

## **2021 WNSL/GHGSL Spring Softball Rules**

**With the exception of the below-listed rules, all other regulations are in effect according to the American Softball Association (ASA) Official Rule Book.**

### **Rules - Coach Pitch Division (K – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade)**

- 1) Scores and League standings will be kept but no tournament or playoff games will be played.
- 2) Two defensive coaches are permitted on the field for instructional purposes.
- 3) Base paths will be 50 feet in length. The pitching plate will be located at 32½ feet. However, coaches may pitch from closer distances.
- 4) Managers and/or coaches may be used as umpires in the event the regulation umpire is not present. An equal number from each team shall be used.
- 5) All players on the roster and in attendance will bat in consecutive order. With the coach pitching, each batter shall be allowed three (3) swings to hit a fair ball. On the third swing, if the ball is considered foul, another swing is allowed. No bunting is allowed. After three swings, the batter is permitted to swing until the ball is hit off of the tee.
- 6) A batted ball must travel a minimum of ten (10) feet from home plate to be considered fair.
- 7) Base runners must stay on base until the ball is hit. The player fielding the position of pitcher must stand within four (4) feet — in any direction — of the pitching plate or rubber while the coach is pitching.
- 8) All hits that stay in the infield are limited to a single (Runners will not advance on overthrows to first base.)
- 9) Runners may advance one base on overthrows to any other base and home plate. (This will also apply to overthrows to the pitcher when they are trying to “kill” the play as described below.)
- 10) If a defensive player within the circle around the pitcher’s mound is in possession of the ball and holds it above her head, all base runners in between

bases must either 1) proceed immediately to the next base, if they are over halfway to that base, or 2) return immediately to the previous base, if they are not over halfway to the next base. Failure to do so will result in the base runner being declared out.

11) The offensive side is retired when three (3) outs are made or when 5 runs have scored. It is the responsibility of the coaches to notify the umpire when the 5 run limit has been reached.

12) All players on the roster must be assigned a defensive position. **Defensive teams are limited to six (6) infield players - pitcher, catcher, first, second, third base and a shortstop.** Infielders must be behind the pitcher's mound. Only one pitcher may be used. All outfield players must be positioned minimally 20 feet beyond the baselines.

13) A complete game will consist of six (6) innings. A game will also be complete after sixty (60) minutes of playing time has expired regardless of the number of innings played. Because our fields do not have lights, it is necessary that all evening games should begin and end on time. If there is a second game scheduled, the umpire should end the 1st game promptly at the end of 60 minutes, even in the middle of a batting order, and the score reverts back to the end of the previous inning. The umpire will determine when the game is over. If tied, the first game will end subject to the above time limit and will be recorded as a tie in the standings. The second game, if tied, will continue until completed or until the umpire calls the game due to darkness. For any game, if the inning begins but is not able to be completed, the score at the end of the last full inning will be the official result, even if tied.

14) The infield fly rule does not apply.

15) No protests or forfeits will be allowed.

16) The player playing the catcher position must wear a catcher's mask. All other players in the field, especially the pitcher, are permitted and encouraged to wear a protective face mask,

17) All players, when not on the field of play, must remain in the dugout, behind the fence, and not in the door opening. Coaches are responsible for this safety strategy and umpires will enforce by stopping the game, if necessary. The on-deck batter must position themselves to the back side of the batter.

## **Rules –Minor League (3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade)**

1. A forfeit will be called if one team has less than eight (8) players. Coach Pitch league players may be added to prevent a team from having to forfeit. If both teams have less than eight ( 8 ) players, the game will be replayed at a later date. The time at which a forfeit will be called is 5 minutes after a first game is scheduled to begin and at the time a second game is scheduled to begin.
2. A complete game will consist of six (6) innings, unless tied. A game will also be complete after one (1) hour and ten (10) minutes of playing time has expired regardless of the number of innings played. Because our fields do not have lights, it is necessary that all evening games should begin and end on time. If there is a second game scheduled, the umpire should end the 1st game promptly at the end of 70 minutes, even in the middle of a batting order, and the score reverts back to the end of the previous inning. The umpire will determine when the game is over. If tied, the first game will end subject to the above time limit and will be recorded as a tie in the standings. The second game, if tied, will continue until completed or until the umpire calls the game due to darkness. For any game, if the inning begins but is not able to be completed, the score at the end of the last full inning will be the official result, even if tied. For tournament play only, the American Softball Association (ASA) tie breaker rule will be in effect if a game is tied after six (6) innings or by the time limit.
3. The home team occupies the third base dugout and will be responsible for placement of the bases. The base paths will be fifty-five (55) feet.
4. It is the Board's desire that good sportsmanship be emphasized. No taunting of batters or harassment of pitchers is allowed. Judgment calls by the umpires cannot be questioned. Any discussion of rules should be between the Home Plate Umpire and the Head Coach/Manager only. This discussion should be brief.
5. No more than ten (10) players may play in the field at the same time. However, all players should play in the field in one of the firsts two innings and no player should sit out more than one inning per game. A player arriving late to a game may not play if the third inning has begun. (The third inning is begun when the home team makes the final out in the bottom of second inning.) Eligible late players are added to the bottom of the batting order.
6. Protective face masks are permitted and, in fact, encouraged to be worn by all infield players especially the pitcher.
7. All outfield players must be positioned minimally 20 feet beyond the baselines.

