

JCLL Co-op Major League Softball Rules for 2025

Conduct

ZERO TOLERANCE RULE IN EFFECT: Coaches are expected to lead by example and to behave in a proper manner. Bad behavior will result in a two-week suspension and possibly removal for the rest of the season. Bad behavior by the fans will result in having them asked to leave the field area. Failure to do so will result in police being called and having them removed. Coaches, leave the umpires alone and keep your fans in check. Everyone benefits from good sportsmanship.

Equipment, uniforms, and safety

1. No metal cleats or spikes are allowed.
2. Protective facemasks are required for all infield positions.
3. Communities will determine on their home fields if on deck batter will be allowed. It is always recommended that the on-deck batter is stationed behind the batter. Coaches and umps will be informed prior to each game if an on-deck batter will be allowed. Posting at the field is recommended.
4. Catchers must wear required gear before they assume the position. All individuals warming up the pitcher under the age of 18 must wear a legal face mask/helmet combination.
5. All batters and base runners must wear legal batting helmets. Anyone coaching bases under the age of 18 must wear a legal batting helmet.
6. Malicious contact by defense or offense will result in player ejection. Offensive or defensive players cannot run through their opponent.
7. Only bats with a 2 ¼" barrel are legal for play. The bats must also have a sticker on them saying they have a BPF of 1.20 (Bat Performance Factor). Bats must be 34" or less in length. All bats must have an ASA or USA Softball certification sticker on them. There is no ounce restrictions on bats. Wooden bats are legal, but they must have a barrel width of only 2 ¼". If wooden bat is less than 30" in length it must have a handle width of 7/8". If wooden bat is more than 30" in length it must have a handle of 15/16" thickness.

The Game

General

Jackson County Little League is associated with the larger Little League organization. The rules below are important callouts and/or modifications of the full ruleset. The full ruleset can be found at:

<https://www.littleleague.org/playing-rules/rules-regulations-policies/> or by downloading the official "Little League Rulebook" app on your mobile device.

1. A 12" ball will be used.
2. Infield fly rule is in effect.
3. Batter/runner may advance on a dropped 3rd strike, called or swung at, if first base is open at the time of the pitch or if there are 2 outs. A batter's motion on a dropped 3rd strike must be to first base or they shall be called out.
4. Teams may play with 9 or 10 players defensively. No 5 person infield allowed. Teams can play with 7 players and not have to forfeit the game. However, when the 8th and 9th player positions come up to bat, an out will be recorded. All players present will be put into the batting line-up. Players that arrive late will be added to the end of the line-up. Once line-up is established it stays that way for the whole game. This allows teams free substitution during the game. "All players must play at least 6 defensive outs." The Board of Directors recommend that players do not sit 2 consecutive innings.
5. Coaches, teach your player how to play defense without being in the baseline. This will help in avoiding obstruction by the players not fielding the ball. Base runners should not have to go around defensive

players that do not have the ball. Likewise, base runners can't run and make contact with the defensive player; this would result in interference being called. Defense has a clear path in trying to make a play on the ball. Interference can be verbal or physical action by the defense. Defensive players cannot block any base if they do not have the ball. This would be obstruction, and it would allow the runner to be called safe if contact is made.

6. Coaches should use a scorebook to keep track of batting rotations, runs scored and innings pitched for both teams. This should avoid confusion and keep everyone on the same page.

Time

1. **When there is a single game scheduled:**

Games shall be 1 hour 30 minutes in length or 6 innings; whichever comes first. No new inning will start after 1 hour 30 minutes. When an inning begins within listed timeframes, it may be finished.

When there are back-to-back games scheduled:

Games shall be 1 hour 30 minutes in length or 6 innings; whichever comes first. No new inning will start after 1 hour 30 minutes. There will be a hard-stop after 1 hour 45 minutes. (~7:45 and 9:45) If an inning was incomplete at the hard stop, the results of that partial inning are nullified, and the score from the previous inning is final. It is imperative that games begin on time, and that teams get on and off the field as efficiently as possible. This hard stop was put into place to prevent the second game from getting too late and conflicting with city ordinances.

