

Northern Virginia Girls Softball League (House League)

Local Rules and Procedures

Revision 11, November 21, 2007



Section I Local Rules

These local rules shall be used in conjunction with the Official Rules of Softball published by Amateur Softball Association (ASA). Except as amended by the local rules below, Northern Virginia Girl's Softball League (NVGSL) shall adopt and abide by the current year's ASA official rules. The local rules are approved by the NVGSA Board of Directors (BOD) and will not be modified without approval of the BOD. Coaches and umpires are expected to know and follow the rules without exception. The BOD reserves the right to make any decisions involving safety, general welfare, or overall league operations (protests, forfeitures, etc.) in carrying out its responsibilities for the well being of the league. Recommendations for changes to these rules should be forwarded through the individual League Commissioners for submission to the President and ultimately for approval by the BOD.

Part I – Player Participation, Game Length, Run Limits

A. Player participation:

1. Each team will utilize a continuous batting order; all players present at the start of a game will be listed on the batting order and will bat in turn. Late arrivals shall be added to the bottom of the order and shall bat in turn after the preceding batter in the order has completed her turn at bat.
2. Except for Coach Pitch League, the initial batting order for each game shall not be changed at any time during the game, even when players are substituted for or rotated in the field.
3. Except for Coach Pitch League, a team must field at least seven players and one adult coach to start a scheduled game. If seven players and one adult coach are not present 10 minutes after the scheduled start time, that team shall forfeit. Prior arrangements can be made to allow players from other teams in lower or equal divisions to play for the shorthanded team. This does not include select players that are not registered with the house league.
4. Players who miss their turn at bat, due to injury or other valid cause, or because they must depart the field of play, shall be skipped without penalty to the team at bat. Notification to the umpire and the opposing team manager should be made. Missed batting opportunities, for whatever reason, will not be made up.
5. During regular season play, teams may field up to ten defensive players on the field at one time, including an extra outfielder (not applicable to Coach Pitch League). However, 18-U level teams should only field a total of 9 players, with just 3 outfielders.
6. Defensive substitutions of players from the bench or among these in the field may be made at any time.
7. Most girls would rather play an infield position rather than an outfield position. We want to make sure all players get to experience playing both in the infield and in the outfield each game. Therefore, each game, all players should play at least one inning in an infield position, and at least one inning in an outfield position. At the 8-U and 10-U level, all girls should be allowed to try a variety of positions. At the 10-U level, each girl will play the same position no more than 2 innings per game. At the 12-U and 18-U level, each

girl should be given the opportunity to play at least one inning each game in an infield position.

8. Each player shall play defensively at least every other inning - No player shall sit out a second time until all players on the team have sat out once. No player shall sit out a third time until all players have sat out twice. Failure to comply with this rule shall result in forfeiture of the game. (Exception: The starting pitcher shall be exempt from this rule, until the end of the inning in which she is removed from the mound. A substitute pitcher also becomes exempt once she has taken the mound, until the end of the inning in which she is removed from the mound.)
9. Pitchers at the 10-U level will be limited to 2 innings per game (consecutive or non consecutive). Pitchers at the 12-U and 18-U level will be limited to 3 innings per game (consecutive or non-consecutive), unless a 7th inning is reached in the game, in which case she will be allowed to pitch a 4th inning in that game. If a pitcher does pitch more than the allowed 2 innings (for 10-U only) or 3 innings (for 12-U & 18-U), it must be brought to the attention of the umpire. The player at bat shall then be awarded a base-on-balls and the pitcher replaced. All prior play is unaffected by this oversight. Teams at all levels of play should do their best to develop 3 or more pitchers just in case they lose one of their pitchers to a family commitment or illness. If, however, a team at the 12-U or 18-U level gets down to only having one pitcher available for a game (their other pitcher(s) can not make the game), then that coach should contact the opposing team's coach prior to the game to discuss whether they can reschedule the game on a date acceptable to both parties. Another option is that maybe the team with only one pitcher can find another NVGSA pitcher at the same or lower level/division that is available to pitch in the game. This participation of this new player/pitcher would of course have to be approved by the coach of the opposing team prior to the game.
10. Teams may, if they wish, use a courtesy runner for the catcher. The courtesy runner shall be the player who made the last out. A courtesy runner, when utilized, is not considered a substitute in the game.

