

2025 UNION COUNTY SOFTBALL LEAGUE

RULES & REGULATIONS

GAME

1. Each association will be required to submit a verified roster at the start of the season. Each association's commissioner is responsible for determining player eligibility based on a 12/31 date of birth in their respective age groups.
 - a. Spring Season Rosters will be due March 15th of each year
 - b. Fall Season Rosters will be due August 15th of each year
2. Official size softball shall be 11" for 8U and 10U divisions. All balls must be leather 375/47 core.
3. All games are maximum of 6 innings or 1 hour and 30 minutes in length; no new inning shall be started after 1 hour and 25 minutes; **GAME TIME will not be extended for any reason (except post season tournament play); Game result will be score when last complete inning is finished, even if tied (if tied, this will be recorded result for regular season standings).**
4. Official game shall be 4 innings or 3 ½ innings if the home team is ahead.
5. Maximum 5 runs can be scored per inning (9 runs in the 6th inning; Exception: HR over the fence = all runs count)
6. **Run Rules:** Ten (10) run rule is in effect after 5 innings; Fifteen (15) run rule after 4 innings; Exception: Fifteen (15) run rule after 3 innings for 8U only.
7. A team must field at least 8 players at game time or the game will be declared a forfeit; 10 position players are allowed defensively with free substitutions in the field (does not affect batting order).
8. Teams that cannot field eight (8) players may use a player from the same division or lower; Substitute players must be officially rostered with the same association; **Pick-up players must follow specific procedures below:**
 - a. This player or players (2 max), must bat last in the batting lineup and can only play outfield positions
 - b. This player(s) must also wear their normal team uniform so that they can be identified by the other team
 - c. Maximum of (2) players can be picked up but cannot go above ten (10) total players
9. All teams are allotted 2 minutes to change sides; If the umpire feels a team is intentionally delaying he may award either: a) 1st batter is awarded 2nd base or b) batting team is charged with 1 out to begin the at-bat; This is an umpire judgement call and may not be protested
10. Batting rotation shall include all uniformed players in attendance
 - a. Any player who does not come to bat in the lineup shall be declared OUT, unless injured/sick during the game
 - b. Once a player is declared injured/sick they cannot re-enter the game/batting order

- c. 9 players shall be the minimum batting lineup; If a team only has 8 players to start the game, the 9th batting spot shall be declared an OUT; a 9th player can be added at any time
 - d. Late players (above 9) may be added at any time prior to the batting lineup going through one time
11. If any player is removed from the game for any reason, they may not return to the game
 12. No player may sit defensively for more than 1 consecutive innings; Upon discovery, a defensive substitution shall be made immediately with no penalty

SAFETY

1. Defensive players: Facemasks – 8U & 10U: Required for all players; 12U: Required for pitcher and corner infielders (1st & 3rd)
2. Unless noted above, all players must be properly equipped per official North Carolina High School Athletic Association rules.
3. Thrown bats: This is a plate umpire judgement call and cannot be appealed or protested. If the batter is called out due to a thrown bat, the play shall be declared dead and all runners return to the previous base.
4. No jewelry is allowed; Umpire's discretion as to what is allowable
5. No bat boys or girls are allowed
6. Anyone under 18 who is coaching a base must wear a helmet with a facemask or catcher's mask while on the field

BATTER/RUNNER

1. All bats shall be ASA Fastpitch
2. **CONTACT RULE:** Runners must slide into home plate; runners attempting to reach any base (including home plate) must "avoid contact" and any malicious or intentional contact will result in the runner being called out; This is an umpire judgement call and cannot be appealed or protested.
3. Sliding:
 - a. No head first sliding into any advancing base; Penalty: Runner/batter will be called out if there is a play or not
 - b. Runners may go back/return to a previous held base head first
4. Limit 1 base per overthrow to 1st base for all runners on the 1st throw from any defensive infielder
 - a. If throw to 1st is from an outfielder or not the 1st throw from an infielder, all base runners may advance at their own risk
5. Fake/Slash Bunting: A batter is out for illegal action when the player fakes a bunt and then takes a full swing, thus eliminating a player from fake bunting the ball; Penalty: Batter is out, play is declared dead, no runners may advance
6. No infield fly rule or dropped 3rd strike rule

PITCHING

1. Pitching distance shall be 35' (8U & 10U); 40' (12U) and 43' (14U and up) from the front of the pitching rubber to the front of home plate
2. One foot must be in contact with the pitching rubber when delivering the pitch; This also includes coach pitching at the 8U division
3. Pitching circle shall be 16' diameter with the center located at the middle/front of the pitching rubber
4. Pitchers are limited to 3 innings per game and 9 innings per week (2 inning limit/game in fall season) for 12U and younger divisions. No restrictions for 14U and above. One (1) pitch shall constitute an inning.
5. Managers shall have the ultimate responsibility for knowing when his/her pitcher must be removed. If any pitcher attempts to pitch above the limit, they are to be removed when discovered

