

2018

# RED RAIDER SOFTBALL, INC. Rec Softball Program Rules



# RED RAIDER SOFTBALL

## Recreation Softball Rules

### Supplemental to the NFHS 2018 Softball Rules Book

#### CONTACT INFORMATION:

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NFHS specific rules will be followed based on the NFHS 2018 published softball rules. Copies of NFHS Rule Books are available for a minimum fee for your mobile device as an app. The following rules are supplemental to NFHS book and will supersede the NFHS rule book.

For ease of use, seasonal rules revisions are highlighted in **YELLOW**

#### GENERAL RULES – All Age Divisions

1. **Rule Modifications** – There will be no modifications or adjustments to these rules at any time during the program season (spring & fall) unless such modification is required for safety reasons, clarification and/or deemed necessary by the President of Red Raider Softball or the Red Raider REC Program Director. Rules revisions are discussed at the beginning of each season and voted on by each REC program coach present at such Rules Meetings. At no other time are these rules to be modified (example – pre-game conference with coaches and umpire prior to game start).
2. **Safety** – The safety of ALL players and participants (including coaches) will be the primary concern of all Red Raider Softball teams. Safety comes first and a safe playing environment MUST be established BEFORE ANY ACTIVITY COMMENCES AND MUST BE SO THROUGH THE DURATION OF THE EVENT. No practice, game or other Red Raider Softball, Inc. sanctioned event will take place or continue in an unsafe environment. It is the coach's responsibility to determine if the environment is unsafe for the activity to commence. If there is

any doubt as to the safety of the event, the coach must contact the Program Director immediately to report the condition.

3. **Eligibility** - Player eligibility in a specific division will be determined by the player's age as of December 31<sup>st</sup>, of the previous year. Players are permitted to play up one age division. Players may only play down one age if a note from a professional (teacher, doctor, school coach) expressing a compelling reason for the playing down and authorization from the Red Raider Softball Rec Program Director.
4. **Minimum Players to Start** - In the event that one team is short the minimum number of players, which is 8 players, but know the player(s) is/are coming, the start of the game will be allowed a 10 minute grace period, but the amount of delay will not be added at the end of the game. Note: special exception in the 10U division, a team can borrow a player or 2 on defense to meet the minimum in order to play the game.
5. **Time Limit & Official Game** - All regular season games are slotted for a 120 minute time limit and no new inning will commence after 105 minutes elapsed time has been reached. A game is deemed OFFICIAL once 3 innings have been completed (2.5 innings if the home team is ahead in the score). During the regular season if a game has reached the 120 minute time limit, all play will stop, the game will end, and the score from the last full inning will be the final score, this is referred to as the Drop Dead Rule. The game is also considered to be a completed game after the 120 minute time limit has been reached, irrespective of the number of innings played. See the playoff section for time limits during playoffs.
6. **Game Time** - The official game start time is determined by the Umpire and starts at the end of the pre-game conference and the home team is allowed to take the field. The official game time will be kept by the umpire. Scorekeepers should note the game start time in the scorebook.
7. **Tie Games** – Regular season games can end in a tie. See the Playoff section for Tie Game information during playoffs.
8. **Weather Suspension** – Games that are suspended due to weather in the middle half of an inning will revert back to the last completed inning, if a completed game has been reached. If the game is suspended before a complete game, then the game will be postponed and once rescheduled, will continue from the previous point of stoppage.
9. **Suspended Games** - Suspended games must be agreed by the umpire and both coaches.
  - a. The coaches must agree where the game will start from. If no agreement is made prior to leaving the field, the Program Director will rule.
  - b. Scorekeepers from both teams must agree on all areas of the game for the restart of the game and it is recommended that the same scorekeepers meet prior to the beginning of the restart to review all situations. This includes base runners, batting order, adding players that were not at the suspended game, score, the amount of time available to play and the number of innings a pitcher is available to pitch.

