

## Rutland County Girls' Softball Association

At a meeting held on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2000, the league adopted the rules of the Amateur Softball Association (ASA), as they may be amended from time to time, with exceptions or additions. And may be adopted by the league from time to time. As of March 22, 2017 the following exceptions or additions are in effect:

1. **Name**: Rutland County Girls' Softball Association
2. **Organization**: The league consists of towns throughout Rutland County and other neighboring towns. The league representatives from each town participating in the league will conduct business at league meetings by majority vote. There are two (2) permanent committees, the Executive Committee and the Tournament Committee. Each committee consists of a minimum of three (3) members to be elected from year to year. The elected members must be representatives of towns participating in the league. The league representatives present from each town participating in the league will conduct business at meetings. The **Executive Committee** is responsible for all league business, except for tournaments and except for business, which may be decided at league meetings. This shall include deciding protests, interpreting rules, and considering all complaints filed by town representatives. The **Tournament Committee** shall plan and operate all tournaments and its duties include responsibility for pairings, assigning fields, and tournament schedules.
3. **Divisions/Eligibility**: There shall be three (3) divisions by age/grades. The following divisions are:
  - Minors**: For girls ages 9,10, 11, and 12 (as of August 1) or in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades.
  - Majors**: For girls ages 12, 13 and 14 (as of August 1) or in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades.
  - Seniors**: For girls ages 15, 16, 17 and 18 (as of August 1) or in 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades, including graduated seniors their senior year.
  - A rostered minor or major league player may play in a higher league if her non-participation would cause the higher league team to forfeit the game due to lack of players. However if the higher league rostered player becomes available, the lower league player will be substituted for with the rostered higher league player no later than the start of the next half inning. No higher league player will sit on the bench while a lower league player is playing. If a lower league player plays in more than half of the higher league regular season scheduled games, she will forfeit her right to be in the lower league and will become a rostered member of the higher league team. **Majors rosters must be submitted by the first game of the season**
  - Any girl that meets the age requirements shall be allowed to play on the team from her town/city.

- Recruiting girls not residing in a member town/city is illegal.
  - A girl residing in a town/city not represented in this league may seek out a team to play on. Coaches are encouraged to accept players in this situation.
  - A younger girl may play in an older division but an older girl may not play in a younger division.
4. **Tournaments**: There shall be a single elimination tournament at the end of the regular season for the Major and Senior divisions. All teams shall be invited to participate. However, if a team has forfeited three or more games in the regular season, that team shall be ineligible for the tournament. There shall be no tournament for Minors. A player must have at least played in one half her team's regular season games to be eligible to play in the tournament, except for cases of injury or change of residence.
5. **Umpires**: For Minors, parents or other interested volunteers shall act as umpires. The home team shall provide the home plate umpire and the visiting team shall provide an adult to assist the home umpire. This may be a base coach. For Majors and Seniors all umpires shall be ASA certified. There will be one umpire provided by ASA for majors and two umpires for seniors. All umpires must be ASA certified for insurance purposes. Umpires have the discretion, and are encouraged, to interpret all rules in an age appropriate manner.
6. **On Field Rules**
- 6.1 **Game Time**: All games start at 6 p.m. unless specifically scheduled otherwise. A forfeit shall be declared at 6:15 p.m. unless otherwise agreed to by both coaches.
- 6.2 **Cancellation**: Unless weather related, cancellation requires a 24-hour notice or the game will be forfeited. Weather related cancellations must be made by 5 p.m. on the day of the game. In Minors, cancelled games do not need to be made up except with the consent of both coaches. In Majors and Seniors, the coach who has cancelled a game shall have the obligation to coordinate with the other team's coach, arrange for an umpire, and make up the cancelled game no later than the second Sunday following cancellation, weather permitting. Otherwise, assuming the other coach has cooperated in good faith, the team canceling the game shall forfeit. If the home team's field is not available, the game shall be played on the other team's field or any other available field.
- 6.3 **Length of Game/Two-Hour Rule**: Regulation games for Minors are six (6) innings and regulation games for Majors and Seniors are seven (7) innings. However, no new inning may be started more than two hours after the start of the game. In all divisions if one team is 15 runs or more ahead of another team after five innings of play, and the losing team has batted that inning, the mercy rule is put in place. The score is set at that point and the losing team, with agreement, has the option of continuing the game as a scrimmage with no umpires.
- 6.4 **Number of Fielders/Batters/Innings Played**: For the Minors and Majors the number of fielders will be ten (10). This will include four (4) outfielders playing either four (4) across or one (1) roving outfielder. The Seniors play with nine (9)

