Prospects Playing Rules (2026)

General Rules

1. Game Times - weekday game time 6:00 PM, weekend game time will be no earlier than 9:00 AM and no later than 6:00 PM unless otherwise agreed upon by both coaches
2. Length of game
    a. 5 innings or 1hr 45 mins – no new inning shall start after the 1 hr 45 min mark, but once the inning has started it will be played to completion.
3. Scoring
    a. Scores will be kept on the website. Standings may be kept on the website if feasible.
        i. **The winning team is responsible for submitting the game scores** to the statistician within 24 hours.
    b. There will be a five (5) run limit per inning. The final play of the inning shall be completed (ball returned to control of the pitcher) despite additional runs scoring. Those runs will not count.
    c. The bottom half of the final inning shall be played even if the home team is leading to allow the visiting team additional defensive time and the home team additional at bats.
    d. There will be no mercy rule
    e. Line ups consisting of players last name and number shall be provided to the opposing team
        i. Any player playing up shall be clearly identified on the line up card

4. Field Dimension
    a. Base length 55’
    b. Pitching rubber 32’ from the back of home plate
5. Equipment
    a. Game Balls - the home team shall supply 2 new game balls for each game. The ball for this level is an 11” ASA or USA approved .47 optic yellow softball with red stitching
    b. Bats must have one of the 3 ASA, USA or NFHS Certification marks and not be on the USA Softball Non-Approved Bat List with Certification Marks: https://usa.asasoftball.com/e/BB1P2000.asp
        i. No composite bats may be used
    c. Helmets – all batters and base runners must wear a protective helmet with an attached facemask. Chin strap is encouraged but not required
    d. Fielding facemask is REQUIRED for all pitchers and HIGHLY ENCOURAGED for infielders. Each team shall be supplied with a team face mask by their organization
    e. Jewelry - post earrings are permitted, but no hoop earrings or dangling earrings will be allowed. A simple chain necklace is permitted, but no other jewelry will be allowed. No watches. Cell phones will not be permitted on the field.
    f. First Aid Kit – each team must have a first aid kit at all practices and games
    g. Use of a double first base is required
    h. Metal cleats may not be worn
6. Rosters
    a. Recommended 10-13 players
    b. Minimum of 8 players required for a game
        i. No automatic out will be charged at the bottom of the batting order
    c. No player will sit consecutive innings defensively, it is highly recommended that at least half a player’s defensive innings are in the infield. Coaches can use their discretion for safety issues or if the player only wants to play the outfield.
    d. Bringing up players
        i. A player shall be brought up from the age level below if a team knows they will have 9 or fewer players for a game. For fall only, teams may call up from any coach pitch team in the league.
        ii. Any player brought up must play in the game and cannot play more than any regularly rostered players
        iii. Any player brought up **CANNOT** pitch
        iv. No player is eligible to be brought up if her regular team has a game scheduled at the same time
7. Game Changes
    a. Cancellation due to weather will be made by the coach of the home team no later than 1 hr 30 mins prior to the start of the game and must be communicated to the opposing coach and umpire via phone

b. Canceled games need to be rescheduled within 3 days. Rescheduling means a new game date must be given to the statistician, the game can be played any time prior to the end of the season.
c. If late changes are made to the schedule that results in umpire change and/or show up fees, the offending team/organization will be responsible for paying those fees

Batting

1. A running batting order including all players shall be used
2. Any player arriving late will be added to the end of the batting order
3. If a team has 8 players at the start of the game, they will not be charged an automatic out at the end of the batting order.
4. If a player leaves the game due to injury or illness the team will not be charged an automatic out when her turn to bat comes up. The player may reenter at any time in her original position in the batting order.
5. The half inning will end when 3 outs have been recorded or 5 runs have been scored. The final play will be played until the ball is returned to possession of an infielder even if additional runs score on the play. Those additional runs will not count.
6. The strike zone will be from the top of letters to the knees, shall include the white and black portions of the plate, and may include the river depending on umpire discretion.
7. Bunting is permitted. Fake bunt and swing is prohibited and the batter will be declared out and runners will be returned to their original positions.
8. If the batter is struck by a pitch directly the batter will be awarded first base. If the batter is struck by a pitch indirectly (hits ground first) the batter will stay and complete the at bat.
    a. The batter must make an attempt to get out of the way of an errant pitch or 1st base will not be awarded. This is at the discretion of the umpire.
9. One (1) warning per game will be given to each team for throwing the bat. Additional offenses will result in the batter being declared out and runners will be returned to their original positions.

Pitching

1. A pitcher may pitch a maximum of 2 innings per game. There are no weekly pitching limits.
2. A pitcher may re-enter to pitch once per game
3. One pitch in an inning shall be counted as an inning pitched
4. If 4 balls are thrown to any batter, the coach will come in to finish the at bat. **The strike count will remain**, and the coach will pitch to the batter until she puts the ball in play or receives a total of 3 strikes (called or swinging). The coach must pitch the ball with both feet starting and ending within the circle. The pitcher will return to pitch to the next batter.
    a. The coach may choose to take 1 warm up pitch. The batter must be outside the box for the warm up pitch.

