

# HSA Softball Ground Rules 2026

## League Responsibilities and Expectations

### Commitment to a Safe and Positive Environment

The Huffman Sports Association is dedicated to providing a safe, positive, and enjoyable environment for all participants, including children, parents, and umpires involved in the league.

### Manager Responsibilities

- Managers are responsible for ensuring the appropriate conduct of all parents, guardians, or spectators who are present in support of their team in the stands.
- Failure by managers to uphold these guidelines may result in their removal from the field until such time as the spectators under their supervision are able to control themselves or are required to leave the premises.

### Interaction with Umpires

- Managers must approach umpires with respect and understanding, setting a positive example for both the children and the parents on their team.

### Consequences for Misconduct

- If a parent, guardian, or spectator fails to adhere to these guidelines, they will be removed from the park by a board member or, if necessary, by law enforcement.
- In the event of an altercation, there will be zero tolerance for inappropriate behavior.

### Protest Procedures

If a protest arises, it must be communicated immediately to the chief umpire before the scorebook is signed by the umpire. Managers who do not sign the scorebook forfeit their right to protest. Umpires are required to record the status of any protest in the scorebook to ensure proper documentation prior to leaving the field. All official protests will be forwarded to the Huffman Sports Association Vice President for further review and consideration.

### Team Field Maintenance Responsibilities

At the conclusion of the final game each day, every team is responsible for raking the field to maintain its condition. Additionally, teams must ensure that all trash is removed from their respective dugouts.

All divisions will be governed by Dixie Youth Softball (DYS) and NFHS rules affecting game play, except for the rules outlined below:

# HSA Softball Ground Rules 2026

## **\*\*Common Rules and Expectations for every Division\*\***

### Game Officials and Scorekeeping

- Each game will have a **score board keeper** provided by the **visiting team**.
- The **home team** is responsible for supplying a **score book keeper**.
- Game clock will start on time, but game will not start until both positions are filled.

Score books **must** be kept in the **press box** during the game and **not** in the **stands**.

Upon completion of the game, the scorebook should be given to the **umpire**. The umpire and both team managers are required to sign the scorebook after each game to verify its accuracy.

### Player Eligibility and Forfeits

- There will be **no** forfeits; teams are expected to play with available players.
- Each team is permitted to use **one** pickup player, but **both** coaches of each team must agree on who that player will be.
- If a pickup player is used, they must play **right field** and **bat last** in the lineup.
- No team may bench a player on the team's regular roster while a player added to the roster for one game is in the game unless the rostered player is sick or injured and cannot continue in the game.

### Player Participation and Equipment

- Every player is required to play **6 outs** on defense (three (3) consecutive outs in an inning).
- **Continuous batting order** every game played by their team, ensuring equal participation for all team members.
- Each batter/base runner **shall wear** a helmet with a face mask attached.
- Metal cleats are **not** permitted for any players.
- Face masks are **highly recommended** for all infielders and are **mandatory** for pitchers to ensure safety on the field.
- Players are **not** allowed outside in front of the dugout during gameplay.
- **Defense Coaches** must remain within an **arm's length** of the dugout opening at all times during the game unless injury time out granted by the umpire.

### Defensive/Offensive Time Outs

- On **defense**, a manager may request time to speak with players **once** per inning without penalty. A second request in the same inning results (6U & 8U) in the manager being placed in the dugout for the rest of the game, (10U, 12U, 15U) the pitcher is removed from the pitching mound.
- On **offense**, a team is permitted **three** timeouts per inning to speak with a batter. A fourth timeout in the same inning causes the coach to be removed from the field and placed in the dugout for the rest of the game.

# HSA Softball Ground Rules 2026

## **6U GIRLS**

### Game Format

- An **11-inch** yellow softball will be used for all games.
- Each regulation game consists of **five (5) innings** or a maximum of **1 hour and 10 minutes** of play.
- Teams may score no more than **five (5) runs** per half-inning.
- If a team leads by 12 runs after three (3) innings or 10 runs after four (4) innings, the run rule will be applied and the game will end.
- Bases are to be set at **60 feet**, with a double base at first base.
- The pitching rubber is positioned **35 feet** from home plate.
- A pitching circle with a 6-foot radius (12 feet in diameter) must be centered around the pitching rubber.

