**2025 HAAA 12u Softball Rules**

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RED = rule added or changed 05/09/25

HAAA will follow USA Softball rules with the following exceptions:

**Game Length:**

* Games are 7 innings or less after completion of 41/2 innings if subsequent innings are started and the game is called for darkness or weather the final score will revert back to the last full inning.
* A team is not permitted to score more than 5 runs in an inning. This rule is waived for both teams in the 7th inning and in extra innings. The 10-run rule is in effect after completion of 4 ½ or 5 innings.
* A 2hr15min “finish the inning" time limit for all regular season games

**Canceled Games:**

* When a game is canceled, it is the responsibility of the home team coach to reschedule the game.
* The home team coach will make 2 attempts to reschedule the game. If a later date and time can’t be agreed upon, the home coach will contact the softball coordinator.
* If the visiting coach is not contacted by the home coach or can’t get in touch with the home coach then the visiting coach will contact the softball coordinator

**Playing Field:**

* Playing field will consist of 60’ bases. With a 40’ pitching rubber (a 24” long by 6” wide pitching rubber required).
* 8’ radius circle around pitching rubber is required.

**Fielders:**

* Ten players are permitted on the field (players positioned in the outfield shall be a minimum of 20 feet behind the base lines).  No Rover.
* All players must play at least 2 innings in the field.
* Free substitutions are permitted in the field.
* Each team is allowed 6 infielders (Catcher, first, second, third, shortstop, and pitcher).
* A minimum of 8 players is required to start a game.

**Batting:**

* There will be a continuous batting order of all players that are at the game. In case of injury, the injured player’s spot in the line-up is skipped until the player is able to return. There will not be an out charged when this occurs.
* The batter is entitled to take one base when hit by a pitch when being pitched to by the kid pitcher (regardless of pitching method).
* Bunting is allowed.
* Batter is out on a caught foul tip third strike. The third strike rule is in effect (primarily USA Softball Rule 8, Section 1, Article B).
* Batter/runner must keep their helmet on until they are out of the play area or until the umpire calls time out and has control of the ball.

**Pitching:**

* Pitching rules will be in accordance with Fast Pitch rules. A fast pitch (i.e. windmill) or modified pitch delivery is allowed. Before starting the delivery (pitch), the pitcher shall comply with the preliminary regulations identified for the method of delivery performed. A pitcher may not change the method of delivery during an at-bat. A change of pitchers may result in a change of the method of delivery.
* Pitching rules:  The pitcher shall take a position with one foot in contact with the pitcher’s plate to start.
* 12U pitchers will receive a verbal warning for 4th player HBP. 5TH HBP will result in that pitcher being removed from game at pitcher.
* Any pitched ball that hits the ground prior to hitting a batter is deemed a hit by pitch. The ball is dead, the batter is awarded first base. No runners may advance.
* Any pitched ball swung at which touches any part of the batter (batters hands are not part of the bat) is a dead ball and is considered a Hit By Pitch. Base runners cannot advance.
* Legally pitched ball that does not enter strike zone, touches the ground before reaching home plate, or touches home plate, and the batter does not swing is a live ball and runners may advance with liability to be put out. USA Softball Rule 7A

