



# 5TMSL 2025 SOFTBALL RULEBOOK

---

## REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

- All players must bring a glove and be wearing a team jersey in order to play.
  - If a player does not have their jersey, the league may provide an extra. If no extra is available, the player cannot play.
  - Helmets are encouraged but not required.
  - Bats may not be swung by anyone other than the batter in the batter's box.
- 

## TEAM REQUIREMENTS & FORFEIT POLICY

- Each team must have at least seven players ready to play no later than 10 minutes after the scheduled game time.
  - Failure to meet this minimum will result in an automatic forfeit.
  - Teams with seven or eight players are not required to put up a catcher.
- 

## GAME STRUCTURE

- Games are scheduled for seven innings, time permitting.
  - Each inning has a 6-run limit, except for the final inning, which is unlimited.
  - A new inning may not begin within 15 minutes of the scheduled end time. The umpire will keep both teams updated on whether the game will be played in full or shortened due to time.
  - A game must be played 4 full innings (or 3.5 if the home team is leading) to be considered an official game. If a game is stopped before that point (due to weather or any other reason) the league commissioner will decide how the game will be handled.
- 

## Fielding Alignment Rules

- Games are played with 9 fielders: 3 outfielders and 6 infielders (including pitcher and catcher).
- Teams must have only a pitcher, catcher, and 4 infielders positioned on the infield dirt.
- Outfielders must be positioned at least 8 feet behind the basepaths until contact is made with the ball.

---

## FIELD DIMENSIONS

- **1st/2nd Grade Division:** 50-foot bases
  - **3rd/4th Grade Division:** 30-foot mound, 55-foot bases
  - **5th/6th Grade Division:** 33-foot mound, 60-foot bases
  - **7th/8th Grade Division:** 36-foot mound, 65-foot bases
- 

## BATTING RULES

- **1st/2nd Grade Division:** Coach-pitch. Batters receive up to 4 strikes or 8 pitches, whichever comes first. After 6 pitches, foul balls do not count toward the pitch limit.
- **3rd Grade and up:** Players pitch.

### Additional Batting Rules:

- A foul tip caught by the catcher is an out if it's the third strike.
  - If the ball does not go sharply and directly from the bat into the catcher's glove — meaning the catcher had to noticeably move their glove or the ball popped up first — it can be considered a foul ball and not a foul tip. This is up to the umpire's discretion. **Note:** there is no six-foot height minimum.
  - Throwing the bat is never an automatic out. However, if it continues and the umpire feels the batter is a threat to the safety of the game, he can eject him.
- 

## FIELDING RULES

- **1st/2nd Grade Division:** the play is dead when the pitcher has possession near the mound. All runners return to the last base they touched.
  - **3rd/4th Grade Division:** the play is dead once the pitcher steps on the mound. All runners return to the last base they touched.
  - **5th Grade – 8th Grade Divisions:** the ball remains live until the umpire grants time.
- 

## BASE RUNNING RULES

- **1st - 6th Grade Divisions:** No leading is allowed.
- **7th/8th Grade Division:** Runners may lead once the pitcher begins their motion. The catcher can attempt to pick off the runner at their base, and it is a force out. If the catcher attempts a pick-off, all runners must "tag up," but the ball remains live and runners may advance at their own risk.

### Overthrow Rules:

- **1st/2nd Grade Division:** the play is called dead immediately. Runners return to the last base they touched when the play was ruled dead.
  - **3rd Grade - 8th Grade Divisions:** the ball remains live unless it goes out of play. If it does go out play, runners advance two bases from where they were at the time of the throw.
- 

### PITCHING RULES (3th–8th Grade Divisions)

- Pitchers may pitch a maximum of four innings per game. One pitch counts as one inning.
  - One foot must be on the rubber at the start of the pitching motion.
  - Hit-by-pitch is a ball; not a walk.
- 

### EXTRA INNINGS & TIES

- If a game is tied and time allows, extra innings must be played.
  - In the second extra inning, the last out from the previous inning will start on second base.
  - If no time remains, the game will end in a tie.
- 

### OBSTRUCTION & INTERFERENCE

- **Obstruction** occurs when a fielder, without possession of the ball and not in the act of fielding it, impedes the progress of a runner. The umpire may award the runner the next base—or more—if they determine the runner would have advanced without the obstruction.
  - **Interference** occurs when a runner or batter interferes with a fielder trying to make a play on a batted or thrown ball. The interfering player is out, and other runners may be returned to the last base they touched, at the time of the interference.
- 

### APPEALS & BASELINE VIOLATIONS

- **Appeals:** If a runner misses a base, the defensive team may appeal by tagging the base or the runner and clearly informing the umpire what their intention is (no accidental appeals). It must be done before the next pitch or play.
- **Out of Baseline:** A runner is out if they go more than three feet outside their direct path to the next base. This is only when trying to avoid a tag (out of the baseline cannot be called when the runner is not actively trying to avoid a tag).

- **Two Runners on the Same Base:** If two runners occupy the same base at the same time, the lead runner has the right to the base. The trailing runner is out if tagged, unless the lead runner was forced to advance.
- 

### Playing Time Rules (All Divisions)

- No player may sit out a second time until all players on the team have sat once.
- No player may pitch more than four total innings per game, including innings in 1st/2nd Grade where they are acting as the "pitcher" during coach-pitch.
- Every player must play at least one inning in the infield and one inning in the outfield each game.

**Note:** There will be no retroactive penalties for earlier playing time violations. However, if an issue arises, the umpire and coach will work together to correct it for future innings.

---

### DIVISION-SPECIFIC RULES

#### 1st/2nd Grade Division

- **Field Size:** 50-foot bases
  - **Pitching:** Coach-pitch — 4 strikes or 8 pitches (foul balls don't count after 6 pitches)
  - **Fielding:** Play is dead when pitcher has possession near the mound; runners return to last base touched
  - **Overthrows:** Ball is dead immediately; runners return to last base touched
  - **Base Running:** No leading
- 

#### 3rd/4th Grade Division

- **Field Size:** 30-foot mound, 55-foot bases
  - **Pitching:** Player-pitch begins
  - **Fielding:** Play is dead once pitcher steps on the mound; runners return to last base touched
  - **Overthrows:** Ball is live unless it goes out of play; runners get 2 bases from time of throw
  - **Base Running:** No leading
- 

#### 5th/6th Grade Division

- **Field Size:** 33-foot mound, 60-foot bases
- **Fielding:** Ball remains live unless umpire grants time

- **Overthrows:** Same as 3rd/4th — ball is live unless out of play; 2 bases if it goes out
  - **Base Running:** No leading
  - **Pitching:** Same as 3rd/4th
- 

### **7th/8th Grade Division**

- **Field Size:** 36-foot mound, 65-foot bases
- **Base Running:**
  - Leading is allowed once the pitcher begins their motion
  - Catcher can attempt pickoff; it is a force out
  - If catcher throws, all runners must “tag up”; ball remains live and runners may advance at their own risk at that point

**It would be impossible to cover every potential situation in this rulebook. If you have a question about a specific rule or scenario, please contact the league for clarification.**