

2026 Western Kansas 4th-7th Grade Softball League Rules

1. Participants in Northwest Kansas Rec League programs shall register in the town which coincides with the school district where they attend school or in the town in which they are residing during the summer (for Baseball and Softball). If that town does not offer that particular program, or does not have enough players to form a team, the player must request, from their Home team, to play for the nearest town who does have a team first (as the crow flies), then the next closest town, etc. Waivers allowing players to transfer to play in another town will not be granted if the player's local town offers a team for them to play on.
2. Players must be in 4th-7th grade to play softball. A player's grade is determined by current school year (2025-2026).
3. The Coach is responsible for the sportsmanship of the team.
4. League game times will be 6:30 p.m. unless a change is agreed on by the league or Coach. Games will be played on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Game night will consist of two games with the first counting for league record.
5. Game night will consist of 2 games with only the first game counting toward the team record. Game format is as follows:
 - Game clock starts with first pitch of the game. A new inning begins as soon as the final out of the inning is made.
 - Scoring Rules: Teams are limited to 5 runs per inning
 - Game 1: Teams are allowed 10 runs in the final inning, whether it's the 5th inning or not. When game time reaches 50 minutes, the current inning will be finished and only one additional inning will be played. If the home team is down by 11 runs at any time during the final inning the game is over. Games will be a maximum of 5 innings.
 - Game 2: Teams are limited to 5 runs per inning for ALL innings. When game time reaches 50 minutes, the current inning will be finished and the game is over. Games will be a maximum of 4 innings. The home team will always get to bat in the final inning, regardless of the score.
 - At least 3 innings must be played to be considered an official game.
 - First game only: Will allow one extra inning to break tie. The extra inning will begin with a runner on second base and 1 out. The runner at second base will be the player in the batting order immediately preceding the leadoff batter of the inning (or a substitute for that player). Each batter starts with a 1-1 count and there is a 10-run limit. Tie stands if not broken in one inning.
 - In case of rain or any act of God, scores will revert to the last full inning after 3 innings have been played. A decision must be made within 30 minutes by the head umpire, in case of an act of God, whether the game is to continue or not.
6. Equipment. No steel spikes or metal tipped cleats will be allowed in any league or tournament game. Batter's helmets must be used by all batters and base runners. Helmets must be a kind that protects the ears, temples, and top of the head. Ball caps, visors, or headbands are optional but highly recommended. If one or a combination of these headwear items are worn by a team, they must be worn properly and be of the same color. Shirt tails must be kept in while playing a game. All balls must be approved NFHSU balls. The catcher shall wear a catcher's helmet during warm-ups and game play. Each player must wear a uniform identical in color and style. Uniform numbers are required and must be a contrasting color to the uniform color.
 - a. It is mandatory for all infielders and pitchers to wear a NFHS approved facemask in all Western Kansas Softball games.

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7. **Re-entry rule:** Any of the starting or substitute players may be withdrawn and re-entered once during a game, providing that they occupy the same position in the batting order. The original player and the substitute(s) cannot be in the lineup at the same time. **EXCEPTION: Injury re-entry rule** - In case of an injury, if no substitute is left on the bench, a replaced player may again enter the game for the injured player.
8. **Batting:** Any of the following 3 options are acceptable. Coaches must declare at the pre-game meeting and may choose a different option for each game. Teams do not have to select the same option as the other team (teams can do what is best for their club).
 - i. Bat a 9-person roster
 - ii. Use an Extra Hitter (EH), which allows a 10th batter
 - iii. Bat entire roster

*If a player leaves the game due to injury/illness, an out will NOT be charged to the team when their position comes up to bat, as long as there are at least 9 batters remaining (options ii. and iii. only).

9. Pitching distance is to be 40 ft. Bases are to be 60 ft. apart.
10. A 12" NFHS/KSHSAA approved softball will be used.
11. The head coach may verbally request an intentional walk to the batter upon notifying the home plate umpire.
12. Crash Rule: If in the judgment of the umpire, the crash is intentional, Runner is declared out, if not play will continue. Rules concerning obstruction are covered in the official rule books.
13. Use of any form of tobacco by a player, coach, manager, or umpire while on the playing field is prohibited. Any violation of the rule causes the individual to be removed from the game. For this rule, dugouts, player bench and bullpens will be considered part of the playing field.
14. The 2026 NFHS/KSHSAA Official baseball rule book will apply if there is no league rule covering the play or situation.
15. A timer showing the elapsed time of the game must be displayed for each game so that it is visible to both teams and all umpires at all times.