10. **Substitutions** - If a player is injured and cannot play defense, that player is allowed to sit out from playing defense even if the player can still bat. The opposing coach should be notified. If the injured player bats and upon reaching a base, is not able to run, the offensive team may provide a pinch runner. The pinch runner must be the batter that made the last out.
11. **Courtesy Runner** – The team at bat may use a courtesy runner for the catcher of the next ½ inning, when there are 2 outs. The courtesy runner must be the player who made the last out, and must be ready to enter the field at time of need. The purpose of this rule is to speed up the transition between innings, thus allowing the catcher to put on the gear ahead of the 3<sup>rd</sup> out. If the courtesy runner is not ready when needed, this would defeat the purpose of the rule and thus should not be handled in that manner.
12. **Coach Ejection** - Any Coach that is ejected from a game will have a one game suspension while his team will be allowed to play the next scheduled game. The Program Director will review the incident report from the umpire and determine if additional action is required. See the 'Conduct' section of the Policy & Procedures Manual for further information on coach's conduct procedures.
13. **Parent Ejection** - Any Parent that is ejected from a game will be banned from all further games scheduled for that season no matter if it is a game played by their daughter or any game being played by Red Raider Softball Teams. The coach for the team that the parent is associated with will be suspended for one game. The Program Director will review the incident report from the umpire and determine if additional action is required.
14. **Foul Language** - Foul language at any Red Raider Softball game or practice will not be permitted or tolerated. Any player or parent using foul language during any Red Raider Softball event will be asked to leave the field immediately by either the game Umpire and/or Head Coach or their designee.
15. **No Jewelry** - For safety reasons, no earrings, jewelry, hair accessories, bracelets, anklets or other adornments will be permitted to be worn by players during game play. Earrings will not be permitted to be taped. Medical alert chains w/medallions or medical alert bracelets may be worn if taped securely to the player's skin during play.
16. **Approved Bats** - All bats used by any player during game play MUST display the LATEST USSSA, ASA or NSA Certification of Approval by the manufacturer on the bat. Any bat being used that does not display the above certification will be removed from the game by the Umpire. No wooden bats are permitted to be used.
17. **Batting Helmets** - Batting helmets with a full face mask attached must be worn by every player that is batting, on deck, advancing to bases, or occupying any base. All batting helmets and facemasks MUST display the NOCSAE approval.
18. **Catching Gear** - Catchers MUST wear full protective gear, which includes leg guards, chest protector and a NOCSAE certified protective helmet with full mask whenever the ball is in play. The catchers must also wear their full gear while warming up pitchers. A Catcher's glove is encouraged but not required.

19. **Base Blocking** - Fielders may not block any portion of the base or Home Plate without holding the ball. If the fielder is waiting for the ball she must give a straight path to the base or Home Plate prior to receiving the throw and then move to the base or Home Plate with the ball.
20. **Field Inspection** - Coaches and the Umpire shall inspect the field of play prior to game start for any unsafe conditions that may exist. The umpire and coaches shall determine if a field is acceptable to be played on. If a field is determined to be unsafe and unacceptable, the Program Director shall be notified and the game rescheduled for another day on another field.
21. **Protests** - Coaches may protest any game on grounds of umpire ruling, transgression of rules or game play ONLY, by formally protesting to the Program Director, in writing within 48 hours of the completion, or end, of the game in question. The Program Director will make a determination based on facts presented and may consult the Red Raider Softball, Inc. President and/or the Board of Directors for opinion. The binding decision shall rest with the Program Director. No protest of any nature will be accepted after 48 hours from game completion or end has passed. Protests for reasons other than what is noted above will not be considered. In cases where the Program Director is directly involved with a particular team, whether lodging the complaint or not, the President of Red Raider Softball, Inc. will make the final determination ruling. Ruling decisions, either by the Program Director, President or Board of Directors (or their designee), will be binding.
22. **Lineup Card** - Prior to the game commencing, each coach (or coach's designee) will supply the opposing team a batting order/lineup or an official lineup card. A coach may not delay the start of a game by not supplying a batting order prior to the game commencing. If such delay occurs past the 10 minute grace period, the team not supplying a lineup will forfeit the game.
23. **Thrown Bats** - Batters must not throw bats. A warning from the Umpire will be given for the first instance of bat throwing. One warning per game. The batter will be called out for every subsequent instance of bat throwing.
24. **On Deck Circle** - Batters that are next to bat (the on deck batter) MUST warm up in the designated 'on deck circle' and MUST have a batting helmet on. The on deck circle must be determined by both coaches and the umpire PRIOR to the game commencing. If no proper and safe on deck circle area can be identified, no warm up batting can be done.
25. **Uniform** - All players must have a complete Red Raider uniform on to participate in any game. All jerseys must be tucked in. A uniform consists of a Red Raider team jersey, Red Raider black shorts or black pants, and black socks. Exceptions: 1) The player has not yet received an official uniform; 2) The player forgot their uniform or some other singular incident. In either case of exception, similar uniform colors should be used.
26. **Travel Player Limit** - No more than 5 travel players are permitted to be placed on one single REC team.

