



2019 Local Rules

Note: All softball divisions at Northwest Softball shall play in accordance with Pony League rules unless a rule is specifically superseded by a Local Rule presented in this document.

Local Rules Applicable to All Divisions:

Zero Tolerance

The following sets forth the specific league policy, rules, and requirements governing behavior of adults and children present at the Northwest Softball (“NW Softball”) field at any time and at all NW Softball games at home or away fields: NW Softball has **ZERO TOLERANCE** for unsportsmanlike or unacceptable behavior.

All adults present will be accountable for their behavior and the behavior of their guests. Parents and guardians will be accountable for the behavior of their children.

The Zero Tolerance Policy agreement certifies that adults, parents, and guardians understand their responsibilities dictated by these terms. **Failure to comply may result in the immediate expulsion from the complex of the offending individual.** If expelled, the individual may not return to the complex pending actuation by the NW Softball Board of Directors.

- Consumption or possession of alcoholic beverages or controlled substances is forbidden at games and practices.
- Persons under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances are prohibited from games and practices.
- Firearms and weapons are prohibited, except in possession of law enforcement personnel.
- Positive cheering and words of encouragement are acceptable; jeering, booing, hissing, taunting or any other form of negative fan interaction is prohibited.
- Use of profane language or profane gestures is forbidden.
- Verbal abuse in any form of umpires, league officials, coaches, players or spectators is prohibited.

- Cooperation with umpires, league officials, coaches and team representatives is expected.
- Respect for and adherence to all league rules, policies, and guidelines is expected.
- Adults are expected to role-model sportsmanship at all times, regardless of any perceived lack of sportsmanship exhibited by anyone else.

Location of Defibrillator:

- NW Softball takes the safety of its players, coaches, umpires and fans very seriously. **A defibrillator is stored in the concession stand at Field 2.** A First Aid Kit is also available in the Snack Shack.

Lightning Policy:

- The NW Softball Lightning Policy has been set in place by the Board of Directors for the safety of all of our players, families, and coaches. All coaches are responsible for being familiar with the policy and following it to the letter of the rule, and are responsible for having the Weather Bug App installed on their phone.
- If the Director on Duty for NW Softball or Northwest Little League (“NWLL”) or another member of either league’s Board sounds the lightning horn (three horn blasts), or if your team is practicing or playing and you know lightning is within the 10-mile radius as determined by your Weather Bug App Spark Finder, all fields must be vacated **for 30 minutes** OR until given the “All Clear Signal” (one horn blast).
- Failure to follow the Lightning Policy will result in a suspension from coaching duties and possible permanent loss of coaching privileges for the remainder of the year as well as loss of any consideration for postseason coaching.
- There will be no leeway given if this rule is openly violated. Do not congregate in the dugouts or batting cages. Head to your vehicles and seek shelter immediately!

Treatment of Umpires and Coaches:

- If a coach has a question or concern about the interpretation of a rule on the field - **not** a judgment call – he or she should ask for time and ask to approach the umpire to discuss it. Only the Head Coach may discuss rule-related questions with the umpire (preferably in the presence of the opposing coach and always away from players, parents, and fans). Time may be called and discussion had amongst coaches and umpire(s) if and only if either of two head coaches has a printed set of local rules and a copy of the Pony League Rules (as applicable) for the group to review and discuss. Without a printed set of rules to review the umpire’s call on the field is final with no discussion. Upon review of the printed rules the Umpire at his sole discretion may change the call based upon his review and understanding of the rule and shall make this final call on the field.
- At no time shall judgment calls such as safe or out be argued or debated. Coaches may not use any means (verbal or nonverbal) to influence umpire’s judgment calls during a game. This includes making safe or out motions with arms / body or verbally making the call out or safe.
- At no time shall a coach be openly critical or argue about balls and strikes.
- At no time shall a coach raise his/her voice, yell at, or in any way treat an umpire with disrespect or in any type of intimidating or threatening manner (whether they are adult or youth umpires).

