

**GIRLS SOFTBALL LEAGUE OF WESTFIELD
AMERICAN LEAGUE BLUE DIVISION RULES**
(Revised March 2011)

Play will be governed by the Fast Pitch rules of the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) except as modified herein.

I. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MANAGERS / COACHES

A. **FOLLOW THE RULES:** Managers and coaches must learn the rules of the American League Blue Division and follow them. If an umpire is unaware of, or is not following, an ASA rule modification that we use in the AL Blue, it is the responsibility of both managers to get together and talk to the umpire. Depending on the circumstances, failure to do so may result in the game having to be replayed in whole or in part. It is best to **keep a copy of these rules with you at all games.**

B. **SETTING UP THE FIELD:** The home team is responsible for setting up the field, and completing the set-up at least 15 minutes prior to game time. ("Setting up" means positioning the bases and the pitching line at the proper distances.) The home team provides a new "game ball" for the game.

C. **START THE GAME ON TIME:** The times listed on the schedule for each game are the times during which the game is to be played. The first time is the time at which the game is to start, and the second time is the time at which the game must end. Thus, a 6:00 game time means that the first pitch should be thrown at 6:00; it does not mean that your team should arrive at 6:00. Umpires have been instructed to start the games on time and to follow strictly the AL Blue time rules concerning forfeiture, which can be declared 10 minutes after game time. You should be able to have access to the field thirty (30) minutes before game time during the week. Therefore, if your game time is 6:00, you should have access to the field at 5:30. The visiting team has the right to use the infield for the last fifteen minutes prior to game time.

D. **REPORT GAME RESULTS:** The winning team must report the results of the game to the League Director within 24 hours after the game. If you do not adhere to this rule, the game will be recorded as a tie.

E. **FOLLOW THE RULES FOR POSTPONING AND RESCHEDULING GAMES** in section VIII A & B.

F. ENSURE THAT GAMES AND PRACTICES ARE CONDUCTED SAFELY:

1. No jewelry may be worn during games.
2. No one is permitted behind the backstop at any time during the game.
3. Follow the Town of Westfield's rules concerning lightning that have been distributed to you and are located on the GSLW website. If the lightning detector alarm sounds, get off the field immediately, take shelter, and do not return until the "all-clear" signal sounds. Even if the alarm does not sound, please make the same precautions at the first sign of lightning.
4. Do not play or practice on a wet or muddy field.

5. Absolutely no practice swinging of bats is allowed as we have no caged areas for this.

G. **SPORTSMANSHIP:** It is the manager's responsibility to ensure that coaches, fans, and players act in a fair and sportsmanlike manner. Verbal abuse and heckling of players, managers, umpires, or fans will not be tolerated. Coaches may reasonably question an umpire's ruling, however yelling or continued arguing is unacceptable.

H. **MAINTAIN EQUIPMENT:** A manager must pick-up and return equipment when requested to do so by the League Director. He or she must also maintain this equipment, keep it in good condition and return all of it at season's end.

I. **REMEDIES FOR NONCOMPLIANCE:** If a manager/ coach fails to live up to his or her responsibilities or fails to follow the rules of the League, the League reserves the right to remove the manager/ coach from that position.

II. PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

ROSTER REQUIREMENTS:

1. A minimum of 6 players per team is required to play a game. A forfeit shall be declared 10 minutes after the scheduled start of the game if one team has an insufficient number of players. If both teams have less than 6 players, a double loss results, which must be reported to the League Director. In the case of a forfeit, coaches are encouraged to play a scrimmage as the umpire will already be there and we want the girls to have as much playing time as possible.
2. On the other hand, if a team has six players, they must play the game. Rescheduling for having fewer than 9-10 players will not be accepted. **No special rules will apply if a team has only 6 players.** Coaches should position players in a way that outfield hits can be fielded.

A. **OFFENSE:** All players shall bat in the lineup regardless of whether they are in the game defensively. Managers must exchange the batting order prior to the game, and the batting order may not be changed once the game begins. Girls arriving after the game begins must be placed at the bottom of the batting order, however, they may bat upon arrival rather than having to play defensively first. . If the defensive team believes a batter has batted out of order, the following occurs:

- if the incorrect batter is still up, correct batter steps to plate and assumes the count at that point
- if the incorrect batter has completed the at bat, and the next batter has not been pitched to yet, the correct batter is out
- if the incorrect batter has completed the at bat and the pitcher has thrown one pitch to the next batter, no penalty can be given

B. DEFENSE

1. Only 10 girls are allowed in the field at one time.

2. Unlimited defensive substitutions, however, are permitted. For example, a girl who has been replaced defensively may return later in the game.
3. Absent extenuating circumstances such as an injury, each girl must play at least 3 innings in the field during a full 7 inning game. If it appears that the game will end prior to 7 innings, the manager should attempt to ensure that each girl plays a reasonable amount of time in the field.
4. No more than 6 defensive players, including the pitcher and catcher, may be positioned in the infield at the start of each play. Outfielders or short fielders must be at least 15 feet behind the base paths at the start of each play. After the play begins, however, there is no restriction on where a player may go or what plays a player can make. Thus, for example, the right fielder can cover first base and take a throw there.
5. Only players who have been properly registered with the League and assigned to a particular team can play for that team in a game. A team playing with a non-roster player will forfeit the game.

