



Southern Softball Rules

Revised February 2022

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MISSION STATEMENT

It is the intent of SOUTHERN SOFTBALL to provide a program where every girl has an equal opportunity to learn the fundamentals of softball and play the game in a safe, supervised environment. It is also our belief that the local league should have a voice in how the program is administrated. Therefore, every district shall elect a district director who shall supervise the leagues within that district, represent the interest of the leagues and act as a liaison in matters of policy and rule change suggestions. To set SOUTHERN SOFTBALL apart from travel ball and to protect the integrity of each local organization, league boundaries will be observed along with policies that ensure that SOUTHERN SOFTBALL remains a true recreational program. Leagues associating themselves with this program must comply with the basic set of rules and regulations as outlined in this book, but league officials will have autonomy in certain areas such as player selection systems, scheduling etc. SOUTHERN SOFTBALL administrators always stand ready to facilitate the leagues and are dedicated to maintaining a platform that is fun and fair for all.

THE INTENT AND PURPOSE OF THE RULES

The restrictions which the rules place upon the players are intended to create a balance of play; to provide equal opportunity between offense and defense; and to create an atmosphere of sporting behavior and fair play.

Therefore, it is important to know the intent and purpose of the rules so that they may be intelligently applied in each situation. A player or a team should not be permitted an advantage that is not intended by the rule. Neither should play be permitted to develop which may lead to placing a player or a team at a disadvantage not intended by the rule.

The rules contained in this book will be in effect during all regular season, District and State tournament games. Safety rules are NOT flexible and will fully be adhered to as mandated by the governing body of softball and this rule book.

YOUR DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Your District Director is elected by the leagues in each district and is your liaison with SOUTHERN SOFTBALL. They should be your first contact in all matters relating to rules, policies and procedures. Your District Director should be familiar with the inner workings of the district in which they represent and is the best equipped person to handle most issues that may arise. They are YOUR elected representative and a valuable resource for your league. . .use them!

IMPORTANT DATES

JANUARY

1st—Notify SOUTHERN SOFTBALL of Intent to Franchise by this date.

MARCH

15th—Deadline for filing franchise renewal forms and paying applicable fees. **FAILURE TO FILE AND PAY FEES BY March 15th WILL RESULT IN A \$50.00 LATE FEE AND POSSIBLE LOSS OF TOURNAMENT HOSTING PRIVILEGES.**

31st—All regular season rosters **MUST** be received by this date. **No rosters will be accepted after this date.** You will have until April 15th to add any late sign-ups to your league roster, but this MUST be done through your District Director. Late sign-ups will only be considered if your regular season rosters were received prior to the March 31st deadline. On April 16th all rosters are closed. Any player who is also playing for their school program must appear on your SOUTHERN SOFTBALL roster prior to the April 15th cut-off in order to be eligible.

JUNE

1st—Last date to notify SOUTHERN SOFTBALL if you will NOT be fielding a tournament team in an age division. SOUTHERN SOFTBALL assumes that each franchised age division within a league will have a representative in the tournament. Failure to send a tournament team or notify the District Director prior to June 1st may result in loss of tournament privileges for that league.

15th—All tournament rosters must be completed and checked by the credentials committee on or before this date. Each district director will set the date for their own district credentials meeting.

30th—If district tournaments are held, they should be completed before this date.

JULY

15th—State Tournaments should begin no later than this date. If no district tournaments are held, State Tournaments may begin no earlier than June 21st.

AUGUST

1st—Last date to submit rule change suggestions for consideration.

1st—Last date to submit nominations for District Directors.

YOUR LEAGUE

(a)--Each individual league should be governed by a board of officers elected by those actively participating in the local program. Those positions should include, but are not limited to, a President, Secretary, Treasurer, Player Reps, etc. SOUTHERN SOFTBALL strongly recommends that each league develop a set of by-laws that clearly outlines the policies and procedures that will be used in the operation of their local program. Once ratified by the league, these by-laws should be made available to anyone actively participating within that league. Your District Director may also request a copy to keep on file.

(b)—SOUTHERN SOFTBALL offers divisions of play in 6u, 8u, 10, 12u, 14u, 16u and 18u. Leagues may franchise up to 7 teams in any age division. Leagues wishing to franchise more than 7 teams in any single age division will need to apply for a second franchise (i.e. 6u American, 6u National etc.)

(c)—All leagues must be franchised and sanctioned with SOUTHERN SOFTBALL in order to be eligible to participate at any level of play. Games played against teams other than those franchised with SOUTHERN SOFTBALL will not count as played games.

(d)—Each franchised league will have a boundary map on file with SOUTHERN SOFTBALL. The population within any league boundary shall not exceed 50,000 residents. Population will be determined by the latest census for that area. All players registered with the league must reside within the established boundary for that league. A link to the official boundary maps can be found on the website at www.southernsoftball.com.

(e)—No new league may franchise in the territory of an existing league(s). If an existing league fails to renew their franchise for any given year, that area may then be franchised by another league within that district subject to the provisions of this rule book and with the approval of the District and State Directors.

(f)—Upon completion of regular season play, each league will select one (1) all-star team from each age division. The method used for selecting all-star teams shall be at the discretion of the individual league. Whatever process is utilized should be fair and clearly stated in the by-laws of each league. The all-star teams from each league will compete in a district level tournament against other representatives from their district with the top 2 teams advancing to the State Tournament. NOTE: If no district tournament is held, each league will send (1) one team from each age division directly to the State Tournament.

(g)—All leagues should have accident and liability insurance in place before ANY organized practice or league function begins.

(h)—SOUTHERN SOFTBALL strongly encourages each league to develop and maintain a risk management program. All volunteers, coaches and umpires should be properly vetted for the protection of the players as well as your own league. Most insurance carriers require such a program before they will provide coverage.

TEAMS

(a)—Each team may carry a maximum of 17 players on a regular season roster. All players listed on the roster must be of the correct age for that division. (AGE IS DETERMINED BY THE PLAYER'S AGE ON JANUARY 1ST OF THE CURRENT SEASON)

(b)—If a team cannot field the required number to play of the correct age, players from the next youngest division shall be allowed to play up. AT NO TIME SHALL A PLAYER FROM AN OLDER DIVISION BE ALLOWED TO PLAY DOWN. The league should collect and keep a copy of each player's birth certificate on file to verify their age before placing them on a roster.

(c)—No player's name shall appear on more than one roster.

(d)—The draft process should be fair and equitable with each team having an equal opportunity in the player selection process. Whatever procedure is utilized should also appear in the league by-laws.

BOUNDARIES

(a)—The current boundary map that is on file for each league shall be used for determination of player eligibility. Any changes to existing boundaries must be submitted to SOUTHERN SOFTBALL for review before they can be implemented. This is to ensure that existing boundaries are protected, and the 50,000 population limit is not exceeded.

(b)-- Any player who registers with your league MUST reside within the established boundary of your league. Under special circumstances, a player may be allowed to sign up in the boundary where she attends school if she has a parent who is employed by that school. This circumstance must be properly documented and approved by the District Director BEFORE she is placed on a roster.

(c)—Any player who wants to play MUST register with the league in the boundary where she resides at the beginning of EVERY season. If AFTER registering with the proper league it is determined that the league will not have a team in that age division, THEN the league may release the player by submitting the required form to the district director. Once approved, the player is free to register with a neighboring league for the current season. However; the player is ALWAYS required to go back and register with the league in the boundary where she resides the following year. If this procedure is not followed, under no circumstances will the player be allowed to play out of boundary.

EXCEPTION: A player has the option to play in the boundary where she attends school IF SHE HAS A PARENT EMPLOYED BY THAT SCHOOL SYSTEM subject to the approval of the district director.

