



NORTH LIBERTY CORALVILLE BASEBALL & SOFTBALL

Junior League Baseball & Softball Rules of the Game

updated 3.13.26

	<u>GENERAL RULES:</u>	
1	General	<p><u>Baseball:</u> Play is governed by Official Rules of USSA (2019). [beginning at Rule 7.0], except as amended herein. In case of conflict with the 2019 USSA rules, these amendments will be followed. Those rules may be found at https://www.ussa.com/docs/baseball/ussa_bb_rules.pdf</p> <p><u>Softball:</u> All games will be played according to the Official rules of USSA Softball (2019). rules, except as amended herein. In case of conflict with the ASA rules, these amendments will be followed. https://ussa.com/docs/fastpitch/fastpitch_rules.pdf</p>
2	Playing Field	<p>The batter's box is a 3' x 6' rectangle with its inner edge 4" from home plate. The batter's box shall extend 3' forward and 3' backward from the center of home plate.</p> <p>A double "safety base" will be used at 1st base. The orange part of the base placed to extend into foul territory is for the batter running from home to 1st base only. All other rules for 1st base apply only to the "normal" white part of the base. The fielder can only use the white base.</p> <p><u>Baseball:</u> The pitching rubber will be 40' from the back of home plate.</p> <p><u>Softball:</u> The pitching rubber will be 35' from the back of home plate.</p> <p>Base lengths will be 60' in both leagues.</p>
3	Coaching Staff	<p>No more than two (2) base coaches and one (1) coach-pitcher are allowed on the playing field during the game when their team is at bat. All coaches must be in uniform when on the playing field. If a uniform is not available, a shirt that is close to the team's uniform color should be worn. If this is not possible, prior to the game the team must notify the umpire and the other team that this person is acting as a coach.</p> <p>No use of tobacco in the dugouts or on the playing field is allowed.</p>
4	Umpire Equipment	<p>Umpires must wear protective gear including, but not limited to, shin pads, a chest protector, and a face mask.</p>
5	Player Equipment	<p>Catchers must wear full protective gear (i.e., helmet /mask with throat protector, chest protector, and shin guards) during practices and games while a batter is in the batter's box, or while warming up the pitcher at any time. (I.e. at the beginning of an inning, on the sidelines between innings, or during a practice). This does not apply to coaches warming up pitchers.</p> <p>Any player on the offensive team who is outside of the dugout on the playing field must wear a batting helmet with ear protectors.</p> <p>No team or player may alter a player's uniform shirt.</p>



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6	Uniform Requirements	Players may wear sliding pads or sliding shorts and mouth guards are encouraged. Players cannot wear steel spikes or loose jewelry such as earrings, chains or bracelets. The only jewelry allowed is a watch or medic alert bracelet/necklace. Earring posts are allowed. Dangling earrings are not allowed.
7	Uniforms - Pitchers	<p><u>Baseball:</u> Anyone playing the position of Pitcher may not wear any long sleeves that are the same or similar color as the ball being pitched. Pitching sleeves, compression sleeves, or any long sleeved undershirts are included in the exclusionary nature of this rule. Nothing in this rule will prevent a pitcher from wearing any of the previously mentioned garments so long as the color of the garment is distinctly different from the color of the ball they are attempting to pitch. This rule is only intended for the pitching position. A player in violation of this uniform rule may still play any other position on the field. Further, this rule does not apply to the NLYBS issued uniform/shirt or hat issued the player by the NLYBS, but would apply to any other garment to be worn that was not provided by NLYBS.</p> <p><u>Softball:</u> Anyone playing the position of Pitcher may not wear any socks, softball pants, or shorts that are the same color as the ball being pitched. If any player has socks that are the same or similar color as the ball, long pants must be worn to cover the socks in their entirety. If the player is wearing pants or shorts that are the same or similar color as the ball, that player will not be allowed to pitch until they change their pants or shorts. This rule is only intended for the pitching position. A player in violation of this uniform rule may still play any other position on the field.</p>
8	Eligible Players	Under no circumstance is a player who is not currently registered with NLCBS allowed to play or participate in any NLCBS game. This rule is applicable regardless of any agreement between the coaches of any particular teams. This rule does not affect the ability of a team to “borrow” a registered player from another team to meet the minimum player requirements for a game, so long as the opponent’s coach does not object and is given adequate notice prior to the commencement of that game.
9	Players in the game	All players present are in the batting order. 10 defensive players are allowed on the field. (A traditional infield and 4 outfielders). Outfielders must be in the outfield grass until pitcher has released the ball. In a situation where the grass is farther than a normal field, an exception may be made. If an exception is to be made it must be discussed and agreed upon by both coaches and umpire prior to the start of the game. No player shall sit out more than 2 innings per game, except in case of injury. (All players should play at least 1/2 of the game). A team must have at least 6 players to play a game.



