

RAMMS SOFTBALL FRESHMAN LEAGUE RULES Revised February 2026

1.0 **PURPOSE:** The intent of the program is to provide clean, wholesome recreation for a maximum number of youngsters. Adults who are involved have the opportunity, through their words and actions, to assist young people in learning to win, as well as lose, while preparing the youngsters for further softball opportunities during their careers.

2.0 **ELIGIBILITY.** Children in second grade and under are eligible to play in the freshman softball league. A child in another grade may play in the league upon the request of a parent only if approved by the league commissioner.

3.0 **PARTICIPATION:** *It is the policy of RAMMS that all players have the opportunity to play at least three of the first five innings of every game in the field.* All players must play at least every other inning in the field on defense, disciplinary action notwithstanding.

4.0 **GAME RULES:** Games are played according to the USSSA Softball Fast Pitch Rules, except as modified herein. The RAMMS Code of Conduct is incorporated herein.

5.0 **BATTING**

5.1 Batting will be on a bat-a-round basis. All players on the roster who appear for the game and who are not injured will be listed in the batting order and will be given the opportunity to bat in their turn.

5.2 If a player arrives late, their name will be added to the bottom of the batting order.

5.3 If a player is injured or becomes sick during the game and can no longer play in the game, the injured or sick player will not be called out at any time that player would come to bat in the lineup, but no substitute will be allowed to play and the team must finish the game with its remaining players. The player may re-enter the game, but must resume the place in the batting order she occupied before the injury.

5.4 Players are **not** allowed to bunt.

5.5 All wood bats are permitted. All non-wood bats must be stamped or otherwise permissible under the most current ASA, USSSA, ISA, ISF or NSA standards.

5.6 A player stepping out of the batter's box will not be called out.

5.7 Six Run Rule. A team's time at bat shall end after the earlier of three outs or the team scores six (6) runs in any half inning; provided that if the team was losing when the team's time at bat began, the team may score as many runs as necessary to tie the score plus an additional six (6) runs; provided further that the six (6) run rule shall not limit the number of runs that can score while the ball is in play (for example, if a team is up five (5) runs with bases loaded and the

batter hits a home run, all four (4) runs will count).

6.0 **FIELDING**

6.1 Teams will field ten (10) players defensively with four (4) players positioned in the outfield at the same general depth and at a minimum of twenty feet (20) away from the infield baseline.

6.2 Base paths and pitching mounds are located as follows:

Base path: 45 ft.

Pitching mound: 35 ft.

6.3 When a thrown ball is (i) thrown or deflected outside the playing area, (ii) thrown over the outfield fence, or (iii) into the stands or dugout, all runners are entitled to advance to the base they were running. If the base runner has already passed the halfway point identified by the hash mark between the bases, the runner will advance one additional base (two bases from their original position).

6.4 Coaches pitch to their teams for all games.

6.5 A batter shall receive a maximum seven (7) pitches or three strikes per at bat. A batter shall receive additional pitches only when the batter fouls the seventh pitched ball or later pitches. A batter may not run to first base on a dropped third strike. If deemed by the umpire that the seventh pitch is not hittable, an additional pitch may be granted.

6.6 If the umpire determines that a batted ball that strikes the pitching coach (buckets, lids, etc. are part of the coach) was unavoidable, the play shall be ruled dead. The batter will be awarded first base and all other base runners will advance one base.

If at the discretion of the umpire a batted ball that strikes the pitching coach was avoidable or no effort was made to avoid contact with the ball, an out shall be awarded, play shall be ruled "no pitch" (not a strike, not a ball and not counted as one of the 7 pitches) and all runners must go back to the base from where they began the play.

6.7 Prior to the ball being pitched, the pitcher player shall not be any closer to home plate than the pitching coach with one foot on the nine (9) foot circle line to the first base or third base side of the pitching coach.

6.8 Any defensive play on the third base side of the pitching coach that results in a throw unavoidably striking the pitching coach who remains upright or in the line of the throw being attempted shall result in the base runners remaining in the position they were in prior to the play and the batter shall be deemed out.

6.9 The pitching coach will not field the position *and will do his/her best to avoid any balls hit in his/her direction.*

6.10 The pitching coach must pitch from 35 foot distance and remain inside the circle with one foot on the rubber while releasing the pitch. They should throw the ball underhand and as flat (parallel to the ground) as possible.

