

# 2024 RULES

## Northern Hills Fastpitch Softball Association

Adopted 5/2008; Amendments (2009 - 2011); (2015);(2017-2024)

**Good Sportsmanship from Coaches; players and patrons are REQUIRED at all times!**

### **DIVISION: U6**

**Tournaments:** Not scheduled for tournaments.

**Base distance:** 60 feet

**Pitching rubber to home plate:** 30 feet

**Ball:** 11 inch RIF

**Game time:** 1 hour, no new innings starting after 55 minutes

**Umpire:** No Umpires

**First Aid Kits:** All teams must have one available in the dugout.

**Score:** No score will be kept.

**Team:** All players will play at least one half of the game in the field, with free substitution, and all players will bat in the line-up.

**Game:** A game will be 1 hour with no new innings starting after 55 minutes. Each team will bat the entire roster, each inning, regardless of the number of outs. No score will be kept. A game is over after 60 minutes regardless of where they are at in the game.

**Pitching/Catching:** Coach will pitch 3 pitches, if girls have not hit the ball a tee will be placed and they will get 3 swings to hit the ball. The batter will hit the ball or be struck out, within the 6 pitches. Coach can pitch from the front of the pitcher circle.

**Batting:** NO infield fly rule. Girls need to be reminded to not throw the bat.

**Base Running:** NO stealing at any time. One base on an overthrow, that leaves the field of play.

**Helmets:** If helmets come off in the field of play on batter/runner and they do not have a chinstrap on they will be called out. Anyone under the age of 18 on the field as a base coach must wear a batting helmet.

**Inclement weather:** In the case of weather cancellations, the home team's head coach will contact the visiting team's head coach by 3 pm of game day.

### **Misc:**

- Coaches can request a change to the rules for an individual game by requesting a coaches and head umpire meeting prior to the start of the game, if all parties agree the change can be made for that game only.



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### **DIVISION: U8**

**Rules:** USA softball rules will be used except for special exceptions noted below.

**Tournaments:** Not scheduled but could be considered.

**Base distance:** 60 feet

**Pitching rubber to home plate:** 30 feet

**Ball:** 11 inch RIF

**Game time:** 1 hour, no new innings will start after 55 minutes

**Score:** Score will be kept.

**First Aid Kits:** All teams must have one available in the dugout.

**Umpire:** 1 Umpire will Officiate

**Team:** All players will play at least one half of the game in the field, with free substitution, and all players will bat in the line-up. To field a team, you must have at least 6 of your own players and may borrow up to 3 from another team. A team may play with 4 outfielders, for a total of 10 players on the field.

**Game:** A game will be 1 hour with no new innings starting after 55 minutes. ~~5~~ 4 run limit per inning. An inning is over when play on the last batter is dead (from an out or run rule) or pitcher has control of the ball in the 16 ft. circle. A game is over after 60 minutes regardless of where they are at in the game. (Games can end in a tie or one team has one more bat than the other).

**Pitching/Catching:** The pitcher will pitch from 30 feet. No wind-up is needed, modified pitching is legal. Coaches must pitch from the rubber at 30 feet. The pitcher must stay in the pitching circle and beside pitching rubber when the coach is pitching. When there is no circle, it is the discretion of the umpire. The circle is 16 feet in diameter around the pitching rubber. Pitching will be by players first and then the offensive coach. Players will throw a maximum of 3 pitches; offensive coaches will get a maximum of two pitches for a total of 5 pitches.

**Batting:** Each batter starts with a 0-0 count and may not have more than 5 pitches unless the last pitch is a foul ball. The at bat will continue if the 5th pitch is a foul ball then the offensive coach receives 1 more pitch. Players may strikeout before 5 pitches have been thrown.

**Base Running:** NO stealing at any time including home plate. A runner must be hit home to score.

Players and runners will stop when:

A ball that never leaves the infield: If no fielder has control of the ball the runners may continue to advance. However, once a fielder has control of the ball the runners should stop at the next base. This encourages the infielder to throw the ball to the appropriate base without the fear of runners advancing to the next base because of an overthrow.

A ball hit to the outfield:

If no outfielder has control of the ball the runners may continue to advance. Once the outfielder gains control of the ball and throws (releases) it toward the infield the runners will stop at the next base, even if the ball doesn't make it to the "dirt" on the throw. Exception, the outfielder can carry the ball to the infield to make an



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out. The runners can keep advancing in this situation.

