

Mountain Softball Association – February 2023

Age Level Playing Rule Exceptions

This list represents additions or exceptions to rules included in the USSSA Rulebook for each age level of play (as well as an occasional <point of emphasis>).

Summary of 6U rules

- 1. Mouth guards are required for all players, unless a fielder's mask is worn.**
2. Minimum of 6 defensive players. <If necessary, teams should agree to play without coverage for some defensive positions and/or share players between teams to avoid forfeit in the interest of playing all scheduled games.>
3. Coaches are also game umpires.
4. Coach pitch from 35ft rubber, may pitch from outside the pitchers circle.
5. Entire team roster bats each inning. If the player is out, they must leave the field of play. Last better runs the bases unless an out is made. Then players leave the field.
6. Games will have 3 innings. Games complete after 2 innings if called for time limit or weather.
7. All registered 6U players will receive 3 pitches and then will be placed on the T. Each at-bat should result in a hit.
8. If batted ball hits the coach pitcher, the batter is not out. Play continues as it would if ball hit another defensive player or a base. *Coach pitchers should always try to avoid being in the path of a thrown or batted ball. But they are part of the game and it will happen. Neither the player nor the coach should be penalized should contact occur. Coaches should simply agree to play on or re-do the pitch depending on advantage.*
9. No balls, No walks.
10. Pitcher's aide must stand at least 3ft to side of coach pitcher and 35ft from home plate.
11. Players should have equal defensive playing time. Player catcher is optional.
12. No stealing or bunting.
13. Base runners may continue to advance until the ball is returned to the pitchers circle.
14. Base runners may only advance one extra base on an overthrow.
15. On-deck batters are permitted **ONLY IF** the playing field has designated circles that meet the following criteria: 1) circle(s) are located at least 25ft from home plate; 2) a fence separates circle(s) from spectators or other players (that are not on playing field).
16. Six fielders including the catcher must be in the infield. The rest must be in the outfield. (Grass)
17. Time limit of 55 minutes for 6U games.

Additional guidelines for instructional play (applies to all age levels):

The goal of the Instructional program is to give the opportunity for learning through instruction. Coaches should never instruct with the will to win at the expense of instruction and fun of the game. Success at this level is determined by whether the player had fun and wants to return next year to continue playing softball.

The best Instructional level game is played when coaches from opposing teams are working together to help both teams during the game. This camaraderie between coaches, as well as coaches and players helps set a better foundation for future years.

General Rules Supplements:

On-deck batters are permitted **ONLY IF** the playing field has designated circles that meet the following criteria: 1) circle(s) are located at least 25ft from home plate; 2) a fence separates circle(s) from spectators or other players (that are not on playing field).

Leagues may move players 'up' (only one age level vs. current roster assignment) to fill team shortages (i.e., if <9 players available). A call-up player cannot displace a regular roster player if moved up. However, if 9 regular roster girls show for the game the call-up, should be permitted to play one inning if moved up. However, lateral moves to fill shortages (e.g., 10U to 10U) are not permitted.

Playing Time Requirement: Coaches must play every player a minimum of 2 innings & 1 at bat for each game. This applies to all age divisions. Notes: 1) EQUAL playing time is still a preferred standard. 2), Coaches are entitled to withhold playing time for disciplinary reasons (practice attendance, behavior, etc.), but must advise opposing coach and umpire prior to game start. 3) Premature game end (e.g., weather, time limit, run-rule, etc.) may nullify this requirement. **Minimum play time does not apply to call-ups.**

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Age Level Playing Rule Exceptions

This list represents additions or exceptions to rules included in the USSSA Rulebook for each age level of play (as well as an occasional <point of emphasis>).

Summary of 8U rules

- 1. Mouth guards are required for all players, unless a fielder's mask is worn.**
2. 10 defensive positions, including 4 outfielders. Team may play with 8 players without penalty. <If necessary, teams should agree to play without coverage for some defensive positions and/or share players between teams to avoid forfeit in the interest of playing all scheduled games.>
3. Batting lineup will be consecutive order of the entire team roster, including players not presently in defensive positions.
4. Coaches are also game umpires. In addition to base coaches, only a coach in the pitchers circle is allowed on the field of play. The pitching coach may only coach the batter prior to the pitch. He/she may not coach the runner at ANY time.
5. Coach pitch from 35ft rubber, or within pitcher's circle (at least one foot must begin in circle).
6. Inning is over after 3 outs. Run limit of 5 runs per inning.
7. Games will have 6 innings. Games complete after 5 innings if called for time limit or weather.
8. Batters will receive 3 strikes, max of 6 pitches. The result of a 6th pitch may only include a hit, a foul, or a new batter.
9. If 6th pitch (last) is fouled, batter will get an additional pitch (no maximum fouls after 5th pitch).
10. If batted ball hits the coach pitcher, the batter is not out. Play continues as it would if ball hit another defensive player or a base. *Coach pitchers should always try to avoid being in the path of a thrown or batted ball. But they are part of the game and it will happen. Neither the player nor the coach should be penalized should contact occur. Coaches should simply agree to play on or re-do the pitch depending on advantage.*
11. No balls, No walks.
12. Pitcher's aide must stand at least 3ft to side of coach pitcher and 35ft from home plate.
13. Players should have equal defensive playing time.
14. No stealing or bunting.
15. Play stops when ball is returned to the pitchers circle
16. Base runners may only advance one extra base on an overthrow.
17. On-deck batters are permitted **ONLY IF** the playing field has designated circles that meet the following criteria: 1) circle(s) are located at least 25ft from home plate; 2) a fence separates circle(s) from spectators or other players (that are not on playing field).
18. Time limit of 1hr 40 min for 8U games

