

2021 Sudbury Girls Softball Junior League (Grades 3-4) 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 skill and 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 all girls should have the opportunity to compete but 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**.
4. **All players in attendance will bat** in a pre-determined batting order.

Playing Field, Equipment and Safety

1. The distance between the back of home plate and the front of the pitching rubber will be **35 feet**.
2. Catchers are required to wear all protective gear – helmet/facemask, chest protector, and shin pads.
3. Any player, coach or parent warming up a pitcher is required to wear a catcher's mask. A face mask does not suffice. This is a USA Softball rule and cannot be deviated from.
4. All batters, on-deck batters, and baserunners must wear a helmet with faceguard.
5. The Junior League will use an 11" hard softball.
6. No jewelry is allowed except a medical alert bracelet which must be taped down. Players must remove all jewelry prior to the game.

The Game

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. The umpire has the right to suspend a game due to darkness or inclement weather.
3. **Mercy Rule: An inning is considered over when (3) outs are recorded or if the batting team scores (4) runs in the inning.** The play may continue until it is over, however only 4 runs per inning will count. The Mercy Rule is not in effect during the last inning of the game.

Pitching

1. Both feet must be on the ground within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. The shoulders shall be in line with first and third bases. The pitcher shall take a position 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. A backward step may be taken before, simultaneous with or after the hands are brought together. The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate at all times prior to the forward step.
2. Once the pitcher has thrown four balls to a batter, the coach will take over pitching to that at bat. The coach will continue pitching until the batter hits the ball or strikes out.
3. "Hit by Pitch" (HBP) -- If the pitcher hits a batter with a pitched ball, the pitch will be ruled a ball and the coach will take over pitching to that batter until the batter hits the ball or strikes out. In cases where the child is hit and is not able to continue the at bat, they will be awarded first base.
4. If a pitcher hits 2 batters in an inning or 3 batters in a game, she must be replaced with a new pitcher. (Note: Coaches may use their discretion. If they believe the batter could have moved out of the way of the pitch, then it will not count as a HBP against the pitcher.)
5. Pitchers must demonstrate proficiency during practice (and practice pitching at home outside of team practice) and be able to throw at least 40% strikes to be considered eligible to pitch, at the head coach's discretion. From a safety perspective, players must also be able to field the position adequately to avoid injury.

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. A player who hits the ball sufficiently for it to reach the outfield may attempt to take up to two (2) bases, as directed by the first base coach. Players on base may advance no more than two (2) bases. If the ball is hit in the air and lands (on the fly) in the outfield grass, the player may take as many bases as they can, at their own discretion, until the ball is under control back in the infield.
2. Advancing on a first base overthrow is *not* in effect. Runners can advance up to one base on overthrows at all other bases, at their own discretion.
3. The runner is allowed to leave second base when the pitch reaches home plate. No more than 2 steals per half inning. The catcher is encouraged to throw the ball down to third base; however, the runner may not advance to home on an overthrow. Any team with a 5-run lead or more, may not steal.
4. Sliding is allowed and is encouraged for plays at home plate to avoid injury. Players are encouraged to wear baseball/softball pants and/or a sliding pad.
5. The play is over when the ball is in the possession of the pitcher within the pitcher's circle.
6. 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.