**Base running:**

* Base runners are entitled to advance with the liability of being put out when the ball leaves the pitchers hand on the delivery.
* Stealing permitted (no limit).
* Over throw at bases and steals ball remains live until possession by the pitcher within the circle and umpire calls time.
* Stealing home permitted.
* You may only go head first when going back to a base. No head first sliding to any base or home plate while trying to advance.
* Drag bunting is legal.
* When a walk is issued the batter (baserunner) may continue to run as long as the base, they are going to is unoccupied and the pitcher is not in the pitching circle with possession of ball. The baserunner is liable to be put out at any point.
* A Live ball will become a Dead ball once the pitcher has possession and control of the ball inside the pitching circle (an 8ft radius of the pitcher’s plate) and all runners have completed their advancement, at this point the umpire shall call time. Runners must be given ample opportunity to complete their base running responsibilities. Runners may only advance during a live ball. In the umpire’s judgment, if a runner has stopped or hesitated upon completing their base running and the pitcher has possession and control within the pitcher’s circle, then time shall be called and base runners will be returned to their applicable base. An umpire will not call time while any play is in progress, except when a player becomes injured and in the umpire’s judgment needs immediate attention. An 8’ radius circle around the pitching rubber is required and shall be drawn on the playing field. Runner can only advance to the base they are going to once the pitcher has possession of the ball in the circle.
* Infield fly rule is in effect.
* Courtesy runners are permitted for the pitcher and catcher only. Courtesy runners must be eligible players and must be the player that has made the previous last out. No one player can run for both pitcher and catcher.
* A runner must make an attempt to side or avoid contact with a fielder at all bases when there is a play at the base. Any runner not sliding or avoiding contact will be put out.

**Safety:**

* No metal spikes or batting donuts.
* All batters and base-runners must wear batting helmets with face guard.
* Face masks are highly recommended but not mandatory for outfielders.
* Bats must meet USA Softball standards. All bats must be approved bat models, and must be properly marked OFFICIAL SOFTBALL. Bats MUST bear the approved ASA/USA Softball 2004 certification markings, and also must not be listed on the latest edition of the USA Softball Banned Bat List. All bats must be legal bats allowed by USA Softball. All bats, in the sole opinion and discretion of the umpire, must comply with the USA Softball bat standards. The umpire has sole discretion to disallow the use of any bat that does not meet these standards.
* All catchers are required to wear a catcher’s helmet. All catchers’ helmets must have double earflaps, or full hooded helmets. No skullcaps.
* Catchers must wear a mask, chest protector, shin guards and helmet.
* No jewelry. Medical tags only and they must be taped.

**Coaches:**

Both coaches are responsible to have the umpire sign, initial, or number their scorebook. The umpire shall indicate the final score.

* Pre-game conference shall take place five minutes prior to the scheduled start time of each game. Half umpire fee if the umpire shows up full fee once a pitch is thrown.
* The home team shall be responsible for maintaining the official scorebook.
* Only head coaches are allowed to dispute calls or have communications with the umpire during the game.
* Only 4 coaches plus a score keeper are permitted in the dugout or on the field (no parents or spectators). All coaches must have volunteer clearances.
* Scores are to be reported to Rob Miller by the winning team within 12 hours of the completion of the game. Any players or coaches ejected need to be reported to the Softball Coordinator as well.

**Playoffs:**

* Players must play in 50% of the teams scheduled games to be eligible for the HAAA Playoffs.
* Teams must play 10 games in order to be eligible for the HAAA Playoffs.
* A & B Brackets will be decided by regular season record.
* Any team who forfeits a game in the playoffs will be disqualified and removed from the playoffs.
* A 2hr15min “finish the inning" time limit for all playoff games
* All coaches must bring their score book to the seeding meeting before the playoffs.

**Call Ups and Call Overs:**

* Every attempt must be made to use a call up player before using a call over player. A call over player must be disclosed to the opposing team’s head coach prior to the start of the game. A call over player can only play the outfield and must bat last in the batting order.
* No Call Over Players can be used in the HAAA Playoffs.

**Sportsmanship:**

* When the pitcher comes set all chanting/cheering by players, coaches and spectators must stop. Penalty • 1 offence - warning by ump • 2 offense – Coach removed from game
* Poor behavior towards an umpire by spectators, coaches and players will not be tolerated. It is the head coach of each team’s responsibility to maintain a safe environment for all players, umpires and spectators. The head coach is responsible for their players, fans, and parents.
* If a player is ejected from a game, she will also be suspended from the next game played. If a violation of this occurs, the head coach will be suspended for the remainder of the season including playoffs.

Any rules not covered, refer to current USA Softball Manual.