

Thumb Area Softball League: 12U Girls Rules – 2024

Good Sportsmanship is required from all coaches, players, parents, and fans. The emphasis of the Thumb Area League is to ensure all players have a good experience and learn the game of Softball.

General Rules

1. Eligibility for 12U SB - players must not be older than 12 years old **prior** to January 1st of the current year.
2. National Federation Rules (high school rules) will be used with the following comments and exceptions.
3. The Umpire has the discretion to remove any player, parent, or coach if behavior is unsportsmanlike. The umpire's decisions are final. At the end of every game teams must line up and shake hands - this is mandatory, no exceptions.
4. A team must have 7 players to start a game. Late arriving players will be added to the bottom of the lineup.
5. Player Pool - If your team is going to be short players (less than nine), you can add up to three, 12U Pool Players for a maximum team size of 9 players total. Pool Players must not be older than 12U, must be rostered on a team in the thumb league and from your town. Pool players can come from a 10U, 12U or 14U team as long as they are not older than 12U. A Pool player should be an average player and certainly not a player that also plays in an advanced program (except if from a younger division). The intent of the Player Pool is to fill a team - not to stack a team – we are expecting coaches to use good judgement and sportsmanship accordingly. A pool player must be reported as such to the other team, cannot pitch or catch and must bat at the bottom of the order. Pool players are not to be included on your team's official roster listed within Tourney Machine – only the regular players assigned to your team. Coaches are encouraged to use a different pool player from game to game if possible. Pool players will not be allowed during the end of season tournament.
6. If a game needs to be called due to weather conditions, all makeup games need to be scheduled through the league. Makeup games start over at the top of the 1st inning. It is up to the home team representative to cancel a game, contact the opponent, and the league to reschedule.
7. Pitching distance is 40 feet (from the front of the pitcher's rubber to the point of home plate)
8. The home team will occupy the 3rd base dugout and will keep the official book. Both team's books must be signed by umpires for league standings.
9. **The WINNING team will report the scores to the league within 24 hours or the game will be considered a forfeit for both teams (score = 0 to 0). Please include your age group and gender.**
10. Maximum run differential to be recorded is 10 runs (maximum winning score to be recorded = losing score plus 10).
11. If a team forfeits, the score shall be recorded as 0 to 10.

Uniforms and Equipment

1. Bats must be 2004 ASA Certified.
2. Metal cleats are prohibited. No Jewelry will be allowed but players will be allowed to tape pierced earrings.
3. All offensive players inside of the playing field fence must wear a helmet with a face shield. Removing the helmet before leaving the playing field is not allowed - the penalty is one warning to the team and next time an out will be called. Repeated violations by the same player will result in that player being removed from the game.
4. Pitchers must wear protective face masks while pitching. Helmet with mask must be worn by any player warming a pitcher up anywhere in the park.

Defense

1. The defense will be allowed to field **nine** players.
2. All players must play at least two complete innings per game defensively.
3. Substitution is allowable at any time. Substitutions are to be announced to the umpire.
4. Umpires may call an out if they feel a team is deliberately stalling.
5. The Infield Fly Rule will be enforced on a catchable fly ball, if there is less than two outs and runners are on first and second, or if bases are loaded. The batter is called out and the runners are not required to advance but can do so at their own risk. If the ball is caught, the runners must tag up like any other caught fly ball.
6. The ball remains live until it is returned to the pitcher in the circle. The play is considered stopped when the pitcher has control of the ball in the circle and is not attempting to make a play. Runners attempting to advance prior to the stoppage in play can continue to advance at their own risk or immediately go back to the previous base at their own risk. The penalty for not immediately advancing or going back to a base is one warning to the team and next time the runner is out.

Sliding and Stealing

1. If a fielder **has possession of the ball or is in the process of fielding the ball** while at a base/plate, an approaching runner must slide – this rule does not apply to first base. The penalty for not sliding when required is one warning to the team and next time the runner is out. Conversely, a fielder cannot block or obstruct a base/plate or base line without the ball – the penalty for obstruction is the runner is safe at the base/plate they are attempting to occupy.
2. Base runners can steal any base including home. Runners cannot lead off or leave the base until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand and are at risk of being tagged out prior to reoccupying or advancing to a base. The penalty for leaving a base early is one warning to the team and next time the runner is out.
3. If base runner is touched by a base coach while the ball is in play, dead ball is called, and the runner will be called out. All runners will be sent back to their previous base and play will resume.

Batting

1. All teams will use a rotational batting order for all players present (all players present and able, must bat). This batting order will remain the same throughout the game except that late arriving players will be added to the bottom of the batting order. If a team has less than a full batting order, an out shall **not** be recorded for the missing batter(s).
2. If a player is injured and cannot bat, the player shall be skipped and an out shall **not** be recorded. However, once a player is skipped in the batting order due to an injury, the player shall then be removed from the rest of the game.
3. There will be a limit of 5 runs scored per inning except in the final inning where there is no run limit.
4. If a batter, while swinging the bat, gets hit in the hand with the ball, it is considered a strike/foul ball and the batter does not get to take her base.
5. The batter must attempt to avoid getting hit by a pitched ball. If the batter does not attempt to avoid the ball, first base will not be granted, and the pitch is added to the count as a ball.
6. A pitched ball that hits the ground is still a live ball unless it then hits the batter which then a “dead ball” is called and the batter takes their base. Any batted ball that hits or settles on home plate is a fair ball.
7. On-deck batter shall use on-deck circle on same side as batter.
8. Throwing the bat is not allowed - the penalty is one warning to the team and next time the batter is out.
9. Bunting and slap hitting are allowed. The drop third strike **WILL** be played.
10. Courtesy/Designated Runners shall be the last batted out. Courtesy runners are allowed for the pitchers and catchers only. Designated runners are only allowed if a batter/runner gets hurt while running the bases. If the previously injured batter/runner comes up to bat again, they cannot get a designated runner for a previous injury. If the batter cannot run, the coach can skip that batter in the lineup without penalty.

Pitching

1. One pitch constitutes an inning. If a pitcher is removed during the inning, they cannot resume pitching in that same inning.
2. The pitcher will get no more than one minute to pitch no more than 5 warmup pitches at the beginning of each inning or when coming in as a relief pitcher.
3. Illegal Pitches will not be called but the defensive coach must attempt to correct the illegal pitch.
4. If a pitcher hits 4 batters during a game, that pitcher is not to pitch for the remainder of the game unless the game goes into extra innings. One additional hit batter per extra inning played will be allowed.

Length of Game

1. A normal game will be 6 innings. To be considered a complete game, a minimum of 3 innings must be completed.
2. Umpires will establish the official start time of each game and relay start time to each team. The umpire will set a game timer for 75 minutes. If the 75 minutes is reached prior to the sixth inning, the inning currently in will be finished and the umpire will call the next inning as the last inning. When the last inning is called, it is unlimited runs and 3 outs are needed to end play. The home team does not bat if they are ahead.
3. In the event of a tie after time limit or after 6 innings have been completed within the time limit, the game will go into extra innings using the International Tie Breaker rule. International Tie Breaker Rule – The player that made the last out of the previous inning for the visiting team is placed on second base with no outs. The same procedure will be done for the home team and the game will continue until one team wins.
4. There is a 10 run mercy rule after the 4th inning