B. Game length

1. Regular season games will adhere to the following time limits (coaches and umpires will enforce this rule strictly). The plate umpire shall keep time and advise the scorekeepers of the official start time for the game. Games shall begin at the scheduled time, or fifteen minutes after the last out of the game played previously at the field.
 - Single games – No new inning will begin after one hour and thirty-five minutes and games will end (drop dead) at one hour and fifty minutes.
 - Double headers – No new inning will begin after 1 hour and fifteen minutes and games will end (drop dead) at one hour and thirty minutes.
2. Plays in progress at the expiration of time will be completed, however, a batter, at bat when the end time is reached, is not required to complete her time at bat.
3. Game ending procedures from the ASA rulebook will apply to shortened games, except that any game that has progressed 4 complete innings (3 ½ innings if the home team is ahead) and is stopped for any reason, including time limits, shall be considered a complete game.
4. During the regular season, tied games will not be made up.

C. Run Limits (Except Coach Pitch League)

1. For all regular season and post-season play, each team will be limited to the following number of runs in each half inning. The half inning will end at the conclusion of the play in which the specified number of runs is scored and only that number of runs will be counted.
 - 18U – 5 runs per half inning
 - 12U and 10U – 4 runs per half inning
2. Play should be allowed to continue to its conclusion to afford the defensive team the opportunity to make any appeals it deems necessary that could influence the outcome of the play.

Part II – Bat Throwing, Uniforms, Protests

A. Throwing of bats:

If a player throws a bat, after hitting the ball, in a manner that presents a danger to participants on the field, the umpire shall stop the game at the conclusion of play and warn both teams. Any player on either team who subsequently throws a bat shall be called out. The ball is immediately dead, and there is no play (hit, steal, etc.)

B. Uniforms:

The minimum uniform for all players will be shirts alike in color, trim and style. All shirts must have a number on the back, with the number being of contrasting color and at least six inches high. If shorts are worn, sliding shorts and sliding pads are highly recommended and encouraged.

C. Protests

1. The umpire's decisions on the field are final; there will be no protests.
2. If a manager feels the ruling on the field by an umpire is contrary to the ASA Official Rules or the NVGSA Local Rules that fact should be brought to the umpire's attention, but once the umpire has made a final ruling, that ruling will stand and play will continue.
3. Managers should discourage any sort of unsportsmanlike conduct by players, parents, or other coaches and should immediately assist the umpire in dealing with this sort of behavior. Complaints regarding umpires should be referred to the respective division commissioner.

Part III – Specific Local Rules for Coach Pitch (8U) League

NVGSA Administrative Rules

The first team listed in game pairings is the “home team.” For example, on the schedule, in the Coach Pitch Division, if the 9:00 game is listed as “1 vs. 2,” Team 1 is the home team.

It is the home team’s responsibility to determine if the game should be cancelled due to the weather or poor field conditions. This decision should be made from the field and not one’s front yard because, as we all know, just because it is raining on one side of town does not mean it is raining on the other side of town.

If the home team has decided the game cannot be played due to weather or poor field conditions the home team coaches will call the visiting team coaches as soon as possible so that the visiting team can call their players before anyone leaves for the game. An earlier notice will have to be made if the visiting team is traveling from the opposite side (i.e. East side to West side). This cannot always be done on time but we want to try.

We want to try our hardest not to have to cancel a game. There are very limited days/times to schedule a makeup game and more than likely make up games will have to be played on Sunday or weekdays. If a game is cancelled due to weather or poor field conditions, it is up to the two teams’ coaches to decide on a day to make up the game by working with NVGSA scheduler Naomi May Mayfamily9@cox.net

The home team is responsible for getting the field ready for play. This includes raking any bad spots, lining the field with chalk (lime) and getting the batters “T” available. Remember, to get into the metal box where the rakes, chalk/lime, liner, measuring tape, etc. are located for either Wakefield Forrest #4 or Wilton Woods #1 you must set the lock to the combination obtained from the director of fields and then push the lock in. The lock will then pop out to allow you to raise the lid and get access to the box.

