

2026 NISA 10U Division Rules Summary

Northern Illinois Softball Association (NISA)

Age Division: 9–10 years old (as of 8/31/2025)

Recommended for: 4th & 5th 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 taking part 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 admins 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 shown on rosters; misrepresentation may result in forfeits or coach suspension.
- All part-time/tournament players must play spring rec ball.

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
- No smoking in the presence of players.
- Inappropriate language will not be tolerated.
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Roster & Scorekeeping

- All registered players must be placed on a team; no cuts allowed.
- Players may only be rostered on one team.
- Minimum of 7 players required to start a game.
- Recommended roster size: maximum 13 players.
- **GameChanger** is required for scoring and rosters; games must be scored live in GameChanger. Paper scorebooks are optional for your own records

Game Rules

- **Game Length:** 6 innings or 1:45 time limit.
 - No new inning after 1:45; finish the current inning if started.
 - No “dead stop.”
 - Games may end in a tie during the regular season.
- **Run Limits:**
 - 5-run limit per inning (unlimited in the 6th inning).
- **Mercy Rule:**
 - Has been eliminated for 2026.

Lineup & Participation

- **Batting:** Continuous batting order is required.
- **Fielding:** No player may sit more than twice in one game.
- **Courtesy runner:** Will be allowed for pitcher/Catcher. Courtesy runner will be the last batted out.
- **Lineup Adjustments:**
 - Late arrivals: added to end of lineup.
 - Injury/emergency: skip spot with no out recorded.
 - Ejection: spot is an automatic out.

Pitching Rules (Illegal pitches will not be called)

Distance: 35 feet.

- **Limits:** 3 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 each inning thereafter.
- **Mound Visits:**
 - 4 visits per game = must remove pitcher.
 - 2 visits in the same inning = remove pitcher for rest of that inning.

Hitting & Fielding

- Maximum of 10 players on defense (4 outfielders allowed).
- **Bunting:** Allowed.
 - Fake bunt followed by a full swing = out.
- Infield Fly Rule: **Not in effect** for 10U.

Equipment Requirements

- **Face masks:** Required for all fielders.
- **Helmets:** Must include 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 not allowed in place of pants).
 - Softball pants are encouraged for practice as well.
 - Shorts are not allowed in games.

Base Running

- Must slide to avoid contact.
- Dropped 3rd Strike: **Not in effect** for 10U.
- Stealing: Allowed once the ball crosses home plate.
- Look-Back Rule: Not enforced in 10U.
- Overthrows: Runners may advance up to 2 bases from the time of throw.

Conduct & Umpires

- Umpires: Non-patched umpires are acceptable.
- Cheering: Positive only; no chanting during pitcher's motion.
- Thrown bats:
 - 1st offense = warning.
 - 2nd offense = ejection.

Substitute / Borrowed Players

- May borrow from 8U or other 10U teams within the NISA organization.
 - Borrowing from another 10U team only if unable to meet the 7-player minimum.
 - Borrowed players cannot pitch or catch and must bat last.
 - Must play outfield.
- No players younger than 8U may be borrowed for safety reasons.

Tournament Play

Spring Tournament

- Teams must play **10+ regular season games** to qualify for seeding
- Higher seeds host games until finals
- **Championship & 3rd/4th Place:**
 - **June 27, 2026 – Bates Park, Woodstock**
 - **1:45 time limit;** finish current inning
 - Ties resolved with **International Tie Breaker (ITB)**
 - Last batted out starts at 2nd base