

## **GRPA & 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:
  - a. 6U Coach Pitch
  - b. 8U Coach Pitch
  - c. 10U Live Arm
  - d. 12U Live Arm
  - e. 14U Live Arm
2. Each player must go through a draft that splits teams as even as possible based on skill level.
  - a. No stacking of teams is allowed.
  - b. No outside teams (travel teams, pick up teams, etc.) are allowed.

### **SECTION B – GOVERNING BODY**

3. Official USA Softball Fast Pitch Softball Rules printed in the current edition of the Official Guide for National USA Softball is an accepted guide for GRPA games with the exceptions found in this manual.
4. Any player or coach ejected from a game for unsportsmanlike conduct will be suspended for one game, in addition to the game from which ejected.
5. 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 GRPA roster.
6. All head and assistant coaches that are coaching youth teams participating in all levels of GRPA Athletics must have undergone a criminal background check through their department. By signing the teams GRPA roster, the Department Director or their designee attests that this has taken place.
7. 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**

8. Game Times, Innings & Run Limits
  - a. 6U – 1:00 (1 hour), Five (5) Innings or mathematical elimination
    - i. Five (5) runs per inning
  - b. 8U & 10U – 1:15 (1 hour & 15 mins), Five (5) Innings or mathematical elimination
    - i. Five (5) runs per inning
  - c. 12U & 14U – 1:30 (1 hour & 30 mins), Six (6) Innings or mathematical elimination
    - i. Six (6) runs per inning
9. Once time has expired, the inning will be completed (unless the home team is batting and winning when time expires).
10. A game which is tied after regulation play shall be considered completed.

## **SECTION D – SPECIAL PROVISIONS**

### **11. Shorthanded Rule**

- a. 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).
  - i. The vacant position must be listed last in the batting order.
  - ii. An out will be recorded when the vacant position in the batting order is scheduled to bat.
- b. To continue a game once started with a full team listed on the line-up card:
  - i. 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.
  - ii. If playing shorthanded and a substitute arrives, the substitute must be inserted immediately into the vacant spot.
  - iii. If the player leaving the game is a runner or batter, the runner or batter shall be declared out.
  - iv. 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.

### **12. Slung Bats**

- a. A slung bat will result in a team warning for the offending team on the first offense.
- b. Each additional slung bat for that team will result in the batter being called out.
- c. If the same player continues to violate the rule, she can be removed from the game.

### **13. Courtesy Runners**

- a. At any time, the team at-bat may use courtesy runners for the pitcher and/or the catcher.
  - i. The same runner may not be used for both positions.
  - ii. Neither the pitcher nor the catcher will be required to leave the game under such circumstances.
  - iii. The courtesy runner for the pitcher or catcher must be anyone not in the current batting order.
  - iv. If no subs are available, then the last batted out is to be utilized as the courtesy runner.
  - v. A player may not run as a courtesy runner for the pitcher or the catcher and then be used as a substitute for another player in the half inning. (Penalty: out if discovered prior to next pitch).
- b. In 6U & 8U, no courtesy runner for the pitcher is allowed (catcher only).

### **14. Batting Lineups**

- a. A continuous batting lineup will be used in 6U, 8U, 10U & 12U age groups
  - i. Free defensive subs will be allowed
- b. A standard batting lineup will be used in the 14U age group
  - i. Subs must be reported to the umpire / scorekeeper

15. Charged Conferences

- a. Each team when on defense may be granted no more than three conferences during a game without penalty, to permit a coach to confer with defensive players.
  - i. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.

**SECTION E – PITCHING REGULATIONS**

16. 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.

17. Innings Allowed Per Pitcher

- a. No more than two games in a day

18. Replacing a Pitcher

- a. 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.

19. Illegal pitches shall be in effect for the 12U & 14U age groups.

**SECTION F – APPROVED EQUIPMENT**

20. Rubber-molded, cleated shoes are approved for use in all age groups.

- a. Steel spikes are approved for 14U.

21. Regulation home plate, pitcher's plate, and bases shall be used (the double base is recommended at first base).

- a. The double first base will be required for hosting post-season tournaments

22. Gloves and mitts are governed by NFS Rules. Pitcher's gloves must be of one color.

23. 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.

- a. The helmets must be approved by NOCSAE.

24. 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.

- a. Facemask are recommended (required for post-season play)
- b. The helmets must be approved by NOCSAE.

25. Bats

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. The official bat shall not be more than 2.250 inches in diameter at its largest part, including any tolerance for expansion.
- d. The official bat must bear either the ASA, USA SOFTBALL, or USSSA stamped certifications
- e. 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.

26. For all 6U and 8U coach pitch, it is mandatory that the pitcher wear a face mask.

- a. It is optional for all other infield players.