(d)—All players MUST reside in a franchised boundary of SOUTHERN SOFTBALL.

(e)—New leagues who franchise with SOUTHERN SOFTBALL for the first time will have the option to retain any players who were registered with their league prior to joining SOUTHERN SOFTBALL. This process, known as “Grandfathering”, will only be allowed (1) one time and ONLY for the initial year of franchising with SOUTHERN SOFTBALL.

REGISTRATION

(a)—All leagues shall submit a roster for each team on or before the March 31st deadline. This roster should be filled out completely as indicated on the form. The roster should include the full name, address and date of birth for each player. Missing information may be cause for disallowing a player, so please check them thoroughly before they are submitted. Rosters should also include the names and addresses for each coach. Four (4) coaches are required in 6u and 8u. A minimum of 2 and a maximum of three (3) coaches are allowed in 10u through 18u. ONLY PLAYERS AND COACHES LISTED ON THE REGULAR SEASON ROSTER ARE ELIGIBLE FOR TOURNAMENT PLAY. IF A ROSTERED COACH IS NOT AVAILABLE, A SUBSTITUTE COACH MAY BE ALLOWED WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR.

SCHEDULE

(a)—All teams 6u through 12u should schedule a minimum of 15 games. All teams 14u through 18u should schedule a minimum of 12 games. A copy of the schedule for each team must be made available upon request from the district director. When scheduling games, keep in mind that anyone on a tournament roster is required to have played in at least 8 regular season games in order to be eligible for tournament play. If a team does not schedule the minimum number of games (whether actually played or not), they will not be considered for any weather-related player waivers at tournament time.

(b)—Only games played against other teams franchised with SOUTHERN SOFTBALL will count as “played games”.

(c)—SOUTHERN SOFTBALL urges leagues to first schedule games with teams in their own district before scheduling games with other franchised SOUTHERN SOFTBALL leagues. This is to ensure that the leagues within the district are able to get in their required number of games.

FORFEITS

(a)—Any team who cannot, at anytime in the game, field the minimum number of players (see age specific rules) shall forfeit the game. Teams may elect to scrimmage, but the team that has the minimum number of players will be declared the winner of the contest.

(b)—If it is discovered that an ineligible player participated in a game, the violating team shall forfeit the game.

SPORTSMANSHIP

SOUTHERN SOFTBALL always expects everyone associated with this program to display good conduct and sportsmanship. We should all strive to set the proper example in front of these impressionable young girls.

(a)—Coaches will follow the rules of sportsmanship, never stall a game, be a graceful winner and loser, and never speak rudely or out of turn to a player, coach, fan or umpire. Coaches are also responsible for the sportsmanship of their own players, coaches and fans. **COACHES SHOULD NOT ALLOW UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT FROM PLAYERS OR FANS.** These acts are not tolerated by Southern Softball in any form.

(b)—Unsportsmanlike behavior by a player, coach, or a fan may result in ejection.

(c)—Artificial noise makers (or anything deemed a distraction by the umpire) will not be allowed.

(d)—Use of profanity or throwing of equipment will result in immediate ejection.

(e)—No one will be allowed to heckle, say or do anything that is a distraction in the judgement of the umpire. (Example: “Batter Swing!”, “Pitcher can’t pitch!” etc.)

(f)—Use of tobacco, in ANY form (including e-cigarettes, chewing tobacco etc.), is NOT allowed on the playing field or in the spectator stands. Each league should designate an area away from the crowd and the players for this purpose.

(g)—Alcoholic drinks, and illegal drugs are not allowed at any Southern Softball event. Firearms are also prohibited except for law enforcement or authorized personnel per T.C.A 39-17-1350.

(h)—Umpires should be fair, impartial, use good judgement and never speak rudely or out of turn to a player, coach or fan. Umpires are subject to making errors the same as the coaches and players, we all are human. In the spirit of fair play and sportsmanship we will not allow anyone to show disrespect towards any umpire because of their decisions. Southern Softball will do its best in pursuing the best qualified umpires to officiate Southern Softball events.

UMPIRE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

These are the standard guidelines adapted by SOUTHERN SOFTBALL that govern the rights and responsibilities of the umpires.

(a)—All umpires are required to be registered with SOUTHERN SOFTBALL by completing the preseason training class and passing the umpire test furnished by SOUTHERN SOFTBALL at the beginning of each season. These classes and tests are typically administered by the umpire in chief for each district. A registration card and patch will be provided to each umpire who successfully completes the registration process. This patch should be worn on the left shirt sleeve. **NO SOUTHERN SOFTBALL GAME SHALL COUNT AS A PLAYED GAME UNLESS IT IS OFFICIATED BY A REGISTERED UMPIRE. ONLY REGISTERED UMPIRES MAY BE USED FOR ANY TOURNAMENT GAME.**

(b)—The umpire is responsible to keep control of the game.

(c)—The umpire has the right to eject any player, coach, or fan from a game for unsportsmanlike behavior.

(d)—Any judgement call that the umpire makes cannot be protested. Misinterpretation of a playing rule by an umpire CAN be protested. A head coach can appeal to the plate umpire in the case of a batter on whether a check swing was checked or not. (The field umpire may have a better view). The plate umpire does not have to grant the appeal.

(e)—The umpire can suspend play for any reason: acts of nature, unruly conduct, etc.

(f)—The umpire may suspend play if he deems the field is unsafe to continue a game.

(g)—Umpires should dress alike in the same color shirt and in either shorts or pants; not a combination. Umpires should be neat in appearance with shirts tucked in while on the playing field. Black shoes should be worn. No metal cleats.

(h)—Umpires are subject to the same no tobacco policy as all coaches and league officials when on the playing field.

(i)—Home plate umpires must wear a facemask and chest protection in all player-pitch age division games. It is also recommended that, in the case of male umpires, a protective cup be worn. In coach-pitch games, the use of protective gear is recommended but not required.

(j)—During the regular season, it is the responsibility of each league to put the best qualified/registered umpires on the field. The district director (with the assistance of the district umpire-in-chief) shall be responsible for assigning umpires for all district tournament games. The State director will assign umpires at all State tournaments.

DEFINITIONS

Altered bat: When the physical structure of a legal softball bat has been changed.

Appeal: A play or rule violation on which the umpire does not make a ruling until requested by a coach or player. The appeal must be made before the next pitch, legal or illegal, or before the defensive team has left the field. Judgement calls (Balls, Strikes, Safe, or Outs) are not appealable.

Base runner: An offensive batter that has put the ball in play.

Bunt: A bunt is a legally batted ball not swung at but intentionally tapped with the bat. An attempted bunt is any non-swinging movement of the bat intended to tap the ball into play. Holding the bat in the strike zone is considered a bunt attempt. In order to take a pitch, the bat must be pulled back and away from the ball. Bunting is NOT allowed in Coach Pitch (6u, 8u)

Conference: Anytime a head coach gets permission to suspend play to talk to the players. Only 1 defensive conference is allowed per $\frac{1}{2}$ inning without penalty. On the second defensive conference in a $\frac{1}{2}$ inning the pitcher must be replaced. Replacement pitcher must pitch to one batter. The replaced pitcher may go back into the pitcher's position once per $\frac{1}{2}$ inning. The offense is allowed one timeout per batter per $\frac{1}{2}$ inning. On the 2nd called timeout, the batter shall be declared out.

Coach-pitcher: The coach in 6u and 8u divisions who actually pitches to the batter.

Dead Ball: When the ball is not in play. Umpire will declare "dead ball".

Dropped 3rd Strike Rule: The catcher is required to catch the 3rd strike when 1st base is unoccupied with less than 2 outs or ANYTIME there 2 outs whether 1st base is occupied or not.

