

North County Fall Ball 2026 Playing Rules and Guidelines

USA Softball rules will be in effect with the following exceptions:

Playing Rules:

All games are 7 innings, but no new inning may start after 1 hour and 20 minutes. Finish the last inning if the home team is losing. If the home team is winning when time expires, the game ends as soon as the home team is up to bat, or immediately, if the home team is already batting. After 1 hour and 30 minutes, if either team is too far behind that they cannot catch up due to run limits per inning, the game will end. Since no standings are kept, and the score doesn't matter, there is no need to revert the score to the previous inning.

No mercy rule is in effect. The goal of the fall league is to let the girls play in the field as much as possible. Maximum runs per inning: 8U 4 runs per inning maximum, 10U, 12U, 14U 5 runs per inning maximum.

A courtesy runner for pitcher and catcher will be the last out or in the event of no outs it will be the last available player. If there is a hit by pitch that results in the batter being unable to run the same courtesy runner rule will be applied.

All teams must bat their entire lineup for each game. (Bat around). Defensive substitutions are unlimited. Players arriving late must be added to the bottom of the lineup. Players leaving the game for any reason and not available to bat will be charged an out the first time they are due up only. Courtesy runners are allowed for the pitcher and catcher per USA Softball rules for pool play bat around (anyone can be a courtesy runner for the pitcher or catcher but if they are on base when they are due to bat, it is an automatic out).

No protests. The game umpire will have final say on all calls and rules interpretations.

Player pitching limits: 8U - 4 inning limit per double header, 10U - 6 inning limit per double header, 12U - 8 inning limit per double header. 14s will be unlimited. If there is an issue due to injury or illness coaches can discuss and accommodate as decided.

Home teams/dugouts: The host team has the choice of dugouts and remains in the same dugout for both games. The host team will be the home team for the first game and the visiting team will be the home team for the second game.

Games are typically scheduled on Sunday mornings or afternoons as doubleheaders. Teams are required to play double headers. Once teams arrive for scheduled games, if a team cancels a game or does not complete the double header that team will be required to pay the total umpire fees for both scheduled games. See forfeit rules for notification time for any changes.

Special Playing Rules

8U:

8U will use 10 defensive players with 4 players in the outfield at the time of the pitch. Outfielders should be 10 feet behind the baseline at the start of the pitch. Infielders should not be closer to the batter than the pitching rubber at the time of the pitch. There will be one stolen base per pitch (from a player only) and home no stealing home.

8U Coach pitch division rules for coach pitch: Same rules as above except for this division there will be no walks. After a batter receives four balls from the pitcher, instead of taking a walk, a coach for the team that is batting will pitch to finish the strike count. The batter will continue with the number of strikes they had at the time they received ball four. Example (if there are 2 strikes, they get one extra pitch from the coach, if there is one strike they get 2 extra pitches from the coach, if there are no strikes they get 3 pitches from the coach). If the batter hits a foul. The coach can continue to pitch to the batter if they continue to hit foul balls. Coach pitchers must exit the field of play as quickly as possible and not interfere with players.

10U:

Gold teams will play with 3 outfielders. Teams below gold will have an option of playing 4 outfielders or less as they prefer. For example, if someone wants to use 4 outfielders and the other wants to use 3, they will play as such.

Equipment:

Each team will provide one new game ball and one backup ball. The host team will provide both balls for the first game, and the visiting team provides both balls for the 2nd game.

14U may use metal cleats unless otherwise stated due to field conditions.

Roster:

All players on the roster must be registered with your league through USA Softball. Roster size is unlimited, but end of year tournaments will most likely limit rosters to 15 players.

Players are expected to play in the division that they are eligible to play according to USA Softball. Leagues may have exceptions that allow for play ups and should follow their rules regarding proper approvals.

Playdowns are discouraged except for inexperienced novice division players new to the game.

Placement of teams should be based on number of returning all star players and number of returning players to the same age division (example 5 or more returning All Stars to the same division should start in gold). Team placement can and may be modified after the first half of the season. This is subject to your league supervision in placing teams in the appropriate division.

Umpires:

Each team will pay the umpire \$80 cash before the first game. The \$160 total will cover both games. Jr. umpires are paid \$50 per game individually or \$80 (\$40ea) if 2 per game on the field. Jr umpires are considered minors under 18 or an umpire in training as established by the UIC of the host league.

If a team cannot play a game, the opposing coach and umpires must be notified by Thursday of the week of the game. Failure to notify them by Thursday will result in a forfeit fee of \$160 due within 48 hours of the scheduled game. If the umpires come to the game, but the fields are not playable, each team will be responsible for paying (splitting) the forfeiture fee of \$80. If the fields are too wet to play, notification must be made no later than noon on Saturday, or if it rains after that, as soon as possible.

Insurance: All leagues must supply proof of USA Softball insurance to the NCFA coordinators. Send certificates to executiveboard@egsl.org

Tournament Eligibility:

To be eligible to participate in the end of the season NCFB Tournaments, a player must have played in a minimum of 50% of her team's games. A team must have participated in 75% of NCFB games to be eligible for end of season tournaments. A Game Changer report (preferred) or the official scorebook will be required to satisfy this requirement. Teams participating in the tournament will play in the division (or a higher division) they played in during the second half of the season.

Carlsbad will host the 8U and 10U division tournaments. Pool Play will begin the last weekend of October and Bracket Play will be the first weekend of November.

Escondido will host the 12U and 14U division tournaments on Nov 13-15.

Tournament hosts will determine format, entry fees and playing rules.