2. Any time after 1 out has been recorded a courtesy runner may be used for the catcher. The courtesy runner will be the person that was the last recorded out. With 2 outs it is recommended that a courtesy runner be used for the catcher. Coaches, please assist in warming up the pitcher if the catcher isn't ready. This will help move the game along.
3. Get pitchers and catchers on the field ASAP... this will help with getting as many innings in as possible.
4. 5 run cap per half inning. There is no limit on runs in the last inning. In order to be considered the last inning (based on time limit), the umpire would need to clearly announce it to both coaches prior to the start of the inning. If it is not announced, the 5 run cap is in effect.
5. Run rule: 15 after 3 innings, 10 after 4, and 8 after 5.

Batting

1. Bunting is allowed during player pitch, but not coach pitch.
2. Hit by pitch will always be considered a walk and the batter will always take 1st base. A hit by pitch will **not** count as a walk when determining when a coach comes in to pitch.

Base running

1. Players may not lead off until the pitched ball has been swung at, is hit, hits the dirt, or crosses home plate. 1st offense is a team warning. 2nd offense results in the runner being called out.
2. Stealing bases is allowed during player pitch. All bases are open to steal during player pitch once pitch has crossed home plate, has been swung at or called a strike. This includes HOME PLATE. No limit on bases attempting to steal in an inning or at an at bat by player.
3. Players must slide at HOME PLATE if a play is being made on them. The KEY WORDS here are "A play being made". If the ball is not on the infield and on its way to HOME PLATE, then a play is not being made on the runner. If a wild throw takes the catcher out of the batter's box area, a play is not being made and the runner does not have to slide. If players slide, they must go feet first on their way to a base. Once passed, a player may dive or slide headfirst back into a base. Failure to slide correctly will result in runner being called out.

Pitching

1. Pitching distance is 40 feet from back of home plate to front of the pitching rubber.

2. Pitchers may pitch up to 4 innings per game, or a total of 6 for a double-header.
3. The pitcher is allowed 2 walks (hit by a pitch does not count as a walk). Once a 3rd person has reached ball 4, the ball is dead and the coach will come in to pitch to that batter until batter is put out or reaches base safely. This situation will continue until 3 outs have been recorded or 5 runs have scored. Batters keep strike count from player pitch to coach pitch. Coaches must pitch from the rubber for this level. No walks while a coach is pitching.
4. Communities will emphasize with their umpires that strikes can occur on coach pitch whether the player swings or not.
5. Pitchers may use either the USA or the WIAA/Little League styles of pitching.
6. Pitchers warming up will get 8 pitches before the first inning and 5 pitches between innings. New pitchers, whether starting a new inning or in mid-inning relief, get 7 warmup pitches. Additionally, if a coach comes out to catch warmups while a catcher gets ready, those count toward that warmup count. If nobody comes to warm up the pitcher and everybody is just waiting around, the chief umpire reserves the right to reduce or waive warmup pitches, depending on the time spent waiting. Umpires will have a big emphasis on these items this year to try to keep games moving at a faster pace.
7. Pitchers have re-entry rights like all other players.
8. If pitcher is ambidextrous, they must commit to one side only to a batter until batter is out or reaches base.

Consequences for major equipment violations

If illegal equipment (metal spikes or illegal bat) is discovered after the player has taken one pitch or reached base, they are immediately OUT. The umpire then reserves the right to issue a warning to the player and bench, or to enact the penalty for a major illegal equipment violation. This penalty is automatic ejection of the offending player and the head coach for the remainder of the game. It is the responsibility of the head coach to ensure that all equipment that makes it onto the field is legal and safe. They are accountable and that is why they are also included in the ejection. If a warning is issued at any level and that team has a subsequent violation, ejections are automatic. No second warnings.

