

MINNESOTA SOFTBALL 8-UNDER STATE TOURNAMENT FAST PITCH RULES

(complete set of playing rules are found at <https://mnsoftball.com/pages/cms/metro-area-8-under-league>)

GAME PLAY

- Coaches need to operate the game with the highest amount of integrity. At all times keep the kid's best interest in mind.
- Games will be five (5) innings or 65-minute time limit. Home team must be ahead after 2 ½ innings to be considered complete. Please hustle on and off the field to keep the games moving along.
- Games cannot end in a tie. 8U will use the tie breaker rule and start the inning with a runner on second base with two (2) outs. The last out will be the runner placed at second base. If the tie is not broken after the inning, the game will continue for a maximum of three innings. If game is still tied after three innings, a coin flip will determine the winner.
- Teams will bat all players in attendance on their roster.
- Half innings are complete after three (3) outs or five (5) runs.
- Run ahead rule: fifteen (15) after three (3) innings, twelve (12) after four (4) innings, and eight (8) after five (5) innings.
- There may be youth umpires for the State Tournament games. Calls will not be disputed. If there is a concern, talk to the tournament director.
- The home team will be determined by a coin toss.
- After the game, the umpire will turn in the blue card with the final score.
- Defense will have nine (9) players on the field. However, there will be no penalty for playing with eight (8) players. Teams with seven (7) players can play, however, the eighth player in the line-up will be out.
- Each batter gets three (3) swings or five (5) pitches unless the last pitch is a foul ball. The at bat will continue on a foul ball just as with all other age groups. An errant pitch because of machine error will not count against pitch count.
- Bunting is not allowed.
- The infield fly rule will not be applied.
- Runners will not be allowed to advance after a dropped third strike.
- Stealing is not allowed.
- Designated players (DP) will not be allowed.
- Leading off is not allowed. Runners may not leave their base until the ball contacts the bat.
- The pitcher must stay in the pitcher's circle and behind or on the side of the coach until the ball contacts the bat. For clarification, draw a line at the 35' mark across the entire circle and use that line for the pitcher to stand behind. The pitcher may line up on either side of the pitching machine. However, absolutely no movement can be made by the pitcher who places them in front of the pitching machine and or coach prior to pitch.
- Prior to the pitch, the pitching coach must check with the defensive coach that their players are in position and ready for play to begin. The pitching coach can simply raise their 'nonpitching' hand to start the process. Arm up, middle, down, release the machine arm.
- Outfielders must start the play standing on the grass at the edge of the infield or deeper. If the infield is cut for baseball create an arc 15 feet behind the bases and the outfielders must start behind that. They cannot move until the bat has contacted the ball.

Players and runners will stop when:

- A ball that never leaves the infield: If no fielder has control of the ball the runners may continue to advance at their own risk regardless of starting on/off the base. However, once a fielder has control of the ball the runners should stop at the next base. This encourages the infielder to throw the ball to the appropriate base without the fear of runners advancing to the next base because of an overthrow. (Example; A batter hits a ground ball; the infielder fields the ball and makes a throw towards first base. The runner must stop at first base and may not advance to second base. If the ball is caught or the runner is tagged out at first base prior to the runner reaching first base the runner is out.)
- Ball fielded on the dirt, or the arc equals one (1) base per infield hit.

- A ball hit to the outfield: If no outfielder has control of the ball the runners may continue to advance. Once the outfielder gains control of the ball and throws (releases) it toward the infield the runners will stop at the next base, even if the ball doesn't make it to the "dirt" on the throw. Exception, the outfielder can carry the ball to the infield to make an out. The runners can keep advancing in this situation.
- Maximum number of coaches allowed on the field: The defense can have three (3) coaches. Two (2) coaches will be in the field, and one (1) will be working with catcher on technique and proper fitting of catcher's gear. The offense can have three coaches (3). Two will be base coaches and one will be running the pitching machine.
- Coaches are part of the field and are in play and need to make every effort to stay out of the players' way.
- The coach feeding the pitching machine must keep a maximum of two (2) softballs in his/her possession and not lay on the ground around the machine.