

AYL 2026 RULE BOOK



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**ARAPAHOE YOUTH LEAGUE
2026 GIRLS SOFTBALL**

BOARD MEMBERS

Vice-President..... Kevin McAllister
Secretary..... Kristy Thomas
Tournament Director..... Jeff Wood
Head Official/UIC.....Jeff Wood

CLUB DELEGATES

Creek..... TBD
Hawks..... Kristy Thomas
Raptors..... Christian Dick
Warriors..... Kevin McAllister

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Arapahoe Youth League Softball program is to provide the best fields, umpires, and competition for the development of youth athletes within the AYL boundary, while maintaining the spirit of neighborhood teams competing against each other.

To support this mission, AYL offers Comp & AA divisions. At the discretion of the Softball Board, the Comp division will be determined by the Club Delegates.

The AYL Softball rules are governed by the AYL By-Laws and General Principles of Operation which take precedence over these rules.

All non-softball league rules are addressed in the AYL General Principles of Operation (GPO).

All references to the Board will mean the AYL Softball Board and/or its Delegates.

GENERAL RULES

RULE 1 AGE LIMIT DETERMINATION:

- 1.1 The youth's age as of September 1st of 2025 shall determine the division for which she is eligible to participate per the following chart:

DIVISION	MAXIMUM AGE AS OF 9/1/2025
8U	8
10U	10
12U	12
14U	14

A player may play up or down one division. All such moves will be made only with the approval of the Softball Board of Directors. Players in the 12-14UAA Division must comply with the 14U maximum age limit.

- 1.2 A maximum of four (4) out-of-territory players are allowed on any given AA team, regardless of the size of the team, unless otherwise approved by the AYL Softball Board. For the Comp divisions teams must have 5 in territory players on the team, unless otherwise approved by the AYL Softball Board This includes players outside of the particular club boundaries, as well as the AYL boundaries.

RULE 2 PROOF OF AGE:

- 2.1 A roster for each team must be accompanied by a league acceptable proof of age document. The AYL Softball Board shall have the discretion in determining what documents shall be accepted as proof of birth. Any team found to be in violation of this rule will be banned from any post season play and any past/future games will be forfeited.

Rule 3 PLAYING FIELD

3.1 Age specific field dimensions:

Age Division	8U	10U	12 -14U AA	14U COMP
Pitching Distance	35'	35'	40'	43'
Base Distance	60'	60'	60'	60'

** The distance to the pitcher's plate is measured from the rear point of home plate to the front edge of the pitcher's plate.
Pitcher's plate must have a 16ft diameter circle drawn around it with the center front edge of the pitching rubber in the center.

Field Use Policies

- 3.2 Do not jump the fence if the gate is locked. Contact the softball Vice President or your delegate.
- 3.3 Fields are closed if snow or standing water is present. Do not shovel off snow.
- 3.4 Do not prepare the field in any way. Local municipality is responsible for fields.
- 3.5 Lights are automatic; do not tamper with the lighting controls.

AYL GAME RULES

ALL DIVISIONS:

The current National Federation of State High School Association (NFSHSA) Fast Pitch Softball Rules shall be used with the following special override rules adopted by the Arapahoe Youth League (AYL).

Rule 1 Length of Game

- 1.1 Games shall be seven innings, but no new inning shall begin after 1 hour and 15 minutes has elapsed from the start of the game. A new inning starts immediately after the third out of the previous inning. If a game ends early due to weather, both coaches shall notify their respective delegate of the place in the game when it was suspended. The game may be rescheduled, continued from where it was suspended or deemed a complete game at the discretion of the AYL Softball Board.
- 1.2 Games can end in ties during the regular season.
- 1.3 An official game is 3.5 innings (i.e., the visiting team has had 12 outs and the home team is ahead) or 4 complete innings if the visitor is ahead.
- 1.4 The final inning will be played to completion even if one team is down 7 or more runs and cannot come back due to the 6 run limit. Example: the visiting team is leading by 8 runs and is batting when time expires. The visiting team will finish batting and then the home team will also bat to complete the inning.

