

WGSL

Junior Division Rules

SPRING SEASON

2011

It is the objective of the Wallingford Girls' Softball League to provide an organized slow pitch softball league to girls who live in the Town of Wallingford, while providing a positive learning experience for all participants. The League stresses skill development, team play and fun. Fair play, cooperation and respect among players, coaches, parents/spectators, umpires and officials shall always be emphasized. All rules established by the League are directed to these ends and, therefore, shall be interpreted and applied by the coaches in the way in which they are intended. Circumventing these 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 - It is our goal to provide a transition between the more educational Clinic Division and the more experienced Senior Division. Competition is encouraged, though never above fair play. ASA rules play a significant role in this division, though minor adjustments have been made to reflect the League objective and the youth of the players. Players will be taught team play and encouraged to refine their individual abilities to bat, throw, catch, and run bases.

ELIGIBILITY - The Junior Division is open to any girl in grades 4-7* who lives within or attends school within the boundaries of the Town of Wallingford. The maximum age is 13 years as of January 1 prior to the playing season. * 7th grade players must have approval from the League Board of Directors to participate in the Junior Division. (See 7th grade option)

THE RULES

The Junior Division conforms to Amateur Softball Association (ASA) rules, exceptions below. The format below is consistent with the "ASA Playing Rules & Umpire Manual".

1. DEFINITIONS (ASA Rule 1)

The following definitions have been emphasized, added and/or modified from ASA:

Base on Balls. There will be no intentional walks.

Call-up. A call-up is a registered Clinic Division player who conforms to the Call-up procedures noted herein. In general, a call-up is asked to substitute for a missing Junior player to prevent the forfeit of a scheduled Junior game

Coach. Up to 3 offensive coaches are allowed on the field, but not in fair territory during active play. Also, a defensive coach can stand behind the umpire to field errant pitches. The coach behind the umpire must remain silent. This provides an opportunity to throw the ball back to the pitcher; not intended for the purpose of providing direction or coaching of the players/game.

Infield Fly. There is no infield fly rule in the Junior Division.

League. The Wallingford Girls' Softball League as represented by its League Officers.

Strike Zone. When the batter assumes a natural batting stance, the strike zone is that space directly over any part of home plate between the armpits and knees. Exaggerated stances will not alter the strike zone.

2. THE PLAYING FIELD (ASA Rule 2)

- a. The pitching distance is **Forty (40) feet**, from the front of the pitching rubber to the rear of home plate.
- b. Bases shall be placed 60 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. The home team coach should identify the correct pitching rubber and cover the others

3. EQUIPMENT (ASA Rule 3)

- a. Bats used in the League must be marked "OFFICIAL SOFTBALL" by the manufacturer and/or bear an ASA certification mark. In addition, the following bats will not be allowed for league play:

- a. All bats listed on the ASA bat ban list,
- b. Bats marked triple-wall, double-wall or composite.

Coaches must verify all bats with the Umpire(s) prior to the start of each game. All approved bats must have a WGSL label affixed to the bat. Any player found to be using an illegal bat prior to, during or upon completion of their at bat within the current inning will automatically be called out and the bat will be removed from the game. The call must take place before the first pitch is thrown to the next batter within the current inning.

- b. The official game ball will be a Synthetic Softball (11") or a comparable softball as approved and provided by the League. Both teams will provide the umpire with a new game ball prior to the start of the game.

- c. The catcher must wear all catchers' equipment while positioned behind the plate. This equipment includes a combination helmet/mask with a properly adjusted throat protector, shin guards and a chest protector.
- d. All batters, base runners and player-base coaches 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. The umpire will issue a warning on the first offense. For subsequent offenses, it will be up to the umpire's discretion if the offender will be called out or ejected from the game. If additional helmets are needed to address safety, the other team will provide them upon request.
- e. *Players must wear their League approved jersey, visor, socks to every game. Players must wear either solid white/grey/black baseball pants or their League approved softball shorts to every game. There are no exceptions. While in the field, players must wear sweatshirts and other warm clothing under their uniforms. Players who fail to change into their proper uniform, upon request by either the umpire or a League official will not be allowed to play in the game.*
- f. Metal spikes are prohibited. Players must wear rubberized cleats or other athletic shoes. Non-athletic shoes, street shoes and boots are not allowed.
- g. All visible jewelry must be removed. Players who fail to remove the jewelry upon request will not be allowed to play in the game. (Note: players should wait until after the softball season to have ears pierced.)
- h. The head coach will maintain all League distributed equipment in good working order and will request replacement equipment from the League's Equipment Manager as necessary.