GENERAL

1. Coaches are to stay along their dugout fence and cannot wonder/walk up and down the foul lines. No buckets or chairs on the field.
2. Head Coach is responsible for their Assistant Coaches, players and parents. In the event an umpire ejects a coach, that coach will serve a one (1) game suspension for the next game, which they must attend and sit in the stands. They will not be allowed in or around the dugouts and cannot coach at all.
3. Profanity, fighting, and unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated from anyone. Offenders will be asked to leave the facility or park.
4. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted in the park at anytime, anywhere, which includes the parking lots. Offenders will be told to leave the park and proper authorities notified.
5. **Decisions of the umpire are final. Any questions directed at umpires regarding rules should be done after asking for a timeout. Confrontational approaches to the umpire will not be tolerated.**

8U SPECIFIC RULES

BATTING/RUNNER

1. Each batter will receive a maximum of five (5) pitches unless 5th pitch is fouled off, 5th pitch will be repeated if fouled off
 - a) Batter is out if: a) 3 strikes, b) 3rd strike is foul tipped and caught by catcher regardless of pitch count or c) Batter does not swing at 5th pitch
2. Bunting
 - a) One (1) bunter will be allowed per inning per team
 - b) Bunter will be the first batter in the inning to attempt to bunt and contact the ball; The bunter may attempt to bunt until they are put out or reach base
 - c) Once a batter has bunted in an inning, any additional attempts to bunt shall be declared a dead ball/no pitch and the batter is out if they contact the ball or not

PITCHING

1. All pitching shall be done by a coach and pitching coach shall be a coach from the batting team
2. Pitching coaches may only be substituted after a complete inning; Once a pitching coach is removed from the game, they may not return to pitch in the same game
3. The player at the pitcher position must have at least one (1) foot inside the circle and be behind the coach that is pitching until the pitch is delivered
4. Pitching coach shall pitch the ball and immediately leave the playing field in the direction opposite of the batted ball and avoid any play on the ball
5. **Coach pitching may not direct base runners at all once on base.**
6. If a thrown or batted ball strikes the pitching coach, the ball is declared dead and batter and all runners move ahead 1 base.
7. If pitching coach intentionally interferes with a batted or thrown ball the ball is dead, batter is out and all runners return to the last base occupied.

DEFENSE

1. Defensive team is allowed one coach to be in the outfield in foul territory on each foul line to help position players in the field; Coaches shall not engage with umpires while in this position
2. Outfielders must start at least 10-feet behind the base path and remain until the pitch is delivered
3. Umpires will call "time" when the pitcher has control of the ball in the pitchers circle or a defensive player possesses the ball ahead of the lead runner and/or the lead runner has stopped advancing, even if momentarily; This is an umpire's call and may not be argued, appealed or protested as it is in their discretion to call time when they see fit to keep the game progressing.

10U SPECIFIC RULES

BATTING/RUNNER

1. Baserunners may not leave the base until the ball has left the pitcher's hand; Players leaving the base early or stealing will have one warning and must return to the base which they left early/stole from; 2nd occurrence the runner will be called out.
2. When a coach is pitching (No Walk Rule BELOW), baserunners may not leave the base until the ball is hit and put into play. Players may not steal any base when the coach is pitching.
3. Only 1 base per runner may be stolen per pitch. If a runner attempts to steal more than 1 base, the ball remains live, and all outs recorded will count. When play stops, all runners will be sent back to the legally stolen base.

4. Only 1 base per runner may be stolen if the ball is overthrown. If a runner attempts to steal more than 1 base, the ball remains live, and all outs will count. When play stops, all runners will be sent back to the legally stolen base.
5. Runners from 3rd may steal home.

PITCHING

1. No Walk Rule:
 - a) If the pitcher from the fielding team pitches four (4) called balls during any given pitch count, a coach from the batting team comes in for a total of **two (2) pitches** for this batter only. **The ball-strike count does not carry over to the (2) pitches from the coach.** If the batter does not get a hit within the **two (2) pitches** from the coach, the batter is out. **ONLY (1) Foul Ball is allowed. NO EXCEPTION!**
 - b) The fielding team's pitcher then returns to the mound to pitch to the next batter.
 - c) Each pitcher is given the opportunity to pitch to every batter. Each batter is given the opportunity to hit off the fielding team's pitcher. Each fielding team has a greater chance to play defense with each batter.

***THE ABOVE LOCAL RULES WILL BE USED AND ENFORCED IN ALL GAMES INVOLVING ANY UNION COUNTY SOFTBALL LEAGUE TEAMS AGAINST ANY OTHER ASSOCIATION DURING LOCAL LEAGUE PLAY.**

THE ONLY EXCEPTION WILL BE GAMES PLAYED IN-HOUSE WITH TEAMS OF THE SAME ASSOCIATION AND WITHIN THEIR OWN DIVISION.