27. **Player Positions** - Each player can play no more than 3 innings per position in a single game. For pitcher inning position limits, see division rules.
28. **Playing Time** - All players are to play at least ½ the number of innings in a game, even amount of innings (i.e. 2 of the 1<sup>st</sup> 4 innings, 3 of the 1<sup>st</sup> 6 innings), unless mathematically impossible.
29. **Batting Order** - There is open and free substitution for all defensive positions. It is not necessary to notify the umpire or the opposing coach of any defensive change or substitution. The batting order must consist of all players.
30. **Hit by Pitch Limit** - The pitcher is only permitted to have 3 HBPs (hit by pitch) called on her during an inning, and then the pitcher will be asked to leave her position as pitcher (she can play other positions). The pitcher can then return to the pitcher position during another inning. If a pitcher, who has been removed because of 3 HBPs in an inning, returns to pitch in another inning, she is only permitted 2 HBPs before she is asked to leave the position of pitcher for the remainder of the game.
31. **Run Limit** - No more than 5 runs per team will be counted in a single inning. **Final inning is UNLIMITED RUNS.** (no continuous run rule allowed in regular season play). See the Playoff section for run limits during playoffs. **EXCEPTION – there is no run limit in the High School division.**
32. **Metal Cleats** – Metal cleats are permitted to be used in the Middle School and High School age groups. Metal cleats are NOT permitted in the Elementary School group.
33. **Lightning/Thunder** – **If lightning is observed at ANY TIME and/or thunder is heard, no matter how distant, game play MUST be suspended IMMEDIATELY. No game can resume play until AT MINIMUM 30 minutes has passed since the last thunder clap was heard and no lightning has been observed FOR AT LEAST 30 MINUTES. All players, coaches and officials MUST exit the field of play immediately and take shelter. AT NO TIME ARE ANY RED RAIDER PLAYER, COACH OR OFFICIAL PERMITTED TO COMMENCE, CONTINUE OR RESUME GAME PLAY IF NOT MORE THAN 30 MINUTES SINCE ANY LIGHTNING WAS OBSERVED AND ANY THUNDER WAS HEARD. ANY COACH OR OFFICIAL NOT ADHERING TO THIS RULE, AT ANY TIME, WILL BE IMMEDIATELY DISMISSED FROM THE RED RAIDER SOFTBALL ORGANIZATION.**
34. **Make-up Games** – In the event of game cancelations or postponements, every attempt will be made by the coaches of BOTH teams affected, to schedule and get the canceled or postponed games played. The responsibility to schedule make-up games rests solely with the head coaches of the two affected teams. Each coach shall agree upon a make-up date and time and location (if possible). This information MUST be communicated to the Red Raider office staff as soon as possible to schedule umpires, field time, etc. In the event that a mutual time/date/place cannot be reached, the Red Raider Rec Program Director will make the determination.

# Elementary School Division Specific Rules

The below rules are supplemental and additional to the NFHS rules and are for the Elementary School Division only.

