12U Division Rules (Ages 11–12)

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

THE PLAYERS

1. Playing Time
    - All players must play at least 2 innings per game.
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 12U teams within the league to make a roster of 7. 12U substitutes must play OF and bat last.
    - Any additional players (player #8 and on) must be recruited from any 10U team within the league. 10U substitutes may play any position, except pitch and must bat last.

THE GAME

1. Game Ball
    - The primary game ball shall be one brand new 12in softball.
    - A second game ball may be used if it is new or 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 45 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 6 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 9 defensive players: 4 Infielders, 3 Outfielders, Pitcher, and Catcher.
    - Outfielder Positioning: All outfielders must begin each pitch on the grass. Use judgement for larger dirt fields.
6. 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.
7. Base Distance
    - Bases shall be 60 feet apart.
8. Makeup Games
    - Coaches should make every reasonable effort to reschedule cancelled games.
9. Umpires
    - An umpire must officiate each game.
    - Umpires must be patched.

PITCHING

1. Pitching Distance
    - The front edge of the pitching rubber will be 40 feet from the back tip of home plate.
2. Pitching Limit
    - A pitcher may pitch a maximum of 4 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
    - Illegal pitches will be called and ruled a ball- runners do not advance.
5. 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.
6. Pitching Fundamentals

- 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 leaves the pitcher's hand.
   - Leaving early will result in a team warning or runner being called out.
3. 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.