8. There will be no infield fly rule. There will be no bunting or stealing. A swing judged to be a bunt will be called a strike. Base runners cannot leave the base until the batter hits the ball. Sliding is permitted.

9. Base coaches may be coaches or players. If they are players, they must wear a protective helmet. Base coaches must stay in the base coaches' box and should not touch or aid a base runner.

10. Each team will provide a player pitcher throughout the game. *It should be noted that all players on each team bat, whether they are in the starting lineup or not.*

11. The pitcher cannot walk more than two batters per inning. After the second walk, when the pitcher gets four balls on the batter, the batting team's coach will come in and pitch a maximum of three (3) pitches. Foul balls count as a pitch but there is no limit on the number of foul balls after the second pitch. After three (3) pitches, assuming no foul balls on the third strike, the batter is called out.

12. Any player may pitch. All pitchers will pitch from 35 feet. The pitching distance is measured from the front of the pitcher's plate to the back of the home plate. This is a fast pitch league. A pitcher must begin her pitch with her pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate. The non-pivot foot may begin in contact with the pitcher's plate, or the non-pivot foot may begin behind the pitcher's plate with no contact on the pitcher's plate. Her first step must be toward home plate. Windmill pitching will be allowed. There is no arc requirement.

13. A player may pitch any number of innings per game or day. A player having been removed as a pitcher may pitch again in the same game.

14. If the pitcher or any defensive player is in possession of the ball and has at least one foot within the circle around the pitcher's plate, all base runners must either (1) proceed immediately to the next base or (2) return immediately to the previous base depending on whether they are more or less than half way to the next base in the judgment of the umpire. Failure to do so will result in the base runner being declared out. Coaches are not to touch the ball until after the play is stopped by the umpire.

15. All players present must bat in consecutive order. All players must wear a batter's helmet when they are batting, running bases, coaching bases, or preparing to bat ("on deck"). A substitute runner is allowed if a base runner is injured or for the player catching when, after 2 outs in the inning, that catcher is on base. This is to allow the catcher to begin putting on the catcher's gear and,

thus, speed up the game. The substitute runner shall be the player who made the last out.

16. A batter hit by a pitched ball is awarded first base provided, in the judgement of the umpire the batter has made good faith effort to avoid being hit by the ball and further provided the pitch is not in the strike zone. The player must take first base. There is no choice.

17. No intentional walks will be allowed. Coaches shall not instruct their pitchers to throw poor pitches to any batter. The umpire may question the pitcher and/or the defensive coaches. If the umpire decides this rule is being violated, he will restart the count.

18. The inning is ended when 3 outs are made or 5 runs are scored. Coaches are responsible to notify the umpire when the 5 run limit is reached.

19. Each team's Head Coach/Manager must exchange a team roster with the opposing team prior to the start of each game. A team roster must be all players present for the current game, and it is to include each player's name, jersey number, and correct batting order. Each team must have a designated scorekeeper. The home team is the official scorekeeper and keeps a detailed score for both teams. It is the responsibility of the visiting team to compare scores periodically to ensure the scorekeepers are in agreement.

20. All players, when not on the field of play, must remain in the dugout, behind the fence, and not in the door opening. Coaches are responsible for this safety strategy and umpires will enforce by stopping the game, if necessary. The on-deck batter must position themselves to the back side of the batter.