1. **# of Players** – 10 players are permitted with the additional player in the outfield, making it 4 outfielders
2. **Stealing** –
  - a. Only stealing of 2<sup>nd</sup> base to 3<sup>rd</sup> base is permitted, with only one base per pitch, no advancement on an overthrow.
  - b. Base runners MUST slide into home to avoid a collision.
3. **Drop 3<sup>rd</sup> Strike** - No drop third strike will be permitted.
4. **1<sup>st</sup> Walk Counts** – A pitcher is allowed one walk per inning. Any ball four counts to subsequent batters, the coach will pitch to complete the batter's plate appearance with the remaining strike count. The pitcher will then return to pitch to the next batter. The pitcher's walk total transfers to subsequent pitchers in inning. Hit batsmen do not count as walks, nor do they negate the consecutive nature of walks preceding and following the hit batsman.
5. **Pitching** – The player pitcher will pitch either 3 strikes or 4 balls to the batter. Upon pitching called ball 4, the designated Pitching Coach for the batting team comes in to pitch 4 more pitches to the batter. If the batter has not hit a fair ball, struck out, or been put out after receiving the maximum number of pitches without completing any of these situations, they will be called out.
  - a) No stealing on coach pitch
  - b) If the final pitch is hit foul the batter is out
  - c) The catcher does not have to catch the 3<sup>rd</sup> strike
  - d) There shall be no Base on Balls (walk) awarded
  - e) Batters hit by a pitch will not be awarded 1<sup>st</sup> base
  - f) Batters may not bunt
  - g) The infield fly rule is not in effect
  - h) The Pitching Coach cannot instruct players on the field, the base coaches are allowed to coach the base runners only
  - i) If the Pitching Coach is unintentionally hit with a batted ball, it is an immediate dead ball and a no pitch (the batter continues their time at bat).
  - j) If the Pitching Coach intentionally makes contact with the ball or in the umpire's judgment interferes with a defensive play, the ball is dead and the batter is out. The Coach will be given a warning and a second infraction will result in the coach being ejected.
6. **Coach Pitcher**
  - a. No warm up pitches for the Coach Pitcher
  - b. It is recommended that the Coach Pitcher is not the scorekeeper or base coach
  - c. The offensive team Pitching Coach must pitch from or behind the pitching plate

7. **Illegal Pitches** - There will be no enforcement of illegal pitches. HOWEVER, coaches will encourage their pitchers to throw the pitch in the proper manner to develop the correct skill.
8. **Infield Fly** – The Infield fly rule will not be observed.
9. **Bunting** - Bunting is prohibited.
10. **Outfielder Placement** – The outfielders cannot start the pitch closer than the grass/dirt line, meaning all outfielders must be in the grass. If the field's grass line is further back than normal, then a judgment call should be made between coaches or umpire before the start of the game, to allow the outfield players to have the option to start in front of the grass line at the pitch.
11. **Pitchers Limit** - A Pitcher in the Elementary School Division can pitch no more than 2 innings in a single game except when extra innings are reached, and then each pitcher may pitch 1 additional inning.
12. **Pitching Distance** – The pitching distance for the Elementary School Division is 35 feet.
13. **Game Ball** – An 11 inch optic yellow ball will be used.
14. **Game Time Limit** – The game time limit for the Elementary School Division is 120 minutes. There will be no new inning started after 105 minutes have elapsed. This is DROP DEAD at 120 minutes. Final score reverts back to the score of the last completed inning. (REV 3/2018)



## Middle and High School Division Specific Rules

The below rules are supplemental and additional to the NFHS rules and are for the Middle and High School Divisions.

1. **# of Players** – 9 players are permitted in the field, with only 3 outfielders
2. **Stealing** - Stealing and sliding of all bases is permitted. Base runners MUST slide into home to avoid contact.
3. **Drop 3<sup>rd</sup> Strike** - Drop third strike is permitted.
4. **Pitching** – All pitching is kid pitch
5. **Illegal Pitches** - Enforcement of illegal pitches is permitted to the discretion of the umpire.
6. **Infield Fly** - Infield fly rule will be observed.
7. **Bunting** - Bunting of all types is permitted
8. **Pitchers Limit**– A pitcher in the Middle and High School divisions can pitch no more than 3 innings in a single game except when extra innings are reached, and then each pitcher may pitch 1 additional inning.
9. **Pitching Distance** – The pitching distance for the Middle School division is 40 feet, and the pitching distance for the High School division is 43 feet.
10. **Game Ball** – A 12 inch optic yellow ball will be used.

## REC Playoff Rules (all age divisions)

The below rules are supplemental and additional to the NFHS rules and apply for any Red Raider Softball REC program sanctioned tournament event as well as playoff/championship games (all age divisions). These rules DO NOT pertain to any Red Raider Softball TRAVEL level sanctioned or unsanctioned tournament event.

