

# **Twin Valley Girls Softball Rules and Regulations**

The Twin Valley Softball league will abide by all rules and regulations as stated under GIRLS FAST PITCH SOFTBALL, 18 and under in the Amateur Softball (USA) rule book. Twin Valley League rules are as follows:

## **I. League Rules (applies to all divisions)**

### **A. General**

1. Lineup cards must be exchanged prior to every game, with an (\*) denoting ALL club players on your roster.
2. All players on your roster, must play in 50% of your scheduled TVL regular season games, to be eligible for the playoffs unless a documented injury or sickness precluded the player from participating. **Any team that uses a player (or players) in the playoffs that is not eligible will forfeit said playoff game(s).**
3. All teams must complete 90% on their scheduled games, to be playoff eligible.
4. Substitution of players is allowed from within an age group only from the B division up to the A division or from a younger age division "playing up" in an older age division. The spirit of the substitution rules is to add players to get games completed and to eliminate an undesirable number of forfeitures.
5. If you have a pitcher who also pitches for a Club/ASA registered, Class A or B Club team, that team must play in the "A" division.
6. **If there is any question regarding a player's eligibility to play, contact your program's TVL representative, who will verify with the league.**

### **B. Game logistics**

1. **Game time will be 1 hour and 20 minutes. At that time, you will finish the inning you are currently playing. The next inning will be your last and unlimited inning. If you complete the game prior to the time limit the game will end**
2. All games will start at 6:00 PM unless the board approves an under the light's location prior to the start of the season. A team not fielding eight (8) players by 6:15 shall forfeit the game. Once a game has been forfeited, both teams can still play for fun, but the score and results will not count toward league play.

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3. Only an "Assigned USA umpire" can officiate the game i.e. A replacement USA umpire / or unassigned USA umpire or a volunteer umpire, if chosen, puts teams and coaches at risk of being exposed to an uninsured event.
4. If a game is to be cancelled, the opposing team and umpire must be notified by 3:30 P.M. If the umpire is not notified, then the team cancelling the game must pay for the umpire. A game can be cancelled if determined by umpire that the field is unsafe for the players. If an umpire or officials cancel a game due to playing conditions, then both teams have 2 weeks to make-up the game or both teams are subject to receiving a forfeit. Note: The only acceptable reason for cancelling a game on the day of the game is poor field conditions / weather.
5. **ANY GAME THAT NEEDS TO BE CANCELLED DUE TO A NON-WEATHER-RELATED ISSUE (i.e., COVID 19 / NOT ENOUGH PLAYERS) MUST BE CANCELLED 24 HRS PRIOR TO THE GAME OR THE TEAM CANCELLING IS RESPONSIBLE TO PAY THE UMPIRE**
6. Equal time for infield practice should be allowed to both teams if infield practice is permitted before the game on the field. For example, home team takes infield at 5:30-5:40, visiting team takes infield at 5:40-5:50.
7. Home team coaches will discuss all ground rules with the umpire and visiting team at **5:50**. Ground rules include field rules set by the town, including items such as curfews.
8. No more than of 6 infielders are allowed in the infield when the pitcher releases the ball. The positions allowed on the infield are Pitcher, Catcher, 1B, 2B, 3B; SS. Outfielders should position themselves on the grass until the release of the pitch, or at minimum of 5' from where the grass should be.
9. Each player shall play a minimum of 2 defensive innings by the end of the 4th inning. A continuous batting order is to be used consisting of all players present at the game. A player that arrives after the start of the game shall be added to the end of the existing batting order.
10. Only the starting pitcher can return to the pitcher position after another pitcher takes the mound. All other pitchers removed from the pitcher position cannot return to the pitcher position in that game.
11. The USA Softball Run Ahead Rule is 12 runs after 3 innings, 10 runs after 4 innings, & 8 runs after 5 innings. This will always apply to all Twin Valley Games

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### **12. Regular season games may end in a tie after a complete game or shortened game, as defined in each division's section.**

13. For Playoffs only: If the score is tied after the designated number of innings for the age division have been completed, a tiebreaker will go into effect. The player who had the last completed at-bat in the last regulation inning will begin at second base with the player batting after her in the order leading off in the tie breaker inning. Each team has three (3) outs to try to score runs. The teams play subsequent innings using this format until someone wins or the umpire declares darkness.

14. The HOME team is required to report scores for ALL games, **including playoffs and championships**. Score reports should include the age group and level; the original scheduled date for the game; the teams/towns that played; and the score, including who won.

15. Runners can tag up on fair/foul balls.

### **C. Behavior and safety**

1. Twin-Valley Girls Softball League (TVGSL) "Zero Tolerance" Policy: TVGSL has adopted a strict "Zero Tolerance" Policy. Good sportsmanship is the number one goal of the TVGSL. Coach, player or spectator violations of league rules will result in game forfeiture. Umpires have authority to monitor and discipline any individual within the ballpark during the game. The decision of the umpire is final in all cases. **There will be "NO SMOKING" at fields hosting TVL games.**

All town representatives are responsible for their coaches' and parents' conduct. Any coach, assistant coach or scorekeeper who is ejected from a game will serve a one game suspension. Additional disciplinary action will be handled by the Board of Directors. Complaints involving inappropriate parent behavior will go before the board for review.

