

# KINDERKAMACK SOFTBALL RULES

Updated 1/1/23

**Philosophy** - To foster the true spirit of the game, where managers, coaches and parents encourage and support the social fabric of the game, the fun and enjoyment in playing the game of softball, teaching the kids sportsmanship, to be team players, to be schooled in the fundamentals and to be enthusiastic and confident.

## **Player Eligibility**

Each team can have a roster consisting of players only from participating towns.

## **Exceptions**

Allowances will be afforded to a player who has a unique circumstance or hardship.

Out of town residents attending an in town private or parochial school.

Towns that cannot field a team(s) without combining with another town(s).

Town administrators must notify the commissioners if any of the above exceptions exist.

All eligibility waivers must be submitted to the commissioners in writing by April 1<sup>st</sup> and will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

## **General Rules**

Team rosters need to be balanced as close as possible with girls from both grades. Towns should make every effort to build balanced teams and not “stack” one team if they have multiple teams in a division. The commissioners will review rosters before the season to ensure compliance.

Weekday games are to start at 6pm or later unless agreed upon by BOTH head coaches. Weekend games are to start at 9am or later. No games will be scheduled on Sundays but games may be played on Sunday if both teams agree. This applies to the regular season as well as the playoffs.

The regular season will consist of 10 games for 3/4, 5/6, and 7/8. Games begin mid-April and end by Memorial Day. Playoffs begin the day after Memorial Day. The 1/2 season consists of 5 games beginning mid-May and ending the first week of June.

## **Game Rules**

**The following rules do not apply to the 1/2 division. All 1/2 rules are below in a separate section.**

High School rules apply in all aspects unless mentioned specifically in the rules.

**(Important: when asked by umpires whether Kinderkamack Softball follows the High School rule, respond by saying “No.” Say instead we follow our OWN RULE)**

1. **Batting Order:** Cinderella batting order. **All** players must be in the starting lineup and bat.
2. **Guest players** can be used from other teams in the same participating town to fill a roster to 10 players. **Guest players must bat last and allowed to play any position EXCEPT pitcher.** Teams should use their best effort to replace missing players with players of equal ability of the missing player(s). Guest players must be declared to the opposing coach prior to the start of the game. **No guest players will be allowed to play in the playoffs.**
3. **Roster** - must be submitted to the by April 1st
4. **Roster minimum size** - 10 players.
5. **Roster maximum size** - discretion of manager
6. **Game day minimum field roster** – 7 (to have a game)

7. **Player participation** – every player on each team’s roster must play a minimum of **4 innings per game in the field if the game is at least 6 innings long for a complete game, No Less!!**
8. **Free Substitution** – is allowed for all players excluding pitchers. Only the starting pitcher can return as a pitcher once.
9. **Mercy rule – Per Inning** – 5 run maximum or once through the lineup. Please note that the number of players in a lineup may differ - the bat around shall be limited to the lower number of players in the 2 lineups. (For example, if team #1 has a lineup of 13 players and team #2 has a lineup of 11 players the bat around will be limited to 11. If one team has less than 9 players, the bat around will be 9 players.) This rule doesn’t apply in the last inning of the game or extra innings.
10. **Mercy rule – Per Game** – 12 runs after 4, 10 runs after 5, 8 runs after 6
11. **Time limit per game** – *see division rules*
12. **Makeup games-** Make every effort to promptly schedule makeup games. The home team will offer the visiting team 3 dates to makeup the game within 48 hours of the cancelled game. Your respective Director should also be emailed with these same dates.
13. **Reporting a Score-** The winning team’s coach must report the score on [kinderkamacksoftball.com](http://kinderkamacksoftball.com) within 24 hours of the game.

## **PITCHING:**

Windmill pitching is not required. See division rules for inning limits.