**SECTION G – PLAYING FIELD REQUIREMENTS**

27. 6U & 8U Coach Pitch

- a. Base Distance: 60'
- b. Pitching Distance: 46' (middle of circle)
- c. Pitching Circle Diameter: 10'
- d. Foul Arc: 20'
- e. Pitching Line (Connecting Circle & Arc): Straight
- f. Safety Line (1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Foul Line): 46'

28. 10U Live Arm

- a. Base Distance: 60'
- b. Pitching Distance: 35'
- c. Pitching Circle Diameter: 16'

29. 12U Live Arm

- a. Base Distance: 60'
- b. Pitching Distance: 40'
- c. Pitching Circle Diameter: 16'

30. 14U Live Arm

- a. Base Distance: 60'
- b. Pitching Distance: 43'
- c. Pitching Circle Diameter: 16'

**SECTION H – PROTEST & APPEALS**

31. A judgment decision by an umpire on any play shall not be protested.

32. Protests on misinterpretation of the rules are allowed to the head umpire on the field, prior to the next pitch.

33. Protests of illegal players can only be made by agency staff members to the Baseball / Softball Commissioner.

## **SECTION I – AGE GROUP SPECIFIC RULES**

### **34. 6U Coach Pitch (Only)**

#### **a. Batting Regulations**

##### **i. Start of Season through April 28**

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
  - a. Ball 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
  - a. Ball crossing the 20' arc is a fair ball

##### **ii. April 29 through the End of Season**

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, he/she may continue to bat.
4. If the fifth pitch is fouled and caught, it is an out.

### **35. 8U Coach Pitch (Only)**

#### **a. Batting Regulations**

- i. Batter will receive five pitches before being declared out.
- ii. Batter will be called out on three swinging strikes.
- iii. If the fifth pitch is fouled, he/she may continue to bat.
- iv. If the fifth pitch is fouled and caught, it is an out.

### **36. 6U & 8U Coach Pitch (Four Coaches Max)**

#### **a. Pitching Rules**

- i. An offensive coach will pitch to her own team.
- ii. 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)
- iii. The pitcher may pitch anywhere from outside of the 20' foul arc and the pitching circle.
- iv. Pitcher may not cross the foul arc or enter the pitching circle (while pitching)
- v. Pitcher must keep one foot on or straddle the pitching line.
- vi. Pitcher must pitch over-handed.
- vii. 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. (Penalty: batter is out - Umpire's Judgment). No runner may advance.
- viii. The offensive coach (pitcher) must attempt to avoid interference and try to pick-up the batter's bat provided 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 him from making a play will result in the batter being called out (Umpire's Judgment). No runner will advance.

b. Offense Rules

- i. After one warning per game, per player for slinging her bat, the batter will be out, a dead ball called, and no runner advance.
- ii. No bunting allowed.
  1. If batter squares to bunt and then swings, she will be called out; this will be umpire's judgment.
- iii. 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.
- iv. No courtesy runner for the pitcher is allowed (catcher only).

c. Defense Rules

- i. No rolling the ball intentionally will be allowed.
- ii. The infield fly rule will not be in effect.
- iii. 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.
- iv. The defensive player listed as a pitcher will stay in the ten-foot circle until the ball is hit.
  1. The player/pitcher may have one foot outside the circle. (Penalty: Offense gets choice of the play or no pitch).
- v. Play shall not be stopped by the defensive team heading off or stopping the front runner. Trailing runners may advance at their own risk.
- vi. 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.
- vii. The player in the pitching position on defense shall wear a mask for safety reasons.

**37. 10U Live Arm (Four Coaches Max)**

- a. The infield fly rule is in effect.
- b. The dropped third strike rule is not in effect.
  - i. The batter is out but other runners may advance at their own risk.
- c. Courtesy runners may be used for pitcher and catcher and must be anyone not in the current batting order or the last batted out if no substitutions are available. It cannot be the same person for both positions.
- d. Stealing
  - i. The baserunner must stay in contact with the base until the pitch reaches home plate
  - ii. Penalty for leaving too soon is OUT.
- e. Nine defensive players will be used.
- f. 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.
  - i. Penalty Out and all runners must return to base occupied at time of pitch.
- g. Pitching Regulations
  - i. 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
  - ii. The player pitcher will remain in the game in the pitching position
  - iii. The player pitcher will be allowed to pitch again the following inning.

**38. 12U & 14U Live Arm (Four Coaches Max)**

- a. The infield fly rule is in effect.
- b. Dropped third strike rule is in effect.
- c. Courtesy runners may be used for pitcher and catcher and must be anyone not in the current batting order or the last batted out if no substitutions are available. It cannot be the same person for both positions.
- d. Stealing
  - i. The baserunner may lead off and steal at any moment.
- e. Illegal Pitches
  - i. Will be called per regulation (one warning per pitcher)
- f. Nine defensive players will be used.