10U Division Rules (Ages 9-10)

All rules and regulations for this league shall follow **IHSA/NFHS rules**, except for the following modifications and additions.

THE PLAYERS

1. Playing Time
    - No player may sit more than two innings per game. Coaches are encouraged to provide equal playing time for all players.
2. Continuous Batting Order
    - A continuous batting order will be used; all players bat.
    - Late Arrivals: Players arriving late will be added to the bottom of the batting order.
    - Players Leaving Early: If a player leaves due to injury, illness, or family circumstances, her spot in the lineup will be skipped without penalty and will not be recorded as an out.
    - Injured Batter: If a player is injured during an at-bat and cannot continue, it is not an out. The last recorded out may complete the at-bat.
    - Ejected Player: If a player is ejected, her batting position becomes an automatic out for the remainder of the game. The player is not suspended from future games.
3. Minimum Players
    - Teams may play with a minimum of 7 players.
    - Teams failing to meet the minimum player requirement must forfeit the game.
4. Substitute Players
    - Teams may borrow players from other 10U teams within the league to make a roster of 7. Any additional players (player #8 and on) must be recruited from any 8U team within the league.
    - Substitute players may only play outfield and must bat last.

THE GAME

1. Game Ball
    - The primary game ball shall be one brand new 11in softball.
    - A second game ball may be used if it is in very good condition.
    - Recreational practice balls may not be used in games. Ball should have ASA or USSSA Stamp present.
2. Length of Game
    - Games shall consist of 6 innings, or 1 hour and 30 minutes, whichever comes first. Any inning will be completed.
    - Ties are permitted.
    - Weather-Shortened Games: A game is considered official after:
        - 3 innings are completed or 2 ½ innings if the home team is ahead.
        - If the umpire suspends the game due to weather or unsafe conditions before the inning is completed: Revert to the score from the previous completed inning.
    - Home Team Leading After Time Limit or After Top of the 6th inning
        - If the top half of an inning concludes after the time limit and the home team is ahead, the bottom half will not be played.
        - If the time limit is reached during the bottom half of an inning while the home team is ahead, the current batter will complete the at-bat and the inning will end.

    - If the home team is ahead after the top of the 6th inning, the bottom half of the inning will not be played.
- Extra Inning: If six innings are completed, the game is tied, and the time limit has not been reached: A 7th inning may be played.

3. Run Limit
    - Maximum of 5 runs per inning for all innings except:
        - 6th inning and any extra innings: Unlimited runs.
4. Sportsmanship
    - Team chants and comments must:
        - Be directed only toward teammates.
        - Be positive in nature.
        - No chanting during the opposing pitcher's windup.
    - Music
        - Warm-up and walk-up music are permitted and welcome.
        - Music volume must allow players and coaches to communicate effectively.
5. Defensive Alignment
    - Teams may field a maximum of 10 defensive players: 4 Infielders, 4 Outfielders, Pitcher, and Catcher.
    - Outfielder Positioning: All outfielders must begin each pitch on the grass. Use judgement for larger dirt fields.
6. Infield Fly Rule: The infield fly rule is not in effect.
7. Bunting is permitted. The batter may not take a bunt stance, then pull back and take a full swing.
    - If a batter attempts this, she will be called out.
8. Base Distance
    - Bases shall be 60 feet apart.
9. Makeup Games
    - Coaches should make every reasonable effort to reschedule cancelled games.
10. Umpires
    - An umpire must officiate each game.
    - Umpires are not required to be patched; However, they should have significant knowledge of the game and league rules.

PITCHING

1. Pitching Distance
    - The front edge of the pitching rubber will be 35 feet from the back tip of home plate.
2. Pitching Limit
    - A pitcher may pitch a maximum of 3 innings per game.
    - One pitch constitutes an inning pitched.
3. Warm-Up Pitches and IF/OF Warm-up
    - New pitchers: 5 warm-up pitches
    - Returning pitchers: 3 warm-up pitches
    - Team infield/outfield warm-ups are only allowed before the first inning.
4. Illegal Pitches
    - No illegal pitches will be called.
5. Pitching Substitutions
    - Free pitching substitutions are allowed, provided the three-inning limit is observed.

6. Coach Visits to Mound
    - Per inning, during the 2nd coach visit to the mound, the pitcher must be removed from pitching for the remainder of the inning.
    - Per game, during the 4th coach visit to the mount, the pitcher must be removed from pitching for the remainder of the game.
7. Pitching Fundamentals (Instructional Emphasis, 12u and up: illegal pitches will be called)
    - Coaches are encouraged to teach:
        - Hands must be apart when stepping onto the pitching plate.
        - Once the hands come together, the pitching motion begins.
        - The pitcher may not separate and then reconnect her hands before delivering the pitch.

BASE RUNNING

1. Sliding
    - Players should be taught to slide to avoid contact and ensure safety.
    - Slide Rule (NFHS Rule 8-6): A runner is out if:
        - Article 13- She does not legally slide and causes illegal contact or interferes with the fielder making a play.
        - Article 14- She remains upright and maliciously crashes into a defensive player. Malicious contact overrides obstruction.
2. Leadoffs
    - Runners may leave the base once the ball crosses home plate.
    - Leaving early will result in a team warning or runner being called out.
3. Stealing of 2b, 3b, and home is permitted once the ball crosses home plate.
4. Look-Back Rule and Dropped 3rd Strike
    - The Look-Back Rule is not in effect.
    - Dropped 3rd Strike is not in effect.
5. Continuous walks are not allowed.
6. Courtesy Runners
    - A courtesy runner may be used for the pitcher and catcher at any time.
    - The courtesy runner shall be the last recorded out.

SAFETY

1. Defensive Face Masks
    - All defensive players must wear face masks.
2. Batting Helmets
    - Helmets must include a full-face mask.
3. Catcher's Equipment
    - Proper catcher's protective equipment is required.
4. Approved Bats
    - Bats must display USSSA 1.20 thumbprint stamp, or USSSA 1.20 rating.
5. Cleats and Jewelry
    - Metal cleats and jewelry are prohibited.
    - Players will be given an opportunity to remove or replace improper equipment.
6. On-Deck Batter
    - The on-deck hitter must remain at the batter's back.
7. Uniform Requirements

- Softball pants are required.
- Leggings or shorts may not be worn.

8. Dugout Safety
    - Players must remain behind the fence while in the dugout.

COACHES

1. Ejection and/or Suspension
    - Any coach ejected by an umpire will receive a one-game suspension.
    - Coaching during a suspension will result in a team forfeit.

2. Multiple Ejections
    - Any coach ejected from two games by an umpire, even across multiple seasons, will be:
        - Removed for the remainder of the current season, and
        - Prohibited from coaching in future seasons across all participating towns.

3. Responsibility for Conduct
    - Coaches are responsible for addressing code-of-conduct violations involving coaches, players, spectators, and anyone associated with their team.

4. Interaction with umpires
    - Only head coaches may approach and interact with umpires.