

RULES FOR LENAPE VALLEY GIRLS SOFTBALL
Jaguar Division (10 and Under) Revised Spring 2018 Season

The following rules are specific to the Lenape Valley 10U Division Intramural Softball Teams. These rules are intended to guide coaches and parents so that we ensure that the children enjoy playing softball in an atmosphere that promotes safety, friendship and sportsmanship. **WINNING IS NOT THE GOAL!** We want to stress fundamentals and increase the player's knowledge of the game so that they are prepared for participation at the next level.

No rules are intended to supersede ASA Softball guidelines. Coaches and parents are to apply the rules in a sportsmanlike manner depending on the various situations. We want the players to understand the proper response to real game situations. Do not exploit weak players, and please do not confuse them by using "loopholes" to win.

1.0 UMPIRES

- 1.1 Umpires shall be utilized from either a volunteer pool as indicated on the registration forms or be recruited from the stands.
- 1.2 The home team will provide an umpire behind home plate; the visiting team will provide an umpire for the bases. The home plate umpire should have attended an umpire's clinic. The goal is to get the most qualified umpires to call balls and strikes. It is the home team's responsibility to remind the scheduled umpire about the game location and time.
- 1.3 The decisions of the umpires are final.
- 1.4 The umpire shall be shown respect at all times. It is the responsibility of the coaches to demonstrate good sportsmanship and proper conduct both on and off the field toward the umpire. Coaches are also responsible for the conduct of their team's parents.
- 1.5 Once the game has begun, the head umpire shall have complete authority and may eject from the game or general area of the playing field, any player, coach or spectator for unsportsmanlike conduct, use of profanity, unnecessary arguing, needling or fighting. The umpire may issue a first warning before ejection, and can terminate a game and award a forfeit as appropriate. **Any remark by a player, coach or spectator, which tends to undermine a player's self-confidence, will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct.** Cheers and chants can only be positive, in support of your own team. No chants directed in a negative way toward the opposing team shall be permitted.
- 1.6 Once the game has begun, the Umpire shall have control of the game. He or she may suspend play because of field conditions, weather, time limits and rules that apply to the general game requirements.
- 1.7 The home team shall provide the umpire with the game ball and umpire's counter.
- 1.8 It is the umpire's responsibility to get the game started on time. All players must report to their team bench 5 minutes prior to the posted start time of the game.

- 1.9 Only the Head Coach (or acting head coach) is permitted to participate in discussions between the umpire and the Head Coach of the opposing team.

2.0 Playing Fields

- 2.1 The playing field shall have 60-ft. baselines.
- 2.2 The distance from the front of the pitcher's plate to the rear point of home plate shall be 35 feet.
- 2.3 The pitching circle shall be 16 feet in diameter and have a radius of 8 feet from the center front edge of the pitching plate. Batters boxes are encouraged where possible, and enforced if marked. Umpires and coaches should keep the players within a reasonable proximity of this area if not marked.
- 2.4 Safety is everyone's responsibility! Coaches must inspect the playing field prior to each practice and game to ensure that it is safe for play. Chuckholes, divots and loose objects should be repaired or removed. Problems must be reported to the league.
- 2.5 The home team is responsible for raking the infield prior to each game (especially around the bases where sliding occurs), and for striping the foul lines. At the end of each game, it is very important to replace the dirt in front of the pitching plate and in the batters boxes as necessary. (Hint: Sprinkle water on newly raked areas to tighten up the fresh dirt.)
- 2.6 Teams are responsible for keeping the dugout areas clean. Please have the team police the area and remove all trash, after each practice or game.
- 2.7 A base path is a direct line between a base and the runner's position at the time that a defensive player is attempting (or about to attempt) to tag a runner. If a runner moves more than three feet (3') out of this line to avoid a tag, the runner shall be called out.

3.0 Pitching

- 3.1 Pitchers shall not pitch in more than three (3) total innings per game, and shall not pitch in more than two (2) consecutive innings in a row in a game. One pitch equals an inning pitched. There is no limit on innings pitched per week. If a pitcher throws one (1) pitch in the 1st inning and is removed as pitcher, then re-enters the game as pitcher in the 2nd inning and throws one (1) pitch, the pitcher has pitched in consecutive innings. In order to be considered as pitching in non-consecutive innings, the pitcher must have at least one (1) full inning of rest (must not pitch at all for the opposing team's entire time at bat in a particular inning).
- 3.2 Pitcher must start delivery with two feet on the pitching plate and the ball exposed to the batter. Motion must be forward, a pitcher is not permitted to step back.
- 3.3 The illegal pitch rule will not be in effect. The umpire may stop the game to explain an infraction.
- 3.4 Warm up pitches shall be limited to five (5) pitches (at the beginning of a game, at the start of each half inning and the start of a new pitcher) or one minute of elapsed time, whichever comes first.

