

NorCal Rules Summary - Updated & Released January 2026

	8-Under	10-Under	12-Under	14-under/16-under
Baseline Distance	60 feet	60 feet	60 feet	60 feet
Pitching Distance	30 feet	35 feet	40 feet	43 feet
Softball Size	10" RIF 1 USA SOFTBALL approved	11" RIF 10 or 11" USA SOFTBALL approved	12" USA SOFTBALL approved	12" USA SOFTBALL approved
Players to Start Game	8 players / Less than 8, forfeit after 10 min	8 players / Less than 8, forfeit after 10 min	8 players / Less than 8, forfeit after 10 min	8 players / Less than 8, forfeit after 10 min
Season Game Time	No new inning after 1:30	No new inning after 1:30	No new inning after 1:30	No new inning after 1:30
Innings per Game	6 inning game.	7 innings per game.	7 inning per game.	7 inning per game.
Short-Handed Rule	If less than 9 Players will take an out at the last spot in the lineup	If less than 9 Players will take an out at the last spot in the lineup	If less than 9 Players will take an out at the last spot in the lineup	If less than 9 Players will take an out at the last spot in the lineup
Tournament Tie-breaker	In case of a tie at the end of the regulation game and/or time limit, a runner will be placed on 2 nd base in first extra inning. The player scheduled to bat last in that respective half inning will start at 2 nd base. If tie is not broken, the second extra inning and succeeding innings, the last 2 players scheduled to bat last in that respective half inning, shall start at 3 rd base and 2 nd base.	In case of a tie at the end of the regulation game and/or time limit, a runner will be placed on 2 nd base in first extra inning. The player scheduled to bat last in that respective half inning will start at 2 nd base. If tie is not broken, the second extra inning and succeeding innings, the last 2 players scheduled to bat last in that respective half inning, shall start at 3 rd base and 2 nd base.	In case of a tie at the end of the regulation game and/or time limit, a runner will be placed on 2 nd base in first extra inning. The player scheduled to bat last in that respective half inning will start at 2 nd base. If tie is not broken, the second extra inning and succeeding innings, the last 2 players scheduled to bat last in that respective half inning, shall start at 3 rd base and 2 nd base.	In case of a tie at the end of the regulation game and/or time limit, a runner will be placed on 2 nd base in first extra inning. The player scheduled to bat last in that respective half inning will start at 2 nd base. If tie is not broken, the second extra inning and succeeding innings, the last 2 players scheduled to bat last in that respective half inning, shall start at 3 rd base and 2 nd base.
Batting Requirements	Bat the roster up to 15 players.	May Bat the Line-up or only Defensive 9.	May Bat the Line-up or only Defensive 9.	May Bat the Line-up or only Defensive 9.
Defensive Players on Field of Play	10 (must have 4 outfielders)	(9) When batting the line-up, free substitution on defense with players in batting lineup	(9) When batting the line-up, free substitution on defense with players in batting lineup	(9) When batting the line-up, free substitution on defense with players in batting lineup
Pitcher	Player - Coach after 4 balls, remaining strikes. (No walks)	Player	Player	Player
Pitching Limitation	2 innings first 4 innings/ 3 innings max. per game	4 innings maximum per game	4 innings maximum per game	4 innings maximum per game
Stealing	No Lead off when ball leaves pitcher's hand.	Yes Lead off when ball leaves pitcher's hand.	Yes Lead off when ball leaves pitcher's hand.	Yes Lead off when ball leaves pitcher's hand.
Stealing Home	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mercy Rule	15 runs after 3 innings 12 runs after 4 innings 8 runs after 5 innings	15 runs after 3 innings 12 runs after 4 innings 8 runs after 5 innings	15 runs after 3 innings 12 runs after 4 innings 8 runs after 5 innings	15 runs after 3 innings 12 runs after 4 innings 8 runs after 5 innings
Runs per inning	5 runs max per half inning	5 runs max per half inning	5 runs max per half inning	5 runs max per half inning
Dropped 3rd strike	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Infield Fly Rule	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Courtesy Runners	Pitcher & Catcher only. anyone in lineup or sub off the bench. Cannot run for pitch & catcher in same game. If CR needs to bat, player she ran for will be out, If 3 rd out, CR will lead off next inning.	Pitcher & Catcher only. anyone in lineup or sub off the bench. Cannot run for pitch & catcher in same game. If CR needs to bat, player she ran for will be out, If 3 rd out, CR will lead off next inning.	Pitcher & Catcher only. anyone in lineup or sub off the bench. Cannot run for pitch & catcher in same game. If CR needs to bat, player she ran for will be out, If 3 rd out, CR will lead off next inning.	Pitcher & Catcher only. anyone in lineup or sub off the bench. Cannot run for pitch & catcher in same game. If CR needs to bat, player she ran for will be out, If 3 rd out, CR will lead off next inning.
Max Approved Adults in Dugout	5	5	5	5
Coaches on Field	Yes, Coach pitching. If batted ball hits Coach-Pitcher, Play is Dead, Batter get 1 st Base, & all other runners advance a base only if forced to next base by the batter.	No	No	No
Bunting	Yes, Only off player-pitcher.	Yes	Yes	Yes

