**WGYSL SOFTBALL RULES**

**SECTION A – AGE DIVISIONS**

1. There are five age divisions for Youth Softball. The age control date: age as of September 1, current year. The divisions are as follows:
	1. 6U Coach Pitch
	2. 8U Coach Pitch
	3. 10U Live Arm
	4. 12U Live Arm
	5. 14U Live Arm
2. Each player must go through a draft that splits teams as even as possible based on skill level.
	1. No stacking of teams is allowed.
	2. No outside teams (travel teams, pick up teams, etc.) are allowed.

**SECTION B – GOVERNING BODY**

1. Apart from rules found in this manual, anything not covered will revert back to GRPA or GHSA rules.
2. Any player, coach or fan ejected from a game for any reason will be suspended for one game, in addition to the game from which ejected.
3. Per the “Return to Play Act of 2013”, effective January 1, 2014, all agencies are required to provide concussion education material to all youth participants and their parents. The verification of compliance to this law is affirmed by the signature of the agency director on the roster.
4. All head and assistant coaches that are coaching youth teams participating in all levels must have undergone a criminal background check through their department. By signing the team’s roster, the department director or their designee attests that this has taken place.
5. Use of audio or visual recording devices, including a cell phone, is not permitted in changing areas, rest rooms, or locker rooms. The use of audio or visual recording devices is not allowed in resolution of protested matters.

**SECTION C – LENGTH OF GAMES**

1. Game Times, Innings & Run Limits
	1. 6U – 1:00 (1 hour), Five (5) Innings or mathematical elimination
		1. Five (5) runs per inning
	2. 8U & 10U – 1:15 (1 hour & 15 mins), Five (5) Innings or mathematical elimination
		1. Five (5) runs per inning
	3. 12U & 14U – 1:30 (1 hour & 30 mins), Six (6) Innings or mathematical elimination
		1. Six (6) runs per inning
2. Once time has expired, the inning will be completed (unless the home team is batting and winning when time expires).
3. A game which is tied after regulation play shall be considered completed.
	1. The International Tie-Breaker will only be used in tournament bracket play.

**SECTION D – SPECIAL PROVISIONS**

1. Shorthanded Rule
	1. To start a game: A game may begin or finish with one less than required to start. (6U & 8U coach pitch – nine (9) players, 10U Live and up - eight (8) players.
		1. The vacant position must be listed last in the batting order.
		2. An out will be recorded when the vacant position in the batting order is scheduled to bat.
	2. To continue a game once started with a full team listed on the line-up card:
		1. If a team begins play with the required number of players as listed, that team may continue a game with one less player than is currently in the batting order whenever a player leaves the game for any reason other than ejection.
			1. A player that has been ejected cannot reenter the game.
		2. If playing shorthanded and a substitute arrives, the substitute must be inserted immediately into the vacant spot (no matter what inning the game is in).
		3. If the player leaving the game is a runner or batter, the runner or batter shall be declared out.
		4. When the player who has left the game is scheduled to bat, an out shall be declared for each turn at bat.
			1. An inning or the game can end with an automatic out.
2. Slung Bats
	1. A slung bat will result in a team warning for the offending team on the first offense.
	2. Each additional slung bat for that team will result in the batter being called out.
	3. If the same player continues to violate the rule, she can be removed from the game.
3. Courtesy Runners
	1. At any time, the team at-bat may use courtesy runners for the catcher only.
		1. The catcher will not be required to leave the game under such circumstances.
		2. The courtesy runner for the catcher must be anyone not in the current batting order or the last batter out.
		3. A player may not run as a courtesy runner for the catcher and then be used as a substitute for another player in the half inning. (Penalty: out if discovered prior to next pitch).
4. Batting Lineups
	1. A continuous batting lineup will be used in 6U, 8U, 10U & 12U age groups
		1. Free defensive subs will be allowed
	2. A standard batting lineup will be used in the 14U age group
		1. Subs must be reported to the umpire / scorekeeper
5. Charged Conferences
	1. Each team when on defense may be granted no more than one conferences during a game without penalty, to permit a coach to confer with defensive players.
		1. The penalty for using conferences in excess of times listed above shall be removal of pitcher from the pitching position for the balance of the game.
	2. A request for time for an injured player shall not constitute a charged conference nor shall a conference be charged whenever the pitcher is removed as pitcher.
	3. Each team, when on offense, may be granted not more than one charged conference per inning to permit the coach or any of that team’s members to confer with base runners and/or the batter.
6. Headfirst slides are not allowed in the coach pitch age groups (6U & 8U).
	1. The penalty for a headfirst slide in the 6U & 8U divisions of softball shall be an out.
		1. C-Flaps can be worn without penalty.
	2. A dive back to a base on a pick off or base overrun is not considered a head first slide.
	3. Runners in rundown situation may not slide headfirst if wearing a facemask.
7. Any runner is out when she does not slide or attempt to avoid the fielder who has the ball in the proximity of the base and is waiting to make a tag or if they maliciously run into a fielder (give up, get down, go around).