Wakefield Forest #4 now has the permanent bases set at the appropriate length (**50 feet between each base**) so the temporary bases no longer have to be installed.

Wilton Woods #1 still has the permanent bases set at 60 feet so the temporary bases have to be installed. The temporary bases are in the metal box and the correct measurement between the bases for the Coach Pitch Division is **50 feet**.

The measurements and/or base/chalk lines to be made by the home team before each game are as follows:

- 50 feet between the bases
- 35 feet between home plate and the pitching rubber.
- Base line from home to first base and home to third base
- Right and left batting boxes are 3 feet wide and 6 feet deep – 3 feet from middle of plate forward and 3 feet from middle of plate backward
- 6 foot circle (radius) chalk line around the pitching rubber
- 10 foot arc (radius) chalk line in front of home plate (inside the arc is considered a foul ball) drawn from the first base line to the third base line.

The home team supplies a new ball (the optic green ball) as the game ball.

The Coach Pitch games should last no longer than 1 hour and 15 minutes. There is no minimum number of innings that need to be played to call the game a “complete game.”

At the end of each game, the home team coach is responsible for ensuring all the items from the box, batting “T,” base line liner, rakes etc. have been returned to the metal box and the box is secured.

SPECIFIC COACH PITCH DIVISION RULES

When in the Field:

All players are in the field at the same time. No player “sits on the bench.” If twelve girls show up to play that day – all 12 girls play in the field.

Whenever possible there should be only 1 player assigned to each of the 10 positions (to include pitcher, catcher and the four outfield positions – leftfield, left centerfield, right centerfield and right field. BUT:

If you have more than 10 players – one can be placed “behind second base,” another at a “short field” type of position and if needed be a 5th outfield position.

If you have less than 10 players – you can begin by eliminating an outfield spot and then the catcher’s spot.

You do not have to use a catcher but the league encourages you to do so to allow the girls to learn the position. The catcher must wear all of the catcher’s equipment when behind the plate. Some girls will refuse to play catcher and that is okay. If you do not utilize a catcher you need a coach/parent/older sibling to be back there to throw the ball back to the pitcher. **This person should be back there even if there is a catcher to expedite the game!**

There should only be 6 “infielders” (1st, 2nd, SS, 3rd, pitcher and catcher) at one time to avoid “flooding” the infield.

The “player pitcher” must be somewhere in the pitcher’s circle when each pitch is made.

The “coach pitcher” can pitch from inside or outside the circle or anywhere he/she needs to be to help ensure the batter hits the ball. **For younger, less experienced players you may have to move very close to the batter perhaps as close as 10 feet away.**

Again, the catcher is required to wear all of the catcher’s gear when behind home plate. **The coach/parent/older sibling used to retrieve pass balls will help the catcher position herself before each pitch to ensure she is not too close to the batter to prevent her from being hit with the bat and to help her with plays at the plate.**

The outfielders should be **at least 10 feet behind the infielders**. They will need to be reminded of this constantly because they have a tendency to move in a little closer with each pitch. This is important to prevent “flooding” the infield and to ensure we are coaching them with regard to that particular outfield position.

Each player should be rotated to another defensive position each inning to allow them the opportunity to play and learn each position. **No player should play the same position more than one inning per game.** For example, have your first inning outfielders play infield in the second inning and vice versa. Again, some of the girls may not want to play catcher. This is fine.

While your team is in the field it is **highly recommended** that two coaches from that team are also on the field (behind the infielders) to position the players and to verbally direct and coach the players on how to play a batted ball, move to cover a base, back up another infielder, etc. **Only two coaches should be on the field at the same time - one on the right side of the infield and one on the left side of the infield.** The coaches should not get physically involved in the play of a batted ball, i.e. stop a batted ball and throw it back to the player.

When batting:

All players bat once every inning, in a **pre-designated lineup**, regardless of the number of “outs” made in an inning. The opposing team can allow the hitting team to bat twice during an inning if the batting team does not have more than 6 players.

The line up should be **changed each inning** to allow each player to hit in a variety of spots in the order, i.e. leadoff, clean up, last. For example, you can reverse your line up in the second inning from what it was in the first inning with the last batter now leading off. For the 3rd inning you can have the girl who batted in the middle of the line up bat lead off and go up your original batting order. For the 4th inning have the girl who batted last that inning now lead off and go down your original batting order.