- If a coach is seen abusing umpires in a manner described above, penalties may be handed down (including possible suspension) at the discretion of a member of the NW Softball Board.
- If a coach gets ejected from a game, there will be a minimum one game suspension and further games may be added – and post season coaching candidacy may be revoked – at the discretion of the NW Softball Board. **A Manager or coach ejected from a game MUST NOT be present at the game site for the remainder of that game.** Any manager, coach or player ejected from a game is automatically suspended for his/her teams next physically played game and **MAY NOT** be in attendance at the game site from which they were suspended
- At no time shall one coach confront another coach in an accusatory fashion on the field or after a game. Be respectful to *all* coaches.
- If you have issues with the way a coach is handling his/her team or questions regarding whether they are following NW Softball rules and/or expectations, please contact a NW Softball Board member.
- We know that all coaches approach the game with different intensity and aggressiveness. The rules of softball do not dictate how every situation will be handled, so please be mindful of what age group you are coaching, the situation you are in, and keep perspective of the philosophies of NW Softball when making coaching decisions in the heat of the moment. *Always treat players, coaches, and umpires with respect.*

Adult Volunteers:

- The **home team** is responsible for providing an adult to operate the concession stand (“Snack Shack”) as well as having an adult responsible for keeping the official score, official pitch counts for both teams (if applicable), and for providing a public-address announcer (if applicable). Games may not start unless all volunteer positions are filled.
- Austin’s Environmental Health Services Division requires that no child under 14 years old be allowed in the concessions stand. Please do not risk our food permit by ignoring this law.

Batting Cages:

- At all times, full NW Softball teams take priority over small group use when the batting cages are unassigned (limit one batting cage per team when space is limited).

On-Deck:

- The on-deck position is not permitted at NW Softball. Only the first batter of each half-inning will be permitted outside the dugout between half-innings. The next batter should be ready with a helmet on, but may not pick up a bat until it is his/her turn at bat. NW Softball has adopted this rule for all divisions and it applies to all on-deck batters.

Pregame Field Warm-Ups:

- Before taking the field, both Head Coaches should meet to reach agreement on the pregame field practice schedule. Field 8 may be utilized along with Field 6 (when available).
- If the field is available for more than 45 minutes prior to the scheduled start of a game, the visiting team may take the field starting at 45 minutes before game time and may practice for twenty (20)

minutes. The home team shall take the field at 25 minutes before game time and may practice for twenty (20) minutes.

- Both teams shall return to their dugout for the five minutes immediately prior to game time.
- If twenty-five (25) minutes separate two games, the visiting team and home team may each practice on the field for ten (10) minutes (starting with the visiting team).
- If fifteen (15) minutes separate two games, the visiting team and home team may each practice on the field for five (5) minutes (starting with the visiting team).

Game Time Limitations:

- No more than a single thirty-minute weather delay shall be taken during a game before the game is officially called or postponed.
- For Colt (16U), Pony (14U), Bronco (12U), and Mustang (10U), no new inning shall start after one hour and 10 minutes.
- For Pinto (8U) and Shetland (6U), no new inning shall start after one hour (60 minutes).
- The game clock starts running at the later of (a) the scheduled start time (not the actual start time) and (b) fifteen minutes after the completion of the preceding game (if applicable).

Official Games:

- Games are six (6) innings but are subject to game time limitations above. Regular season games ending in a tie after six innings will be counted as a tie (i.e., extra innings will not be played).
- If four (4) or more innings have been completed and a new inning cannot be started because of rain/lightning or a game time limitation rule, the team that has scored the most runs at the time the game is stopped is declared the winner (or, if the game is tied, it will officially count as a tie in the league standings) provided that a complete inning occurs. **(This rule is three (3) innings for Shetland (6U) and Pinto (8U) division games.)**
- If four (4) complete innings have been played and the teams do continue to the next inning but the inning cannot be completed due to darkness or due to weather, the official score reverts to the last completed inning.
- If a game is stopped and ultimately suspended due to weather before one (1) complete inning is in the books the game shall be rescheduled in its entirety.
- If a game is stopped and ultimately suspended due to weather before four (4) innings have been completed but after one (1) complete inning, the game will be continued at a later date and will pick back up at exactly the point at which it was stopped (as if it were a continuous game).
- If a game was delayed at any time due to weather and as a result of this delay four (4) innings are not complete before “game time limitations” stop play, the game will be continued at a later date and will pick back up at exactly the point at which it was stopped (as if it were a continuous game).