**SECTION E – PITCHING REGULATIONS**

1. The use of National Federation and current GHSA rules and regulations for pitching requirements pertaining to only having to have the pivot foot (one foot) in contact with the pitching plate is allowed.
2. Innings Allowed Per Pitcher
	1. No more than two games in a day
3. Replacing a Pitcher
	1. If the pitcher is replaced while her team is on defense, the substitute pitcher shall pitch to the batter then at-bat, or any substitute for that-batter, until such batter is put out or reaches first base, or until a third out has been made.
4. Illegal pitches shall be in effect for the 12U & 14U age groups.

**SECTION F – APPROVED EQUIPMENT**

1. Rubber-molded, cleated shoes are approved for use in all age groups.
	1. Steel spikes are approved for 14U.
2. Regulation home plate, pitcher’s plate, and bases shall be used
3. Gloves and mitts are governed by NFS Rules. Pitcher’s gloves must be of one color.
4. Catchers must wear full protective equipment, including mask with throat protector, protective helmet (protective cap in 10U and 12U must cover ear), body protector and shin guards.
	1. The helmets must be approved by NOCSAE.
5. All players shall wear protective helmets while batting, running bases, and when on deck. The helmet shall be so designed as to give protection to the temples and the base of the skull as well as to the top of the head.
	1. Facemask are recommended (required for post-season play)
	2. The helmets must be approved by NOCSAE.
6. Bats
	1. The official bat, made up of the knob, handle, grip, taper, barrel and end cap shall be free of burs, dents cracks, sharp edges, rattles and show no signs of excessive wear.
	2. The official bat may be marked OFFICIAL SOFTBALL by the manufacturer and shall be no more than 34 inches long nor exceed 38 ounces in weight.
	3. The official bat shall not be more than 2.25 inches in diameter at its largest part, including any tolerance for expansion.
	4. The official bat must bear either the ASA, USA SOFTBALL, or USSSA stamped certifications
	5. If a team is found using an ILLEGAL/ALTERED/NON-APPROVED bat prior to the player entering batter’s box, the equipment shall be removed and play continued. After the player enters the batter’s box, the player will be called out and the coach will be given a warning.
7. For all 6U coach pitch, it is mandatory that the pitcher wear a face mask.
	1. It is optional for all other infield players.
8. For 8U and above, it is recommended that the pitchers wear a face mask.
	1. It is optional for all other infield players.

**SECTION G – PLAYING FIELD REQUIREMENTS**

1. 6U & 8U Coach Pitch
	1. Base Distance: 60’
	2. Player Pitching Line: 46’ (defensive pitcher must be touching line when the pitch is thrown)
		1. Line needs to be at least 4’ long
	3. Foul Arc: 20’
	4. Pitching Line (Connecting Arc to pitching location for coach pitcher): 30’ max
	5. Safety Line (1st and 3rd Foul Line): 46’
2. 10U Live Arm
	1. Base Distance: 60’
	2. Pitching Distance: 35’
	3. Pitching Circle Diameter: 16’
3. 12U Live Arm
	1. Base Distance: 60’
	2. Pitching Distance: 40’
	3. Pitching Circle Diameter: 16’
4. 14U Live Arm
	1. Base Distance: 60’
	2. Pitching Distance: 43’
	3. Pitching Circle Diameter: 16’

**SECTION H – PROTEST & APPEALS**

1. A judgment decision by an umpire on any play shall not be protested.
2. A judgment decision by an umpire on any play shall not be protested.
3. **TOURNEY ONLY:** A protest fee of $50 (cash only) will be given to the tournament director.
	1. Protests on misinterpretation of the rules are allowed to the head umpire on the field, prior to the next pitch.
	2. Protests of illegal players are allowed to the head umpire on the field, prior to the next pitch.

