Dear Coaches,

We would like to thank you for choosing to volunteer at one of the most rewarding jobs you will ever have. It is for this reason we have developed this rulebook to help you understand and learn our leagues policies and rules. Please carry this with you throughout the season.

Each respective Board of Directors is committed to support you and ensure we provide the best recreational softball experience for the children. Additional rules can found on our web sites and you also have the responsibility to ensure you are aware of these.

This is a very important job you are undertaking teaching the youth of our community. You are the person we rely on to manage the experience.

Once again, thank you for your hard work and dedication to our organizations.

Joe Molinaro                        Mark Lonigro                  Dave Cesario
AAYO Commissioner         LITHYAA President       CLGSL President

Softball Rule Handbook
2013

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Objectives, General Policies and Rules

- Players, volunteers, and spectators safety at all times and in all things is mandatory.
- Place emphasis on teaching the rules, how the game is played, and teamwork.
- Promote sportsmanship and good character among players on your team as well as other teams.
- Smoking or drinking alcoholic beverages by managers, coaches, or other adult volunteers during a practice or game is prohibited.
- No vehicles are permitted on any field area.
- Make games and practices an enjoyable experience, as well as a learning experience. Think of the positive aspects and be sure to give your players plenty of encouragement.
- The basic overall concept is total participation for all of the players in a congenial environment under adult supervision. The leadership is to be positive, tempered by patience.
- Each manager is to schedule a meeting with the team members parents to explain briefly their philosophy, answer parents concerns, inform of league rules, hand out uniforms, and give players an opportunity to meet each other.
- Always remember that we teach more by our actions!
Objectives, General Policies and Rules

1. EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE
If a player is injured:
- Administer First Aid: Kits are provided in the knack boxes or conces-
sion stands.
- Contact paramedics if necessary
- Contact parent/guardian if not present using contact numbers pro-
vided on the team roster.

2. FIELD CONDITIONS
Both managers and coaches are responsible for preparing the field of
play and raking the field after the game. The home team has the re-
ponsibility to store and secure the bases and field equipment.
Before a practice or a game, manager and coaches should survey the
field for any damage, holes, stones, glass or other foreign objects.

3. WEATHER
The umpire along with the managers will decide if a game or practice
will start because of weather or playing conditions – this is to be
decided at the scheduled start time, at the field.
No game or practices should be held during threatening weather or
any unsafe conditions
Inadequate lighting
Poor field conditions
All umpire decisions are final

4. AUTHORITY OF THE UMPIRE
The umpire, once the game has started, has full authority to control
the game.
If there is excessive harassment of the umpire or the other team, the
umpire has the authority to:
- Issue a team warning.
- Issue a manager, coach or player responsible a "bench ejection". (The person receiving a “bench ejection” will be allowed
to stay and watch the game, but not participate further – sit on
the bench ONLY.)
- Issue a manager, coach, player, parent or spectator responsible
an ejection. (asked to leave the premises).
Judgment of the umpire is final and will be based on the severity of
the infraction

5. COACHES/PLAYER CONDUCT
The use of abusive language will not be tolerated.
Throwing equipment in anger will not be tolerated.
Intentionally taking off or knocking off a helmet while running will
be called out.
All players not playing, fielding or base running must remain seated
in the dugout area.
At no time should “Horse play” be permitted.
No food or non-players are allowed in the dugout area or on the
playing field during games

6. FAN CONDUCT
Only players, managers, coaches and umpires shall participate in the
game or occupy the playing field and bench area.
Undue vocal or physically threatening actions by fans towards manag-
ers, coaches, players, umpires or spectators will not be tolerated. This
will result in the ejection of the person from the premises and will be
subject to a board review.
A spectator can be ejected by Executive Board Member and/or ump-
ire.

7. EJECTION
If anyone is ejected from a game and the person does not leave the
premises, the game will be suspended until they leave or their team
will forfeit after 5 minutes of waiting.
Any manager, coach or player ejected from a game will need to dis-
cuss the situation with the league coordinator immediately.

8. EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS
Equipment should be inspected regularly making sure it fits properly.
Any broken or damaged equipment should be reported to the League
Coordinator for immediate replacement.
Full uniforms must be worn for all games.
Jersey must be tucked into pants.
Team cap must be worn when playing.
No clothing may be worn over the uniform while batting or in the field
unless agreed upon by coaches during in climate weather.