Additional guidelines for instructional play (applies to all age levels):

The goal of the Instructional program is to give the opportunity for learning through instruction. Coaches should never instruct with the will to win at the expense of instruction and fun of the game. Success at this level is determined by whether the player had fun and wants to return next year to continue playing softball.

The best Instructional level game is played when coaches from opposing teams are working together to help both teams during the game. This camaraderie between coaches, as well as coaches and players helps set a better foundation for future years.

General Rules Supplements:

On-deck batters are permitted **ONLY IF** the playing field has designated circles that meet the following criteria: 1) circle(s) are located at least 25ft from home plate; 2) a fence separates circle(s) from spectators or other players (that are not on playing field).

Leagues may move players 'up' (only one age level vs. current roster assignment) to fill team shortages (i.e., if <9 players available). A call-up player cannot displace a regular roster player if moved up. However, if 9 regular roster girls show for the game the call-up, should be permitted to play one inning if moved up. However, lateral moves to fill shortages (e.g., 10U to 10U) are not permitted.

Playing Time Requirement: Coaches must play every player a minimum of 2 innings & 1 at bat for each game. This applies to all age divisions. Notes: 1) **EQUAL** playing time is still a preferred standard. 2), Coaches are entitled to withhold playing time for disciplinary reasons (practice attendance, behavior, etc.), but must advise opposing coach and umpire prior to game start. 3) Premature game end (e.g., weather, time limit, run-rule, etc.) may nullify this requirement. **Minimum play time does not apply to call-ups.**

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Age Level Playing Rule Exceptions

This list represents additions or exceptions to rules included in the USSSA Rulebook for each age level of play (as well as an occasional <point of emphasis>).

Summary of 10U rules

1. **Mouth guards are required for all players, unless fielder's mask is worn.**
2. **Fielders mask is mandatory for pitchers and infielders**
3. **10** defensive positions, including 4 outfielders. Team may play with 8 players without penalty.
4. Games will have 6 innings. Games complete after 4 innings if called for time limit or weather. Finish the inning, if possible. Games may end in a tie.
5. Score of called game shall be that of the end of the last complete inning, providing at least 4 innings played. Otherwise, the game must be rescheduled.
6. Maximum of 5 runs per inning. **(10 RUNS IN FINAL INNING)**
7. Mercy rule, 10 runs after 4 innings.
8. Base runners may not leave base until ball crosses home plate.
9. No dropped 3rd strike rule.
10. No infield Fly Rule.
11. Can only advance 1 base on a non-batted ball. Only one stolen base per pitched ball. (example– If player steals a base (non-batted ball), and catcher overthrows the base, the play is dead and the runner must stop at that base)
 - a. Players must stop at 1st base on a walk and may not continue to 2nd
12. Each team is allowed to attempt to steal home 2X per inning. After the 2 attempts at home, the runner may only advance past 3rd on a batted ball.
13. Player pitches from 35ft rubber.
14. Batting line-up will be consecutive order of the **entire team roster**, including players not presently in defensive positions.
15. Pitchers should pitch no more than 12 innings per week. *Coaches should consider additional rest (day after game pitched or limited innings/week to lessen risk of injury. Highly suggested to have 3-4+Pitchers per team*
16. Free Defensive substitutions. *See Rule book for Offensive Substitutions (ie. Batters cannot change batting positions)*
17. Time Limit: 1 hour 50 minutes, finish the inning started.

Additional guidelines for instructional play (applies to all age levels):

The goal of the Instructional program is to give the opportunity for learning through instruction. Coaches should never instruct with the will to win at the expense of instruction and fun of the game. Success at this level is determined by whether the player had fun and wants to return next year to continue playing softball.

The best Instructional level game is played when coaches from opposing teams are working together to help both teams during the game. This camaraderie between coaches, as well as coaches and players helps set a better foundation for future years.

General Rules Supplements:

On-deck batters are permitted ONLY IF the playing field has designated circles that meet the following criteria: 1) circle(s) are located at least 25ft from home plate; 2) a fence separates circle(s) from spectators or other players (that are not on playing field).

Leagues may move players 'up' (only one age level vs. current roster assignment) to fill team shortages (i.e., if <9 players available). A call-up player cannot displace a regular roster player if moved up. However, if 9 regular roster girls show for the game the call-up, should be permitted to play one inning if moved up. However, lateral moves to fill shortages (e.g., 10U to 10U) are not permitted.