**SECTION I – AGE GROUP SPECIFIC RULES**

1. **Playing Time**
	1. All Age Groups
		1. All players must play at least one defensive inning and bat at least one time
2. **6U Coach Pitch (Only)**
	1. **Batting Regulations**
		* 1. The batter will receive three pitches from their coach
			2. If the ball is not put in play after three pitches, the player will hit off the tee
				1. Ball on or crossing the 20’ arc is a fair ball
			3. The batter will receive two swings off the tee to put the ball in play
			4. If the ball is not put in play after two tee attempts, the batter will be out
				1. Ball on or crossing the 20’ arc is a fair ball
	2. **Coach Pitcher**
		1. Able to pitch anywhere between the arc (20’) and the end of the pitching line (30’)
	3. **Defensive Coaches**
		1. One defensive coach behind home plate to assist with passed balls (no coaching), two defensive coaches in the outfield (behind the player) and one coach in the dugout.
3. **8U Coach Pitch (Only)**
	1. **Batting Regulations**
		1. Batter will receive five pitches before being declared out.
		2. Batter will be called out on three swinging strikes.
		3. If the fifth pitch is fouled, she may continue to bat.
		4. If the fifth pitch is fouled and caught, it is an out.
	2. **Coach Pitcher**
		1. Must pitch behind the end of the pitching line (30’)
	3. **Defensive Coaches**
		1. One defensive coach behind home plate to assist with passed balls (no coaching).
4. **6U & 8U Coach Pitch (Four Coaches Max)**
	1. Pitching Rules
		1. An offensive coach will pitch to her own team.
		2. The coach may only coach the batter until she reaches first base or after she leaves third base. (Penalty: The coach will be replaced after the second occurrence for the remainder of the game)
		3. Pitcher must keep one foot on or straddle the pitching line.
		4. Pitcher must pitch under-handed.
		5. Any batted ball that hits the pitching coach will be a dead ball and called no pitch.
			1. If the pitching coach intentionally allows the ball to hit him/her. (Penalty: batter is out - Umpire’s Judgment). No runner may advance.
		6. The offensive coach (pitcher) must attempt to avoid interference and try to pick-up the batter’s bat provided he/she does not interfere with the play.
			1. If the offensive coach (pitcher) does not attempt to get off the field and/or interferes with the defensive player to keep her from making a play will result in the batter being called out (Umpire’s Judgment). No runner will advance.
	2. Offense Rules
		1. Ball in play must be on or crossing the 20’ arc to be a fair ball
		2. After one warning per game, per player for slinging her bat, the batter will be out, a dead ball called, and no runner advance.
		3. No bunting allowed.
			1. If batter squares to bunt and then swings, she will be called out; this will be umpire’s judgment.
		4. Any base runner leaving the base before the ball reaches home plate is out.
			1. (Penalty: The ball is dead and all other runners return to base occupied prior to pitch – Umpire’s judgment.)
			2. The pitch will not count.
		5. Stealing is not allowed in coach pitch.
	3. Defense Rules
		1. No rolling the ball intentionally will be allowed.
		2. The infield fly rule will not be in effect.
		3. Only ten players on the field: six infielders (including pitcher & catcher) and four outfielders.
			1. There must always be players in the pitcher and catcher roles. If playing shorthand, the player must come from the in-field or outfield.
		4. The defensive player listed as a pitcher will stay in contact with the player pitcher line until the ball is hit.
		5. Play shall not be stopped by the defensive team heading off or stopping the front runner. Trailing runners may advance at their own risk.
		6. If a player is injured by being hit with a batted or thrown ball, time out will be called immediately. Bases will be awarded/outs will be called at the umpire’s discretion based on each individual situation.

1. **10U Live Arm (Four Coaches Max)**
	1. The infield fly rule is in effect.
	2. The dropped third strike rule is not in effect.
		1. The batter is out but other runners may advance at their own risk.
	3. Stealing
		1. The baserunner must stay in contact with the base until the pitch reaches home plate
		2. Penalty for leaving too soon is OUT.
	4. Nine defensive players will be used.
	5. In the 10U Live Arm, it is illegal for a batter to square to bunt and then draw back his bat and swing away at pitch – contact with ball not required.
		1. Penalty Out and all runners must return to base occupied at time of pitch.
	6. Pitching Regulations
		1. If the player pitcher walks or hits three (3) batters during one inning, the opposing coach will pitch to their batters for the remainder of that half inning.
			1. The rules will revert back to coach pitch at this point
		2. The player pitcher will remain in the game in the pitching position
		3. The player pitcher will be allowed to pitch again the following inning.
	7. If a player is injured by being hit with a batted or thrown ball, time out will be called immediately. Bases will be awarded/outs will be called at the umpire’s discretion based on each individual situation.
2. **12U & 14U Live Arm (Four Coaches Max)**
	1. The infield fly rule is in effect.
	2. Dropped third strike rule is in effect.
	3. Stealing
		1. The baserunner must stay in contact with the base until the pitch reaches home plate
		2. Penalty for leaving too soon is OUT.
	4. Illegal Pitches
		1. Will be called per regulation (one warning per pitcher)
	5. Nine defensive players will be used.
	6. If a player is injured by being hit with a batted or thrown ball, time out will be called immediately. Bases will be awarded/outs will be called at the umpire’s discretion based on each individual situation.