

GIRLS SENIOR LEAGUE SOFTBALL RULES 2021

Wellesley-Wayland-Weston-Needham Girls Softball follows all USA Softball rules, AND the rules and exceptions listed in these two pages.

Batters: All batters must wear helmets with approved NCOASE face masks. All bats must bear the ASA or USA SOFTBALL approved label with a date of 2000 or later. No fake- bunt/swing-away: Any batter that presents in a bunting position, and then swings away, will be called out. Runners who throw off the helmet while the ball is live are called out.

Stealing: Stealing of all bases is allowed. Runners may leave the base when the pitcher releases the ball.

Pitching: The official distance is 40 feet for 6th graders and 43 feet for 7th and 8th graders. With the approval of the opposing head coach, developing 7th grade pitchers may use 40 feet. 6th graders have the option (this is encouraged) to pitch at 43 feet. Both feet must be on the ground within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. Pitchers must start their windmill or slingshot motion with their pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate and their non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the pitcher's plate. The shoulders shall be in line with first and third bases. She shall bring her hands together for not less than one second and not more than 10 seconds before releasing the ball. A backward step may be taken before, simultaneous with or after her hands are brought together. The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate at all times prior to the forward step. After the ball is released, pitchers may take additional steps as needed for proper fielding positioning.

Dropped 3rd strike: This rule is in effect in Senior League. Generally, it means that a batter is allowed to reach first base on a dropped third strike unless 1st base is occupied with less than two outs. The catcher may tag the batter or make a throw to first to complete the out. If the 3rd strike bounces in the dirt, even if it is then caught by the catcher, it is considered a dropped pitch. The catcher must either tag the batter or throw to 1st to complete the out.

Double 1st base: The runner has the right to the orange portion of the base. The fielder has the right to the white portion. Should a dropped 3rd strike be fielded in foul territory the catcher may throw to the 1st baseman in foul territory. In this instance the runner may take the white portion of the base and the 1st baseman takes the orange portion.

Slide rule: USA Softball Rule 8 is in effect. Summary: A fielder is not allowed to block a base while awaiting a throw. If the fielder already has the ball in her possession she may block the base. The runner is out if the runner interferes with play, including colliding with the fielder which should be avoided.

Batting order: Continuous. Every player in the game must take a turn in the batting order. All coaches should submit a batting order to the umpire and the opposing coach at the beginning of the game. Should any player arrive late the umpire and opposing coach must be notified and the player must be added to the end of the batting order. Should a player leave early the umpire and the opposing coach must be notified. Batting out of order may result in the batter being called out.

Fielders: Each team may field 9 players, with three players spread across the outfield, even if there are more than 9 players on the team. If fewer than 9 are playing, then such number less than 9 may be removed from the 3 outfield positions.

Safety: All pitchers must wear a softball fielder's mask. Fielders at 1st, 2nd, SS and 3rd are encouraged to wear a softball fielder's mask.

Player minimum: 7 players on each team. A team may call up 5th grade Junior League players from their assigned sister team(s) to achieve the minimum number, but the 5th grader cannot play in a Senior League game if it conflicts with her Junior League game. If at game time, and after a 15 minute wait, one team still has fewer than 7 players, while the other team has at least 7, then the team with more players shall allow as many players as necessary to play for the other team to even the number of players on both teams and a game will be played, however the official final score shall be deemed to be 7-0 in favor of the team that had enough or extra players at the 15 minute mark.

Inning limits: The league goal is equal playing time. The following rules are in force for the regular and during playoffs.

- Position players, other than pitcher and catcher, may play a maximum of three innings at one position.
- In order to help ensure equal playing time, no players shall be out of the defensive lineup for a second time until (or coincident with) such time as all other players have been out at least once.
- Subject to the immediately preceding rule, the *catcher* may play the entire game.
- ALL PLAYERS MUST PLAY 2 INNINGS IN THE INFIELD. THIS SHOULD BE IN THE FIRST 5 INNINGS. COACHES SHOULD SCHEDULE "MAKE UPS" IF PLAYERS MISS THEIR INFIELD ASSIGNMENT DUE TO RAIN, ETC.
- *Pitchers* have a 4-inning limit per game. Innings do not have to be contiguous, but a pitcher can only ENTER a game *twice* in any one game. If a game goes into extra innings the limits still apply. Any appearance within an inning counts as an inning pitched.

Plunk rule: Any pitcher who hits two batters in the same inning must come out for the remainder of that inning. Once a pitcher hits the fourth batter, she stops pitching immediately and may not return as a pitcher in that game.

Umpires: USA SOFTBALL certified umpires are paid \$60 per game (*Wellesley only*). Payment should be made by the home team prior to the start of the game. Arguing with the umpire is not allowed. Expressing ANY disagreement with umpire judgment calls is not allowed. Coaches are allowed to discuss rule interpretations with umpires between innings. Except for safety issue reasons, coaches should avoid interrupting the opposing team's play with timeouts for questions or concerns.

Game length: Games are 6 innings. In the event of a tie at the end of 6 innings extra innings may be played. Should a game be rain-shortened it is official once four innings (3-1/2 if the home team is leading) have been completed.

Time limit: No inning may start after 1 hour and 45 minutes from the first pitch. If time will only allow 5 innings the umpire will make an announcement to this effect prior to the start of the 5th inning. THERE IS NO TIME LIMIT FOR PLAYOFF GAMES.

Run limit: Except for the final inning, there is a 4-run limit per inning. (*No continuation*). In the final inning (as determined by the umpire), runs are unlimited until three outs are recorded. *There is no other mercy rule.*

Playoff Requirement. A player is not eligible to play in any playoff game unless she is registered at the beginning of the season and has played in a minimum of 50% of the number of regular season games (unless she is absent due to injury)

Rev'd 3/2/21