Rule 2 Minimum Play

- 2.1 All players shall play in the field for a minimum of four (4) defensive outs in every game attended. The required playing rule shall not be abridged except for injury or illness or for disciplinary measures concerning the member's attitude and attendance. Minimum play shall be completed by the end of the third (3rd) inning for all divisions. There is free defensive substitution including pitching. The only limit on pitchers is that no pitcher shall pitch more than nine (9) outs per game. (See rule 4 below).

Rule 3 Batting

- 3.1 There is NO free substitution in the batting order. You must bat all players present and continue to bat them through your entire line-up. If a girl appears late and the team has gone through the batting order, the late player still shall be added at the end of the line-up.
- 3.2 **Batting out of turn:**
If the batting team catches the error, the batter may be replaced with the correct batter and she continues with the ball/strike count.
If the fielding team catches the error, they may declare it immediately and the batter is out. They may elect to wait until the play is completed and take either the out or the play. However, if the batting team catches the error before then, they then can switch so that the correct batter is at bat and she continues with the ball/strike out. The error must be declared before the next pitch.
- 3.3 **Hit by Pitch:**
A batter who is hit by a pitch from a kid pitcher only, is awarded first base. If the pitch hits the ground and then hits the batter, it is up to the umpire to determine if the batter has attempted to avoid being hit and will take the base or whether the pitch will be called a ball. If the pitch by a kid pitcher hits the ground and is swung at, the ball is live. If the ball is put into play, the play continues. If the batter swings and misses, it is a strike.

Rule 4 Pitching

- 4.1 ALL AA DIVISIONS (EXCEPT INSTRUCTIONAL –8U): No player shall pitch more than nine (9) outs per game. After nine (9) outs, you are considered an illegal pitcher when you take the mound and pitch one ball with a batter in the box; it doesn't matter if the ball pitched is a ball or strike. If an illegal pitcher is used, the game may be declared a forfeit at the AYL board's discretion.
- 4.2 Prior to the pitch, the pitcher shall take a position with her pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate, and her non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the pitcher's plate. Both feet must be on the ground within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. A backward step with the pitcher's non-pivot foot may be taken before, simultaneous with or after the hands are brought together. The pivot foot must remain in contact with or push off and drag away from the pitcher's plate prior to the other foot touching the ground. The pitcher may use any wind-up desired except she may not use a wind-up in which there is a stop or reversal of the forward motion.
- 4.3 The kid pitcher shall be allowed a max of six (6) warm-up pitches before each new inning.
- 4.4 There are no intentional walks. Pitchers must pitch to every batter.

Rule 5 Maximum Runs

- 5.1 AA Division only, if a team scores six (6) runs in their half of an inning, the teams will then change from offense to defense, regardless of the outs.

Rule 6 Mercy Rule

- 6.1 A 10 run mercy rule will apply at the completion of 3 and ½ innings (i.e., the visiting team has had 12 outs) if the home team is ahead by 10 runs or more or after 4 innings if the visiting team is winning by 10 runs or more.

Rule 7 Saying Swing to the Batter

- 7.1 No player, coach, or spectator may shout or say “swing” or “nice pitch” or anything similar to encourage the batter to swing once the ball is released and prior to the ball reaching the catcher. The offender may be subject to ejection at the umpire’s discretion.
- 7.2 No player, coach, or spectator may attempt to influence the umpire’s call by making any gestures or statements (e.g. saying safe on a close play to first).

Rule 8 Unnecessary or Willful Delays

- 8.1 Teams must appear on the field promptly and any unnecessary or willful delay of the game will result in a forfeiture of the game by the offending team. Umpire shall give one (1) warning to the team before declaring a forfeit.

Rule 9 Profanity

- 9.1 If any player, coach or spectator uses profanity or obscene language or the given names of the opposing players, the umpire shall warn him/her that a second offense will result in her/his removal from the game, or forfeiture of the game. Upon a second offense by a player, she will be immediately removed from the game and shall not be allowed to return. If the violation is by a coach, the second offense will result in forfeiture of the game. Spectators will be asked to leave the field.

Rule 10 Equipment

- 10.1 **GAME BALLS:** The league will supply each team with game softballs (4-6 per team depending on final game totals per division). In turn, the home team will supply the home plate umpire with two (2) new game balls before each game.
- 10.2 **BATS:** Only bats marked as “Official Softball” and bearing an ASA/USA certification and/or USSSA 1.20 BPF permanent stamp will be allowed for play in AYL softball games. Any player using an illegal bat that steps into the batter box will be declared out. Any second violation involving the use of an illegal bat by any player will result in an out and the player involved, and the team’s head coach being ejected.

