

# WGSL

## Instructional Division Rules

### SPRING SEASON

### 2011

It is the objective of the Wallingford Girls' Softball League to provide an organized slow pitch softball league to school age girls who live in the Town of Wallingford, while providing a positive experience for all participants. The League stresses fundamental skill development, team play and fun in a sports activity. Fair play, cooperation and respect among players, coaches, parents/spectators, and officials are emphasized at all times. All rules and regulations established by the League are directed to these ends. All regulations shall be interpreted and applied by the coaches in the way in which they are intended. Circumventing League intentions to win, though technically permissible in some cases, is not considered in the best interest of the league, its participants and most importantly, the girls.

**GOAL** - The Instructional Division introduces our youngest players to the game of softball. Only the most basic rules of the game will be used in this non-competitive atmosphere. Players will see team play as they learn to bat, throw, catch, and run bases.

**ELIGIBILITY** - The Instructional Division is open to any girl who will attain the age of five (5) years old by Opening Day and all girls in Kindergarten and first (1<sup>st</sup>) grade who lives within or attends school within the boundaries of the Town of Wallingford. The maximum age is seven (7) years as of January 1.

**RULES AND GUIDELINES** - Instructional Division play shall conform to only the most basic rules of softball. Since the older divisions comply with the rules of the Amateur Softball Association (ASA), it is the intent of the League to gradually introduce Instructional players to these rules.

#### **THE PLAYING FIELD**

- a. The pitching rubber shall be placed thirty (30) feet from the rear point of home plate.
- Bases shall be placed forty-five (45) feet apart. The home team coach will set the bases and pitching rubber before the game and return them to the locked field box after the game (if necessary).

## **EQUIPMENT**

- Bats used in the League must be marked T-ball, "OFFICIAL SOFTBALL" and/or bear an ASA certification mark.
- All approved bats must have a WGSB label affixed to the bat.
- The official game ball is a poly soft ball (9") as approved and provided by the League. The home team will provide a **new** ball for each game.
- **All** batters and baserunners must wear approved batting helmets. **Chinstraps must be used while wearing a batting helmet.** Helmets must not be removed until the player is off the field.
- Players must wear their League provided team shirts and visors. There are no exceptions. Warm clothing may be worn **under** uniforms at any time.
- Players must wear athletic shoes with socks. Non-athletic shoes, street shoes and boots are not allowed.
- All jewelry must be removed. Players should wait until after the season to have ears pierced.
- All fielders must use a softball or baseball glove (gloves are not supplied by the League).
- The head coach of each team will maintain all League distributed equipment in good working order and will request replacement equipment from the League's Equipment Manager as necessary. This equipment includes but is not limited to balls, bats, helmets, chin straps, equipment bags, score book, and other items supplied by the League.

## **BATTERS AND RUNNERS (OFFENSE)**

- The batting order includes **all** players present and ready to play. Coaches will insist that players arrive at least ½ hour prior to a scheduled game; it is at this time when most of the pre-game instruction is provided. If a player arrives after the game has started, this player(s) may be added to the end of the order.
- All players who are not playing in the field, batting, on deck, or running bases **must remain in the dugout area** (preferably on the bench) during the game; the players may not leave the dugout area without the coach's permission.
- At the start of the season, all players will use a batting tee. Coach pitching may be introduced into the game at the first scheduled game following Memorial Day weekend. Since abilities may vary greatly in this Division, the introduction of coach pitching will be at the coach's discretion. However, if the coach pitching is introduced to a player and if after three pitches the player is unsuccessful in her attempt to hit the ball, the batting tee will be re-introduced for the remainder of the "at-bat".
- Upon hitting the ball, the batter and all runners may advance one base. A team will remain at bat until each player has had her turn at bat. The last batter in the Team's respective line-up and all runners on base at that time will be allowed to run to all of the bases. Once the last batter has reached home plate, play will be stopped and the teams will change sides.
- No walks (base on balls) will be allowed in this Division.
- All baserunners must proceed and stop at the base they have been awarded regardless of the playmaking conducted in the field by the defensive team. Competed plays will be verbally rewarded **but** no outs will be called. Baserunners should hustle to their assigned base with direction and encouragement from the base coaches.
- Runners can **not** advance on bad throws.
- **Sliding is not allowed** at the Instructional level.

