These are some rules that are unique to Special Olympics softball. **2023**

1. We use a second first base for the runner. This will be orange and is attached to the normal first base.
2. The game consists of 7 innings or one hour whichever comes first.
3. **Do not start an inning after 50 minutes. But if the inning has started, finish the inning even if it goes over 1 hour. Both away and home teams bat if necessary.**
4. Here is the mercy rule: 15 run lead after 4 full innings, 12 run lead after 5 full innings.
5. There is a 10 batter rule per inning. So you play 3 outs or 10 batters an inning, whichever comes first. The inning will end when the 10th batter stops forward progress or the ball goes to any base in front of the 10th batter.
6. If you are umpiring a **Unified** game, the pitcher and catcher must be split athlete/partner. It doesn’t matter which is which.
7. Athlete and partner must alternate in the batting order.
8. **If a Unified Partner is walked in a Unified game, he is awarded 1 base, just like an athlete now.**
9. **Shorthanded rule: If a team is short a Unified Partner. They must take an out in that spot in the batting order every time.**
10. There must 2 partners in the outfield, and 2 partners in the infield.
11. Partners or athletes must not dominate play.
12. The distance between the pitchers rubber and home plate must be between 40-55 feet. **However if you are playing Unified, the distance is set to 50 feet**
13. A second home plate will be used. This will be placed 8 feet to the right of the regular home plate. This is the plate the runner will run to. All plays at home plate are a force out. The catcher must touch the regular home plate, while the runner must run for the second home plate. If the catcher “tags” out the runner instead of touching home plate the runner is considered “safe”. That is not an out. Also if the runner runs for the regular home plate and not the second plate and touches it, he is considered “out.” The ball is still live at this time.
14. There will be a line down the third base line called the commitment line. This is located 20 feet from home plate. Once a runner has passed this line he has to go home. He can not pass this line and then turn around and go back to third base.
15. Teams will provide their own ball for the game.
16. Pitching height will be between 6 feet and 10 feet.
17. **We will start with a 0-0 count. There will be no curtesy foul. So if they foul off the ball with 2 strikes, they are out.**