III. GAMES

A. Subject to any exceptions stated below, games will be 7 innings long.

B. A half-inning ends when 3 outs are made, regardless of how many players have come to bat.

C. There is a 10 run "mercy rule" in effect from the fifth inning on. Thus, if the visiting team is leading by 10 or more runs after the bottom half of the fifth or sixth innings, the game is over, and the visiting team wins. If the home team is leading by 10 or more runs after the top half of the fifth or sixth innings, or if it takes a 10 run lead while it is batting in the bottom of the fifth or sixth, the game is over, and the home team wins.

D. The purpose of this "mercy rule" is to avoid lopsided games. If a game ends as a result of the "mercy rule" and if time and conditions permit, however, the remainder of the game can be played as a scrimmage.

E. There is a 2 hour limit on all games (calculated from the first pitch), however can not be later than 10 minutes after the scheduled game time. If for some reason the game starts later than 10 minutes after the scheduled game time, the time limit is nevertheless 10 minutes after the scheduled ending time for the game. No new inning should begin less than 15 minutes before the time limit. An inning already begun, however, should be played to conclusion. Thus it is possible for a game to extend beyond 2 hours as the inning must be completed.

F. In case of rain, darkness, or time limit, 4 innings (3 1/2 innings if the home team is winning) will constitute a complete game.

G. If a game is suspended before it is a complete game, the game should be resumed at a later date from the point of interruption. In other words, pick up exactly where you left off. Thus, for example, if a pitcher pitched 4 innings prior to the time that the game was suspended, she cannot pitch anymore when the game continues. Similarly, if a new player is available for the continuation of the game, she should be treated as if she had come to the game late -- she can pitch, she can play defense, and she must be placed at the end of the batting order.

IV. PLAYING FIELD

- A. The base paths are 60 feet long. The distance between home plate and first and third bases should be measured from the back point of home plate to the outfield side of the bases.
- B. The pitching rubber/line should be approximately 6" x24".
- C. The pitching distance is 37.5 feet from the back point of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber/line.
- D. The pitching area is a 16 foot diameter circle around the pitching rubber.

V. PITCHING RULES

A. The pitcher must start her delivery with 2 feet on the pitching rubber/line. The pitch must be delivered using a one step delivery with both feet remaining within the 24" width of the pitching rubber/line. A second, follow-through step is permitted, but only after the pitcher has released the ball. As part of the wind-up, the pitcher may rock back on the non-pivot foot, but both the pivot foot and the non-pivot foot must stay in contact with the pitching rubber/line during the motion.

B. A pitcher may pitch a maximum of **4 innings per game**, regardless of whether the game goes into extra innings, subject to the following restrictions:

--a pitcher may not pitch more than two consecutive innings. Thus, if a pitcher pitches the first two innings, she may not pitch the third inning. She may return to pitch later.

--if a pitcher is removed during the course of an inning, she may not return to pitch during that inning.

--for purposes of this rule, a pitcher is deemed to have pitched an inning if she throws a pitch in that inning, even if it is only one pitch.

--a partially pitched inning will be deemed to be an inning pitched for purposes of the consecutive innings rule.

C. Five warm-up pitches are allowed between innings.

VI. DEAD BALL RULES

A. The ball is declared dead when, in the judgment of the umpire, the ball is in the possession and control of the pitcher in the pitcher's circle. If the runner is more than half way to the next base, the umpire should award that base to the runner. If the runner is less than half way, the umpire should send the runner back. Please remember that, in these situations, the pitcher always has the option of attempting to throw the base runner out. If she does, however, the play is alive and this dead ball rule does not apply.

B. The ball is dead when it goes into a dead ball area that has been designated as such by the umpire before the game. The base runners are awarded the bases to which they were running.

C. The ball is dead when there is interference by the spectators, non-playing team members, or coaches. The umpire will award bases as deemed appropriate.