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10	Players' location	All fields: the third base side dugouts are considered the HOME team and the 1 st base side dugouts are considered the VISITORS team. All players must stay within the playing field or in the dugout area at all times during league games except with the permission of the manager or coach.
11	Players' Attire	Players may wear sliding pads or sliding shorts and mouth guards are encouraged. Players cannot wear steel spikes or loose jewelry such as earrings, chains or bracelets. The only jewelry allowed is a watch or medic alert bracelet/necklace. Earring posts are allowed. Dangling earrings are not allowed.
12	Game Length	A complete game will be 6 innings or 100 minutes (whichever comes first). The home team shall record the game starting time with the umpire. No new inning is to begin with fewer than ten minutes left in the game (a new inning is considered to have begun immediately after the third out is made in the preceding inning). Any inning that starts after 90 minutes will automatically be the last inning.
13	Double Headers	Early games: 5:30-7:00 (90 minutes). Late games: 7:15-8:45 (90 minutes). Teams in early games must vacate the dugout immediately following the game (post game talks outside fences). When an early and a late game are scheduled, no new inning beginning 70 minutes after the game start time. The early game will NOT go into extra innings, nor have its time limit exceeded even if the game results in a TIE. The home team shall record the game starting time with the umpire.
14	Darkness	If darkness threatens, the umpire will announce prior to the start of an inning that this will be the last inning. Regardless of how little or long it takes to play the final inning, the game is officially ended.
15	Weather	Three complete innings (or two and one-half innings if the home team is leading) will constitute a legal game if the game is called by the umpire due to darkness, time limit, or bad weather. When lightning is witnessed, the game will be delayed 20 minutes. If any additional lightning is seen in the first 10 minutes of the delay, the game will be called.
16	Mercy Rule	No mercy rule will be in effect for these games.
17	Tie Games:	For all games in which a winner must be determined (i.e. tournament games), the international tie breaker rule will be enforced. ITB: The last batter of the previous inning will be placed on second base with 0 outs.



