

NTX Interlock

OFFICIAL FASTPITCH SOFTBALL RULES

(Unified Playing Rules for Interlock Competition)

ARTICLE I – GOVERNING RULE SET

Section 1 – Base Rule Authority

NTX Interlock shall utilize **USA Softball rules** as the primary governing ruleset, except where modified by these Interlock rules. All rules listed in the NTX Interlock Rule Modifications, supersede USA Softball rules for Interlock play.

Section 2 – Rule Interpretation Authority

- The Plate Umpire has final authority on rule interpretation during games.
- The home commissioner has authority on post-game disputes.
- For tournaments, an Interlock Board Member or Division Commissioner should be on-site for major rule interpretations.
- To avoid confusion regarding authority, NTX Interlock may issue identification badges for commissioners and board representatives.

ARTICLE II – FIELD, BALL & GAME SETUP

Section 1 – Field Dimensions

Field distances shall follow **USA Softball** standards by age division unless modified by NTX Interlock.

Section 2 – Game Balls

- The host city shall provide game balls.
- Ball specifications – refer to rule modifications document.

ARTICLE III – GAME LENGTH, TIES, RUN RULES

Section 1 – Regulation Games

Games are scheduled for a set number of innings per division.

Section 2 – Time Limits

- All games are subject to time limits.
- No new inning may begin after time expiration unless otherwise stated.

Section 3 – Tie Games

Tie games may end in a tie during the regular season unless division rules specify otherwise.

Section 4 – Mercy/Run Rule

- Refer to Run Rule in NTX Interlock Modifications

ARTICLE IV – LINEUPS & BATTING ORDER

Section 1 – Continuous Batting

All teams shall use a **continuous batting order** of all present players.

Section 2 – Late Arrivals

Late-arriving players shall be added to the bottom of the lineup.

Section 3 – Injuries & Ejections

- Injured players may be skipped without penalty.
- Ejected players result in an out each time their position appears in the batting order.

ARTICLE V – DEFENSIVE ALIGNMENT

Section 1 – Player Positions

- Standard fastpitch defensive alignment applies.
- Free substitution is allowed.

Section 2 – Pitcher & Infield Safety

Pitchers must wear protective face masks where required by division rules.

ARTICLE VI – BATTING & BASE RUNNING

Section 1 – Stealing

Stealing bases is allowed based on division rules.

Section 2 – Sliding

- Refer to USA Rules

Section 3 – Overthrows

Runners may advance on overthrows in accordance with division rules.

ARTICLE VII – DEAD BALL & LIVE BALL

Section 1 – Dead Ball Situations

The ball is dead when:

- An umpire calls time
- The ball leaves the field of play
- Safety concerns arise

ARTICLE VIII – COACH & PLAYER CONDUCT DURING GAMES

Section 1 – Dugout Behavior

- Only rostered players and approved coaches are allowed in the dugout.
- Excessive arguing or unsportsmanlike conduct may result in ejection.

Section 2 – Ejections

Ejected individuals must leave the playing area immediately and may not return for the remainder of the game.

Section 3 – Code of Conduct

- All coaches and players must follow the NTX Interlock League Policies & Code of Conduct at all times.
- Violations of the Code of Conduct may result in removal from the game, suspension, or additional disciplinary action as determined by the home organization or the Interlock Board.

Section 4 – Discipline

- **Disciplinary matters will be handled by the city of registration; however, if the action is deemed insufficient, the Interlock Board reserves the authority to review and adjust discipline to ensure fairness across all cities as per the Interlock Bylaws, League Policies and Code of Conduct.**

ARTICLE IX – PROTESTS & RULE CLARIFICATIONS

Section 1 – Protestable Issues

Only rule interpretation issues may be protested. Judgment calls are not protestable.

Section 2 – Protest Procedures

- Protests must be declared before the next pitch.
- Written protests must follow within league timelines.

Article X – UMPIRE ELIGIBILITY & ASSIGNMENTS

To ensure fairness, neutrality, and competitive integrity, the following restrictions apply to all umpire assignments:

- Umpires are ineligible to officiate any division in which they currently coach.
- Umpires may not officiate games involving a team on which their child plays.
- Umpires may not officiate games involving a team coached by an individual with whom the umpire's parent or guardian has a close personal relationship.
- Umpires may not officiate games in which an immediate family member has a direct competitive, coaching, or supervisory role.
- Umpires must disclose any potential conflicts of interest to their home organization, assignor, or the Interlock Board.
- Commissioners and assignors must ensure umpire assignments avoid conflicts of interest.
- Conflicts discovered during or after a game may result in reassignment, protest review, or other corrective action as determined by the Interlock Board.

ARTICLE XI – DIVISION-BASED ELIGIBILITY FOR TOURNAMENT PLAY

A player must participate in Interlock tournaments in the same age division in which they were officially registered and rostered during the regular season. A player who was registered on a higher-division team (e.g., registered in 10U) may not play down in a lower division (e.g., 8U) for tournament play, even if their chronological age qualifies them for that lower division.