

Northern Ct. Girls Softball League
Rules, Policies & Procedures
(see Article 26 for special 12u rules)

It is strongly recommended that pitchers and infielders, especially third baseman wear face masks.

1. Mission

The primary purpose of the Northern Connecticut Girls' Softball League (NCGSL) is to encourage and enhance the development of competitive fastpitch softball players at the intermediate and secondary school levels in an organized, competitive, and safe environment.

2. Code of Conduct:

NCGSL is an invitational league where by every officer, manager, coach, assistant and player is responsible for upholding the integrity of the league and is subject to yearly review and renewal by the League Officers. The officers shall be entrusted by the member towns with the overall welfare of the League and are empowered to govern the League in a manner that will preserve that welfare.

Any and all instances of rule infraction, unsportsmanlike conduct and willful misrepresentation will come into consideration in cases of membership suspension or expulsion from the League.

Special Cheering Rule for 12U: teams may not cheer or chant when the pitcher is on the rubber or delivering her pitch. (At this level we do not find such behavior conducive to the learning/developing process.)

Coach Background Checks: The League lacks the resources to conduct background checks of coaches. It relies on each Town's families to be aware of any problems. The League welcomes notice of any findings by other entities which can assist it in determining a coach's acceptability.

3, Membership Voting:

- a.) Issues decided at League meetings will be by one vote per town represented. Any active coach may be the voting representative for their town.
- b.) League officers each have one vote in deciding issues not brought before a town vote. The Presidents' vote will decide a tie. An officer must abstain from voting on an issue that involves the town he or she is affiliated with.

4. Team Age Divisions

Each team may have a maximum of 25 players on its roster. As a practical matter, 12-16 players is the usual range depending on player commitments.

Players who were enrolled in grades 6 - 8 as of June of the current year are eligible to play in the **Middle School Division** (14u administratively).

Players enrolled in grades 8 - 11 in June of the current year are eligible to play in the **High School Division** (18u administratively). High School graduates are ineligible.

12U Division shall be comprised of players 12 years old and under as of December 31 of the previous year. (USSSA PG. 6 Sec. 1)

Transitional Players: players Going-Into-9th-Grade (**GINGS**) are eligible to play in either the High School or Middle School Division, but not both. Once rostered on a team, they may participate in only one Division for that summer

12u players may play in the Middle School Division if safety and skill levels are appropriate in the mutual opinion of parents and coaches. Such players may play in only one Division for that summer's season.

Rosters must be registered on the USSSA system by June 1 so that all teams can receive their insurance certificates immediately thereafter. Players may be added up to and including July 15th.

For current on-line procedures See: Rocha-Miller e-mail dated 5/23/15.

5. Medical forms and Birth Certificates

Coaches shall bring parent completed medical forms to every game.

Coaches shall maintain player birth certificates **for all new players from 2013 and on**, which shall be available for inspection on reasonable notice.

6. Residency Requirement

Players must reside or attend school in the town for which they play. Players with divorced or separated parents may play for the town in which either parent resides.

Players residing in a town which is part of a **Regional School District** may play for another town in that District provided their home town has no appropriate age team.

Players whose families move to a new town may continue to play for their former town.

At Large Player Policy--Players residing in towns in our historic geographic area with no appropriate age team may apply to the League President for assignment to another town. In making such assignments, the President shall consider geographic proximity, town needs, and parity of competition.

The purpose of the At Large Player Policy is two-fold:

- 1. To provide NCGSL area players with no hometown team an opportunity to play softball, and**
- 2. to help towns having difficulty finding enough players for a viable team.**

a.) No qualified in-town players shall be displaced by At Large Players.

b.) A majority of players on each team shall legally reside in or attend school in the host town.

c.) **The League President shall notify respective Division coaches of At Large Player assignments periodically.** Where appropriate, "A" level pitchers may be assigned by lottery to towns geographically acceptable to parents.

d.) Coaches are prohibited from recruiting out-of-town players.

e.) Only players from towns within the League's historic footprint are eligible for At Large status.

f.) Excess Player Policy: Where a town has an excessive number of home town players, yet not enough for two viable teams, or alternatively lacks enough coaches, **IT** may offer its players to the At Large Pool.

However

in such cases no out-of-town players shall displace hometown players, except in the case of "Grandmothers".

Rationale: this policy contributes to increased League participation and does not appear to foster recruiting abuses.

g.) **Grandmother Rule:** An At Large Player may return to her out-of-town team even tho her hometown forms a team in subsequent years.

h.) Any team found to be using **unregistered or ineligible** players under these rules will forfeit those games and may also be subject to additional sanctions determined by the League Officers.

