

**TIMBERGROVE SPORTS ASSOCIATION SOFTBALL**  
**12U DIVISION RULES**

**GENERAL**

- TSA is following USA Softball rules with some minor modifications to fit our playing fields and age group.
- A regulation game for 12U will consist of seven (7) full innings or 80 minutes, whichever comes first. Time duration during week night games could be modified to accommodate daylight.
- A new inning will not be started after 80 full minutes of play. If a new inning is started before the 80-minute game clock has expired, the inning will be completed.
- A half inning consists of three (3) outs or five (5) runs, whichever comes first.
- If a game is called in the middle of an inning after the 5<sup>th</sup> inning, the score of the game will be that of the last completed inning of play.
- Games that are called before regulation shall be resumed at the exact point that they were stopped.
- A run rule format of 15 after three innings, 12 after four innings, or ten after five innings will be in effect.
- Regular season games that are tied at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning, or 80 minutes, are complete and the game will be recorded as a tie.
- Playoff games that cannot end in a tie will utilize the International Tiebreaker Rule (ITB). The ITB rule states at the end of regulation play if the game is tied, the next inning will follow ITB to guarantee a winner. The last hitter from the previous inning, on the offensive team, will be placed on second base at the beginning of the new ITB inning. Regular play resumes. The ITB rule will be used in each consecutive inning until an inning is completed with one team emerging as the winner.
- A ground rule double will be called if a ball has contact with the ground in fair territory before going outside of the outfield fence. All runners may advance only two bases.
- The infield fly rule will NOT be in effect.
- Dropped third strike rule WILL be in effect.

**SOFTBALL FIELD**

- The distance between the pitcher's rubber and the apex of home plate is 40 feet.
- The distance between bases is 60 feet.
- The double base will be used at first base. This base is 15" x 30" with both sides equal in height. Half of the base is white (over fair territory) and half of the base is of contrasting color (over foul

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territory).

- The pitcher's circle will be an 8-foot radius drawn from the front edge of the pitcher's plate.
- Chalk lines will be required for foul lines, the pitcher's circle, and the batter's box.

**ROSTERS & FIELD POSITIONS**

- Each team's roster will be 9-11 players.
- A team may begin or end a game with 8 players, utilizing 2 outfielders instead of 3. In the event a team plays with 8 players, the vacant position must be listed on the batting line-up, and an out will be recorded when the vacant position is scheduled to bat.
- In the event a team does not have enough players to play shorthanded, the team is allowed to pick up one player. The player must be in the same eligible age group, will play the outfield positions only, and must bat at the bottom of the line-up.
- If a team has less than 8 players show up for a game, the team will forfeit the game.
- There will be nine (9) defensive fielding positions:
  - Pitcher
  - Catcher
  - First Base
  - Second Base
  - Short Stop
  - Third Base
  - Left Field
  - Center Field
  - Right Field

**PLAYING RULES**

- COACHES
  - Players or adult volunteers who engage in unsportsmanlike conduct, such as fighting, abusive language, or similarly derogatory activity, may be suspended for one or more games.
  - One coach can stand/sit outside of the dugout if (s)he is not on the field. Coaches should be in their specified areas on the field, or in the dugout, and cannot try to rattle any of the players. If behavior is seen as being disruptive to the players by the umpires, the coach will receive a warning. Any additional offenses and the coach will be asked to leave the complex.

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- Coaching Positions
  - Defensive Coaches
    - Defensive team coaches are NOT allowed on the field, and must stay in or near the dugout during play. Between innings the coach can direct players of field positions if needed.
  - Offensive Coaches
    - Offensive team coaches are positioned at first and third base.
    - Base coaches are not allowed to physically assist runners at any time (i.e. stopping runners, assisting runners back on base, or pushing runners to the next base). In this event the physically assisted runner will be called out.

**FIELDING**

- The first baseman, pitcher, and catcher are permitted to tag a batter out after the batter hits the ball in play and before the batter touches first base. When any other position endeavors to make an out at first base the ball must be thrown overhand to an eligible player, unless proximity warrants an underhand toss.
- For all other bases, the defensive fielder must throw the ball to get an out, unless she is close to the runner and can easily tag the runner out. The defensive player cannot run around the field to tag a runner out (i.e. short stop running to tag the runner going from first base to second base).
- Ball is considered dead once the defensive team has stopped the lead runner on a base and the ball is returned to the pitcher. The look back rule will be in effect for all base runners.
- Fielders must stand at their intended position location. Major shifts are not allowed.
- It is recommended that players at this level get to know and master a position.

**BENCH PLAYERS**

- No player will sit on the bench twice until all girls on the team have been on the bench at least once.

**PITCHING**

- Pitcher's will pitch the windmill technique as described in the USA Softball official rule book.
- The rules for the pitcher are standard USA softball rules regarding pitcher's. Three strikes is an out and four balls is a walk.
- The pitcher must start with both feet on the pitching rubber. The pitcher may not jump or hop off of the rubber. Her foot must drag off of the pitching rubber and she must execute a legal pitch.