Fair Ball: A fair ball is a batted ball that:

- a. Settles or is touched on or over fair territory between home plate and first base or between home plate and third base.
- b. Bounds past first or third base on or over fair territory.
- c. Bounds over any part of the first or third base bag, regardless of where the ball hits after going over the bag.
- d. While on or over fair territory, touches the person, attached equipment or clothing of a player or an umpire.
- e. Touches first, second or third base.
- f. First falls or is first touched on or over fair territory beyond first or third base.
- g. While over fair territory, passes out of the playing field beyond the outfield fence.
- h. Hits the foul pole above the fence level.

NOTE: A fair fly shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul territory at the time, she touches the ball. It does not matter whether the ball first touches fair or foul territory as

long as it does not touch anything foreign to the natural ground in foul territory and complies with all other aspects of a fair ball.

Fake Tag: When a defensive player makes the motion of tagging a base runner when there is no actual play being made. PENALTY- could be ejection of the offending player.

Foul Ball: A foul ball is a batted ball that:

- a. Settles or is touched on or in foul territory between home plate and first base, or between home plate and third base.
- b. Bounds or rolls past first or third base on or over foul territory.
- c. While on or over foul territory, touches the person, attached equipment or clothing of a player or an umpire, or any object foreign to the natural ground and provided a fair ball declaration had not been made prior to the ball entering foul territory.
- d. First falls or is first touched over foul territory beyond first or third base.
- e. Touches the batter or the bat a second time while the ball is within the batter's box.
- f. Immediately rebounds up from the ground or home plate and hits the bat a second time while the batter is in the batter's box.

NOTE: A foul fly shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not as to whether the fielder is on foul or fair territory at the time, she touches the ball.

NOTE: A fly ball that is caught in foul territory before it hits the ground or anything foreign to the natural ground is a "live" ball and will be played as if the fly ball was caught in fair territory.

Foul Tip: A foul tip is a batted ball that goes sharply and directly from the bat to the catcher's mitt or hand and is legally caught by the catcher. It is a strike and remains a live ball.

Hit by Pitch: When the pitched ball hits the batter and the batter is not swinging at the ball or a strike has been called. Dead ball results and the batter is awarded first base.

Illegal Bat: A bat that does not meet the requirements of an official bat as dictated by the governing body of softball.

Infield Fly Rule: A batted pop fly in the infield with less than 2 outs when a base runner occupies 1st and 2nd base or 1st, 2nd and 3rd base. When the umpire feels the ball can be caught with reasonable effort by the infield, the umpire will indicate and verbalize the infield fly and the batter is out. The ball is live and base runners may tag-up and advance at their own risk with liability to be put out.

Interference: Interference is the act of an offensive player, team member or fan which impedes or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play. The interference can be physical, visual or verbal. A checked swing or attempted bunt with the bat pulled back is NOT considered interference.

Leap, Crow Hop, or Replant: A "leap" is defined as an act by the pitcher which causes both feet to be airborne at the same time on the initial move and move from the pitcher's plate. "Pushing

off” and dragging the pivot foot in contact with the ground is required. If a hole has been created, the pivot foot may drag no higher than the level plane of the ground. A “Crow Hop” is defined as the act of a pitcher who steps, hops, or drags off the front of the pitcher’s plate, replants the pivot foot, ESTABLISHING A SECOND STARTING POINT, pushes off from the newly-established point and completes the delivery.

Live Ball: Any and all times that the ball is in play or until the umpire calls “time” or “dead ball”.

Obstruction: Obstruction is the act of:

- a. A defensive player, team member or fan which hinders or prevents a batter from striking or hitting a pitched ball. This obstruction can be physical, visual or verbal.
- b. A fielder, (1) not in possession of the ball, (2) not in the act of fielding a batted ball, or (3) not about to receive a thrown ball which impedes the progress of a base runner or batter-runner who is legally running bases.

Player-pitcher: The player in 10u through 18u who actually pitches to the batter.

Stalling: Umpire has the right to end a conference early if the umpire determines a team is trying to stall a game. This call will not be questioned or appealed by a coach.

Strike Zone: The strike zone is that space over any part of home plate between the batter’s arm pits and the top of her knees when she assumes a natural batting stance.

EQUIPMENT/SAFETY

This is the equipment to be used while playing in official SOUTHERN SOFTBALL events. As a rule, equipment must be standard approved equipment that is properly marked with the "Official Softball" or similar markings that certify the equipment. All official safety equipment must be used and properly marked as certified. Each league and team are responsible for all safety equipment.

(a)-- SOUTHERN SOFTBALL follows the National Federation of High School guidelines. All bats must be unaltered and deemed safe for play by the plate umpire. In order for a bat to be legal for use it must be marked with the ASA 2000, 2004 or the USA Softball All-Games Certification Mark. All bats that are approved by USA Softball, formally ASA, for use in fast pitch play shall bear one of the markings as listed here and shown on the SOUTHERN SOFTBALL website. Additionally, any bat with one of these certification marks must NOT appear on the list of the USA Softball Non-Approved Bats with Certification Marks, which can also be found on the SOUTHERN SOFTBALL website. Each coach is responsible for all bats and equipment. Any illegal bats will be removed from the dugout prior to the game. National Federation of High School sports maintains a list of illegal bats and SOUTHERN SOFTBALL will enforce this list. Each coach will certify all bats and equipment are legal before each game with the home plate Umpire. Use of an illegal bat will result in an automatic out and ejection of the player using the bat and ejection of the head coach.

NOTE: Bats must be 2 ¼" in diameter and no more than 34" in length or 38 oz in weight.

NOTE: Players in the 6u division may use T-Ball bats if they so choose.

(b)-- All 12U through 18U divisions will use a 12-inch, optic yellow softball with .47 C.O.R. and .375 compression. 6U, 8U, and 10U must use 11-inch, optic yellow softball with .47 C.O.R. and .375 compression.

(c)-- Non-compliance in any form may lead to the offending coach being ejected from the game.

(d)-- All batting helmets and catching gear must be approved with the NOCSAE STAMP and in original condition. Numbers and personalized designs on the helmet are permitted as long as they do not, in the opinion of the umpire, present a safety issue for any player.

(e)-- Every player playing the infield in SOUTHERN SOFTBALL will wear a face mask. **PLAYER SAFETY IS THE MAIN CONCERN.**

(f)-- Any player warming up or catching the pitcher is required to wear a NOCSAE approved catcher's helmet **with a throat guard**. If a coach is warming up a pitcher, a facemask is strongly suggested. **SAFETY IS THE MAIN CONCERN.**

(g)-- Shoes and socks must be worn. Cleats must be rubber or plastic. **METAL CLEATS are NOT allowed in any age divisions. SAFETY IS THE MAIN CONCERN.**

(h)-- Hats and visors are permissible. They are optional between each individual player. No tinted face shields are permitted.

(i)-- ALL JEWELRY IS PROHIBITED, except medical alert bracelets which must be worn on the glove hand. Non-compliance will lead to the offending player and coach being restricted to the dugout for the remainder of the game.

(j)-- Numbers must be worn on uniforms, with no two players having the same number. (Unless it is a borrowed player wearing the jersey of her own team)

(k)-- All helmets must have a NOCSAE approved face guard. Chinstraps are recommended but not required. Defensive face guards are required for ALL INFELDERS in SOUTHERN SOFTBALL.

(l)-- No playing equipment shall be left lying anywhere on the field.

(m)-- SOUTHERN SOFTBALL does not require heart guards but does highly recommend the use of them.

(n)-- Any item deemed unsafe or a distraction by the umpire must be removed from the game. This includes cell phones, or any item(s) not associated with the game.