players. A game is a legal game if a team starts with a minimum of eight (8) players, the game may continue. A team with less than eight (8) players to start the game will forfeit. In the Minors division, all rostered players present shall be in the batting line-up for the entire game. In the Majors division, teams can have up to 12 players in the batting lineup. In all divisions, each rostered player present shall play at least three (3) innings. Failure to comply with this three (3) inning rule shall result in forfeiture of the game. The league recognizes that this rule needs to be somewhat flexible for games shortened by weather, disciplinary issues, or the two-hour rule. If a coach is aware before the games, or as soon as he or she becomes aware during a game, that a player will not play the minimum number of innings for disciplinary reasons, the coach shall immediately notify the umpire and the opposing coach.

**6.4.1 Fielding Equipment:** While playing 1st and 3rd base all players must wear a mask.

**6.5 Maximum Batters/Runs: For Minors,** no more than six (6) runs shall be allowed per inning. **For majors,** a maximum of six runs shall be allowed per inning. **For Seniors,** a maximum of nine (9) runs shall be allowed per inning.

**6.6 Balls:** In Minors and Majors, the home team is required to provide at least one new game ball and several other balls in good condition. Minors shall use an eleven (11) inch ball and the Majors and Seniors shall use a twelve (12) inch ball. In Seniors the home team must provide two (2) new balls. Yellow balls shall be used.

**6.7 Pitching:** Pitching rules follow Federation guidelines. Any pitch that hits the plate is a ball. There are no intentional walks allowed in any division. In Minors and Majors a player shall not pitch more than four (4) innings per game during the regular season and tournament play. The pitcher may be removed from the circle and return, provided she pitches no more than four innings. An inning consists of one pitch. The pitcher only has to have one foot in contact with the pitching rubber at the start of windup. For Minors, the umpire has discretion to allow a pitcher to pitch from closer than 43 feet if the pitcher is having trouble reaching the plate or throwing strikes. However, a pitcher may not start her delivery from in front of the pitchers' circle, or if no circle, 35 feet from home plate. In this event, it shall not be required that the umpire give the same consideration to pitchers from the opposite team if they are not having the same trouble. (It is recommended that a portable pitching rubber be available with short spikes for the coach to install for their games.) A pitcher shall be immediately removed from a game after hitting their third batter with a pitch. In Minors, after a pitcher walks four (4) batters in a row, an adult associated with the team that is batting must replace the pitcher for the rest of the inning and is not allowed to field the position. **Can be up to both coaches agreement to have a coach come in and pitch if the pitcher is struggling but four walks don't happen in a row.** While a coach is pitching, the third strike can only occur by the player swinging. While a coach is pitching, only 8 pitches shall be allowed per batter (i.e. the batter is out after 8 pitches, if she has not reached base safely or otherwise made an out.) While a coach is pitching, there will be no bases on balls.

**6.7.1 Pitchers Masks:** All pitchers must wear a mask during play.

**6.8 Stealing/Sliding**

**Minors:** There is no stealing in minors. Runners may not advance on any pitch to the plate caught or missed by the catcher. **Player can run if the ball is not caught when thrown back to the pitcher in accordance with live ball rules.** Runners can take a lead after the pitch leaves the pitcher's hand. The catcher can make a play on any runner on base. In all cases the runner must get back to the original base safely or they are out. Batters may not go to first base on a dropped third strike pitch by the catcher. Runners are awarded two bases when a thrown or batted ball goes out of play. The exception is a pitched ball that goes out of play, after which all runners get one base

**Majors:** Runners may steal second or third base, but cannot steal home plate. (They may try to score if caught in a rundown). Runners are awarded two bases when a thrown or batted ball goes out of play. The exception is a pitched ball that goes out of play, after which all runners get one base. A runner may advance to any base on a pitch the catcher does not catch including home. A batter may advance to first base on any third strike pitch dropped by the catcher if first base is open or there are two outs.