### Coach Pitch Rules

- Players are allowed **four (4) pitches** from the coach. If the ball is not hit fair in those four pitches, the player will receive **one swing** off the tee.
- If the player fails to hit a fair ball on that swing from the tee, the player is out.
- If a batter throws the bat completely out of the circle, she will be called out. The chalk marking the circle is considered part of the circle and the ball must be hit fair.
- **No** stealing, **No** bunting, **No** slapping, **No** intentional walks is permitted.
- If a runner passes a base before the player pitcher gains control of the ball within the pitching circle and does not stop, she may attempt to advance to the next base at her own risk.
- If a fielder does not freeze the lead runner, the lead runner(s) may advance until the play is dead.
- The play is dead and umpire will call “**Time**” only when the **player pitcher** has **control** of the ball **inside** the pitching circle **or** when a **fielder freezes the lead runner**.
- The catcher is required to wear full catching gear.
- The infield fly rule will **not** be in effect.
- There are **no restrictions** on overthrows to first base.
- Player pitchers must stand inside the pitching circle until ball is in play.
- If the pitcher leaves the circle prior to the batter putting the ball into play and touches the ball; the ball is dead, and all base runners advance one (1) base.
- Teams field **10 defensive players**, including six infielders.

# HSA Softball Ground Rules

## 2026

6U continued...

- **Infielders** may **not** be closer than **40 feet** to home plate prior to the ball being hit. Violation of this rule will result in Offensive team to accept the play or nullify the play with a no hit.
- **Outfielders** must be in the **grass** behind the base paths until ball is in play.
- A maximum of **four (4) coaches** is permitted on the field: the coach pitcher, first base coach, third base coach, and dugout coach.

### Coach Pitcher Guidelines

The coach pitcher is responsible for delivering the ball to the hitter using an **underhanded** motion in the **standing position** for each pitch. Once a coach assumes the role of pitcher at the start of an inning, that coach must remain as pitcher for the entire inning unless an injury necessitates a substitution.

The coach pitcher is required to pitch from within the designated pitching circle. Both feet must be inside the circle, or at least one foot must be inside and the other touching the chalk or paint marking the circle boundary, at the time the pitch is released. The coach pitcher is not obligated to pitch from the pitching rubber or a specific halfway point within the circle. If the coach pitcher fails to stay within the circle while delivering the pitch, the umpire will call a violation. In such cases, the defensive team may choose to accept the play or have a no pitch called.

After the ball is hit into play, the coach pitcher must leave the playing field by moving behind the runner or away from the action to prevent interference. If the umpire determines that interference has occurred due to the coach pitcher, the batter will be declared out, and all runners must return to the base they occupied at the time of the pitch. The coach pitcher will receive a warning for the first occurrence; a second offense in the same game will result in the coach pitcher being removed from the mound and sent to the dugout for the remainder of the game. The coach pitcher must stay outside the playing area until the ball is ruled dead.

Should the coach pitcher be struck by the ball, the play will be stopped and declared a dead ball with no pitch counted.

The **coach pitcher** may **only** instruct or position the batter **prior** to delivering the pitch and is **not** permitted to coach baserunners. A warning will be issued for the first violation of this rule; on the second violation, the coach pitcher will be removed from the mound to the dugout for the remainder of the game.

# HSA Softball Ground Rules 2026

## 8U GIRLS

### Game Format

- An **11-inch** yellow softball will be used for all games.
- Each regulation game consists of **five (5) innings** or a maximum of **1 hour and 15 minutes** of play.
- Teams may score no more than **five (5) runs** per half-inning.
- If a team leads by 12 runs after three (3) innings or 10 runs after four (4) innings, the run rule will be applied and the game will end.
- Bases are to be set at **60 feet**, with a double base at first base.
- The pitching rubber is positioned **35 feet** from home plate.
- A pitching circle with a 6-foot radius (12 feet in diameter) must be centered around the pitching rubber.

