

2026 NISA 8U Division Rules

Northern Illinois Softball Association (NISA)

Age Division: 6–8 years old (as of 8/31/2025)

Roster & Eligibility

Recreational Only

- No tryouts or cuts allowed.
- Full-time travel players are not eligible for 8U.

Tournament/Part-Time Players (within 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/part-time players must be identified on rosters; misrepresentation may result in forfeits or coach suspension.
- All part-time/tournament players must play spring rec ball for their organization. Fall is optional.

Player Participation & Lineup

- No player may sit more than 2 innings per game. Equal playing time is encouraged.
- No player may play the same defensive position more than 3 innings per game.
- Courtesy runner is allowed for the catcher at any time (last batted out).
- Continuous batting order is required — all players bat.
- Late arrivals: added to the end of the batting lineup.
- Players leaving due to injury or family reasons are skipped (no out recorded).
- If a player is injured during an at-bat and cannot continue, the last batted out may complete the at-bat.
- Ejected players: automatic out in the lineup.
- Ejected coaches: suspended for the next game. Coaching while suspended results in team forfeit.

Game Format

- **Length:** 6 innings or 1:30 time limit.
 - No new inning after 1:30; drop dead at 1:45.
- **Official Game (weather):** 3 innings (2½ if home team leads).
- **Run Limit:** 5-run limit per inning (all innings).

- **Defense:** Max 10 players (4 outfielders, 4 infielders, pitcher, catcher).
- Outfielders must start on the grass or behind the baseline for larger fields.
 - Short center can cover 2nd base; other outfielders may only cover empty bases or back up plays.
- Pitcher (when coach is pitching) must stay within or behind the pitching circle.
- If a batted ball hits the coach pitcher, the ball remains live.
- Infield Fly Rule: **Not in effect.**
- Bunting: **Not allowed.**
- Bases: 60 feet.
- Two defensive coaches allowed on the field behind the baseline for instruction.
- Umpires: should be used when available; if not, a coach/parent may umpire if both teams agree.

Pitching Rules

- **Distance:** 30 feet.
- Max 3 innings per pitcher per game (one pitch = one inning).
- Warm-ups: 5 pitches before 1st inning; 3 pitches each inning thereafter.
- No hit-by-pitch awards (pitch ruled a ball, at-bat continues).
- No walks: after 4 balls, batter keeps strike count and coach pitches (max 3 pitches).
- Coach pitcher **MUST** pitch from the mound. No taking multiple steps toward batter.
- No restrictions on substitutions within the 3-inning limit.
- IHSA pitching mechanics should be taught (hands apart on mound, one hand-to-glove motion).
- No illegal pitches will be called.

Base Running

- Must slide to avoid contact.
- NFHS Slide Rule 8-6 applies for illegal or malicious contact.
- **When ball is hit infield:** runners advance 1 base only; batter awarded a single.
- **When ball is hit to outfield:** play stops when ball enters the infield and pitcher has possession; runners advance to base they are going to.
- No extra bases on overthrows or passed balls.
- Stealing: allowed only after the ball crosses the plate; 1 base per pitch; no stealing home.
- Lead-offs allowed after ball crosses the plate; leaving early results in a warning.
- Look-Back Rule: **Not in effect.**
- **No stealing during coach pitching.**

Equipment Requirements

- **Facemasks:** 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 are not allowed in place of pants.
- Pants encouraged for practice as well.
- Shorts are not allowed in games.

- **Safety:**

- On-deck batter must stand behind the current batter.
- All players must stay behind the fence in the dugout while batting.

Tournament Rules

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**
 - **1:35 time limit;** finish current inning
 - Ties resolved with **International Tie Breaker (ITB)**
 - Last batted out starts at 2nd base