5. A pitcher shall be removed from the circle when she hits 3 batters directly in an inning. Any pitched ball that hits the ground prior to striking the batter shall not be considered a hit batter for the purpose of removing the pitcher.
6. A pitched ball that is thrown out of play from the circle while in the act of pitching to the batter will be considered a ball
7. USSSA pitching rules will be enforced
    a. The pitcher will be removed after two visits by a coach to the circle in an inning – injury checks will not count toward this total
8. Drop 3rd strike rule will not be enforced

Base Running

1. Play concludes when the ball is in possession of the pitcher in the circle
    a. If an infielder has firm possession of the ball in the infield and runners have stopped, the play will be considered dead and no advancement can be made on return throw to the pitcher
2. Overthrows
    a. Runners can advance one base on each overthrow at their own risk
    b. If the ball goes out of play, the runners will be awarded the next base per USSSA rules
    c. No advancement may take place on throws from the catcher to the pitcher or from an infielder to the pitcher after the infielder had firm possession of the ball
3. There will be unlimited steals of 3rd base only
    a. There will be no steals of 2nd base or home
    b. There will be no advancement on throws from the catcher on stolen base attempts even if the ball goes out of play
    c. Delayed steals are not allowed
    d. There will be no steals when the coach is pitching
    e. There will be no steals on ball four.
4. Base runners may take a lead at all bases. Base runners may leave the base when the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. Runners must return to the base immediately when the ball is returned to the pitcher.
    a. If the base runner leaves early, the umpire will issue a warning. There will be 3 warnings issued per team per game. After the third warning, the baserunner will be called out.
5. Pick off plays are not allowed
6. Collision Rule
    a. A collision is defined as a violent coming together of two bodies
        i. Running into the catcher's arm while she is attempting to make a tag or brushing of the catcher by a runner is incidental contact, not a collision
    b. A deliberate collision shall result in that player being ejected from the game
7. Obstruction Rule
    a. A fielder may not block the base unless she is in possession of the ball. A runner must slide or give herself up if the fielder is blocking the base while in possession

of the ball. If the fielder is blocking the base while not in possession of the ball and any contact, incidental or otherwise occurs, an obstruction shall be declared, and the runner shall be awarded the base

b. Plays at the plate – in the event of a play at the plate, the catcher must be positioned in front of the plate when not in possession of the ball and must allow the runner complete access to the plate. If the throw takes the catcher into the path of the base runner and a collision or incidental contact occurs, the runner will be awarded the plate.
    i. This does not apply to a force play at the plate. In this instance the catcher may place one foot on the plate, but must allow the runner access to the plate
c. Plays at 2nd and 3rd – the fielder may not stand with her foot on the base while awaiting a throw or making a tag. She must allow direct access to the base.
d. The fielder has the right on a batted ball, the runner on a thrown ball.
e. Possession is defined as the fielder holding the ball in her hands or glove. A thrown ball on the way to the fielder that has not yet been caught, is not possession
f. Sliding is strongly encouraged when the runner is in the act of attempting to achieve a base or when the fielder is in possession of the ball before she gets to the base

8. Double First Base
    a. The defensive team may only retire the batter/runner using the white base when the throw is on or inside the baseline. If the throw is outside fair territory, the fielder may use the orange base
9. Courtesy Runners
    a. MUST be used for the catcher when there are 2 outs (MAY be used anytime)
    b. May be used for the pitcher when there are 2 outs
    c. The courtesy runner will be the last batted-out player

<u>Defense/Fielding</u>

1. There will be 10 defensive players – pitcher, catcher, 1B, 2B, SS, 3B and 4 outfielders
2. The outfielders must be positioned at least 15' behind the baseline at the start of the play
3. Outfielders may not cover a base
4. Infielders must be in their assigned playing position no more than 5' in front of the baseline until the start of the pitch
5. Catcher's interference will be enforced
    a. The umpire may move the catcher back for safety reasons
    b. Catchers must attempt to accurately throw the ball back to the pitcher, rolling the ball is not allowed
6. Fielders are not permitted to stand in the baseline at the start of the pitch when there are runners on base advancing to the affected base
7. Infield fly rule does not apply

Game Conduct

1. Cheering
    a. Players from the offensive team will be allowed to cheer for the batter and the batter only
    b. Cheering should be positive toward your team, not negative toward the opposing team
    c. Cheering should cease when the pitcher is pitching and should not be used to distract the opposing pitcher
2. Coach and Player Conduct
    a. Any coach or player ejected from a game is automatically suspended for their next game. The ejected person will not be allowed to participate, coach or attend the game
    b. The offending team is responsible for reporting any ejections to the statistician within 24 hours
3. Parents/Spectators
    a. Any parent or spectator who steps on the field of play for reasons other than injury will be ejected from the game
    b. No one will be permitted behind the backstop. One warning will be issued by the umpire. On the second offense, the offending team will be charged an out.