## **ADDITIONAL GAME RULES**

1. **Sliding** – Head first sliding is not permitted except when returning to a base. All base runners advancing shall slide feet first at all bases. Any other slide is an automatic out. No hurdling over a player on a tag play to avoid tag. This will result in an automatic out. A baserunner should avoid collisions at all time by either sliding or avoiding collision with the defensive player. To clarify a baserunner must slide or avoid. In the judgment of the umpire, any runner is OUT when the runner does not slide OR attempt to get around a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag. It is the responsibility of the runner to slide in order to reduce potentially injurious contact on all plays at all bases. NOTE: A player is not out if she doesn't slide, she's out only when she creates a collision with a defensive player. No contact, no out. Also a defensive player cannot block a base unless there is a play at that base and the defensive player is in possession of the ball or is in the process of receiving the ball. IF A DEFENSIVE PLAYER IS NOT IN POSSESSION OF THE BALL OR IS IN THE ACT OF FIELDING or RECEIVING THE BALL AND THERE IS A COLLISION then the umpire shall wait until a dead ball situation and award the runner the base by reason of obstruction.
2. **Regulation game** – if weather, darkness or time limitation interferes with play so that the game is called (ended) by the umpire prior to completion, the following rules apply:

**It’s an official regulation game, after (4) four innings, unless the Home Team is leading after 3 1/2 innings. (IMPORTANT – this applies for game shortened by rain or lightning. It is an official game after 4 innings).**

After four innings, you revert back to the previous completed inning to determine a winner if the game is called due to weather or darkness.

If a game is called before it's a regulation game or it's a tie game, you resume play from the exact point that the play was halted until it becomes a regulation game.

A tie game will be counted as a tie for both teams

If there is a tie after the scheduled number of innings, extra innings will be allowed if under time limit otherwise game will end in a tie.

**Games that end due to TIME LIMIT are official regardless of how many innings were completed.**

If "last inning - unlimited runs" IS NOT DECLARED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE **TOP** OF THE INNING AND THE BOTTOM OF THE INNING GOES BEYOND THE TIME LIMIT, then the mercy rule run cap WILL apply to that bottom half of the inning. At this point, the game would end and be considered an official game.

If the margin of runs by the Visiting Team is greater than 5 then the visiting Team is declared the winner and you finish the bottom half of that inning for "fun" or "practice". As that is considered an official game.

If the "last inning" is declared before the top of the inning and the inning finishes before getting to the time limit, the game is over and is considered an official game.

3. During the regular season a tie will stand as the final score.
4. All playoff games must be played until a winner is determined, upon weather or darkness game will follow continuation rule. *The time limit restriction will not apply to championship games.*
5. **Continuation Rule** – Game will be resumed exactly where it left off. All records including pitching shall be counted.
6. **Players arriving to a game late** – Player will be added at the bottom of the batting order.
7. **Players leaving a game early** - There is no penalty for players leaving the games early. The spot in the lineup will be skipped.
8. **Speed Up Rule** – Teams can choose to use a courtesy runner for pitchers or catchers no matter how many outs. The courtesy runner must be the last batted out.
9. **Infield Fly Rule** – *see division rules.*
10. **Tagging up** – is allowed at all divisions
11. **Warm Up** – Prior to games, the visiting team shall have a 15 minute window to warm up and practice on the opposing team's field.
12. **Game balls** - Home Teams are responsible to supply 2 game balls (11" for 3/4 & 12" for 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>). Balls must be max .47 COR, max 375 lb. compression
13. **Bats** – Composite bats are allowed in all divisions.
14. **Umpires**- Home team will provide and pay for the umpire. If the field location is changed due to field conditions or field availability, the originally scheduled home team is still responsible for providing and paying for the umpire. Only 1 umpire is required for regular season games. Home team may choose to have 2 umpires at their sole expense. For all playoff games, 2 umpires are required at the 7/8 level only.

### **Players Code of Conduct:**

1. Umpires have the sole authority and discretion to warn, discharge and suspend a player whose conduct on the field is contrary to the spirit of "fair play" and to our philosophy.
2. These infractions involve but are not limited to:
3. Profanity or abusive language
4. Throwing of equipment in the dugout or on the field

5. Act of violence or intent to injure a player
6. Arguing with umpires or players
7. Willful acts or behavior in delaying a game
8. Childish behaviors in the dugout or on the field so as to taunt, bait, discredit and make fun of a player (race, religion and origin)
9. Purposely obstruct or hinder a player from making a play, running bases or any routine play
10. Personal actions to incite spectators or demonstrations
11. Entering the area behind the catcher while the pitcher and catcher are in their respective position
12. Be outside the designated dugout or bullpen area if not a batter.
13. Any player ejected in a game is subject to their town's ejection rules for the following game.

