

**CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS
CITYWIDE YOUTH SPORTS BOARD**

2024 Citywide Tournament Rules

Softball

The current High School Federation Softball Rulebook will govern play in the Regional and Citywide Softball Tournaments with the following rules being the exceptions or clarifications. Rules can be clarified by the Regional or Citywide Youth Sports Board.

I. EQUIPMENT:

1. Bats

- a. Bats may not be altered.
- b. Bats must be marked “Official Softball”, “USA Softball”, or “ASA Softball”
- c. The barrel of the bat may not exceed 2 ¼ inches.
- d. The length may not exceed 34 inches.
- e. An official softball bat ring must be able to slide over the barrel of the bat.
- f. Bats will be inspected by umpires or city staff prior to the start of the game. If an illegal bat is used, the batter will be ruled out. The use of an illegal bat must be caught before the first pitch of the following batter.

2. Shoes

- a. Athletic shoes must be worn. Rubber cleats or tennis shoes are permitted.
- b. No metal cleats are permitted.
- c. Shoes with detachable plastic or rubber cleats that screw into the shoe are permitted.

3. Helmets

- a. Department approved NOCSAE headgear with dual ear flaps must be worn by:
 - i. The batter.
 - ii. The catcher.
 - iii. Player assigned to warm up the pitcher.
 - iv. The base runners.
 - v. The on deck batters.
 - vi. Players assigned to coach a base.
 - vii. Base coach who is under the age of 18.
 - viii. Players retrieving foul balls or bats within the confines of the field.
- b. Failure to wear a helmet in these situations will result in an out.
- c. The intentional removal of a helmet by a batter or runner during a live ball will result in an out and a dead ball situation.

4. Face Masks may be worn by any defensive players and must be attached to all batting helmets.

5. Jewelry is prohibited. **Exceptions:** Medical alert bracelets or necklaces must be taped to the body with the medical information visible. Religious medals must be taped and worn under the uniform.

6. Catchers Equipment. Catchers must wear:

- a. Mask with a built-in extended throat protection or an extension.
- b. “NOCSAE” approved helmet with earflaps or approved catcher’s “hockey goalie” style facemask.
Note: Head gear described above must be worn by any player warming up a pitcher either on the field or in the bullpen.
- c. Shin guards
- d. Chest protector.

7. Softball size: Minor Girls will use an 11” size ball. Majors and Juniors Divisions will use a 12” ball.

II. FIELD LAYOUT:

1. All divisions will use 60 foot base paths.
2. The pitching distance is 35 feet for Minor and 40 feet for Major and Junior divisions.
3. **First Base Orange Double Base** (if available) – Used to prevent collisions on close plays.
 - a. The orange double base is used when the batter hits a ball and runs to first and a play is made by the defense.
 - i. The batter-runner touches the orange base only.
 - ii. The fielder touches the white base only.
 - b. If a play is not made at first by the defense, the batter-runner has the option to touch either the white or orange base.
 - c. Once the batter-runner has been ruled to be safe at first by the umpire, the orange base is no longer in play.
4. A sixteen (16) foot circle, eight feet in radius, drawn from the center of the pitcher's plate will designate the pitching circle.

III. ELIGIBILITY:

1. A player may not play on more than one team during the Regional or Citywide Tournament.
2. A player is ineligible if they are listed on a high school softball Varsity or Junior Varsity roster during the current season.
3. Only registered players listed on the recreation center's official tournament roster are eligible to play.
4. Proof of age is required. Age is determined as of January 1st of the current year.
 - a. Minor Division: 9-10 years of age
 - b. Major Division: 11-12 years of age
 - c. Junior Division: 13-15 years of age
5. All-Star Tournament teams must meet all eligibility requirements as identified in the General Rules of the Citywide Youth Sports Board Bluebook.
6. All Star Tournament **roster size: minimum of 12 players and a maximum of 15 players.**
7. If a player is found ineligible during the tournament, that player will be eliminated. The last game the player participated in will be considered a forfeit. It will have no effect on previous games already played in the tournament.