- If less than four (4) innings are complete and a new inning cannot be started due to a “game time limitation” and the game was not at any point delayed due to weather, the game is considered complete and a winner (or a tie) is to be declared.

Run Limits:

- Maximum five (5) runs per team per inning unless the RBI knocking in the fifth run is a home run hit over the fence on the fly, in which case all resulting runs will be counted.

Batting Helmets:

- All batting helmets used by players of NW Softball must have a facemask.

Face Masks:

- All pitchers in all divisions are REQUIRED to wear face masks while pitching. Infield players are highly recommended to wear face masks.

Bats:

- All players must use a USSSA approved softball bat with 1.20 BPF, or ASA 2004 certified bat. NO T-BALL BATS. NO de-certified ASA bats (prior 2004).

Game Score Reporting:

- It is the responsibility of each NW Softball coach to report every game’s score via Team Sideline’s automatic scoring within 24 hours of a game’s completion.

Determination of Champions:

- Regular season standings (and, if applicable, half-season winners) are determined based on points awarded as follows:
 - Two (2) points will be awarded for each win, and one (1) point will be awarded for each tie.
 - If teams are tied by points in the standings, the tie shall be broken using the following sequence, applied in succession until the tie is broken:
 - Total wins
 - Points in head-to-head meetings (+2 points for a win, +1 point for a tie, -1 for a loss)
 - Average runs allowed in games between NW Softball teams (excluding forfeits)
 - Coin toss

Bronco (12U), Pony (14U), Colt (16U) Division Rules:

Line-Ups:

- Every player on the team must be in the batting line-up. The order will not change during the game, except in the case of an injury or ejection, in which case the player's place in the order will be skipped (without an out being assessed). Do not abuse this policy to gain a competitive advantage by skipping poor batters with insignificant injuries.
- A player arriving late for a game will enter the batting order in the last position (i.e., just before the team's original leadoff hitter).
- If a team only has eight (8) players, **no out** is recorded when the ninth position in the line-up is scheduled to bat. Teams must have eight (8) players to play a game.
- There are 9 defensive positions, P, C, 1B, 2B, 3B, SS, LF, CF, RF
- No player should be on the bench for more than two defensive innings in a six (6) inning game.
- Only roster players, the Head Coach and the Assistant Coaches are allowed in the dugout during games (and all must have completed a Volunteer Application for the current season). No parents are allowed in the dugouts during games.

Game Time Limitations:

- For all games, no new inning shall start after **one hour and 10 minutes**.
- The game clock starts running at the later of (a) the scheduled start time (not the actual start time) and (b) fifteen minutes after the completion of the preceding game (if applicable).
- A game may be called due to darkness if players are unable to safely field their positions.

Run Limits:

- Maximum five (5) runs per team per inning unless the RBI knocking in the fifth run is a home run hit over the fence on the fly, in which case all resulting runs will be counted.

Infield Fly Rule:

- The Infield Fly Rule is in effect. If the umpire calls "Infield Fly" (only applicable if there is a force at third with less than two (2) outs) then the batter is out and runners are at risk.

Batter's Box Rule:

- The batter shall take her position within the lines of the batter's box and must keep at least one foot in the batter's box while taking signals from the coach.
- The batter can leave the box when she hits a fair or foul ball, check swings, forced out by a play at the plate, forced out by a pitch, or the catcher leaves the catcher's box.
- If the batter leaves the batter's box illegally, after a warning the umpire will call a strike on the batter.

Courtesy Runner for Catcher:

- If the catcher who played the position in the previous half-inning and who will play the position in the next half-inning is on base with two outs, a courtesy runner may be used. The courtesy runner must be the player who made the last recorded out.

Pitching rules:

- A player may pitch in a maximum of twelve (12) innings in a day. If a player pitches in seven (7) or more innings in a day, one calendar day of rest is mandatory. Delivery of a single pitch constitutes having pitched in an inning.
- A pitcher remaining in the game, but moving to a different position, can return as a pitcher anytime in the remainder of the game but only once in the same inning as he/she was removed.
- If doubleheaders are played, the limitation of twelve (12) innings in a calendar day would apply to each pitcher. A pitcher who pitches in the first game may pitch in the second game provided that pitcher has eligibility remaining.
- A team is allowed two (2) visits to a pitcher per inning at the pitcher's mound. The third visit in the same inning must result in a pitcher change.