### Coach Pitch Rules

- Batters will have **5 pitches or 3 strikes**. If last pitch is foul, batter will receive another pitch.
- If a batter throws the bat completely out of the circle, she will be called out. The chalk marking the circle is considered part of the circle and the ball must be hit fair.
- **No stealing, No bunting, No slapping, No** intentional walk is permitted.
- If a runner passes a base before the player pitcher gains control of the ball within the pitching circle and does not stop, she may attempt to advance to the next base at her own risk.
- If a fielder does not freeze the lead runner, the lead runner(s) may advance until the play is dead.
- The play is dead and umpire will call “**Time**” only when the **player pitcher** has **control** of the ball **inside** the pitching circle **or** when a **fielder freezes the lead runner**.
- The catcher is required to wear full catching gear.
- The infield fly rule will **not** be in effect.
- There are **no restrictions** on overthrows to first base.
- Player pitchers must stand **inside** the pitching circle until ball is in play.
- If the pitcher leaves the circle prior to the batter putting the ball into play and touches the ball; the ball is dead, and all base runners advance one (1) base.
- Teams field **10 defensive players**, including six infielders.

# HSA Softball Ground Rules 2026

8U continued...

- **Infielders** may **not** be closer than **40 feet** to home plate prior to the ball being hit. Violation of this rule will result in Offensive team to accept the play or nullify the play with a no hit.
- **Outfielders** must be in the **grass** behind the base paths until ball is in play.
- A maximum of **four (4) coaches** is permitted on the field: the coach pitcher, first base coach, third base coach, and dugout coach.

## Coach Pitcher Guidelines

The coach pitcher is responsible for delivering the ball to the hitter using an **underhanded** motion and in the **standing position** for each pitch. Once a coach assumes the role of pitcher at the start of an inning, that coach must remain as pitcher for the entire inning unless an injury necessitates a substitution.

The coach pitcher is required to pitch from within the designated pitching circle. Both feet must be inside the circle, or at least one foot must be inside and the other touching the chalk or paint marking the circle boundary, at the time the pitch is released. The coach pitcher is not obligated to pitch from the pitching rubber or a specific halfway point within the circle. If the coach pitcher fails to stay within the circle while delivering the pitch, the umpire will call a violation. In such cases, the defensive team may choose to accept the play or have a no pitch called.

After the ball is hit into play, the coach pitcher must leave the playing field by moving behind the runner or away from the action to prevent interference. If the umpire determines that interference has occurred due to the coach pitcher, the batter will be declared out, and all runners must return to the base they occupied at the time of the pitch. The coach pitcher will receive a warning for the first occurrence; a second offense in the same game will result in the coach pitcher being removed from the mound and sent to the dugout for the remainder of the game. The coach pitcher must stay outside the playing area until the ball is ruled dead.

Should the coach pitcher be struck by the ball, the play will be stopped and declared a dead ball with no pitch counted.

The **coach pitcher** may **only** instruct or position the batter **prior** to delivering the pitch and is **not** permitted to coach baserunners. A warning will be issued for the first violation of this rule; on the second violation, the coach pitcher will be removed from the mound to the dugout for the remainder of the game.

# HSA Softball Ground Rules 2026

## **10U GIRLS**

### Game Format

- An **11-inch** yellow softball will be used for all games.
- Each regulation game consists of **six (6) innings** or a maximum of **1 hour and 15 minutes** of play.
- Teams may score no more than **five (5) runs** per half-inning.
- If a team leads by 12 runs after three (3) innings or 10 runs after four (4) innings, or 8 runs after five (5) innings the run rule will be applied and the game will end.
- Bases are to be set at **60 feet**, with a double base at first base.
- The pitching rubber is positioned **35 feet** from home plate.
- A pitching circle with an 8-foot radius (16 feet in diameter) must be centered around the pitching rubber.