- 10.3 HELMETS: Any offensive player, batter, runner, and offensive coach under 18 years old, MUST wear protective helmets while on the field until they reach the dugout. No out will be called for the first team offense, but an out will be called upon the second team offense. There will be no ejection. Facemasks are mandatory.

Rule 11 Rescheduling of Games

- 11.1 Games that are not played or finished due to weather or other conditions may be rescheduled at the AYL Softball Board's discretion.

Rule 12 Umpires

- 12.1 The Board shall determine the number of paid umpires that will normally be supplied for regular season & playoff games. Games in which two umpires are scheduled may be played with only one umpire.
- 12.2 Umpires must be in full uniform.
- 12.3 When only one umpire umpires a game, such umpire shall work from behind home plate.
- 12.4 An official game must be umpired by at least one (1) AYL certified umpire. Any game played without AYL certified umpires will be deemed "no contest" and rescheduled by the Board.

Rule 13 Ejections

- 13.1 Any player or coach that is ejected from a game will not be allowed to participate in the next scheduled game. For the second offense, that player or coach will be disqualified for the remainder of the season and not allowed to participate with her team for any AYL softball functions. There will be no refunds made of fees or other monetary receipts that the player or coach may have paid to the parent club or the AYL.
- 13.2. The home plate umpire must report all ejections to the Head Umpire and the Softball Board of Directors within 24 hours after the game, with a brief description of what occurred to cause the ejection.

Rule 14 Jewelry

- 14.1 No jewelry will be worn at any time taped or un-taped. The only exception to this is a medical bracelet or necklace, which shall be taped to the body.

Rule 15 Home Team

- 15.1 Home team is listed on game schedule. Home team shall occupy the third base dugout. Each team in every division will have at least a minimum of 3 home games.

Rule 16 Minimum Number of Players

- 16.1 A team must have a minimum of eight (8) players in order to field a team. There is no out called for only having eight batters. If a team drops to seven (7) players that team will forfeit the game.

A team that starts a game with more the eight (8) players may drop to eight (8) without the game resulting in a forfeit.

Rule 17 Protests

- 17.1 No Protests. Only the head coach may speak to the umpire or question any of their calls.

Rule 18 Score Reporting

- 18.1 Both teams should report game scores on the AYL Softball website within 48 hours of game completion.

Rule 19 Courtesy Runners

- 19.1 In order to speed up the game, if the pitcher and or catcher reaches base or if a player becomes injured and cannot run, the last out shall run for her. The catcher shall then put on her equipment to prepare for the next inning.

Rule 20 Tiebreakers

- 20.1 Record (Winning pct, number Wins).
20.2 Head-to-Head (Recursive) (Used only when all tied teams have played each other).
20.3 Points Allowed (An average is used if teams have not played an equal number of games).
20.4 Points Scored (An average is used if teams have not played an equal number of games).
20.5 Points Scored (An average is used if teams have not played an equal number of games).

Note: If the system can not break ties at a particular tiebreaking stage, the system will move to the next tiebreaker and only return or revert back to a previous tiebreaker for head to head recursive.

Note about the Head-to-Head tiebreaker: Head-to-Head is ignored if all tied teams do not play each other at least once. For example, if three teams are tied, and one team plays the other two, but the other two do not play, this tiebreaker is ignored (regardless of the outcome of the two games played by the first team).

Rule 21 Avoiding Contact

- 21.1 A runner is out if the runner does not legally slide and causes illegal contact and/or illegally alters the actions of the fielder in the immediate act of making a play on the runner. Runners are never required to slide, but if the runner elects to slide, the slide shall be legal.

SPECIAL 8U AA DIVISION RULES

Rule 1 Base Running

- 1.1 A base runner cannot leave any base until the ball has crossed home plate. Each team will receive three (3) warnings from the umpire before any runner is called out for this violation. If the runner leaves too early and the batter hits the ball, there will be no penalty against either the batter or the runner, unless three (3) warnings have already been assessed. The penalty can be the base runner being called out at the umpire's discretion.
- 1.2 There shall be no stealing in the 8U Divisions. (No advance on a wild pitch or passed ball shall be allowed.)