## **Rules – Major League (5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> Grade)**

1. A forfeit will be called if one team has less than eight (8) players. Minor league players may be added to prevent a team from having to forfeit. If both teams have less than eight (8) players, the game will be replayed later. The time at which a forfeit will be called is 5 minutes after a first game is scheduled to begin and at the time a second game is scheduled to begin.
1. A complete game will consist of six (6) innings, unless tied. A game will also be complete after one (1) hour and ten (10) minutes of playing time has expired regardless of the number of innings played. Because our fields do not have lights, it is necessary that all evening games should begin and end on time. If there is a second game scheduled, the umpire should end the 1st game promptly at the end of 70 minutes, even in the middle of a batting order, and the score reverts back to the end of the previous inning. The umpire will determine when the game is over. If tied, the first game will end subject to the above time limit and will be recorded as a tie in the standings. The second game, if tied, will continue until completed or until the umpire calls the game due to darkness. For any game, if the inning begins but is not able to be completed, the score at the end of the last full inning will be the official result, even if tied. For tournament play only, the American Softball Association (ASA) tie breaker rule will be in effect if a game is tied after six (6) innings or by the time limit.
2. The home team occupies the third base dugout and will be responsible for placement of the bases. The base paths will be sixty (60) feet.
3. It is the Board's desire that good sportsmanship be emphasized. No taunting of batters or harassment of pitchers is allowed. Judgment calls by the umpires cannot be questioned. Any discussion of rules should be between the Home Plate Umpire and the Head Coach/Manager only. This discussion should be brief.
4. No more than nine (9) players may play in the field at the same time; however, each player must play in the field at least six (6) outs. All substitute players must play those six (6) outs within the first four (4) innings of the game. (It is suggested that team managers make substitutions every other inning.) A player arriving late to a game may not play if the third inning has begun. (The third inning is begun when the home team makes the final out in the bottom of second inning.) Eligible late players are added to the bottom of the batting order.
5. Major League players may bunt and steal any base. A runner may leave her base when a pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand. The batter is out on the third strike if ball is caught by the catcher. If the pitched ball hits the dirt or the ball is dropped and the batter swings, the batter may advance to first base, if

unoccupied or there are two outs. The catcher must tag the runner or throw the batter out at first base. Sliding is permitted.

6. Base coaches may be coaches or players. If they are players, they must wear a protective helmet. Base coaches must stay in the base coaches' box and should not touch or aid a base runner.

7. Any player may pitch. All pitchers will pitch from 40 feet. The pitching distance is measured from the front of the pitcher's plate to the back of the home plate. This is a fast pitch league. A pitcher must begin her pitch with her pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate. The non-pivot foot may begin in contact with the pitcher's plate, or the non-pivot foot may begin behind the pitcher's plate with no contact on the pitcher's plate. Her first step must be toward home plate. Windmill pitching will be allowed. There is no arc requirement.

8. A player may pitch any number of innings per game or day. A player having been removed as a pitcher may pitch again in the same game.

9. The pitcher's circle rule is not in effect. The defensive team must stop the advance of the offensive team. When the ball is in possession of the pitcher within the 16' circle, any runners between bases, must immediately advance to the next base, or return to the last base touched, with liability to being put out. If the runner fails to return or advance immediately, the runner will be declared out.

10. All players present must bat in consecutive order. All players must wear a batter's helmet when they are batting, running bases, coaching bases, or preparing to bat ("on deck"). Substitute runners are allowed for an injured player and for the catcher, if there are two outs. The substitute runner shall be the player who made the last out.

11. A batter hit by a pitched ball is awarded first base provided, in the judgement of the umpire the batter has made good faith effort to avoid being hit by the ball and further provided the pitch is not in the strike zone.

12. No intentional walks will be allowed. Coaches shall not instruct their pitchers to throw poor pitches to any batter. The umpire may question the pitcher and/or the defensive coaches. If the umpire decides this rule is being violated, he will restart the count.

13. Regardless of the number of outs, the batting team's half of an inning will end when the batting team scores 5 runs. If the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) run is scored during the middle of a play any additional runs after the 5<sup>th</sup> will not count. It is the

responsibility of each team to inform the umpires when five (5) runs have been scored in an inning. Should the teams fail to inform the umpires until six (6) or more runs have scored, the number of runs that have scored at the time the umpires are notified will be the official number of runs scored in that inning.

14. Each team's Head Coach/Manager must exchange a team roster with the opposing team prior to the start of each game. A team roster must be all players present for the current game, and it is to include each player's name, jersey number, and correct batting order. Each team must have a designated scorekeeper. The home team is the official scorekeeper and keeps a detailed score for both teams. It is the responsibility of the visiting team to compare scores periodically to ensure the scorekeepers agree

15. All players, when not on the field of play, must remain in the dugout, behind the fence, and not in the door opening. Coaches are responsible for this safety strategy and umpires will enforce by stopping the game, if necessary. The on-deck batter must position themselves to the back side of the batter.