

Rule and policy reminders for Highland Softball – Majors

May 4, 2023



Game Format and Equipment

- Games are scheduled for 90 minutes or 6 innings, but a new inning cannot be started after 75 minutes. Coaches and umpires should agree on start time at the beginning of each game to align on time management. If there is no game scheduled on your field following your game coaches can agree to play all six innings or extra if tied.
- A minimum of 3 innings (2 ½ if the home team is ahead) must be completed to register a final score. If the weather prevents you from doing this, please work with the opposing coach to continue the game another night.
- The 5-run rule: a team may not score more than 5 runs in an inning. As such, half innings will be complete when the defensive team gets 3 outs or the 5-run rule occurs, whichever comes first.
- 12" softballs will be used
- Pitching rubber will be 40' from the plate. Note: the pitching rubbers on Highland Park HS fields are 43' from the plate so we will need to install a temporary pitching rubber at 40'. Pitching rubbers and hammers can be found in the South field storage box.
- Bases are 60' apart
- Infielders must wear fielding masks. Outfielders are strongly encouraged to wear fielding masks.
- Batting helmets must have a face mask.
- Nine players on the field: P, C, 1B, 2B, 3B, SS, LF, CF, RF. Teams must have at least 7 players to play an official game. Players can be pulled up from Minors, if needed. The number 8 spot in the batting order will be an automatic out if there is no 8th player. There are no automatic outs if teams field 8 or more players.

Hitting

- Dropped third strike rule will not be used. Batters cannot steal first base on a dropped third strike.
- All players bat, even if not playing in the field. Coaches can set different batting lineups for each game but please set a batting lineup with all players for each game.

Baserunning

- Runners cannot advance once the ball is returned to the pitcher at the pitcher's mound and is controlled by the defense. This rule encourages players to field with urgency and return the ball to the pitcher ASAP.
- Runners may only advance one base if the ball is thrown out of play.

- No stealing on walks.
- Players should slide into home when there is a play at the plate. Umpires may call a runner out if there is a play at the plate and the runner does not slide. This call is at the discretion of the umpire and will usually be called an out if the ump views the play as dangerous. For safety reasons we need players to learn the art of sliding to avoid collisions. Additionally, this is more commonly called an out at the travel and high school levels.
- Runners cannot leave the base until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. No leading off.

Miscellaneous

- A fielding grid is not used at the Majors level and batting orders may be changed each game. It's the coach's discretion as to which positions the players are assigned and what order they bat in. Please keep in mind the Majors league is intended to develop the players, therefore, player rotation is strongly encouraged as is enabling players to have roughly equal at bats. One way to do the latter is to keep the same batting order and pick up where you left off in the order in the previous game.
- All bench players must remain in the dugout unless at bat/on deck. Please remind/enforce this habit with your players. This too is a strict rule at the higher levels of play, and we want to foster good habits.
- Coaches may approach the mound. Travel and high school levels have strict rules around this. In Majors, please limit discussions on the mound to one per game. If a pitcher is struggling, please give the opportunity to pitch to another player.
- The umpire staff consists of local youth who are learning the craft of umpiring. Please set an example for your players and parents by showing respect to our umps.
- Opposing coaches should confirm the number of runs scored with one another each half inning.
- Keep it light, this should be fun for the players and the coaches, especially at this age. If the kids aren't having fun, they won't have long softball careers.

Coach responsibilities

- Each team will provide one new/lightly used ball for each game. Additional balls will be provided as necessary by the home team.
- At the conclusion of a game the final score should be entered into the SportsEngine app by the winning coach.
- Home team rakes the field after the game.
- North field bases can remain in the field. South field bases should be removed and put in the storage box.