The inning is over, regardless of the number of “outs,” when the last batter in the line up takes her turn at bat.

When the last batter in the lineup comes up to bat in any inning, the coach of the team that is batting will clearly announce to the fielding team/coaches that this is the “*last batter*” prior to the player’s at bat.

Under the “*last batter rule*” once the last batter has gotten a hit, all runners (to include the batter) will circle all the bases in an attempt to “score” no matter where the ball is. **The fielding team must attempt to get one or more of the runners out on the bases first** and then throw the ball to the catcher in an attempt to get an out or outs at home.

Other than the last batter, all other batters should be held at first base by the first base coach, unless it is a clean extra base hit. No batter is allowed to advance to second base on a fielding error or an over throw to first base. **In the Coach Pitch Division – unlike the older Divisions – the play is over when the batter reaches a base – not when the ball is back in the pitcher hand while the pitcher is in the pitcher’s circle.**

Players or their parents may elect to have their daughter initially hit off the “T” as opposed to being pitched to by their coach. The coach, however, should attempt to pitch to each of their players to give them an opportunity to hit a “live pitch.” It is each coach’s judgment to determine when a batter should be placed on a batting “T” however,

EACH BATTER SHOULD GET APPROX 7 TO 10 GOOD PITCHES BEFORE THE BATTER MUST BE PUT ON THE BATTING “T.”

This is a flexible rule. No opposing coach is going to count the no. of pitches and be upset if a coach throws a few extra pitches to any batter.

For example, if you have a good player who is having a bad day, it is okay to throw her a few extra pitches so she can try to get a hit from live pitching.

For example, if the girl is fouling off pitches it is okay to throw her a few extra pitches so she can try to get a hit from live pitching.

But, if the batter has not come close to hitting the ball in those 7 to 10 good pitches she must be placed on the batting “T.”

No one likes to be placed on a “T” but in the past we have had coaches throw 25 to 30 pitches to a batter to avoid putting them on the “T.” But, it is very detrimental to the team in the field to wait for pitch after pitch. Soon, the team in the field has lost all interest in the game. They are now playing in the dirt, have their gloves on their heads or are lying down in the outfield grass!

So, all of us coaches need to attempt to abide by this rule if at all possible!

By the way, SYA only allows 3 pitches before it is mandatory to use the “T.”

For a ball to be a “fair ball” it must have gone beyond the 10 foot arc in front of the plate. A coach pitcher will yell “*foul ball*” if it does not go beyond the arc. If the ball has stopped on the line it is a foul ball. It must go beyond the line.

It is up to each team if they want to allow their batters to stay on a base if they are “out.” There are several philosophies to this and to tell you the truth I am not sure which one I subscribe to. For example, the girls at this age may feel “humiliated” if they are called “out.” Yet, at the same time they need to learn the game. What I do on my team is this:

If one of my batters is clearly “out” then I tell them they are “out” and why (*so they can learn the game*). I tell them they did nothing wrong (*so they are not humiliated*) and that the players on the other team made a “great” play on their ball (*which praises the players on the other team who made the play.*) This seems to work well for my team but it is up to each coach as to how they want to do it.

Now if the play is close – even if the batter is truly “out” – we may allow the player to stay at first so they can get experience at running the bases and the adulation of scoring a run for their team. It also helps the defensive team learn a variety of different plays – going to second instead of first with the ball, double plays, etc. The coaches for both teams should tell each other before the game how they want to do this so an opposing coach does not tell a girl she is “OUT!”

Base Running:

Base runners will only advance to the next base when a batter hit the ball unless the batter hits a clean extra base hit meaning there were no errors made by the fielders. If this occurs, the base coach can send the runners, to include the batter, two bases. This is with the exception of the base runners, to include the batter (who is running as part of the “*last batter*” provision as explained above), who are circling the bases without being held up.

No base runners will advance on an over throw by the fielding team or a pass ball by the catcher.

All base runners stop at their base and cannot advance when the play is over as opposed to the older Divisions which require the ball to be in the pitcher’s hand and the pitcher in the pitcher’s circle.