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18	Run Limits	<p><u>Baseball</u>: There is a limit of five (5) runs per inning for each team and the inning will be declared over by the plate umpire when the fifth run crosses home plate. This rule will be in effect for all innings, including the last or final inning in regular games.</p> <p>In <u>tournament play</u>, this rule will be suspended in the last or final inning as declared by the umpire, and the last inning shall not have a run limit, in Junior Baseball.</p> <p><u>Softball</u>: There is a limit of five (5) runs per inning for each team and the inning will be declared over by the plate umpire when the fifth (5th) run crosses home plate. There will be no open inning in Senior Softball. This rule shall continue into tournament play for Junior Softball.</p> <p>This run rule limit shall be in effect in all innings of play, including the designated “Last Inning”</p>
	<u>DEFENSIVE RULES:</u>	
19	Balks	<p>The pitcher cannot balk. In the event of a balk, a no-pitch will be called and the ball becomes dead. Players will return to their previous occupied bases and the play will start over.</p>
20	Pitchers/Catchers	<p>Pitchers may not pitch more than 2 innings in a game. Innings pitched must be consecutive. A pitcher who has pitched at least one pitch to a batter is considered to have pitched for one inning.</p> <p><u>Baseball</u>: Pitchers must be in contact with the pitching rubber from the start of the wind-up or stretch and must remain in contact with the pitching rubber until the point of release of the ball.</p> <p><u>Softball</u>: The pitching motion in ASA softball starts with one or both feet in contact with the pitching rubber. Pitchers must have one foot (the pivot foot) in contact with the pitching rubber, the other may be on the rubber or anywhere behind it. Pitchers may step back or start with their stride foot behind the rubber. Once the motion to pitch has begun it must be completed by delivering a pitch. Raising the foot off the pitching plate and returning it to the plate creates a rocking motion and is an illegal act. Pushing off and dragging the pivot foot in contact with the ground is allowed. If a hole has been created, the pivot foot may drag no higher than the level plane of the ground.</p> <p>Catchers shall remain in the catcher’s box/behind the batters’ boxes until the pitcher releases the ball.</p>
21	No Dropped Third Strike	<p>A batter will be out upon the occurrence of a third strike, regardless of the catcher’s ability to maintain control of the ball, and that batter shall be out with no opportunity to advance or steal of first base.</p>



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		<p>If the batter foul tips the third strike, and the catcher fails to maintain control or catch that ball, that pitch shall be a foul ball and the batter shall earn another pitch. If a foul tipped third strike is caught by the catcher, the batter shall be out.</p> <p>This rule shall apply to both Junior Baseball and Junior Softball. In essence, the “Dropped Third Strike” rule is not in effect for this league.</p>
22	Infield fly	The Infield Fly Rule is not valid for this league.
23	Pitch	<p>A pitch constitutes any movement by the pitcher, done from the set position on the pitching rubber, whereby the ball leaves the pitcher’s immediate possession, towards home plate. Any action, done by the pitcher, that does not meet this definition, will not be considered a pitch.</p>
24	Pitching Rotation	<p>In order to facilitate more depth in pitching, every player on the roster must pitch, unless the coach has received a written request from the parent(s) of a player choosing to opt out of the pitching rotation. A player may not pitch on a second or subsequent turn through the rotation until every player on the team has had a turn to pitch their turn through the rotation. Every rotation of pitching must include every player having pitched in a game before a coach may begin a new rotation. The specific pitching order in each rotation need not be the same through every rotation, but the coach of the team must keep a written record of the pitching rotation, the games and inning each player pitched and be prepared to present this record to the commissioner of the league upon request.</p> <p>All player waivers must be turned into the Commissioner of the Junior League Baseball or Softball prior to the team’s next scheduled game after the waiver has been executed.</p> <p>This rule will be suspended during the end of the season tournament.</p>
25	Defensive Positioning	<p>Players are expected to play at every position in the field. If a player plays the outfield in one inning, they must play an infield position in the subsequent inning and a player may not play more than two consecutive innings in the infield. Infield positions consist of First Base, Second Base, Third Base, Shortstop, Catcher, and Pitcher. Outfield positions consist of Left field, Left-Center field, Right-Center field, and Right field. Should a player sit out a defensive inning due to injury or player rotations because of team size, the above noted rule shall apply to those innings in which the player is in the field defensively.</p> <p>This rule shall apply unless the coach has received a written request from the parent(s) of a player choosing to opt out participation in this rule.</p> <p>All player waivers must be turned into the Commissioner of the Junior League Baseball or Softball prior to the team’s next scheduled game after the waiver has been executed.</p> <p>This rule will be suspended during the end of the season tournament.</p>