7. Tournament Eligibility and Format

a.) **Teams** must play three quarters (75%) of their regular season scheduled games to be eligible for tournament participation. No exceptions for Little League playoff teams.

b.) **Players** must have played in 50% of their regular season scheduled games to be eligible for tournament participation. An exception will be made for injured players where there is clear proof of such injury at the

time of its occurrence.

c.) There are no refunds for tournament ineligibility or other inability to participate.

d.) **Format**--Saturday play will consist of team pools with each team playing 2-3 games depending on space availability. **A Hybrid approach** will be used whereby pools will be constructed of "Top, mid, and bottom Tier teams" as determined by regular season standings. The purpose of this approach is to give partial recognition to the regular season results while also providing bottom tier teams a competitive opportunity. (E.g. Pool #1. Teams 1, 5, 9, and 13--in a 16 team league)

Pool Play Priorities:

1. Fit 30+ games covering 3 different age divisions into 7 diamonds over 5 time slots.
2. Avoid any team having to play 3 games in a row without a rest period.
3. Ensure every team plays at least 3 games, even tho in the case of an odd number of teams this is mathematically impossible. Thus one team must play a 4th game.
4. Avoid a 1 v. 2 matchup
5. Provide the lower seeded teams a "fighting chance".
6. Note: Even tho the High School seedings may be determined

before

all

4th

delays

the M.S. and 12u Divisions, match ups can not be finalized, until seedings are known and diamonds are allocated. **Finding the game opponent or a last minute withdrawal in any Division all Divisions.**

Sunday's single elimination tournament seedings will be based on Saturday's results, i.e. won/lost, head-to-head competition, runs allowed, runs scored, coin toss.

e.) In the event of a Saturday rainout, that day's schedule will be played on Sunday. Tournament champion will be decided by the above criteria.

f.) Refunds will be made as follows: if only one tournament game is played there will be a 25% refund of the USSA FEE after deduction for the on-line registration fee. If no games are played the refund will be 50%. If one day is retained out there will be no refunds as each team will have played 2-3 games.

8. Team Standings (See #27 for Tournament Pool Play pairings and Sunday Seedings).

Standings will be based on 2 points for each win, 1 for each tie.

Forfeits will result in a loss of one point.

The order of tie-breaking in League standings will be 1.) head-to-head
2.) geographic division 3.) runs allowed.

9. Forfeits, Suspended, and Re-scheduled Games

a.) Coaches are expected to know their Player Availability Schedules by the Team sign-up meeting.

b.) Teams will have up to 3 days after the 1st Schedule Draft to re-schedule games. After the final schedule is published, games may be re-scheduled only for weather related events or Little League Playoffs. All other cancellations will be deemed forfeits.

c.) Coaches must inform the "Web Master" and Division Director of re-scheduled games. Such games are not official until posted on the website at which time the Umpire Assignor will assign umpires.

d.) The last week of the season has been reserved for make-up games. Teams are expected to use those dates, but no team shall be required to play more than 4 games in a rolling 7 day period. Games unable to be made up because of **Little League playoffs or lack of available make-up dates** due to extraordinary weather events will not result in forfeits. Teams may play weekend make-up games where mutually agreeable.

e.) If the **same game is rained out twice in a row**, the teams will not be required to make it up.

f.) No games will be scheduled on the Friday before the tournament.

g.) When **two teams cannot agree on a mutually acceptable make-up date** forfeits will result by the team or teams that cannot comply.

h.) **Teams receiving forfeits and all their players are credited with a game played for purposes of tournament eligibility.** Such teams also receive 2 points for a win in the standings and are credited with a 0-0 victory. Neither forfeiting teams nor their players receive credit for a game played.

i.) Except as noted above, schedules will not be re-constituted after they're established.

j.) **Suspended games** resume at the point of suspension.

10. Field Availability

Where a team is unable to host a home game, that game should be moved to the opponent's field (if available), but the original home team continues as such.

11. Uniforms

The minimum player uniform will be a shirt with a large number on the back. All players on a team in a game must wear different numbers to avoid confusion concerning the identity of those players. It is recommended, but not required, that coaches all wear a matching shirt which readily identifies them on the field.

12. Scorebooks

SCOREBOOKS MUST CLEARLY INDICATE FIRST NAME OR INITIAL, LAST NAME AND UNIFORM #. This is important should eligibility questions arise.

13. 7 Players-15 Minute Grace-No outs for vacant Spots

A minimum of 7 players is needed to begin and complete a game. If 7 players are not present by 15 minutes past the designated start time, the game will be forfeited by a score of 7-0. If a team plays a game or part of it with less than 9 players, those missing spots in the batting order will not be counted as "outs" except as provided in Rule #14.

14. Playing Time

a. Every player in uniform must play at least 2 innings in the field---time

permitting.