**Helmets:** If helmets come off in the field of play on batter/runner and they do not have a chinstrap on they will be called out. Anyone under the age of 18 on the field as a base coach must wear a batting helmet.

**Inclement weather:** In the case of weather cancellations, the home team's head coach will contact the visiting team's head coach by 3 pm of game day.

### **Misc.**

- The defense will have three (3) coaches. Two (2) coaches can assist on the field. One (1) will assist the catcher with returning balls to the pitching coach. The offense will have three (3) coaches. Two (2) will be base coaches. One (1) will be the adult pitcher. The coach assisting the catcher may comment to their batter but should make any comments short and quick in nature. The point of the extra offensive and defensive coach is to move the game along quickly.
- Coaches can request a change to the rules for an individual game by requesting a coaches and head umpire meeting prior to the start of the game, if all parties agree the change can be made for that game only.



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### **Division U10**

**Rules:** USA softball rules will be used except for special exceptions noted below.

**Tournaments:** U10 will play with Northern Hills Rules.

**Base Distance:** 60 feet

**Pitching Rubber to Home Plate:** 35 feet

**Ball:** 11 inch

**First Aid Kits:** All teams must have one available in the dugout.

**Umpire:** 1 umpire will officiate

**Game Time:** 1: 10, no new innings after 1:05.

**Score:** Mercy rule in effect: 15 runs after 3 innings, 12 after 4, 10 after 5.

**Team:** Coaches are encouraged to play their players for half of the game (defensively), with free substitution, and all players will bat the line-up. To field a team, you must have at least 6 of your own players and may borrow up to 3 from another team. A team may play with 4 outfielders, for a total of 10 players on the field.

**Game:** A game will be 1 hour and 10 minutes with no new innings starting after 1 hour and 5 minutes. 5 run limit per inning. An inning is over when play on the last batter is dead or the pitcher has control of the ball in the 16ft. circle. Games can end in a tie.

**Pitching/Catching:** A pitcher must start with the pivot foot on the rubber and their non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the rubber within 24". The pivot foot must always remain in contact with the pitcher's plate prior to the forward step. A backward step may be taken before, simultaneous with or after the hands are brought together. *(2020 Amendment)* No wind-up is needed, modified pitching is legal. When there is no circle of chalk it is the discretion of the umpire. The circle is 16 feet in diameter around the pitching rubber.

**Batting:** No pitch count when the batter gets up to bat. **NO** infield fly rule. **NO** Coach Pitch. There will be one (1) warning for a thrown bat and any offense after that the batter will be out. No dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike rule as batter does not advance to 1<sup>st</sup> on a dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike. They are considered out. Batters can be walked, including walking a runner home.

### **Base Running:**

Runners may steal between 1<sup>st</sup> and home (1 base/ 1 pitch) anytime in the season. Runner must stay on their base until the ball LEAVES the pitcher's hand, if the runner leaves too soon the runner will be called out.

**Helmets:** If helmets come off in the field of play on batter/runner and they do not have a chinstrap on they will be called out. Anyone under the age of 18 on the field as a base coach must wear a batting helmet.

**Inclement weather:** In the case of weather cancellations, the home team's head coach will contact the visiting team's head coach by 3 pm of game day.

### **Misc:**

- 10U teams can play with 7 players without penalty. Playing with 6 players will result in an out when the missing 7<sup>th</sup> batter appears in the lineup. *(2020 Amendment)*
- Coaches can request a change to the rules for an individual game by requesting a coaches and head umpire meeting prior to the start of the game, if all parties agree the change can be made for that game only.



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### **Division U12**

**Rules:** USA softball rules will be used except for special exceptions noted below.

**Tournaments:** U12 will play USA Softball rules.

**Base Distance:** 60 feet

**Pitching Rubber to Home Plate:** 40 feet

**Ball:** 12 inch: Pro 9, 47 core, 375 compression

**First Aid Kits:** Required in the dugout

**Umpires:** 2 umpires will officiate when possible

**Game Time:** 1:20, no new innings after 1:15

**Score:** Mercy rule in effect: 15 runs after 3 innings, 12 after 4, 10 after 5

**Team:** All players will play at least one half the game in the field, with free substitution, and all players will bat in the line-up. To field a team you must have at least 6 of your own players and may borrow up to 3 from another team. All teams will have a first aid kit in their dugout.

**Game:** A game will be 1 hour and 20 minutes with no new innings starting after 1 hour and 15 minutes. 5 run limit per inning. Games can end in a tie.