IV. THE GAME:

1. The game schedule will designate which dugouts teams will occupy.
2. A coin flip by the umpire shall determine the home team unless specified by the schedule.
3. Coaches must supply the umpire and opposing head coach with a lineup card prior to the game and report all changes to the umpire and the official scorekeeper.
4. Junior division teams shall consist of nine (9) players on the field of play. Minor and Major divisions are permitted ten (10) players on the field. The tenth player must play in the outfield.

Note: A team may start the game with 8 players. However, if the ninth (9) player is not on the field or in the dugout by the 1st pitch of the 3rd inning, the game shall be declared a forfeit.
5. There is **no Grace Period**. Game time is forfeit time.
6. **An official game is six (6) innings or 1 hour and 30 minutes.** No new inning may start after the time limit has expired.

Exception: The Citywide Final will be played to a full six (6) innings or if the 10-Run Mercy Rule is reached.
7. **10-Run Mercy Rule:** The game will be called if one team leads by ten (10) runs or more after 4 innings, or 3 1/2 innings if the home team leads.
8. **Tie Game:** If the game remains tied, an extra inning will be played. If the game still remains tied after that inning, all subsequent innings shall begin with a base runner on 2nd base. The runner will be the player

scheduled to bat last in that respective inning.

9. The “**Infield Fly Rule**” is in effect in all divisions. The rule is executed when there are less than 2 outs with runners on at least first and second and, at the discretion of the umpire, the catch can be made with ordinary effort in fair grounds. (Note: outfielder may catch an infield fly)
 - i. Batter is declared out
 - ii. The base runners may advance at their own risk as they would any other fly ball.
 - iii. The infield fly rule does not apply to line-drives, bunt, or foul balls.
10. **Blood Rule:** Any player or coach who is bleeding or has blood on their uniform shall be prohibited from participating further in the game until all appropriate treatment can be administered. If medical treatment is administered in a reasonable length of time, the individual will not have to leave the game. The length of time is up to the umpire’s judgment. Uniform rule violations will not be enforced if a uniform change is required.
11. Designated Player/Flex will not be used.
12. **Conferences**
 - a. Offensive Conference:
 - i. One conference is permitted per inning between coaching staff and a batter or base runner.
 - ii. Failure to comply may result in ejection of the coach that commits the violation.
 - iii. If a team representative confers with a batter or base runner during a defensive charged conference but is ready to play when the defense is ready, it is not considered an offensive conference.
 - b. Defensive Conference:
 - i. Three conferences per game are permitted between the coaching staff and their defense. Pitcher must be removed on the fourth visit. **Note:** If a game goes into extra innings, one visit will be permitted per extra inning with no carry overs.
 - ii. The following are not considered defensive conferences:
 - 1) The team representative informs the umpire that they are going to remove the pitcher and they do so.
 - 2) Shouting instructions from the dugout area to the pitcher
 - 3) A dugout representative confers with any defensive player during a charged offensive conference.

Note: Checking on a player injury does not constitute a conference.

13. Players and Coaches

- a. Coaches may only coach from the dugout area or from a base coaching box.
- b. Players must remain in the dugout at all times when not actively on the playing field.
Note: The first offense for rules ‘a’ or ‘b’ above is a team warning. Any repeat offense may result in the ejection of the violating team member.
- c. A base coach shall be obligated to stay entirely within the confines of the coach’s box.
Note: A coach may leave the coach’s box to signal the runner to slide, advance, return to a base or move out of the fielder’s way as long as the coach does not interfere with the play.
- d. Coaches may not use negative language referring to players, umpires, coaches or spectators.
- e. Teams may have a maximum of three (3) coaches including the head coach.
- f. Only players and coaches on the team roster are permitted in the dugout.

V. **BATTING:**

1. Teams must use a continuous batting order.
Free defensive substitution will be permitted for all team members with the exception of the pitching position. Late arriving players (after line-ups have been exchanged) will be added to the end of the batting order and the free substitution rule will apply.
2. If a **player has to leave the game** for any reason other than ejection, **an out** will be recorded only the **first time** they miss their at-bat. If a **player is ejected from the game**, it shall be **an out each time** that

player would have come to bat. A team must have a minimum of eight (8) players eligible to continue the game.

