

# **2023 Intercounty Softball Association (ISA) League Rules**

## **Umpire Assigner:**

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### **General Rules for All Age Groups:**

1. All teams must submit a team roster prior to the start of the season. Any player on a travel/tournament team roster or playing for a travel/tournament team must be identified.

**Rosters are due by March 13, 2023 with a lockdown date of April 28, 2023 for the Spring season.**

2. All umpires and coaches will receive a copy of these rules prior to the start of the season.

3. The umpire's judgment is final. There are no protests allowed at any time. Only the manager and one of the coaches designated by the manager prior to the game is permitted to discuss any play in question with the umpire.

4. All discussions with the umpire must take place away from the players and spectators, so that the conversation may not be overheard.

5. No game shall be permitted to begin without a home plate umpire.

6. The umpire may eject and/or banish from the game and/or field area any player, coach, or spectator for un-sportsmanlike conduct. This privilege extends to tournament directors for mid and end of season tournaments.

- This includes, but is not limited to:
- Use of profanity
- Unnecessary arguing
- Fighting
- Needling of the umpire
- A warning may be given first
- Team coaches are responsible for the conduct of the players, parents, and spectators on his/her side of the field

7. The assignment of the umpire is the responsibility of John Bradbury, ump assigner. In the event of rain, if the field is unplayable or if a team needs to reschedule, it is their responsibility to work with John Bradbury.

Ump fees are \$60 per game (\$30 per team).

8. At the first sign of lightning, or if thunder is heard, the game must be stopped and the players removed from the field immediately. This is mandatory. No

arguments, no judgments, no exceptions. The umpire may stop the game at any time due to unsafe field conditions. This includes inadequate lighting or adverse weather conditions.

9. The home team is responsible for preparation of the field prior to the game.

10. Any rule interpretation questions, suggestions for additions and/or revisions should be submitted to the Board and only to the Board. The Board may modify these rules during the season if deemed necessary by a majority Board vote. All coaches and umpires will receive a copy of any rule change(s) and the date the change(s) is effective.

11. Smoking is not permitted on or around the field by anyone on or associated with the team including coaches and score keepers.

12. Every player bats for her team. The lineup remains consistent throughout the game. If a player is injured and cannot bat when it is her turn, she is bypassed and the next batter in the lineup bats. There is no out if an injured player is bypassed in the lineup. The injured player may be placed back in her original place in the lineup if she returns to the game. Players that arrive late are inserted at the end of the lineup. When fielding with 10 players, 4 players must be in the outfield and the players in the outfield must be on the outfield grass and off the infield.

13. Batting Helmets: All offensive players must wear a batting helmet. As stated in the USSSA fastpitch rules, NOCSAE approved batting helmets with extended ear

flaps, which cover both ears and temples are mandatory for all batters, on deck batters, base runners, non-adult base coach, non-adult bat & ball shaggers in live ball territory, even if the ball is dead.

All fastpitch batting helmets shall be equipped with a NOCSAE-approved face protector. The phrase, "Meets NOCSAE Standard at the time of manufacture" must be permanently affixed to the face protector.

If an eye shield is worn attached to the batting helmet, it must be constructed of a molded rigid material that is clear and permits 100 percent (no tint) allowable light transmission.

14. No player may participate in 8U, 10U, 12U or 14U wearing footwear other than sneakers or rubber spikes. Metal spikes are *not* allowed at 8U, 10U, 12U or 14U for the safety of the players. The player shall be removed from the game until the proper footwear is worn. Metal spikes are allowed at 18U.

15. The players may wear no jewelry. This includes bracelets, earrings, necklaces, etc. Any earrings left in place *must* be taped over.

16. At 8U, 10U, 12U and 14U, all players must have a fielding glove and **Facemask** (infielders only are required, but outfielders may wear a Facemask if they wish) when taking the field. At 18U, fielding masks are encouraged, but optional.

17. All batters and base runners must wear a batting helmet at all times while on the field.

18. Non approved Bats (12U, 14U and 18U):

1. Must have at least one of the three stamps, ASA, USSSA or USA.
2. Must not be on the banned bat list provided on the link below and meet the standards provided below of the USA /ASA softball organization.
3. Must not be the **Easton Ghost Double Barrel -10 Fastpitch Softball Bat FP19GHU10**

<https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Softball/Certified-Equipment/Equipment-Bats>  
<https://usa.asasoftball.com/e/BB1P2000.asp>

No composite bats are allowed at 10U.

19. A courtesy runner can and should be used for the catcher and pitcher when she is on base at any time. The courtesy runner should be the last girl at bat to make an out.