4. PLAYERS & SUBSTITUTES (ASA Rule 4)

- a. The minimum number of players needed to start and continue a game is 9 per team. If at least 9 players per team are present and ready to play, the game will begin at the scheduled time. There is no out for the missing tenth player. Rule # 4.d.
- b. The batting order must include **all** players present and ready to play. New players may be added to the end of the batting order at any time during the game.
- c. Teams will use 10 players on defense, including 4 outfielders. If shorthanded, 3 outfielders will be used. All outfielders must be positioned no less than 10 feet beyond the normal infield dirt area prior to the pitch. If the infield is poorly defined, then outfielders must be positioned at least 20 feet behind the bases. For safety, the 4 base players will be positioned no closer than 50 feet from home plate and in fair territory prior to the pitch. No infielder is permitted to stand on a base or in foul territory (except for the catcher) at the time of the pitch.
- d. The ASA Shorthanded Rule does not apply (i.e., no automatic out for missing batters).
- e. The ASA Re-Entry Rule (ASA Rule 4.5.) does not apply. Defensive substitutions are permitted within the following restrictions:
 - (1) Each girl must play a minimum of 3 innings on defense.
 - (2) Defensive substitutions from the bench or the field must be made prior to the start of each half inning unless: a fielder is injured or must otherwise leave the game or if a team is playing with nine players, the late tenth player may be introduced by calling for a time-out and informing the opposing team. All other rules apply.
 - (3) Any pitcher who is removed from that position cannot return to the pitching position in the same inning nor more than once during the game.

- f. All players who are not playing defense, coaching, batting, on deck, or running bases must remain in the dugout/bench area during the game without coach's permission.

5. THE GAME (ASA Rule 5)

- a. Game time is as indicated on the game schedule. A team with less than nine (9) players present at the scheduled game time will be granted up to fifteen (15) minutes of grace. After the grace period, a team or teams with less than nine (9) players will forfeit the game. **No coach, umpire, or other League official has the authority to extend the grace period beyond fifteen (15) minutes.**
- b. All games are 7 innings. If the score is tied at the end of 7 innings, as many complete innings as necessary to break the tie will be played.
- c. Umpires have the authority to suspend or postpone any game should conditions warrant, i.e. insufficient visibility, wet conditions, lightning, excessive cold, continuous harassment from anyone present, etc.
- d. A new inning cannot start after 8:30 pm with the exception of any game scheduled to start at 7pm or later. For these games, a new inning cannot start after 10pm.
- e. A game called by the umpire shall be regulation if five or more complete innings have been played, or if the team second at bat has scored more runs in four or more innings than the other team has scored in five or more innings. Games that are not considered regulation shall be resumed at the exact point where they were stopped.
- f. Playoff games will be scheduled by the League at the conclusion of the regular playing season. The League will determine the playoff format.
- g. **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); 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 and suspended games will be rescheduled by the League to be played at the next earliest available makeup date.
- h. Make-up of postponed games are a continuation of the game and all rules apply, with the exception of 4.e. where as if there are girls that could not be present at the make-up date to complete their three (3) consecutive innings of play, they may be substituted with available players
- i. All players and coaches will hustle on and off the field between innings. All players will be ready and in position when the umpire declares "play ball". If, in the judgment of the umpire, either team unnecessarily delays play, the umpire will call a ball (or balls) for a defensive delay or a strike (or strikes) for an offensive delay.
- j. The travesty (run ahead limit) rule must be used after 4 innings are completed and one team has scored 20 runs or more than the other team **or** after 5 innings are completed and one team has scored 15 runs or more than the other team. Complete innings must be played unless the home team scores the run ahead limit. Whenever the run ahead limit is used and the visiting team reaches the limit in the fifth or later inning, the home team must have an opportunity to bat in the bottom half of the inning. If the home team reduces the lead to less than 15 runs in the fifth or sixth inning, the game will continue.