Playing Time Requirement: Coaches must play every player a minimum of 2 innings & 1 at bat for each game. This applies to all age divisions. Notes: 1) EQUAL playing time is still a preferred standard. 2), Coaches are entitled to withhold playing time for disciplinary reasons (practice attendance, behavior, etc.), but must advise opposing coach and umpire prior to game start. 3) Premature game end (e.g., weather, time limit, run-rule, etc.) may nullify this requirement. **Minimum play time does not apply to call-ups.**

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Age Level Playing Rule Exceptions

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Summary of 12U rules

1. **Mouth guards are required for all players, unless fielder's mask is worn.**
2. **Fielder mask is mandatory for pitchers**
3. 9 Defensive positions; You **may** utilize two (2) EP positions in the batting order. (11 hitters Max in batting order).
4. Games will have 6 innings. Games complete after 4 innings if called for time limit or weather. Finish the inning, if possible. *<International tie breaker rule applies>*
5. Score of called game shall be that of the end of the last complete inning, providing at least 4 innings played. Otherwise, the game must be rescheduled.
6. Maximum of 6 runs per inning. Unlimited runs in the last inning. The coaches are to decide, this could be in the 4th or 5th inning due to time constraints, but must be declared before the Away Team bats.
7. Mercy rule, 10 runs after 4 innings.
8. Base runners may not leave base until the ball is released from the pitchers hand.
9. Dropped 3rd strike is in effect
10. Infield Fly Rule is in effect - (Batted ball in fair territory, not including a line drive or bunt, that can be caught by an infield, pitcher, or catcher with ordinary effort when runners are on first and second, or bases loaded with less than two outs.)
11. Player pitches from 40ft rubber.
12. Pitchers should pitch no more than 12 innings per week. *Coaches should consider additional rest (day after game pitched or limited innings/week to lessen risk of injury. Indicators for increased risk may include decreased performance, decreased desire, or complaint of pain. Highly suggested to have 3-4+ Pitchers per team*
13. Free Defensive substitutions. *See Rule book for Offensive Substitutions (ie. Batters cannot change batting positions)*
14. Time Limit: 1 hour 50 minutes, finish the inning started.

Additional guidelines for instructional play (applies to all age levels):

The goal of the Instructional program is to give the opportunity for learning through instruction. Coaches should never instruct with the will to win at the expense of instruction and fun of the game. Success at this level is determined by whether the player had fun and wants to return next year to continue playing softball.

The best Instructional level game is played when coaches from opposing teams are working together to help both teams during the game. This camaraderie between coaches, as well as coaches and players helps set a better foundation for future years.

General Rules Supplements:

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Leagues may move players 'up' (only one age level vs. current roster assignment) to fill team shortages (i.e., if <9 players available). A call-up player cannot displace a regular roster player if moved up. However, if 9 regular roster girls show for the game the call-up, should be permitted to play one inning if moved up. However, lateral moves to fill shortages (e.g., 10U to 10U) are not permitted.

Playing Time Requirement: Coaches must play every player a minimum of 2 innings & 1 at bat for each game. This applies to all age divisions. Notes: 1) EQUAL playing time is still a preferred standard. 2), Coaches are entitled to withhold playing time for disciplinary reasons (practice attendance, behavior, etc.), but must advise opposing coach and umpire prior to game start. 3) Premature game end (e.g., weather, time limit, run-rule, etc.) may nullify this requirement. **Minimum play time does not apply to call-ups.**

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Age Level Playing Rule Exceptions

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Summary of 15U rules

1. High School Rules (available at <http://www.nfhs.com/c-223-softball.aspx>)
2. **Mouth guards and fielders masks are highly encouraged on field, but not required. Players accept risk liability.**
3. No Time Limit
4. International Tie Breaker Rule in effect after the last regulation game inning.
5. Mercy rule, **10** runs after 4 innings.

International Tie Breaker Rule

Starting with the first half of the inning following the completion of the last regulation game inning, the visiting team will place the player who is scheduled to bat last in that inning on second base. *A substitute runner can be inserted for the runner.* Do so for each half inning. If the team is in the tie-breaker and the short handed rule is in effect, do not declare an out if the absent player is the one who should begin the half inning on second. Place the person who precedes the absent person on second.

Additional guidelines for instructional play (applies to all age levels):

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The best Instructional level game is played when coaches from opposing teams are working together to help both teams during the game. This camaraderie between coaches, as well as coaches and players helps set a better foundation for future years.

General Rules Supplements:

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Leagues may move players 'up' (only one age level vs. current roster assignment) to fill team shortages (i.e., if <9 players available). A call-up player cannot displace a regular roster player if moved up. However, if 9 regular roster girls show for the game the call-up, should be permitted to play one inning if moved up. However, lateral moves to fill shortages (e.g., 10U to 10U) are not permitted.

Playing Time Requirement: Coaches must play every player a minimum of 2 innings & 1 at bat for each game. This applies to all age divisions. Notes: 1) EQUAL playing time is still a preferred standard. 2), Coaches are entitled to withhold playing time for disciplinary reasons (practice attendance, behavior, etc.), but must advise opposing coach and umpire prior to game start. 3) Premature game end (e.g., weather, time limit, run-rule, etc.) may nullify this requirement. **Minimum play time does not apply to call-ups.**