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26	Coach Conference	The second trip by the coach to the pitcher's mound within the same inning will result in an automatic change in pitchers. This rule is not applicable to the "coach-pitcher" subject of rule 28.
27	Defensive Obstruction	Defensive players without the ball must yield right of way to base runners. This includes the orange base at first base. If obstruction occurs, the runner shall be awarded the base they previously occupied, and may be awarded the next base, subject to umpire discretion.
28	No Walk/Coach Pitching	<p>No player shall walk on four (4) pitched balls. Once the pitcher has pitched four (4) called balls, the batter's coach is then granted up to three (3) pitches. The batter will be out if they do not put the ball in play after three (3) coach pitches. Each pitch shall count as a strike (regardless of whether the pitch is foul-tipped or taken for a called strike, and regardless of the location of the pitch in the strike zone), with the exception that a batter may not strike out on a foul-tipped third strike that is not caught by the catcher. <i>Any foul-tipped third strike that is not caught by the catcher, shall earn the batter another pitch.</i></p> <p>The coach must pitch with at least one foot in contact with the portable pitching mound.</p> <p>Stolen bases are not allowed when the coach is pitching.</p> <p>All coaches must pitch with one foot in contact with the pitching mound.. Coaches may take one (1) step forward, but no more than 1 step.</p>
	<u>OFFENSIVE RULES:</u>	
28	Batting Lineups	All players in attendance shall be placed in the batting order, whether or not they are playing one of the defensive positions. If a player arrives anytime within the first 30 minutes of the start of the game, their name shall be added to the bottom of the batting order. The Coach must notify the official Scorekeeper and Umpire upon the player's arrival. If the player arrives after the first 30 minutes of the game, they are not eligible to play in that game.
29	Batting Out of Turn	If a player that has batted at least once and cannot take their turn batting for any reason, they will be declared out for their next at bat. Subsequent batting turns will result in no additional penalties (i.e., they are only out the first time). It is the responsibility of the coach to notify the umpire and the other team coach(s) prior to the player's turn at bat. Otherwise an extra out will be given if discovered after another player has batted.
30	Regulation Bats	<u>Baseball</u> : Any traditional baseball bat will be allowed. Certification from any organization is not required.



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		<p><u>Softball</u>: Any traditional softball bat will be allowed. Certification from any organization is not required.</p> <p>Determination of what constitutes a “baseball bat” or “softball bat” is entirely up to the home plate umpire’s discretion, but these terms shall be interpreted liberally.</p>
31	Bat Throwing	No bat throwing is allowed. First offense is a warning to the player. The team and coach are notified. Second offense may be an automatic out. A player’s attempt to remove the bat out of the field of play shall not be construed as a violation of this rule.
32	Balls, Strikes & Hit by Pitch	<p>All at bats will begin with a 1-1 count, no walks.</p> <p>There are no limits on the number of 2-strike foul balls a batter may hit.</p> <p>A batter, while still in the batter’s box, who is struck by a pitch, whether that pitch has bounced in the dirt or struck the batter on the fly, shall be awarded first base.</p>
33	Sliding	Base runners must attempt to avoid contact when running bases and infielders must attempt to avoid contact with the base runner. Any flagrant attempt by a base runner to collide with a fielder (including the catcher) will result in the runner being called out and, at the umpire’s discretion, may result in that player’s ejection from the game. There is no automatic out for not sliding, safe play is the goal. A player shall never slide head first or slide into first base.
34	Required Slide at Home Plate	<p>Any time there is potentially a play at home plate the base runner must choose the safest play; slide into the plate, give themselves up for an out, or make every effort to avoid a collision at home plate. If the defensive team is not attempting to make a play at home plate, then no slide is necessary. If the defensive team makes any attempt to secure an out at home plate, the baserunner must either slide, give themselves up, or make every effort to avoid a collision.</p> <p>This rule will even apply to situations where the catcher does not secure the ball at home plate but where the defensive team is attempting to make an out at home plate. Any violation of this rule will result in an automatic out at the plate, regardless of a play being made for an out, and all runners still on the base paths may no longer advance past the last base they had safely achieved.</p>
35	Rounding first base	All runners should turn towards foul territory (runner’s right). Base runners turning left towards 2 nd base will not be considered an attempt unless they make a significant move towards 2 nd base. Umpires have been instructed to give the base runner the benefit of the doubt, as players at this level sometimes turn to the left even when there is no intent to advance towards 2 nd base. Base runners making a significant move towards 2 nd base will be called out if they are tagged, unless on a base.