Lightning Policy
The IHSA Lightning Safety Guidelines are summarized below. This guide-
line will be in full effect at any site not equipped with a lightning detection
system.
Lightening – immediately remove the children from the playing field.
There is a minimum 30 minute waiting period (children must be in cars). After
30 minutes, the game may be restarted if lightening is no longer anywhere near
the area. The 30 minute waiting period restarts with each new lightening strike
that is seen. Otherwise the game is suspended (or considered complete according
to league rules for minimum number of innings).
Additionally, the observation of the lightening detection systems must be ad-
hered to as stated on the posted signs. Failure to do so can result in village fines.
Once the game has started, the umpire, managers and coaches will decide wheth-
er the game will either be delayed or suspended due to weather condition.
Games suspended or canceled for weather must be rescheduled through League
Coordinator. Games suspended that can be rescheduled will be restarted from
the point in which the game was suspended.
Lightning Prediction System

How It Works
The system detects conditions that could trigger lightning. When a potentially dangerous weather situation is approaching, a Warning Signal (one long 15 second horn blast) will sound and strobe lights will activate. The strobe lights are mounted on the prediction system cluster located on the roof of a building at each site. If the strobe lights are activated, a potentially dangerous weather situation exists. When the dangerous weather conditions have ceased, the All Clear Signal (three short horn blasts, two seconds apart) will sound, and the strobe lights will deactivate.

Procedures
When the Warning Signal sounds, all activities in affected park(s) will end immediately and patrons must leave the park. It is recommended that park patrons seek shelter in their cars or a building. Patrons should avoid areas that are higher than the surrounding landscapes and a tree for shelter. They should keep away from metal objects such as but not limited to bicycles, golf clubs, umbrellas, etc. All park patrons must wait until the Lightning Prediction System performs an All Clear Signal before returning to the park and resuming their activities.

Caution
Although the Lightning Prediction System helps assess the weather conditions, weather can be highly unpredictable. Neither the signal nor the system is intended to guarantee that conditions are safe. If the weather appears to you to be threatening and no warning signal is heard or seen, use good judgment and leave the park. Do not wait for the warning signal to activate, as the system can malfunction. If you are at a park without a lightning protection system, continue to follow judgment and your organization’s rules for inclement weather. Please be aware that lightning can strike even on a sunny day. Therefore, anytime lightning is observed, the best course of action is to seek shelter immediately.

Softball Rules

1. LENGTH OF GAMES
The umpire will start the game timer as soon as the first warm-up pitch is made in the top of the first inning
No new inning shall start after 2 hours from the start of the game.
Exception: Playoff games have no time limit.

Note: An inning is considered to be started as soon as the last out of the previous inning has been made. If an inning cannot be completed due to darkness, the score goes back to previous completed inning unless the home team is ahead and the top half of the inning is completed

Pony Tail and Minors
Games consist of six (6) innings and will be considered a complete game after 4 innings (3 ½ if home team is ahead).

Ponytail Softball: A complete ½ inning will be three (3) outs or five (5) runs, except for the 6th inning will be eight (8) runs.
Minors Softball: A complete 1/2 inning will be three (3) outs or six (6) runs, except for the 6th inning will be nine (9) runs.
Majors: Games consist of Seven (7) innings and will be considered a complete game after 4 innings (3 ½ if home team is ahead).
A complete ½ inning will be three (3) outs.

4. INJURY REDUCTION
After a game has started, play will continue even if illness or injury reduce the number of players below the minimum to have started the game.

5. MINIMUM PLAYING TIME
No player shall sit out more that one (1) inning in a row. A player cannot sit out a second time until every other teammate has sat out one (1) complete inning.
Each player MUST play a minimum of three (3) defensive innings.

Ponytail & Girl Minors: No player shall play the same defensive position for more than three (3) innings in any one (1) game, including pitchers and catchers. Players must play an infield position and an outfield position for an entire (complete) inning. A complete inning is defined as 3 outs in one inning.

All players should be allowed to try all positions through out the season.

Girl Majors: No player shall play the same defensive position for more than four (4) innings in any one (1) game, including pitchers and catchers. Players must play an infield position and an outfield position for an entire (complete) inning. A complete inning is defined as 3 outs in one inning.
Moving a player between an infield/outfield position is prohibited unless due to an injury replacement and no other players are available or both players have already played a complete inning in both infield and outfield.
6. PLAY-UP PLAYERS

Play-up player request needs to be arranged with League Coordinator.

