

2009 U.S.S.S.A. Youth Softball Program Rules

Group Age

- Mini 7 – 8 years (Monday & Wednesday)
- Midget 9 – 10 years (Tuesday & Thursday)
- Pee Wee 11 – 12 years (13 & 14 depending on ability) (Monday & Wednesday)
- Seniors 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 years (Tuesday & Thursday)

Game Rules

(unless otherwise noted, all rules should be applied to all age divisions)

The following rules will govern and supersede standard rules contained in the USSSA rulebook where conflict exists.

Base Path

- 50' Mini
- 55' Midget
- 60' Pee Wee and Seniors

Pitcher's Mound

- 25-40' Mini
- 35' Midget
- 40' Pee Wee
- 50' Seniors

Innings

- 6 Mini and Midget
- 7 Pee Wee and Seniors

If after four (4) complete innings a team is leading by fifteen (15) or more runs, the game can be terminated by the trailing team's manager. This is to be a determination made only by the trailing team's manager, and shall not be subject to appeal or criticism by the opposing manager or team. If team is leading by ten (10) runs after five (5) complete (four ½ (4 ½) if home team is ahead) game will be over. Maximum of 1 Manager and 2 Coaches on the field during any game that has begun.

Time Limit

- A new inning will not be started after 1 hour and 30 minutes into the game. An inning in progress will be completed.
- From the time a 3rd strike is called, teams have 2 minutes to change field position and resume play. The umpire CAN start calling balls and strikes after 2 minutes. If your catcher is on base with 2 outs, a courtesy runner (player making the last out) can be substituted.

Players

- Coaches are required to register their official roster and keep an accurate roster of players at all times. A team roster should include: player name, jersey number, address, city, telephone number and date of birth.
- No more than the number of players established by the team roster may be in uniform during the game.
- A player can play in a higher age group, but not in a lower age group. Players cannot play in both age groups at the same time. A child can only be moved up with the Director's approval.
- Jewelry cannot be worn on the playing field: new piercings can be taped.
- You may borrow players if you cannot field a team of 10. We do not borrow for an 11th or more players. A maximum of 3 players may be borrowed. The same players may not be borrowed by the same team more than twice. If possible the borrowed player should be of an equal ability as the absent players. To borrow a player, the Manager MUST notify their Director as soon as possible. The Director will verify with the family that the child will be absent BEFORE selecting a player to be borrowed from another team. A Director, Assistant Commissioner or Commissioner must authorize the substitution. Borrowed players WILL NOT be allowed to pitch.
- 15 minutes after the official starting time of a game is the forfeit time if a team does not have enough players. A team may play a game with a minimum of eight (8) players. When fielding eight (8) players, there will be only two outfielders.
- A team that does not field the proper number of players for an official rescheduled game will forfeit that game.
- If a participant has to leave a game for any reason except for illness or injury the next time they would have been up to bat will be scored as one out. All subsequent at bats for that person is simply passed by, no out is scored. There are no penalties for leaving the game for illness or injury. If a player leaves a game for illness or injury she is still allowed to reenter for the remainder of the game. Teams must maintain a minimum of eight (8) players to continue the game. If a team has less than eight (8) players after starting the game, the score will revert to the previous complete inning score, if at least four (4) innings have been played by the trailing team. If less than four (4) innings have been played, the game will be suspended at that point and resumed at a later date with the same number of players as were in the lineup for the suspended game. The Director will have the authority to settle any disputes arising out of the suspension or calling of the game, and the resumption of the game.
- Each team will use ten (10) players in the field. The fielders will consist of five (5) infielders (including pitcher), four (4) outfielders and one (1) catcher.
- If a team loses a player during the current season through permanent injury, permanent illness, change of address, or other justifiable reason, the team will obtain a player through the Director to replace the player lost. The playing ability of the new player shall not be considered in replacing said player. The procedure of replacing lost player is as follows:
- The coach shall inform the Director of the conditions and circumstances that necessitates this replacement.

- If the Director and/or the Commissioner agree that the reasons are justifiable, the player shall be replaced.

Line-ups

- Everyone that is present to play at the beginning of the game will be listed in the batting line-up; anyone coming late will be placed at the end of the line-up. Late arriving players play in proportion to the inning in which they arrive.
- When there is one (1) bench player, they may sit only one inning per game.
- Players may sit only 2 (2) innings in a game and may not be consecutive.
- Managers will list the player's numbers at the bottom of the scorebook in the innings they sit. The scorebook can be reviewed by opposing coach at anytime.
- Discrepancies will be handled immediately.
- A manager cannot discipline a player by not playing them the minimum playing time without being approved, in advance, in writing by the Director.
- Only the Director can drop a player from a team roster.

