USA Softball rules will apply with the following clarifications and modifications:

1. **Players to Start Game:**  Eight (8).

2.  **Game Balls:**  12” yellow, reduced impact. (Rawlings Dream Seam)

3. **Pitching Rubber:**Thirty-Five (40’) feet.

4.  **Run Limit Per Inning:**  A maximum of four (4) runs per inning may be scored by each team.

5. **Mercy Rule:**  No.

6.  **Length of Games:**  A complete game will be six (6) innings.  Drop Dead end to the game will be at one hour and thirty minutes.  The umpire will determine if the batter in the box is last batter or if the batter on deck is last batter.

7.  **Round Robin Batting:**All players will bat in their assigned order.  If a player must leave before the end of the game, her spot in the order will be skipped with no out recorded.  If a player arrives late to a game and her pre-assigned spot has already batted, she will be placed at the end of the batting order.

8.  **Outfield Positions:**  Left Field, Right Field and Center Field. These positions are outfield positions in your rotations.  An outfielder is prohibited from taking the throw down on a steal attempt at second base but can back up the throw.

9.  **Defensive Play:**  Every player must play a minimum of 2 defensive innings in the first 3 innings of a game (i.e. 3 out of 5, 4 out of 6).  Further, the following must be observed:

        a)  A player may not sit out two consecutive innings;

        b)  Every player must play an infield position a minimum of one inning in the first 4 innings; and

        c)  No player can sit out a second inning until all players have sat out at least one inning.

10.  **Pitchers:**  A pitcher may pitch a maximum of 2 innings in the first 4-innings of a game, 3 innings in a 5-inning game, and 4 innings in a 6-inning game.  One pitch is considered an inning.  A pitcher cannot re-enter the game to pitch in an inning in which she as already pitched.  Note:  During interleague play, pitchers are not restricted to a maximum number of innings pitched per game in accordance with USA Softball rules.

11.  **Bunting:**  Yes.

12.  **Stealing:**  Yes.

13. **Sliding:**  Yes.  A base runner must slide or avoid contact with a fielder during a play made at any base especially home plate. "A base runner must slide or avoid contact with a fielder with or without the ball especially at home plate.  If the base runner fails to do so, the base runner is out.  However, a fielder without possession of the ball may not block a base or home plate.  If a fielder without possession of the ball blocks a base or home plate and the runner follows the slide or avoid rule, the runner is awarded that base or home plate."

14.  **Courtesy Runner:**An injured player may have a courtesy runner.  Last player out serves as the courtesy runner.

15. **Look Back Rule:** The umpire will give a warning the first time it occurs in the game. The umpire will call a girl out if it happens again.

**RULES CLARIFICATIONS**

15.  **Infield Fly Rule:** An infield fly is a fair fly ball (not including a line drive or an attempted bunt) which can be caught by an infielder, pitcher or catcher with ordinary effort when first and second or first, second and third bases are occupied with less than two outs. The pitcher, catcher or any outfielder who position themselves in the infield area on the play shall be considered infielders for the purpose of this rule. The general rule of thumb to use in determining “ordinary effort” is: "Can the catch be made by a fielder without turning his/her back to the infield?" If the infield fly rule is called by an umpire and the ball is caught while fair or if the ball falls & settles in fair territory - - the batter is out, the ball is live. Runners may advance at the risk of the being caught or may tag-up and advance after the ball is touched, the same as on any fly ball. If the hit becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul ball.

16.  **Dropped 3rd Strike:** *(from USA Softball Participant Manual: Official Rules of Softball 2018)*

The batter becomes a batter-runner when the catcher fails to catch the third strike before the ball touches the ground and there are:

1. Fewer than 2 outs and first base is not occupied at the time of the pitch, or
2. Any time there are two outs.

*A note from LCYO: with 2 outs and bases loaded, if the batter runs to first on a dropped third strike, the catcher has to just tag home plate to make the third out since the other runners have been forced off their bags. Teach catchers to tag all batters on the third strike no matter what.*

17.  **Look Back Rule** *(from the USA Softball Participant Manual: Official Rules of Softball 2018)*

The “Look Back” Rule shall be in effect for all runners when:

1. The ball is live.
2. The batter-runner has reached first base or has been declared out.
3. The pitcher has possession and control of the ball within the pitcher’s circle. The pitcher is considered to be in the pitcher’s circle when both feet are on or within the lines
   1. When a runner is legitimately off a base after a pitch or as a result of a batter completing a turn at bat, and while the pitcher has control of the ball within the eight foot radius of the pitcher’s plate, the runner may stop once then must immediately return to the base or attempt to advance to the next base.
   2. Once the runner stops at a base for any reason the runner will be declared out if leaving the base.
   3. Responsibilities of the batter-runner after reaching first base and while the pitcher has control of the ball within the eight foot radius of the pitcher’s plate, including a bse on balls or a dropped third strike, are as follows:
      1. A batter-runner who rounds first base toward second base may stop once, ut then must immediately non-stop return to first base or attempt to advance non-stop to second base
      2. A batter-runner who over-runs first base toward right field, turns left and immediately stops, must then return non-stop to first base or attempt to advance non-stop to second base.
      3. A batter-runner who over-runs first base toward right field, turns left and moves directly towards second base and stops, is committed to second base and must attempt to advance non-stop to second base.
      4. A batter-runner who over-runs first base toward right field, turns left and moves back toward the infield in any direction except directly toward second base, is committed to first base and ust return non-stop to first base.
      5. A batter-runner who over-runs first base toward right field, and turns right, is committed to first base and must return non-stop to first base.

