

SOFTBALL INTERMEDIATE 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 bases is 60 feet.
2. A double base should be used at first base.
3. The distance from the rear tip of home plate to the front edge of the pitching rubber is 32 feet.
4. A 16-foot circle must be drawn centered around the pitching rubber.
5. The head umpire is responsible for ensuring that these dimensions are accurate before the beginning of a game. Both coaches are permitted (and encouraged) to check these distances prior to the beginning of a game. If necessary, the bases and/or pitching rubber must be adjusted to the proper dimensions before a game begins.

REGULATION GAME:

1. A regulation game is 5 innings.
2. 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 completed.
3. A regulation game called with a tie score is counted as ½ game won and ½ game lost for each team.

GAME TIME LIMIT:

1. No new inning may begin more than 1 hour and 45 minutes after the actual start time of the game.
2. The game ends at 2 hours, 15 minutes from the actual start of the game, and the final score is that of the last fully completed inning, unless the game ended halfway through the inning because the home team was leading.
3. **A game's start time MUST be noted by the umpire prior to the beginning of a game.** Each team should record the start time in its scorebook.

Tournament

1. There is no time limit for games in the tournament. All games will go 5 innings.
2. Tournament Run Rule: A game will be ended if a team is leading by more than 10 runs after four innings.
3. The rule stating a player must play more than one position in the first four innings is waived for the tournament since all 5 innings will be played. A player must play more than one position in the game.
4. The **4-run limit** applies to the first four innings of all tournament games but is lifted during the final (5th) inning.

SOFTBALL INTERMEDIATE LEAGUE RULES

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 for all fielders.

PLAYERS and COACHES:

1. Each team consists of 10 players (4 outfielders) who are registered to play softball in GBSA. Each team must also have a coach and no more than two assistant coaches or an adult designated by the coach.
2. A team unable to field 10 players for a game but that has 9 of its own players may play a game with its 9 players and is not allowed any borrowed players.
3. No more than 2 players from other teams in GBSA may be used to fill out a starting line-up.
4. A team must field at least 7 players from their team roster ten minutes after the scheduled game start time, or the declared start time by the umpire, or forfeit the game. (A team may play a game with just 7 or 8 players, as long as at least 7 are from its own roster).
5. Players are only eligible for the tournament if they play in 2/3 of the team's games. This rule will be waived if the player misses games due to injuries, illness, or vacation.
6. Coaches should instruct their players from the dugout or the coach's box at first or third base. Coaches should not be on the field during the game except in the event of an injury.
7. NON-PLAYERS: Non-players are not permitted on the playing field. Aside from coaches, non-players are not permitted to be in the dugout or on the bench.

Playing Time:

1. Each player must play three complete innings in the field (per five inning game). No player may sit out more than two innings no matter the length of the game.
2. Players' positions in the field may be switched or substituted at any time.
3. Each player must play more than one position during the first 3 innings of the game.
4. Each player must play at least one (1) inning in the infield. Coaches should be aware of the fact that many regular season non-tournament games (other than tournament games) will last only 3 or 4 innings. Each player must still play one inning in the infield even if a game lasts only 3 or 4 innings. In other words, coaches should make sure each player actually plays in the infield during the first, second, or third inning, except in the case of tournament games, which must be 5 innings, and in which coaches can wait until the 4th inning to play some players in the infield. Rule 8A regarding player positions is waived in tournament games if tournament run rule is invoked.

Substitute Players:

1. If the team is unable to field 9 of their own players, they may use 1 or 2 substitute players to bring their total to 9 players. Subs must come from other teams in GBSA and no more than two subs may be used to fill out a starting line-up.
2. Subs must be grade level or lower than the absent players and must be agreed upon by both head coaches and the league representative prior to the game.
3. Substitutes may play only one inning as an infielder.

SOFTBALL INTERMEDIATE LEAGUE RULES

4. Substitutes may not pitch or play catcher.
5. Subs bat at the bottom of the order.
6. Players can sub multiple times per team per season.
7. NO SUBS ARE PERMITTED IN TOURNAMENT GAMES
8. Coaches must exchange their team lineups before each game. Coaches must note borrowed players in their lineup.

BATTING:

