

# **Twin Rivers – Softball – Official Rules – 2026 Season**

Minors and Majors Divisions

Effective April 16, 2026

## **1. Governing Rules**

Iowa Girl's High School Athletic Union (IGHSAU) Official Softball Rules apply, except where modified by these Twin Rivers rules. Rule changes adopted by IGHSAU after the start of the season are not used.

All bats are to be ASA or USSSA certified.

All pitchers and corner infielders are required to have protective face masks. It is recommended that all fielders – regardless of position – have protective face masks.

## **2. Team Requirements & Lineups**

- Teams must start and play with at least 7 players or else the game will be recorded as a forfeit (recorded as a 10–0 score)
- Batting lineups must include at least 9 batters
- Teams will be required to take an out for each batting order spot that is not filled up to the 9 required batters

## **3. Twin Rivers League Rule Exceptions**

### **3.1 Participation**

- All players on the active roster must bat
- Each player must play at least two defensive innings unless injured or the game lasts fewer than 3 innings
- All defensive substitutions are open, including the pitcher
  - There is no inning limit for pitchers

### **3.2 Run Rule per Inning**

- Minors: 5-run limit per inning
- Majors: 5-run limit per inning

### **3.3 Sliding Rules**

- No headfirst slides advancing to a base
  - Headfirst slides only allowed returning to a base
- If a runner fails to slide on a close play at 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, or home, the runner is out
- Umpire discretion applies for slides and close plays

### 3.4 Pitching Distances, Pitching Circle, and Pitching Rules

- Minors: 35 feet from the back of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber
- Majors: 40 feet from the back of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber
- A pitching circle with 16' diameter around the pitching rubber is required for both Minors and Majors
- A play becomes dead when the pitcher has control of the ball and at least one foot is within the pitching circle around the pitching rubber
  - Runners must be past the halfway point to be able to advance to the next base, otherwise they must return to the last base touched

### 3.5 Minors-Only Rules

- No dropped third strike
- Steals of 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> are allowed at pitch release
  - No more than one stolen base per runner per pitch – even if a play is made on a runner
  - No stealing bases during coach pitch
- A player cannot steal home unless all of the following conditions are met:
  - A runner is already legally occupying third base, and
  - The defense makes a live throw to third base, and
  - The runner from third advances as a direct reaction to that throw
- Courtesy runners for catchers are encouraged
- Bunting allowed except during coach pitch
- No infield fly rule
- May field 10 defensive players; the 10th must play in outfield
- Maximum 6 infielders, including catcher
- All batters that are hit by a player pitch *must* advance to 1<sup>st</sup> base
  - Players hit by a coach pitch *do not* advance to 1<sup>st</sup> base
- After a pitcher throws ball four:
  - Coach-pitch begins
  - Coach must have one foot on the pitching rubber
  - Strike count carries over
  - Coach-pitch will continue until the batter either hits the ball or strikes out
- During coach-pitch:
  - Until the time that the coach-pitched ball reaches the plate, the player/pitcher must:
    - Have at least one foot inside the pitching circle
    - Be no closer to the plate than parallel to the pitching rubber
  - If there is coach-interference on a batted ball:
    - Ball is dead, runners return to their previous base
    - Batter re-hits
    - Pitch does not count
  - Bunting is not allowed during coach pitch

### 3.6 Majors-Only Rules

- Dropped third strike applies when 1st base is unoccupied or there are two outs

## 4. Rosters & Player Eligibility

- Teams may roster up to 3 reserve players
  - Reserves may not play in tournament unless the roster falls below 10 players
- Non-reserve players must attend at least 50% of regular season games for tournament eligibility
- Typical ages: 8 (2nd grade) through 12 (6th grade)
  - Players may not exceed age 13
- Players normally play only Minors or only Majors unless needed due to roster shortages
- Players on Minors teams that are the same color and community as Majors are automatically eligible to play up
  - To play on a different colored team, a Minors player must be specifically indicated on the Majors roster and is not eligible to play for other teams

## 5. Game Duration Rules

### 5.1 Minors Game Length

- 70-minute timer
  - When the timer goes off, in-progress innings will continue until completed
    - A new inning officially starts after the last out of the prior inning
  - If the home team is batting and ahead at expiration, the game ends immediately
- Games must last at least 70 minutes, with exceptions for weather or mutual coach agreement
- Rain-shortened games, which are subject to umpire discretion, are considered as official if the losing team batted at least two complete half-innings

### 5.2 Majors Game Length

- 6 inning games, with the following exceptions:
  - 85-minute timer
    - When the timer goes off, in-progress innings will continue until completed
      - A new inning officially starts after the last out of the prior inning
    - If the home team is batting and ahead at expiration, the game ends immediately
  - Darkness-shortened games, which are subject to umpire discretion, revert to the end of the previous completed inning
  - Rain-shortened games, which are subject to umpire discretion, are considered as official if the losing team batted at least three complete half-innings
  - Mercy rule applies if a team leads by:
    - 15 runs after 3 innings
    - 10 runs after 4 innings
    - 8 runs after 5 innings

- If time remains, coaches may agree to extra innings to break a tie after playing 6 innings

## 6. Umpires & Game Administration

- Certified umpires strongly encouraged for all games
- Base umpires are upon a coach's or umpire's request and may be provided by visiting team or agreed upon adult
  - Home plate umpire may overrule base umpires
- Home team provides game balls
  - Minors will use an 11" yellow leather softball
  - Majors will use a 12" yellow leather softball

## 7. Coaching Rules

- Three coaches allowed per team and in dugout
- Two coaches allowed on field when batting, with all three allowed during coach-pitch
- Substitute coaches must be communicated before game and may not coach pitch

## 8. Player Draft Rules

- All towns must hold a genuine draft
- Two coaches per team may automatically assign their sons/grandsons
- Player pools combine all players in same division (e.g., 3rd-4th grade for Minors)

## 9. Make-Up Game Policy

- Home coach must attempt to reschedule within one week
  - The *date* of the rescheduled game does not need to be within one week of the cancelled game, just the effort to schedule the make-up game
- Home field is not required to be the makeup location
- No response from either team may result in a forfeit (commissioner discretion)
- Attempts to reschedule must include at least one email and one call or text message

## 10. Standings Reporting

- Either team may enter final score on the website
- Scores must be entered within 3 days of the completion of the game
- Home team scorebook is official in case of disputes

## 11. Spectator Conduct

- Umpire may instruct coach to warn a problematic spectator
- Second offense: spectator must be removed from the game