Rule 2 The Hidden Ball Trick

- 2.1 The hidden ball trick will not be allowed under any circumstances.

Rule 3 The Infield Fly Rule

- 3.1 The infield fly rule will not be enforced.

Rule 4 Dropped Third Strike

- 4.1 The dropped third strike rule does not apply.

Rule 5 Pitching

- 5.1 A coach, or someone he/she designates, shall pitch UNDERHANDED to his/her own players from the thirty-five (35) pitching rubber. Pitcher must keep one foot on the pitching rubber when delivering the ball to the batter. In case the pitcher is struck by a hit ball or thrown ball, the ball will remain in play. The designated pitcher must make every effort to stay out of the way of the play of the ball, but should be ready to receive the ball back once play has effectively stopped. There are no walks or hit by pitch in this division. If the coach pitcher is hit by a batted ball, the ball is live and play continues.
- 5.2 A player will play the position of the fielding pitcher and must be within the pitcher's circle. She may be on either side of the coach-pitcher. The umpire will have the discretion to determine if the fielding pitcher is in the correct position.
- 5.3 The coach-pitcher is allowed to talk to or coach the batter before the ball is pitched, but is not allowed to coach a base runner or the batter as a runner once there is a hit. The umpire shall give a warning to the coach-pitcher and upon the second violation at the umpire's discretion the runner may be called out.

Rule 6 Batting

- 6.1 Each batter will get 5 pitches to put the ball into play. There are no three strike pitch strike-outs. If the fifth pitch is missed or not put into play, the batter is out. If the fifth pitch is fouled off, the batter will continue to receive pitches until she either puts it into play, misses it or lets it pass by.
- 6.2 There is no bunting.
- 6.3 There is no hit by pitch in this division.

Rule 7 Fielding (10 Players)

- 7.1 Teams may have ten (10) players in the field. If a tenth player is used, she must play in the outfield. The outfield is defined as fifteen feet behind the base line. The umpire will have the discretion to determine if the tenth player and all outfielders are in the correct positions before the ball is hit.

Rule 8 Coaches in the Field

- 8.1 The fielding team may have 2 coaches in the outfield to provide verbal instructions to players.
8.2 At no time may the fielding team's coaches be in the infield during play.
8.3 At no time may the fielding team's coaches touch the ball while in play.

Rule 9 Overthrows

- 9.1 Base runners will only be allowed to advance to the base that they are advancing to at the time of the overthrow (one base on an overthrow), if they are at the base and not advancing they may not advance. The runners will advance or be sent back at the umpire's discretion and judgment. In other words, if there is an overthrow to first base, the batter may not advance to second.

Rule 10 Dead Ball

- 10.1 In order for the umpire to control the play and to avoid unfair advancement of the base runner, the league has implemented a "dead ball" rule. Umpires shall have the discretion to call time once the ball is in the infield (ball control or no control). At that point the umpire shall determine whether the base runner should advance to the next base.

Rule 11 Official Ball

- 11.1 An eleven (11) inch, yellow, low impact ball will be used.

SPECIAL 10U AA DIVISION RULES

Rule 1 Base Stealing

- 1.1 Base stealing will be allowed in the 10U division as follows:
Base runners may only lead off base and steal a base once the pitched ball reaches home plate. Only one (1) stolen base per pitch will be allowed regardless of whether there is an overthrow on the attempted play. If the base runner is caught by the umpire for leaving early, the base runner will receive a warning from the umpire. If she leaves early again, she will be called out. The base runner on 3rd base cannot come home unless the ball is hit or is forced home by a walk or hit by pitch. The runner cannot advance to score a run on a passed ball or overthrow. The runner cannot steal home.
A runner may not advance once the pitcher has possession of the ball in the circle.

Rule 2 The Hidden Ball Trick

- 2.1 The hidden ball trick will not be allowed under any circumstances.

Rule 3 The Infield Fly Rule

- 3.1 The infield fly rule will not be enforced.

Rule 4 Dropped Third Strike

- 4.1 The dropped third strike rule does not apply.

