

Northwest Catholic Conference Softball Rules

Current IESA/ IHSA rules apply, except as noted BELOW - (Rules Updated 4/3/2025)

Changes from last year's rules are in red font.

General Rules:

- 1) **Jr. Varsity:** 5th & 6th graders (No JV in 2025) - **Varsity:** 7th & 8th graders
- 2) The NWCC will provide the umpire for all games
- 3) Cancellation of games;
 - a. Home school must notify all involved by 1pm the day of the game.
 - b. Every effort should be made to play the games on schedule. The turf fields at Melas Park make it possible to play if it is not raining at game time
 - c. Canceling a game because your star player is absent is not accepted and will result in a forfeit for your team.
- 4) Scores should be reported to John Collins at 847- 867-9502 or email @ nwccscores@comcast.net. Please report all JV and Varsity scores
- 5) REPORTING OF SCORES: Home team must report scores within 48 hours of the games.

Note: Failure to report scores will result in a Forfeit for the Home team.

- 6) Full Uniforms are NOT required. Each player should have a Jersey with a unique number.
- 7) "**Approved**" bats for play in ASA, USSSA, NSA, ISA, ISF and does not exceed a 1.20 BPF are allowed.
- 8) Recommended Softballs to be used for game ball:
 - a. Dudley-SB12 NFHS
 - b. Rawlings –IESA
 - c. Worth- Dream Seam
- 9) Batting helmets with face mask are mandatory for batters, base runners, and on-deck hitters.
- 10) No reflective helmets may be worn by any player.
- 11) Pitchers, 1st basemen and 3rd basemen must wear a fielder's face mask or batting helmet with a mask. However, they are recommended for all positions.
- 12) 60ft base paths. Pitching distance is 37ft for JV and 40ft for Varsity levels. The home team shall provide a new 12-inch softball for each game (recommended softballs are listed above). Pitching distance for JV pitchers can be adjusted if pitchers are struggling to throw strikes.
- 13) Players may advance to second & third base, 1 base per pitch. A runner may not leave their base until the ball has crossed the plate. Varsity can advance to home. No extra bases on catcher's overthrow.
- 14) Games will be seven inning games with a 1:25 minute drop dead time limit or if weather conditions, darkness or other factors interfere with play so that the game is called (ended) by the umpire & head coaches. The last inning should be called around the 1:10 minute mark from the scheduled start time of (4pm, 4:30pm or 5:30pm) regardless of when the game actually started. If the game is not over by the 1:25 minute drop dead the final score will be reported from the last completed inning played.

- a. In case of inclement weather which stops play, it is a regulation game if 45 minutes or more has elapsed from the scheduled start time.
 - b. In case of inclement weather which stops play in a game prior to becoming official, (in which there has been less than 45 minutes of play from the scheduled start), the game will be resumed from the point of interruption. Coaches and scorekeepers should note the situation (score, inning, number of outs, baserunners, elapsed time, etc) and the game should be resumed from that point on a mutually agreed date. Total time for the game will still be held to 1:25.
- 15) Batters must make an attempt to move to avoid being hit by a pitched ball.
 - 16) Catchers must wear facemasks, chest protector and shin guards.
 - 17) No metal cleats are allowed.
 - 18) Cap on runs per inning will be 5 runs per inning, ~~4 runs per inning for JV~~ an **unlimited number of runs are** allowed in the final inning of play. Umpire must notify both teams when last inning is starting. Score keepers should talk after each inning to confirm the scores.
 - 19) Slaughter rule: 10 runs after 5 innings (4 ½ innings if the home team is leading.)
 - 20) Forfeit time is 5 minutes after scheduled start time.
 - 21) Five (5) warm-up pitches between innings.
 - 22) A batter is out on a dropped third strike.
 - 23) Infield fly rule is in effect.
 - 24) Bunting and chop hitting is allowed. A player cannot show a bunt and fake bunt (known as a swinging bunt) and swing away; if so the batter will be called out.
 - 25) A runner should be called out if the fielder is in legal defensive position (with the ball in their possession) and the runner creates contact with the fielder. **Umpires, for further clarification, see NFHS rule book **“avoid contact”** with fielder.
 - 26) **MUST AVOID CONTACT RULE.** If a play is made on a runner; the runner **must avoid contact**. If the player does not slide and makes contact the player will be called out. If no play is made on a runner; the runner does not have to slide. This rule does not apply to a batter running to first base.
 - 27) Speed-up rule: with two outs; the offensive team’s catcher must be taken off on base they must be replaced by the batter/player that made the last out(s). It is an option to pull the catcher with less than 2 outs.
 - 28) Jewelry cannot be worn by any Athlete participating in the softball game. Athletes will be disqualified if they play with jewelry on during a game. Band-Aids over earrings is not allowed.

Line-up Rules:

- 1) A team must start with at least 8 players. If they have less than 8 players, you may borrow a player from the other team to play **“in the field only”**. **The borrowed player bats with her original team.** This rule applies to 5th/6th graders moving up to the 7th/8th grade team and/or a 7th grader moving down to the 5th/6th grade team to get a complement of 9 players. 7th & 8th graders may not pitch in JV games.

Note: due to special circumstances; permission may be granted to a school to allow a 7th grader to play on a JV team. This will be voted on by Athletic Directors of the participating schools. If a vote isn’t possible then the Conference Commissioner will have final say.

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- 2) (If agreed upon by both head coaches before the game starts) A team may start with a 10-player line-up and use 10 defensive players (4 outfielders). A team which starts with 10 players may finish up with 8 players due to injury or disqualification.
- 3) When teams agree to use a 10th player, the 10th player must play in the outfield. They must start in the grass. **NO short center will be used and teams must use 4 outfielders.**
- 4) Each team will use a continuous batting order, where all their players present bat in the order.

Pitching Rules:

- 1) Pitcher **must** start her delivery with both feet in contact with the pitching rubber.
- 2) Pitcher may only take a **FORWARD** step toward the batter during the delivery. **NO** backwards step at the Varsity level (7th & 8th grade).
- 3) Ball must be delivered in an underhand motion on the first forward swing of the pitching arm.
- 4) Pitcher may use a windmill type delivery if they so chose.
- 5) Pitchers may pitch a Maximum of 3 innings per game. One pitch thrown in an inning counts as a complete inning.
- 6) Any pitcher who hits 3 batters in an inning or 4 batters in a game must be taken out of the game as pitcher, and will not be allowed to complete their 3 innings of pitching.
- 7) A pitcher who is removed from the mound will be allowed to come back as a pitcher in at a later time. The pitcher is still under the 3-inning rule. If the pitcher is taken out in an inning she cannot return in the same inning, she can come back in after the inning she is removed is over.
- 8) A pitcher who is removed from the mound can stay in the game and play another position.

Umpire League Rules:

- 1) Umpires **MUST** have proper protective equipment, including a MASK.
- 2) Umpire Fees – The FULL fee is paid by the home team. Payment should be made before the game starts.
- 3) Umpire are to arrive 20 minutes before scheduled start time
- 4) \$62.00 (2025) for a single game;
- 5) If you have to cancel a game the first call or text should be to **Jeff Schwarz 847-302-5405** or coachjeff1@aol.com to inform him of the cancellation so he can contact the umpire. The NWCC commissioner must be notified as well; You will then need to call the visiting Head Coach and the school office (by 1pm) so they can add it to their afternoon announcements.

Additional Rules:

- 80% of all scheduled games must be played by a team in order to be eligible for a trophy at the end of the season.
Trophies are awarded to first place Varsity teams only.