**EFFECT**

1. The ball is dead.
2. The runner is out.
3. When more than one runner is off base, only one runner is called out.
4. All other runners are returned to the last base touched

**Exception: The runner will not be declared out if:**

1. A play is made on any runner. A fake throw is considered a play.
2. The pitcher no longer has possession of the ball within the eight foot radius, or
3. The pitcher releases the ball on a pitch to the batter.

When a runner is legitimately off base after a pitch, or as a result of a batter completing their turn at bat, and is stationary when the pitcher has the ball in the circle, the runner MUST immediately attempt to advance to the next base or immediately return to the base left. The responsibility is entirely on the runner. There is no obligation on the pitcher to look, fake or throw.

1. The Look Back rule does not go into effect for any runner until the batter-runner touches first base or is called out, and the pitcher has control of the ball within the eight foot radius circle.
2. Failure to immediately proceed to the next base or return to their original base after the pitcher has the ball within the circle results in the runner being called out.
3. Once the runner returns or stops at any base for any reason, the runner is out if they leave that base.
   1. EXCEPTION B-C: A runner will not be declared out when:
      1. A play is made on another runner, or
      2. The pitcher leaves the circle or drops the ball, or
      3. The pitcher releases the ball to the batter, or
      4. The pitcher places the ball under their arm or between their legs to free both hands to fix their uniform, hair, etc. The ball is not controlled unless it is held in the glove or hand. Once the pitcher controls the ball gain in the glove or hand, the Look Back rule is again in effect.
4. If multiple runners are off base and more than one umpire calls a runner out, the umpires must determine which runner was called out first and return the other runner(s) to the base they left. When a runner is declared out in this situation, the ball is dead. It is impossible to call two outs on the Look Back rule.
5. A pitcher fielding a ball in the circle is an infielder and runners can leave their base. If runners leave their base the same rule applies while the pitchers hold the ball in the circle: once the runner stops, they must decide which way to continue or be called out.
6. A base on balls or a dropped third strike is treated as a batted ball if the batter runner continues past first base without stopping or stops only once and then immediately moves one way or the other. However, if the runner stops at first base and then steps off the base after the pitcher has the ball in the circle, the runner is out.
7. Batter-runners overrunning first base can not start back to the base and before reaching first, advance to second base. If a batter-runner commits to first base, moving toward first base, the runner must return to that base. The batter-runner may not change their mind and advance to second base once they have started moving directly to first base following the overrun. If they do so, the runner is out. Umpire’s judgment determines what is committing toward a base.
8. If a runner is moving toward a base other than first base, when the pitcher receives the ball in the circle, that runner may stop once then immediately advance to the next base or return to the previous base. A runner failing to advance to the base or return to the previous base should be called out. Making an attempt or fake justifies the runner being called out. If, after the pitcher has the ball in the circle, the runner starts back to their original base or forward to another base and then stops or reverses direction the runner is out unless the pitcher makes a play on them or another runner. When a play is made on any runner, other runners may also stop or reverse their direction.
9. A runner is out when standing off the base and they do not immediately attempt to advance or return after the pitcher has the ball in the circle.
10. While in the circle and in possession of the ball, any act by the pitcher that, in the umpire’s judgement, causes the runner to react is considered making a play.
11. The pitcher must have control of the ball while in the circle. Placing the ball on the ground, holding the ball between their legs or under their arm is not considered having control of the ball.
12. Being in the eight foot circle is defined as both feet within or partially within the lines. The pitcher is not considered in the circle if either foot is completely outside the lines.

18. **Over-Running First Base** *(from the USA Softball Participant Manual: Official Rules of Softball 2018)* After over-running first base, the batter-runner may legally turn to their left or right when returning to the base. If any attempt is made to advance to second base, regardless of whether the runner is in fair or foul territory, they are liable for an appeal out if tagged with the ball by a defensive player while off the base.

When using the double-base, the batter-runner may use the white portion any time a play is not being made at first base. If a play is made at first base, but the ball is overthrown or the fielder is pulled off the base by an errant or missed throw, the batter runner is now allowed to use the white portion of the base. Should the batter-runner overrun first base and return to either portion of the base before an appeal, an appeal is not allowed.

19. **Rules for the double base at first** *(from the USA Softball Participant Manual: Official Rules of Softball 2018):* The double base shall be used at first base in all divisions of play. The following rules should be enforced:

1. A batted ball hitting or bounding over the white portion is fair.
2. A batted ball hitting or bounding over the contrasting color portion is foul.
3. When a play is being made on the batter-runner, the defense must use the white portion and the batter-runner the contrasting color portion of the base.

**Effect:**  The batter-runner is out when there is a play being made at first base and the batter-runner touches only the white portion, providing the defense appeals prior to the batter-runner returning to first base. Once the runner returns to the white or contrasting color portion of the base, an appeal shall not be honored.

1. On any force-out attempt from the foul side of first base the defense and the batter-runner may use either the white or contrasting color portion of the base.
2. On an errant throw pulling the defense off the white portion of the base into foul ground, the defense and the batter-runner can use either the white or contrasting color portion.
3. Once the batter-runner reaches first base, they may start on either the white or contrasting color portion of the entire base.
4. When tagging up on a fly ball, the white or contrasting color portion of the base may be used. On appeal for the runner leaving the base too soon, the defense may use the white or contrasting color of the base.
5. On a pick off play the runner may return to the white or contrasting color portion of the base.
6. On plays at 1B when the batter-runner touches only the white portion and collides with the fielder about to catch a thrown ball while on the white portion of the base.

**Effect:**

* 1. The ball is dead.
  2. The batter-runner is out.
  3. Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.