



Town of Rolesville Parks & Recreation

Title:	Youth Softball Rules
Leagues:	8U, 10U, 12U & 14U Softball
Effective Date:	June 22nd, 2026

ARTICLE 1: Governing Rules

- 1.1 North Carolina High School Athletic Association and Tar Heel Leagues Inc. rules will govern play with the exceptions covered herein.
- 1.2 A team must have at least 7 players for a game to be official. Teams not fielding at least 7 players will forfeit the game.
- 1.3 All age groups will use continuous batting. All players present will be placed in the batting lineup. Late players will be added to the bottom of the lineup at any time. It is also highly recommended that each child plays at least 2 defensive innings in the field (ages 9 and up).
- 1.4 **Face shields on batting helmets are mandatory for all softball leagues**
- 1.5 No fast pitch team will play more than 3 games in one day.
- 1.6 The pitcher and catcher may have a courtesy runner at any time but it is mandatory for the catcher with two outs. The runner will be the last player to make an out in the lineup. **The catcher MUST be the catcher of record.**
- 1.7 All players should be dressed alike (shirts and pants or shorts). Caps and visors are allowed but do not have to be worn by all team members.
- 1.8 **No steel cleats are allowed.**
- 1.9 Any coach ejected must leave the facility immediately or the game will be ruled a forfeit. Any coach (or player) ejected will also serve at least a one game suspension at their team's next game(s). Longer suspension is possible and will be based on the actions that caused initial ejection.

ARTICLE 2: Player Eligibility

- 2.1 All ages will be determined as of January 1st, of the current year. For the Fall season, the "age as of date" will match that of the upcoming Spring. (Example Fall 2026, age as of date will be January 1, 2027).

Ages	League
7-8-year olds	8U Coach Pitch
9-10-year olds	10U Player/Coach Pitch
11-12-year olds	12U
13-14 Year olds	14U

ARTICLE 3: Equipment

- 3.1 **No steel cleats allowed.**

- 3.2 Any approved and legal softball bat is permitted. Softball bats CAN BE composite as long as it is stamped with an ASA logo.



ARTICLE 4: Basic 8U Coach Pitch Softball Rules

- 4.1 Adult pitcher must deliver pitch in a standing position. Pitcher may not kneel on one knee. Pitch must be delivered in an underhand motion.
- 4.2 Coach must submit a batting order to the umpire and scorer before the game. All players must be listed in the batting order and that order will not change during the game. In the event that a player leaves a game for any reason other than an ejection, the scorekeeper will be notified, and the player will be out for the remainder of the game with no penalty.
- 4.3 No player shall sit in the dugout for two consecutive innings (defensively). Ten players are allowed on defense and must play a minimum of every other inning defensively.
- 4.4 A maximum of 5 runs or 3 outs will constitute an offensive inning.
- 4.5 Six innings will constitute a game.
- 4.6 No new inning can begin after 60 minutes has elapsed. Time should start with the first pitch of the game. Inning must be completed if the home team is behind. **There is not a Drop-Dead time limit.**
- 4.6.1 If after 4 innings, a team is mathematically eliminated due to the 5 run rule, the game shall be called.
- 4.7 No intentional bunting is allowed. No walks are allowed. Any attempted bunts will be called a strike.
- 4.8 A circle with a radius of 8 feet is to be drawn around the pitcher's plate. The defensive pitcher must remain in the circle until the batter strikes the ball **(both feet inside).**
- 4.9 All outfielders shall be positioned in a similar radius. No short fielder or 5 infielders will be allowed.
- 4.10 Each batter will be allowed 5 pitches or 3 strikes. There will be no limit on the number of foul balls on the third strike or the **fifth** pitch. The adult pitcher must pitch underhanded.
- 4.11 Headfirst sliding will not be allowed into any base. Penalty: Runner will be declared out. **Diving back to a base IS NOT considered a head first slide.**
- 4.12 There will be no infield fly rule.
- 4.13 No base stealing will be allowed. A runner leaving the base before the ball reaches home plate will be removed from the base and an out will be declared. This will be a delayed dead ball call by the umpire.