(o)-- Gloves must be worn by every defensive player but only the catcher and first baseman may wear a mitt.

(p)-- A player, manager/coach or umpire who is bleeding or who has blood on their uniform shall be prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment can be administered. If medical care or treatment is administered in a reasonable length of time, the individual will not have to leave the game. The length of time that is considered reasonable is left to the judgment of the umpire or in the case where an umpire is involved, the judgment of the umpire not involved. Uniform rule violations will NOT be enforced if a uniform change is required. The umpire shall:

(a) Stop the game and allow treatment if the injured person would affect the continuation of the game.

(b) Immediately call a manager/coach, trainer or other authorized person to the injured person.

(c) Apply the rules of the game regarding substitution, short-handed player and re-entry if necessary.

(r)- Concussion education/training is required by the State for all coaches, athletes and their parents before competing in youth sports and SOUTHERN SOFTBALL fully endorses this State law. Please visit <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/fhw/vipp/tbi/tennessee-concussion.html> for complete information and requirements.

THE PLAYING FIELD

These are the basic dimensions for the playing field for all SOUTHERN SOFTBALL events. Please reference the age appropriate section of this rule book for specific dimensions for each age division.

(a)—All age divisions will play on 60' bases

(b)—SOUTHERN SOFTBALL allows league to use their outfield fence "as is" during the regular season and a home run will be any fair ball hit over the fence. However; during tournament play, the outfield fence should be positioned as follows:

6u—8u	120'—140'
10u	140'—160'
12u	160'—180'
14u—18u	180'—200'

Temporary fences are recommended to bring fields into the legal bounds. If multiple fields are used for tournament play, fences should be the same on each field and age appropriate.

(c)—There will be a 16' diameter circle centered and drawn around the pitching rubber at the appropriate distance for each age division as follows:

6u—10u	35 feet
12u	40 feet
14u—18u	43 feet

(d)—The batter's boxes on each side of the plate are to be 3' wide and 7' deep. The outer edge of the lines should be 4" from home plate. Each box should be drawn with 4' from the center of home plate toward the pitcher's plate and 3' from the center of home plate toward the backstop.

(e)—Base lines should extend from the back point of home plate, across the outer edge of 1st and 3rd base and run to the foul poles. The foul lines are ALWAYS considered fair territory and should not be drawn outside the outer edge of the bag(s).

(f)—The pitcher's plate shall be of white rubber six inches (6") by twenty-four inches (24") and shall be placed on the same level as the home plate. The pitching distance shall be measured from the front edge of the pitching rubber to the back corner of home plate.

(g)—Bases shall be 14" x 14" and safely secured at the proper distances. Base distance for 1st and 3rd base is 60' and is measured from the back corner of home plate to the back corner of 1st and 3rd base. The distance from the back corner of home plate to the center of the 2nd base bag should measure 84'-10 ¼".

SOUTHERN SOFTBALL recommends that a safety bag be used at first base. The double base is to assure separation between the fielder and the runner **IF** there is a play at 1B. The fielder and the runner get their own base to touch to make that happen. If there is no play at 1B and the base runner is making the turn, then the runner uses the white portion of the base.

EXCEPTION: On a dropped 3rd strike play at first base, the fielder and the runner may touch either the white or the colored portion of the base. The intent of this rule is to avoid an interference call.

(h)—If after the game has started it is discovered that the pitching rubber, circle or bases are not at the proper distance, the error shall be corrected immediately and anything that has happened in the game up to that point will stand.

(i)—A 3' wide running lane should be drawn parallel with the first base line with the line starting 30' from home plate and extending to the back edge of 1st base.

(j)—Coaching boxes and on-deck circles are suggested for regular season play and required at tournament time. SOUTHERN SOFTBALL recommends that coaches boxes be drawn 4 feet wide by 8 feet long and positioned at 1st and 3rd base and 6 feet off the baselines if conditions allow. On-deck circles should be 5' in diameter and located a safe distance from home plate.

(k)—SOUTHERN SOFTBALL recommends that half-way marks be drawn at the mid-point between 1st and 2nd, 2nd and 3rd and 3rd and home plate in 6u and 8u games during the regular season to assist the umpires in awarding bases for forward progress when time is called. The half-way marks will be required for all 6u and 8u tournament games.

GENERAL PLAYING RULES

The general rules listed in this section will be used in all playing situations unless it is superseded by a rule in an age specific portion of this rule guide. Any rule not specifically addressed in this rule guide will be governed by the current NFHS Softball rule book.

GAME PLAY

(a)—The time limit for games in all age divisions will be 80 minutes unless one of the teams is mathematically eliminated, run-ruled or the innings for that age group are completed. A team may concede a game at any time.

(b)—A new inning shall not be started after 75 minutes have elapsed.

(c)—SOUTHERN SOFTBALL games will be 5 innings for all coach-pitch divisions (6u—8u) and 6 innings for all player-pitch divisions (10u—18u).

(d)—The RUN RULE in 6u and 8u is 8 runs per half inning and the game shall be called when a team is mathematically eliminated.

(e)—The RUN RULE in 10u—18u will be 12 runs after 3 innings, 10 runs after 4 innings or 8 runs after 5 innings.

{LOCAL LEAGUE OPTION: A league may adopt a league option to use a 5-run per half inning limit in 10u—18u during the **regular season only**} If used, this option replaces the standard run rule.

(f)—TIED GAMES: If a game is tied after specified innings are completed or time has expired there are two options.

1. Play additional complete innings until a winner is declared
2. Use the INTERNATIONAL TIE BREAKER RULE. The last completed batter in the previous inning is placed on 2nd base and play continues until a winner is declared.
3. INTERNATIONAL TIE-BREAKER RULE will be used for all tournament play.

DEAD BALL SITUATIONS

The ball is “dead” when:

1. When “no pitch” or “illegal pitch” is called by the umpire
2. When a fly ball in foul territory is not caught
3. Offensive interference.
4. When the batter or base runner is hit by a batted ball before the ball is touched by a fielder.
5. When the umpire calls “TIME”
6. If the ball hits the bucket or the bucket interferes with a baserunner, then interference, blocked ball or obstruction will be declared on the offending team as deemed necessary by the umpire’s judgement. (ONLY 1 BUCKET ON THE FIELD FOR THE PURPOSE OF CALLING SIGNALS.)
7. When a base runner is called out for leaving too soon.
8. When a pitched ball touches any part of the batter’s person or clothing whether the ball is struck at or not.
9. When there is interference by the plate umpire or his clothing with the catcher’s attempt to throw.
10. When in the judgment of the umpire, the coach touches or helps the runner physically to assist her to return or to leave a base or when a coach near third base runs in the direction of home plate on or near the baseline while the fielder is attempting to make a play on a batted or thrown ball and thereby draws a throw to home plate.

NOTE: Base runners cannot advance on a dead ball, unless forced to do so by reason of the batter having reached first base as entitled to or they are awarded a base or bases.

LIVE BALL SITUATIONS

The ball shall be considered “live” and in play when:

1. Any batted fair ball.
2. Any fair ball that is in the playable field of play.
3. Any and all times before the umpire calls “TIME”.
4. When an umpire is hit by a thrown or batted ball after it has touched or passed a fielder.
5. When a base coach is accidentally hit by a thrown ball.
6. When the INFIELD FLY RULE is enforced.
7. When a base runner is called out for passing a preceding runner.
8. When an appeal play is enforced and involved.
9. When a ball has been called on the batter and when four balls have been called but the batter may not be put out before she reaches first base.
10. When a strike has been called on the batter and when three strikes have been called on the batter.
11. If the ball slips from a pitcher’s hand during wind-up or during the back swing.

