

# GIRLS SOFTBALL LEAGUE OF WESTFIELD NATIONAL LEAGUE RULES

(Revised Spring 2011)

## I. GENERAL

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

## II. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MANAGERS / COACHES

1. FOLLOW THE RULES: Managers and coaches must learn the rules of the National League and follow them. If an umpire is unaware of, or is not following, an ASA rule modification that we use in the NL, 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.

2. 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.

3. START 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 strictly follow the NL time rules concerning forfeiture, which can be declared 10 minutes after game time. You will have access to the field thirty minutes before game time. The visiting team has the right to use the infield for the last fifteen minutes prior to game time.

4. 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.

### 5. FOLLOW THE RULES FOR POSTPONING AND RESCHEDULING GAMES

See section IX for details.

### 6. ENSURE THAT GAMES AND PRACTICES ARE CONDUCTED SAFELY --

- a. No jewelry may be worn during games.
- b. No one is permitted behind the backstop at any time during the game.
- c. No practice swinging is permitted at any time as we do not have designated on deck circles.
- d. Follow the Town of Westfield's rules concerning lightning: if the lightning detector alarm sounds, get off the field(s) immediately, take shelter, and do not return until the "all clear" signal sounds. Even if the alarm sounds, please follow these same procedures for any sighting of lightning.
- e. Do not play or practice on a wet or muddy field.

7. 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.

8. 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, keeping it in good condition and return *everything*/he was issued at the end of the season.

9. REMEDIES FOR NONCOMPLIANCE: If a manager or 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 or coach from that position.

### III. PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

1. Six players constitutes a team. A minimum of 6 players per team is required to play a game; and if a team has 6 players, they must play the game; they may not reschedule. A forfeit shall be declared 10 minutes after the scheduled start of the game only 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, teams may play the game as a scrimmage to give the girls instruction and game experience.
2. No special rules will apply if a team has only 6 players. Coaches should position players in such a way that outfield hits can be fielded.
3. **BATTING**: 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 and may bat upon arrival rather than having to playing defensively first.

#### 4. DEFENSE

- a. 10 girls are allowed in the field at one time.
- b. Unlimited defensive substitutions, are permitted. Thus, a girl who has been replaced defensively may return later in the game.
- c. **Each girl must play at least 3 innings in the field** during a full 6 inning game. If it appears that the game will end prior to 6 innings, the manager should attempt to ensure that each girl plays a reasonable amount of time in the field. Additionally, every player should play at least one inning in the infield and **MUST play at least one inning in the outfield**.
- d. 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, generally this is at the edge of the grass. 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.
- e. 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.

### IV. GAMES

1. Subject to any exceptions stated below, games will be 6 innings long.
2. A half-inning ends when 3 outs are made **or** when all batters have completed one at-bat.
3. There is a 10 run "mercy rule" in effect from the end of fourth inning on. Thus, if the visiting team is leading by **10 or more runs** after the bottom half of the fourth or fifth inning, 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 fourth or fifth inning, or if it

takes a 10 run lead while it is batting in the bottom of the fourth or fifth, the game is over, and the home team wins.

4. 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.

5. There is a 2 hour limit on all games (calculated from the actual beginning of the game). This limit will be no 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 end time limit.** An inning already begun, however, should be played to conclusion, which means a game could extend beyond the ending time on the schedule.

6. In case of rain, darkness, or time limit, 4 innings (3 ½ innings if the home team is winning) will constitute a complete game.

7. 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 where you left off. Thus, for example, if a pitcher pitched 3 innings prior to the time that the game was suspended, she cannot pitch any more 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.

## V. PLAYING FIELD

1. 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.

2. The pitching rubber should be approximately 6"x24".

3. The pitching distance is **35 feet** from the **back point of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber/line**.

4. The pitching area is a 16 foot circle around the pitching rubber.

## VI. PITCHING RULES

1. 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.

2. A pitcher may pitch a **maximum of 3 innings per game**, regardless of whether the game goes into extra innings, subject to the following restrictions:

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

- c) A pitcher is deemed to have pitched an inning if she throws even one pitch in that inning.
- d) A partially pitched inning will be deemed to be an inning pitched for purposes of the consecutive innings rule.

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

## VII. DEAD BALL RULES

1. 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.

2. 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 one base to which they were running.

3. 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.

5.

## VIII. BASE RUNNING, STEALING, AND RELATED RULES

1. **No stealing** or advancing to another base on a wild pitch or passed ball.

2. **No leading**--A runner may not leave any base **until the ball crosses home plate**. If she leaves early, the umpire can call her out.

3. **Sliding is permitted**, but not required except when necessary to avoid a collision with a defensive player at home plate. Failure to slide into home plate when a play is being made there should result in the runner being called out by the umpire.

4. **No tagging up.**

5. **No infield fly rule.**

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.

7. **No intentional walks.**

8. **No dropped third strike rule.**

9. The strike zone is between the shoulders and the knees as the pitch crosses home plate. **A ball is called when the pitch hits the plate.**

10. Courtesy Runner: When there are 2 outs, 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 girl 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 & gets hits, this is not a hit by pitch and no base is awarded.

## **IX. POSTPONING AND RESCHEDULING GAMES**

### **A. POSTPONING GAMES**

1. The League may postpone games for any reason. If the League postpones a game, the League Director will contact the managers and the Umpire Coordinator.

2. If both managers are in agreement, they can postpone a game if they reach this agreement **no later than 3 days prior to the scheduled game time**. The home team manager must communicate this agreement to postpone the game to the League Director who will notify the Umpire Coordinator at the time of the agreement.

3. The League Field Manager will post on the website any times the fields are unplayable due to weather conditions. However, if both managers are already at the field and both agree that the game should be postponed due to inclement weather or unplayable field conditions, using their good judgment because 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, the umpire should be asked to make the decision.

Generally, postponement decisions must be made as soon as possible, informing both the League Director and Umpire Coordinator because when the umpiring assignment is not canceled with sufficient notice, 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.

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.

### **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.

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, contact the League Director and/or Field Scheduler to secure a field assignment.

b. Call 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 Field Scheduler.

c. After the field and the umpire have been booked, confirm with the League Director the date,

time, and field for the rescheduled game.

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

## **X. UMPIRES**

1. The League will, through its Umpire Coordinator, attempt to assign ASA umpires to call games played in the National League, however, teenaged/ young adult cadet umpires will also be used and should be treated with the same respect as adult umpires.

2. Prior to the game, the managers should meet with the umpire to discuss the rules (especially the National League's modification of ASA rules), discuss ground rules, and designate dead ball areas. Toward that end, managers should carry these rules with them to all games and The home team manager should give the umpire a copy of the GSLW Rules Comparison sheet as soon as the umpire arrives at the field, even if the umpire indicates that he or she has worked National League games before.

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

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

## **XI. COMPLETING THE SEASON**

1. Playoff games will be scheduled based on field availability.
2. The structure of the playoff is solely at the discretion of the League Director, ie: only top half of teams vs bracketing all teams; determination of third place team via consolation vs standings etc.
3. Trophies will be awarded to the top three teams.