Players registered in Instructional Softball (ONLY) can play for any Pony-tail team provided:

Players registered in Pony Tail Softball (ONLY) can play for any Minor team provided:

Players registered in Minors Softball (ONLY) can play for any Major team provided:

Play-up players can NOT play in a playoff game.

Play-up players are not eligible to play in the pitcher or catcher positions at any time.

Parents must have completed a waver and have it on file with their league director.

Must bat in the last position in the lineup.

Will be considered one of the minimum players.

Must be in uniform (from lower league they play in).

7. DUGOUTS

Home team will use the third (3rd) base dugout.

8. PRE-GAME MEETING

10-minute prior to scheduled game time, the head coach/managers must meet with the umpire to discuss the game rules.

9. SCORE KEEPING

The home team will keep the official score and should verify the score after each completed inning with the visiting team’s scorekeeper.

The winning manager will call the score to the league coordinator for it to be considered an official game.

10. FIELD DIMENSIONS

Pony Tail
Pitching rubber will be 35 feet from home plate.
Bases will be 60 feet apart.

Minors
Pitching rubber will be 40 feet from home plate.
Bases will be 60 feet apart.

Majors
Pitching rubber will be 43 feet from home plate.
Bases will be 60 feet apart.

11. SOFTBALL

Pony Tail
The game is played with eleven (11) inch softball.

Minors and Majors
The game is played with twelve (12) inch softball.

12. BATS

Official softball bats must be used and must be stated on the bat.

13. UNIFORMS

To play in the game, a player must wear a uniform. Jerseys should be tucked in and no clothing of any kind should be worn over the uniform. Jewelry, of any kind, is not allowed to be worn

14. THROWING OF THE BAT

Each player will receive one (1) warning for throwing the bat. A second warning will be an automatic out, which will result in a dead ball situation.

15. BATTING ROTATION

All players will bat in a continuous rotation including those players who are presently sitting out and not playing a defensive position. Any additions (i.e. late arriving player) to the lineup must be announced to the umpire, opposing team, and scorekeeper. The additions shall be placed at the bottom of the batting order. Batting out of order rule will apply. Please see page 18-19 in handbook for the rule.

16. BUNTING

Bunting is permitted. If the batter does not pull the bat back, it will be considered a strike by the umpire.

17. DROP THIRD STRIKE

Pony Tail and Minors: Batters may not advance on a dropped third strike.

Majors: Batters may advance on a dropped third strike.

18. INFIELD FLY RULE

Pony Tail and Minors: Infield fly rule will not be called.

Majors: Infield fly rule will be called

19. PITCHING

Number of warm-up pitches for starting pitcher or for a new pitcher will be seven (7), returning pitcher will get four (4).

Pitchers must use the “windmill” motion for all pitches. Failure to do so will result in a non-pitch. Both feet must be on or touching the rubber to start the pitch motion and one foot must stay in contact with the ground until the ball is released. Failure to do so will be declared a non-pitch. A step backward once the pitch motion begins is not permitted.

A manager is allowed one (1) trip to the mound in any inning (Timeout). On the second trip (Timeout) to the mound in one (1) inning, the pitcher must be removed.

Pony Tail (First half of season)
If a pitcher has walked 3 batters in an inning, If a 4th batter reaches 4 balls in the count, the batter will not walk. A coach from the offensive team will come in and throw the balance of strikes in the count (both coach and pitcher will remain in the circle during the pitch). The umpire will continue to call strikes, balls will not be counted. If the batter reaches 3 strikes they will be called out.

Pony Tail and Minors
A pitcher will pitch no more than three (3) innings per game. Innings pitched do not have to be continual and one (1) pitch Constitutes an inning.
Majors
A pitcher will pitch no more than four (4) innings per game. Innings pitched do not have to be continual and one (1) pitch constitutes an inning.

20. HIT BY PITCH
If a batter is hit by a pitch, the ball is considered dead and batter is awarded 1st base.

If a pitcher hits three (3) batters in a game, a pitching change must be made immediately. That pitcher then becomes ineligible to return to the pitching position for the remainder of the game.

This does not apply to Majors Softball

21. BASE STEALING
Pony Tail
A base runner is allowed to steal one base per batter, but only on the 1st or 2nd pitch. The runner must wait until the ball crosses the plate. Stealing home is not allowed. A runner on 3rd base can only advance to home on a batted ball or walk.

The runner may be played upon by the defense and called out if tagged. Should an error occur when attempting a put out (overthrow, dropped ball, etc.), the runner, or other base runners, MAY NOT ADVANCE additional bases.

