

Inter-Community Softball Association (ICSA) House League Rules (Revised Feb 2026)

1. General

Unless otherwise stated in the current ICSA House League Rules, games for all divisions will be governed by the "Official Guide and Rule Book" of the Canadian Amateur Softball Association. (Softball Canada), PWSA and OASA, available on the Softball Canada website.

2. Area Responsibilities

- a) Provide field times for teams to play regularly scheduled games.
- b) Provide liability insurance for each team involved in league play.
- c) Schedule and pay registered umpires for all scheduled home games and hosted tournaments.
 - i. U15 and under may use Junior Umpires.
 - ii. **U17+** will use Senior Umpires when available.
 - iii. When possible, one umpire must be at least two age groups older, and one umpire, one age group older, than the team playing. Senior Umpire should be at home plate.
- d) Shall have an area representative to represent their area and its concerns regarding softball, and to be liaison between their area coaches and players and the ICSA Executive.
- e) Shall assist as required with game scheduling, tournaments, returning trophies etc.
- f) Shall abide by and support the ICSA Rules.
- g) Shall ensure that their area's coaches and umpires receive copies of the current ICSA rules before the first game. Any amendments made during the current year shall be forwarded as soon as possible to coaches.

3. Registration Policy/Player Eligibility

- a) Player registration forms must include name, date of birth, parents'/guardians' name, address, telephone number and signature. If registration occurred online, selecting "agree" to the online waiver will be considered a signature.
- b) Only special need cases will be accepted as a reason to play down one or more age levels. Such special needs must be addressed through the ICSA.
- c) Submitted Team Players must play a minimum of **4** regular games to be eligible for *end of year* tournament games.
- d) **Rep teams** will be allowed to play in the ICSA house league, but they must play a division higher (i.e. A U15 rep team is required to play in the U17/19 house league division). Rep teams are not permitted to play in the end of year tournament, unless all coaches in the division are in agreement to allow them.
- e) **Rep players** will be allowed to play in the ICSA house league, but they must play a division higher (i.e. A U15 rep player is required to play in the U17/19 house league division). In some cases, rep players may be allowed to play in their own division, but this will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the ICSA.
- f) **Rep players** should be put on a wait list until all ICSA house league teams are formed. It is the responsibility of the coach by June 30th, to recognize and acknowledge by written declaration that they have a rep player on their team. Failure to do so will result in Rule #24 e) being enforced.

- g) **Select players** are chosen from teams in the ICSA to play in occasional tournaments and are not affected by the rule for rep players. All select players and teams may be reviewed by the ICSA executive.
- h) **Select teams** cannot play in the same house league division. They must play up in the next division.
- i) For insurance reasons, pregnant females are not eligible to play in the ICSA.
- j) ICSA Registered Players may play in another fastball league, however, the ICSA team will be first priority and it will be at the coach's discretion whether a player remains on the team if they are not following this. NOTE: ICSA Insurance does not cover play in another league.
- k) There is no maximum age for Jr. Ladies & Jr. Men teams, as of 2018.

4. Balls

Effective 2014, the yellow ball will be the official ICSA Ball exclusively. Provision of CASA approved softballs (one new and one used ball per game) are the responsibility of the home team. *(PWSA yellow ball may be used, however, both balls used must be of the same color.)*

5. Safety Equipment

- a) All batters must wear helmets. **U17 and below must wear helmets with a cage and straps fastened.** This rule includes batters on deck, base runners, and any coach under 17 years of age.
- b) Catchers must wear a helmet (without strap), a facemask, chest protector, safety cup, shin pads with kneecap protector, throat guard **at all times** while catching for a pitcher. (Throat guards are not required if facemask already has a throat extension like a goalie mask). **Anyone** warming up a pitcher must wear a face mask **(this includes adults whether on or off the field).**
- c) Double bags must be used at first base. **Defensive players must choose one bag and give the runner a clear path to the other bag. While the defensive player will usually play the white bag, they may use the orange bag if the ball is in play in foul territory to avoid the runner being hit by a thrown ball.**
- d) First Aid kits are required for all teams.
- e) All **U17 pitchers** and below must wear a defensive face mask when pitching ** U19 and older recommended but not mandatory.

6) Jewelry

- a) **ICSA recommends all jewelry be removed. Any jewelry that cannot be removed should be covered. Coaches are responsible for reminding players to remove or cover jewelry.**
- b) Pitchers cannot have anything on their pitching arm. Failure to remove such items after being requested to do so by the umpires will result in the player being removed from the game and being ruled ineligible for play.