The TVGSL "Zero Tolerance" and Sportsmanship Code will be strictly enforced. A copy of the TVGSL "Code of Conduct" can be found on the homepage of the TVGSL website, under It is the responsibility of town coordinators to review The TVGSL "Code of Conduct" with all coaches, players and parents.

2. No protesting of a call is allowed. Head Coaches Only may question why an umpire made a call when it involves an interpretation of a rule.

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3. If, in the judgment of an umpire an injury that requires immediate medical attention occurs, the ball is immediately called dead and the player is attended to. Placement of runners and batters is at the umpire's discretion.

An injured player in the continuous batting order is unable to play she will be skipped in the order and the opposing team will not get an automatic out. An injured player is allowed return to the lineup after being skipped.

4. For the safety of the players and the coaches, a batter that throws the bat will be given at the judgment of the umpire a warning, called out or will be ejected.
5. All fields must have a double safety bag at first base.
6. **The Twin Valley League recommends that mouth guards for players in the field, and facemasks for infielders be worn. If a program has bylaws or requirements that are stricter than this recommendation, then both teams at the field must comply with the stricter rules. Programs with specific safety requirements beyond recommendations must communicate this information in writing with a copy of the relevant rule to TVL when submitting rosters for the season.**
7. Batting helmets with facemasks shall be worn by batter, baserunners, and players waiting on deck as required per USA. (U-10 players not allowed to base-coach).
8. Bats must visibly display an ASA approved emblem to be used during games.

### II. Divisional Rules

- A. The table below shows the rules by division, with explanations underneath.**

	<b>U10B</b>	<b>U10A</b>	<b>U12A</b>	<b>U12B</b>	<b>U14</b>	<b>U18</b>
1. Pitcher's plate	35 feet	35 feet	40 feet	40 feet	43 feet	43 feet
2. Number of fielders	10 fielders	10 fielders	10 fielders	10 fielders	<b>9 fielders</b>	<b>9 fielders</b>
3. Number of innings	6 innings	6 innings	6 innings	6 innings	<b>7 innings</b>	<b>7 innings</b>
4. Ball size	11 inches	11 inches	12 inches	12 inches	12 inches	12 inches

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5. Maximum runs per inning	<b>4 runs</b>	5 runs per inning. Unlimited for the final inning	5 runs per inning. Unlimited for the final inning	5 runs per inning. Unlimited for the final inning	5 runs per inning. Unlimited for the final inning	5 runs per inning. Unlimited for the final inning
6. Infield fly rule in effect	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
7. Pitching limit	<b>3 innings per game</b>	None	None	<b>3 innings per game</b>	None	None
8. Stealing	Yes. <b>Limit 3 steals per inning.</b>	Yes Unlimited steals per inning.	Yes Unlimited steals per inning.	Yes Unlimited steals per inning.	Yes Unlimited steals per inning.	Yes Unlimited steals per inning.
9. Stealing Home	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
10. Overthrow on a steal attempt	Runners <b>not</b> allowed to advance	Runners <b>not</b> allowed to advance	Runners can advance	Runners can advance	Runners can advance	Runners can advance
11. Dropped third strike	Runners not allowed to advance	Runners not allowed to advance	Runners allowed to advance	Runners allowed to advance	Runners allowed to advance	Runners allowed to advance
12. Bunting	<b>Permitted - 1 player limit per inning</b>	Permitted - unlimited bunts / inning	Permitted - unlimited bunts / inning	Permitted - unlimited bunts / inning	Permitted - unlimited bunts / inning	Permitted - unlimited bunts / inning
13. Slash Bunting	No	No	No	No	No	<b>Yes</b>
14. Players permitted to coach bases	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

1. The pitchers plate distance is measured from the apex (point) of the plate to the front of the pitcher's plate. A fixed pitcher's plate is preferred but, if unavailable, then the Umpire will mark the distance. Umpires are required to verify the correct pitching distance before the start of each game.

