

Softball Rules and Regulations 8U Division
(Spring 2025)
https://usssa.com/docs/Fastpitch/Fastpitch_Rules.pdf

All play will be judged according to the rules set down by USA Softball with the following exceptions. Any situation not specifically covered in these local rules will be governed by the current year's USA rules.

1. **Eligibility**-Only those girls properly registered with the towns of Frankfort, Mokena, Frankfort Square, Homewood, Steger, Flossmoor and Tinley Park (Bobcats and Bulldogs) Girls Softball Programs will be eligible to participate in association activities and game play. All fees must be paid, and a completed registration form must be on file. Any team using a player who is not registered with their town or a player that is registered, rostered, and plays on a Full Time Travel Team will automatically forfeit the game in which the action occurred.
2. **Age**-Age determination is based upon the player's age as August 31st of the year preceding play for spring season. If a player wishes to play in a division other than their age level, the parent(s) of the player must formally petition the league board which will then notify the SSC Board for approval.
3. **Uniforms**-Each player must be in proper uniform to participate. A players' uniform consists of the standard team uniform shirt, shorts, pants and safety equipment (face mask). Uniform shirts should be tucked into the player's shorts or pants. No jewelry or hair combs are allowed to be worn during game play. Medical alert jewelry is permitted.
4. **Equipment**
 - a. **BATS**- Only softballs with the official ASA/USSSA/NSA softball insignia are to be used for game play. All game balls are supplied by the home team at the beginning of each game. Only 11" softie softballs are permitted.
 - b. **BATTING HELMETS**-All batters, on-deck batters, and base runners are required to always wear protective-batting helmets. It is mandatory for all batting helmets to be equipped with a face mask. A player may wear their own batting helmet only if it is equipped with the mandatory face mask. A player who in the judgment of the umpire intentionally removes a helmet while base running during a live play will be called out.
 - c. **Players face mask**-It is required that any player in the position of PITCHER wear a protective mask. It is further required that protective masks be worn by all position players for their safety.
 - d. **Catcher's Equipment**-Catchers must wear a catcher's helmet, face mask with integrated or attached throat guard, chest protector, and shin guards.
5. **Umpires**-For 8U, it is at discretion of the home team if they will utilize an official umpire or implement a coach's honor system for pitch and play calling. This includes calling balls, strikes, and outs. If an umpire is scheduled and does not arrive, then a coach or parent volunteer should be used.
6. **Players**-A minimum of 6 players is required for a team to start a game in this division.
7. **Field Dimensions and Gameplay**
 - a. **Base Lengths**-The distances between the bases 50 feet and is measured from the back tip of home plate.
 - b. **Pitching Distance**-The distance for the placement of the pitching rubber will be the measurement from the back tip of home plate to the front edge of the pitcher's plate. The pitching distance is 30 feet.
 - c. **Standard Game Length**-5 innings or 90 minutes. No new inning after 75 minutes. Drop dead applies at 90 minutes.
 - d. **Scores-New in 2025-Scores** will be kept for each game but no standings will be held. It is the responsibility of the Home Team manager to enter the score on the SSC website. At the end of the season a Blind Draw tournament will be held.

- i. Each inning will have a 5 run limit.
- e. **Lead Offs**-Leaving from a base is not allowed until the ball has left the pitchers hand. Lead offs should be taught at this level. Lead off are limited to 5 feet from the base at this level.
- f. **Stealing**-Stealing Stealing is not allowed in 8U.
- g. **Sliding**-Sliding or other effort must be made to AVOID CONTACT with the defensive player.
- h. **Infield Fly/Drop Third Strike**-These are not permitted at this level.
- i. **Strike Zone**-A liberal strike zone will be utilized. From the armpits to mid-shin and one ball outside and inside the plate shall constitute a strike.
- j. **Batting Order**-A continuous batting order will be employed, and outs will be called. An inning will end at the earliest of the following: batting through the lineup, 3 outs, or five runs. To ensure equal batting opportunities, coaches will be strongly encouraged to keep the same lineup throughout the season, beginning a game where the order left off the previous game.
- k. **Player Innings**-It is required every player plays equal innings, each game. Up to 5 players can be utilized in the outfield at a time, for a maximum of 11 defensive players. The remaining extra players will rotate sitting out defensive innings. All outfielders must be in an arc-shaped pattern, equidistant to the cut of the outfield grass. No short-center position will be used. Under no circumstances may a team have 5 infielders and all outfielders must have their feet in the grass. A catcher must be utilized no matter how many players a team has. A player shall not play the same position for the entire game and must play the infield for at least half the innings of the game. Coaches are strongly encouraged to play players at every position throughout the season.
- l. **Defensive Substitution**-Free defensive substitutions are permitted. Coaches may switch positions anytime during an inning.
- m. **Dead Ball**-Play is considered stopped when an ATTEMPT to return the ball to the pitcher is made. Runners who have advanced past the mid-point between bases may continue to the next base, runners who have not must return to the previous base. On balls hit to the outfield, once the outfielder has possession of the ball, the runner may only continue to the base she is currently running to. Runners cannot advance on an overthrow to ANY base.
- n. **Pitching**- games will be player pitch for at least the first two innings. A team may opt to player pitch the entire game or change to coach for the last inning. This will be at the discretion of the coach, allowing an opportunity for more player pitch, or batting through the order.
 - i. **Player Pitch**- Players pitch to the opposing team. A team pitcher shall pitch up to 5 pitches per batter. If three strikes are thrown without contact, the batter is out. After a pitcher throws three called "balls" the coach from the batting team will pitch to the batter, inheriting the current count.
 - ii. **Coach Pitch**-The coach will inherit the count and continue to pitch until completion of the at-bat. The coach does not have to pitch from the pitching rubber. Coaches cannot walk a batter. Coaches need to make every attempt to get out of the way when a ball has been hit. If the batted ball hits a coach, the play is considered dead, and the batter is awarded first base. The defensive team pitcher should be positioned to the glove side of the coach pitching.
 - iii. **Hit by Pitch**-Because this is a developmental pitching level, coaches need to use common sense. Hit batters will occur. Encourage batters to move out of the way of a wayward pitch. Batters WILL NOT be awarded 1st base. If a pitcher hits a batter, the coach will come in to pitch, with a reset count. Batters will be given three pitches that are considered strikes.

