

# 2026 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Rules

**The league shall follow all rules of Federated HS rules with the following exceptions:**

## **General Rules**

1. Team rosters must be submitted to the league before the first scheduled game.
2. Any coach or player who uses profanity or inappropriate behavior will be asked to leave the game immediately. Infractions of this rule could result in loss of game or removal from the league as a coach or player.
3. Only certified coaches/team players are allowed in the bench area. Players must remain in bench area during games, except for bathroom trips if needed. Managers are responsible for players during games. No parents, children or spectators are allowed around the bench area.
4. One carded umpire will call games.
5. Regular games are 6 innings; extra innings can be played to break a tie. (International tie breaker rule is in effect for all extra innings played). Official game is 4 innings (3 1/2 if home team is ahead). Umpire has official start time. No new inning begins after 1 hour 45 minutes from start time. Any non-official game that ends due to weather or darkness will be replayed from the start. If any official game is called due to weather or darkness the game is final even if the score is tied. All decisions to call a game due to weather or darkness will be up to the umpire.
6. There will be a **five run rule** every inning except for the last inning which will be unlimited runs.
7. Forfeit time is 15 minutes after scheduled game start time. Teams can start with 8 players.
8. Home team supplies game balls, sets up pitcher's mound & bases. Pitching distance is 43' and 60' base distance.
9. Game balls are regular 12" softball (not softie). Home team will provide 2 new balls per game. Bats must have a current, legal stamp embedded on it.
10. All batters must have helmets with facemasks and will be allowed to play without chin straps.
11. All players must wear full uniforms at all times- as provided by their Town. Shirts should be tucked in. No metal spikes are allowed.
12. Jewelry is not to be worn at any games.
13. At the first sign of lightning or thunder, the field will be cleared immediately for a period of not less than 1/2 hour.
14. No smoking or alcoholic beverages at any time.
15. Late arriving players are added to the end of the batting order and bat in turn. Any player that leaves early will be skipped in the batting order without penalty.

16. Following a game, all teams must line up at home plate and shake hands...INCLUDING ALL COACHES. NO EXCEPTIONS

17. Teams must keep official scorebooks and the umpire's name should be clearly written for each game.

18. Call ups are allowed, 6<sup>th</sup> grade girls only. If there are not enough girls available you may also slide players from team to team from your Town. The "borrowed" player cannot pitch. She must play the outfield or catch. She is not allowed to play the infield and must bat in the last position. In order to borrow a player over the team requesting help must have less 10 players.

19. All game cancelations must be made 24 hours in advance unless weather related. Please confirm game/directions 2 days before.

20. Mercy Rule is in effect if one team is winning by at least 12 runs after a complete 5 innings. (Home team gets last at bat chance if needed) (4 ½ if home team is ahead). Make every effort to avoid this.

21. Reporting Scores: Either Team should report the score within 24 hours.

22. Each team is responsible for the disposal of any garbage generated by their team/fans. Please keep the fields clean!!

23. Should any game be called before a full allotment of innings played (either due to darkness, weather, time or other umpire decision), the final score will revert back to the last played inning. Final score will be upheld regardless of the number of innings played, provided the minimum number of innings has been played to make it an official game. If coaches and umpires agree an upcoming inning will be the final inning due to impending darkness, weather or time issues it must be agreed upon before the first pitch of the inning, allowing a full inning (if necessary) to be played. If time, daylight or weather allows do not play another inning after the agreed upon "final" inning.

24. Coaches should be responsible for getting the girls on and off the field quickly and limiting in between warmups to speed up the game.

## **BATTING**

1. Cinderella batting is used (**all players bat**). There is no penalty if a player has to leave. Players that arrive late are added to the end of the lineup after first pitch is thrown.

