

## Grades 6-8

We follow Massachusetts USA Softball rules with the following highlights and/or adjustments

### **COACHING:**

All coaches must adhere to the Coaches Code of Conduct. Norwood Youth Softball expects strict adherence to the Code and any violations will be treated very seriously and may include being asked to leave the position.

### **PLAYING THE GAME:**

**MINIMUM NUMBER OF PLAYERS:** 7 to start, teams can finish a game with less than 7 players.

### **LENGTH OF GAME:**

- 7 innings or 1:35 time limit (not a "drop dead" time limit). TIME LIMIT WILL CHANGE AS SUNSET GETS LATER
- Umpire will determine the last inning based on the approaching curfew, last inning is unlimited runs.
- If the away team is batting after 7:30 PM or 1:30 after the start of the game, then that inning will be the last inning and will be allowed to score unlimited runs. Any game that starts later than the original start time will follow the above rule based on the original start time.

**RAIN OR DARKNESS:** When a game is called due to rain/darkness, the game will count as a completed game if the losing team has completed 4 innings of batting.

### **PITCHING:**

- The mound is 40 feet.
- Pitchers must start with both feet on the rubber, and may only step towards Home Plate.
- Modified or Fast Pitch motion is acceptable.
- Pitchers can pitch unlimited innings in a game.
- Any pitcher can return to the game FREE SUBSTITUTION as with field positions.
- If a pitcher hits 3 players in one inning or 5 players during their five innings in a game, she must be replaced with another pitcher immediately and cannot return to pitch.

### **BATTING:**

- Continuous batting order
- Batting Out of Order: the batter is out, next batter in order is up
- Bunting IS allowed. A foul bunt on the third strike is an out.
- Slap hitting IS allowed.
- Slashing is NOT allowed. (i.e. fake a bunt then pull the bat back and swing at the pitch). A batter who swings is immediately out - no warning
- If a player misses her time at bat because she had to use the restroom, then she is skipped in the order and no out will be recorded. The next batter will bat.

## **RUNNING:**

- **STEAL:** steal any base
- **LEADS:** Runners can take a lead after the ball leaves the pitcher's hand
- **DROPPED 3RD STRIKE:** When 1st base is open or whenever there are 2 outs - the batter may run to first on a dropped third strike. Other runners may advance as well.
- **PINCH RUNNERS:** Pinch runners are encouraged for pitchers and catchers. The last recorded out will be the pinch runner (regardless of the inning). If one pinch runner is already on base, the next previous out becomes the 2nd pinch runner. If a pinch runner is needed in the first at-bat with no outs, the last batter in the batting order runs.
- **SLIDING** is encouraged. The runner is not automatically out for not sliding. Umpires will use their discretion on runners avoiding contact. All runners must try to avoid hard collisions at any base. The umpire will use their discretion to call the runner out if the collision could have been avoided.
- **CONTINUATION** is allowed when a player is walked and second base is open.

**MAXIMUM RUNS PER INNING:** 5 run maximum per inning – except the last inning.

**RUN-AHEAD RULE:** We will follow USA Softball run-ahead rule.

## **DEFENSE:**

- **DEFENSIVE POSITIONS:** Players can play any position and there are no rules on rotating positions.
- **STOPPING PLAY:** The Defensive Team assumes the responsibility of stopping the runners by getting the ball to a base in front of the lead runner (normal softball rules)
- **INFIELD FLY:** The Infield Fly Rule IS in effect.
- **COVERING A BASE:** Players covering a base are not allowed to stand on the base and impede the runner from reaching that base and continuing to the next base. If a player does impede the progress of a runner, the umpire will use their discretion to call interference and award a runner an additional base. If there is a play at a base, the player receiving the ball cannot block the base rather must straddle the base allowing the runner to reach the base whether there is a slide or not.
- **OUTFIELDERS** must start on the outfield grass (or equivalent) for each pitch.
- 9 defensive players per USA Softball
- rules

## **PLAYOFFS:**

- Playoffs are a single elimination tournament and every team qualifies
- Seeds are determined by the final standings
- Tie-breakers are listed below the standings table
- A coin flip will be the final tie-breaker if needed
- Playoff games will have a time-limit, with the exception of the Championship Game (full game)

- When a playoff game is called due to rain, the game will count as a completed game if the losing team has completed 4 innings batting.
- If a playoff game is called for darkness, the score will revert back to the last completed inning, UNLESS: If the home team took the lead in the bottom of the inning, they win the game

### **SAFETY REGULATIONS:**

- HELMETS: All helmets, whether league issued or personal helmets, MUST have cages to be compliant with USAS rules. Batting helmets are required whenever a player has a bat - even during team practices.
- DEFENSIVE MASKS: Defensive masks are mandatory for all infield players
- BATS: ASA approved bats only. Umpires check bats prior to the game.
- Players in Dugout: All players on the batting team must be in the dugout (or bench area) except the batter and the player on deck. Those are the only two players who are allowed to have a bat. On-deck batter must stay behind fence (or similar).
- Coaches must take the responsibility to instruct and control parents/fans of their players.

### **UMPIRES:**

The Major League uses ASA Umpires. The Umpire controls the game. Coaches may not talk to the umpires while a game is in progress except to ask a question about the progress of the game. (i.e. "What is the count?" Or "How many outs are there?"). Please treat them with respect at all times. If you wish to discuss something with the umpire, please do so between innings.