1. The batting order for each team includes **all players present** at the start of the game.
2. Players arriving after the start of the game are put at the bottom of the order.
3. If a player is injured, they cannot play offense or defense. A player who plays in the field must also bat when it is their turn. A player who plays in the field cannot be skipped in the batting order. If a fielder is skipped in the batting order then it is counted as an out. If a player is injured, and not able to take their turn at bat, they will be replaced, that at-bat, by the last batter that was unsuccessful in reaching 1st base.
4. **NEW/Updated for 2025:** A half inning consists of 4 runs or 3 outs, whichever comes first. A batter must hit, be called out, or strike out.
5. **NEW/Updated for 2025:** SPECIAL BATTING RULE: The batter must put the ball in play or strike out. If the batter receives 4 pitched balls, the batting team's coach will come on to complete the count to the batter (e.g. a 4-0 count receives 3 coached pitched strikes, 4-1 count receives 2 coach pitched strikes, and a 4-2 count receives 1 coach pitched strike.) The umpire will continue to call coach pitch balls and strikes. The batter is called out after 4 coach-pitched balls are called. The batter cannot foul out during coach pitch.
6. If a batter cannot continue, the highest available **previous** batter in the order must bat. For example, Batter #9 cannot continue to bat and batters #8 and #7 are on base, batter #6 must step up in place of batter #9.
7. A player who plays in the field must also bat when it is her turn. A girl who plays in the field cannot be skipped in the batting order. If a fielder is skipped in the batting order then it is counted as an out. If a player is injured, and not able to take their turn at bat, they will be replaced, that at-bat, by the last batter that was unsuccessful in reaching 1st base.
8. BUNTING: Bunting is not permitted. Short hits (e.g., hits that do not go past the pitching rubber) are permitted as long as the batter makes a reasonable effort to swing the bat.
9. HIT BY PITCH: **NEW/Updated for 2025:** A batter that is hit by a pitch may advance to first base. A batter must attempt to avoid being hit by a pitch or protect themselves. If they do not attempt to avoid being hit then the ball is dead once it hits the batter, it shall be called a ball or strike depending on if it was in the strike zone when it hit the batter, and the batter is NOT awarded first base. [The intent of this rule is a batter may not willfully take a HBP]

FIELDING:

1. There is no infield fly rule.
2. OVERTHROWS: Upon an overthrow, the base runner at the base where the overthrow occurred may advance to the next base (but no further). An overthrow occurs when the ball is thrown to a fielder at a base who misses the throw and must go retrieve the ball.
3. Catchers should be prepared to take the field as soon as possible at the conclusion of an inning. If possible, a catcher should put on the protective gear even if her team is still at bat.

SOFTBALL INTERMEDIATE LEAGUE RULES

4. All Players must be in fair territory (catcher excluded).
5. At Pierce Field, outfielders must be in the outfield grass until a pitched ball crosses the plate or is put into play. At all other fields, the outfield begins 15 feet behind the baseline between 1st, 2nd, and 3rd bases. If necessary, coaches may mark this distance with chalk before the beginning of a game. Outfielders must stay behind this 15-foot line until a pitched ball crosses the plate or is put into play.

PITCHING:

1. PITCHING: **NEW/Updated for 2025:** A pitcher may pitch in no more than 2 innings per game, including tournament games. Innings may be non-consecutive. For purposes of this rule, 1 pitch constitutes pitching in 1 inning.
2. Each team must have a 3th grader pitch at least one full inning (as defined by the 8-4-3 rule) during a regular season game. If a suitable, game ready 3th grade pitcher is not available and if agreed by each head coach at the beginning of the game, this rule is waived. This rule does not apply during a tournament game.
3. SPECIAL BATTING RULE: **NEW/Updated for 2025:** If a pitcher throws four called balls, the batter does not walk, rather the batter's coach, or his or her designee, will pitch the remainder of the count (SEE SPECIAL BATTING RULE under the Batting section, Rule # 5).
4. BATTER IS HIT BY A PITCH - If a pitcher hits **TWO** batters in one inning the pitcher must be removed from that position for the remainder of the inning and may return in a later inning. If the same pitcher hits another batter (**TOTAL OF THREE IN THE GAME**), the pitcher must be removed and may not pitch again in the game.
5. All pitches must be thrown from the rubber. This includes pitches thrown by a player or coach or designee.
6. INTENTIONAL WALKS: The use of an "intentional walk" is not permitted.
7. WARMING UP: Facemask and helmet must be worn by a player catcher warming-up the pitcher.
8. Batters may not run on a dropped third strike.

BASE RUNNING:

1. The base runner cannot leave the base until the pitched ball has been hit or has crossed home plate.
2. A runner leaving a base early may be given a warning or called out.
3. NO STEALING. Stealing is not permitted under any circumstance. This includes throws between the catcher and pitcher when a batter is at home plate to bat. Stealing is not permitted on a walk.
4. SLIDING: A runner may attempt to slide at any base other than first base when she anticipates a close play being made. If the runner fails to do so, the umpire has discretion to call out the runner if he feels there was an intent to injure.

Circle Rule:

1. When the pitcher and the ball are within the circle (technical possession of the ball is not required):

SOFTBALL INTERMEDIATE LEAGUE RULES

- 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 from 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 the 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.

PREGAME MEETING:

1. Coaches and umpires shall meet before the game to review these rules and any ground rules.

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.

TOURNAMENT:

1. If 2 teams are tied in the standings at the end of the regular season, the following tiebreaking criteria will be used.
 - 1- "Head to head". Whichever team has won more games between the 2 teams will advance.
 - 2- "Coin Toss". In the event that the above criteria is even, a coin toss will be the ultimate tie-breaker. The coach with the first initial of their last name that is earliest in the alphabet calls the toss.