



GVPSSA Girls Softball Rules



Updated 2011

EQUIPMENT

- Seniors - The ball shall be a 12 inch leather softball.
- Juniors - The ball shall be an 10 inch leather modball.
- All bats must have at least 20cm of safety grip.
- All bats must be aluminium and conform to Official Rules of Softball.
- A safety base is to be used at 1st base in both junior and senior games.
- Batting helmets must be worn by all batters until reaching home plate or getting out. If a helmet is removed before the runner has crossed home plate and left the area of play, the runner is out. This does not apply to a helmet that falls off while the runner moves between bases.
- Catchers wearing shin pads instead of full leggings must also wear knee pads.

PLAYERS

- A team may consist of twelve players, however only 9 may take the field.
- The batting order must not change from the original score card.
- The minimum number of players required to play is 7. Less than this will result in a forfeit.
- When playing with less than nine players, an automatic OUT occurs in the batting line up each time the "SHORTIE" is up to bat.
- Seniors may not play for the junior team, however, juniors may be substituted into the senior team if numbers are needed. These substitutions must be cleared with the umpire.
- If a junior player plays in the senior team, they may not play in the junior game that day.
- If a junior plays more than 2 games for the senior team, they must finish the rest of the season as a Senior.
- Designated hitters shall not be used.

THE GAME

- Senior games will be 45 minutes.
- Junior games will be 45 minutes.
- If at the end of time the teams have not had equal innings, the score must revert back.

THE PLAYING FIELD

- Seniors ~ 18m between the bases. (approx 20 paces)
~ 12 paces from home plate to the pitchers plate.
- Juniors ~ 15.5m between the bases. (approx 17 paces)
~ 10 paces from home plate to the pitchers plate.

STRIKE

- Any pitch passing over any portion of the plate between the batters sternum and knees when in natural batting stance (this is the strike zone) without hitting the ground or home plate.
- Any foul tip caught by the catcher until the call of strike 2 (foul tip caught on strike 3 is out)
- Any foul ball until the call of strike 2.
- A pitch swung at and missed.
- An attempted bunt when the bat is actually moved.

STRIKE 3

- Is out only when the pitch is caught by the catcher. Batters should attempt to reach 1st base.
- If the bases are loaded and strike 3 is called, the batter is out even if the catcher drops the ball.

BALL

- A pitched ball which is not in the strike zone.
- An illegal pitch ~ runners advance one base.
- Four balls entitles the batter to first base. Other runners may steal at their own risk if not forced to walk.

FOUL

- Any ball which comes to rest outside the diamond in the infield unless touched by a player in fair territory.
- Any ball which **lands** outside the line of the diamond in the outfield.
- A ball rolling across the white portion of 1st or 3rd **base** is a fair hit.
- There is no limit to the number of fouls which may be hit ~ they count as strikes until strike 2.
- A foul is a dead ball ~ no one may steal or be put out.
- A foul tip is a foul ball which goes directly from the bat, not higher than the batters head to the catchers hands (these are not out until after the count of strike 2)
- A foul cannot be called until the ball has hit the ground, therefore can be caught by any fielder and the batter is out.

BUNT

- A bunt is a gentle hit of the ball that remains in the infield.
- A foul bunt on strike 3 is out.

FLY BALL

- Any ball caught on the full by a fielder is out. Any runner who has left their base before the catch must return. They may be played out by a fielder standing on the base with the ball or tagged. They become a forced runner (forced to return to their base).
- Runners may run at their own risk after returning to their base, once the ball has been caught.

ILLEGAL PITCH

- Any pitch which is contrary to the rules, ie:
 - a) not having both feet on the plate to begin.
 - b) taking more than one step before pitching.
 - c) having wrist wider than the elbow (side arm action).
 - d) windmill action
- The pitch is called a BALL no matter where it goes and runners get one base.

PASSED BALL

- Any pitch missed by the catcher and travelling 7.5m behind home plate. All base runners advance one base. The ball is dead, no runner may be put out.
- This rule is only to be played when a clear 7.5m is available otherwise the ball is live off the fence and must be fielded. Runners may advance at their own risk.
- Always consider the condition of the fence when playing the “live off the fence” rule. If there are many holes/gaps discuss what rule will be applied BEFORE beginning the game.

DEAD BALL TERRITORY

- The area behind the 7.5m clearance, ie: the fence. If the ball goes under, over or through the fence on a pitch or overthrow, the umpire shall call dead ball and runners are awarded a base.

THE SAFETY BASE

- The batter-runner should run directly to the orange portion of the safety base.
- Once at 1st, the runner must use the white portion or can be tagged out.
- Fielders must always play the white portion.

OVERTHROW

- An overthrow is a ball in play which is overthrown into dead ball territory at 1st, 3rd or home plate. Runners are awarded the base they were attempting at the time of the throw plus one.

TAGGING

- Any runner off a base may be tagged out by any fielder.
- Unforced runners (stealing or not forced to run by the batter) must be tagged.
- A runner who over runs 2nd or 3rd base may be tagged out.
- If the fielder drops the ball while making the tag, the runner is safe, unless the runner has deliberately barged the fielder to cause the error. The fielder has right of way.
- Fielders must have control of the ball when tagging.
- The runner may not avoid being tagged by running off the direct path between bases.