Rule 5 Bunting

- 5.1 Bunting is allowed. If a batter attempts to bunt with two strikes and it goes foul, the batter is out.

Rule 6 Ten Players in the Field

- 6.1 Teams may have ten (10) players in the field. If a tenth player is used, she must play in the outfield. The outfield is defined as fifteen feet behind the base line. The umpire will have the discretion to determine if the tenth player and all outfielders are in the correct positions before the ball is hit.

Rule 7 Overthrows

- 7.1 If the ball remains in the field of play on an overthrow, runners can advance one additional base at risk of being put out. The play will end and the umpire will call time if the runners advance safely. If the ball leaves the field of play, it is a dead ball and runners advance one additional base.

Rule 8 Official Ball

- 8.1 An eleven (11) inch, yellow fast pitch ball will be used.

SPECIAL 12-14U AA DIVISION RULES

Rule 1 Base Stealing

- 1.1 Base stealing is allowed. Runners may leave the base once the pitcher releases the ball. It will be the umpire's discretion to determine if the runner leaves early. If the base runner is caught by the umpire for leaving early, the base runner will receive a warning from the umpire. If she leaves early again, she will be called out.
- 1.2 On a walk, the batter may attempt to reach second if she does so in a continuous motion. If she attempts, and then doesn't advance, she may be called out at the umpire's discretion (the continuation rule).

Rule 2 The Hidden Ball Trick

- 2.1 The hidden ball trick will not be allowed under any circumstances.

Rule 3 The Infield Fly Rule

- 3.1 The infield fly rule will be called at the umpire's discretion.

Rule 4 Dropped Third Strike

- 4.1 The dropped third strike rule does apply.

Rule 5 Bunting

- 5.1 Bunting is allowed. If a batter attempts to bunt with two strikes and it goes foul, the batter is called out.

Rule 6 Ten Players in the Field

- 6.1 Teams may have ten (10) players in the field. If a tenth player is used, she must play in the outfield. The outfield is defined as fifteen feet behind the base line. The umpire will have the discretion to determine if the tenth player and all outfielders are in the correct positions before the ball is hit.

Rule 7 Official Ball

- 7.1 A twelve (12) inch ASA or NFSHSA approved yellow fast pitch ball will be used.

Rule 8 Overthrows

- 8.1 If the ball remains in the field play on an overthrow, runners can advance as many bases as they choose at risk of being put out until the pitcher has the ball in the circle. If the ball leaves the field of play, it is a dead ball and runners advance one additional base.

SPECIAL 10U – 14U COMP DIVISION RULES

Rule 1 Base Stealing

- 1.1 Base stealing is allowed. Runners may leave the base once the pitcher releases the ball. It will be the umpire's discretion to determine if the runner leaves early. If the base runner is caught by the umpire for leaving early, the base runner will be called out.
- 1.2 On a walk, the runner may attempt to reach second if she does so in a continuous motion. If she attempts, and then doesn't advance, she may be called out at the umpire's discretion (the continuation rule).

Rule 2 The Infield Fly Rule

- 2.1 The infield fly rule will be called at the umpire's discretion.

Rule 3 Dropped Third Strike

- 3.1 The dropped third strike rule does not apply in the 10U Comp division. The dropped third strike rule does apply in the 12U and 14U Comp divisions.

Rule 4 Bunting

- 4.1 Bunting is allowed. If a batter attempts to bunt with two strikes and it goes foul, the batter is called out.

Rule 5 Official Ball

- 5.1 An eleven (11) inch ASA or NFSHSA approved yellow fast pitch ball will be used for 10U.
- 5.2 A twelve (12) inch ASA or NFSHSA approved yellow fast pitch ball will be used for 12U & 14U.

Rule 6 Players in the Field

- 6.1 Teams shall play with nine (9) players in the field.

Rule 7 Overthrows

- 7.1 If the ball remains in the field play on an overthrow, runners can advance as many bases as they choose at risk of being put out until the pitcher has the ball in the circle. If the ball leaves the field of play, it is a dead ball and runners advance one additional base.

Rule 8 Uniforms

- 8.1 Comp division teams must play with their approved comp team uniforms unless otherwise approved by the AYL Softball Board. A player may not play in a game unless she is in full uniform and matches all her teammates.