GAME UMPIRES

- Coaches must meet with the umpire(s) five minutes before game time for instructions and announce ineligible players and pitchers. Coaches are responsible for ensuring that the umpires are aware of the special rules of the GCYAA – those that differ from the USSSA.
- The umpire will determine if a game should be called for weather, darkness, or time limit according to the age group he/she is umpiring that day. If, in the judgment of the umpire, one of the tries to stall or delay the game to take advantage of the time limit, impending weather or darkness, the umpire shall declare a forfeit against the that team. This is a judgment call and is not subject to protest.
- Criticism of any umpire's decision will NOT be tolerated. Managers and coaches MUST back these decisions at all times. Both team managers should assist the umpire in immediately stopping any spectator criticism. The ONLY person who may address the umpire is the manager or acting manager. Persons not in this capacity are subject to ejection from the area of the field at the umpire's discretion. Managers are responsible for the conduct of players, parents and fans.
- Volunteer umpires, also known as pick-up umpires, may be used upon agreement of both managers. If both managers agree to play with a pickup umpire, the game will be official. Volunteer umpires will call balls/strikes from behind the plate and will not receive monetary compensation.
- After a game has started, only the umpire can call time.
- If an umpire sees lightning, play stops and there is a 15-minute wait to see if play can resume; if weather conditions continue the game is over or suspended depending on the inning. The game is over if 3 ½ innings have been played and the home team is ahead, or after 4 or more completed innings. A suspended game is rescheduled and resumes at the point it was left off. There is a 15 minute wait for a rain delay to see if play can resume.

Base Running

- The batter is out if she has 3 strikes; or she hits a second foul after 2 strikes (ball is dead; runners do not advance).
- There is no intentional sliding in the Mini and Midget age groups.
- Overthrow rule: If thrown out of play (beyond the fence lines) the runner will receive the base they were running to PLUS one base; if the overthrow is still in bounds, runners proceed at their own risk. Base runners may advance until the umpire calls time.
- A runner cannot leave the base until the ball crosses the plate. No relaxed step rule.
- A ball that leaves the fence line is out of play.

Pitching

- Any player on a roster may pitch.
- One pitch to a batter constitutes a pitcher being used.
- A pitcher can be removed from the pitchers position and be returned once any time during the game to the pitchers position. If the player is returned once to the pitchers position, it counts as two pitchers used.
- Pitching arc: 3' from the point of release and no higher than 10' from the ground.
- The pitcher must position both their feet on the ground and in contact with the pitching rubber. The pivot foot (pitching hand side) must remain in contact with the pitching rubber until the ball is released. The opposite foot's first motion must be forward.
- Strike zone: when the ball passes over any part of the plate, from the top of the batters highest shoulder to the bottom of the batters front knee.
- Trips to the mound. One per inning, second trip in the same inning constitutes removal of the pitcher from that position. Exception: umpire called injury time-out.

Other Rules

- **A COACH, PLAYER, ATTENDANT OR BENCH PERSONNEL SHALL NOT USE TOBACCO PRODUCTS IN ANY FORM IN THE CONFINES OF THE PLAYING FIELD. PENALTY: UMPIRES SHALL ISSUE A TEAMWARNING; ANY SUBSEQUENT OFFENDERS ON THE TEAM SHALL BE EJECTED.**
- **ANY RULES NOT SPECIFICALLY COVERED HERE SHALL BE GOVERNED BY OTHER RULES OF THE U.S.S.S.A. PLAY BOOK.**

Disciplinary Actions

- If a player is benched before or during a game the manager must report this action to their Director.
- Misconduct will not be tolerated under any circumstances. All parents, players, coaches and managers will sign a code of conduct contract. This is instituted for the safety and well being of our children. Managers and coaches that have been thrown out of a game will come under a review and may be subject to suspension or firing. Players, parents, coaches and managers may be removed at any time if their conduct is considered in violation of any of the following rules:

GCYAA Softball, Bylaws or U.S.S.S.A. rules and regulations. If necessary a hearing will be held. There will be zero tolerance.

- Players not in the field, batting, or in the on-deck circle must stay in the dugouts at all times. Siblings, friends and other team players should not be in the dug out. There will be no Harassment of opposing players (this includes songs and chants aimed at offending the other Team). Penalties include player, parent, coaches and manager removal from the game. Foul language may result in suspension.

Mini only rules

- The manager for the defensive team will be the official umpire for each ½ inning that their team is on the field defensively.
- Each batter will receive a maximum of 5 pitches. There will be no walks, but batters can strike out on three swings. A fouled ball on the 5th pitch results in the player being out.
- No participant may play the same position more than two (2) innings in any game.
- If a pitcher (coach) is hit by a batted ball the play will be played again, having no effect on the batter's count.
- The team will bat thru the line-up or 3 outs.
- In the interest of keeping the game instructional, standing will not be kept or posted. Scorebooks and scores are for the managers' benefit (for team development), and for determining when five (5) runs have been scored in a half (1/2) inning.
- The pitcher in this league is the batting team's manager or coach. Pitching distance should be 25 to 40 feet. There will always be a participant assigned to the position of pitcher, for the purpose of fielding the ball.

