2026 Dirt Devil Rules

GENERAL INFO:

- Cancellation by a team after May 9, 2026 will result in a partial refund depending on the ability of the tournament director to fill the open spot.
- In the event of inclement weather, the Tournament Director reserves the right to modify game times and durations.
- In the event that the tournament is unplayable (no games played), teams will be refunded all but $25 of their registration for administration fees. If the team plays one game, there will be a 50% reimbursement. If at least two official games by rule are played, or are available for play, no reimbursement will be offered.
- If there is a situation where a team does not get all 5 games due to forfeit. The tournament director will work to try scheduling another game for them if possible. If it's not reasonably possible to do so, the team may not get 5 games.
- **Umpire decisions are final**. All protests will be settled on the field. Tournament Director's and/or the Umpire-In Chief's can be called upon to clarify, but decisions that the umpire made will be final.
- Heckling of the Umpire will not be allowed. The Coach of the team whose fans violate this rule will be warned once. If the heckling continues, fans will be asked to leave the premises. Fans not complying within two minutes will cause the forfeiture of the game to the opposing team.
- Games are limited to no new innings beginning after 60 minutes. This applies to all pool and bracket play. Official time is kept by the umpire. Umpires will check time at the end of each inning after the last out is made or the 5th run is scored. Umpires ruling on time is final. When time expires, the current inning will be completed if the winner is not already determined. The game will end if completing the inning could not change the winner.

TOURNAMENT RULES: Unless otherwise noted or modified in these rules, USA Softball rules will apply.

- The home team will be decided by a ball roll in pool play games or coin flip at umpire's discretion; in bracket games, the higher seeded team gets the choice of home or away. ** except 8U bracket all will use ball roll or coin toss.
- Teams will bat all players and defensive substitutions are unlimited. There is a maximum of 5 runs per inning **(pool and bracket play).**
- 5 warm-up pitches allowed in the 1st inning; 3-warm-up pitches allowed in all other innings. A new pitcher gets 5 warm-up pitches unless there has been an injury, and then the new pitcher is allowed unlimited warm-up pitches.
- There are no restrictions to the number of innings a pitcher may pitch.
- Courtesy runners may be used for the pitcher, catcher or an injured player. Courtesy runners may be the last out, or the last player due to bat that is not on base.
- Starting time is to be acknowledged by both coaches and on-field umpires.
- A 12-run rule will be in effect after three innings and a 10-run rule after four innings.
- In pool play, games can end in a tie. In bracket play, if a game is tied, the game will be decided using the International Tie-breaking Rule. *If agreed to by both coaches either before the game, before extra-innings, or before subsequent extra-innings, modifications to the number of starting outs is allowed. Starting the inning with a runner on second and no outs is the default. (Some levels of play might want to start with outs depending on the level of pitching and all-around skill).
- **Defensive coaches are not allowed on the field unless needing to speak to their pitchers (except 8U).**
- Any team's failure to follow rules will be brought before the Tournament Director and/or Tournament Team Coordinator for clarification and resolution.
- The strike zone will be from the armpits to the knees & width of the plate plus a ball. The umpires will discuss the strike zone prior to each game if requested to do so.

10U Specific Rules

- All above rules apply.
- In 10U pool play games in which there is at least one C team playing, the batter is not allowed to advance to first base on dropped third strikes.

- In 10U Gold bracket games, the batter may advance to first base on dropped third strikes. In 10U Silver bracket games, the batter may not advance to first base on dropped third strikes.
- Umpires will communicate to coaches prior to all games whether or not the rule will be used.