**Pitching/Catching:** A pitcher must start with the pivot foot on the rubber and their non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the rubber within 24". The pivot foot must always remain in contact with the pitcher's plate prior to the forward step. A backward step may be taken before, simultaneous with or after the hands are brought together. *(2020 Amendment)* No wind-up is needed, modified pitching is legal.

**Batting:** No pitch count when the batter gets up to bat. Infield fly rule in effect. If the batter is struck by a pitched ball they are awarded first base if the umpire feels like an attempt was made to move out of the way. If the catcher drops the third strike the batter can run: a) if first base is unoccupied with 0 or 1 out, or b) with 2 outs. If the batter throws their bat, they will be called out. A warning will be given to each team before the game starts; if the umpire forgets to give the warning it is up to the coach to remind their team.

**Base Running:** Runner must stay on their base until the ball LEAVES the pitcher hand, if the runner leaves too soon the runner will be called out.

**Helmets:** If helmets come off in the field of play on batter/runner and they do not have a chinstrap on they will be called out. Anyone under the age of 18 on the field as a base coach must wear a batting helmet.

**Inclement weather:** In the case of weather cancellations, the home team's head coach will contact the visiting team's head coach by 3 pm of game day.

### **Misc:**

- 12U teams can play with 8 players without penalty. Playing with 7 players will result in an out when the missing 8<sup>th</sup> batter appears in the lineup.
- Any player may be a Courtesy Runner for catcher and pitcher. If the courtesy runner is stranded, she is out and then she bats.
- Coaches can request a change to the rules for an individual game by requesting a coaches and head umpire meeting prior to the start of the game, if all parties agree the change can be made for that game only.



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### **Division U14/U16**

**Rules:** USA softball rules will be used except for special exceptions noted below.

**Tournaments:** U14 and U16 will play USA Softball rules. Except when a U14 team is playing a U16 team the notation will be in affect

**Base Distance:** 60 feet

**Pitching Rubber to Home Plate:** 43 feet

**Umpires:** 2 umpires will officiate when possible

**First Aid Kits:** Required in the dugout

**Ball:** 12 inch: Pro 9, 47 core, 375 compression

**Game Time:** 1:20, no new innings after 1:15

**Score:** Mercy rule in effect: 15 runs after 3 innings, 12 after 4, 10 after 5

**Team:** All players will play at least one half of the game in the field, with free substitution, and all players will bat in the line-up. To field a team you must have at least 6 of your own players and may borrow up to 3 from any other team. All teams will have a first aid kit in their dugout.

**Game:** A game will be 1 hour and 20 minutes, with no new innings starting after 1 hour and 15 minutes. 5 runs per inning. An inning is over when play on the last batter is dead or the pitcher has control of the ball in the 16 ft. circle. Game can end in a tie.

**Pitching/ Catching:** A pitcher must start with the pivot foot on the rubber and their non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the rubber within 24". The pivot foot must always remain in contact with the pitcher's plate prior to the forward step. A backward step may be taken before, simultaneous with or after the hands are brought together. (2020 Amendment) No wind-up is needed, modified pitching is legal.

**Batting:** No pitch count when the batter gets up to bat. Infield fly rule in effect. If the batter is struck by a pitched ball they are awarded first base if the umpire feels like an attempt was made to move out of the way. If the catcher drops the third strike the batter can run: a) if first base is unoccupied with 0 or 1 out, or b) with 2 outs. If the batter throws their bat, they will be called out. A warning will be given to each team before the game starts; if the umpire forgets to give the warning it is up to the coach to remind their team.

**Base Running:** Runner must stay on their base until the ball LEAVES the pitcher's hand, if the runner leaves too soon the runner will be called out. Steel cleats will be allowed in Northern Hills, in accordance with USA Softball.

**Helmets:** If helmets come off in the field of play on batter/runner and they do not have a chinstrap on they will be called out. Anyone under the age of 18 on the field as a base coach must wear a batting helmet.

**Inclement weather:** In the case of weather cancellations, the home team's head coach will contact the visiting team's head coach by 3 pm of game day.

### **Misc:**

- **When a U16 team is playing a U14 team,** the U16 team will have a 5 run limit U14 teams will have a 7 run limit.
- 16U and 14U teams can play with 8 players without penalty. Playing with 7 players will result in an out when the missing 8<sup>th</sup> batter appears in the lineup. (2020 Amendment)
- Coaches can request a change to the rules for an individual game by requesting a coaches and head umpire meeting prior to the start of the game, if all parties agree the change can be made for that game only.