7) Clothing/Footwear

- a) **Numbered shirts (for U13 and up),** long pants, socks and proper athletic shoes are required. (Exception: Rep teams would be allowed to wear shorts **if that is their team uniform.**)
- b) Shirts shall be tucked in for proper uniform; games will not be stopped to have shirts tucked in.
- c) Anyone on the ball diamond (including coaches, assistants, and parents) must wear appropriate attire including proper enclosed footwear.
- d) Coaches are to encourage proper dress code (Shirts tucked in).
- e) **No metal cleats are permitted at any age.**

8. Base and Field Lining

It is the responsibility of the home team to have the field and diamond ready for play 15 minutes before game time. This includes the foul line, the batter's box, the pitching circle and bases.

9. Infield Warm-Up /Start Time

Infield warmups are limited to 5 minutes per team and no infields 5 minutes before official starting time. Failure in a team's readiness to play within 15 minutes after the official time will cause the game to be awarded to the non-violating team. This will be the sole decision of the assigned umpires. Official times are as per the schedule.

10. Batting

- a) Teams will bat in a continuous order for the whole line up unless a player has been benched due to derogatory behavior, illness, or injury. A player arriving late can be added to the bottom of lineup anytime, with notification to the other team.
- b) Batters who get hit by a pitch that would normally be called a strike and do not make an attempt to move or who move into the pitch, will not be granted a walk and the pitch will be called a strike. This will be at the umpire's discretion.
- c) Players who leave the game early can be scratched off the batting order, with notification to the other team and will not be called out.

11. Substitution

- a) Unlimited substitution will apply including pitchers (subject to pitching rule #13). Runners may be substituted for injured players only, whose injury prevents them from running. The runner substitute is the last player out.
- b) Catchers on base can be substituted when there are two out and be replaced by the last player out to run the bases for them. This is optional for coaches to use.

12. Defensive Players

During regular league play and playoffs, any registered player shall not sit out two consecutive innings on defense before every player has sat one inning. No player shall sit a third inning before every player has sat 2 innings. Doing so may result in forfeiture of the game. This is called the Fair Play Rule. Coaches must document the defensive positions of all players during the game.

The following exceptions will apply:

- a) Should a player arrive late for a game.
- b) Should a player act in a derogatory manner towards coaches, players, or umpires.
- c) Should a player become sick or injured during a game.
- d) No Fair Play Rules apply in U17 division and up.

ICSA would like coaches to encourage the players to try all positions (both infield and outfield) especially in the lower divisions. This is a House League and should be fun for all children.

13. Pitching

- a) New Softball Canada Pitching Rules 2023 [4. PITCHING \(softball.ca\)](#). Summary:

- a. Pitcher must pause with the ball and both hands in front of the body before beginning the pitch.
 - b. One foot must start on the pitcher's plate and not lift off to create a rocking motion.
 - c. Stepping foot can only move forward. No backward step allowed after the pause.
 - d. Pitcher must continue to pitch once they have started.
 - e. Pitcher must stay "in the shoot" when pitching and may take one step forward toward the batter.
 - f. Pitchers may step or leap from the mound, land and with a continuous motion deliver the ball to the batter.
 - g. Pitcher must not crow hop or push off from any place other than the pitcher's plate.
 - h. Pitcher has 20 seconds to release the next pitch after receiving the ball or after the umpire indicates "play".
- b) U11 pitchers are allowed to pitch a maximum of 2 innings per game. Any portion of an inning is considered a full inning.
 - c) U13 may pitch a maximum of 3 innings per game. Any portion of an inning is considered a full inning.
 - d) U15 Pitchers may pitch a maximum of 4 innings (please remember the substitution rule). *If extra innings are required, the pitcher is reinstated.* Any portion of an inning is considered a full inning.
 - e) U17 & U19 have no pitching limit and no fair play rule.
 - f) U17 & U19 and below, if a pitcher hits 3 batters in the same game the pitcher is retired from pitching for the remainder of the game. At the discretion of the umpire, the pitcher can be removed at any time.
 - g) Batters who get hit by a pitch that would normally be called a strike and do not make an attempt to move or who move into the pitch, will not be granted a walk and the pitch will be called a strike. This will be at the umpire's discretion.
 - h) Intentional walks by the defense can now be done by word or mouth, no need to pitch the 4 balls (as of 2019)

14. Mercy Rule

- a) 3 outs or 6 runs shall constitute an inning. All innings are 6 run mercy i.e. All innings are closed for all divisions.
- b) Game is over when one team leads another by 15 runs after 3 innings, 10 runs after 4 innings or 7 runs after 5 innings.

15. Stealing Bases & Infield Fly

There is no stealing at the U11 division.

