# 18U Rules

1. **Age Limit:** Player must NOT be 18 before January 1, 2026.

2. **Ball:** 12 inch optic yellow USA Fast Pitch softball.

3. **Bat:** Only USA fast pitch softball bats may be used.

4. **Shoes**: Rubber cleats or Metal cleats are allowed.

5. **Scoring:** Score is kept during the regular season and tournament play, Report scores after each game to Carrie Trompke by emailing to: **southcentralsoftball@gmail.com**

6. **Helmets:** Batters, on-deck batters, runners, and batboys/girls must wear a helmet with a face mask.

7. **Umpire:** Home teams furnish umpires and game balls. Two umpires are required for all games. Umpires need to know the rules. Give them copies of all the rules for each age group prior to umping. Certified umpires are only required at the end of season tournament.

8. **Outs:** 3 outs per inning.

9. **Safety Base:** All towns must have a safety base at 1st base.

10. **Cancelations:** Notify town coordinators of visiting teams for any games you need to cancel by **2:00 p.m. on game day.**

11. **Field:** Bases are 60 feet.
Pitchers Circle is 16 feet in diameter around pitchers mound.
Pitchers Plate is at 43 feet.

12. **Length of Game:** 6 innings constitute a game unless the opposing team is ahead 15 after 3 innings - 12 after 4 innings or 8 after 5 innings. A new inning should not start any later than 1 hour and 15 minutes into the game. The next inning begins at the time of the third out of prior inning. If there is no game following your game - you can play all 6 innings IF both coaches and umpire agree BEFORE the game starts.

    **Tournament**: No new inning will start after 70 minutes.

13. **Ties:** No ties. Use the USA Softball tiebreak rule. The last batter the inning before starts as a base runner on 2nd base. Both teams get a chance to bat, no outs.

14. **Playing Time:** Each player must play at least 1 inning defensively.

15. **Number of Players:** Each team shall field 9 players but CAN play with 8. Fielding less than 8 players constitutes a forfeit unless other arrangements are made with the opposing coach in advance. If playing with 8 players no outs have to be taken when the 9th player should be up.

16. **Number of Infielders:** Defense consists of 6 infielders (pitcher, catcher, 1st base, 2nd base, 3rd base, shortstop between 2nd and 3rd.) Infielders must play their positions. Infielders must play in front or behind the baseline so they don't interfere with base runners.

17. **Number of Outfielders:** The 3 outfielders must remain 20 feet behind the baseline until the ball is hit.

18. **Substitution:** Free substitution or reinsertion into the defensive field is legal.

19. **Number of Batters:** A continuous batting order must be followed.

20. **Base Runners:** Stealing is allowed. Runners must stay in contact with the base until the ball has been released by the pitcher. Leaving the base too soon is a judgement call by the nearest umpire. If the runner leaves early - a dead ball is called - the runner is out and the pitch does not count. Runners can advance on overthrows.

21. **Throwing the Bat:** Any player excessively throwing the bat will be warned 1 time. The next offense will result in an automatic out.

22. **Fly Ball:** A fly ball caught in any area is an automatic out and retires the batter. Runner MAY tag up after the catch and advance. The runner will be called out if they did not tag up before advancing.

23. **Infield Fly Rule:** Yes - umpires call on an easily catchable ball.

**24.** **Catcher:** Must wear full catcher's gear.

**25.** **Pitcher:** The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate at all times prior to the forward step.

**26.** **Bunting:** IS allowed.

**27.** **Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** Will not be tolerated by players/coaches/fans. After a fair warning by the umpire - anyone can be dismissed from the game or asked to leave the field. If ejected from a game - a mandatory 1 game suspension the following game will be served. They may NOT be present at the game at all. If there is any unsportsmanlike conduct by any players, coaches or umpires please contact the league coordinator, Sara Wells 308-830-2899, after the game.

**28.** **Coaches:**
a. can instruct their players from their 1st or 3rd base coaching positions (box)
b. will NOT touch a player OR interfere with a play

**29.** **Make Up Game:** Rain out games will be rescheduled (teams involved will decide a new date). Make an honest effort to make up games. If a team forfeits it will be recorded as a 1-0 win for the opposing team. If a game was called due to rain and was not an official game at the point it was called - start a new game on a re- scheduled date. If for any reason a team cannot play they must make reasonable efforts to reschedule Rules committee has final say on any dispute.

**30.** **Protests:** Teams must notify the League Coordinator of any protests within 24 hours of the game.

**31.** **Hit by Pitch:** When a pitched ball, not swung at nor called a strike touches any part of the batter or clothing the batter is awarded first base. It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground first. The batter must attempt to avoid being hit. If no attempt is made to avoid being hit, the batter is not awarded first base.

**32.** **Infield Player Face Masks:** Recommended but not required.

**33.** **Player Availability**: A player can only play on 1 team in the South Central Nebraska Summer Softball League per age group for regular season and tournament play. (Example: If Cambridge has 2 14U teams - Team A and Team B. Staci can only play on Team A and never play for Team B.) However, she can play up with their 18U team if they are short players.

**34.** **Sliding:** It is the **runner's responsibility** to avoid contact at any base & home plate. A fielder may not block the base or plate unless in possession of the ball and making a play. Safety is a priority in this recreational league. The runner MUST slide on any close play at 2nd or 3rd base & home plate, or the runner is automatically out. Close play is defined as the defensive playing having the ball and attempting to make a play.