6.11 No glove restrictions.

7.0 BASE RUNNING

7.1 Bases may not be stolen by base runners. The base runner may not leave the base until the pitched ball has been hit by the batter. A base runner leaving the base before the ball has been hit will be called out after one warning to the player.

7.2 The infield fly rule will not be in effect.

7.3 If a base runner deliberately runs into a defensive player in an attempt to cause the defensive player to drop the ball, the runner will be called out, the play called dead, the hitter awarded first base and the runner called out.

7.4 If a defensive player blocks the base or impedes the base runner without possession of the ball or while not in the process of receiving the ball the runner will be awarded the base to which the runner was proceeding.

7.5 The catcher may not block home plate without the ball in her possession.

7.6 A runner who makes a head first slide will be called out, except if the slide is made to return to a base the runner has reached safely.

7.7 Whenever a defensive player is about to receive the ball or has the ball and is waiting to make a tag at a base, all base runners must slide to avoid physical contact. Any runner violating this rule will be called out.

7.8 Advancement of the base runners is stopped when an infielder has controlled possession of the ball in hand or glove and is positioned in the infield. The base runner may still be put out while attempting to advance or retreat with no risk of error by the defensive team. If the base runner is deemed by the umpire to have advanced beyond the midpoint between bases when the infielder gained controlled possession of the ball, the base runner may advance only as far as the next base past midpoint but at her own risk of being put out by the defensive team and with no risk of error by the defensive team. If the umpire finds that the base runner had not advanced beyond the midpoint between bases when the infielder gained possession of the ball, the base runner is still at risk of being put out while advancing or retreating with no risk of error by the defensive team and may not advance to the next base past midpoint.

7.9 Hash marks are to be placed midway between first and second base and second and third base, and third base and home, to help the umpire make a better decision if a

base runner is past the halfway mark and deserves to advance to that base pursuant to the rules set forth above.

- 7.10 Field Layout. The field will be defined by the chain link backstop and the outfield fence and chalk lines connecting the backstop and the fence. A chalk line, cones, or other marker will mark the limits of the outfield if there is no fence. Any ball crossing this line will be considered a two-base hit and all runners will advance two bases. Any ball that is clearly hit over the chalk line in the air will be a homerun.

8.0 GENERAL RULES

- 8.1 A game shall consist of six (6) innings and no extra innings will be played (except for playoffs).
- 8.2 A new inning will not start if 1 hour and 30 minutes has expired.
- 8.3 An inning starts immediately after the third out of the preceding inning.
- 8.4 All innings started prior to one and one-half hours (1 1/2) will be completed. There is no drop-dead time. The game can end in a tie during regular season, but not playoffs.
- 8.5 During the playoffs, at least six (6) innings shall be played provided, however, no new inning will start after 1.5 hours have expired. All innings started prior to 1.5 hours will be completed. In the event the score is tied after the last completed inning; the next inning will begin under the RAMMS California Tie Breaker rule.

The RAMMS California Tie Breaker Rule requires the last out of the previous inning to be placed as a base runner at second base with one (1) out, and full innings will be played until a winner is determined.

- 8.6 The umpire will maintain an official game clock and the home team's official scorekeeper should record the time the first pitch is thrown in the official scorebook.
- 8.7 Any intentional "delays" or "speed-ups" of the game to circumvent the time limit rules may result in forfeiture by the offending team at the discretion of the umpire.
- 8.8 All play must stop no later than 8:45 p.m. (M-TR) and 9:45p.m. (Fri-Sat).
- 8.9 Coaches are encouraged to have their teams run on and off the field between innings. The umpire will allow no more than two minutes to elapse between the last out and the first pitch when the teams change field positions.
- 8.10 Minimum Number of Players and Substitute Players. A team must have at least eight (8) of its own team members present on the field at the time the game is scheduled to begin or the team forfeits the game to its opponent if the opponent complies with this requirement. If a team has less than ten (10), but at least eight (8) of its roster

players at the start of the game, the team may use a substitute player from another team in the RAMMS Freshman Softball leagues with the following restrictions:

1. A substitute player may not play for any one team on such team's consecutive games. A team may only use the same player twice during the entire season.
2. A substitute player must play in the outfield and bat only after all regular players have batted.
3. If a roster player arrives late, the player must be immediately put into the game for the substitute player.
4. If a team is not going to have ten (10) of their own players for a game, they may "call up" players from another team as follows:

(a) teams may only use second graders and younger from their own division, **excluding** first and second round draft picks.