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- Umpires should direct the pitcher to avoid “no pitch” situations on the first offense. After providing direction if the pitcher does not correct her pitch, it is at the umpire’s discretion to call a no pitch. A no pitch will result in the batter being awarded first base.
- If a pitcher hits the batter with her pitch, the batter will NOT be awarded a base unless she makes a clear attempt to avoid being hit by the pitch. These calls are at the umpire’s discretion.
- The pitcher must wear a face mask.
- A coach may change a pitcher twice within one game. A team shall not be allowed to transfer a pitcher back and forth from pitching to fielding in attempts to pair specific pitchers against specific batters. This may be considered unsportsmanlike conduct and subject to disciplinary action.

**CATCHER**

- Catcher’s will be required to wear full protective catcher’s gear at all times during the game. The only exception is removing the helmet in an attempt to catch a pop up or foul ball for an out.

**BATTING**

- The entire roster of players present for a game will bat in rotation.
- All players on each team will bat in a fixed batting order, per the line-ups provided at the beginning of regulation game play. The batting order may not be changed after the start of regulation game play.
- If a player leaves a game willingly for any reason that player’s position in the batting order will be skipped without recording an out. The only exception to this is if the player’s absence drops the team’s roster to 8 players or less, in which case the above mentioned play short rule will be effective and the out will be recorded.
- If a player is ejected from a game for any reason that players position in the batting order will remain and any scheduled at bat will be recorded as an out.
- The batting order for each team shall be presented to the official scorekeeper before the game begins. Any player that arrives after the game has started shall bat in its original batting order position, if that position has not batted in the game yet. Otherwise, the position is skipped in the batting order without penalty, and the late arriving player is placed at the bottom of the batting order. The official scorekeeper and the umpire shall be informed of any late player additions or changes proactively before the late arriving player enters the game.
- If a player refuses to bat at their official order in the line-up the player will be called out.
- Batters are permitted and encouraged to bunt. If a player has two strikes against her and bunts a ball into foul territory the call will be a strike and the batter will be declared out.

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**LEAD OFFS & BASE STEALING**

- Base runners ARE permitted to steal bases.
- Base runners must remain in contact with the base until the ball leaves the pitchers hand. If a runner leaves the base early the runner will be called out and no strike or ball will be called on the batter (no pitch rule).
- After a ball is declared dead if a runner is not more than halfway to the next base she will return to the previous base.
- Base runners are permitted to steal home.
- Any time a runner is stealing a base they are encouraged to slide to avoid injuries and encourage defensive players to still attempt plays.

**BASE RUNNERS ADVANCING & SCORING**

- Runners are encouraged to slide into bases (with the exception of first base) when there is a play at that base. If there is a play at home plate, the runner is strongly encouraged to slide to avoid injury.
- When a runner is stealing home it is strongly encouraged that the batter get out of the batter's box and of the way of the play. If the batter does not move from the batter's box it is at the discretion of the home plate umpire to call obstruction and the batter can be called out.
- Base runners may advance or score in the following ways:
  - When a pitched ball is hit into play by a batter.
  - When forced to advance as the result of a walk. A runner may attempt to steal second base as the result of being walked by the pitcher.
  - If the batter is hit by a pitch and awarded first base she must stop at first base and may not advance or attempt to steal second. Any existing base runners may not attempt to steal or advance (unless required to do so by occupied bases).
  - When any defensive position player over throws in an attempt to make a play the runner can advance. For example, if the catcher receives a pitch and is returning the ball to the pitcher and overthrows, runners can advance.
  - When otherwise directed to advance by the umpire.
  - Courtesy runners are encouraged for the pitcher/catcher position. The last player called out will serve as the courtesy runner.

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**EQUIPMENT**

- The 12U division will use an official 12" yellow softball weighing at least 6.75 ounces.
- Pitcher's will be required to use a face mask (one provided per team).
- All defensive players are encouraged to wear a face mask.
- Catcher's will be required to wear catcher's gear (one set provided per team).
- Players are allowed to use their own bats provided they meet the necessary ASA standards.
- Players are responsible for their own equipment at practices and games.

**UNIFORMS**

- Jerseys will be provided to the players.
- Players are responsible for pants, socks, belts, and cleats.
- Jewelry may not be worn during regulation game play. It is at the umpire's discretion to call a player out or ejected for violating this rule.

**UMPIRES AND RULES**

- Any clarification for rules not stated above should be referred to the current edition of the USA Softball official rule book.
- Umpires should always be respected by players, coaches, and spectators alike. Any violation of this rule is cause for disciplinary action, including removal from the park grounds.
- Coaches may appeal calls on the field directly to the umpire that made the call. After appeal any decision by the umpire is final and game play shall continue. Any violation of this is cause for disciplinary action.