

2020 12U Division Rules

I. Introduction:

- a. Timbergrove Sports Mission Statement
 - i. It is the mission of the Timbergrove Sports Association to provide a safe, fun, and competitive community sports environment for young athletes while promoting core principles of sportsmanship, respect, hard work, and volunteerism.
- b. Code of Conduct
 - i. Parent Creed
 1. I shall set an example of good sportsmanship and conduct for my child to follow.
 2. I shall not criticize or show displeasure with any umpire or their calls unless I am ready to assume their duties.
 3. I shall remember that only a certain number of children can play at a time.
 4. I shall remember that all managers, coaches, and board members are volunteers.
 5. I shall not complain about anyone unless I have labored as much as they have on TSA projects.
 - ii. We expect all spectators to:
 1. Let the coaches coach.
 2. Let the officials officiate.
 3. Let the children play, compete, perform, and learn.
- c. Positive Coaching Alliance
 - i. Timbergrove Sports Association has partnered with PCA in an effort to provide their great resources to our coaches & parents, and because we share their belief that winning is a goal in youth sports but that there is a second, more important goal of using sports to teach life lessons through positive coaching.
 - ii. Coaches are required to attend and complete the Positive Coaching Alliance workshop once every other year. Division Directors and/or the Director of Softball Operations will have records on coaches with active certificates for the PCA workshop.
 - iii. Additional PCA resources for parents and coaches can be found [here](#).

II. General Rules and Guidelines

- a. Rule Book
 - i. TSA is following the USA/ASA Softball rulebook with some modifications made to fit our playing fields and age groups.
 - ii. Division specific rules are provided in this document and are designed to gradually progress as the athletes age. Any clarification for rules not directly stated herein should be referred to the appropriate Division Directors, Director of Softball Operations, or the current edition of the USA Softball official rulebook.
 - iii. A copy of the Timbergrove Sports Association Softball Rules will be laminated and hung from each dugout for reference during games. If this copy is missing coaches should alert their Division Director, or the Director of Softball Operations, so that it can be replaced.
 - iv. Each Head Coach will receive a hard copy of the USA Softball rule book.
- b. Divisions
 - i. TSA will offer the following divisions for softball:
 1. 6U (Tee Ball)
 2. 8U (Coach Pitch)
 3. 10U (Modified Player Pitch)
 4. 12U (Player Pitch)
 - ii. Player's divisions will be determined by their age on January 1st of the season year. The season runs from August 1 through July 31.
 - iii. Players may request to play up one division per the [TSA Play Up Policy](#). No exceptions will be made to this policy. Any requests made outside of the policy, or the approved timeline, will be denied.

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- c. Uniforms
 - i. In the spring season players will receive a jersey, headband, and socks for the season. Pants, belts, cleats, etc. will be communicated by the coaches and are the responsibility of the player.
 - ii. In the fall season players will receive a jersey and headband for the season. Pants, belts, socks, cleats, etc. will be communicated by the coaches and are the responsibility of the player.
 - iii. Jewelry may not be worn during regulation game play. Each team may receive one warning per game where the player removes the jewelry. Another violation of this in the same game will result in the player being called out.
- d. Umpires
 - i. Umpires should be respected by players, coaches, and spectators alike. Any violation of this is cause for disciplinary action, including removal from the park grounds.
 - ii. Head Coaches may appeal calls on the field directly to the umpire that made the call. After appeal, decisions by the umpire(s) are final and game play shall continue.
 - iii. Each team will submit a lineup to the home plate umpire prior to the start of regulation game play.
- e. Coaches
 - i. Coaches, players, or adult volunteers who engage in unsportsmanlike conduct, such as fighting, abusive language, or similarly derogatory behavior, may be ejected from the game and asked to leave the fields. Additional offenses may result in suspension from future games.
 - ii. Coaches should be in their designated areas (see division specific rules) on the field or in the dugout.
 - iii. Coaches may not try to “rattle” any of the players. If a coach’s behavior is seen as being disruptive to the players by an umpire the coach will receive a warning. Any additional offenses will result in the coach being ejected for the remainder of the game.
- f. Players and Rosters
 - i. Each team shall have a minimum of 9-11 players assigned to their roster.
 - ii. Players are encouraged to try new positions, however the spring season is competitive and positions in the field or batting order are not guaranteed to players.
 - iii. No player will sit the bench twice until all players have sat at least once per game.

