



## 2024 Northwoods League Division Outdoor Rules

### GAMES

- Play 2 innings at a time.
- Play 7 innings, 2 innings at a time innings 1-6.
- Home and visiting teams will be determined in advance as indicated on the schedule.
- Defensive teams will have 12 players in the field. If short of players, opposing team can provide a catcher, 3<sup>rd</sup> or 1<sup>st</sup> baseman as needed.
- Flip-flop rule: If the home team is behind at top of the 7<sup>th</sup>, it will bat in the top of the inning and can only go ahead by 5 runs. If that team goes up by 5 runs, the visiting team can only tie.
- Pitch count: 3 balls, 2 strikes, one courtesy foul allowed.
- Pool players: Lowest team in standings gets preference unless number of players per team dictates otherwise.
- If one team has more than 2 players than the other team, that team gives players to the other team to balance within one player. (Manager choice of three.)
- Short fielders cannot play on same side of a mid-field line from home to second to the outfield. shortstop and second baseman play on opposite sides of second base.
- 4 outfielders must remain in outfield defensive positions, two on each side of second base and not overcrowding the infield. Outfielders must start the at-bat approximately 50 feet from the infield edge or managers identify a physical object on a field such as a pole.
- If a player or players from the National Division play in Northwoods, they bat last and should play in the outfield. They should only play infield if needed by a team with agreement from the opposing manager.

## PINCH RUNNING

- A player can only pinch run once per inning. The pinch runner is the last batted out. A pinch runner on base when it is their turn to bat can be replaced and will not be out. (This is a revised rule designed to prevent injuries to extremely fast runners who were courtesy running almost every inning.)
- The other change is that no batter is allowed to use a runner from home. They must reach first base before asking for a courtesy runner

## PITCHING

- A pitching screen is required. The top of the screen is placed 12 feet from rubber. Pitcher must pitch from behind the screen.
- Pitchers must face the batter and hold the ball one second before pitching. Quick pitches are not allowed to ensure the batter is ready to hit. Otherwise, a no pitch is called.
- Arc on pitch between 6 and 12 feet high.
- The first batted ball that strikes the screen is "inert"- a no pitch, play continues with same count; subsequent hit screens are strikes.

If modifications are required (e.g.: weather issues) minor revisions could be implemented if both managers agree. They should be used in specific situations (such as weather). Modifications to the above rule can be considered if both opposing managers agree. They should be used in specific situations, not permanently changing the above rules. The courtesy runner rule cannot be changed, and all batters are required to run to first base.

Addendum from SSUSA 2023 Rule Book:

**1.41 • INFIELD FLY** A fair fly ball (not including a line drive) that can be caught by any fielder with ordinary effort when first and second bases or first, second and third bases are occupied with less than two outs. Any fielder can catch an infield fly. NOTE: When it becomes apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire shall immediately declare, "infield fly - batter is out", to aid the runners. If the ball is near the foul lines, the umpire shall declare, "infield fly - if fair". The ball is live, and runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught, or re-touch and advance after a fielder touches the ball. If the hit ball becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any other foul ball. Failure of the umpire to call "infield fly," does not negate the infield fly. If the error is discovered prior to the next pitch, the infield fly rule may still be called.

## Northwoods League Division Expectations

The West Metro Senior Softball Association has asked players in the Northwoods League We asked them to honestly assess their own skill set by answering the following questions:

- 1) Are you able to throw a softball on target and at length as effectively as the average player in the NWL?
- 2) Are you able to easily run to first base? (All NWL batters will need to run to first base this summer season)
- 3) Are you able to hit a pitched ball hard and far enough to get a hit with any regularity?
- 4) Are you able to react to a hard-hit ball?

- 5) Are you able to react to catching a thrown ball, especially if thrown with speed and intensity?
- 6) Are you able to pursue and field a routine ground or fly ball with regularity?

Questions, contact the [West Metro Board](#).

[National Division rules](#)