There are no leads or base stealing in the Coach Pitch Division. The runners may not leave their base until the ball is hit by the batter. There is no sliding.

COACH PITCH GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Many of the above Coach Pitch Division rules are flexible. Most are designed due to specific philosophies and to expedite the game. If followed, the game will progress at a productive rate. Remember, the goal is for the girls to learn the game and to have fun!

Part IV – Specific Local Rules for 10U League

10U League local rules are designed to facilitate the continued training of softball skills begun in Coach Pitch League, while still maximizing fun for the players.

- A. Field measurements will be per the ASA rule book and should be marked as follows:
1. 60 feet between the bases.
 2. 35 feet between home plate and the pitching rubber.
 3. 8-foot radius circle around the pitching rubber.
- B. Additional player participation rules for 10U League:
1. There should only be 6 “infielders” (1st, 2nd, SS, 3rd, pitcher and catcher) at one time to avoid “flooding” the infield. Outfielders may not start a play stationed in the infield; they must start play somewhere on the outfield grass.
 2. Coaches have the option to remain in the outfield when their team is on defense to position players and to give verbal directions to the players on how to play the batted ball (i.e. throw to 1st base and then back to pitcher). Coaches cannot get physically involved in the play of the batted ball (stop the ball and throw it back to the player). A maximum of two coaches are allowed in the field at one time.
- C. Additional pitching rules for 10U League:
1. All managers should develop as many pitchers on their teams as possible, striving to have at least 1 player who can pitch a ball “over the plate” (on the fly) to a batter. If the pitcher is struggling to pitch a ball “over the plate” (on the fly) from the pitching rubber, she may move up within the 8-foot radius of the pitching circle to throw the pitch. She must finish the pitch with both feet entirely within the 8-foot radius circle. Any pitcher who possesses the arm strength/ability to consistently pitch a ball over the plate (on the fly) from the pitching rubber must pitch from the rubber.
 2. There will be no walks; if the batter receives a fourth ball from the player-pitcher, a coach from the team at bat will come onto the field to finish pitching to the batter. The batter will receive the number of pitches, from this coach-pitcher, equal to the strikes remaining on her count (e.g., with two strikes, the batter will get only one pitch from the coach-pitcher; with one strike, the batter will get two pitches from the coach-pitcher). The umpire will have the ability to decide whether a pitch pitched to the batter by the coach-pitcher is “hittable”; if a pitch is declared “unhittable” by the umpire, the batter may receive an additional pitch from the coach-pitcher. The batter can be struck out by the coach-pitcher if she fails to hit the ball in the allotted number of pitches.
 3. When the coach-pitcher is pitching, the player-pitcher can position herself anywhere within the 8-foot pitching circle, but must remain in the circle until the ball is hit.
 4. When the coach-pitcher is pitching and the ball is hit, the coach-pitcher will make every effort to avoid disrupting the play of the defensive team. If the coach unintentionally interferes with a batted ball or with a thrown ball, the ball will remain live and play will continue. If the coach intentionally interferes with a batted or thrown ball, the umpire shall call the play dead, return runners to their bases at the time of interference and call

the batter-runner out for interference of the coach. Determination of intent is solely the judgment of the umpire and cannot be protested.

D. Additional batting rules for 10U League:

1. The infield fly rule will not be enforced.

E. Base running rules for 10U League:

1. Runners may advance only 1 base on an overthrow.
2. Runners may only take a 2 step lead when the ball leaves the pitchers hand. After the ball crosses home plate the runner may complete the steal.
3. Runners starting at first or second base are entitled to advance or steal one base only per pitch. A runner attempting to advance beyond the one base they are entitled to advance to or steal may be put out while between bases; but a runner cannot be put out while in sole contact with a base.
4. Runners starting at third base may not steal home. Runners may only score on a batted ball, a hit batter when the bases are full, or an awarded base. A runner attempting to steal home may be put out while between third base and home.
5. After all play ceases, and the ball is called dead by the umpire, if a runner occupies a base beyond the one the runner was entitled to advance to or steal, and has not been put out by the defense while between bases, the runner will be returned to the correct base, without liability to be put out.

