

# 2023 Twin Rivers Softball Rules

## Minors and Majors

*January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023*

1. Current Iowa Girl's High School Athletic Union Official Softball Rules will be followed by the Majors and Minors Divisions except those collectively amended by vote of the league's directors. Twin Rivers will **not** adopt Iowa Girl's High School rule changes **after** the start of the season.
  - All bats used are to be ASA or USSSA certified for player safety.
  - All pitchers and corner infielders are required to have protective face masks. It is recommended that all fielders – regardless of position - have protective face masks.
  - A team must start and play with no less than 7 players at any time during the game otherwise the game will be forfeited, and a 10-0 score will be recorded. All batting lineups must have a minimum 9 batters. For every lineup with less than 9, the coach of such team shall inform the official scorer as to the positions in the batting order he/she desires the absent players to come to bat and when such turn at bat occurs, the umpire shall declare an out.
  - Minors Rules include but are not limited to:
    - No dropped 3rd strike
    - One stolen base per runner allowed per pitch
    - No stealing home unless a throw is made to 3rd base
    - Courtesy runners for catchers are encouraged
    - Bunting is allowed except against coach pitch
  - A copy of the rules can be found at the following website:  
<https://www.ighsau.org/coaches-administrators/softball/>
2. The following rule exceptions will be applied to Twin Rivers League:
  - Participation rule – All players in the lineup must bat, and each player must play defense for a minimum of two innings unless there is an injury, or the game is less than 3 innings. All defensive substitutions in and out of the field are open including the pitcher.
  - There is no inning limit on pitchers.
  - Run rule per inning:
    - Minors - 5 runs
    - Majors - 5 runs
  - Headfirst slides are illegal when advancing to the next base. Runners are allowed headfirst slides back to the previously occupied base. If there is a close play at 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, or home and the runner does not attempt to slide and makes contact with the defensive player, the runner shall be declared out. The definition of an intentional headfirst slide and a close play/contact will be at the umpire's discretion.
  - Pitching rubber will be set from the back point of home plate to the front edge of the pitching rubber at 35 feet for minors and 40 feet for majors.
  - A 16 ft. diameter pitching circle around the pitching rubber is required for both majors and minors.
  - A play becomes dead when the pitcher has control of the ball and one foot is in the 16 ft. diameter circle around the pitching rubber. Any runners must be past the halfway mark to be able to advance to the next base; otherwise they must return to the last base touched.
  - Majors Only – A batter may advance to 1st base on a dropped third strike if either of the following are met:
    - 1st base is unoccupied
    - 1st base is occupied and there are two outs

- Minors Only - Minors can play 10 defensive players however the 10th player cannot play on the infield dirt or grass. The defensive team is only allowed to have 6 players in the infield (including the catcher) prior to the pitch being thrown.
  - Minors Only - After the pitcher has reached a four-ball count, the batting team's coach will pitch to the batter from the pitching rubber until she either hits the ball or strikes out. The strike count will carry from the pitcher to the coach that the batter has already received. The umpire will call strikes using a standard strike zone while the coach is pitching.
    - When a coach is pitching, until the time at which the ball reaches the plate, the pitcher/fielder must have one foot completely inside the 8-foot pitching circle (16 ft. diameter) and must remain behind a line drawn parallel to the front edge of the pitching rubber.
    - If the coach pitching interferes with a batted ball, the ball becomes dead and runners must return to their previous base. The batter who hit the ball will return to the batter's box and re-bat. The pitch will not be counted as a strike or a ball. If the coach interferes with a second batted ball during the same at bat, the ball becomes dead and runners must return to their previous base and the batter is declared out.
  - Minors Only – Bunting is allowed except during coach pitch.
  - Minors Only - If a batter is hit by a player pitch, it is up to the batter and/or batter's coach to advance to 1<sup>st</sup> base (excludes a better hit by a coach pitch). See rule 8 sec 1 letter b in the Iowa Girls Softball Rule book. Batter becomes a Runner- A pitched ball not swung at nor called a strike touches any part of the batter's person or clothing. It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter. The batter's hands are not considered a part of the bat. The penalty is the ball is dead and the batter is entitled to one base without liability to be put out, unless she made no effort to avoid being hit.
  - Minors Only - Stealing of second base or third base is allowed upon the release of the ball from the pitcher but limited to one base per pitch. Even if the catcher makes a play on the runner, only 1 base is allowed. There is no stealing allowed if the coach is pitching.
  - Minors Only - Minors may not steal home unless the catcher or fielder makes a play at third base. A play will be defined as a throw that leaves the catcher's or fielder's hand to third base. Stepping toward a runner or pump faking is not considered a play. Minor players on 3rd base must return to the base once the catcher throws the ball back to pitcher. Some specific, but limited to, instances include:
    - Runner on third. Catcher throws the ball to the third baseman. Runner may advance to home. Catcher has made a play to third.
    - Runner on third. Catcher runs toward the runner. Runner may not advance to home. Catcher has not made a play to third.
    - Runner on third. Catcher throws the ball to the pitcher who proceeds to throw the ball to the third baseman. Runner may advance to home. Fielder has made a play to third.
    - Runner on third. Catcher throws the ball to the pitcher who proceeds to run to the base runner. Runner may not advance to home. Fielder has not made a play to third.
    - Runners on first and third. Runner on first steals second. Catcher throws to second. Runner on third may not advance. Catcher has not made a play to third.
    - Runners on first, second, and third. Catcher throws to first for a pickoff play. Runner on third may not advance to home. Catcher has not made a play to third.
    - Runner on second. Runner steals third. Catcher throws the ball to third. Runner **may not** advance to home.
  - Minors Only – no infield fly rule
3. All teams must submit a final player roster to the league commissioner by April 15<sup>th</sup>. This will consist of players for both Minors and Majors divisions. Each roster can include up to 3 reserve players for in season games. Reserve players are not allowed to play in the tournament unless the current roster is

**below the maximum number of players allowed on the field for defense.** Rosters will be distributed to all town directors and roster challenges must be submitted before the first game.