VII. BASE RUNNING, STEALING, AND RELATED RULES

1. Stealing is only permitted from second to third base and a runner may not go home on an overthrow.
2. A runner may not leave any base until the pitcher releases the ball. If she leaves early, the umpire should call her out.
3. Sliding is permitted, but not required, except when there is a play being made at home plate. Failure to slide under those circumstances may result in the runner being called out by the umpire.
4. Tagging up is not permitted.
5. The infield fly rule is not in effect.
6. Bunting is permitted. However, players are not permitted to fake a bunt and then swing away. If a player fakes a bunt and then swings away, she will be called out by the umpire.
7. Intentional walks are prohibited.
8. The Dropped Third Strike Rule is not in effect.
9. The strike zone is between the shoulders and knees as the ball crosses home plate. **A ball is called when the pitch hits the plate.**
10. Courtesy Runner: A pinch runner(or courtesy runner) can run for a runner who will be the catcher in the next inning for the team at bat. In such a situation, the catcher/runner must call time-out, come off the base, and immediately put her catcher's gear on. She also must in fact catch during the next half-inning. Any deviation from this rule can result in the runner being called out.
11. Hit by Pitch: first base is only awarded if the batter makes a reasonable attempt to get out of the way of the wild pitch. A pitch which hits the ground then hits the batter is not a dead ball and can be a hit by pitch as long as the batter tried to move away. Finally, if a pitch hits a batter as she swings, or if a batter moves a body part into the strike zone and gets hit, this is not a hit by pitch and no base is awarded.

VIII. POSTPONING AND RESCHEDULING GAMES

A. POSTPONING GAMES

Scheduled games may be postponed in the following circumstances:

1. The League may postpone games for any reason. If the League postpones a game, the League Director will contact the home team manager and the Umpire Coordinator. It is the responsibility of the home team manager to contact the manager of the visiting team.
2. Two managers can postpone a game **prior to game day** only if
 - a. at least one of the teams will potentially not have enough players (i.e. six) to play the game
 - b. both managers are in agreement to postpone the game

- c. both managers establish a mutually acceptable time and date for the make-up game
- d. they obtain the permission of the League Director to postpone and reschedule the game.

This must all be accomplished **no later than 3 days prior to the scheduled game time**. The home team manager must also communicate this agreement to postpone the game to the League Director, who will communicate the change to the Umpire Coordinator.

3. If both managers are in agreement and they obtain the permission of the League Director, they can postpone a game due to inclement weather or unplayable field conditions. In making this decision, please use good judgment. Moreover, as some fields have better drainage than others, the decision to postpone **should be made at the field** in order to make an informed decision. If the managers disagree on this point and the League Director cannot be reached, the umpire should be asked to make the final decision.

If the weather is bad enough to warrant a decision to postpone sufficiently prior to the scheduled game time, the home team manager should call the League Director so that he can attempt to cancel the umpire. (If the umpiring assignment is not canceled, the League must pay the Umpire if the Umpire comes to the field to work a scheduled game, even if the game is not played. Thus, if you have the time, please make this call.)

4. The League reserves the right to nullify an agreement or decision to postpone a game and to direct that the game be played as scheduled if permission is not obtained from the League Director.

B. RESCHEDULING GAMES

1. If a game is postponed, the two managers must reschedule the game within 1 week of the day the game was originally scheduled. This does not mean that the game must be played during that week; it means only that **a new date and time for the game must be set during that week**. Failure to reschedule in a timely manner will result in a tie being recorded.

2. When rescheduling a game, the managers must follow the procedures outlined below, and unless the managers agree otherwise, the home team manager is responsible for taking these steps.

- a. After both managers have agreed on a date and time, tentatively book a field for the game with the League Director.

- b. The League Director will contact the Umpire Coordinator to determine if an umpire can be booked for that day and time. If the Umpire Coordinator indicates that an umpire cannot be booked for that game, try to work out another possible day and time with the other manager and the League Director.

3. The League reserves the right to reschedule games on its own.

IX. UMPIRES

A. The League will, through its Umpire Coordinator, *attempt to* assign ASA umpires to call all games played in the American League.

B. Prior to the game, the managers should meet with the umpire to discuss this divisions' rules, ground rules, and designate dead ball areas. Also, a copy of the Blue vs White Division rules comparison should be given to the umpire.

C. The umpire has control of the game once it begins. For example, the umpire may order unruly or disruptive managers, coaches, players, or spectators from the field, or in extreme cases, may declare a forfeit.

D. Disputes over an umpire's judgment calls (such as balls and strikes) are not allowed.

X. COMPLETING THE SEASON

A. Playoff games will be scheduled based on field availability.

B. The structure of playoffs is at the discretion of the League Director.

REVISED March 2011