PLAYERS & SUBSTITUTES

(a)—Teams in 6u and 8u divisions are required to play with 10 players. Teams in 10u—18u are required to play with 9 players. However; if a team does not have the required number of players to start or continue a game, the game shall NOT be forfeited. Teams will be allowed to play with 1 or 2 less than the required number for their age division. **An out will be recorded each time those spots come up in the batting order. If a team, at any point, drops to 3 less than the required number of players, the game will be counted as a forfeit win for the team who has the minimum required number of players.**

(b)—If a team does not have the required number of players to start a game, they can borrow a player from the same age or younger as long as the borrowed player is a rostered player in the league. A borrowed player cannot be used after the game has begun. A borrowed player is not allowed to pitch and must bat at the bottom of the lineup. The borrowed player should also wear the jersey of the team she is rostered on to identify her as a borrowed player.

(c)— A continuous batting order will be used in all age divisions. Every player at the game shall be listed on the lineup and will bat when her position comes up whether she is currently playing in the field on defense or not.

(d)— All players in the lineup MUST play at least 3 consecutive outs on defense. Failure to meet these minimum requirements will result in a forfeit if properly protested by the other team. This requirement is waived if the game is cut short due to the run rule or if time expires before required innings are completed.

(e)—If a player becomes sick or injured during the game and misses a turn at bat, she is skipped without penalty but cannot return to that game. If a player is ejected from the game, and that ejection creates a situation where there is less than the required number to play, an out will be recorded each time her spot comes up in the batting order for the remainder of that game and she cannot under any circumstances return to that game even if it means the team must forfeit.

(f)—Any defensive substitution made during the game must remain on the field until at least 1 batter has completed an at bat. This does not negate the 3 consecutive out rule.

(g)—All substitutions should be reported to the plate umpire at the time they occur. The umpire should then notify the official scorekeeper and/or the other team's scorekeeper.

(h)—Courtesy runners are allowed for the pitcher and catcher of record anytime they are on base in the inning. The courtesy runner will be the last completed at bat who is not currently on base. If the last completed at bat is a pitcher or catcher, the courtesy runner will be the batter immediately preceding her in the lineup who is not on base.

NOTE: Coaches are encouraged to utilize the courtesy runner but are not required to do so. This is to allow the catcher time to gear-up and facilitate the prompt start of the next inning.

PITCHING RULES

(a)—Before the pitcher pitches the ball, she must do the following:

1. Have possession of the ball in either the pitching hand or the glove hand.
2. Have both hands separated as she steps on the rubber.
3. Prior to the delivery (pitch), the pitcher shall take a position with the pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate. The non-pivot foot may be on or behind the rubber.
4. Pitcher must take or simulate taking signs while on the rubber from the catcher only.
5. The delivery must start no less than 1 second and no more than 10 seconds after the hands are in contact with each other.
6. The pitch begins when the hands are no longer separated. The pitch delivery may be aborted by the pitcher stepping off the rubber in a backward step with the plant foot. Failure to "step off" constitutes an illegal pitch and a ball is called on the batter.
7. On the pitch delivery the pivot foot may slide across the pitcher's plate but must remain in contact with the ground.

(b)—Pitcher's delivery:

1. Windmill or slingshot style is acceptable. No sidearm pitches are allowed.
2. Arm movement must be an underhand motion. No more than one revolution of the arm on the windmill pitch.
3. As part of the delivery, the pitcher can step back with the non-pivot foot prior to or simultaneous with the hands coming together, then take a forward step with that foot and deliver the ball. Once the hands are together, no further backward step is allowed.
4. If the underhand arm movement is more than 12" away from the parallel of the body, the pitch will be considered a sidearm pitch.
5. A "LEAP" or "CROW HOP" is not permitted during the pitching delivery.
6. The pitcher may not stop her wind up (unless the Umpire calls Time) without releasing the ball. No action by a batter, coach, or a fan can cause the pitcher to throw an illegal pitch.

Any violation of the above shall result in an illegal pitch. The ball is "dead", and a ball is called on the batter.

EXCEPTION: If the ball is put into play on an illegal pitch and the batter reaches 1st base safely and any base runners advance at least one base, then the play stands and the illegal pitch is nullified.

(c)—The pitcher cannot have anything distracting on her pitching arm, hand, or wrist. This includes the wrist band chart. Any sweatband must be flesh in color on the pitching wrist or arm. Pitcher's uniform, equipment and/or accessories must be worn properly. A pitcher is prohibited from wearing or using any item that, in the Umpire's judgement, distracts the batter.

(d)—The pitcher can ask the umpire for a different ball at any given time before the start of her pitch. During wet conditions, a coach may request permission to towel dry the balls for the pitcher.

(e)—The pitcher or any other player or coach shall not at any time during the game be allowed to use tape or other substance(s) upon the ball, the pitching hand or fingers.

(f)—INTENTIONAL WALK: If the pitcher desires to intentionally walk a batter, she can at any time during the players at bat notify the Umpire of her intentions to walk the batter; the Umpire shall grant the walk at that time. NO PITCHES HAVE TO BE THROWN TO INTENTIONALLY WALK A BATTER.

(g)—If the ball slips from the pitcher's hand during her wind-up or backswing, the ball will be in play and the runners may advance at their own risk.

(h)—At the beginning of each inning or when a pitcher relieves another, they will be allowed 1 minute to throw no more than 5 warm-up pitches. Each excessive warm-up pitch will count as a ball toward the batter.

(i)—The coach is allowed only 1 defensive visit to the mound per $\frac{1}{2}$ inning without penalty. On the second defensive conference in a $\frac{1}{2}$ inning, the pitcher must be replaced. The replacement pitcher must pitch to at least one complete batter. The replaced pitcher may go back into the pitcher's position once per $\frac{1}{2}$ inning.

CIRCLE RULE/LOOK BACK RULE/OVER-RUNNING 1ST BASE

(a)—An 8' radius circle shall be drawn centered on the pitcher's plate for all player-pitch divisions (10u—18u). The circle shall be drawn centered at 35' for all coach-pitch divisions (6u—8u).

(b)—When the player-pitcher (10u-18u) has control of the ball inside the pitcher's circle and does not attempt to make a play on any runner, then all runners who are on base must stay on the base. Any throw or "fake" throw attempt constitutes making a play.

(c)—Any runner off the base when the player-pitcher has control of the ball inside the pitcher's circle must go back to the previous base or advance to the next base WITHOUT ANY HESITATION. If the runner off base, while on her way to any base either stops or changes direction, she will be called out. This is a judgement call by the umpire and is not subject to protest.

(d)—If the batter-runner rounds 1st base (meaning she cuts 1st base and immediately heads to 2nd base), she is allowed to stop only once at any point between 1st base and 2nd base. Then she must either immediately return to previous base or advance to the next without stopping or change of direction.

(e)—If the batter-runner intentionally overruns first base towards right field, turns left, and stops, then the player must either immediately return to 1st base or immediately attempt to advance to 2nd base. If, in the opinion of the umpire, the player does not do so and is tagged, then she is called out.

If the batter-runner overruns 1st base towards right field and turns right, then she is committed to 1st base and forfeits her right to advance to 2nd base unless she first returns to 1st base and retouches the bag.

BATTING

(a)—A player is considered a batter when she takes her place in the batter's box.

(b)—The batter can call time by lifting her hand to the umpire, the umpire may or may not grant the batter time out. If time is not granted, she will take the called pitch.

(c)—Batting out of order can be appealed to the umpire by the defense:

1. If the infraction is appealed **during** an illegal batter; the correct batter takes over and assumes the pitch count.
2. If the infraction is appealed **after** an illegal batter has batted but before the next pitch; the girl that should have batted is out and any base advances will return to their position prior to the illegal batter's bat. The correct spot in the line-up will be the batter that follows the girl called out.
3. If the infraction is appealed **after** illegal batter has batted and **after the next pitch**: The play stands. All base runners remain where they are.

