

ISA Best Practices-2026

- If an organization has more than one team at the same age level, teams should be balanced as evenly as possible. The goal is to avoid creating designated “A” and “B” teams.
 - Any agreements between coaches regarding game rules must be communicated to the umpire prior to the start of the game. For example, if both coaches agree not to implement the continuous walk rule during a regular-season exhibition game, the umpire must be informed.
 - Games should be played regardless of the number of available players. The primary purpose of the league is to provide players with game experience. Whenever possible, coaches should make every effort to play scheduled games, even if one team is short players.
 - If a team takes a lead of more than 10 runs, the leading team should stop stealing bases and implement an artificial per-inning run cap (for example, no more than five runs per inning, or another agreed-upon limit). The intent is to prevent running up the score in lopsided games.
 - Good sportsmanship must be promoted and modeled by all coaches. Coaches are expected to lead by example and hold players accountable for displaying positive sportsmanship at all times.
 - Coaches should use positive and respectful language when speaking to their players about the opposing team. Negative or demeaning comments about opposing players should be avoided. For example, instructing a batter to “only swing at strikes” is appropriate, while saying “don’t swing at that junk” could be perceived as disrespectful toward the pitcher.
 - All umpires must be treated with professionalism and respect at all times. Any concerns regarding an umpire’s actions or conduct should be addressed through the appropriate league channels.
 - Cheering is encouraged, and players should support their teammates. However, cheering should not occur while a pitcher is in her windup if the intent is to distract the pitcher.
 - The intent of the ISA league is to foster a community of organizations that trust one another and act in the best interest of the players. Each team and organization is expected to self-police and follow league rules. This is especially important regarding the travel/tournament pitching rule. While the ISA will make every effort to monitor travel and tournament players, verification is limited primarily to the USSSA website. Teams are expected to self-identify any players who also play on travel or tournament teams and ensure those players do not pitch at the 8U, 10U, 12U, or 14U levels. This is a small softball community, and attempts to circumvent this rule are likely to be discovered, resulting in disqualification from pitching.
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