6. PITCHING REGULATIONS, SLOW PITCH (ASA Rule 6)

- a. The pitcher must begin her delivery in a stationary position with one or both feet on the pitching rubber and she must hold this position for at least one second before starting the pitching motion. After starting the motion, the pitcher is allowed only one step toward the plate until the ball is batted. No windup is allowed.
- b. The Junior Division will use a 5 to 10 foot arc measured from the ground.
- c. A maximum of three (3) warm-up pitches will be allowed between half innings.
- d. The catcher shall be in full gear and ready to take her position at the end of each half inning, unless she was the last batter, on deck or a base runner. In this case, another player or the coach will take the three (3) warm-up pitches as the catcher dresses.

7. BATTING (ASA Rule 7)

- a. Each team shall submit a batting order to the opposing coach before the start of each game. The batting order must include all players present and ready to play. Players who arrive after a game is in progress will be placed at the end of the batting order.
- b. **Foul Tip Rule:** If there are two strikes on the batter and the catcher catches a foul tip, regardless of its height, the batter is declared out. If there are less than two strikes on the batter and the catcher catches a foul tip provided that the ball is hit higher than the catcher's head then the batter is declared out.
- c. **Five (5) Run per inning Rule:** A team remains at bat until three (3) outs are declared or the Team scores five (5) runs. Said rule shall not be applicable for the final inning (or extra innings) as determined by the umpire. During the final inning (or extra innings), a Team may score an unlimited number of runs.

8. BATTER-RUNNER AND RUNNER (ASA Rule 8)

- a. A base on balls will be awarded to the batter if the bases are loaded.
- b. There will be no intentional walks.
- c. Bat throwing is not allowed. The umpire will issue a warning on the first offense. For subsequent offenses it will be up to the umpire's discretion if the offending batter will be called out or removed from the offensive line-up for the remainder of the game.
- d. There is no infield fly rule in this Division.
- e. Sliding is permitted in this Division.

9. PROTESTS (ASA Rule 9) Judgment calls made by an umpire cannot be protested. These include strikes, balls, outs, fair/foul balls, illegal pitches, touching a base, leaving a base too soon, interference, obstruction, game suspensions due to conditions, and other judgment calls. Protests may be considered for the following:

- (1) A misinterpretation of a playing rule which must be protested before the next pitch.
- (2) An illegal substitution or re-entry must be protested while she is in the game and before the umpires leave the playing field.
- (3) An ineligible player which can be protested anytime.

Any protest must be presented in writing to a League Vice-President or President within 24 hours to be considered. The final step of any protest is resolution by the League Officers. The final interpretation of any and all by-laws, rules, and/or procedures is the sole responsibility of the League Directors.

10. UMPIRES (ASA Rule 10)

- a. Umpires are given charge of the game. They represent the League and are required and authorized to enforce the rules and to make decisions on situations not specifically covered by the rules. Umpires will be treated with the respect due all participants in the League.
- b. a. The umpire will call time when, in the judgment of the umpire, all action in progress has been completed. Time will not be automatically called by the umpire simply because a player or coach requests it.

11. SCORING (ASA Rule 11)

- a. The home team is the official scorekeeper. Each scorekeeper will confirm the score at the end of each half inning by conferring with the opposing team scorekeeper. Discrepancies will be resolved before play is allowed to continue.
- b. The score of a forfeited game shall be 7-0 in favor of the team not at fault. If both teams forfeited, their individual records will each reflect a 7-0 loss.