During an attempted steal, no other runners may advance under any circumstances (No double steals). Any runner caught off base, (attempting steal when not allowed) is in jeopardy and can be tagged out.

Should runners illegally advance to another base, they must return to the original base and are considered to be in jeopardy and can be tagged out.

Lead offs are not permitted.

Minors
A base runner may steal after the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand.

The runner may be played upon by the defense and called out if tagged. Runners stealing a base can advance on an overthrow and may continue running until the ball is back to the pitcher in the circle.

Double steals are allowed. Any runner caught off base, (attempting steal when not allowed) is in jeopardy and can be tagged out.

Should runners illegally advance to another base, they must return to the original base and are considered to be in jeopardy and can be tagged out.

Lead offs are permitted once the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand.

No suicide squeeze attempt is allowed.

A base runner may attempt to steal home; If the pitched ball is not cleanly caught by the catcher, if the catcher attempts to make a play any runner, or if the ball thrown back to the pitcher is overthrow.

If a run is scored by stealing home (non batted ball) runners may not steal home for the rest of the inning, unless the catcher makes a throw to 3rd in an attempt to pick-off the runner. If the catcher makes a throw to 3rd, that runner can advance home and the other runners may advance at their own risk.

Majors
No suicide squeeze attempt is allowed.

Base coaches cannot touch the runner or the runner will be called out.

The pitcher, catcher, or other player must have the ball in order to block the plate or any other base.

Running with the pitch is allowed once the ball leaves the pitchers hand.

called out by the umpire.

26. SAFETY
Base runners and batters (at bat or on deck) must wear helmets.

Catchers must wear catcher’s helmet and the complete set of catcher’s equipment.

No jewelry is to be worn during games or practices.

Rubber spikes only.

Batters will not be allowed to fake bunt and swing for the safety of the infielders.

Head first sliding is not allowed. The runner will be called out if this occurs.

While batting, only the batter and the player on deck should have a bat. All other players should remain on the bench.

Spectators may only handle equipment that is property of the league when given permission by the manager. This should only be done while instructing a player or within the scope of assisting the manager during a game.

All equipment is to be kept off the playing field and behind the dugout fence when not in use.

If equipment breaks, notify the league coordinator who will coordinate the replacement of the broken equipment.
PLAYOFFS

Home team (higher seed) must open and man the concession stand.

The following are the playoff structures

10 Team league should be bracketed as follows:
1v(8v9) winner, 4v6 on one side of the bracket with 2v(7v10) winner, 3v5 on the other
and then continue bracket as such.

9 Team league should be bracketed as follows:
1v(8v9) winner, 4v5 on one side of the bracket with 2v7, 3v6 on the other
and then continue bracket as such.

8 Team league should be bracketed as follows:
1v8, 4v5 on one side of the bracket with 2v7, 3v6 on the other
and then continue bracket as such.

7 Team league should be bracketed as follows:
1v(4v5) winner on one side of bracket with (2v7) winner v (3v6) winner
and then continue bracket as such.

6 Team league should be bracketed as follows:
1v(4v5) winner on one side of bracket with 2v(3v6) winner
and then continue bracket as such.

5 Team league should be bracketed as follows:
1v(4v5) winner on one side of bracket with (2v3) winner
and then continue bracket as such.

Instructional Softball League
Managers/Coaches Objectives and General Policies

League standing and team win/lose records are not compiled, nor are they significant.
Place emphasis on teaching the rules, how the game is played, and teamwork. De-emphasize competition at this age level.
Devote an equal amount of time to all players on the team.
All players must field each regular defensive infield softball position as many times as possible during the season, unless a safety issue arises.
Mangers and coaches will be permitted on the field while their defensive team is in the field for real time instructional purposes.
The basic overall concept is total participation for all of the players in a congenial environment under adult supervision. The leadership is to be positive, tempered by patience.
Managers, coaches and players are responsible for the setting up and cleaning up of the field for all practices and games.

League Rules

1. LENGTH OF GAMES
Games consist of five (5) complete innings.
After one (1) hour and 30 minutes of game time the next inning will be the last inning which will be announced by and agreed upon by both managers. Final inning rules will apply.
A complete inning will consist of 3 outs or all rostered players batting one time.
The offensive team will notify the other team manager when the last batter is batting. At this point two (2) outs will automatically be declared. When the batter puts the ball in play, she will be treated as a regular batter with two (2) outs.
Make up games are not required, but can be scheduled at the managers discretion, with League Coordinators approval for field availability.
Game in progress may be suspended for instructional purposes.