20. Travel Player Rules – **A TRAVEL/TOURNAMENT PLAYER IS CONSIDERED ANYONE WHO IS PLAYING ON A TRAVEL/TOURNAMENT TEAM. THE LEAGUE WILL DO IT’S BEST TO POLICE THIS. ANY PLAYER LISTED ON THE USSSA WEBSITE FOR THE CURRENT YEAR IS CONSIDERED A TRAVEL/TOURNAMENT PLAYER in addition to anyone that is playing on a travel/tournament team. This includes players who were listed on the USSSA website for the current year and subsequently removed.** If a player is listed on the USSSA website, but does not have a year associated with them on the site, you must have the player explain when they played and for what team so it can be verified on the USSSA site. If it cannot be verified or if the player does not supply the information, they will not be eligible to pitch. The onus is on the player / organization to explain why the player is on USSSA if they are on the site. If players are playing on any other travel/ tournament team (ex. USA tournaments or any other travel/tournament team – not just USSSA), they are not permitted to pitch in the ISA at 10U, 12U or 14U. If a team isn’t sure, we encourage them to ask – do not hide it. A player that is classified as an ‘A’ travel/tournament player is not permitted to play in the ISA at 10U, 12U or 14U. Suburban Select is not considered travel/tournament. School teams are not considered travel/tournament.

Travel/tournament players may not pitch at 10U, 12U or 14U.

21. A minimum of twenty-four hours notice must be given for rescheduling a game for any reason other than a rainout.

22. Rainouts or other inclement weather

- \* The home team coach is responsible for determining if the game is to be played.
- \* The decision to postpone a game due to rain or other inclement weather must be made no later than two hours before the game time.
- \* The home team coach must call the opposing team's head coach, and the umpire assigner. All required phone numbers would be provided to each coach.
- \* The the home team works with their opponent to reschedule the game.

23. All games played will not begin an inning after **1 hour 45 minutes** from the scheduled start time. The umpire will keep the official time. Once you start an inning, you should finish it, other than weather or daylight issues. Games can end in a tie in regular season, but if a game finishes the full 7 innings prior to time expiring, extra innings should be played.

24. A full team is 8 players but the 9<sup>th</sup> spot in the batting order is recorded as an out. If you are shorthanded you can use girls from a lesser age bracket as long as they are ISA rostered players. As a last resort you can borrow a player from your other ISA team at the same age bracket. These "borrowed" players are ineligible to pitch without getting your opponent's ok.

**THIS APPLIES TO THE REGULAR SEASON ONLY, NO BORROWING OF PLAYERS FOR THE TOURNAMENTS.**

25. A full game is 7 innings (6 innings at 10U). Games can end in a tie in regular season, but if a game finishes the full 7 innings prior to time expiring, extra innings should be played.

26. All players are to play in all games and are not to sit on the bench more than **2** consecutive innings or half of the game, with the exceptions of injuries or medical conditions. This applies to regular season and tournament games.

27. A player is not allowed to show bunt, pull back and swing. If this occurs, it will result in a dead ball with the batter being out.

28. Pitching shall be as defined by the USSSA rules for female fastpitch (Rule 6. Pitching Rule). This includes (Updated Rule Change: Rule 6A, Section 1A) Prior to the pitch, 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. Both feet must be on the ground within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. The hands must be apart. The pitcher may not take the pitching position on the pitcher's plate without possession of the ball, and the pitcher may not simulate pitching with or without the ball when near the pitcher's plate.

Comment: Rule change (listed above) allows female pitchers to start with one or two feet on the pitcher's plate.

Note: ISA is not implementing the 2022 'leaping' rule for pitchers. Leaping and crow hopping will remain illegal in ISA.

## **29. USSSA Fastpitch Softball playing rules apply except as noted or clarified below.**

### **14 & Under**

1. The inning ends when the team at bat has three outs or as a result of the ten batter rule.

### **12 & Under**

1. The infield fly rule **is not** in effect.
2. The inning ends when the team at bat has three outs or as a result of the ten batter rule.
3. Stealing is permitted only after the pitched ball crosses the home plate. The runner is not permitted to advance on an overthrow by the catcher on an attempted steal.
4. The drop third strike rule is not in effect.

### **The Ten Batter Rule (10U, 12U and 14U only – the 10 batter rule does not apply at 18U)**

1. If a team bats ten batters in an inning the tenth batter will be played as if there are *two* outs.
2. If a tenth batter in an inning hits a fair ball, play will continue until the third out is made at any base or at home plate.
3. If the tenth batter walks or is **hit by pitch**, the batter will be awarded two bases and base runners, who are forced, will advance. When the batter reaches second base, the inning is over. If there are base runners forced to score, the runs will count and the inning is over.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Question:** If the base runner does not slide and there is a play, is it automatically an out?