Other Things To Note

Home Team Responsibilities-It is the responsibility of the manager of the designated home team to set up the bases and pitching rubber prior to the start of the game. It is the responsibility of the manager of the designated home team to retrieve the items from the field and place them back in the lockbox after the game. Base peg covers must be replaced on the field and the clean-out tool returned to the lockbox. The area around the pitching circle and batter's boxes should be raked and leveled. It is the responsibility of the manager of the designated home team to make sure that the lock on the lockbox is securely locked before they leave a field. Missing or damaged equipment should be reported to the division coordinator immediately after the game. The home team is responsible for supplying a new game ball at each game. These balls are supplied by your town to the manager at the beginning of the season.

Game Cancellation-Games cannot be canceled and rescheduled for any reason except adverse weather conditions or unplayable fields. The home team town's Softball President or designated field coordinator will make all decisions pertaining to field cancellations due to adverse weather conditions or unplayable fields and communicate to their coaches. It is the responsibility of each home team coach to communicate game cancellations with the visiting coach. Towns will report field conditions no later than 4:00 weekdays and 7:30 am on the weekends to each town's scheduler or softball lead.

If games have not been officially canceled, managers should proceed with the scheduled start time. Managers must arrive at the scheduled field at the time they requested their team to arrive. Games cannot be called beforehand in anticipation of adverse weather conditions or the assumption that the field is unplayable. All reasonable attempts should be made to play scheduled games.

The umpire has the authority to cancel a game before one is started, if adverse weather conditions exist. If both managers agree before the start of the game that adverse weather conditions exist, the game can be cancelled. These games will be rescheduled.

Adverse Weather-If lightning is observed, the game should be halted immediately, and the players should be removed from the field. If the field is equipped with lightning detection equipment, all warnings from such equipment are to be strictly and absolutely obeyed, despite any observation of weather conditions to the contrary. Safety of all participants and spectators is the priority. No game can resume until 30 minutes after the last lightning strike.

Disciplinary Actions

All players, parents, coaches, and managers must adhere to the Code of Conduct, to which they signed at the beginning of the season. Disputes should first be discussed by managers and umpires with the umpire holding discretion in enforcement. Only the head coach is allowed to communicate with umpires. If disputes cannot be settled at the game, complaints must be submitted to each town's softball lead, which will be thoroughly reviewed by the SSC board.

Umpires retain the authority to eject any offending party from the game and determine what is foul language and unsportsmanlike conduct. Ejected parties must leave the vicinity of the field and shall not approach or otherwise attempt to communicate with the umpires or opposing team following the completion of the game.

Coaches are fully responsible for the actions and behaviors of your team's spectators. Umpires will address spectator issues with that team's coach. If the coach refuses to address the issue, both the coach and

spectator will be ejected and required to leave the vicinity of the field and shall not approach or otherwise attempt to communicate with the umpires or opposing team following the completion of the game. All ejections will be reviewed by the SSC board to determine if future disciplinary action is necessary. Bats or any other equipment thrown in anger will result in the batter being declared out and dismissal from the game with the ball being declared dead.

Bats or any other equipment thrown in anger will result in the batter being declared out and dismissal from the game with the ball being declared dead. A bat that slips from the batter's hand will result in a warning to the team for the first occurrence. The second team occurrence will result in the batter being declared out, the ball declared dead, and the runners unable to advance. This ruling is based on the judgment of the umpire and is a non-arguable judgment call.

Grievances-The Grievance Committee will handle only the following matters:

1. Protests pertaining to lightning/thunder scenario. All other weather, darkness, curfew, etc. decisions are the sole responsibility of the umpire and will not be reviewed.
2. Reported incidents of improper conduct by team managers, coaches, players, or spectators that are of a nature that poses a threat to the health and well-being of the players and/or the league.
3. No other protests are allowed.