- 3.5 If a pitcher hits three batters in one inning, or four batters during the game, that pitcher shall be replaced. The pitcher may reenter the game as a fielder.
- 3.6 A pitcher may re-enter a game to pitch in a later inning providing they do not exceed three innings pitched per game (and they do not pitch in more than two (2) consecutive innings).
- 3.7 If a pitcher throws one pitch during an inning, it shall count as a full inning pitched.
- 3.8 A batter may strike out, but not walk. After ball four is called, the coach of the team at bat will pitch. The coach must also pitch from the pitching plate. Note: The strike count does not change and the umpire will continue to call strikes while the coach is pitching.

4.0 Batting

- 4.1 Every player that comes to a game is placed on the roster and bats in turn whether or not they are playing in the field that inning. All members of the team will bat in the order established prior to the start of the game. Players, who arrive late, will be inserted at the end of the batting order. An injured player may skip their turn at bat, but must return to their original place in the order if they are able to return to the game.
- 4.2 There shall be 10 batters, seven (7) runs or three (3) outs per inning (whichever occurs first will end the inning). Once a team has scored the 7th run in an inning, the inning ends at the end of playing action (at the end of the play during which the 7th run scores). The defense may continue to make outs, including out(s) which may end an inning and/or negate run(s) scored (i.e. a force-out for the 3rd out). Any runs over seven (7) which score are not counted (maximum of 7 runs can be scored during any inning). This rule does not apply in the 6th inning, any extra inning, or if the umpire declares an inning prior to the 6th inning to be the "last inning" (in all of which cases three (3) outs are required to end an inning).
If the 10th batter is hit by a pitch the batter may take first base (1 base only) and any players on base that are forced to advance may advance (if forced and only 1 base). However, if due to the walk, no players are forced to advance, the inning is over and no additional runs score.

Declaring the Last Inning:

REGULAR SEASON: Once a regular game has become official (3 complete innings or 2-1/2 if the home team is ahead), any inning which begins more than 1:45 after the game started will be declared as the "last inning, regardless of the score, or who is leading, and regardless if it was noticed right at the 1:45 time mark, or not.

- a) **No inning prior to the 4th inning can ever be declared the "last inning". The 7-run rule is in effect for games which end at the exact moment of becoming official (3 complete innings or 2-1/2 if the home team is ahead).**
- b) **Once a "last inning" has been declared, the game is over when the inning ends and the game may end in a tie (extra innings are not allowed once "last inning" is declared).**

DURING PLAYOFFS: "Last inning" cannot be declared in a playoff game. As per rule 8.4, any inning which begins more than one hour and forty minutes (1:45) after the game starts is considered an "extra" inning (7-run rule is NOT in effect, 3 outs are required to end an inning, ASA TIE-BREAKER RULE IS IN EFFECT).

- 4.3 A ball hit over the fence is a home run. If it bounces over it is a ground rule double. If the ball goes under the fence, the fielder must raise their arm signaling to the umpire that the ball is out of play.
- 4.4 If a batter throws the bat, a warning will be issued by the umpire to both benches. If the same player throws a bat after the warning, she shall be called out.
- 4.5 Only official softball bats will be allowed.
- 4.6 **Bunting is permitted, with these restrictions:**
- a. **Once a player squares to bunt, they must either bunt the ball, attempt to bunt the ball, or pull back to take the pitch, No player may “fake” a bunt, and then pull the bat back and take a full swing. If a player does this, she shall be called out.**
 - b. **No player may bunt if a coach is pitching**
- 4.7 If the batter is hit by a pitched ball, the batter is awarded first base (even if the ball hits the ground first), providing that the batter made an attempt to get out of the way of the pitch.
- 4.8 All batters and base runners must wear approved batting helmets with face guards.
- 4.9 The batter is out if a foul ball goes over the batter’s head (in the opinion of the umpire), and is caught by the catcher.
- 4.10 A tipped 3rd strike held by the catcher is an out.
- 4.11 If the batter either swings or is called out on the third strike, and the catcher missed the ball, the batter is out, and cannot advance to first base.
- 4.12 If the catcher obstructs the batter's swing, the umpire may award the batter first base OR the manager of the team at bat may take the result of the play. If everyone advances safely at least one base, the obstruction is ignored. Any runner attempting to advance an additional base does so at their own risk.