USA SOFTBALL rules govern all rules not covered in NorCal rules

Northern California Girls Softball Association **Fall Ball Playing Options**

10-UNDER / 12-UNDER / 14-UNDER / 16-UNDER

A team may play one of the following options for any Fall Ball Tournament and Fall Ball Season play game(s).

Each team must declare an option before the start of each game.

NorCal Option 1 - Bat the Lineup Option (Extended Lineup)

- The coach/manager may submit a batting lineup from 8 players up to 15 players.
- Each additional player will be listed as a substitute below the batting lineup.
- Each player in the batting lineup that does not have a defensive position will be listed as an EP (extra player) and can be listed in any order within the batting lineup.
- When batting more than nine players with no available substitutes: if an injured player is not available to bat in their place in the batting lineup, the batting order will be compressed to the number of batters in the batting order with no out recorded for the injured player unable to bat.
- Max compression to nine (9) players: If a batting line up drops below 8 players, a team will forfeit.
- Player reporting to the game late may be added to the end of batting lineup or as a substitute.
- Players in the batting lineup may freely exchange defensive positions on the field with all pitcher and catcher changes being reported.
- Batting order never changes.
- Substitutions coming off the bench must be reported to the umpire and placed in the lineup.
- USA Softball reentry rule applicable for all substitutes.
- DP/Flex entry rule available

NorCal Option 2 - Bat Nine and Play Nine Defensively Option

- The coach/manager may submit a batting line-up with nine players batting.
- Each additional player will be listed as a substitute below the batting lineup.
- Each player in the batting lineup will play a defensive position.
- Player reporting to the game late may be added as a substitute.
- If a batting line up drops below 8 players, a team will forfeit.
- Player reporting to the game late may be added to the end of batting lineup or as a substitute.
- Players **NOT** in the batting lineup may **NOT** freely exchange defensive positions on the field.
- Batting order never changes.
- Substitutions coming off the bench must be reported to the umpire and placed in the lineup.
- USA Softball reentry rule applicable for all substitutes.
- DP/Flex entry rule available.

NorCal Courtesy Runner

- The team at bat may use a Courtesy Runner for the pitcher or catcher providing the pitcher or catcher bats for themselves and reaches base safely.
- Any player present at the game and in the lineup or on the bench may be a Courtesy Runner.
- The same Player may not run for both the pitcher and catcher in the same inning.
- In the top of the first inning only, the pitcher and catcher, are identified as those players listed on the lineup sheet as pitcher and catcher. Thereafter, the pitcher and catcher are identified as the last player to have played the position on defense.
- If a player is on base as a Courtesy Runner and it becomes her turn to bat, she will be pulled off base to bat. The player for whom she is running for (pitcher/catcher), will be called out.
Exception: If third out of the inning, the inning will be over and the player that was the Courtesy Runner will lead off the next inning for their team

NorCal Fall Ball Season Play - Time Limits

- No new inning will begin after 1 hour and 20 minutes from the start of the game. Any new inning started shall be finished unless another rule applies. There will be a minimum 20 minute break between all games.
- When time expires, if trailing team can't tie or take the lead due to maximum runs, game will end. **Finish the batter.**
- **No extra inning will be played, Game will end in a tie.**

NorCal Tournament Play - Time Limits

- A time limit for each game will be announced prior to the tournament at the Managers meeting.

USA Softball Rules govern all rules not covered on this summary