III. Division Game Play Rules

- a. Regulation Game Play
 - i. A regulation game will consist of seven (7) full innings or 90 minutes of play, whichever comes first. Time duration during weeknight games may be modified to accommodate daylight.
 - ii. A new inning will not be started after 90 full minutes of play. If a new inning is started before the game clock is expired the inning will be completed.
 - iii. A half inning consists of three outs or five runs, whichever comes first.
 - iv. If a game is called in the middle of an inning after the 5th inning the game is complete, and the score will be that of the last completed inning of play.
 - v. Games that are called before regulation play shall be resumed at the exact point that they were stopped. (Refer to home team scorebook)
 - vi. A run rule format of 15 after three innings, 12 after four innings, or ten after five innings will be in effect.
 - vii. Regular season games that are tied at the end of the 7th inning, or 90 minutes, are complete and the game will be recorded as a tie.
 - viii. Playoff games that cannot end in a tie will utilize the International Tiebreaker Rule (ITB). The ITB rule states at the end of regulation play if the game is tied, the next inning will follow ITB to guarantee a winner. The last hitter from the previous inning, on the offensive team, will be placed on second base at the beginning of the new ITB inning.

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Regular play resumes. The ITB rule will be used in each consecutive inning until an inning is completed with one team emerging as the winner.

- b. Field
 - i. The distance between the center of the pitcher's rubber and the apex of home plate is 40 feet.
 - ii. The distance between bases is 60 feet.
 - iii. The double base will be used at first base. This base is 15" x 30" with both sides equal in height. Half of the base is white (over fair territory) and half of the base is of contrasting color (over foul territory).
 - iv. The pitcher's circle will be an 8-foot radius drawn from the front edge of the pitcher's rubber.
 - v. Chalk lines will be required for foul lines, the pitcher's circle, and the batter's box.
- c. Equipment
 - i. The 12U division will use an official 12" softball. Game balls are provided by the league, one per team per game.
 - ii. All infield positions will be required to wear a facemask.
 - iii. All outfield positions are HIGHLY encouraged to wear a facemask.
 - iv. Catchers are required to wear a full set of catcher's gear while behind the plate. This includes chest pad, shin guards, and helmet. One set will be provided per team.
 - v. Player's bats must meet current USA/ASA standards. It is the players and coaches responsibility to ensure a bat is legal prior to the start of a game.
 - vi. All batters are required to wear a protective batting helmet with a face mask while batting and baserunning. Chin strap is recommended.
- d. Coaches Positions
 - i. Offensive Coaches
 - 1. Offensive team coaches may be positioned at first and third base.
 - 2. Base coaches are not allowed to physically assist runners at any time (ie stopping runners, assisting runners back on base, or pushing runners toward the next base). In this event the physically assisted runner will be called out.
 - 3. One coach can stand/sit immediately outside of the dugout if (s)he is not on the field.
 - ii. Defensive Coaches
 - 1. Defensive team coaches are not allowed on the field
 - 2. One coach may sit/stand immediately outside of the dugout.
 - 3. Between batters the coaches may verbally direct players of field positions if needed.
- e. Rosters and Positions
 - i. Each team roster will consist of a minimum of 9-11 players.
 - ii. A team may begin or end a game with 8 players, utilizing 2 outfielders instead of 3. (Playing shorthanded)
 - iii. In the event a team plays with 8 players the vacant position must be listed on the batting lineup and an out will be recorded when the vacant position is scheduled to bat.
 - iv. In the event a team does not have enough players to play shorthanded, they may pick up a player to avoid forfeiture of the game. Teams may only pick up the number of players required to meet the minimum roster number of 9.
 - v. Players who are picked up on a team must be registered at TSA, in the same eligible age group or below, in the same draft order position or below for the season, will play the outfield positions only, and will bat at the bottom of the lineup. For playoff games all player pickups must be agreed upon in advance of the game by both team's head coaches, the division director, and the director of softball operations prior to the start of the game.
 - vi. If a team has less than 8 players show up for a game the team will forfeit the game.