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36	On base rule	<p>Base runners must start with one foot touching the base, may not run until the pitched ball has crossed home plate or hits the ground and may advance only one base on any passed ball. A player may advance only one base on the first overthrow during a play (i.e. runners must stay at base on any subsequent overthrows if they have already advanced one base due to a previous overthrow on that particular play). An overthrow to the pitcher is not considered an overthrown ball. A player may not advance a base once the ball has reached the pitching circle (10' radius around pitching rubber).</p> <p><i>Example: With a runner on 1st base, the batter hits a ground ball to second base. The second baseman throws toward second base to attempt a force, but the throw goes into left field. The runner that started at 1st base touches 2nd base and advances toward 3rd base. Meanwhile, the batter-runner touches 1st base and advances toward 2nd base. The left fielder throws the ball to 2nd base in an attempt to put out the batter-runner, but the throw goes into right field. The runners must stay at 2nd base and 3rd base, as they have already advanced one base due to an overthrow on this play.</i></p>
37	Stealing	<p>Base runners may not steal more than one base per batter.</p> <p><i>Example: The runner on first base may steal second base on a pass ball at home. The runner now may not steal another base until another batter has come up to the plate. When the next batter comes up to bat the runner on second base may steal third base.</i></p> <p>Players can not advance an extra base on an overthrown ball on a steal.</p> <p>Home is closed. Players will not be allowed to steal home.</p> <p>Home plate will be closed to all baserunners for steals, passed balls, wild pitches, pick off attempts, attempts to throw out an attempted base stealer, or on any throws back to the pitcher on a pitch or any of the forgoing instances of this paragraph.</p> <p>Home plate will only be open during the continuation of a batted ball in play, a batted foul ball caught for an out, or when a runner at third is forced home on a bases loaded walk, bases loaded hit by pitch, or a bases loaded catcher's interference.</p>
38	Courtesy Runner	<p>When there are 2 outs, the last person out may be used as a courtesy runner for the catcher. This is so that the catcher can be ready to play within the 2 minute warm-up time. A courtesy runner may be substituted for an injured player after the injured player has reached base safely.</p>
39	Coach Interference	<p>Base coaches may not touch players when the ball is in play. Coach interference results in the runner being called out. Coaches may not be on the field of play when the ball is in play. This rule is not applicable to the "coach-pitcher" subject of rule 28.</p>



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40	No Walk/Coach Pitching	<p>No player shall walk on four (4) pitched balls. Once the pitcher has pitched four (4) called balls, the batter's coach is then granted up to three (3) pitches. The batter will be out if they do not put the ball in play after three (3) coach pitches. Each pitch shall count as a strike (regardless of whether the pitch is foul-tipped or taken for a called strike, and regardless of the location of the pitch in the strike zone), with the exception that a batter may not strike out on a foul-tipped third strike that is not caught by the catcher. <u>Any foul-tipped third strike that is not caught by the catcher, shall earn the batter another pitch.</u></p> <p>The coach must pitch with at least one foot on the rubber.</p> <p>Stolen bases are not allowed when the coach is pitching.</p> <p>All coaches must pitch from the pitching rubber. Coaches may take one (1) step forward, but no more than 1 step.</p>
41	Stealing on Ball Four	<p>Stealing of a base is allowed on a fourth player pitched ball, until such time as the ball is returned to the player pitcher and that player pitcher has then transferred the ball to the coach pitcher. If a baserunner attempts to steal a base prior to the player pitcher transfer to the coach pitcher, the ball shall still be considered live. If the catcher or any other player shall attempt to transfer the ball to the coach pitcher, the ball shall still be considered live for the baserunner to steal and the coach pitcher must return the ball to the same player that originally transferred them the ball.</p> <p>In other words, the only way the ball may become a "dead ball" in order for the baserunners to no longer have the option to steal a base is when the player pitcher transfers the ball to the coach pitcher. Until such time as this transfer is accomplished, a baserunner may steal a base in accordance with <u>NLCBS Junior League Rule No. 37.</u></p> <p>Once the player-pitcher has the ball, and is within the immediate area of the pitching rubber, the umpire should at that point call for time so the transfer of the ball to the coach-pitcher may be executed.</p>
	<u>MISCELLANEOUS RULES:</u>	
42	Delay of Game	<p>No more than 2 minutes, or 3 practice pitches, will be taken for warm up between innings. After 2 minutes the umpire will wait 20 seconds and begin calling balls if the pitching team is not ready or calling strikes if the batter is not ready (Exceptions may be made for the catcher to get gear on/off).</p>
43	Pace of Game – Coaches challenges	<p>Each team is permitted to request up to two (2) conferences with the umpires during each game (up to four (4) total per game) to seek clarification of rule interpretation, implementation, or enforcement. Once a team has used two conferences, there shall be no further discussions with the umpires called by that team, for any reason.</p>