## **DEFENSE (FIELDERS)**

- All players will **hustle** on and off the field between innings to provide as much playing and instruction time for the girls as possible.
- Teams will use **all** available players on defense.
- Only five (5) players can play in the infield at any one time (there is no catcher).
- The infielders shall be no closer than 40 feet from home plate prior to the pitch.
- Only **one (1) player-pitcher** can play in the pitching area. She will stand no closer than 30 feet from home plate prior to the pitch (the player-pitcher fields batted balls but doesn't actually pitch).
- All fielders must be properly positioned before each play. No fielder is permitted to stand on a base prior to the ball being hit.
- Infielders must **not** block baserunners advancing to the next base.
- The remaining players will play the outfield. All outfielders must be positioned no less than five (5) feet beyond the normal infield dirt area prior to the pitch. If the infield is poorly defined or larger than Instructional dimensions, then outfielders must be positioned at least 15 feet behind the bases.
- Instruction being the primary objective of Instructional, coaches shall **rotate** all players through the various infield and outfield positions throughout the game. However, it is recommended that only the more capable girls play the player-pitcher position due to their proximity to the batter.
- We encourage all defensive players to make an attempt to finish the play. Infielders should be directed to throw caught balls to 1<sup>st</sup> base, outfielders should be directed to throw caught balls to 2<sup>nd</sup> base. This is the only way to learn how to make an out.

## **THE GAME**

- Games in the Instructional Division are simply an extension of the learning process. Coaches shall concentrate on teaching skills to their players in a game setting without worrying about the competitive aspect of the game.
- Coaches are expected to hold additional practice sessions outside of the game schedule.
- Games will continue for roughly one hour. Play will not continue past 7:30 p.m.
- Either coach has the authority to **suspend** any game prematurely should conditions warrant, i.e. insufficient visibility, wet conditions, lightning, excessive cold, etc. No game should be started or continued if the players are at risk. Games will **not** be rescheduled if at least one (1) inning of play has been completed or play is halted after 7:00 p.m.
- **Postponements:** In case of inclement weather, the League no later than one hour-fifteen minutes before game time will post the status of all games on its website, ([www.wgsl.org](http://www.wgsl.org)); it is the responsibility of the Head Coach (or his/her designate) to confirm the status of his/her team's game. It is then the responsibility of the Head Coach (or his/her designate) to inform his/her players within a reasonable timeframe of any postponement. Teams must report to the field of play, unless otherwise notified.
- Postponed or incomplete suspended games will be rescheduled by the League to be played at the earliest available makeup date.
- Games will **not** be forfeited due to a lack of players.

## OTHER

- Coaches: The League encourages each head coach to use as many parents/coaches as can be managed to teach the girls. All parents participating in the game as either a coach or simply a volunteer must have completed the League's volunteer form and cleared a background check, as required by the League.
- On defense, three coaches will be allowed to roam the outfield to help guide the girls. No defensive coach will be allowed in the infield area during normal play. Nor will any coach be allowed to physically interfere with a ball in play. A coach can provide fielding instruction from the sidelines or outfield. Coaches not in the outfield should remain in the dugout area.
- On offense (at bat), there will be the two base coaches and a batter coach. For the safety of the girls, a coach should be assigned to the bench to maintain discipline and prepare girls for batting. Players who are not on the field, at bat, on deck or on base are to be in the dugout-bench area preferably on the bench.
- Coaches should position themselves behind the outfield players to provide assistance and instruction to players without physically interfering with them or the ball in play. A coach from the offensive (batting) team should be stationed behind the plate to retrieve the ball and place balls on the tee; however, this coach will not interfere with a ball in play- There are no umpires in this Division.
- There will be no division standings or division playoffs in Instructional.
- **Conduct:** All coaches are reminded that players and spectators may copy their actions. Coaches will set the proper example by reflecting those values and intentions herein. The League will review all complaints relative to the conduct of coaches, players or spectators and respond accordingly.
- For the safety of our girls, the playing area must be kept clear of equipment not being used. Players who are not in the field, at bat, on deck or on base should remain on or immediately around the bench. Spectators and equipment must remain behind the backstop or behind an imaginary line drawn from the end poles of the backstop parallel to the foul lines. A bench coach should be used to enforce this rule, since failure to comply will seriously compromise player safety.
- **Smoking/Alcoholic Beverages: Smoking/Alcoholic Beverages:** There shall be no drinking of alcoholic beverages allowed in the parks. There shall be no smoking on the playing fields and the surrounding areas. Per Town Ordinance, smoking is only allowed in the parking lot areas of the parks including the Gaylord Field Complex. Coaches committing an infraction of the smoking rule will receive a written warning after the first infraction. Coaches committing a second infraction of the smoking rule will be suspended indefinitely and subject to review by the respective Division Vice-President, League Vice-President and League President. Coaches committing an infraction of the alcoholic beverages rule will be suspended indefinitely and subject to review by the respective Division Vice-President, League Vice-President and League President.

Approved by the Wallingford Girls Softball League, Inc.

Last Revision Date:  
November, 2010