**Seniors:** Stealing is allowed according to ASA rules.

- 6.9 **Throwing of Bats:** If a player throws a bat her team shall be warned. Thereafter any player on her team throwing a bat shall be called out.

#### 6.10 **Substitutions**

**Minors:** Players may be substituted without limitations

**Majors:** Starters may be re-entered but only in the same spot in the batting order from which they were originally removed. A person may never change their position in the batting order during a game. Once the ball has been pitched at the start of the game, and after each legal substitution, the official batting order is established. Starters and substitutes may be re-entered only once in a game.

**Seniors:** Substitutions are according to ASA rules.

- 6.11 **Sportsmanship/Spectator Conduct:** Home plate umpires have the discretion to direct any person who is abusive to players, coaches, umpires, or other participants, or whose conduct is otherwise offensive, to leave the vicinity of the playing field. If the person so directed fails to do so, forfeiture shall be declared against the team whom the person is associated with. Players and coaches shall be required to exhibit good sportsmanship at all times and the home plate umpire may remove any player or coach who does not.

- 6.12 **League Philosophy:** In all divisions, it is the philosophy of this league to develop the softball skills, teamwork, ethic and good sportsmanship in all players. There shall not be a preoccupation with winning at the expense of this. All players should have the substantial opportunity to play, learn, develop skills and enjoy the sport and not sit on the bench while others get this opportunity. The primary concern is of basic fairness to all players, without regard to their perceived talent or ability. In Minors and Majors, all players shall get substantially equal playing time in the field and, in Majors, substantially equal at bats, throughout the course of the season, including tournament play. The executive committee is empowered to take any action whatsoever in order to remedy any violations of this philosophy by coaches, spectators or other participants.

- 6.13 **Runners on Base**: Any runner leaving the base before the ball leaves the pitcher's hand when pitching to the plate will be automatically called out by the umpire. A "no pitch" is declared. A runner missing a base must be appealed by the team on defense.
- 6.14 **Lining of Fields**: Home teams are strongly encouraged to line the playing field before each game. At a minimum, this should include base paths, out-of-play lines, batters' boxes and the pitching circle.
7. **Tournament Seeding**: Tournament seeding will be determined by a team's win/loss percentage. Ties will be settled first by the teams' records in head-to-head games, second by total run differential in head-to-head games and third by a coin toss. In order for games to count in the standings, the winning coach shall report the victory to the league official designated for that purpose no later than 48 hours after the game ends. In the event of a cancellation due to weather, the home team shall report the cancellation to the league representative. All other cancellations shall be reported by the team that is responsible for the cancellation.
8. **Protest**: All protests must be filed in writing within 24 hours. The protest should be to questions rules interpretation. Appeals involving judgment calls will not be considered.
9. **Rules often questioned**
- a. **Sliding/Running** – Runners must approach 1<sup>st</sup> base and be on the right of the white line, in the three-foot running lane, tagging the orange base at 1<sup>st</sup> base or risk being called out. Runners are NEVER forced to slide but will be called out if unavoidable contact is made with a fielder in possession of the ball or the runner interferes with the fielder making a play or throw.
  - b. **Example**: A runner is attempting to take home plate on a wild pitch and doesn't slide in, she may be called out for interfering with the catcher's/pitcher's inability to make a play. Any batter that does not step out of the batters' box when a runner advances to home may also be called out for interference.
  - c. **Obstruction** – Blocking the base without the ball and preventing the runner from attaining the base is obstruction and, in such cases, the runner will be safe.
  - d. **Infield Fly** – It is an infield fly when, in the judgment of the umpire, a fair ball may be played with routine effort by an infielder, regardless of where the ball may be. (For example, it can still be an infield fly if the ball is in the outfield but may be routinely played by an infielder. It can also be an infield fly if the ball could be routinely played by an infielder but an outfielder makes the catch.) Base runners may advance at their own risk. If the ball is not caught, they do not need to tag up and must be tagged out. There is no force play on a dropped infield fly.
  - e. **Pitcher's Circle** – When the ball is in the circle, base runners must quickly determine to which base they are going. They may not change that decision unless the pitcher makes any move toward the runner. **PENALTY**: The runner is called out.
  - f. **Other Situations** – When not specified, ASA rules apply.