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44	Tournament Seeding	All Junior teams shall draw for the end of the year tournament seeding on a random basis at the coaches meeting. Seeding shall no longer be based on regular season schedule.
45	Score Keeping	The home team is responsible for keeping the official score book. Both teams are responsible for making sure that the other team has a current and official team batting roster. Once the game starts any changes must be made to the official book.
47	Cancelled and Rescheduled Games	When a game is cancelled for any reason the makeup game must be rescheduled and completed prior to the start of the tournament.
48	Re-Entry of Injured Player	If a player is capable of playing in a game after previously being removed from the game due to injury or illness, that player may re-enter at their previously assigned batting position. Players who were previously removed from the game due to injury or illness may reenter defensively at any time (subject to the limitations of <u>NLYBS Junior Rules No. 24 and No. 25</u> , and need not wait until they have made another plate appearance.
49	Sportsmanship	NLCBS fosters a culture of learning and sportsmanship. Players, coaches and umpires will make mistakes. We do not want to foster a culture of arguments and confrontation. Therefore, coaches, players and spectators are not allowed to argue or challenge calls made by the umpires. Arguing or challenging calls may result in ejection and being escorted from the field. Coaches may discuss umpiring issues with the Head Umpire after the game and the Head Umpire may then instruct umpires, if needed, in a positive coaching environment.
50	Spectators	All spectators are expected to follow the same rules as the coach. Spectators shall never critique or taunt the umpires and or any players or coaches. They shall also not engage in any way except for positive cheering for the players. Any spectator may be ejected by the umpire or commissioner if warranted. Then they need to follow rule #53 for “Coaches or spectator expulsion” for reinstatement back into the league.
51	Taunting or chanting	A player, coach, or team may never taunt another player or team. To do so would be considered unsportsmanlike conduct and the player or team doing the taunting will be warned and possibly ejected from the game if repeated. Chants are allowed from a team as long as they are not derogatory or directed towards an oppositional player. Chants are not allowed once a pitcher has started the pitching motion.
52	Player Expulsion	Any player who is expelled from a game will need to pick up an expulsion letter from the concession stand. They must have it signed by one of their parents/guardians and returned to the concession stand before that player will be allowed to participate in future games.



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53	Coaches or spectator expulsion	<p>If the coach, assistant coach, or spectator is ejected from, or disciplined as a result of an action during a game, he/she will be suspended for their next played game. The coach or assistant cannot be on the field or in the dugout during their suspended game from the time of the umpires meeting with the coach (prior to the game) until the completion of the game. Any violation of this rule will result in forfeiture of this game, as well as being suspended from the next played game and potential further disciplinary action from the NLCBS Board of Directors.</p> <p>The ejected coach or spectator must appeal to the NLCBS Board of Directors in writing requesting to be reinstated and allowed back into the league. The decision of the Board of Directors is final.</p>
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**Any questions or concerns should be directed to
Junior Baseball/Softball League Commissioner or any NLCBS Board Member**