**Answer:** In our league there is NO "Slide or Surrender" rule. The correct wording to be used is "AVOID CONTACT OR BE CALLED OUT" a base runner is to avoid contact with a baseman making a play however she does NOT need to slide into a base. If she collides due to not sliding, then she will be called out. A fielder who

is putting a tag on a runner is not considered a collision when the glove touches the runner. Also Catchers or fielders cannot block bases if they do not have the ball.

**Question:** With the 10<sup>th</sup> batter up and playing “as if 2 outs” as soon as the ball is put into play, can the defensive team get an out by simply throwing the ball home and touching out plate, regardless if it’s not a force out?

**Answer:** If there is a legitimate play at home that is one thing. If a catcher has to stand on home plate and wait for a runner to trot from 1st to home that is another. In the case of the former, the common sense thing to do would be to call the out and avoid any future collision. However because of the latter, the rule cannot be WORDED or INTERPRETED that simply touching home plate results in an out. That would open up a can of worms whereas you have the 10<sup>th</sup> batter up with a runner at second representing the tie or winning run, the batter hits a single to the outfield and there is a legitimate play at the plate. The umpire needs to make the call based on the same rules that apply at every other point in the game which is to say –

- Did she beat the tag?
- Did the catcher hold onto the ball?

**Question:** Does the “slide or surrender” rule mean the runner is automatically out if there is a play and the runner does not slide?

**Answer: (Directly from the Head of the Umpires, John B.)** There is no "Slide or surrender" rule in the ASA rule book. The runner cannot deliberately crash into a fielder or interfere with a fielder attempting to make a play. The slide or surrender rule is an over-riding rule that is put in by leagues to protect both the runner and fielder. It becomes a problem when both coaches and umpires take the words Slide or Surrender" Literally. Some coaches want a runner called out in any circumstances when she doesn't slide and some umpires will take an out anyway they can get it. Both are wrong. The other problem is when there is an errant throw that may take a catcher or fielder up the line and into the path of a runner and there's contact. Should the runner be penalized for not sliding when she may not have had the chance to slide? That is part of the game. The problem is that the wording is really too vague. Each situation should be officiated differently and as it unfolds. If there's a close play with no slide or no contact, I don't believe a runner should be automatically called out. Each situation is different. Bottom line, coaches or umpires shouldn't be looking for an automatic out.

**Question:** While the 10<sup>th</sup> batter is up, a runner is out stealing either at a base on home plate. Does this mean the inning is immediately over since we are playing it as if there are 2 outs?

**Answer:** No, unless of course there were already 2 official outs made. The playing “as if” 2 outs rule does not go into effect UNTIL the batter either puts the ball in play, walks, strikes out, or reaches base safely or is called out in any other way. In the case mentioned above, the batter reserves the right to complete the at bat.

#### OVER THROWS/ UNDERTHROWS : 12U Only

**Question:** if a catcher attempts to throw out a base runner during a steal and the ball does not reach the base, but falls short, can the runner continue to advance as if it is a live ball.

**Answer:** an under thrown ball is treated the same as an overthrown ball in the 12 U division.

**Question:** The catcher overthrows the pitcher while a runner is stealing home, and the ball rolls around the infield, can the rest of the base runners continue to advance?

**Answer: No**, this is still considered to be an over throw, home plate is considered a base just like all of the others.

#### OUT OF PLAY RULE, all AGES

**Question:** A fielder attempts to throw out a runner at first or [third base], however, the fielder throws a high-arching ball, and by the time the ball hits the ground and rolls out of play, the runner has already touched the first base she is heading to, and on her way to second. The ball finally rolls out of play just as the runner is reaching second base. Does the runner automatically get one more base? As if the batter going to First Base would get Third Base automatically, or a runner on First Base going to Third Base would automatically get Home Plate

**Answer:** Once a ball is deemed “out of play” by the umpire, the runner will get the base she is going to “PLUS ONE” This happens at the time of release from the fielder’s hand towards the base in which she is throwing to. So basically, no matter how fast the runner is and no matter how slow the throw is, or how long it takes to roll out of play, the runner will only be awarded one additional base from where she was at the time of the throw.

Balls not going out of play are considered “Live”.

#### OVERTHROW TO PITCHER WHILE IN THE CIRCLE:

An overthrow to the pitcher while she is in the circle is considered a LIVE Ball, Runners can advance to any base at their own risk. This does not apply at 10U when a catcher is throwing the ball back to the pitcher after a pitch.