U13 and above, a runner may advance after the ball leaves the hand of the pitcher.

The infield fly rule does not apply at U11 or U13 divisions.

16. Base Running

Running the catcher or any defensive player will not be tolerated and will result in ejection from the game.

17. Third Strike Rule

A runner may run to first base on a dropped third strike from U15 Boys and Girls division up. Existing runners can still advance at their own risk.

18. Minimum Number of Players

A minimum number of 8 players are required to constitute a legal game.

19. Calling up

- a) If a team has 8 players or less, they may call up a registered player to a maximum of 9. Players called up must be identified as such on the score sheet and must be registered to play softball in the ICSA.
- b) If you are calling up a player, you must call the coach first to get permission for that player to play for your team. Players must be called from your own registration area. If there is a conflict in the game times players must play for their registered teams.

20. Playing Time

- a) U11 & U13 divisions: Length of game will be five innings. No new inning will be started after 1 hour and 20 minutes has elapsed.
- b) U15 and up: Length of game is 7 innings. No new inning will be started after 1 hour and 30 minutes has elapsed.
- c) Time starts when umpires and coaches meet at the plate. Plate meetings usually start 5 minutes early to start the game on time. Scorekeepers should note the start time and give it to the umpires.
- d) N.B. Umpires do not have to call "Last inning". One hour of playing time constitutes a game and the score reverts to the last completed inning. The bottom half of the last inning will be played regardless of the score unless the Home team does not wish to continue or the umpire feels there are extenuating circumstances that could be detrimental to the teams.

21. Regular, Cancelled & Rescheduled Games

- a) All regular games will be scheduled and an effort will be made to play the game as scheduled. Coaches are obliged to call up from a younger division if they are unable to field a full team of players.
- b) Games cancelled due to extenuating circumstances (exams, graduation and trips): The coach of the canceling team must notify the other coach within a minimum of 24 hours before the start time. The home coach will then notify the appropriate persons in their association.
- c) Games cancelled due to rain, field conditions or other unforeseen circumstances: The coach of the home team is responsible for cancellation of the game and shall notify opposing coach, the umpire (or their umpire-in-chief) and the convenor within a minimum of 1 hour and 30 minutes prior to the scheduled game time.
- d) Games will be cancelled under the extreme heat policy consistent with those used by our local school boards. If the heat index exceeds 35 degrees C, team officials are encouraged to consider rescheduling the game. If teams do agree to play, the following shall be considered:
 - mandatory water consumption every 15-20 minutes.
 - coaches are to encourage players to hydrate before, during, and after activity.
 - coaches require at least two substitutes(11 players) to ensure a break from the exposure.
- e) A game in progress terminated by the umpire due to inclement weather or field conditions: If 1 hour of game time has been completed, the score reverts back to the last complete inning. If not completed, it is the responsibility of the home team to reschedule the game.

- f) The first sign of any type of lightning requires a game delay for up to 15 minutes and if it has not cleared, the game will be cancelled.
- g) Rescheduling of games shall be the responsibility of the home team coach.
- An alternate date shall be determined in consultation with the other coach, field availability and umpires.
 - **GKSA Coaches:** Rescheduling must be done within 10 days *if possible*. After that, if no consensus can be reached within an additional 2 days, GKSA coaches should contact the convenor, who may set the date and time and it will be binding.
 - 4 point games are accepted at the next game in place of a reschedule.
 - If no agreement for reschedule can be reached by the teams then each team will only get one point.
 - If by the end of the season, c) and f) have not been followed, then the home team shall be at fault and the game shall be forfeited and 2 pts awarded to the visitor. The convenor must always be notified of cancelled games.
- h) If a game is forfeited at the field, umpires must leave and cannot umpire exhibition games.

22. Tournament Rules

To be available before tournaments begins - sent to umpires as well.

23. Scorekeeping

- a) Scorebooks must include all player first names, last names, jersey numbers and umpire name(s).
- b) Numbered shirts are required for U13 division and above.
- c) Tied games are acceptable in league play.
- d) Scorekeepers from each team need to confirm with each other that their scores match and resolve any discrepancies between them.
- e) Starting in 2026 coaches will be provided a link to a Google Sheets document to record their scores and make any notes related to cancellations or reschedules.
- f) Enter Division, Date, Home team, Visit team, Score.
- g) In case of ejection, umpires will inform a member of the ICSA (ICSA.KFLA@gmail.com), the member must inform the rest of the ICSA of it and the umpire incident report can follow within 24 hrs.

23. Complaints

A complaint/ejection must be notified as soon as possible after the game, but the formal report may be sent within 48 hours.