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f. Fielding

- i. There will be 9 defensive fielding positions:
 1. Pitcher
 2. Catcher
 3. First Base
 4. Second Base
 5. Third Base
 6. Short Stop
 7. Left Field
 8. Center Field
 9. Right Field
- ii. The first baseman, pitcher, and catcher are permitted to tag a batter out after the batter hits the ball in play and before the batter touches first base. When any other position endeavors to make an out at first base the ball must be thrown overhand to an eligible player, unless close proximity warrants an underhand toss.
- iii. For all other baserunners, the defensive fielder must throw the ball to get an out, unless she is close to the runner and can easily tag the runner out. The defensive player cannot run around the field to tag a runner out (i.e. shortstop running to tag the runner going from first base to second base).
- iv. The ball is considered dead once the defensive team has stopped the lead runner on a base and the ball is returned to the pitcher. The look back rule will be in effect.
- v. Fielders must stand at their intended position location. Major shifts are not allowed.
- vi. Fielders may not stand on top of the bases and must provide a clear path for the baserunner. It is at the umpire's discretion to call obstruction/interference as they see fit, call the runner safe, and award the base to the runner.
- vii. Fielders may not be in the direct line of the runner (ie positioned on the baseline) unless they are actively attempting to make a play. It is at the umpire's discretion to call interference/obstruction as they see fit, call the runner safe, and award the runner the base.
- viii. It is highly recommended and encouraged that players at this level get to know and master a position.
- ix. No player will sit the bench twice until all players have sat at least once per game. The first violation during the season of this rule will be a warning. Any additional violations in the same season may warrant a coach's removal from their team.

g. Pitching

- i. Pitcher's will pitch the windmill technique as described in the USA Softball official rule book.
- ii. The rules for the pitcher are standard USA Softball rules regarding pitchers. Three strikes is an out and four balls is a walk.
- iii. The pitcher must start with both feet on the pitching rubber. The step back pitching variation is in effect and legal.
- iv. The pitcher may not jump or hop off of the rubber.
- v. The pitcher's foot must drag off of the pitching rubber and she must execute a legal pitch.
- vi. Umpires may direct the coach on the first offense to avoid an illegal pitch call. After providing direction if the pitcher does not correct her pitch it is at the umpires' discretion to call an illegal pitch and the pitch will be called a ball.
- vii. If a pitcher hits the batter with her pitch the batter will NOT be awarded a base unless a clear attempt is made to avoid being hit by the pitch. These calls are at the umpires' discretion.
- viii. The pitcher must wear a face mask.
- ix. A coach may change a pitcher twice within one game (exception made for brand new innings). A team shall not be allowed to transfer a pitcher back and forth from pitching to

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fielding in attempts to pair specific pitchers against specific batters. This may be considered unsportsmanlike conduct and subject to disciplinary action