### **Players Dress Code:**

1. All players should be in the same color matching uniforms.
2. All player's uniform shirts should be tucked in their pants at all times during the game.
3. Shoes with rubber cleats are the only acceptable footwear to be worn by the players in the game.
4. No player is allowed to wear jewelry, earrings or any ornamental body piece during the game.

### **Managers and Coaches Rules:**

#### **"Special Code of Conduct"**

1. No smoking, tobacco chewing, spitting are allowed in the dugout or on the field.
2. Profanity, abusive language or continuous yelling and harassment should not be directed toward any player on either team in the dugout or on the field.
3. A manager or coach who deems winning the game the only reason for his or her involvement, should stay out of our program and watch the game outside the field boundaries along with the rest of the spectators.
4. Arguing with umpires is prohibited; accept the umpire's call and play. The umpire is incidental to the game, not a major symbol for debate.
5. No coach shall physically assist a runner during play.
6. Coaches shall stay within the boundaries of the coaching boxes.
7. Ejections from any game will be that game plus the next. This rule applies to all coaches. A second ejection in the season of any coach will be handled on an individual basis by the administrators from each participating town.

### **Safety Code:**

1. Responsibility for safety procedures should be that of an adult member of your program.
2. Arrangements should be made in advance of all games and practices for emergency medical services.
3. Managers, coaches and umpires should have some training in first aid. First aid kits should be available at the field.
4. No games or practice should be held when weather or field conditions are not playable, particularly when lighting is inadequate.
5. Play area should be inspected frequently for holes, damage, stones, glass and other foreign objects.
6. Dugouts on-deck circles and bat racks should be positioned behind the screens and/or fences.
7. Only players, managers, coaches and umpires are permitted on the playing field during play and practice sessions.
8. Responsibility for keeping bats and loose equipment off the field of play should be that of a regular player assigned for this purpose.

9. Procedure should be established for retrieving foul balls hit out of the playing area.
10. During practice games all players should be alert and watch the batter on every pitch.
11. During warm up drills players should be spaced so that no one is endangered by wild throws or missed catches.
12. Equipment should be inspected regularly.
13. Batters must wear protective helmets with facemasks during practice, as well as during games.
14. Catchers must wear catcher helmet, facemask, chest protector, and shin guards at all times during the game and while warming up pitchers.
15. At no time should “horse play” be permitted on the field.
16. Safety glasses – per New Jersey law as follows: Any child who wears corrective eyeglasses while participating in racquetball, squash, tennis, women's lacrosse, basketball, women's field hockey, badminton, paddleball, soccer, volleyball, baseball or softball, sponsored by a school, community or government agency, shall be required to wear protective eyewear that meets the frames standards of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) F803 and lens standards of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Z87.1.

## **Playoffs**

**THERE WILL BE NO PLAYOFFS AT THE 1 /2 DIVISION.**

**THE TOP 12 TEAMS IN EACH DIVISION WILL QUALIFY FOR THE PLAYOFFS**

The playoffs will be single elimination. Seeding for the playoffs will be determined by a point system. Higher seeded team will be the home team unless there are field availability issues. Each team will be awarded points as follows:

3-Win 2-Tie 1–Loss 0-Forfeit

Tie breakers will be as follows:

- A) Wins
- B) Losses
- C) Head to Head
- D) Coin Flip with the team you are tied with.

The higher seed is the home team. There will be NO RE-SEEDING for each round.

Trophies will be awarded to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place teams in each bracket.

Playoff games will require one umpire at 3/4 and 5/6 and two umpires at 7/8.

All Championship games will require 2 umpires.

**Teams will split the cost of the umpires at all Playoff games as well as all Championship games.**

## 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Rules

1. Scores are not kept at this level. This level is strictly an instructional program.
2. Teams will use 11" safety balls, (i.e. "RIF", or "Incrediballs").
3. Games will be 3 innings long, time permitting. Time limit of 1 hour and 15 minutes.
4. Bases are at 60 feet.
5. Batters and runners must wear helmets with face masks
6. There is no infield fly rule.
7. There is no tagging up.
8. There is no leading or stealing.
9. There is no bunting.
10. Coaches pitch to the players.
11. There are no umpires.

Every girl plays the field. Infield positions consist of: Two pitcher's helpers, 1B, 2B, SS, and 3B. All other players are to stand **behind the baseline and on the grass of the outfield**. Pitchers helpers are to stand no closer than 32 feet.

There will be a maximum of 3 coaches on the field. One pitching, one catching, and one in the field.

