

# 2026 Westfield Recreational Softball Rules

## 12U

(as of 1/5/2026)

### A. The Playing Field/Equipment

1. 60' between bases with 30' baseline hash marks
2. 40' to pitcher's plate with 8' radius pitching circle
3. Foul lines, batter's box and base coach boxes per ASA Rulebook
4. 12" optic yellow ball with red stitching required
5. Batting helmet with faceguard is required, chin straps are strongly recommended
6. Facemasks are required for all players in the field

### B. Pitching Regulations

1. Player Pitch: 12U players will pitch all innings.
2. All pitchers **must** wear a fielding mask and a chest guard.
  - a. Pitchers are allowed to wear a padded shirt under the jersey in lieu of a chest guard.
3. A player may pitch a maximum of three (3) innings per game.
  - a. One pitch an inning is considered an inning.
  - b. No limit on substitutions.
  - c. (Note: Pitchers may be inserted multiple times, only once per inning)
4. **Strike Zone:** From the top of the batter's shoulder to the bottom of the batter's knees.
5. A pitcher will be allowed five (5) warm up pitches when the game starts and when a new pitcher enters the game. Otherwise, three warmup pitches per inning, if needed.
6. The Pitcher's wind up must start with **one foot** in contact with the rubber, facing the batter.
7. Play will end when the ball is controlled by the pitcher inside the pitcher's circle.
  - a. *Exception: If the girl on base is making an attempt to go to the next base after the ball is controlled by the pitcher, the runner must advance.*

### C. The Game/Playing Rules

1. A game shall consist of six (6) innings, or no new innings after 75 minutes. *Umpires are not obligated to inform teams about how much time is left.*
  - a. The clock starts immediately after the coaches' meeting.
  - b. A "new" inning starts once the third out from the previous inning occurs.
2. Home Team is decided by the schedule. Home Team takes 3<sup>rd</sup> base dugout.
3. **Mercy Rule:** If the home team is up 15 runs after four (4) innings, or 10 runs after five (5) innings, the ball game is over.
4. **Base Running:** Stealing is permitted at all bases. A runner may lead off from the base once the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
5. **Ties:** If the game has ended via max innings played or time has expired, the game is entered into record as a tie.

6. A team must have at least eight (8) players to start an official game. If a team is short of players, a team may use two (2) players from another similar level recreational team or bring up to two (2) players from a lower recreational league team to field a team. You may only bring up enough players to field a team of no more than 10 players.
  - a. If a team only has eight players, the team must take an out in the ninth spot.
7. Teams may use up to 10 defensive players with free substitution. Coaches must make an effort to allow players to play in different positions and allow equal playing time.
8. Outfielders must have a **starting** position in the outfield (grass area) before the ball is pitched.
9. **Infield fly rule is in effect.**
10. Bunting is allowed.
11. **Dropped Third Strike Rule is in effect.**
  - a. If the third strike is not caught in flight:
    - i. If no runner occupies first base, or there are two outs, the batter is not out unless the third strike is caught. The batter is entitled to try to reach first base before being tagged out or thrown out.
    - ii. If a runner occupies first base and there are less than two (2) outs at the time of the pitch, the batter is out.
      1. Clarification:
        - a. Are there less than 2 outs?
          - i. Yes
            1. Is there a runner at first base?
              - a. Yes – Batter is out.
              - b. No – Batter must be tagged or thrown out.
            2. No (there are two outs)
              - a. Batter must be tagged or thrown out
12. **Bat Throwing:** First time = warning to coach and player
  - a. Second time = *may* result in player being called out. (*Umpire's discretion*)
13. **Courtesy Runner:** Catchers, pitchers and injured players may receive a courtesy runner at any time that they reach base.
  - a. The courtesy runner will be the last out,
  - b. Or if no outs, the farthest away in the lineup.
  - c. If the last out was the pitcher or catcher, it will be the player before them in the lineup.
14. **Runs Allowed:** Max of six (6) runs per inning for the first five (5) innings, or three (3) outs, whichever comes first.
  - a. Unlimited runs can be scored in the 6th inning if the 6<sup>th</sup> inning is reached within the time limit.
15. One (1) offensive conference is allowed per inning. Teams are allowed max of three (3) defensive conferences per 6-inning game (removal of pitcher does not equal a defensive conference). One (1) more defensive conference is allowed for each extra inning.