8U Specific Rules

The same above applies EXCEPT:

- Player Pitch/Machine Pitch: Games will be played with three swinging or called strikes as an out. The strike zone will be determined by the umpire at that game, and can discuss this issue with both teams prior to the game beginning.
- After four balls are called, the at bat will be completed by machine pitch, taking up with the current count. ALL MACHINE PITCHES ARE CONSIDERED STRIKES. This means: (1) if the count is four balls, no strikes, the batter gets three strikes (pitches); (2) if the count is four balls, one strike, the batter gets two strikes (pitches); and (3) if the count is four balls and two strikes, there will be just one machine pitch. The machine will be set up at 35 feet. There will be NO walks. The batter either hits the ball or strikes out. FOUL BALLS DO NOT COUNT AS THE THIRD STRIKE! If a player is hit with a pitched ball, the pitch is considered a “ball” and play will continue, there is no base awarded for a hit batter or a walk.
- In 8u there is no bunting.
- Pitching distance is at 30 feet.
- Neither batters nor runners may advance on dropped third strikes.
- When finishing the at-bat with the pitching machine, the player playing in the pitcher position must remain within 3' on the right or left side of the pitching machine until the batter hits the ball.
- All outfielders should start all plays with at least one foot touching the outfield grass.
- No more than 10 players are allowed on the field at one time. You may play with 4 outfielders
- A ball hit in the infield, the runners may advance 1 base.
- A ball hit in the outfield a runner may take additional bases until the ball is thrown or motion of throwing the ball is made. As soon as the ball is thrown by a fielder, the runner needs to stop at the base they are running to. There just needs to be a motion of a throw, the direction does not matter.
- No stealing is permitted. Sliding is permitted and recommended at home or any plate if the play is close.
- Teams are required to bat the full roster with unlimited substitutions. No player can sit twice until all players have sat once. Batters will warm up in front of their teams’ bench. Only one batter will be allowed to warm up at a time. No throwing of the bats allowed.
- Batters will not be allowed to take a base if hit by a pitch. Each batter will either strike out or hit the ball.
- Coaches are allowed in the outfield on defense. This means at least as deep as the outfielders are supposed to be playing (see rule above).

Tournament Format – 12U and 10U

- There will not be classic pool play, instead each team will play two preliminary games to determine bracket and seeding.
- Each team’s ‘Strength of Schedule’ will be as similar as possible.
- After preliminaries, Gold and Silver brackets are formed and released based on teams’ records. First tie-breaker is Runs Allowed, second tie-breaker is Runs Scored and the last tie-breaker will be a coin toss. Head-to-head is not used.
- Bracket play will be two brackets: Gold and Silver. Each will be a full multi-level eight team bracket, with each team playing three bracket games.
- In bracket play, the higher seeded team gets the choice of Home or Away. #1 seed is the highest seed and #8 is the lowest seed.
- For further explanation, including methods for determining preliminaries, you may contact the tournament director Matt Milton at 612-221-6346.
- Each team’s final game will be either a bracket championship, third place game, consolation championship or 7th place game.

Tournament Format – 8U

- There will not be classic pool play, instead each team will play three preliminary games to determine bracket and seeding.
- Each team's 'Strength of Schedule' will be as similar as possible.
- After preliminaries, Gold, Silver and Bronze brackets are formed and released based on teams' records. First tie-breaker is Runs Allowed, second tie-breaker is Runs Scored and the last tie-breaker will be a coin toss. Head-to-head is not used.
- Bracket play will be three brackets: Gold will be the top four teams, Silver will be the next four teams and Bronze will be the last two teams.
- Gold and Silver brackets will be two game guarantee four team brackets with a championship and a third place game.
- Bronze bracket will be a doubleheader between the two teams.
- A ball roll will be used in all bracket games to determine home team.
- For further explanation, including methods for determining preliminaries, you may contact the tournament director Matt Milton at 612-221-6346.

Medals and Berths

8U

- Medals are awarded to all teams.

10U and 12U

- Medals are awarded for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place as well as the consolation champion in each 10U and 12U bracket.
- Unpaid USA Nationals and Monsta Berths are awarded to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place as well as consolation champion in the 10U and 12U Gold Brackets and 1st and 2nd place in the 10U and 12U Silver Brackets.