(d) Batter positions on the lineup sheet are determined by the player's name and not jersey number. Improperly recorded position numbers and player numbers are correctable errors.

(e)—The batter is out when:

1. Three strikes are recorded on the batter.
2. The batter steps on the plate when hitting the ball in fair or foul territory.
3. The batter steps out of the batter's box when hitting the ball in fair or foul territory.
4. Batter fouls off third strike while trying to bunt.
5. Catcher catches third strike foul tip.
6. Anytime the batter slings the bat in an unsafe manner (in the opinion of the umpire).
7. The batter interferes with the catcher's ability to catch or make a throw.
 1. The batter is out unless a base runner attempting to steal is put out; the batter is not also out.
 2. With less than 2 outs and a runner on third (3rd) base and the batter interferes with a play being made at home plate, the batter is not out because the runner coming home is out. If there are 2 outs, then the batter is out, and the inning is over.

(f)—A strike is called when:

1. A pitch enters the strike zone before touching the ground and the batter does not swing.
2. Any legally pitched ball that is swung at and missed.
3. Any foul tip caught by the catcher
4. Any foul ball that is not legally caught on the fly when the batter has less than 2 strikes.
5. Any pitched ball that is swung at and missed that touches any part of the batter.
6. Any part of the batter is hit with her own batted ball when she is in the batter's box and she has less than 2 strikes.

(g)—A ball is called when:

1. A legally pitched ball does not enter the strike zone or touches the ground before reaching home plate and the batter does not swing. Any pitch that hits the plate and is not swung at is a ball on the batter.
2. An illegal pitch is called by the umpire. If the batter hits the ball and reaches any base safely, the illegal pitch is nullified and the play stands.
3. For each warm-up pitch in excess of the 5 that are allowed between innings.

(h)—The batter can advance to 1st base when:

1. Batter is pitched 4 balls or is intentionally walked.
2. Batter is hit by pitch (unless the ball is in the strike zone or swung at).
3. Catcher drops third strike with less than 2 outs with no base runner occupying first base or with two outs regardless of whether first base is occupied. A ball that hits the dirt and caught by the catcher is considered a dropped third strike.
EXCEPTION TO THE DROPPED 3RD STRIKE: If after a dropped 3rd strike, the batter abandons her attempt to advance or enters the dead ball area, she will be called out. Dead ball area is considered outside the fence or in the dugout.
4. When the catcher interferes with the batter's bat while the batter is swinging at a pitched ball, or anytime during a pitch. If the ball is put into play during the interference, the offensive coach has the option to take the result of the play or the interference.

BASE RUNNING

(a)—The base runner must run the bases in order when advancing or retreating.

(b)—When the base runner misses a bag, the play is appealable to the umpire by the defensive coach or any player on the field. Appeal must be made before the next pitch is delivered.

(c)—Base runners may attempt to steal only after the ball leaves the pitcher's hand during her delivery of the pitch. If the runner leaves early, they will be declared, out. There is NO stealing or leading off in coach-pitch. In 6u—8u, the runner must remain in contact with the base until the ball is hit.

(d)—The base runner cannot run more than 3 feet out of the base path to avoid a tag. This will result in the base runner being called out. The base path is the path between the runner and a direct line to the next base.

(e)—The base runner must avoid contact with any defensive player who is making (or attempting to make) a play on the ball. If the defensive player has the ball and is waiting to apply a tag, the base runner must either:

1. Slide
2. Attempt to get around the tag without running more than 3 feet outside the base path.
3. Give herself up

Failure to do so will result in the base runner being called out and all other base runners returning to their previous bag before the interference occurred (unless forced to advance). The batter/base runner is deemed safe at 1st base.

(f)—Runners intentionally sliding into a base with cleats raised in any unsafe manner (in the opinion of the umpire) will be declared out.

(g)—If a batted ball hits a base runner prior to the ball passing or being touched by a defensive player (nonpitcher unless the pitcher touches the ball or makes a play on the ball), the base runner is called out. In addition, if the runner interferes with an attempt by the defense to field the ball, the base runner will be called out.

(h)—Runners on base must tag-up on any caught fly ball and may not leave the base until the ball is touched by the defensive player's glove or body.

(i)—Two base runners may not occupy the same base simultaneously. The runner who first occupied the base is entitled to it until forced to advance.

(h)—No runner may return to touch a missed base or one she left illegally once she enters the dugout, after a following runner has scored or after the ball becomes "dead".

(i)—A base runner shall be declared out anytime she passes a proceeding runner before that runner has been put out.

(j)—No coach may touch or assist a base runner in any manner during a live ball. The runner will be declared out.

PROTEST & APPEALS

Anything involving the judgment of an umpire cannot be protested.

Things that can be protested are. . .

1. Misinterpretation of a playing rule
2. Failure of an umpire to apply the correct rule in situation
3. Failure of an umpire to assess the correct penalty in a situation
4. Discovery of the use of an illegal player

Only the head coach may file a protest and the protest must be made to the plate umpire before the next pitch is thrown; OR within 10 minutes on a game ending play. The umpire will then notify the opposing coach and the official scorekeeper that the game is being played under protest. The scorebook will be noted at the point the protest was filed. If the protest is later upheld, the game would resume from that point.

Protests must be made to the League President in writing within 48 hours of the incident. The league shall act on the protest by contacting the District Director who shall rule on the protest within 3 days of receiving the complaint from the league.

AGE SPECIFIC RULES

Unless a rule is specifically covered in the age specific section, the General Rules will apply.

6u

For girls who are 6 years of age or younger on
January 1st of the current season.

- (a)—Games are played using an 11-inch, .47 core ball that is optic yellow in color.
- (b)—Bats shall not exceed 31" in length. Tee ball bats may be used in the 6u division only.
- (c)—Games are 5 innings or 80 minutes unless a team is mathematically eliminated. No new inning will begin after 75 minutes.
- (d)—Teams may score a maximum of 8 runs per half-inning.
- (e)—The batting order will be continuous, and every player is required to play 3 consecutive outs on defense.
- (f)—Each batter will receive 5 pitches or 3 strikes, whatever comes first. If the 5th pitch (or any subsequent pitch) is fouled off, the batter will continue batting until they hit the ball or strike out. There are no "walks" in coach-pitch divisions.
- (g)—If the coach-pitcher is struck by a hit ball, the umpire will call a dead ball, no pitch. If, in the opinion of the umpire, the coach-pitcher **intentionally** allows the ball to hit him/her, the batter shall be called out and any runners on base will return to the base they occupied before the dead ball occurred.
- (h)—If a batter slings the bat in a manner that the umpire considers unsafe, the batter is out. The umpire should give a warning to both team before the game begins. The umpire should use "common sense" in making the out call but safety will be the priority.
- (i)—The offensive half of the inning will be ended when 3 outs are recorded, or 8 runs have scored.
- (j)—There will be 10 players in the field on defense with only 6 on the infield. Outfielders must play at least 10 feet behind the baselines. Infielders can be no closer than 35' from home plate when the ball is hit. All infielders are required to wear facemasks.
LOCAL LEAGUE OPTION: During the regular season only; the defense may allow all players to play in the field on defense. There can only be 6 players in the infield at any time.
- (k)—The player who is playing inside the circle must position herself in the back half of the circle with at least one foot completely inside the circle.

(l)—Teams are required to have at least 10 players on the lineup. However; teams may play with 1 or 2 less than the required number, but an out will be recorded each time those positions come up in the batting order. If a team drops to 3 less than the required number to play, the game shall be forfeited.