There will be a running batting order, every player hits. The batting order may change inning to inning and is encouraged.

After Six (6) swinging strikes, the batter will hit from a tee to complete the at-bat. There are no strike outs. The Home Team will provide the tee.

The runners advance 1 base at a time unless the ball is hit past the outfielders, then they may advance 2 bases.

If a runner is out on a play, the player returns to the dugout but the inning is not over until all of the batters on the team get an at bat.

On an overthrow, the ball is dead and the play is over.

The team batting will continue until the lineup has batted, even after having made three (3) outs. The last batter in each inning may run around all the bases.

**Coaches are encouraged** to teach their players to throw to the catcher on a force play at home plate, not run to home to make the out. We want to try to avoid collisions at home plate.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Rules

### Game & Field

1. Games are scheduled for 6 innings. An official game is 4 innings (3 ½ if the home team is winning). No new inning will begin after 1 hour and 30 minutes of play.
2. All players on the roster will bat and 10 play on the field.
3. The 10<sup>th</sup> player in the field must be 10 feet behind 2nd base as a starting point and can move in on the release of the pitch.
4. The “*Dropped Third Strike Rule*” and the “*Infield Fly Rule*” are **NOT** in effect.
5. The pitching rubber shall be 35 feet from the back of home plate.
6. Bunting is **NOT** allowed.
7. Composite bats are allowed.
8. Defensive facemasks **MUST** be worn by **ALL** players on the field

### Pitching

1. A pitcher may pitch a maximum of 3 innings (2 consecutive innings max.) One pitch constitutes an inning. Only the starting pitcher may return to pitch once. Extra innings constitute a new game for the purpose of pitchers.
2. A 3<sup>rd</sup> grader, or a combination of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, must pitch at least one inning or 3 consecutive outs in each game. This has to occur before the completion of the 3rd inning.
3. Hit by pitch rules - The batter must make an attempt to avoid the pitch if possible. The definition of "attempt" is an umpire's discretion call. Batters that are hit by "slow" pitches that are rolling or bounce multiple times should not be awarded 1st base. If a pitcher hits 3 batters in a game, both coaches and the umpire should discuss if the pitcher is a safety concern. If so, then the pitcher should be removed from the game. There must be a unanimous agreement amongst the 3 parties (2 coaches plus the umpire) agreeing the pitcher is not a safety concern in order for the pitcher to remain in the game. If an agreement cannot be reached and at least one party believes a safety concern exists, then the pitcher should be removed after the third hit batter. We do not want to punish struggling pitchers but we also do not want players getting hurt.
4. The coach/manager is allowed 2 trips to the pitcher's mound per inning. Upon the 3<sup>rd</sup> trip, the pitcher must be removed. This does not include the “coach pitch rule”.
5. There will be a maximum of two walks per inning per team.
6. Coach Pitch Rule - The coach will pitch when 4 balls have been thrown **AFTER** the two walks per inning have been observed. The coach must pitch from inside the pitcher's circle. If the batter has 2 strikes when the coach enters the game, the strike count will go down to 1. The coach will have the pitcher step aside, remain inside the circle, either even or behind the pitching rubber and pitch to the batter until the batter either hits the ball or strikes out. Umpires will call strikes on the batter. The batter can strike out swinging or looking. The pitcher will then pitch to the next batter.

### Baserunning

1. Baserunners will be allowed to lead upon the release by the pitcher. If a baserunner leaves early, there will be 1 warning per team per game. Next infraction constitutes dead ball and runner is out.
2. There will be no advancement on overthrows by the catcher.
3. The ball is dead once in control by any player in the pitcher's circle. Baserunners will be sent back to previous base if less than halfway to next base as determined by the umpire
4. Only one base is allowed on an overthrow at 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base unless the overthrow is from the catcher (see rule # 2).
5. Maximum of 2 successful steals per inning. 2nd to 3rd base only.
6. Pick offs- 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base are force plays.