### Batting and Offensive Rules

- Bunting and slapping **are permitted** as offensive tactics.
- The fake bunt/swing-away tactic is **strictly prohibited**. Once a batter squares to bunt, she may either pull the bat back and take the pitch or attempt to bunt the ball. If the batter fakes a bunt and then swings away, the umpire will call the batter out as a penalty.
- If a batter is hit by a pitch, the ball becomes dead immediately and the batter is awarded first base.
- A maximum of **three (3) coaches** is permitted on the field: the first base coach, third base coach, and dugout coach.

### Fielding and Defensive Rules

- Teams field up to **ten (10) defensive** players, which must include six infielders.
- The infield fly rule **will be enforced** during gameplay.
- **Outfielders** must be in the **grass** behind the base paths until ball is in play.

### Pitching and Base Running

- The dropped third strike rule **is NOT in effect** for regular season.
- If a kid pitcher delivers an illegal pitch, it will be called an automatic ball.
- **Base runners** are permitted to steal **after** the ball leaves the **pitcher's hand**.

# HSA Softball Ground Rules 2026

## **12U GIRLS**

### Game Format

- A **12-inch** yellow softball will be used for all games.
- Each regulation game consists of **six (6) innings** or a maximum of **1 hour and 20 minutes** of play.
- Teams may score no more than **five (5) runs** per half-inning for the **first 3 innings**. **4<sup>th</sup> inning** begins **opening inning** for the remainder of the game.
- If a team leads by 12 runs after four (4) innings or 10 runs after five (5) innings, or 8 runs after six (6) innings the run rule will be applied and the game will end.
- Bases are to be set at **60 feet**, with a double base at first base.
- The pitching rubber is positioned **40 feet** from home plate.
- A pitching circle with an 8-foot radius (16 feet in diameter) must be centered around the pitching rubber.

### Batting and Offensive Rules

- Bunting and slapping **are permitted** as offensive tactics.
- The fake bunt/swing-away tactic is strictly prohibited. Once a batter squares to bunt, she may either pull the bat back and take the pitch or attempt to bunt the ball. If the batter fakes a bunt and then swings away, the umpire will call the batter out as a penalty.
- If a batter is hit by a pitch, the ball becomes dead immediately and the batter is awarded first base.
- A maximum of **three (3) coaches** is permitted on the field: the first base coach, third base coach, and dugout coach.

### Fielding and Defensive Rules

- Teams may field up to **nine (9) defensive** players.
- The infield fly rule **will be enforced** during gameplay.

### Pitching and Base Running

- The dropped third strike rule **is in effect**.
- If a kid pitcher delivers an illegal pitch, it will be called an automatic ball.
- **Base runners** are permitted to steal **after** the ball leaves the **pitcher's hand**.

# HSA Softball Ground Rules 2026

## **15U GIRLS**

### Game Format

- A **12-inch** yellow softball will be used for all games.
- Each regulation game consists of **seven (7) innings** or a maximum of **1 hour and 30 minutes** of play.
- Teams may score no more than **five (5) runs** per half-inning for the **first 3 innings**. **4<sup>th</sup> inning** begins **opening inning** for the remainder of the game.
- If a team leads by 15 runs after three (3) innings or 10 runs after four (4) innings, or 8 runs after five (5) innings the run rule will be applied and the game will end.
- Bases are to be set at **60 feet**, with a double base at first base.
- The pitching rubber is positioned **43 feet** from home plate.
- A pitching circle with an 8-foot radius (16 feet in diameter) must be centered around the pitching rubber.

### Batting and Offensive Rules

- Bunting and slapping **are permitted** as offensive tactics.
- If a batter is hit by a pitch, the ball becomes dead immediately and the batter is awarded first base.
- A maximum of **three (3) coaches** is permitted on the field: the first base coach, third base coach, and dugout coach.

### Fielding and Defensive Rules

- Teams field up to **nine (9) defensive** players.
- The infield fly rule **will be enforced** during gameplay.
- **Defense Coaches** must remain within an **arm's length** of the dugout opening at all times unless injury time out granted by the umpire.

### Pitching and Base Running

- The dropped third strike rule **is in effect**.
- If a kid pitcher delivers an illegal pitch, it will be called an automatic ball.
- **Base runners** are permitted to **steal** after the ball leaves the **pitcher's hand**.