(m)—There will be 4 coaches on 6u teams, but one coach must always be in the dugout.

(n)—Two coaches are allowed on the field on defense, but they must be positioned in foul territory at least 10' behind the baselines.

LOCAL LEAGUE OPTION: During the regular season only; the 2 coaches may position themselves in the outfield BEHIND the deepest outfielder. If, in the opinion of the umpire, there is interference by a coach, a delayed dead ball will be signaled, and 1 extra base awarded to any players on base. Coaches must be in foul territory for all tournament games.

(o)—The coach-pitcher will pitch from no closer than 18' from the batter and no further than 30' and must exit the playing field on any hit ball.

(p)—The coach-pitcher may verbally assist in positioning the batter prior to the pitch. Once the ball leaves the coach-pitcher's hand, they are not allowed to speak or instruct the batter or batter/base runner in any way. After one warning from the umpire, the coach-pitcher will be removed from the pitching position for the remainder of that inning for any subsequent violations.

(q)—Base runners may only advance when the ball has been hit. If any runner leaves a base early, a delayed dead ball will be signaled, and the defensive team shall have the option to nullify any portion of the play.

(r)—The umpire will call time-out when the lead runner is stopped by a defensive player or if, in the opinion of the umpire, she has abandoned her attempt to advance to the next base. Placement of any trail runners will be determined by where they were in relation to the halfway marks when time was called.

(s)—The inning is over when:

1. Any time the 3rd out is recorded.
2. When the offensive team scores 8 runs.

(t)—Bunting is not allowed, and the infield fly rule is NOT in effect for coach-pitch divisions.

8u

For girls who are 8 years of age or younger on
January 1st of the current season.

- (a)—Games are played using an 11-inch, .47 core ball that is optic yellow in color.
- (b)—Games are 5 innings or 80 minutes unless a team is mathematically eliminated. No new inning will begin after 75 minutes.
- (c)—Teams may score a maximum of 8 runs per half-inning.
- (d)—The batting order will be continuous, and every player is required to play 3 consecutive outs on defense.
- (e)—Each batter will receive 5 pitches or 3 strikes, whatever comes first. If the 5th pitch (or any subsequent pitch) is fouled off, the batter will continue batting until they hit the ball or strike out. There are no “walks” in coach-pitch divisions.
- (f)—If the coach-pitcher is struck by a hit ball, the umpire will call a dead ball, no pitch. If, in the opinion of the umpire, the coach-pitcher **intentionally** allows the ball to hit him/her, the batter shall be called out and any runners on base will return to the base they occupied before the dead ball occurred.
- (g)—If a batter slings the bat in a manner that the umpire considers unsafe, the batter is out. The umpire should give a warning to both team before the game begins. The umpire should use “common sense” in making the out call but safety will be the priority.
- (h)—The offensive half of the inning will be ended when 3 outs are recorded, or when 8 runs have scored.
- (i)—There will be 10 players in the field on defense with only 6 on the infield. Outfielders must play at least 10 feet behind the baselines. Infielders can be no closer than 35’ from home plate when the ball is hit. All infielders are required to wear facemasks.
- (j)—The player who is playing inside the circle must position herself with at least one foot inside the circle.
- (k)—Teams are required to have at least 10 players on the lineup. However; teams may play with 1 or 2 less than the required number, but an out will be recorded each time those positions come up in the batting order. If a team drops to 3 less than the required number to play, the game shall be forfeited.
- (l)—There will be 4 coaches on 8u teams, but one coach must always be in the dugout.
- (m)—Two coaches are allowed on the field on defense, but they must be positioned in foul territory at least 10’ behind the baselines.

(n)—The coach-pitcher will pitch from 30' and must exit the playing field on any hit ball.

(o)—The coach-pitcher may verbally assist in positioning the batter prior to the pitch. Once the ball leaves the coach-pitcher's hand, they are not allowed to speak or instruct the batter or batter/base runner in any way. After one warning from the umpire, the coach-pitcher will be removed from the pitching position for the remainder of that inning for any subsequent violations.

(p)—Base runners may only advance when the ball has been hit. If any runner leaves a base early, a delayed dead ball will be signaled, and the defensive team shall have the option to nullify any portion of the play.

(q)—The umpire will call time-out when the lead runner is stopped by a defensive player or if, in the opinion of the umpire, she has abandoned her attempt to advance to the next base. Placement of any trail runners will be determined by where they were in relation to the halfway marks when time was called.

(r)—The inning is over when:

1. Any time the 3rd out is recorded.
2. When the offensive team scores 8 runs.

(s)—Bunting is not allowed, and the infield fly rule is NOT in effect for coach-pitch divisions.

10u

For girls who are 10 years of age or younger on
January 1st of the current season.

- (a)—Games are played using an 11-inch, .47 core ball that is optic yellow in color.
- (b)—Games are 6 innings or 80 minutes unless a team is run ruled or a team concedes the game. No new inning will begin after 75 minutes.
- (c)—The RUN RULE in 10u—18u will be 12 runs after 3 innings, 10 runs after 4 innings or 8 runs after 5 innings.
{LOCAL LEAGUE OPTION: A league may adopt a league option to use a 5-run per half inning limit in 10u—18u during the **regular season only**} If used, this option replaces the standard run rule.
- (d)—The batting order will be continuous during the regular season, and every player is required to play 3 consecutive outs on defense.
- (e)—If a batter slings the bat in a manner that the umpire considers unsafe, the batter is out. The umpire should give a warning to both team before the game begins. The umpire should use “common sense” in making the out call but safety will be the priority.
- (f)—There will be 9 players on defense with only 6 players on the infield. All infielders are required to wear facemasks.
- (h)—Teams are required to have at least 9 players on the lineup. However; teams may play with 1 or 2 less than the required number, but an out will be recorded each time those positions come up in the batting order. If a team drops to 3 less than the required number to play, the game shall be forfeited.
- (i)—Three coaches are allowed in 10u—18u. Teams must have at least 2 coaches.
- (j)—Base runners may attempt to advance when the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand. If any runner leaves a base early, she will be declared, out.
- (k)—Bunting is allowed in all player-pitch divisions (10u—18u).
- (l)—The infield fly rule is in effect in all player-pitch divisions (10u—18u).
- (m)—There is NO dropped 3rd strike rule in the 10u division.
- (n)—A batter shall be awarded 1st base after four called balls, catcher interference, hit by pitch or anytime the defense elects to intentionally walk the batter.

(o)—All base runners must be on a base when the pitcher has control of the ball inside the circle. If a runner is not on a base or immediately heading to a base and the pitcher does not make a play on her, she will be called out. (Throwing or faking a throw constitutes “making a play”).

(p)—The player-pitcher shall pitch from 35 feet.