- b. The entire lineup bats its regular turn regardless of whether a player was in the field that inning.

15. Batting Order

A. Injured or departing players.

All players must remain in the original batting order for the entire game. The order can be changed only in the case of an injury or other circumstances that cause a player to leave the game. An injured player who is unable to appear for a scheduled at-bat but could possibly return to the game at a later time will be called "out" for that at-bat, scored as a technical out, and will retain her place in the order.

A player who will not re-enter the game simply drops out and successive players move up. The departing player's spot will not be counted as an out.

B. Late Arriving Players--are simply added to the end of the batting order when they arrive.

16. Pinch & Courtesy Runners

Pinch runners will be allowed if a baserunner is injured or must temporarily leave the game. Courtesy runners may be used for catchers and pitchers in order to speed play. Pinch and courtesy runners will be the last player to have made an out.

Where a player on base has not been the catcher in the previous inning, but will catch the next inning, they are permitted a pinch runner.

Conversely, a catcher who will not catch the next inning, is not permitted a courtesy runner.

Rationale: the purpose of the rule is to avoid game delay by waiting for a catcher to put their equipment on.

17. 2014 New Bat Rule, Jewelry, Metal Spikes, Chin Straps.

- a.) No jewelry of any kind is allowed on a player in a game. Medical-alert medals are not considered jewelry. A medical-alert medal must be taped and may be visible.
- b.) The wearing of sunglasses over the eyes is allowed during games.

c.) Metal spikes are not allowed in the Middle School or 12u divisions.

d.) **Chin straps and faceguards are required on batting helmets and must be secured whenever the helmet is worn.**

e.) All Bats must be stamped with the current and correct USSSA approved stamp. **Prior to stepping into the batter's box each at-bat, players will show the home plate umpire the approved USSSA stamp on her bat proving it is legal for USSSA play.** This is a national rule for the 2014 season only allowing all to become familiar with the new bat stamp.

See <http://neusssafastpitch.com/ussa-fastpitch-softball-bat-marks-grandfathering-rules>.

18. Length of Game---Mercy Rule, International Tie Breaker, Darkness, Lightning, 2 hr Rule, Night Games, Double Headers

a.) In the High School and Middle School Divisions, a **Mercy Rule** will be invoked after **4 and 1/2 innings if the home team is ahead, or after 5 innings if the visitor is ahead by 10 runs.**

5/13/15 Meeting: If a team is ahead by 15 or more runs in the early innings, the coaches may agree to limit offensive innings to 5 runs or 3 outs whichever occurs first. However the trailing coach concedes defeat at the time of the agreement. (Rationale: to eliminate lopsided scores such as 30-0. Nothing constructive is accomplished by a group of girls futilely trying to get 3 outs.)

b.) The **international tie breaker** rule will be instituted in games in which the score is tied after 7 innings have been completed, i.e. beginning with the 8th inning, the team at bat will start the inning with a runner at second base. That runner will be the last batter of the previous inning.

c.) In **games called by darkness or weather**, the score reverts back to the last completed inning, even if the score is tied, but not if the home team is ahead.

d.) In the event **lightning is seen or thunder is heard**, the game shall be halted immediately. After the last flash of lightning or last thunderclap, a waiting period of **30 minutes** must elapse before the game may resume.

e.) **No new inning will begin after two hours from a 6 o'clock or later start.** If the game is tied, an additional inning will be played using the international tie-breaker rule. **Night games:** the opposing coaches should agree before the game starts on an appropriate end time.

f.) **Doubleheaders where no lights available.**

Start games at 5:30 p.m. Play 2 one hour 15 minute games with no new inning to start after 8 p.m. Score reverts to last full inning played except where home team leads.

19. Pitching Rule & Distances

The pitcher is required to have at least one foot in contact with the pitching rubber at the beginning of her delivery, i.e. pitching will be governed by high school Federation rules to replicate C.I.A.C. competition.

H.S. and M.S. 43'. 12U 40'.

1. Prior to the pitch, the pitcher must take a position on the rubber with both feet touching the rubber.
2. The hands must be apart. The ball may be in either hand, the bare hand or in the glove, but the hands must be apart.
3. The pitcher must take or simulate taking a sign from the catcher by pausing 1 to 10 seconds. **The pitcher must then bring their hands together 1 time** in front of the body, for not more than 10 seconds and then pitch the ball.
4. There is no reference in the rule about presenting the ball. That word has been removed from the pitching definition long time ago. She does not have to put the ball in her glove, but she may.
5. **Step-Back:** The pitcher may take a step back in her delivery, as we use the NFHS High School Rule in our League.