3. “Dropped Third Strike” rule is not in effect in the Minors and Majors Divisions; batter is automatically out.
4. **“Dropped Third Strike” rule** is in effect in the Junior Division. (Occurs when there are less than two outs and first base is unoccupied. Runners advance at their own risk.)
5. An intentional base on balls may be granted by the umpire upon request by the defensive team.
6. Pinch runners are only permitted for an injured base runner. The last player who committed the last out will take their place on base. **The injured player may not be able to return to the game. There are no courtesy runners.**

VI. BASE RUNNING:

1. Lead-offs are not permitted. Stealing is permitted once the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand during delivery.
2. Stealing of home is permitted in the Major and Junior divisions.
3. In the Minor Division, stealing of home is not permitted. **Exceptions:**
 - a. There is an overthrow back to the pitcher that travels beyond the pitching circle (umpire’s discretion)
 - b. There is an attempt made to throw out a runner. **Note:** A fake throw is not an attempt.
4. Base runners must avoid contact or slide on any close play. Penalty: the runner is out and the play will immediately be called dead (judgment call). Malicious contact is an out and an ejection.
Note: Interference is the act of an offensive player, team member, umpire, or spectator who impedes, hinders, or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play. Contact is not necessary.
5. The faking of a tag without the ball is illegal. Obstruction will be called (advance a base or bases).
Note: Obstruction is the act of a defensive team member who:
 - i. Hinders or impedes a batter from striking at or hitting a pitched ball, or
 - ii. Impedes the progress of a runner or batter/runner who is legally running the bases unless the fielder is in possession of the ball or in the act of fielding a batted ball.Contact is not necessary to impede the progress of the batter-runner or a runner.
6. Circle rule is in effect (when the pitcher is in possession of the ball in the circle and is not making a play, all runners off of their base must immediately attempt to advance or retreat).

VII. PITCHING:

1. The pitcher shall take a position with their pivot foot in contact with the pitcher’s plate and their non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the pitcher’s plate.
2. Pushing off and dragging the pivot foot in contact with the ground or having both feet in the air is allowed as long as all motion is forward.
3. **Pitchers will be limited to three (3) consecutive innings per game.**
4. Once a pitcher is removed from pitching, they cannot return to pitch again in the game. The removed pitcher can play any other position on defense.
5. Pitchers may throw up to eight (8) warm-up pitches or for one (1) minute, whichever comes first.

VIII. MANDATORY PLAY RULE:

Players may not sit on the bench in consecutive innings.

IX. PROTESTS:

1. Protests of rule interpretation will be handled on the spot by the sports board members or their representative.
2. To implement a protest, the head coach must call a timeout and immediately let the umpire know that there is a protest. The game must come to a standstill until protest is resolved.
3. Protests must be made prior to the next pitched ball

4. Batting out of order:
 - a. If **the improper batter is still at-bat** when the appeal is made, the proper batter replaces the improper batter. The proper batter assumes the existing count. **No penalty.**
 - b. If **the improper batter has completed his/her at-bat and no pitch has been made to the next batter** when the appeal is made, then
 - i. Nullify all action from improper at-bat.
 - ii. Identify the proper batter and he/she is out.
 - iii. The next batter is the batter following the proper batter.
 - c. If **the improper batter has completed his/her at-bat and a pitch has been made to the next batter** when the appeal is made, then the improper batter will not be out and play will continue from the current batter. **No penalty.**

X. SPORTSMANSHIP AND CONDUCT:

1. Good Sportsmanship among spectators, coaches, players and officials is expected. We require that ALL spectators practice supportive and encouraging behavior at all times.
2. Recreation Directors, paid staff, and coaching staff are responsible for the conduct of their fans.
3. If the head coach is ejected from the game, the assistant coach will coach the team. If the assistant coach is ejected from the game while taking the place of the head coach, the game will be declared a forfeit.
4. Inappropriate conduct and/or negative gestures are not allowed during any part of the game (e.g. taunting, derogatory comments, distracting players with yelling, stomping, or banging devices, using horns/bells/whistles). Failure to comply may result in forfeiting the game and/or suspension.
5. A player/coach ejected from the game will automatically be suspended from their next game. Depending on the severity of the ejection, the Sports Board may implement a multi-game penalty not limited to suspension from the remaining tournament.
6. Any violation of the rules may lead to further discipline including ejection from the game and suspension from the tournament.