#### D. Batting & Running

1. All players present shall be included in the batting order. Any player arriving late will be inserted at the bottom of the order. Any girl leaving the game early will be removed from the lineup with no penalty.
2. Any hit ball that lands in either batter's box is a foul ball.
3. **Hit By Pitch:** If a pitched ball hits the batter out of the strike zone, the batter will be awarded first base. However, if the pitched ball **bounces or rolls first and then hits the batter, no base will be awarded.** Hands and fingers are not considered part of the bat.
4. A player removed from the game due to injury will **NOT** be allowed to return to the game unless agreed upon by both coaches. The injured player will be skipped in the batting order without penalty.
5. **Sliding:** Runners are NOT required to slide at any base. However, the runner must avoid contact with the defender. If a runner attempts to slide (judgement call), contact rule is not in effect.
  - a. Head-first slides are not allowed and will result in an out. Diving back to base is not considered a head-first slide.
  - b. Runners may leave the base after the ball leaves the pitcher's hand to steal a base.
6. **Look Back Rule: designed to keep baserunners from taking unfair advantage when the ball is in the pitcher's control.**

**Basic Explanation:**

- a. The rule **only applies when the pitcher has possession of the ball inside the pitching circle** and is not making a play.
- b. At this point, **runners must immediately decide** whether to advance to the next base or return to the previous base.
- c. **No stopping, hesitating, or juking**—once they make a move in one direction, they must commit.
- d. **Common Situations:**
  - i. **Runner is off the base when the pitcher gains control in the circle**
    1. The runner must quickly return or attempt to advance.
    2. If they hesitate or stop, they can be called out.
  - ii. **Batter-runner overruns first base**
    1. If they take a step toward second base, they must continue or be called out.
    2. If they return directly to first base, they are safe.
  - iii. **Key Points for Players:**
    1. The pitcher must **have the ball and be inside the circle**—if they are making a play, the rule doesn't apply.
    2. The rule prevents unnecessary delays and keeps the game flowing.
    3. If a runner stops moving between bases when the rule is in effect, they can be **immediately called out.**

**E. Other Rules**

1. All other softball rules will be in accordance with IHSA Rules, and the Umpire's call will be final.

2. All safety and conduct rules will be in accordance with WYSI and will be enforced by the Umpires and Commissioner.
3. **Rainouts/Suspended Play:** Will be determined 30 minutes prior to the first game time by the League Commissioner. During game times, Coaches and Umpires will determine this.
  - a. Lightning Policy will be in accordance with WYSI Lightning Policy
  - b. In the event the game is called prior to the 4<sup>th</sup> inning, for whatever reason, the game will resume at a later date and will continue just as the game never stopped (runners will return to bases, after will have same pitch count, the same number of outs, etc.).
  - c. In the event the game is called after the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> inning, for whatever reason, the winner will be determined by going back to the last full inning and the team with the highest score wins (unless the home team is batting and is winning at the time the game is suspended, then the home team would be the winner).
  - d. In the event the game was tied, the game will be considered a tie.
  - e. In the event of a rain-out that needs to be made up, the Recreational Softball Commissioner will coordinate the make-up dates.

#### **F. Tournament Seeding**

1. The 12U tournament seeding is determined by seeding is determined by win-loss records at the end of the WYSI season. (All teams will make the tournament)
2. All regular season scores must be reported to the WYSI Recreational Softball Commissioner.
3. If two teams are tied, then head-to-head is the first tie breaker, followed by the least runs allowed, followed by most runs scored, followed by coin flip.

#### **G. Umpire Requirements**

1. All umpires on the field must be at least 16 years of age.
2. All 12U games will have one (1) umpire only.
  - a. Exception: 12U Championship will have two (2) umpires.
3. Only Head Coaches may privately, and respectfully, discuss calls that are made on the field of play.
  - a. Head Coaches are responsible for the actions of the Assistant Coaches, players and fans.
  - b. All issues with any umpire must be directed to the WYSI Recreational Softball Commissioner. Entirety