

Northwest Skylands Girls Softball League

2011 Senior Level Rules

The Northwest Skylands Girls Softball League utilizes the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Rule Book. At a minimum, each head coach should have a copy of these rules. The rules included in this document are to be followed as exceptions to the NFHS Rule Book. All coaches and umpires are expected to know and enforce these exceptions.

I. ELIGIBILITY

1. Players may be girls in school grades Pre-K through 9, who have reached the age of 5 by March 1 immediately prior to the start of the season.
2. For 2011, the following divisions, with corresponding school grade levels, will be used:
 - Rookie.....Grades Pre-K through 2
 - IntermediateGrades 3 and 4
 - JuniorGrades 5 and 6
 - Senior.....Grades 7, 8 and 9
3. Girls who play on a Northwest Skylands recreation team may not play on a travel team or a school team during the regular spring softball season (February to June). Examples: If a girl is playing on a travel team, she is not allowed to also play on a recreation team. If a 9th grade girl is not playing on a high school freshman team, she may play on a recreation team.
4. Town representatives/coordinators have the option to “pull up” a player to the next level for the entire season, or at any point prior to the mid-point of the regular season, if, after consultation with the coaches and player’s parents, the player is of sufficient playing ability, maturity and awareness to participate safely at that level. Experienced 2nd graders (i.e., those who have played previously), should be moved up to the Intermediate level. Players may only be moved up one year (i.e., a 2nd grader may be moved up to Intermediate, a 4th grader may be moved up to Junior, or a 6th grader may be moved up to Senior). No player may be moved down a level.
5. Towns are not required to submit their team rosters to the league. However, should a dispute arise over the age or school grade of a player, the town representative/coordinator may be asked to provide appropriate documentation.

II. ROSTERS

1. All players present and in uniform will be included in the batting line-up (i.e., “bat all”), regardless of how many fielders are being used, with no penalty for losing a player during the game. When you bat all, you and your opponent do not have a replacement player.

2. In the event that a team does not have enough players to field a team for a scheduled game, the coach may “pull up” enough players from the next division below theirs to field a team. Players may only be moved up one year (i.e., a 2nd grader may be moved up to Intermediate, a 4th grader may be moved up to Junior, or a 6th grader may be moved up to Senior). No player may be moved down a level. You may not pull up players just to fill a bench. This rule excludes play-offs.
3. All teams at the Intermediate, Junior and Senior levels may have a maximum of ten (10) players in the field during an inning. At the Rookie level, additional players may be placed in the outfield.
4. At all levels, all players present and in uniform must play a minimum of three (3) innings in the field.
5. Free substitution, including pitchers, is allowed at any point of the game.

III. UNIFORMS

1. Each player must wear a uniform consisting of team hat or visor (not mandatory, coaches discretion) and shirt with numbers in full view, while on the field. Uniform pants/shorts and socks are the choice of the coach; however, all players should be consistent (e.g., the entire team should wear uniform pants/shorts of the same color).
2. The pitcher may wear a warm-up jacket when she is a base runner.
3. Metal spikes are not allowed.
4. Jewelry of any kind, and/or barrettes or other decorative items, may not be worn during the game, except for medical alert pendant or bracelets, which must be securely taped to the body. Cloth or elastic headbands may be worn.
5. Any sweatshirts, jackets, etc. for cooler weather must be worn underneath the uniform shirt.

IV. EQUIPMENT

1. Catchers must wear all equipment when behind the plate during games and practice sessions. This includes mask, helmet, chest protector and shin guards.
2. All players must wear batting helmets with face masks while at bat, running the bases, or occupying a coach’s box during all games and practices.
3. For Senior level, the home team is responsible for providing two (2) new balls for play and the ball’s core is 375 max. This shall be a 12-inch ball, leather covered and optic yellow in color.

V. FIELDS AND WEATHER

1. The home team will ensure that the field for play is safe and suitable for play, and that the field is lined (baselines and 16-foot pitching circle).
2. The home team sits on the first base line.
3. Bases at fields for the Senior level should be secure (i.e., the base should not slide out from under a baserunner's foot).
4. A pitching rubber shall be present. The following pitching distances, measured from the front of the pitching rubber to the rear point of home plate, will be used:
 - Intermediate35 feet
 - Junior40 feet
 - Senior43 feet
5. The following baseline distances will be used:
 - Rookie45 feet
 - Intermediate60 feet
 - Junior60 feet
 - Senior60 feet
6. In the event of threatening or inclement weather, both coaches will confer at least 90 minutes before game time and the home team coach makes the final decision. If a game is to be cancelled, the home team coach must notify the umpire immediately, and the game must be rescheduled as soon as possible. Once a game has begun, any further decision to cancel (rain, darkness, unplayable field, etc.) is at the umpire's discretion.

VI. UMPIRES

1. Umpires at the Senior level must be "carded."
2. Umpires should be aware that Northwest Skylands uses the NFHS Rule Book, as well as the specific league rules detailed in this document.
3. Umpires must hold a conference with the head coaches of both teams prior to the start of the game to review ground rules and to clarify any rules in this document. Coaches and umpires will not agree to disregard any rules in this document.

VII. CONDUCT OF PLAYERS, COACHES AND SPECTATORS

1. Coaches and umpires have the responsibility to control both the team and the spectators. Umpires, at their discretion, may suspend a game completely and declare it null and void, not to be re-played.