A formal written **complaint** should contain the following information:

- a) Date, time and place of the game.
- b) Names of the Umpires and Scorekeepers
- c) Rule or section of the official rule or local rules under which the protest is being made.
- d) The decision; and the condition surrounding the making of the decision.
- e) All essential facts involved in the matter protested.
- f) Both umpires are required to submit an umpire's report.
- g) It then must be forwarded to the ICSA.KFLA@gmail.com.

24. Code of Conduct/Rules Violations – Refer to the ICSA Discipline Policy for Minor and Major Infractions ([ICSA Discipline Policy](#))

- a) A player's, coach's umpire's or Association's failure to comply with the ICSA Rules of Play or Official's decision.
- b) Unsportsmanlike conduct or the use of abusive or insulting language on or near the playing field.
- c) Aggressive bat or helmet throwing.
- d) Physical threat or abuse.
- e) A coach, manager or team playing an ineligible player (including a player under suspension). All games played by the offending team in which ineligible players played shall be forfeited and the coach will be suspended for the rest of the season.

25. Ejections/Suspensions -

- a) Any of the above violations may result in players, coaches, managers, or spectators being ejected/suspended, and shall result in automatic ejection from the game. Failure to comply with the Umpire may result in forfeiture of the game. An umpire's report is required for all ejections and formal protests sent to ICSA UIC. A game ejection for any reason carries an automatic further 1 game suspension (excluding the game the ejection occurred in). Depending on the cause of the offence, further suspension may be set by the Convenor in conjunction with ICSA.
- b) A player, coach, manager, umpire or ICSA area representative may be suspended for any other reason by their own association or if there is a majority consent of the ICSA executive.
- c) Suspensions will continue into the next softball season and ICSA will honor other softball association suspensions.
- d) All suspensions must be recorded and the following people notified: the appropriate convenor, the ICSA Secretary and the ICSA Chairperson. The Convenor will notify the opposing coaches of any suspended players or coaches. The ICSA member should notify all other ICSA members so they are aware of each incident.
- e) All ejections and suspensions beyond the one game mandatory may be appealed to the appropriate Convenor in conjunction with ICSA. All appeals should be made within 24 hours from the suspension.
- f) Player Ejection – If a player is ejected from the game and results in a team having less than 8 players, the game is forfeit..

26. Coaches

- a) Shall keep an accurate scorebook.
- b) Shall ensure their scorekeeper confirms the score with the opposing team's scorekeeper and that they work out any discrepancies.
- c) Shall abide and support the ICSA Rules & Regulations and the Coach's Code of Conduct.
- d) Shall notify their convenor of any ejections or incidents.
- e) Shall ensure their players, coaches and their team's spectators display sportsman-like conduct at all times at the ballpark.

27. Umpires

- a) Shall abide by and support the ICSA Rules of Play.
- b) Shall provide a written report to the ICSA within 24 hours of any ejection or incident. This report shall include name, team, date, place, and reason for ejection. This report will be forwarded to the convener and ICSA email.
- c) After the game, shall remain on the field of play in a position to observe the post-game handshake.
- d) Shall not officiate for same age or older players unless previously authorized by ICSA executive.

- e) Must be at least 12 years of age.

28. Proof of insurance must be presented by each organization to be verified.

29. ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

- a) Effective August 2022, we have a Zero Tolerance Policy for drinking/drugs during the game. This is not limited to just players but also spectators and includes before, during and after the game on ball grounds. Spectators who are found drinking or doing drugs on the ball grounds will be asked to leave. Player(s) caught drinking or doing drugs will be asked to leave and will not be allowed to play for the remainder of the season. If anyone who is asked to leave refuses to comply, the police will be called and the player(s) will not be allowed to play the following season either.
- b) Smoking and/or vaping is not permitted on the fields or benches. If you need to light up, please be respectful and step away.
- c) Aggressive behaviour (yelling, swearing or threats of any kind, etc.) will not be tolerated and will result in ejection from the ball grounds. If anyone who is asked to leave refuses to comply, the police will be called. Ejected players will be suspended from the game they were ejected from as well as one additional game, no matter the ejection reason.
- d) Bat and helmet throwing will result in an automatic ejection.
- e) Coaches may bring any issues they are experiencing to their convenors for support.
- f) This zero tolerance policy works in conjunction with our discipline policy. (link)

If you have any questions or concerns about any of the above rules or regulations, please contact your convenor.

[Softball Canada Coaches Guides](#) – Great new resources for coaches of all ages, including full practice plans with drills.

**“Each of us in softball are a part of the game we all enjoy.
We expect all participants to demonstrate courtesy and respect
at all times. Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity.
This will be the guiding principle of conduct in this game.”**