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2. Number of fielders includes infielders and outfielders. No more than of six (6) infielders can be in the infield when the pitcher releases the ball. The positions allowed on the infield are Pitcher, Catcher, 1B, 2B, 3B; SS. Outfielders should position themselves on the grass until the release of the pitch, or at minimum of five (5) feet from where the grass should be.
3. Number of innings in a complete regulation game not shorted by weather or time. In the event that a game needs to be stopped due to weather, the minimum number of innings required for a complete game is three and a half (3.5) innings for a six (6) inning game and four and a half (4.5) for a seven inning game. If a game is stopped in the middle of an inning, then the score reverts to the last full inning played.
4. Balls used must be standard ASA seal. No softies are allowed.
- 5. For the U10B division only: A 5 run mercy inning rule is in effect for all innings. The only exception is a team that is behind entering the agreed last inning (or 6<sup>th</sup>) can score as many runs as needed up to a tie in the game if they are behind by more than the 5 runs per inning limit. (Example 1: the away team is down by 7 runs in the last inning. The run limit does not apply to them as they are behind by more than 5. Instead, they can score 7 runs to tie the game, and then their half of the inning is over. If they do tie, the home team gets a chance to score and would only need 1 run to win. Example 2: The away team is ahead by 3 going into the last inning. They score 5 and hit the inning mercy rule which ends them ahead by 8 runs. The home team now can bat and can score up to 8 runs to tie the game).**
6. Infield fly rule by definition: The infield fly rule applies only when there are fewer than two outs, and there is a force play at third or home. In these situations, if a fair fly ball is a hit that, in the umpire's judgment, is catchable by an infielder with ordinary effort, the batter is out regardless of whether the ball is caught in flight. The rule states that the umpire is supposed to signal and / or announce, "Infield fly, if fair." If the ball will be almost certainly fair, the umpire will likely yell, "Infield fly, batter is out!" or just "Batter's out!" Any fair fly ball that could have been caught by an infielder with ordinary effort is covered by the rule regardless of where the ball is caught. The ball need not be caught by an infielder, nor must it be caught in the infield. For example, if an infielder retreats to the outfield in an effort to catch a fly ball with ordinary effort, the Infield Fly Rule would be invoked, even if an outfielder ultimately caught the ball, and even if no infielder attempted to make a play on the ball. Similarly, a fly ball within the infield that could have been caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, but is caught by an outfielder, would also be covered by the rule. The infield fly rule is a judgment call by the umpire. On a caught infield fly, a

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runner must tag up (i.e., retouch, at or after the time the fly ball is first touched by a fielder, the base the runner held at the time of pitch) to be eligible to advance, as on any catch. If the infield fly falls to fair ground untouched, or is touched and dropped, runners do not need to tag up. In either case, because the batter is out, the force play on runners is removed.

7. The B division pitchers are limited to 3 innings per game.
8. Runners can steal second or third when the pitcher releases the ball. In the **10B division only**, teams are allowed 3 steals per inning. A double steal constitutes two steals. The number of steals in the older divisions is not limited per inning. In all divisions, stealing is not permitted when batting team has a ten (10) run lead or larger, in which case, runners shall not steal or advance to the next base via pass ball, wild pitch.
9. In the **U12 and older divisions**, stealing home is permitted.
10. In the **U10 division**, runners are not allowed to advance on an overthrow on a steal attempt. In the U12 and older divisions, runners may advance on an overthrow on a steal attempt. Stealing is not permitted when batting team has a ten (10) run lead or larger, in which case, runners shall not steal or advance to the next base.
11. In the **U10 division**, runners are not allowed to advance on an overthrow on a steal attempt or a dropped third strike. In the **U12 and older divisions**, the batter and runners may advance on a dropped third strike. Definition: A "dropped third strike" play is when a third strike is not fielded cleanly by the catcher whereby an out is not recorded by the umpire. The batter may attempt to advance to first base on a "dropped" 3rd strike if there are less than 2 outs and 1st base is not occupied. If there are 2 outs, the runner can advance on a dropped third strike even if 1st base is occupied.
12. Bunting is allowed in all divisions. In the **U10B division**, only 1 player can square to bunt **per inning**. If a second player squares to bunt in the same inning the girl and coach will be given a warning. If it happens a second time in the same game, the girl will be out. In all other divisions, unlimited bunting attempts are allowed.
13. Slash bunting is not allowed in the U10 through U14 division. A batter cannot show bunt and then swing at a pitch. If a violation occurs the ball is dead, and the batter is out. If a second violation occurs the coach will be ejected. In the U18 division slash bunting is permitted.
14. For safety reasons, U10 players are not allowed to be base coaches.

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## **B. Other divisional specific rules include:**

### **1. 10B ONLY**

- a. All games are regular season games. There are no playoffs.
- b. Each team's pitcher will pitch unless the bases become loaded, then the team's pitcher will continue to pitch but will NOT walk in a run. Once the fourth ball has been thrown, one of the hitting team's coaches will come in and pitch to his or her team's batter. The batter will keep the number of strikes in the count. The pitcher must remain inside the circle. The coach must pitch from the mound. Any player hit by a pitch will advance to first. (exception: Batter gets hit when the coach is pitching)

### **2. U12B ONLY**

- a. During the **PLAYOFFS ONLY** the starting pitcher can return to pitch 1 inning provided the game goes into extra innings. She will **NOT** be permitted to return to the pitching circle during the regular season. **(SEE RULE B-10 FOR REGULAR SEASON PITCHING RULE)**

### **3. U18 ONLY**

- a. ALL girls must have been students in high school for the academic year leading into the season. Girls who have graduated a year before the current season are not eligible to play in TVL.