2. Obscene or harassing language used by any player, coach or spectator will not be tolerated. After an initial warning, any offender repeating the offense will be automatically ejected from the game by the umpire.
3. There will be absolutely no arguing with the umpire. Please advise your league representative/coordinator of any problems and/or complaints regarding umpires.
4. Players not playing in a game due to disciplinary action by a coach, or injury, must be announced to an opposing coach before the start of a game.

IX. RE-SCHEDULING, MAKE-UPS AND PROTESTS

1. Re-scheduling is to be taken care of before the season begins (black-out dates). There will be no re-scheduling during the season, except for school functions or emergencies. If re-scheduling must take place due to those reasons, the affected team must make arrangements with the opposing team as soon as possible (i.e., prior to game day). Failure to do so could result in forfeit of the game.
2. Makeup games must be done the Friday, Saturday or Sunday of the week the original games were scheduled, weather permitting. If weather does not allow for the same week, it must be played by the following Sunday. A team unable to or unwilling to reschedule the game forfeits the game. Games postponed during the final week of the regular season must be made up by Sunday of that week.
3. Game protests must be submitted in writing (email is acceptable) to the league representatives/coordinators, who will forward the matter to the head of the league. The representatives/coordinators from the towns not involved in the grievance will make a decision on how to handle the issue and will inform the other two (2) towns when a decision has been made.

IX. PLAY-OFFS

1. For each play-off game, the home and away teams shall split the cost of the umpires 50-50.
2. Each team will supply one new ball for play and the ball's core is 375 max. For Senior level, this shall be a 12-inch ball, leather covered and optic yellow in color.
3. At the conclusion of each play-off game, the winning coach must contact that town's representative/coordinator as soon as possible. The town representative/coordinator must then call the pre-determined league play-off coordinator immediately to allow for a timely scheduling of the next game and notification of the appropriate town representatives/coordinators and coaches.

X. GAME DURATION, RUN LIMITS AND SURRENDER RULES

1. All games will start at the time indicated on the schedule provided by the league. A grace period of 15 minutes is allowed. If one team has enough players to begin and the other team does not, then the team with too few players will forfeit. If neither team has enough players to begin, the game will be re-scheduled.
2. A team at the Senior level must have a minimum of seven (7) players to begin the game.
3. Games for Senior level will be seven (7) innings and four (4) complete innings will constitute an official game.
4. Games that are tied either at the end of regulation play, or are tied when an umpire ends a game due to darkness or weather and the game is an official game, shall be credited as a tie for each team.
5. There will be no extra-inning games, except for play-off games.
6. At the Senior level, an inning will be limited to three (3) outs. There will be no maximum runs rule.
7. A 10-run surrender rule shall be in effect. If the home team is ahead by 10 or more runs after 5 innings, or the visiting team is ahead by 8 runs or more after 6 innings, the game shall be declared over.
8. For Senior level games, there is no 8:00 p.m. rule. The game shall be called on account of darkness or weather at the discretion of the umpire for the safety of the players. If a game is called, the score reverts back to the last full inning. If the game is incomplete, it must be re-scheduled or dropped.

XI. GAME PLAY

1. Windmill pitching is encouraged, but it is not mandatory.
2. Pitchers must start with their pivot foot on the rubber, and their non-pivot foot in contact with the rubber. Only one-step forward on the non-pivot foot is allowed. The trail foot may be dragged behind, but it must remain in contact with the ground. "Crow hopping" is not allowed.
3. If a pitcher hits two (2) batters in one inning or five (5) batters in a game, she will be removed from pitching for the remainder of the game. She is allowed to play another position.
4. If there is a play at home plate, the runner may slide but it is not mandatory. However, if the runner does not legally slide and she causes illegal contact and/or illegally alters the actions of the fielder in the immediate act of making a play on her, a call will be made by the umpire.

5. The infield fly rule will apply at the Senior level.
6. The “dropped third-strike rule” will apply at the Senior level.
7. The play ends when the ball is in possession of the pitcher, and the pitcher is within the 16-foot diameter of the mound. If the runner is greater than half way to the next base, the runner gets the base to which she is headed. If she is less than half way, she must return to the base from where she was coming (this decision is made by the umpire).
8. Batters should not take practice swings while in the batter’s box. Umpires have the option to call a strike on a batter who takes a practice swing while in the batter’s box.
9. All teams at all levels may have a maximum of ten (10) players in the field during an inning.
10. In addition to the pitcher and catcher, a team may have four players in the infield until the ball is hit. If using a short fielder in the outfield, the short fielder must be a minimum of eight (8) feet from the baseline.
11. Base runners must be on the base before each pitch. A lead is allowed off the base only after the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand.
12. Stealing is allowed only after the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand.
13. For the Senior level, there is no limit on steals.

XII. SPORTSMANSHIP

1. All players and coaches are to follow rules of proper conduct and good sportsmanship.
2. If a power pitcher is dominating a game, the pitcher’s coach should consider removing the player from pitching and replacing her to allow the opposing team a chance to get back in the game. This also allows pitching time for other pitchers on the team to get some experience/practice. The original pitcher can return to the pitcher’s mound at any time under free substitution.
3. If a team has a comfortable lead and the game is obviously one-sided, the coach of the so-far-winning team should stop all stealing and only allow the runners to advance by hits. This should not be shouted out to the players, so as not to demoralize the other team.