20. Rainouts

a.) A rainout must be called by the coach of the home team no later than 4:30 p.m (or 90 minutes prior to starting time). If the home team's coach has not contacted the visiting team's coach by that time, the game will be started or cancelled at the field by the umpire.

b.) THE HOME TEAM COACH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR TELEPHONING AND E-MAILING BOTH THE OPPOSING TEAM'S COACH AND THE UMPIRE ASSIGNOR AT LEAST 90 MINUTES BEFORE GAME TIME.

FAILURE TO DO SO COULD RESULT IN PAYING THE UMPIRE(S) HIS/HER FULL FEE. Visitor coaches are expected to check their messages before traveling to out of town games.

The Web Master should then be informed by e-mail.

21. Parent and Fan Conduct

- a.) Parents and fans are not allowed in dugouts or on or near benches of either team unless they have been previously registered with the League as a coach.
- b.) The number of coaches and/or scorekeepers on the field and in the dugout or bench is limited to 4 per team.
- c.) Coaches are responsible for their parents and fans proper conduct.
- d.) Umpires are authorized to order misbehaving parents and fans to leave the park.

22. Home Team Obligations

- a.) Provide a suitable playing field of regulation dimensions.
- b.) Provide a new **USSSA game ball** and suitable USSSA back-up balls. Some fields are prone to losing softballs in the adjacent woods, ravines, and streams. Home teams bear the brunt of such conditions.
- c.) Arrange for at least one USSSA qualified and registered umpire, assigned by the USSSA assignor. Two umpires are contemplated for H.S. Division games. **Umpire fees** shall be split equally between both teams that are playing. The umpire(s) shall be paid in full prior to the start of the game.
- d.) Provide restroom facilities at or close to the playing field

23. Coach/Player Ejections and Suspensions

Profanity used by a player, coach, or other team personnel will be cause for immediate ejection from the game. If a player being ejected leaves the team with less than 7 players, the team will be allowed to finish the game with less than 7 players. Any player or coach ejected for any reason will be out for the remainder of that game as well as suspended for the next game. The Division Director and Officers will be notified of ejections by the coach of the Home Team. Ejections and suspensions apply to all other team personnel as well. Repeated offenses will be a cause for disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by

the League Officers.

Any coach engaging in unfriendly conversation or conduct with an opposing team, or their own team's player, will be subject to partial or permanent suspension.

24. Umpire Calls and Rule Interpretations

a.) Only the Head, or acting-Head Coach is allowed to converse with umpires regarding Umpire **rule interpretations**.

b.) No one is allowed to question or remark about **judgment calls**, most especially balls and strikes.

c.) Any disputes, questions or grievances should be addressed to the League Officers.

25. League Fees

League fees will cover expenses such as insurance, game balls, publication expenses, association fees, trophies and other awards and any other costs approved at NCGSL meetings or by the Officers on an ad hoc basis.

26. Reporting Scores

The coach of the winning team must report game results to the League's Web Master. It is recommended that game results be e-mailed to or called in to the Journal Inquirer before 11:00 p.m. on the night of the game.

27. Special 12U Rules

Six inning games
No dropped third strike
5 run max per 1/2 inning
10 run mercy rule after 4 1/2 or 5 innings (Complete inning if time permits just for practice).

28. Tournament Pool Play Pairings and Sunday Seedings.

For Saturday tournament play we follow a "Hybrid" approach. Hybrid in the sense that we give partial recognition for Season Standings and also make an attempt to provide the lower quartile teams some "parity of competition".

Step 1: All teams within an Age Divison are combined into one universe.

Step 2: Where Pool Play consists of 3 games, teams are ranked according to total points in the standings.

Step 3: First Tie Breaker: Age Division Record--if the tied teams are in the same Geographic Division.

Step 4: **If the tied teams are not in the same Geographic Division, then Runs Allowed, then Runs Scored if necessary.**

Division Record is not used where teams are not in the same Division, because one Division might have been much stronger than the other.

(Head to Head competition is not used. The tournament scheduler can not be required to review hundreds of games to determine Head to Head.)

Step 5: The Tournament Universe will be divided into quartiles. Pools will be comprised of one team from each quartile. E.g. 1, 5, 9, 13.

Note; if an odd number of teams, one team must play 4 games. If no volunteer, last place team will play next 4 lowest teams.

A limited number of teams can result in lower quartile teams playing more than one top quartile teams and even a #1 team playing a #2.

For Sunday Seedings, USSSA tournament rules apply.

29. USSSA Rules-go to neussfastpitch.com/ussa-fastpitch-rules/

30. Substitutions-Unlimited v. Limited

Unlimited substitutions are permitted at all fielding positions, except Pitcher.

Only the starting pitcher may return to that position.

May 12, 2015

Jack Miller, President

