

JOHNSTON COED SOFTBALL – 2026 LEAGUE RULES

ANY RULES NOT SPECIFIED IN THIS DOCUMENT DEFER TO THE 2026 USSSA RULE BOOK -
https://usssa.com/docs/2026/SP_RuleBook_24.pdf

RULE 1 – EQUIPMENT

- A. Bats
 - 1. Men shall use wooden softball bats only. The bat must be labeled as “softball” by the manufacturer. (i.e. The bat must say “softball” on it.)
 - 2. Women may use any USSSA certified bats. Please see the current USSSA mark on page 9 of the 2026 USSSA Slow Pitch Rule Book - https://usssa.com/docs/2026/SP_RuleBook_24.pdf
- B. Metal spikes are not allowed
- C. Teams must have matching uniforms. At a minimum, that consists of the same shirt with a unique number for each player. Uniform rules go into effect on May 29, 2026.
- D. Game Balls – Only USSSA 12” Classic M balls may be used. Home team shall supply one new ball for each game. The visiting team shall supply a new ball or a good condition used ball. Each team is responsible for supply additional balls good condition balls as necessary.

RULE 2 – THE GAME

- A. A 10 minute grace period will be allowed for first game only. If grace period is used, that game will played with a 60 minute time limit from time the game was intended to begin. Games after the first game of the night will start immediately after the end of the preceding game.
- B. Game forfeits
 - 1. The forfeiting team will be responsible to pay for both umpires fees (see below) and the scorers fee (\$20.00).
 - 2. Multiple forfeits by the same team may result in being prohibited from the league playoffs or removal from the league at the commissioner’s discretion
 - 3. If you cannot play a scheduled game, please notify the league commissioner at least 24 hours in advance. If notice is given less than 24 hours in advance, you may still be responsible for umpire and scorer fees.
- C. Legal pitch height will be at least 6 feet, with a maximum of 10 feet, measured from the ground.
- D. A 3-2 count will be used. A batter walks on the 3rd ball and is out on the 2nd strike.
- E. If a male batter is walked with a female batter next in the lineup, the female batter may elect to walk without batting, and the previous male batter is forced to 2nd base. If the female does not walk, the male batter is not awarded 2nd base.
- F. Batter will be declared out on the 2nd foul ball after the first strike. (“One to waste”)
- G. Courtesy runners will be allowed, once per inning. The courtesy runner will be the player who was the last recorded out.
- H. No infield warm-up balls will be allowed after the second inning.
- I. Defensive positioning
 - 1. While a female is at bat, defenders other than the pitcher or catcher may not come closer to home plate than the imaginary line connecting the bases until the batter make contact with the ball. The first offense will be a warning; the second offense will result in the batter being awarded first base.
 - 2. An “over the middle” or “short fielder” may be used. That player is considered a 5th outfielder, and must stay on the outfield grass until the batter makes contact.
- J. If a male batter hits a ball “up the middle” as defined as the imaginary box created by the width of the pitching plate and the height of the pitcher, it will be declared an out and a dead ball.
- K. Home run rule - 3 home runs per game per team (progressive up to 5 maximum). An out-of-the park home run after the maximum number allowed will be an out.
- L. Run Rules - 20 runs after 3 innings, 15 runs after 4 innings, 12 runs after 5 innings.

1. In the event that the visitor team scores to go ahead by the previous innings run rule (e.g. visitors go ahead by 15 runs in the top of the 5th inning), the game will end without the home team batting.
- M. A game called by the umpire, during regular season play, which cannot be resumed within 30 minutes, may be regulation if four or more innings have been played or if the team second at bat has scored as many or more runs during the incomplete fourth inning.
- N. Pitching – pitchers ARE NOT ALLOWED to fake pitch, dance, sing, do cartwheels, or anything else that USSSA allows pitchers to do.

RULE 3 – PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES

- A. Rosters – Teams may have up to 20 players on the roster
 1. Players must be 18 years of age or older.
 2. Preliminary roster must be submitted to commissioner prior to first game.
 3. Final roster is due to league commissioner on May 29, 2026, after which no other roster changes may be made.
 4. No male player may be currently or previously active in USSSA Major classification or higher.
- B. If a team has 9 players at starting time, of which at least 3 are female, the game must start. A team cannot play with less than 9 players or less than 3 females.
 1. A team may play or continue a game with 9 players. However, the league also allows for a 4th female to be added to the game and immediately into the field without penalty.
 2. If a 4th female is not in attendance, a spot in the batting order must be allotted for an out until she arrives.
- C. A team may play no more than 11 defensive players in the field, with a maximum of 7 males.
- D. A team may not have 3 consecutive male batters bat in a row. If 3 males come to bat in a row, an out will be applied prior to the 3rd male. In the instance of Rule 3.B.2 above, the out allocated to a missing 4th female will be considered to break the streak of 3 males.
- E. Teams may play a male and female designated hitter, or only a female designated hitter. A lone male designated hitter is not allowed.
- F. Female/male or male/female defensive switches are not allowed while in the field, with the exceptions of:
 1. Redeploying defenders after an injury;
 2. A pitching change (i.e. a male defender can replace a female pitcher and vice versa).

RULE 4 – UMPIRES

- A. Umpires will be paid \$32 per umpire for two umpires, or \$48 per umpire for one umpire.
- B. Texas Swear Rule. Any player who used inappropriate language, regardless of the intent, is subject to his team being assessed one out when on offense.
 1. If a team is on offense when the infraction occurs, an out will be immediately called. If the infraction occurs on the 3rd out, then the team will come to bat the next inning with one out already declared. The person scheduled to bat will be out.
 2. If the team is on defense when the infraction occurs, an out will be called when the offending teams comes to bat the next inning. The person scheduled to bat will be the out.
- C. Protests are based on misapplication of USSSA or league rules only
 1. The protesting team must notify the umpire, scorer, and opposing coach of the protest before the next pitch.
 2. Protests must be submitted in writing within 48 hours of game in which protest is lodged.
 3. Protests will be heard and acted upon by the league commissioner and the state and local Umpires in Chief.
 4. Each protest must be accompanied with a \$30.00 fee and will be returned if protest is upheld.

RULE 5 - MISCELLANEOUS

- A. No alcoholic beverages are allowed on any town property before, during, or after games.
- B. Batting practice is not allowed on the field before games.
- C. No children under the age of 18 are allowed in dugouts or on playing field — no bat boys or bat girls allowed. Each team can have only 2 non-players (coach/scorekeeper) on the bench.
- D. Teams can and will be held responsible for the actions of their fans.
- E. Player conduct - Managers and coaches are responsible for players' conduct & behavior. It is expected that every coach and player conduct himself in a responsible manner. Any action by a coach, player or spectator which falls in the following categories will result in ejection and 3-game suspension:
 - 1. Making a mockery of the game
 - 2. Fighting
 - 3. Arguing with official, opposing players, coaches, or fans,

Unsportsmanlike conduct or creating an unsafe playing condition Any player, manager or coach ejected from a game will not be allowed to participate in the next 3 games. A second ejection shall result in a league suspension for 1 year from date. If the action of a player or manager warrants greater penalty such penalty will be applied at the discretion of the league commissioner. Umpires have the authority to eject a team or player before, during, and after a game.

- Each team is allowed only 2 non-players on the bench (coach and or scorekeeper).
- Females are allowed to bun