2. DUGOUTS
Home team will use the third (3rd) base dugout.

3. PRE-GAME MEETING
10-minute prior to scheduled game time, the head coach/managers must meet to discuss the game rules. These two individuals will be responsible and in control of the game.

4. SCORE KEEPING
Managers need not exchange line-ups, as no official score is kept.
All players are in the batting lineup and will play a defensive position each game.

5. FIELD DIMENSIONS
Pitching rubber is 30/35 feet from home plate.
Bases will be 55/60 feet apart.

6. SOFTBALL
The game is played with an eleven (11) inch flex softball.

7. NUMBER OF PLAYERS
There are no limits to number of players to start or play a game.
If discussed with opposing team, players will be allowed to play for the other team to give each player more opportunities to play.
Regular softball infield positions (including catcher) will be used.
All outfield positions must be played at or beyond the grass line. Up to 4 outfielders may be used (10 players total).

8. MINIMUM PLAYING TIME
No player shall sit out more than one (1) inning in a row. A player can not sit out a second time until every other teammate has sat out one (1) inning.
Permanent positioning of players is not permitted. No player shall play the same defensive position for more than two (2) innings in any one (1) game. Pitchers and catchers are limited to one (1) inning at those positions per game. No player shall play outfield two (2) consecutive innings. All players must be allowed to try all positions throughout the season (exceptions only accommodated for safety reasons).

9. UMPIRES
The manager/coach pitching will make all calls at home & 2nd base. The manager/coaches coaching the base will make the calls at their respected base. No players are allowed to coach bases. If an umpire is provided, it will be for training purposes only, and will make all base calls only. Balls and strikes will not be called because walks or strikeouts are not allowed.

Manager and coaches will be responsible for their fan’s conduct and should encourage good sportsmanship. Defensive coaches are allowed on the field during the game to instruct.

10. PITCHING/BATTING
At no time is a t-stand allowed to be used during a game.

The manager or coach of the batting team will pitch to their own team. The manager or coach shall pitch underhand, increasing or decreasing speed for each player’s ability. The defensive team will field a pitcher in position next to the coach pitching, for defensive purposes.

In innings 1 & 2 the offensive coach will pitch 5 QUALITY pitches to their batter, if the batter does not hit the ball they will be out (the at bat will not end in a foul ball).

Starting in the third inning, the player in the pitcher position will pitch to the first 3 batters, up to four pitches. (or if hit by pitch, the batter may choose to walk) per batter. If the batter fails to hit the ball the offensive coach will finish pitching to that batter with up to 3 QUALITY pitches. If the batter does not hit the ball they will be out (the at bat will not end in a foul ball). The rest of the batters will be the same coach pitch rules has in innings 1 & 2.

For a batter that does not put the ball in play after 3 innings of consecutive strikeouts, the Pitching coach may use “soft-toss” method for the last 2 QUALITY pitches.

All players MUST wear a approved helmet with facemask and will bat in a continuous rotation and will change after each game. Players should be instructed to not throw their bats.

If a player arrives late they are to be placed at the bottom of the line-up.

11. BASE RUNNING/STEALING
Runners may advance to the next base at their own risk on any batted ball. The base runner must stop at their present base when the pitcher (player, not coach) has the ball in the general vicinity of the pitching rubber.

Running should be tempered with the idea that this is an instructional league.

Runners will not advance any base, with an overthrown ball. The ball is dead immediately. Runners may advance one additional base if the hit ball has gone beyond the infielder and outfielder NOT on an error.

Base stealing is not permitted.

Lead offs are not allowed.

12. UNIFORMS
To play in the game, a player must wear a uniform. Jerseys should be tucked in and no clothing of any kind should be worn over the uniform (weather dependant, wearing clothes under the jersey is encouraged, hoods must be tucked in).

Jewelry, of any kind, is not allowed to be worn.

13. SAFETY
Base runners and batters (at bat or on deck) must wear helmets.

Catchers must wear catcher’s helmet and the complete set of catcher’s equipment.

Head first sliding is not allowed.

While batting, only the batter and the player on deck should have a bat. All other players should remain on the bench.

Spectators may only handle equipment that is property of the league when given permission by the manager. This should only be done while instructing a player or within the scope of assisting the manager during a game.

All equipment is to be kept off the playing field and behind the dugout fence when not in use.