Home Team

- The home team will sit on the 3B side, and will be responsible for bringing the bases and measuring out the distances. The home team should use the field for warm-ups/practice after the visiting team and vacate the field 5 minutes prior to game time. The team listed on the schedule last is the home team.

Away Team

- The away team sits on the 1B side. The away team should use the field for warm-ups/practice first and vacate the field 15 minutes prior to game time.

Scores and Standings

- The manager of the winning team will be responsible for entering scores as soon as the game has ended. In the event of a tie game, the home team is responsible for entering the score in the Website.
- Each team will have a maximum of 5 runs or 3 outs per inning with the exception of the last inning of play being unlimited. **This rule is for Midgets only.**
- Tie games will count as half games won and half games lost in the standings.

- In the event of a tie game, at the end of innings that constitute a complete game, if there is time to continue play, the game will continue until a team wins or time expires.
- Tournament positions will be decided based on the number of games won and lost. However, if there is a tie for first place in the same division, the play-off positions will be decided by the Director using:
 - 1st – The record of head to head competition.
 - 2nd – The least number of runs scored by opposing teams in head to head competition.
 - 3rd – The tied teams' record against the next highest team in the standing.
 - 4th – The least number of runs scored by the next highest team in the standings against their team.
 - 5th – A coin toss by the Director in the presence of the coaches/acting coaches of the tied teams, with the winner of the coin toss being the higher position in the tournament.

Equipment:

- **GAME BALLS**
 1. Game balls must be yellow leather and 11” softballs. Home team will supply the game ball.
- **Bats:**
 1. Must be round and no more than 34 inches long, 2 and ¼ inches in diameter at its largest part, and not exceed a weight of 38 ounces. Bats may be made of wood, metal, fiberglass, graphite, or bamboo. All bats must have some kind of grip or gripping tape on the handle, in proper condition.
- **Batting Helmets:**
 1. Helmets are required to be worn by all players that are batting, running or on deck. Players are not to take the helmet off until they have returned to the dugout. Any player intentionally throwing a helmet should be called out by the umpire.
 2. The catcher must wear a mask, protective helmet, chest protector and shin guards. Offensive players must wear a “NOCSAE” approved batting helmet with extended ear Flaps to cover both ears and temples when in the live area.
- **Team Gear:**
 1. The league supplies each team with an equipment bag containing: a first-aid kit, ice packs, scorebooks, measuring tape, bats, balls, tee, bases, helmets and catching gear. The equipment is the responsibility of the team coach and is to be returned to the equipment manager at the end of the season.

Uniforms

- Players should be in complete uniform. The sole of the shoes may have soft or hard rubber cleats. Metal cleats are prohibited. Shoes with cleats should be worn by all players, but tennis shoes are acceptable.

Injuries

- Injured players must be attended to immediately. All play must stop if the injury appears to be in the slightest way serious. Base runners shall be awarded bases at the umpire's discretion. The players parents must be contacted immediately. An accident report must be filled out within 24 hours.

Protests

- Only rule violations may be protested, not judgment calls. BALLS AND STRIKES CANNOT BE PROTESTED.
- At the time of the alleged infraction, the game is to be IMMEDIATELY stopped, the umpire is to be notified that there is a protest and both scorebooks should be signed by all parties concerned. The game resumes. YOU CANNOT DECIDE TO PROTEST AFTER THE GAME.
- A protest form must be filed with your Director within 24 hours.
- The Director will contact all involved for a written explanation.
- The Director will ask for a meeting with the Assistant Commissioner and the Commissioner and they will present the protest. The Director will contact those involved with the outcome.

Tryout Rules

- Girls must come to tryouts. Attendance will be taken and collected by the Directors. There will be NO HAT PICKS. All manager and coaches must get approval from their Directors, commissioners and GCYAA Board.

Draft rules

- Sister Act: unless parents request otherwise, sisters will be drafted on the same team. If you draft one sister, the other sister will be automatically assigned to a draft round equal to her sister, if the sisters are in the same age group then they will go in consecutive rounds. Girls living in the same household will be considered a "sister act".
- While we may try to honor a parental request, we do not guarantee them.
- Ride acts are not guaranteed. However, we will honor requests NOT to be on a specific team, or children to be kept apart.
- Manager and one (1) coach may protect their child.

COACHES

- All coaches MUST be approved by the Governing Board of NDHBL. No one under 18 and unapproved may be on the field in a coaching capacity.

Rainouts

- Notification will come from the Softball Commissioner or the GCYAA President. Directors will notify managers. Notification may be posted online. **DO NOT CALL THE REC OR THE CITY.** If you are not notified, please assume the game will be played and show up at your scheduled time ready to play. The Umpire is the last one to call a game because of rain. A game not having enough players will not automatically be reschedule, it is a forfeit. If the 6:00 games are cancelled, that does not automatically mean that the later games will be cancelled, again please show up.