1. **Game Times** - Game times are slotted for 120 minutes. No new inning will begin once the 105 min time limit has been reached. Whichever team is leading once the game has reached the 120 minute time limit AND after a full inning has been completed (or half inning if the home team is ahead) they will be declared the winner and the game will be noted as completed. There is NO drop dead rule in any playoff or championship game. A full inning must be completed (unless the home team is ahead once 120 minutes has been reached).
2. **Game Clock** - Game time will commence once the pregame conference has been completed. In the case of a lengthy delay, such as a major injury, the umpire can add additional time to the game clock.
3. **Home Team** - The higher seed team is always the home team.
4. **Unlimited Run Innings** - Starting in the 4<sup>th</sup> inning, an unlimited run rule is in effect and will remain in effect for the remainder of the game. The 1<sup>st</sup> 3 innings remain at a 5 run rule limit, per team, per inning.
5. **Mercy Rule** – Because of the addition of the unlimited run rule, a mercy rule also goes in to effect starting in the 4<sup>th</sup> inning. If a team is ahead by 12 runs or more at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> inning or at the end of any inning after, the game is over.
6. **Tied Game** - If a game is tied after 7 innings or after the 'no new inning time limit', additional innings will be played based on ITB (International Tie Breaker) rules, whereby a runner (the runner should be the last out) starts at second base prior to the inning starting and the batting order resumes where it left off at the previous inning, until a winner is determined.
7. **Seeding** – For seeding/scheduling purposes during playoffs, if the number of games played differs from team to team, then head to head results will be used to determine the seeding of teams for playoffs. After head to head, points AGAINST will be used. After points against, a coin flip will be used.
8. **Trophies** – No 'participation' trophies will be given to any team. Only 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place trophies will be awarded according to playoff game results.

**Change control document:**

**Rev 11 – April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

Changed divisions from age to school title.

Revised metal cleat rule for all divisions – allowed in MS and HS. Not allowed in ES.

Added thunder/lightning language.

**Rev 10 – April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

10U section – Rule #4 – Replace rule with a more descriptive explanation prompted by questions.

Updated watermark & footer with new Revision format

**Rev 9 – April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014**

10U section – added rule #4 1<sup>st</sup> walk counts

Updated watermark & footer with new Revision format

**Rev 8 – Nov 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013**

Playoff section – Changed 1:45hr to 1hr 45min and 2:00 to 2hrs

Updated watermark

**Rev 7 – June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

Playoff section – Item 4 added

**Unlimited Run Innings** - Starting in the 4<sup>th</sup> inning, an unlimited run rule is in effect and will remain in effect for the remainder of the game. The 1<sup>st</sup> 3 innings remain at a 5 run rule limit, per team, per inning.

Playoff section – Item 5 added

**Mercy Rule** – Because of the addition of the unlimited run rule, a mercy rule also goes in to effect starting in the 4<sup>th</sup> inning. If a team is ahead by 12 runs or more at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> inning or at the end of any inning after, the game is over.

Playoff section – Item 6 added

**Tied Game** - If a game is tied after 7 innings or after the 'no new inning time limit', additional innings will be played based on ITB (International Tie Breaker) rules, whereby a runner (the runner should be the last out) starts at second base prior to the inning starting and the batting order resumes where it left off at the previous inning, until a winner is determined

General section – Item 31 updated

(no unlimited run inning or continuous run rule allowed in regular season play). See the Playoff section for run limits during playoffs.

**Rev 6 – March 15<sup>th</sup> 2013**

General section – Item 4 additional item for 10U added

Note: special exception in the 10U division, a team can borrow a player or 2 on defense to meet the minimum or maximum in order to play the game.

General section – Item 5, added clarification for playoffs

General section – Item 18 updated for safety

The catchers must also wear their full gear while warming up pitchers

General section – Item 25 added for safety  
All jerseys must be tucked in.

**Rev 13 – September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017**

- Game time reduced from 1:45 to 1:30 (90 minutes).
- Elementary game time set to 1:30 (90 minutes)
- The 5-run limit rule for the last/final inning has been eliminated
- For Playoffs Only – for seeding purposes, if the number of games played differs from team to team, then head to head results will be used. Points against will be the next factor, then coin toss.
- Participation trophies will not be awarded to any team. Only 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place.
- Make-up game scheduling is the responsibility of the head coaches of the affected teams.

**Rev 14 – March 28<sup>th</sup> 2018**

- Game time increased to 120 minutes.
- Game start time and timekeeping clarification.
- Make-up game scheduling procedures updates.

**60' Softball Field**

