

# 2026 NISA 14U Division Rules Summary

Northern Illinois Softball Association (NISA)

Age Division: **13–14 years old (as of 8/31/2025)**

Recommended 8th grade and below: **Players who also participate in high school softball are not eligible due to schedule overlap.**

---

## 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)

- Tournament/part-time players affiliated with the rec organization **are eligible**.
  - These players must be **evenly distributed** across all teams.
  - Coaches and league administrators must coordinate distribution **before drafts or team formation**.
  - No team should gain an advantage due to an uneven number of advanced players.
  - Violations may result in:
    - Forfeits
    - Player reassignment
    - Loss of coach eligibility
  - Goal: **Fairness, integrity, and balanced development** for all athletes.
- 

## Coaches Rules

- Maximum **3 coaches** in the dugout (10U–14U).
  - If using 3 coaches, **one must remain in the dugout** at all times.
  - When on defense, all coaches must remain inside the dugout.
  - No coaching or distractions from behind the backstop.
    - 1st violation: **Warning**
    - 2nd violation: **Ejection**
  - Coaches should not smoke near players; parents must be directed to designated smoking areas.
- 

## Roster & Scorekeeping

- All registered players must be placed on a team — **no cuts allowed**.
- A player may only be rostered on **one team**.
- Minimum **7 players** required to start a game: otherwise, forfeit.
- Recommended roster size: **13 players max**.
- **Gamechanger** is required for all teams to track rosters and scores.

---

## Game Rules

- **Length:** 7 innings or **1:45** time limit.
  - No new inning after 1:45; finish the current inning.
- **Run Limit:** 6 runs per inning (unlimited in 6th inning and beyond).

## Mercy Rules

- **15 runs after 3 innings**
- **10 runs after 5 innings**
- **8 runs after 6 innings**

---

## 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, not out.
  - Injury during at-bat: out for that at-bat; skip spot afterward.
  - Ejection: spot becomes automatic out.

---

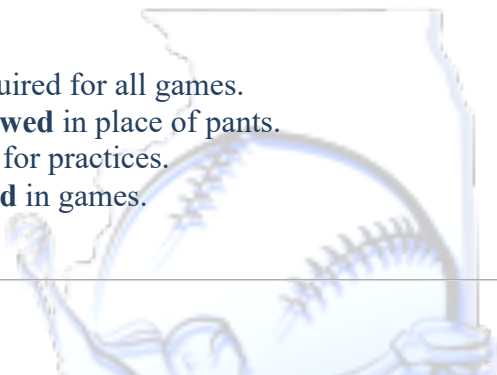
## Pitching Rules

- Distance: **43 feet**.
  - No inning limits: **free defensive substitution** allowed.
  - Coaches should use good judgment to prevent overuse.
  - Warm-ups:
    - 5 pitches before the 1st inning
    - 3 pitches before following innings
    - Coaches must train pitchers/catchers to self-manage warmup timing.
  - Mound Visits:
    - 2 visits in the same inning = pitcher removed for that inning.
  - Sunglasses
    - Are allowed by pitcher
  - Illegal pitch: **Ball on the batter**; no runner advancement.
    - An **illegal pitch** occurs when the pitcher does not follow pitching rules, including:
    - Both feet not in legal position on and within the pitching plate
    - Hands not together before the pitch
    - Pitching motion not continuous (stop/start)
    - Replanting or stepping illegally
    - Pitch delivered before the batter is ready
-

## Hitting & Fielding

- Maximum **9 players** on defense.
  - **Bunting & slap hitting:** Allowed.
    - Fake bunt → full swing = **out**.
    - Slap hit from outside the batter's box = **out**.
  - **Infield Fly Rule:** In effect.
- 

## Equipment Requirements

- **Facemasks required** for all fielders.
  - Helmets must have a **full facemask**.
  - Bats must have **USSSA 1.20 BPF** or **USA Softball** stamp.
  - **No metal cleats**.
  - **Uniforms:**
    - Softball pants required for all games.
    - Leggings **not allowed** in place of pants.
    - Pants encouraged for practices.
    - Shorts **not allowed** in games.
- 
- 

## Base Running

- **Sliding-** *Runners must avoid contact if a fielder has the ball*; if they slide, it must be legal (feet-first or headfirst within reach of the base, avoiding rolling/pop-up slides into the fielder). If a runner slides illegally or crashes into a fielder with the ball, they are out for causing illegal contact, as safety and avoiding collisions are paramount.
  - **For the Defense (Obstruction):**
    - A defender can't block a base or runner's path if they don't have the ball.
    - If a defender is fielding a batted ball, they have a right to their position, but once they field it, they must clear the path.
    - **Key rule:** If a runner is hindered (slows down, changes direction) and the fielder doesn't have the ball or isn't making a play, it's obstruction.
    - An obstructed runner is generally awarded the base they would have reached in the umpire's judgment
  - **Dropped 3rd strike:** In effect.
  - Stealing allowed once ball leaves pitcher's hand.
  - **Look-Back Rule:** Enforced once pitcher has control in the circle.
  - Plays continue until pitcher **has possession in the circle**.
- 

## Conduct & Umpires

- Patched umpires required unless both coaches agree otherwise.
- Cheering must remain **positive**, no chanting during windup.
- Thrown bats:
  - 1st offense = warning
  - 2nd offense = ejection

## Substitute / Borrowed Players

### If short on players:

#### Borrowing from 12U:

- Allowed
- Restrictions:
  - Max **4 innings pitched**
  - Must **bat last**
  - Must **play outfield** when not pitching

#### ***Borrowing from other 14U teams:***

- Allowed **IF** below 7 players (Borrowing another 14U when you have more than 7 regulars will result in forfeit)
- Restrictions:
  - Cannot pitch
  - Cannot catch
  - Must bat last

#### ***Safety Rule***

- No borrowing from below 12U.

#### ***Borrowing Requirement***

- Borrowed players must come from the **same town rec program**.

---

## Tournament Play — Spring 2026 (14U)

### General Tournament Rules

- Regular season rules apply unless noted.
- Seeding based on **regular season standings**.
- Teams must play **10 games** to qualify by win percentage.
  - Fewer than 10 games = automatic last seed.
- Higher seed hosts and supplies umpires & balls until finals.

### Championship & 3rd/4th Place Games

- **Location:** Woodstock – Bates Park
- **Date:** June 27, 2026
- **Umpires & game balls provided by NISA**

### Game Length

- 3rd/4th place: **1:45 finish the inning**
- Championship: **Full 7 innings — no time limit**

### Tie-Breaker (All Tournament Games)

If tied at the No New Inning time or after regulation:

#### International Tie Breaker (ITB)

- Last batted out starts on **2nd base**.
- All pitching & position rules remain in effect.