(b) any player that is asked to help out and shows up for a game must be permitted to play;

(c) any Head Coach that uses a player from another team must list both the called up player(s) name and team name to the league Commissioner before the game to get approval. Both first and last names should be listed. This information will be recorded and maintained by the league Commissioner or his/her designee. Updated listings of all called up players will be provided to the coaches upon request.

5. A team should not call up a player if they expect ten (10) of their own. In no case may a team call up more than two (2) players.
6. Any violation of any part of this rule shall result in an automatic FORFEIT of the game in which the violation occurred.
7. The intent of this rule is to prevent a team from forfeiting when players are missing. It is NOT to build a super team.

- 8.11 HOME TEAM is responsible for keeping the official scorebook and will record in real-time, at a minimum, batting order, runs scored, outs, and a count (strikes and number of pitches per batter). Will sit in the third base dugout. Be responsible for trash pick-up in and around their dugout.
- 8.12 VISITOR TEAM will sit in the first base dugout and be responsible for trash pick-up in and around their dugout.
- 8.13 Modifications. Modifications to the rules where necessary and final interpretation of the rules will be made by the Freshman Girls Softball Commissioner or Director of the league. **Please make sure to read emails to ensure you're caught up on the most recent rules.**

9.0 FIELD DECORUM

- 9.1 Game Sequence. Players and coaches should report to the field at least thirty (30) minutes before game time (as circumstances permit). The Visiting Team may take the field thirty (30) minutes before the game start time for a fifteen (15) minute infield and outfield warm-up. The Home Team may take the field fifteen (15) minutes before the game start time for a fifteen (15) minute infield and outfield warm-up. No live batting practice will be allowed on the field.
- 9.2 Each coach must maintain a copy of the rules at every game. Each team will contribute one (1) new ball and one back-u ball to the umpire as the game balls. The Home Team will enter the final score of the game in their scorebook and report the final score to the League Commissioner within forty-eight (48) hours.
- 9.3 The RAMMS code of Conduct will govern the conduct of all coaches, players, parents, spectators, and officials during RAMMS' sponsored activities. As a condition to attending practices or playing in the RAMMS Softball program, all coaches, players and parents shall acquaint themselves with and agree to abide by the RAMMS Code of Conduct & Discipline & Rules, which can be located on the RAMMS' website at: www.RAMMS.org.
- 9.4 Time-out may be called by the umpire when all legal play has stopped and no further play is possible. Time-out is "granted" by the umpire. It is not "taken" by a coach or player. A time-out may be denied by the umpire when there is no apparent reason for the time-out, or delay of the game is a possibility. A coach may not leave the dugout area until time-out is granted.
- 9.5 Coaches must remain in "the area of the dugout" at all times except during a time out. The "area of the dugout" is defined as inside the dugout or the space that is six (6) feet wide immediately in front of the dugout, and extending four (4) feet beyond the entrance of the dugout.
- 9.6 Appeal. Decisions involving an umpire's proper judgment may not be appealed. In all other circumstances, in order to appeal a play, a coach must do the following:
- (a) When the ball is dead after the play a coach must request a TIME OUT.
 - (b) The Coach may then make his/her appeal directly to the umpire.
 - (c) The umpire then makes the call from the appeal.
- 9.7 An umpire may remove a coach from the game and the vicinity of the playing field and/or remove any spectators from behind the backstop if they protest the umpire's calls or interfere with the proper conduct of the game.
- 9.8 Only coaches and eligible players may be in the dugout area during the game. When a team is at bat, all players except the batter, base runners, base coaches and the on-deck batter will remain in the dugout. Each head coach shall appoint one player, parent or guardian to keep bats and extra equipment in the dugout. Coaches may be base coaches or appoint base coaches.

- 9.9 Delay of game tactics may result in forfeiture.
- 9.10 Good sportsmanship must be exhibited by parents, players and coaches at all times. Players, coaches and parents should be a staunch supporter for their team, encourage individual players, and be polite to the opposing team.
- 9.11 Littering of the grounds with cups, paper, candy wrappers and other debris will not be permitted. All coaches will be responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of the playing fields and dugout areas. Coaches will not allow their players to leave the field until the team has cleaned the area.