Miscellaneous Rules:

- An 12" Pony League approved ball shall be used
- The distance from the pitcher's rubber to home plate is 40 feet (12U) or 43 feet (14U, 16U).

Mustang (10U) Kid-Pitch Division Rules:

Line-Ups:

- Every player on the team must be in the batting line-up. The order will not change during the game, except in the case of an injury or ejection, in which case the player's place in the order will be skipped (without an out being assessed).
- A player arriving late for a game will enter the batting order in the last position (i.e., just before the team's original leadoff hitter).
- Teams must have eight (8) players to play a game.
- There are 10 defensive players: P, C, 1B, 2B, 3B, SS, LF, LCF, RCF, RF
- Each player must play at least one (1) inning in the infield (which includes catcher) within the first four (4) innings (unless the Commissioner has approved a safety-related exception) and no player should be on the bench for more than two defensive innings in a six (6) inning game.
- Only roster players, the Head Coach and Assistant Coaches are allowed in the dugout during games (and all must have completed a Volunteer Application for the current season). No parents are allowed in the dugout during games.

Game Time Limitations:

- For all games, no new inning shall start after **one hour and 10 minutes**.
- The game clock starts running at the later of (a) the scheduled start time (not the actual start time) and (b) fifteen minutes after the completion of the preceding game (if applicable).

Run Limits:

- Maximum 5 runs per team per inning unless the RBI knocking in the fifth run is a home run hit over the fence on the fly, in which case all resulting runs will be counted.

Infield Fly Rule:

- The Infield Fly Rule is in effect. If the umpire calls "Infield Fly" (only applicable if there is a force at third with less than two (2) outs) then the batter is out and runners are at risk.

Overthrows:

- One base on an overthrow to any infield position (including catcher) from any place on the field.
- Up to one, and only one, overthrow per batted ball. Runners advance the first base at their own risk. Beyond the first base, runners will be placed back on the "one base" if over-advancing occurs.
- If, in the judgment of the umpire, a runner is more than halfway when overthrow occurs, they may advance at their own risk to the next base plus one base.
- Base runners may not advance on overthrows to the pitcher from the catcher.

Batter's Box Rule:

- The batter shall take her position within the lines of the batter's box and must keep at least one foot in the batter's box while taking signals from the coach.
- The batter can leave the box when she hits a fair or foul ball, check swings, forced out by a play at the plate, forced out by a pitch, or the catcher leaves the catcher's box.
- If the batter leaves the batter's box illegally, after a warning the umpire will call a strike on the batter.

Base Stealing:

- When a pitcher is in contact with the pitcher's plate and in possession of the ball and the catcher is in the catcher's box ready to receive delivery of the ball, base runners shall not leave their bases until the ball has been delivered and has reached the batter.
- Stealing home is permitted. Batters are required to execute a slide when the catcher is in position at home plate. First-time offenders will receive a warning, and be called out on subsequent offenses.

Courtesy Runner for Catcher:

- If the catcher who played the position in the previous half-inning and who will play the position in the next half-inning is on base with two outs, a courtesy runner may be used. The courtesy runner must be the player who made the last recorded out.

Pitching rules:

- A player may pitch in a maximum of twelve (12) innings in a day. If a player pitches in seven (7) or more innings in a day, one calendar day of rest is mandatory. Delivery of a single pitch constitutes having pitched in an inning.
- A pitcher remaining in the game, but moving to a different position, can return as a pitcher anytime in the remainder of the game but only once in the same inning as he/she was removed.
- If doubleheaders are played, the limitation of twelve (12) innings in a calendar day would apply to each pitcher. A pitcher who pitches in the first game may pitch in the second game provided that pitcher has eligibility remaining.
- A team is allowed two (2) visits to a pitcher per inning at the pitcher's mound. The third visit in the same inning must result in a pitcher change.

Miscellaneous Rules:

- An 11" Pony League approved ball shall be used
- The distance from the pitcher's rubber to home plate is 35 feet

Pinto (8U) Division Rules:

Coach Pitch Rules:

- The batter received up to five (5) pitches.
- Swinging strikes are called; three (3) strikes is an out. No ‘dropped third strike’ rule.
- Batter received an additional pitch if the third strike or last pitch is fouled off.
- If a batted ball hits the coach-pitcher, the ball is dead and the pitch is re-thrown. Such a pitch would not count as one of the five pitches.
- No walks, and no bases are allowed for a HBP.
- No bunts.
- No stealing.
- The player in the pitcher position must line up even with the pitching rubber with both feet in the dirt area of the mound.

