

NORTHWEST GIRLS SOFTBALL-FASTPITCH

16/18u Rules - UPDATED January 2025

USA Softball rules will be used with the following modifications:

COACHES

Refer to the NWGS League Rules Section 7 – Head Coaches, Coaching Staff, and Coach Vacancies for full rules and guidelines regarding coaches. The following items are here simply for emphasis.

- All coaches must be ACE certified. (League Rules, Section 7, p.6)
- All team staff must be able to show proof of an unexpired Volunteer Coach Educated Softball card when on the field or in the dugout. (League Rules, Section 7, p. 6)
- Ensure there is always a background-checked/ACE-certified female in the dugout or on the field during practices and games. (League Rules, Section 7, p. 6)

GAME INFORMATION

- A. Game Time Begins with the first warm-up pitch. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 12)
 - Pitcher warm-up before the game and between innings is five (5) pitches or one (1) minute, whichever comes first. (USA Softball Official Rules 2023, Chapter 6A, Section 9)
- B. Forfeits occur five (5) minutes after game time unless the prior game has run late. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 12)
- C. A game will NOT be rescheduled unless it is called by the Umpire due to weather or safety issues. (League Rules, Section 12, p.12)
- D. Game time is one hour and twenty minutes. There is no new inning after one hour and twenty minutes. When game time is reached during an inning, finish the inning. (League Rules, Section 11, p. 11)
- E. A game that has completed three (3) innings, or that has completed two and one-half innings with the home team ahead, will be an official game and not rescheduled if called by the umpire due to weather or safety issues. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 12)
- F. Inning Run Limits
 - 4 run maximum – first through third innings. (League Rules, Section 12, p.13)
 - 6 run maximum – fourth and subsequent innings. (League Rules, Section 12, p.13)
 - After game time expires, a game shall end if at any point a team cannot at least tie its opponent because of run cap rules. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 12)
- G. Mercy Rule
 - 12 runs ahead – after the third inning. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 13)
 - 10 runs ahead – after the fourth inning. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 13)
 - 8 runs ahead – after the fifth inning. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 13)
- H. Pitching distance is 43'. (USA Softball Rulebook 2023, Rule 2, Section 1)
- I. Umpires and the opposing coach must have your lineup prior to the start of the game.
 - Per the USA Softball Official Rules, lineup cards must include each player's first and last name, jersey number, and starting position. (USA Softball Official Rules 2023, Rule 4, Section 1, Letter A, Number 1)

- It is the responsibility of each team's scorekeeper to check the score with the umpire at the end of each half-inning.

UNIFORMS

- Girls must be in full uniform with shirts tucked in. (USA Softball Rulebook 2023, Rules Supplement, Number 49 Sporting Behavior)
- Face masks are mandatory for any girl playing in the field. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 13 and Section 13 p. 16)
- If hats are worn, they must be "like" in color. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 13)
- Metal cleats are not permitted. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 13 and Section 13, p. 16)
- No jewelry or hard hair accessories. Sport rope necklaces are allowed. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 13)

GAMEPLAY

- A. Bat the bench - all players in attendance. (League Rule, Section 12, p. 13)
- B. If there are only eight (8) players in attendance, the 9th position will take an out. (USA Softball Rulebook 2023, Rule 1, Section 1)
- This penalty is effective the entire game. (USA Softball Rule Book 2023, Rule 1, Section 1)
 - Late arrival(s) may be inserted in the 9th position and beyond. (USA Softball Rulebook 2023, Rule 1, Section 1)
 - A team may not play with seven (7) players. (USA Softball Rule Book, Rule 1, Section 1)
- C. Every girl must play two (2) defensive innings. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 13)
- All substitutions must be made by the top of the 3rd inning. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 13)
 - If any players were unable to play their two (2) innings, those players must start the next game and complete any missed innings. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 13)
 - It is the sole responsibility of the Head Coach to demonstrate proper use of players by either book or player card. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 13)
 - A team in violation of this rule will have the Head Coach suspended from the field for one full game. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 13)
- D. Umpires who have a conference with any player shall have a coach present. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 13)
- E. If the pitcher and/or catcher is on base you may utilize the courtesy runner rule at any time (USA Softball Rulebook 2023, Rule 8, Section 10), the last recorded out may run for the pitcher/catcher (League Rules, Section 12, p. 15)
- If the pitcher/catcher is the last out, proceed to the next out. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 15)
 - If there are no outs furthest away will be utilized. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 15)
 - In the event that there are zero (0) outs in the first inning, the player in the lineup who is furthest away from batting may run for the pitcher/ catcher. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 15)
 - In the top of the first inning, the pitcher and catcher are the players identified at that position on the lineup card. Thereafter, the pitcher and catcher are identified as the last players who physically played that position on defense. (USA Softball Rule Book, Rule 8, Section 10)
- F. Commonly used softball chants by softball teams are permitted. (League Rules, Section 11, p. 11)
- Negative cheering that is felt to be excessive or done to humiliate a player is not permitted and should be brought to your Division Representative's attention to review. (League Rules, Section 11, p. 11)
 - Any necessary disciplinary steps needed will be addressed by Vice President. (League Rules, Section 11, p. 11)
- G. No artificial noisemakers of any kind. (League Rules, Section 11, p. 11)

RECORDING OF PITCHER AND CATCHER OUTS

1. Unlimited pitching and catching outs per week (In-League and Inter-League). (League Rules, Section 12, p. 14)
2. Outs are tracked as follows:
 - If the pitcher or catcher plays the entire inning, then each pitcher and catcher will be charged with three (3) outs. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 14)
 - If the pitcher or catcher is relieved in the inning, then each pitcher and catcher is charged with the actual outs she records but must be charged with at least one (1) out each. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 14)
 - If the pitcher or catcher is relieved in the inning and no outs are recorded, then each pitcher and catcher is charged with one (1) out. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 15)
 - If application of these rules results in a total of only two (2) outs being assigned to all pitchers or all catchers in an inning, then the pitcher or catcher who pitched or caught the most pitches in the inning will be assigned an additional out. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 15)
 - If the pitchers or catchers pitched or caught the same number of pitches, then the pitcher or catcher who started the inning will be assigned an additional out. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 15)

REPORTING PITCHER AND CATCHER OUTS

- The winning Head Coach is responsible for reporting P/C outs via email to their Division Representative within 24 hours of the completion of their game. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 12)
- The opposing coach must be included on the email. (League Rules, Section 12, p. 12)
- Failure to meet these reporting requirements results in the below repercussions:
 - a. 1st offense – 1 game suspension
 - b. 2nd offense – 2 game suspension
 - c. 3rd offense - 0-7 forfeit loss