

Specific Rules for Minitail League

General Rules

- NFHS/OHSAA Softball Rules will be used in all cases except as listed in the Bylaws, Common Rules, and Specific League Rules.
- An 11" softball will be used for play
- A pitcher who hits three (3) batters during a game must be removed from pitching for the remainder of the game
- Teams will play 6 infielders (P, C, 1B, 2B, 3B, SS), and a maximum of 5 outfielders who are to be positioned no shallower than the edge of the outfield grass. The outfielders are NOT permitted to directly make a play on a base or runner. The ball must be possessed by an infielder to make a play on the base runner.
- Teams must field a catcher defensively
- No new inning will be permitted to start after ninety (90) minutes have elapsed from the scheduled game time. If a game is tied after six (6) innings, one (1) extra inning can be played if the time limit has not been reached. If the game remains tied after the extra inning the game will end in a tie (all aspects of this rule are enforced without exception in all games.)
- All players on the roster who are present at the start of the game must play a minimum of three (3) innings defensively, including at least one (1) of the first four (4) innings at an infield position. No player can sit two (2) consecutive innings. If a parent/guardian has determined that their child cannot play the infield due to safety concerns, any such player(s) shall be identified during the pregame manager's meeting, and should be marked accordingly in each team's scorebook
- A wind-up/windmill motion may be used, provided it is legal according to NFHS rules. However, most pitchers will use the underhand motion, which is also permitted.
- If a batter is hit by a pitched ball while in the batter's box, the hit batter is awarded first base.
- Both teams should maintain a scorebook and verify scores between innings. In the case of a dispute, the home team's book is official.
- After all playing action has ended, a defensive team manager or coach may follow NFHS/OHSAA rules or simply verbally appeal to an umpire that a runner has missed a base or left a base too early in a tag-up situation.
- Immediately after being walked, the batter-runner is not permitted to advance past first base.
- If a batter is injured while batting and cannot continue the at bat, a replacement batter will be inserted with the current ball-strike count. The replacement batter will be the player who was the last put out for that team.
- All league participants are prohibited from using any tobacco product while on the field or on the bench. No alcohol is permitted at the field before, during, or after games – this includes spectators. Violation of this policy can result in ejection from the game and suspension from the league.
- No protests – umpire decisions are final

Players, Field & Equipment

Age Limit: On August 1, 2023 be at least 9 years old and no older than 12.

Innings: 6

Minimum Innings To Be An Official Game: 3.5 or 4

Mercy Rule Number Of Runs: 15

Players, Field & Equipment (continued)

Mercy Rule Number Of Innings: (After) 3.5 or 4

Maximum Defensive Players: 11

Minimum Defensive Players: 7 (there is a 15-minute grace period from scheduled game time before a forfeit is declared)

Base Distances (Field Square): 60'

Home Plate To Pitcher's Plate Distance: 35'

Home Plate To Second Base Distance: 85'

Shoes: No Metal

Wood bats are permitted, provided that the bat has been inspected by and approved by the umpire. The bat should be in good condition, and be free of chips, cracks, etc.

In the event that a team will not be able to field at least 11 players for a game, notify the Recreation Director who will help arrange for the "call up" of a coach pitch league player. If a player from the coach pitch division is not willing/available to play as a "call up", teams can "call over" a player from another minitail team in their home community. Call ups or call overs cannot pitch, must play at least 3 innings defensively, must bat last in the lineup, can only play the outfield defensively, and should wear the jersey of their original team. Call ups/call overs also cannot play more innings than a regular team member. The director or baseball/softball commissioner for the team's community **MUST** be notified and approve of the call up/call over, or the player will be considered ineligible. Directors or commissioners will track the use of players in these situations to make sure the same player is not being used as a call up on a repeated basis. Travel players who are not already on a roster in this league may **NOT** be used as call ups. If a community only has one team in this age group and a "call over" is needed, the community directors whose teams are playing in any impacted game(s) will collaborate on determining a reasonable call over alternative. Teams can only call up or call over enough players to have a maximum of eleven (11) players present.

Pitching

Illegal Pitches Enforced: No

Maximum Outs Per Game: 12

Any Pitcher Permitted To Re-Enter As Pitcher: Unlimited (Substituting a pitcher numerous times to reflect the opposing line-up is not permitted.)

A coach is allowed one (1) visit to the mound **per pitcher**. All additional visits to that pitcher over the course of the game will result in removal of pitcher. Any defensive conferences called by a coach during the game will count as a mound visit.

Batting

Bunting Permitted: No

Infield Fly Rule In Effect: No

Catcher Must Hold Third Strike: No

Maximum Runs Per Inning: 5 runs can be scored per inning until the last inning. The umpire will declare the final inning after conferring with the managers, and the declared final inning **ONLY** will be played as an unlimited runs inning. If there is not agreement between the managers and umpire on declaring the final inning, then the umpire's decision is final.

Base Running

Sliding Permitted: Yes

The Slide or Give-Up rule is in effect. Base runners must “slide or give up” at all bases (except 1st) and home plate on all close plays. A legal slide **MUST** be feet-first with no malicious contact. If any malicious contact occurs, the runner shall be called out and immediately ejected for the remainder of the game. A malicious contact determination is made at the umpire’s discretion. A runner is permitted to slide head-first only when returning to a base i.e. pickoff attempt, trying to avoid being doubled off on a fly out, etc.). Any violations are made at the umpire’s discretion and will result in the runner being called out. If a coach physically helps his or her player in any way or interferes with the opposing team’s players the umpire will either call the runner out or award the next base to the interfered team.

If the pitcher has the ball in the circle and a baserunner(s) is between bases, the runner(s) must commit to trying to advance to the next base or must commit to returning to the previous base – a runner(s) CANNOT stop or pause at this point or she can be ruled out. The defense can attempt to make a play on any runner(s) in this scenario.

Steals and lead offs: No steals or lead offs are permitted; runners must wait until the batter makes contact before leaving the base

If a game is called because of rain; this is the rule governing the situation:

1. If 4 innings have been completed it is considered a complete game.
2. If the home team has scored more runs in 3 1/2 innings than the visiting team has scored in 4 complete innings it is considered a complete game.
3. If neither #1 nor #2 have been satisfied, the game shall be considered a rain-out, pitching and hitting shall not be counted.

Lightning and threatening weather should be used as a guideline to temporarily suspend the game for safety purpose for all parties.

Any games that are cancelled due to weather must have a new date, time, and field agreed upon within 10 days of the cancelled game (the game does not need to be **played** within 10 days – the rescheduling process just needs to be completed). Teams must complete the rescheduling process for its earliest cancelled game before completing rescheduling of a subsequent game. For example, a game cancelled on June 2 must be rescheduled before a team can finalize plans to reschedule a game that was cancelled on June 8. Any game not rescheduled after 10 days will be assigned a date, time, and field by the home team’s director or scheduler. If a team cannot make the date/time assigned by the home team’s director or scheduler, the game may be declared a forfeit.