2. Helmets, with face cages, must be worn by all batters.

3. Thrown bat, not deliberate: First instance, player is warned. Second instance, batter is out. Note – The Umpire may warn the entire team as a first warning to all players

4. Dropped third strike rule WILL NOT BE IN EFFECT. If the catcher fails to cleanly field a third strike pitch, the batter is out and may not attempt to advance to first base. However, the ball is live and a steal attempt or pickoff attempt may be made provided team has allowable steal or pickoff attempts left.

5. Bunting is allowed. A batter may not square to bunt and then swing away, they must continue to bunt. This will be called an out. This is extremely dangerous for the infielders.

6. A batter hit by a pitch even if it bounces will receive first base. The batter must make an effort to avoid being hit by the pitch.

7. NO intentional walks will be permitted.

8. NO CONTINUOUS WALKS: This happens when a batter walks and does not stop at first but continues to run or STEAL second base, before next pitch is thrown.

## **BASE RUNNING**

1. Stealing: ONLY allowed 4 successful stolen bases per inning of any base except home. Advancing on a pickoff attempt does count as a steal. Being thrown out on a steal does not count as one of your steals. If exceed limit, base runner will be sent back to the prior base, if called prior to the next pitch in the game. A runner can only score on a batted ball or a walk with bases loaded. If a runner steals third and there is an overthrow, you cannot steal (advance) to home. Also, if a runner attempts to steal 2<sup>nd</sup>, the runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> cannot attempt to advance home.

2. Base runner can leave base on the pitcher's release. Once the ball is back in the pitcher's circle, the runner must immediately proceed back to base or she will be called out.

3. A pickoff attempt is a tag play. Catchers are limited to 4 pickoff attempts per inning. A player can advance on a pickoff throw with the exception of home. (EX: If runners are on 1st & 2nd and the catcher throws down to 1<sup>st</sup> the player on 2<sup>nd</sup> can advance to 3<sup>rd</sup>, but will be counted as a steal for the inning.)

4. Base runner must slide or attempt to avoid contact going to any base.

5. Speed up rule. A runner may be used for both the catcher and pitcher at any time.

6. Players deliberately removing their helmets in the course of a play will be called out. Coaches should warn their entire team prior to game.

## **DEFENSIVE RULES**

1. Free substitution of players in the field.

2. A team must field 8 players to start the game. Less than 8 players 15 minutes after game time results in a forfeit.

3. Team can play with 10 defensive players on the field. All outfielders are to play in the outfield grass / not be positioned within 10' of 2<sup>nd</sup> base at the start of play & cannot receive pick-off throw from catcher.

4. If "dead ball" results from overthrow, base runner gets the base they are going to plus one base. Does not apply to steal attempts (Ex: overthrow "dead ball" on steal to third, player does not get home).

5. Appeals can be made only on missed bases or leaving base early (when time is out player asks umpire for appeal). This rule applies to leaving the base early on a **tag-up play**, which is an appeal. Leaving the base early on a steal or lead-off attempt is an Umpire decision and results in a dead ball/no pitch and the runner is automatically called out. Exception: Coaches may agree pre-game to give one warning per team for leaving the base early on a steal or lead-off attempt. Otherwise, there is no warning and the runner is out.

6. Catcher blocking home plate or Fielder blocking any base without the ball is considered obstruction and the runner will be called safe. Runner must have ability to touch home plate or any base to avoid obstructive contact.

7. Infield fly rule is in effect.

## **PITCHING RULES**

1. Pitcher's mound is 43' from behind home plate. One foot must be in contact with the pitching rubber at the start of each pitch. Pitcher is allowed to take first step back while keeping one foot in contact with pitching rubber. No crow hopping will be allowed. One foot must be in contact with the ground at all times. A pitcher is limited to pitch a total of 4 innings per 6 inning game. One pitch constitutes an inning of play. (Only if extra innings can a pitcher pitch more innings).

2. The starting pitcher can return to the mound one time after being taken out, as long as only 4 innings in total are pitched. Secondary pitchers cannot return if taken out unless agreed to by both teams manager. Exception will be if the starting pitcher is injured and cannot play.