- 4.14 The umpire, upon completion of the play, shall call out base runners that miss touching a base. There will be no appeals on missed bases. This will also be a delayed dead ball call by the umpire.
- 4.15 The umpire's judgment will rule on a runner's position at the time that timeout is called by either official. **The defense MUST contain the lead runner before timeout will be granted.**
- 4.16 The coach pitcher must stay in contact with the pitching rubber until the ball is released. Once the ball is released, he/she cannot be involved with coaching until time is called. Coach may not deceive defensive players to get ball thrown before time is called. Penalty: all runners will return to last base.
- 4.17 The catcher MUST be in a squatted catching position. Catcher must also wear a mask, throat protector (highly recommended, but not required), helmet with earflaps, shin guards and a chest protector.
- 4.18 If a batted ball hits the coach pitcher before the defense touches the ball, the ball will be ruled dead and the batter will be awarded first base. All runners will advance one base IF FORCED. If the coach pitcher intentionally interferes with a batted ball, the ball will be ruled dead, the batter will be called out and all runners will return to the base they occupied before the pitch.
- 4.19 The umpire will call time **once the lead runner is contained.**
- 4.20 On over throws to ALL bases, the base runners will only be allowed to advance ONE base if forced. The call is the umpire's judgment. If the umpire views it as an over throw, then time will be called and all players advance one base if forced. If time is not called by the umpire base runners may advance at their own risk.

4.21 Field playing dimensions:

Bases:	60 feet
Pitchers Rubber	40 feet
Circle at Pitchers Rubber	8' Radius (16' Diameter)
Defensive Coach's Line	60-foot line behind 1st and 3rd base (Defensive coach cannot come with 60 feet of base during a live ball. Hash mark shall be on foul line)

If the defense chooses to have coaches on the field they must remain in foul territory at all times and must not interfere with play at any time. The defensive coaches must remain in the outfield at all times. If a coach interferes with play, it will be the official's judgment as to how many bases the offensive team will be awarded.

- 4.21 This league will use the 11" softball (core .47)

ARTICLE 5: Basic 10U Softball Rules

- 5.1** Coach must submit a batting order to the umpire and scorer before the game. All players must be listed in the batting order and that order will not change during the game. **In the event that a player leaves a game for any reason other than an ejection, the scorekeeper will be notified and the player will be out for the remainder of the game with no penalty.**
- 5.2** Six innings will constitute a complete game unless one team is ahead by ten or more runs after 4 complete innings (3.5 innings if the home team is ahead).
- 5.3** No new inning can begin after 70 minutes (one hour and 10 minutes) has elapsed. **Inning must be completed if home team is behind. There is not a Drop-Dead time limit.**
- 5.3.1** Run/Mercy Rule (Minor League and Little League): A game shall be declared complete if a team is ahead by **12 or more runs after 3 complete innings**, or **10 or more runs after 4 complete innings**. If the home team is ahead by the applicable run differential after the visiting team has completed its at-bat in the required inning, the game shall end.
- 5.4** Players may steal once the ball reaches home plate with the player pitching. **No stealing is allowed when the coach is pitching.**
- 5.5** Base runners are allowed to only **steal/advance** one base at a time, per pitch, with the player pitching. **Base runners may advance as many bases as possible on a batted ball.**
- 5.6** Base runners are not allowed to steal home at any time.
- 5.7** A batter may bunt with the player pitching but cannot bunt with the coach pitching. Any attempted bunt off of the coach will result in a strike being called.
- 5.8** **There will be no walks (BB) in this age group, however a batter will be awarded first base if she is hit by a pitch (HBP) with the child pitching.**
- 5.9** Teams will field 10 players on defense. Four of these players must be in the outfield and must play at a uniform distance. No short fielders are allowed.
- 5.10** Any player ejected may stay in the dugout. Any further problems from the ejected player can/will result in game being forfeited.
- 5.11** Batters may not advance to first base on a dropped third strike. **The ball however, is not dead. Base runners may advance one base at their own risk, not to include home.**
- 5.12** No pitcher may pitch more than 4 innings per game. One pitch constitutes an inning. **Any pitcher can be re-entered to the mound, one time, in a game.** All other positions may be substituted at the coach's discretion.
- 5.13** The pitcher player will pitch to the batter until the batter becomes a runner, is called out on strikes, is put out by a play or receives ball four (4) as called by the plate official.
- 5.13.1** Upon the batter receiving ball four (4), the offensive coach will enter to pitch to the batter. If the batter has a four (4) balls and no strikes count, **the coach will only have three (3) pitches.** If the batter has four (4) balls and one (1) strike count, **the coach will only have two (2) pitches.** If the batter has four (4) balls and two (2) strikes, **the coach will only have one (1) pitch.** If after the above has been completed and the batter is still at home plate, she shall be called out.