12. OTHER RULES

- a. **Player's conduct:** all players should conduct themselves in a good sportsmanlike manner. Coaches are not to tolerate from players any swearing, derogatory remarks, chants or cheers or any disrespect toward coaches, players or umpires.
- b. **Discipline:** If a player displays unsportsmanlike conduct (as referenced above) while representing the League, the Head Coach, has the ability to discipline this player in an appropriate manner; said player, regardless of their ability, can and should be withheld from the balance of the game in which the unsportsmanlike conduct was displayed and from the next game in which her team plays. If such disciplinary action is enforced, the Head Coach is required to inform the player's parents as soon as possible. The Head Coach is also required to inform the opposing Head Coach of any disciplinary action that affects his/her batting order. The Head Coach is required to inform all players of the League's code of conduct, in writing and prior to the start of the season, and if any disciplinary action is taken, it should only be taken if it is clearly stated in the team's rules and they are uniformly enforced with all players, regardless of ability. Last, the Head Coach is required to report disciplinary issues (that result in a game suspension) to both the League President and the respective Divisional Vice President.
- c. **Courtesy Runner:** A Team will be allowed two courtesy runners during the course of a game. The player who represented the last "batted" out prior to the player needing a runner will be the courtesy runner. If a courtesy runner is used for an injured player, the Coach must use appropriate discretion before he/she reinserts said injured player back into the line-up; especially if there are additional players available.

Coach responsibilities: See “Coaches Agreement”

Conduct: All coaches are reminded that players and spectators will emulate their conduct. Coaches will set an example by providing a model reflecting those values and intentions herein. Any coach ejected from a game for unsportsmanlike conduct or abusive language/behavior will be required to leave the field area within three (3) minutes of notification by the umpire. Failure to leave in the designated time will result in the forfeit of the game. Any coach ejected from a game will automatically serve an additional one game suspension to be enforced the next game the team plays. The offending coach's continued participation in the League will be subject to review by the respective Division Vice-President, League Vice-President and League President.

Safety: The playing area must be kept clear of equipment not being used. Spectators must stay behind the fence. Players not in the field, at bat, on deck or on base should remain in the dugout-bench area. Where there is no fence, spectators and equipment must remain behind an imaginary line drawn from the end poles of the backstop parallel to the foul lines. Failure to comply with this rule will seriously compromise player safety and may end in a forfeit by the team at fault.

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.

JUNIOR CALL-UP PROCEDURES

1. All **Clinic Division** head coaches will evaluate their teams during the pre-season for the expressed purpose of selecting players who have the skill, knowledge, and attitude to compete at the Junior level. These players may be eligible for call-up. Clinic coaches will not consider any girl who could be at serious risk playing with the older girls. Coaches may reconsider their selections at any time.
2. At the start of the season, the League will provide each Junior team head coach with the name and phone number of each Clinic team head coach. If there is reason to believe that a team will be unable to field 9 players for a scheduled Junior game the Junior head coach may contact the parents of girls on the call-up list from the Clinic team that has a BYE for that day. If, in an emergency situation, enough girls are no available from the BYE team to complete the roster, the Junior division head coach may contact the Clinic division head coach of the teams that are schedule to play for no more than one girl from a team. It will be the discretion of the head coach and the parent of the player to agree to give a player the opportunity to play in the Junior division game and miss her own Clinic division game. No Junior division coach may contact a Clinic division player's family without the prior expressed permission of the parent.
3. All call-ups will play a minimum of 2 complete innings. Call-up(s) will be placed at the end of the batting order. After 2 complete innings, **no** Clinic player will be allowed to play defense in place of a rostered girl who is present and ready to play, unless the Junior girl is subject to disciplinary action as described elsewhere in the rules.
4. The Junior head coach shall report the use of a call-up player to the League when reporting the game scores. The League will provide phone numbers.
5. Any coach violating these call-up rules and procedures will be reprimanded. Subsequent violation will include suspension. In addition, the team's performance will be evaluated by the League Officers to determine if unfair advantage was gained by using the illegal call-up. If so determined, further sanctions (including forfeiture) may be imposed.
6. **All coaches, parents and players are reminded that the sole purpose for call-ups is to avoid forfeiture, not to enhance a team's chances against an opponent.**

Senior Call-Up Procedures

1. All Junior Division head coaches will evaluate their teams during the pre-season for the expressed purpose of selecting 2 or 3 players who have skill, knowledge and attitude to complete at the Senior level. These selections may be eligible for call-up subject to risk playing with the older girls
2. Junior coaches will obtain permission from the parent of each girl before submitting her name and phone number to the League. Depending on the number of eligible girls, the League will place the players on any number of call-up lists, which may be updated at any time.

Approved by the Wallingford Girls Softball League, Inc.

Last Revision Date:
November, 2010