**2022 Sudbury Girls’ Softball**

**Intermediate League (Grades 5-6) Rules**

**League Philosophy:**

The purpose of the Sudbury Girls Softball League (SGSL) is to provide Sudbury and Lincoln girls the opportunity to take part in a skills development-based softball program, progressing to fast pitch softball (USA rules) in the spirit of fun and good sportsmanship. The overall philosophy of the league is that girls should have the opportunity to compete and having fun should be of maximum importance.

**Playing Rules**

1. Every girl must be allotted equal playing time, including **at least 2 innings in the infield**.
2. Players are **limited to 3 innings maximum at any one position**, except pitcher, catcher, or outfield where they may play up to 4 innings.
3. Teams may have up to **10 players** in the field with **free substitution**. Outfield players must remain on the outfield grass until the pitch leaves the pitcher’s hand.
4. **All players in attendance will bat** in a pre-determined batting order.

**Pre-Game**

1. If a league approved umpire is not present 5 minutes prior to game time, the two coaches must agree on a replacement umpire. Replacement umpire must use appropriate protective equipment.
2. Visiting team takes infield 25 minutes prior to game time for 10 minutes. Home team takes infield 15 minutes prior to game time for 10 minutes.
3. Both head coaches MUST attend a pregame conference with the umpire no later than five (5) minutes prior to the start time of the game.
4. Anyone 18 or under warming up a pitcher MUST wear a catcher’s mask with helmet.

**Playing Field, Equipment and Safety**

1. The distance between the back of home plate and the front of the pitching rubber will be **40 feet**.
2. Catchers are required to wear all protective gear – helmet/facemask, chest protector, and shin pads.
3. Any player warming up a pitcher is required to wear a catcher’s mask (see #4 above).
4. All infielders including the pitcher, are required to wear a fielding mask. SGS strongly recommends that the entire outfield wear one as well.
5. All batters, on-deck batters, baserunners, and players acting as base coaches must wear a helmet with face guard.
6. No jewelry is allowed. Players must remove all jewelry prior to the game with the exception of medical bracelets.

**Conduct Rules**

1. Good sportsmanship and behavior are expected from players, coaches, and parents.
2. Cheering for your own team is highly encouraged. Teamwork and building an enjoyable experience for all the girls in the league is our desired goal. However, there comes a time when the line can be crossed, and it is up to the coaches and the umpire to be aware of the incidents and to try to maintain a level playing field for both teams. This issue is not only between girls from both teams, but it also involves coaches and parents. Negative cheers about the other team should not be tolerated. Sudden noises (shouts, horns, foot-stomping, "swing", or other noise making devices) shall not be tolerated. Players and Coaches should not purposely distract the other team’s pitcher. Coaches are responsible for adherence to this etiquette for themselves, their other coaches, their players, AND their players’ parents/spectators.

**Game Rules**

1. League games should not exceed (6) innings or one hour and twenty minutes long. At one hour and twenty minutes, you finish the inning you are playing, and the next inning is announced as the final inning. Unlimited runs are allowed in the final inning.
2. No new inning will start after 1 hour and 45 minutes.
3. The umpire has the right to suspend a game due to darkness or inclement weather.
4. Mercy Rule: An inning is considered over when 3 outs are recorded or if the batting team scores 4 runs in the inning. The Mercy Rule is not in effect during the last inning of the game.

**Pitching**

1. Hit by pitch will be awarded first base. The umpire determines hit by Pitch (HBP) – i.e., at the umpire’s discretion, the batter has made a legitimate effort to avoid being hit by the ball.
2. Call-ups/call-overs cannot pitch.
3. If the ball slips from the pitcher's hand during the delivery, then the ball remains live and runners may advance at their own risk.
4. Pitchers should follow the guidelines set forth by USA Softball which include that a pitcher in Girls Fast Pitch may start with both feet on the pitcher’s plate or one foot on the pitcher’s plate and step back prior to separating their hands. **Rule 6A, Section 1C & E**

**Batting**

1. Intentional bunting is *not* allowed.
2. Infield Fly Rule is *not* in effect.
3. Dropped Third Strike rule is *not* in effect.

**Base Running**

1. Runners may not leave the base until the release of the pitch.
2. Base runners may steal from second to third and third to home, but only two runs per inning may be scored in this fashion. No stealing from first to second is allowed.
3. A team may NOT steal once they are up by **6** runs.
4. When a runner is attempting to steal home the batter must move out of the batter’s box to allow the defensive team to make a play at the plate.
5. In order to avoid contact with a defensive player, a runner must do one of the following: slide, go around, go over (if defensive player is prone), or give themselves up.
6. The on-deck batter may not interfere with a defensive player’s opportunity to make an out.

Effect: 1 The ball is dead. 2 If it involves a runner, the runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out. 3 If it is with the defensive fielder fielding a fly ball, the batter is out.

1. In all cases, the ball is “live” until it is in the possession of the pitcher within the pitcher’s circle and the play is over.
2. One base on an over-throw that goes out of play. If the ball remains in play on an overthrow, runners advance at their own risk until ball is in possession of pitcher within the pitcher’s circle (see #4 above).
3. Runner hit by a batted ball which has not been touched by a fielder is out unless they are standing on a base or in foul territory.
4. Look Back Rule: (Fast Pitch) shall be in effect for all runners when: 1 The ball is live. 2 The batter-runner has reached first base or has been declared out. 3 The pitcher has possession and control of the ball within the pitcher’s circle. The pitcher is considered to be in the pitcher’s circle when both feet are on or within the lines. a) When a runner is legitimately off a base after a pitch or as a result of a batter completing a turn at bat, and while the pitcher has control of the ball within the eight-foot radius of the pitcher’s plate, the runner may stop once then must immediately return to the base or attempt to advance to the next base. b) Once the runner stops at a base for any reason the runner will be declared out if leaving the base. c) Responsibilities of the batter-runner after reaching first base, and while the pitcher has control of the ball within the eight-foot radius of the pitcher’s plate, including a base on balls or a dropped third strike, are as follows: A batter-runner who rounds first base toward second base may stop once, but then must immediately non-stop return to first base or attempt to advance non-stop to second base. 2 A batter-runner who over-runs first base toward right field, turns left and immediately stops, must then return non-stop to first base or attempt to advance non-stop to second base. 3 A batter-runner who over-runs first base toward right field, turns left and moves directly toward second base and stops, is committed to second base and must attempt to advance non-stop to second base. 4 A batter-runner who over-runs first base toward right field, turns left and moves back toward the infield in any direction except directly toward second base, is committed to first base and must return non-stop to first base. 5 A batter-runner who over-runs first base toward right field, and turns right, is committed to first base and must return non-stop to first base. *Effect - Section 7T[A-C]:* 1 The ball is dead. 2 The runner is out. 3 When more than one runner is off base, only one runner is called out. 4 All other runners return to the last base touched.