- 5.14 There is no limit on the amount of foul balls allowed with two strikes.
- 5.15 If a batted ball hits the coach pitcher before the defense touches the ball, the ball will be ruled dead and the batter will be awarded first base. All runners will advance one base IF FORCED. If the coach pitcher intentionally interferes with a batted ball, the ball will be ruled dead, the batter will be called out and all runners will return to the base they occupied before the pitch.
- 5.16 Adult pitcher must deliver pitch in a standing position. Pitcher may not kneel on one knee. Pitch must be delivered in an underhand motion.
- 5.17 The umpire, upon completion of the play, shall call out base runners that miss touching a base. There will be no appeals on missed bases. This will also be a delayed dead ball call by the umpire.
- 5.18 Maximum Runs/Inning: Maximum of 5 runs or 3 outs per inning.
- 5.19 Field playing dimensions:
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|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Bases: | 60 feet |
| Pitchers Rubber | 35 feet |
| Circle at Pitchers Rubber | 8' Radius (16' Diameter) |
- 5.20 A circle with a radius of 8 feet is to be drawn around the pitcher's plate. The defensive pitcher must have **both feet** in the circle until the batter strikes the ball (when the coach is pitching).
- 5.21 In the 9-10 Girls Division, the only illegal pitch that will be called is when a girl starts her delivery towards home plate but does not deliver the ball. If this happens, an illegal pitch will be called and a ball will be awarded to the batter and any base runner will advance one base to include home. With the coach pitching, there will be no illegal pitch.
- 5.22 Catcher must wear a mask, throat protector (highly recommended, but not required), helmet with ear flaps, shin guards and a chest protector.
- 5.23 The infield fly rule will be in effect for this division.
- 5.24 This league will use the 11" softball (core .47)
- 5.25 **One umpire can be used in 9-10 Girls Softball. That umpire will call from behind the plate. It is perfectly fine if an area chooses to use 2 umpires.**

ARTICLE 6: Basic 12U Softball Rules

- 6.1** Coach must submit a batting order to the umpire and scorer before the game. All players must be listed in the batting order and that order will not change during the game. **In the event that a player leaves a game for any reason other than an ejection, the scorekeeper will be notified and the player will be out for the remainder of the game with no penalty.**
- 6.2** Six innings will constitute a complete game unless one team is ahead by ten or more runs after 4 complete innings (3.5 innings if the home team is ahead).
- 6.3** No new inning can begin after 85 minutes has elapsed. **Inning must be completed if home team is behind. There is not a Drop-Dead time limit.**
- 6.4** Players may steal once the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
- 6.5** Teams will field 9 players on defense in this league.
- 6.6** Batters **MAY** advance to first base on a dropped third strike. The ball is not dead. Base runners may advance at their own risk.
- 6.7** No pitcher may pitch more than 4 innings per game. One pitch constitutes an inning. **Any pitcher can be re-entered to the mound, one time, in a game.** All other positions may be substituted at the coach's discretion.
- 6.8** There is no limit on the amount of foul balls allowed with two strikes.
- 6.9** The umpire, upon completion of the play, shall call out base runners that miss touching a base. There will be no appeals on missed bases. This will also be a delayed dead ball call by the umpire.
- 6.10** Any player ejected may stay in the dugout. Any further problems from the ejected player can/will result in game being forfeited.
- 6.11** Field playing dimensions:
- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Bases: | 60 feet |
| Pitchers Rubber | 40 feet |
| Circle at Pitchers Rubber | 8' Radius (16' Diameter) |
- 6.12** In the 11-12 Girls Division, the only illegal pitch that will be called is when a girl starts her delivery towards home plate but does not deliver the ball. If this happens, an illegal pitch will be called and a ball will be awarded to the batter and any base runner will advance one base to include home.
- 6.13** Catcher must wear a mask, throat protector (highly recommended, but not required), helmet with ear flaps, shin guards and a chest protector.
- 6.14** The infield fly rule will be in effect for this division.
- 6.15** This league will use the 12" softball (core .47).

ARTICLE 7: Basic 14U Softball Rules

- 7.1 Games will consist of seven (7) innings of play (unless game is stopped due to the expiration of the time limit or by the ten-run rule).
- 7.2 No new inning shall begin after 90 minutes (1:30).
- 7.3 Teams are to provide Official Scorer with a lineup at least ten (10) minutes prior to game time.
- 7.4 Teams will place nine (9) players in the field on defense.
- 7.5 Teams will use 12" softballs.
- 7.6 If, after five (5) or more completed innings, one team has a 10-run (or greater) lead, the game shall be called (4 ½ if home team is ahead).
- 7.7 Pitching distance: 43'.
- 7.8 Players may not pitch more than 6 innings per game. Delivery of a single pitch constitutes having pitched one inning. ONLY the starting pitcher may re-enter the game as a pitcher (one time/game).