

# 2026 Westfield Recreational Softball Rules

## 8U

(as of 1/5/2026)

### A. The Playing Field/Equipment

1. 60' between bases with 30' baseline hash marks.
2. 35' to pitcher's plate with 8' radius pitching circle.
3. Foul lines, batter's box and base coach boxes per IHSA Rulebook.
4. 11" 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: 8U players will pitch the first two pitches to each batter during the first two innings of the game. (Maximum two pitches per hitter.) ***This is not required for the first two weeks of the season, but after, coaches must encourage players to pitch.***
  - a. A player may only pitch a maximum of one inning per game, to encourage each team to allow multiple girls to pitch.
  - b. While the player is pitching, strikes ***will not count***.
    - i. Batters ***must be encouraged to swing*** at the player pitch.
    - ii. Umpires should acknowledge if a player's pitch is a strike as you would in a normal game to encourage confidence in the player.
  - c. If the batter hits off a player pitcher and it is fair, it is considered a live ball.
  - d. After the first two (player) pitches, the offensive coach will come in to pitch the remaining pitches.
2. Coach Pitch: The coach has five (5) total pitches.
3. **Strike Zone:** From the top of the batter's shoulder to the bottom of the batter's knees.
4. A player pitcher will be allowed three (3) warm up pitches when the game starts and when a new pitcher enters the game.
5. The 8U Pitcher's wind up must start with both feet in contact with the rubber, facing the batter.
6. The Coach-Pitcher will remain off the field while the 8U player pitches.
7. The Coach-Pitcher must start with one foot on the pitching rubber and the ball must be released towards the batter no more than one step out of the circle.
  - a. (Note: The Coach-Pitcher does not have to maintain contact with the pitching rubber while in pitching motion.)
8. The Coach-Pitcher must avoid contact with the ball and defensive players when the ball is in play.
  - a. Upon a batted ball, the Coach-Pitcher must leave fair territory immediately, without interference.

- b. If there is unintentional interference by the Coach-Pitcher, it will be declared a dead ball/no hit and all runners will return to their original base.
  - c. If it is declared intentional interference, it will be a dead ball and the lead runner will be called out (*Note: Intent is at the discretion of the umpire.*)
- 9. After the pitch is made, or while the ball is in play, the Coach-Pitcher shall not direct any players in any way. The Coach-Pitcher may instruct a batter prior to a pitch being made.
  - a. *If a Coach-Pitcher instructs after a pitch, he/she may be given a warning by the umpire. A second offense may result in removal from the game.*
- 10. The Pitcher-Helper (defensive player) must keep **at least one foot** in the pitcher's circle and be two steps behind the pitching rubber until the ball is released.
  - a. All Pitcher-Helpers must wear a fielding mask or helmet with a faceguard and a chest guard.

### 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 third 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. **Ties:** If the game has ended via max innings played or time has expired, the game is entered into record as a tie. (Regular season only.)
5. A team must have at least eight (8) players to start an official game. If a team is short players, a team may use two (2) players from another recreational team of the same level of the recreational league team to field a team. You may only use enough players to field a team of **10 players**.
6. Teams will bat their entire team in the lineup, with a maximum of six (6) runs per inning, or three (3) outs, whichever comes first.
  - a. All players must play at least three (3) defensive innings per game.
  - b. Players must also play at least one inning in the infield and one inning in the outfield.
  - c. Rotation of players to all positions is strongly encouraged in 8U.
7. Teams may use up to 10 defensive players.
8. Outfielders must have a **starting** position in the outfield (grass area) before the ball is pitched.
9. Two defensive coaches are allowed on the field and must be positioned in the outfield—with their feet in the grass. (**Coaches cannot encroach on the infield**).
10. **Bat Throwing:** First and second time = warning to coach and player
11. A maximum of five (5) pitches, with unlimited fouls on the last pitch, or three (3) strikes shall count as an out.
  - a. There will be **NO WALKS**.

- b. If the Batter fails to swing on the fifth/last pitch, that will be a strike and the Batter will be out.
- 12. There is no infield fly rule, no bunting, no stealing and no dropped third strike rule.
- 13. An umpire will call time when the ball is held by a defensive player stopping the lead runner or no further play is being made (*Umpire's judgement*).
- 14. An umpire will call time when the ball is in control by **any defensive player** with both feet within the pitcher's circle, intentionally or unintentionally.
- 15. After a ball is hit into play, if there is an overthrow to first base, the (hitting) runner may advance only one base.
  - a. If there are other runners on the field, they may only advance **one base** as well.
  - b. Runners may not advance if a second overthrow occurs (during the same play) that is directed at the pitcher.
  - c. **Overthrow** - any throw which sends a ball untouched past its intended recipient or target
- 16. Coaches must ensure that Catchers is ready to go at the beginning of each inning. Each team must have someone (13 and older) behind the catcher to catch passed balls to throw back to the pitcher. (This will help speed up the game.)

#### D. Batting & Running

- 1. Runners may not leave the base until **after the ball is hit**.
  - a. Runners may be called out for leaving early. (*At the discretion of the umpire*)
- 2. Any hit ball that lands in either batter's box is a foul ball.
- 3. 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.
- 4. **Sliding:** Head-first slides are not allowed and will result in an out. Diving back to base is not considered a head-first slide.

#### E. Other Rules

- 1. All other softball rules will be in accordance with IHSAA 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 fourth 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, pitcher will have same pitch count and the outs will continue, 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 rainout needs to be made up, the Recreational Softball Commissioner will coordinate the make-up dates.

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

1. The 8U tournament seeding is determined by random draw. (All teams make the tournament.) However, all regular season scores must be reported to the WYSI Recreational Softball Commissioner.

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

1. All umpires on the field must be at least 16 years of age.
2. All 8U games will have one (1) umpire only.
  - a. Exception: 8U 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 Umpire Director and the WYSI Recreational Softball Commissioner.