Line-Ups:

- Every player on the team must be in the batting line-up. The order will not change during the game, except in the case of an injury or ejection, in which case the player’s place in the order will be skipped (without an out being assessed). Do not abuse this policy to gain a competitive advantage by skipping poor batters with insignificant injuries.
- A player arriving late for a game will enter the batting order in the last position (i.e., just before the team’s original leadoff hitter).
- There are 10 defensive players: P, C, 1B, 2B, 3B, SS, LF, LCF, RCF, RF
- Teams must have eight (8) players to play a game.
- Each player must play at least one (1) inning in the infield (which includes catcher) within the first four (4) innings (unless the Commissioner has approved a safety-related exception) and no player should be on the bench for more than two defensive innings in a six (6) inning game.
- Only roster players, the Head Coach and Assistant Coaches are allowed in the dugout during games (and all must have completed a Volunteer Application for the current season). No parents are permitted in the dugout during games.

Game Time Limitations:

- For all games, no new inning shall start after **one hour (60 minutes)**.
- The game clock starts running at the later of (a) the scheduled start time (not the actual start time) and (b) fifteen minutes after the completion of the preceding game (if applicable).
- All games may be called due to darkness if players are unable to field their positions safely.

Run Limits:

- Maximum 5 runs per team per inning unless the RBI knocking in the fifth run is a home run hit over the fence on the fly, in which case all resulting runs will be counted.

Batter’s Box Rule:

- The batter shall take her position within the lines of the batter's box and must keep at least one foot in the batter's box while taking signals from the coach.
- The batter can leave the box when she hits a fair or foul ball, check swings, forced out by a play at the plate, forced out by a pitch, or the catcher leaves the catcher's box.
- If the batter leaves the batter's box illegally, after a warning the umpire will call a strike on the batter.

On-Deck:

- The on-deck position is not permitted in NW Softball. Only the first batter of each half-inning will be permitted outside the dugout between half-innings. The next batter should be ready with a helmet on, but may not pick up a bat until it is his/her turn at bat.

Courtesy Runner for Catcher:

- If the catcher who played the position in the previous half-inning and who will play the position in the next half-inning is on base with two outs, a courtesy runner may be used. The courtesy runner must be the player who made the last recorded out.

Overthrows:

- One base on an overthrow to any infield position (including catcher) from any place on the field.
- Up to one, and only one, overthrow per batted ball. Runners advance the first base at their own risk. Beyond the first base, runners will be placed back on the "one base" if over-advancing occurs.
- If, in the judgment of the umpire, a runner is more than halfway when overthrow occurs, they may advance at their own risk to the next base plus one base.
- Base runners may not advance on overthrows to the pitcher from the catcher.

Stopping Play:

- The play ends when the umpire yells "time" or when an infielder has the ball secured and the runners are on a base. Base runners may not advance beyond the bag they're running to when the infielder secures the ball on the infield, but may continue running to that closest base at their own risk. If the infielder attempts to make a play on the runner, he does so at the risk of a miscue/overthrow that would allow to runner to potentially move on to yet another base.

For example, a base hit deep down the first base line is returned to the shortstop (cleanly) covering second base as the batter/runner is on his way to third base. If the fielder holds on to the ball, the runner will make it to third (without a play) but have to stop there. If the shortstop attempts to make the play on the batter/runner heading to third he certainly can, but an overthrow in this situation suddenly opens the possibility of the runner making it home (presuming it's the first/only overthrow).

To reiterate, if the ball is secured by an infielder the runner may not leave a base but can continue running only if he has not yet reached the bag at the time the ball is secured in the infield. This applies to each runner on base (and if a base runner is on a bag as his/her teammate continues to

run toward his/her next base, the base runner may not attempt to advance simply because the teammate continues running (presuming an infielder has the ball secured)).

Miscellaneous Rules:

- An 11” Pony League approved ball shall be used
- The distance from the pitcher’s rubber to home plate is 35 feet