up in anticipation of a weak hitter.
6. THERE IS NO INFIELD FLY RULE.
7. DOUBLE FIRST BASE: A runner must use the base located on the foul line for any initial play at first base (if applicable). Once a runner safely reaches first base, the runner may use the entire double first base.
8. OVERTHROWS: On an over throw to 1<sup>st</sup> base no runners may advance. Any other overthrow allows the runners to advance an additional base.

**PITCHING:**

1. The offensive team coach will pitch, potentially using a pitching machine provided by GBSA.
2. Each batter may receive a maximum of 7 pitches with no balls or strikes.
3. If the batter fails to put the ball in play after 7 pitches, the batter is called out.
4. DEAD BALL: A ball hitting the coach who is pitching is considered a dead ball, the batter and each runner will be awarded 1 base.

**Circle Rule:**

1. When the pitcher and the ball are within the circle (technical possession of the ball is not required):
  - a. If a runner is off base after a pitch or batted ball the runner may stop once, but then must either immediately return to base or attempt to advance to the next base.
  - b. Runners are allowed to advance to the base they are heading to; they may not leave that base when the pitcher is in the circle with the ball. In effect this stops all runners advancing.
2. A batter-runner who overruns 1st base towards right field must return non-stop to first base.
3. Penalty for violation of the circle rule:
  - a. First offense: a warning to the coaches will be issued by the umpire. The umpire may require runner(s) to return to previous base(s).
  - b. For repeated offenses by a team, especially if the runner is obviously baiting the pitcher, the runner will be called out.
4. A batter after a walk or hit by a pitch is entitled to first base only and must remain there unless the pitcher attempts to make a play against another baserunner while in the circle. All other runners may advance beyond their entitled bases at their own risk.

#### **BASE RUNNING:**

1. SLIDING: Sliding is not required. A runner will not be called out for sliding (or not sliding).
2. BASE RUNNING: On any batted ball, runners and the batter may advance until ball is under control by an infielder including the catcher.

#### **UMPIRE'S DECISIONS:**

1. Judgment calls by an umpire (such as whether a pitch is a strike or a ball, a hit is fair or foul, or a runner is safe or out) are final.
2. If there is reasonable doubt about a decision being consistent with the rules, the coach may ask that the ruling be reviewed. The umpire making the decision may ask the other umpire, or league commissioner, if present, for more information before making a final decision.
3. A coach in disagreement with the final decision may continue the game under protest, but must notify a GBSA officer in writing, within 24 hours of the protest. After 24 hours all game results are final.
4. If a protest is upheld, the game will be resumed from the point of protest.
5. Once a game has started, the umpire will be responsible for stopping play in the event of curfew, rain, or lightning.
6. If lightning can be seen and heard there will be a 20 minute wait period from the time of the last visible lightning strike. Only the umpire can allow a game to continue after the wait period.

7. If a tornado siren is sounded play will be halted immediately, and all persons must leave the field and seek shelter. Play will not be resumed after a tornado warning.
8. If a coach removes his/her team from the field of play, and no stoppage of play has been called by the umpire, league rep, or commissioner, that team will forfeit the game.

***Coaches are encouraged to meet before the game with each other and the umpire to determine if any of these rules will be modified or not enforced during a game.***