STRUCK WITH BATTED BALL

- If the batter remains in the box it is a strike and the ball is dead.
- If the batter attempts to run and is hit by their own ball they are out.
- Runners are out if struck, unless the ball has passed a fielder other than the pitcher.

BATTING OUT OF ORDER

- If a batter bats out of order and the umpire is notified while the offending batter is still in the box, the correct batter will take over. They assume the count of the offending batter.
- If a batter bats out of order and the umpire is notified before the next batter receives a pitch, the offending batter is out and any base runners must return to their last held base, including those who came home from the play.

BATTING OUT OF THE BOX

- If the batter has a foot on home plate and hits the ball they are out.
- If the batter has the whole of one foot outside of the box and hits the ball they are out.

SLIDING BASE

- If a base moves/slides out of position as the runner attempts to advance, the runner must remain where the base should have been and wait for the base to be put back by the umpire. Otherwise they can be tagged out.

DANGEROUS PLAY

- Throwing the bat is considered dangerous play. The umpire shall warn the batter, this acts as a **team warning**. If it happens again, the offending batter is out. Umpires discretion.
- Sliding into first is not necessary and should be discouraged. Use the safety base, which can be safely over run.

INTERFERENCE

- Catchers interference - catcher struck by the bat when fielding too close. Batter gets first base. Ball is dead.
- Batters interference - batter blocks the catcher trying to make a play. Batter is out. UNLESS there are less than 2 outs and there is a runner on 3rd base and the batter has interfered with a play at home plate. In this instance the batter is not out, the runner is out.
- Fielders interference - a fielder must not “block” the passage of a runner to a base unless they are in the process of fielding the ball or the play is being made at their base. Any runner who is obstructed by a fielder must be declared safe at the base they were attempting.
- Runners are out if they deliberately interfere or block a fielder attempting to field the ball. Fielders have the right of way over a runner if they are fielding the ball.
- Runners MUST NOT jump the batted ball. They must wait for it to pass before continuing to their base.

BASE RUNNING

- If runners leave their base before the pitcher has released the ball the runner is out.
- The ball is alive when not in pitchers circle. Runners may advance at own risk.
- Juniors - No sneaking or stealing is permitted.

COACHING

- Base coaches may coach a runner.
- A team will have no more than 2 coaches to give words of assistance and direction to their players while at bat. One at 1st base and one at 3rd base. These must be teachers or students NOT parents.

UMPIRES

- Any ball striking the umpire is “live” behind the plate and must be fielded. Runners can steal.

RETIRED SIDE

- Seniors - When 3 outs have been made.
- Juniors - When 3 outs have been made or when all 9 players have batted once, whichever occurs first. **A team may declare their innings at any time.**

Junior Girls Softball Modifications

The general rules of Softball, although there are several modifications that must be implemented. Unless otherwise stated, you should follow the GVPSSA Softball rules.

THE PLAYING FIELD

- 15.5m between the bases (approx. 17 paces)
- 9m from home plate to the pitchers plate (approx. 10 paces)

POSITIONS

- Normal fielding positions.
- The pitcher must have both feet in contact with the plate until the ball is hit.
- No fielder is permitted to field in front of the pitcher.
- Until the ball is hit, all players except the catcher must be in fair territory.

BATTING

- The batting team shall have 9 batters or 3 outs whichever is called first.
- The ball is foul if it travels less than 4.5m from home plate. (approx halfway to the pitcher).
- Bunting is not permitted.
- As per general softball rules, a batter will be out if the bat is thrown dangerously.

STRIKE

- As rules as the seniors

BALLS

- A pitched ball which is not in the strike zone.
- After the fourth ball, the batter doesn't advance to first base. The tee is used for the batter to hit from.
- The strike count – starts again. E.g. If the batter was strike 2, ball 4 – the tee is used and the call reverts back to zero.
- After three strikes on the tee, the batter is out.

BATTING WITH THE TEE

- The Tee must be placed with the stem over the centre of home plate.
- The batter is not permitted to take a half swing, all their force must be used.
- Three strikes and the batter is out.
- A batter is not permitted to have practice swings when at the Tee. These count as a strike.

LAST BATTER

- The batting side must notify the umpire of the last (9th) batter.
- When the last batter hits a fair ball, the batting team may be retired by:
 - getting the last batter out - regardless of the number of OUTS.
 - getting an out by normal play - regardless of the number of OUTS.
 - returning the ball to home plate - regardless of the number of OUTS.
- No runs shall score **after** the last out is made. If a runner crosses home plate before the last out is made, the run shall score.

BASE RUNNING

- A runner must wait until the ball is hit before leaving the base.
- No sneaking or stealing is permitted.
- Runners may run more than one base in a play.
- When the batter hits a fair ball, play proceeds until all runners are held up on bases or no further play is possible.
- TIME shall be called by the umpire when:
 - all possible play has ceased.
 - the ball has been returned to the pitcher.
 - an infielder AHEAD of the LEAD runner has control of the ball.
- When the ball is over thrown and goes DEAD (out of the playing area/into the crowd/into foul territory) the runner is awarded the base they were attempting plus the next base.