3. Pitcher conferences: Coach/Pitcher conference – The coach or manager may call one time-out per inning to confer with the pitcher. A second time out must result in a pitching change (unless time out is due to injury).

## **CONDUCT**

1. If a player demonstrates INTENTIONAL unsportsmanlike conduct, it is the coach's responsibility to discipline the player.

2. Only one coach is allowed in coaching box at 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. ONLY PLAYERS, AND COACHES OF THE TEAM PLAYING ARE ALLOWED IN OR BEHIND THE DUGOUT. Parents must sit in the designated fan area.

3. ALL UMPIRES DECISIONS ARE FINAL AND NO PROTESTS ARE PERMITTED!

4. Umpires will not tolerate arguments and or abusive/insulting language from managers, coaches, players and spectators. It is the manager's responsibility to control this aspect of the game. Managers will be warned and the second time they will be removed from the game, along with the person who is doing the abuse. If they do not leave the field their team will forfeit. ALL UMPIRE DECISIONS ARE FINAL. There is a zero-tolerance rule in effect for this type of behavior.

## **PLAYOFFS**

1. The top four (4) teams will enter a playoff tournament. Round one (semi-finals): The 1<sup>st</sup> seed will play the 4<sup>th</sup> seed and the 2<sup>nd</sup> seed will play the 3<sup>rd</sup> seed.

All Games will be played at the higher seed field. The winners of both semi-final games will play for a championship at the higher seeds field. There will be no call-ups allowed and only rostered girls for each team will be allowed to play in all playoff games. 16 first and 16 second place trophies will be distributed to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishers.

2. All teams are scheduled for 12 games and Coaches are encouraged to reschedule any postponed game(s) as quickly as possible. Seeding is determined by total points, regardless of

number of games played however, no team may play more than 12 official games to be counted towards points total.

3. Seeding will be determined by: 1. Total Points 2. Head to Head 3. Number of Wins 4. Runs Allowed (average per games played) 5. Coin Toss. A win equals 3 points, tie 2 points, a loss 1 point. 0 points for a forfeit.

4. Playoff games will be played using No New Inning after 2:00 Hours of play. An official playoff game must be at least 5 Innings of play. A New Inning may be started after 2:00 Hours of play if the score is tied. Playoff game cannot end in a tie score.

5. Extra innings (7<sup>th</sup> inning and beyond) will be played with international tie breaker rules.

6 Regular season play will conclude the Saturday following Memorial Day Monday; no games shall be played on the Sunday after Memorial Day. Coaches are requested to reschedule any postponed games as quickly as possible and not wait until the final week. There shall be NO extension of the regular season. Playoffs will begin the Monday following Memorial Day and each round will be played each weekday thereafter (\*).

Should a playoff game be unable to be played till official and must be resumed, the playoff schedule will push out one weekday to accommodate. Any playoff game shall not be played on a Saturday or Sunday unless both Coaches agree.

All Teams should be prepared to play playoff games as scheduled or rescheduled until Team has been eliminated.

Other than weather-related conditions, any Team unable to play as scheduled or rescheduled will be considered a forfeit. (\*) Exception shall be made for any Team unable to play due to a Town or school scheduled event and will be confirmed by each Town's Softball Coordinator; approved events must be submitted to the League by Memorial Day Monday.

7. If a playoff game is halted (due to darkness, weather or other Umpire decision) before the game is official, game will be suspended and resumed from that point.

8. Speed up rule for playoffs: In an effort to speed up playoff games so the full allotment of innings may be played in a reasonable time, after the 1st Inning, the Pitcher is limited to 5 warm-up pitches before play will resume.

**Any issues not covered in rules shall be addressed by a review committee comprising of one (1) Softball representative from each Town that fields at least one Team in all 3 age divisions. Any Town(s) that is combined with players from another town will be considered as one (1) Town.**