

2025 NISA 12U Division Rules Summary

Northern Illinois Softball Association (NISA)

Age Division: 11–12 years old (as of 1/1/2025)

Recommended for: 6th & 7th graders

Player Eligibility & Team Composition

Recreational Only

- No tryouts or cuts allowed.
- Full-time travel players are not eligible.

Tournament/Part-Time Players (within own rec program)

- Players participating on tournament or part-time teams through the rec program are eligible to play.
- These players must be evenly distributed across all teams in the division to promote fairness.
- Coaches and league administrators must coordinate this distribution before team formation or draft.
- Teams cannot have a competitive edge due to an unequal number of advanced players.
- In cases of imbalance, leagues should rotate assignments each season.
- Tournament players must be identified on rosters; misrepresentation may result in forfeits or coach suspension.
- These rules support equal development and preserve league integrity.

Coaches Rules

- Maximum of 3 coaches in the dugout (10U–14U).
- If using 3 coaches: one must remain in the dugout; others may coach 1st and 3rd base.
- When on defense, all coaches must remain in the dugout.
- No coaching or distractions behind the backstop.
 - 1st violation = warning.
 - 2nd violation = ejection.

Roster & Scorekeeping

- All players must be placed on a team; no cuts allowed.
 - Players may only be rostered on one team.
 - Minimum 7 players required to start a game.
 - Recommended roster size: maximum 13 players.
 - All teams must use **GameChanger** for rosters and scorekeeping.
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Game Rules

- **Length:** 6 innings or 1:30 time limit.
 - No new inning after 1:30; finish the inning if started.
 - **Run Limits:**
 - 6 runs per inning (unlimited in the 6th inning).
 - **Mercy Rules:**
 - 12-run lead after 4 innings (3½ if home team ahead).
 - 10-run lead after 4 innings.
 - 8-run lead after 5 innings.
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Lineup & Participation

- **Batting:** Continuous batting order required.
 - **Defense:** All players must play at least 2 defensive innings.
 - **Courtesy runner:** Will be allowed for pitcher/Catcher. Courtesy runner will be the last batted out
 - **Lineup Adjustments:**
 - Late arrivals: added to end of order.
 - Injury/emergency: skip spot, no out.
 - Injury during at-bat: out for that at-bat; skip spot afterward.
 - Ejection: spot becomes automatic out.
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Pitching Rules

- **Distance:** 40 feet.
 - **Limits:** Maximum 4 innings per game per pitcher; free substitution allowed.
 - One pitch in an inning counts as an inning pitched.
 - **Warm-Ups:** 5 pitches before 1st inning; 3 pitches thereafter.
 - **Mound Visits:**
 - 4 visits per game = must remove pitcher.
 - 2 visits in the same inning = remove pitcher for that inning.
 - **Illegal Pitch:** Results in a ball; no runner advancement.
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Hitting & Fielding

- Max 9 players on defense.
- **Bunting & Slap Hitting:**
 - Allowed.
 - Fake bunt followed by full swing = out.
 - Slap hit from outside the batter's box = out.
- Infield Fly Rule: **In effect.**

Equipment Requirements

- **Facemasks:** Required for all fielders (infield & outfield).
 - **Helmets:** Must have full face mask.
 - **Bats:** Must have USSSA 1.20 BPF or USA Softball stamp.
 - **Cleats:** No metal cleats allowed.
 - **Uniforms:**
 - Softball pants required in games.
 - Leggings or shorts are not allowed in place of pants.
 - Pants encouraged for practice as well.
 - Shorts are not allowed in games.
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Base Running

- Must slide to avoid contact.
 - Dropped 3rd Strike: **In effect.**
 - Stealing: Allowed once the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
 - Look-Back Rule: Enforced once the pitcher controls the ball.
 - Overthrows: Runners may advance up to 2 bases from the time of throw.
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Conduct & Umpires

- Umpires: Patched umpires required unless both coaches approve otherwise.
 - Cheering: Positive only; no chanting during pitcher's windup.
 - Thrown Bats:
 - 1st offense = warning.
 - 2nd offense = ejection.
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Substitute / Borrowed Players

- May borrow from 10U if short on players:
 - Max 4 innings pitched.
 - Must bat last.
 - In Fall: must play outfield.
- May borrow from other 12U teams only if unable to meet 7-player minimum:
 - Cannot pitch or catch; must bat last.
- No borrowing from under 10U for safety reasons.
- All borrowed players must be from the same town rec program.

Tournament Play

Fall Tournament

- Must play 6+ games to qualify for seeding.
- **Championship Game:**
 - **Game will be played at 12PM Field 1**
 - October 18, 2025 – Indian Prairie Park, Crystal Lake.
 - 6 innings, no time limit.
 - Ties resolved by International Tie Breaker (ITB):
 - Last batted out starts at 2nd base; count starts 0–0.