## 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Rules

### Game & Field

1. Games are scheduled for 6 innings. An official game is 4 innings (3 ½ if the home team is winning). No new inning will begin after 1 hour and 45 minutes of play.
2. All players on the roster will bat and 10 play on the field.
3. The 10<sup>th</sup> player in the field must be 10 feet behind 2nd base as a starting point and can move in on the release of the pitch.
4. The “*Dropped Third Strike Rule*” and the “*Infield Fly Rule*” are **NOT** in effect.
5. The pitching rubber shall be 40 feet from the back of home plate.
6. Bunting is allowed. No Fake Bunting then swinging away. No slashing or slapping.
7. Composite Bats are allowed.
8. Defensive facemasks **MUST** be worn by **ALL** players on the field

### Pitching

1. A pitcher may pitch a maximum of 4 innings (3 consecutive innings max). One pitch constitutes an inning. Only the starting pitcher may return to pitch once. Extra innings constitute a new game for the purpose of pitchers.
2. Hit by pitch rules - The batter must make an attempt to avoid the pitch if possible. The definition of "attempt" is an umpire's discretion call. Batters that are hit by "slow" pitches that are rolling or bounce multiple times should not be awarded 1st base. If a pitcher hits 3 batters in a game, both coaches and the umpire should discuss if the pitcher is a safety concern. If so, then the pitcher should be removed from the game. There must be a unanimous agreement amongst the 3 parties (2 coaches plus the umpire) agreeing the pitcher is not a safety concern in order for the pitcher to remain in the game. If an agreement cannot be reached and at least one party believes a safety concern exists, then the pitcher should be removed after the third hit batter. We do not want to punish struggling pitchers but we also do not want players getting hurt.
3. The coach/manager is allowed 2 trips to the pitcher's mound per inning. Upon the 3<sup>rd</sup> trip, the pitcher must be removed.

### Baserunning

1. Baserunners will be allowed to lead upon the release by the pitcher. If a baserunner leaves early, there will be 1 warning per team per game. Next infraction constitutes dead ball and runner is out.
2. The ball is dead once in control by any player in the pitcher's circle. Baserunners will be sent back to previous base if less than halfway to next base as determined by the umpire
3. Maximum of 4 successful steals per inning. Any advancement of a runner after a pitch is considered a steal. Even on overthrows to 2nd base. If the runner advances to 3rd base, it is considered a steal. No Stealing Home (Runner must be batted in or walked in or forced in)
4. Pick offs- If team has already taken their 4 steals, pickoff is a force play. If the team has steals left, the pick off plays are tag plays. 3rd base is always a force play.
5. Runners may advance on overthrows to any base or balls overthrown to the pitcher. Runners advance at their own risk. Any advance on a ball thrown back to the pitcher by the catcher counts as a steal.
6. Continuous walk is **NOT** permitted.



## 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Rules

### Game & Field

1. Games are scheduled for 7 innings. An official game is 4 innings (3 ½ if the home team is winning). No new inning will begin after 1 hour and 45 minutes of play.
2. All players on the roster will bat and 10 play on the field.
3. The 10<sup>th</sup> player will not be a shortfielder. Outfield will play 4 across.
4. The “*Dropped Third Strike Rule*” and the “*Infield Fly Rule*” are in effect.
5. The pitching rubber shall be 43 feet from the back of home plate.
6. Bunting is allowed. No Fake Bunting then swinging away. Slapping is allowed.
7. Composite Bats are allowed.
8. Defensive facemasks **MUST** be worn by **ALL** players in the infield. Optional for outfielders

### Pitching

1. A pitcher may pitch a maximum of 4 innings (3 consecutive innings max). One pitch constitutes an inning. Only the starting pitcher may return to pitch once. Extra innings constitute a new game for the purpose of pitchers.
2. The coach/manager is allowed 2 trips to the pitcher’s mound per inning. Upon the 3<sup>rd</sup> trip, the pitcher must be removed.

### Baserunning

1. Baserunners will be allowed to lead upon the release by the pitcher. If a baserunner leaves early, there will be 1 warning per team per game. Next infraction constitutes dead ball and runner is out.
2. Unlimited stealing of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. **No stealing home.** (Runner must be batted in or walked in or forced in). Runners may not score on overthrows while stealing 3<sup>rd</sup> or on pickoff attempts at 3<sup>rd</sup>. Runners may not score on balls thrown to 1<sup>st</sup> base after a dropped third strike except if there are 2 outs.
3. Pick offs - Tag plays at all bases.
4. Runners may advance on overthrows to any base or balls overthrown to the pitcher. Runners advance at their own risk. Runners on 3<sup>rd</sup> may not score on overthrown balls back to the pitcher after a pitch.
5. Continuous walk is NOT permitted.