12u—18u

- (a)—Games are played using a 12-inch, .47 core ball that is optic yellow in color.
- (b)—Games are 6 innings or 80 minutes unless a team is run ruled or a team concedes the game. No new inning will begin after 75 minutes.
- (c)—The RUN RULE in 10u—18u will be 12 runs after 3 innings, 10 runs after 4 innings or 8 runs after 5 innings.
{LOCAL LEAGUE OPTION: A league may adopt a league option to use a 5-run per half inning limit in 10u—18u during the **regular season only**} If used, this option replaces the standard run rule.
- (d)—The batting order will be continuous during the regular season, and every player is required to play 3 consecutive outs on defense.
- (e)—If a batter slings the bat in a manner that the umpire considers unsafe, the batter is out. The umpire should give a warning to both team before the game begins. The umpire should use “common sense” in making the out call but safety will be the priority.
- (f)—There will be 9 players on defense with only 6 players on the infield. All infielders are required to wear facemasks.
- (h)—Teams are required to have at least 9 players on the lineup. However; teams may play with 1 or 2 less than the required number, but an out will be recorded each time those positions come up in the batting order. If a team drops to 3 less than the required number to play, the game shall be forfeited.
- (i)—Three coaches are allowed in 10u—18u. Teams must have at least 2 coaches.
- (j)—Base runners may attempt to advance when the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand. If any runner leaves a base early, she will be declared, out.
- (k)—Bunting is allowed in all player-pitch divisions (10u—18u).
- (l)—The infield fly rule is in effect in all player-pitch divisions (10u—18u).
- (m)—The dropped 3rd strike rule is in effect 12u—18u divisions. The catcher shall be required to catch the 3rd strike when 1st base is unoccupied with less than 2 outs or ANYTIME there are 2 outs whether 1st base is occupied or not.
On a dropped 3rd strike situation, the batter may attempt to advance to 1st base with liability to be put out. If, in the opinion of the umpire, the batter abandons her attempt to go to 1st base, she shall be called out.
- (n)—A batter shall be awarded 1st base after four called balls, catcher interference, hit by pitch or anytime the defense elects to intentionally walk the batter.

(o)—All base runners must be on a base when the pitcher has control of the ball inside the circle. If a runner is not on a base or immediately heading to a base and the pitcher does not make a play on her, she will be called out. (Throwing or faking a throw constitutes “making a play”).

(p)—They player-pitcher shall pitch from 40 feet in the 12u division. All other player-pitch divisions (14u—18u) shall pitch from 43 feet.

TOURNAMENT RULES

Unless specifically altered in this tournament section of the book, all regular season rules will apply for all tournament games.

Tournament Preparation

After regular season play has concluded, each league will select an all-star team from each age division. These players will be listed on the official Tournament Affidavit provided by your District Director. A tournament folder should be assembled for each all-star team. This folder will be used at the credentials meeting to verify the eligibility of each player listed on the Affidavit. Each folder should contain. . .

1. Two (2) copies of the Tournament Affidavit that have been signed by the league President and notarized. (One copy will remain with folder and one copy will be retained by the District Director)
2. A notarized copy of the birth certificate for each player listed.
3. The completed Medical Release Form with parent signatures.
4. Proof of Insurance Certificate.
5. A team photo with names of all players and coaches. (Only those players and coaches listed on the Affidavit should appear in the photo.)

The Tournament Affidavit

Each Tournament Affidavit MUST list at least the required number to play for that age division and a maximum of 12 players. (EXAMPLE: 6u and 8u rosters must list a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 12 players. 10u—18u rosters must list a minimum of 9 and a maximum of 12 players.)

If a team had only one regular season team in a particular age division and cannot field the minimum number of tournament players from the correct age division, a player may be pulled up from the next younger division as long as that player does not appear on another tournament roster.

Southern Softball strongly encourages all leagues to involve as many girls as possible by bringing a full roster of 12 players. However; if a league elects to come to the tournament with only the minimum required number to play and a player is lost due to sickness, injury, ejection or any other reason; **an out will be recorded each time that position comes up in the batting order.** If a second player is lost, the team must forfeit the game.

Tournament Eligibility

In order to be eligible to participate on a tournament team, each player must have appeared on a regular season roster and played in a minimum of eight (8) regular season games. (The District and State Director may waive this requirement for extenuating circumstances). If during the credentials process it is discovered that a player is illegal (wrong age or out of boundary) OR that the eight (8) game minimum was not met, that player will not be allowed to participate.

No player shall be listed on any tournament roster if they cannot commit to the full spectrum of tournament play. If a player misses any part of a tournament game or scheduled event while participating with another organization, that player will NOT be allowed to return to that team and will be considered ineligible for the remainder of the current season.

Only managers and coaches who were rostered coaches during the regular season are eligible to coach on a tournament team. Replacement coaches must be approved by the District Director.

A team may replace players that were originally listed on the Tournament Affidavit in the event of sickness or injury but ONLY with the approval of the District Director for district tournaments and by the State Director at the State tournament. A Player Replacement Form must be completed and added to the credentials folder for each player that is replaced. Once a player has been removed from the tournament roster, they will not be allowed to return.

Players and Substitutes

As in the regular season, all rostered players are required to play at least 3 consecutive outs on defense. Once this requirement is met, free substitution is allowed. All substitutions should be reported when the team takes the field on defense and must be reported to the plate umpire at the time they are made.

A continuous batting order of ALL rostered players will be maintained throughout the entire game. **EXCEPTION:** If the opposing team has less players, the team that has more players is only required to play as many as the other team has on their roster. The additional players are not required to be listed in the continuous batting order and may be used as substitutes or not at all. This option must be exercised before the start of the game. Once line-ups have been turned in and the game has begun, the line-up must be followed as submitted. Southern Softball urges teams to take this situation into account when turning in tournament rosters at the credential meeting.

If a player is removed from the game for sickness or injury, that player shall be skipped without penalty for the remainder of the game but may NOT return to that game once she has missed a turn at bat. If the loss of the player drops the line-up to less than the required number to play, an out will be recorded each time that spot comes up in the batting order. If, at any time, a team drops to 2 less than the required number to play, they must forfeit the game. Any pitcher may return to the pitching position one time per ½ inning.

If a time out is called in the last 5 minutes of a tournament game, the game clock will be stopped to allow for the visit/pitching change. This is to prevent the intentional stalling of the game.

Courtesy runners are allowed for the pitcher and catcher of record anytime they are on base. The courtesy runner shall be the last completed at bat who is not on base. Coaches are NOT required to utilize a courtesy runner but are encouraged to do so to keep the game moving.

Tournament Uniforms

Through district tournament play, all-star teams will have the option to play in their own regular season uniform if they so choose. Any duplicate player numbers would simply be designated by adding the color of the jersey to the number in the line-up. (i.e. #5 Blue, #5 Red etc.) However; any team participating in the State Tournament will be required to play in matching uniforms. Coaches are required to dress similar in appearance with coordinating shirts that match their team. It is recommended that coaches wear the same color shorts or pants. The wearing of blue jeans is discouraged.

Tournament Games

All tournament games shall be played in the order they appear on the official bracket.

Tournament games shall be ended when. . .

1. The required innings have been completed.
2. A team has been mathematically eliminated/run-ruled.
3. A team concedes
4. 80 minute time limit has elapsed. (Inning will be completed, if required)
5. INTERNATIONAL TIE-BREAKER RULE shall be used for games tied after regulation.

Any game suspended for weather, or any reason, will be resumed from the point of termination.

If District Tournaments are held, the winner and runner-up from each District Tournament will advance to the State Tournament. If no District Tournaments are held, each league will send (1) one tournament team from each age division directly to the State Tournament.

The State Tournament sites will alternate by region each year. Each league within that region will be eligible to submit a bid to host. Tournament hosts will be selected by the region in which the State Tournament falls for that season. Each league in good standing should have an equal opportunity to bid on a State Tournament with each franchised league in that region having one (1) vote.

Any league wishing to host a State Tournament will be required to meet certain criteria as outlined in the State Tournament Hosting Guidelines.

Forfeiting Games

Any league who has a team forfeit a game during tournament may lose the option to host the following year.

Tournament Protest & Appeals

A protest committee consisting of three (3) members shall be used at all tournament games. Any valid protest must be submitted to the committee by the head coach prior to the next pitch being thrown; OR within 10 minutes on a game ending play. Only protests involving the misinterpretation or misapplication of a playing rule shall be heard. Protests involving player eligibility must be made at the district credentials meeting. Once the Tournament Affidavits are signed by the Director, they are considered valid and legal. Only definitive proof of fraud regarding a player's eligibility will be reviewed after the credential process has completed.