(items 3-5 are directly from the ASA rule book)

Section II Local Procedures

Part I - Game Preliminaries, Game Play and Length

The umpires at the game are the final authority on rules decisions at each game; their decisions will be final.

A. Umpires and Scorekeepers

1. The league attempts to schedule umpires for all games at the 10U level and above; house umpires at the 10U level and certified ASA umpires at 12U and 18U levels. Ordinarily, the league will not attempt to schedule umpires at the 8U (Coach pitch) level.
1. When no official plate umpire is assigned, or if an assigned umpire fails to arrive, the home team is responsible for providing the home plate umpire. The visiting team will be responsible for supplying a base umpire, if one is desired and agreed to by the home plate umpire.
2. In no case will a game be delayed, cancelled or postponed because assigned umpires are not available.
3. The home team will provide the official scorekeeper for each game. The home plate umpire should inform the official scorekeeper that they should only converse only with the home plate umpire and may advise only on rules infractions that could cause a protest.

B. Game Preliminaries, pre-game warm-up and field preparation

1. For regular season games, the first team listed in game pairings is the “home team.” For example, if a game is listed as “1 vs. 2.” Team 1 is the home team.
2. It is the home team manager’s responsibility to determine if the game should be cancelled due to the weather or poor field conditions. This decision should be made from the field and as early as possible (attempt to make a decision about field playability 2 hours before game time to allow cancellation notice to be made and to prevent the league from being charged for umpire fees). If the home team manager has decided the game cannot be played due to weather or poor field conditions, he/she will call the visiting team manager as soon as possible. If a game is cancelled due to weather or poor field conditions, it is up to the two team’s managers to decide on a mutually agreeable day to make up the game, working in concert with respective League Commissioner and the NVGSA scheduler. This needs to be done within a short period of time so that makeup games are not carried through the season.
3. The visiting team should be given the opportunity to take infield practice for 5 minutes approximately 20 minutes before game time. The home team should be given the opportunity to take infield practice for 5 minutes approximately 15 minutes before game time.
4. The field should be cleared for the final 10 minutes before game time to allow final field preparation not completed earlier (lining and raking as needed).
5. The home team is responsible for preparing the field for play and for returning the equipment to the field box after each game. The visiting team should assist with field preparation. The home team of the last game of the day at a field is also responsible for filling all holes and dragging the field following the completion of the last game.

6. Prior to each game, the plate umpire shall hold a plate conference with the managers and team captain(s) (if desired) to discuss field conditions and any local ground rules that may be in effect. The plate umpire will confirm that lineups have been exchanged between teams, if necessary. Each manager will supply the umpire with at least one ball at the start of the game (home team supplies a new ball; visiting team supplies a new or “like-new” ball, depending on the supply of balls issued at the beginning of the season).

Part II – Trophies, Post Season Tournaments, All-Star Team Selection

A) Trophies

1. Participation trophies will be awarded to each player in the 8U and 10U divisions.
2. Trophies will be awarded to each player on the first place team in the 12U and 18U divisions.

B) Post Season Tournaments

1. Division/Conference standings shall be determined by a point system; two points for a win one point for a tie, and zero points for a loss. All scheduled games must be played or forfeited. Ties in the standings shall be handled in the following manner:

- (a) If there is a tie for first place in the Division/Conference standings, there shall be a post-season playoff game.
- (b) If there is a tie for second place In the Division/Conference standings, there shall be a post-season playoff game.
- (c) Ties in the standings which do not affect awards do not require a playoff.

2. Post-season playoff tournaments may be scheduled. Standings from regular season play shall determine tournament seeding. In the event of a tie in the final Division/Conference standings, the winner of the last regular season game between the two tied teams shall be considered ahead in the standings for the purposes of tournament seed assignments. In tournament play, the home team shall be the team ranking highest in the Division/Conference standings. In the event both teams hold the same conference standing, the home team shall be the winner of the last regular season game between those two teams.

4. All Stars are selected at the end of each spring season and compete in organized all star games in the 10U, 12U and 18U divisions. Division coaches will select a designated number of players from their individual teams as All Stars. Teams are formed based on the final regular spring season standings in the 10U, 12U and 18U divisions.