4. Players normally will be 8 years old or in 2nd grade through 12 years old or 6th grade but cannot be older than 13 years old. However, at the discretion of the coach, town organization, and the player's parents, younger players may play up a level.
5. Players shall play either Minors or Majors, but cannot play on both teams unless numbers warrant them to play on both teams. Minors team colors that are paired with majors colors are automatically eligible to play up. To play on a different colored team, a minors player has to be specifically indicated on the majors lineup and is not eligible for other teams. Indicate those players with an (\*) beside their name on the lineup.
6. Minor games will begin promptly at 5:00 pm and have a 70-minute timer. Once the timer sounds, the inning will be completed unless the home team is winning after visitor inning has completed (three outs). There are no cardbacks (NO scores revert back as inning is always finished to necessary completion). A new inning officially starts after the last pitch of the prior inning.
  - If there is no Major's game following Minor's game, the Minor's game starts at 6:00 pm and have a 70-minute timer. Timer rules will apply as stated above (inning is played to completion after timer sounds)
  - If there is a Minor's game that is shortened by rain (umpire's discretion), an official game is met after 1.5 or 2 innings have been completed (losing team has made at least 6 outs)
7. Major games will consist of 6 innings (traditional extra inning rules apply in the event of a tie after 6 innings), unless the game is any of the following:
  - Shortened by time limit. Majors will have a 1:45 timer. Once the timer sounds, the inning will be completed unless the home team is winning after visitor inning has completed (three outs). A new inning officially starts after the last out of the prior inning.
  - Shortened by darkness (umpire's discretion). No new innings are to begin 20 minutes after "official" sunset time. Official USSSA rules for cessation of game due to darkness will apply. If the game is called in the middle of an inning, the game reverts back to end of previous inning. There will be no exceptions. **Coaches must agree PRIOR to start of the game to extend play if playing under lights.**
  - Shortened by rain (umpire's discretion). An official Major's game is met after 2.5 or 3 innings have been completed (losing team has made at least 9 outs)
  - Shortened by mercy rule. A 15-run mercy rule after 2.5 or 3 innings (losing team has made 9 outs), 10 run mercy rule after 3.5 or 4 innings (losing team has made 12 outs), and an 8 run mercy rule after 4.5 or 5 innings (losing team has made 15 outs).
8. All home Minor/Major games **are strongly encouraged** to be officiated by a certified umpire. Base umpires are upon a coach's or umpire's request and will be provided by the visiting team (or coach's agreement for home team). A responsible adult will be selected who does not need to be certified. The certified home plate umpire can overrule the base umpire.
9. Home teams will provide game softballs. Minors shall use an 11" yellow leather softball. Majors shall use a 12" yellow leather softball.
10. Three coaches are allowed per team and in the dugout. Two coaches are allowed on the field when their team is up to bat (unless during coach pitch where all three coaches may be on the field – one pitcher and two base coaches). The three coaches must be determined at the same date as the final

rosters are due. In the event a substitute coach is needed, it must be communicated to the other team prior to the game. Substitute coaches are not allowed to coach pitch.

11. Every town in Twin Rivers Little League will hold a genuine draft. They may have two coaches per team with sons/grandsons on their respective teams to start with. Once they begin to choose players, it will be in a fashion of a true draft where one team picks from the “pool” of players alternately with each coach from other teams. All drafts will pool players from their communities collectively and draft out of that pool. “Pooling” of players are not by age. If players are playing in a certain division, then all players shall be “pooled” together. Example: 3rd & 4th graders shall be “pooled” together in the Minor Division as well as 5th & 6th graders shall be “pooled” together in the Major Division (this will eliminate teams of having all 6th graders on one team).
12. Make Up Policy – If there is a rainout or cancellation for any reason, the home team coach is responsible for rescheduling with the opposing coach. The home team coach must attempt to reschedule within 1 week of the cancelled game. The rescheduled game does not have to be played within 1 week however the makeup date must be set in this period of time. The home team field does not have to be used for the makeup. If no standard time is available in the attempts to reschedule between the two teams, the home team must record the game as a scratch/permanent cancel on the league system.
  - If the home team does not attempt to coordinate a rescheduled date within one week of the initial cancellation, the visiting team can submit a request to the commissioner for review to be awarded a forfeit. The attempt must include at least one e-mail AND one phone call or message to the opposition coach.
  - If the visiting team does not respond to the home team’s rescheduled date request, the home team can submit a request to the commissioner for review to be awarded a forfeit. The attempt must include at least one e-mail AND one phone call or message to the opposition coach.
  - Any final considerations on forfeits by the commissioner will include but not be limited to the following: home/away team rescheduling attempts, number of cancellations during the season due to weather, cancellation timing, etc.
13. League Standings – Either the home or visiting team may enter in the final score of the game into the league website. Please complete this no later than 1 week after the completion of the game in order to maintain the accuracy of league win/loss standings. The home team ultimately maintains the final book and therefore will be used for any score discrepancies.
14. All end of year tournament costs including umpires, trophies, and supplies should be divided equally amongst the number of participating teams.
15. If the umpire feels a spectator is displaying excessive protests, arguments, complaints or behavior not appropriate in a recreational setting, the umpire will notify the coach of the offending team’s spectator. That coach will give one warning to that spectator. If there is a second incident with the same spectator, the umpire will again notify the coach and the coach will ask the spectator to leave the game.