- h. Catcher
 - i. Catchers are required to wear full protective catcher's gear at all times during the game. The only exception is removing the helmet in an attempt to field a pop up or foul ball for an out.
 - ii. Catchers must position behind the batter's box in the proper regulation catching area.
 - iii. Catchers may not stand on home plate. It is at the umpire's discretion to call obstruction/interference as they see fit and award the run to the runner.
 - iv. Catchers may not be in the direct line of the baserunner unless there is an active play at home. These calls are at the home plate umpire's discretion.
- i. Batting
 - i. The entire roster of players present for a game will bat in rotation.
 - ii. All players on each team will bat in a fixed batting order, per the lineups provided at the beginning of regulation game play. The batting order may not be changed after the start of regulation game play.
 - iii. The batting order for each team will be presented to the umpires and official scorekeeper before each game begins. Any player that arrives after the game has started shall bat in their original batting order position if that position has not yet batted in the game. Otherwise the position is skipped in the order without penalty, and the late arriving player is placed at the bottom of the batting order. The umpires and official scorekeeper shall be informed of any late player additions or changes proactively before the start of the game.
 - iv. If a player refuses to bat at their official order in the lineup the player will be called out.
 - v. If a player is ejected from a game for any reason that player's position in the batting order will remain and any scheduled at bat will be recorded as an out.
 - vi. If a player leaves a game willingly for any reason that player's position in the batting order will be skipped without recording an out. The only exception to this is if the player's absence drops the roster to eight (8) players or less, in which case the above-mentioned short play rule will be effective and an out will be recorded.
 - vii. Batters are permitted and encouraged to bunt. If a player has two strikes against her and bunts the ball into foul territory the call will be a strike and the batter will be declared out.
 - viii. Players should be coached to play as competitively and safe as possible (ie no "turn and take it"). A batter that is hit by a pitch should make every attempt to avoid the hit and is not guaranteed a base when hit by a pitch. It is at the discretion of the home plate umpire if effort is made to avoid the pitch and if a base is awarded.
 - ix. Coaches should train batters to be aware of base runners and their efforts to steal home. If a batter does not move from the batter's box it is at the discretion of the home plate umpire to make a call and the batter can be called out.
- j. Lead offs and Base Stealing
 - i. Base runners are permitted to steal bases.
 - ii. Base runners are permitted to steal home.
 - iii. Base runners must remain in contact with the base until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. If a runner leaves the base early the runner will be called out and no strike or ball will be called on the batter (no pitch).
 - iv. Any time a runner is stealing a base they are encouraged to slide to avoid injuries and encourage defensive players to still attempt to make a play.
 - v. Any runner stealing home is highly encouraged to slide. It is at the home plate umpires discretion to call a runner out for not sliding to avoid collision/injury risk.

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- k. Base Runners, Advancing, and Scoring
 - i. Base runners are encouraged to slide into bases (with the exception of first base) when there is a play at that base. If there is a play at home plate the runner is strongly encouraged to slide to avoid injury.
 - ii. Base runners may advance or score in the following ways:
 1. When a pitched ball is hit into play by a batter.
 2. When forced to advance as the result of a walk. A runner may attempt to steal second base as the result of being walked by the pitcher.
 3. If the batter is hit by a pitch and awarded first base. Any existing base runners may not attempt to steal or advance (unless required to do so by occupied bases).
 4. When any defensive position player overthrows in an attempt to make a play, the runner can advance. For example, if the catcher receives a pitch and is returning the ball to the pitcher and overthrows, runners can advance at the risk of being thrown out.
 5. When otherwise directed to advance by the umpire.
 6. When a batter is walked, they may attempt to advance past first and steal second at the risk of being thrown out. A walk is a live ball.
 7. If the runner rounds first, they must immediately advance to second or return to first. The look back rule will be in effect.
 - iii. Courtesy runners are encouraged for the pitcher/catcher position(s) when there are two recorded outs in that half inning. The last player called out will serve as the courtesy runner.
 - iv. A ground rule double will be called for any ball that has contact inside fair territory before bouncing/rolling outside of the outfield fence boundaries. All runners may advance only two bases.
 - v. Dropped third strike rule is in effect.
 - vi. Infield fly rule is in effect.

TIMBERGROVE
SOFTBALL