5.0 Fielding

- 5.1 Each team will field ten (10) players each inning. The positions shall include the following:
1 Pitcher
1 Catcher
4 Infielders (First Base, Second Base, Short Stop & Third Base)
4 Outfielders (Left Field, Center Field, Short Field & Right Field)
- 5.2 There shall be free substitution at the start of any inning.
- 5.3 *The infield fly rule shall not be in effect, unless a double play occurs (see exception below). If one or no outs occur on the play, the play stands. If a double play occurs, the infield fly rule will be enforced as follows after the play is completed: The batter is out and all runners return to the base occupied at time of pitch; all other playing action (including runs scored and outs made) is nullified. This rule only applies in normal "infield fly" situations (runners on first*

and second or with bases loaded, and there are less than two outs, for any routine fair fly ball [not a line drive nor a bunt] to the infield). *EXCEPTION: Once a fly ball is caught in the air, the infield fly rule no longer applies (the batter is out anyway, due to the catch, the infield fly rule becomes irrelevant). Any double (or triple) play which results after a caught fly ball is legal and the play stands.* **IMPORTANT:** The application of this infield fly rule and the placement of runners is a judgment call. There will be zero tolerance for coaches arguing this rule (immediate ejection).

- 5.4** Each player shall play a minimum of two innings in the infield, and a minimum of one inning in the outfield. All players shall play an infield position at least once prior to the start of the 4th inning. Coaches are encouraged to move players into different positions throughout the game.
- 5.5** No player shall sit on the bench, one more inning than any other player. With a full roster of players, some players may sit out for one inning while some may sit out for two. No child shall sit two consecutive innings. The only exception to this rule are if the player:
- * Shows up after the game begins
 - * Leaves before the game ends
 - * Is injured or becomes ill
 - * The player is disruptive or is a disciplinary problem

Coaches should see to it that all players sit out an equal number of times for the entire season. (In other words, the same players should not sit out twice during each game.)

- 5.6** The fielder must have control of the ball – in their hand – to be considered a catch.
- 5.7** A tag must be made with the ball, either in the hand or in the glove or both. Holding the ball in one hand, while tagging a runner with an empty glove or the other hand does not constitute a legal tag.
- 5.8** Fielders must allow access to the base – especially when no play is being made at the base in question, or obstruction must be called. Fielders are not permitted to pretend to be in the act of receiving a throw, in order to force the runner to slide or otherwise slow down. The umpire may award additional base(s), which the umpire judges the runner would have reached if the obstruction had not occurred. When a play is being made, the runner must be given access to at least half the base. (Rule is intended to avoid collisions.) Fielders can only be in the base path if they have possession of the ball or if they are fielding a batted ball. A fielder about to receive a *thrown* ball is not entitled to occupy the base path until after they have caught the ball. When a fielder is in the act of fielding a batted ball, interference will be called if the runner fails to avoid the fielder or if the runner hinders the fielder's attempt to field the batted ball.
- 5.9** Infielders must start within five feet (5') of the straight line through the center of the bases when the pitch is released. Upon release, fielders are permitted to take steps toward the batter. It is the responsibility of the base coaches at first and third to bring an infraction of this rule to the umpire's attention. Exception: If the play is only at home, the coach may call "infield in", but must explain what they are doing, so everyone understands the purpose of the call. Outfielders must start three feet (3') back on the outfield grass – (or at a mutually agreed upon distance if playing on an all-grass field).

5.10 Where playing at fields with a deep backstop when the umpire does not have a convenient means of storing a spare game ball (i.e. ball bag), the team in the field may provide a coach/parent to back up their own catcher. This person will stand at the back of the backstop and retrieve balls that get past the catcher. The sole purpose of this position is to keep the game moving. There is to be no coaching from this position (and no second-guessing of umpires!). Wherever possible, it is preferable to have the umpire (plate or base umpire) give the spare ball directly to the pitcher while the catcher retrieves the original ball, to save time and keep the game moving.

5.11 All infielders MUST wear a facemask as part of the new league-wide rule.

6.0 Coaching

6.1 A coach may request time and meet with any defensive player(s) a maximum of three times per game (one additional meeting is allowed if extra innings are played). This is considered a "charged defensive conference". If a pitcher is replaced, a conference is not charged. After the allowed conferences are used up, any subsequent visit or meeting with defensive players forces the removal of the pitcher (who may remain in the game in another defensive position).

6.2 No Coaches will be allowed on the field while their team is on defense. Meetings with pitchers will be done along the foul line.

6.3 Managers and Coaches should lead by example. Praise players even while correcting them.

6.4 The offensive team is only permitted to have one first and one third base coach. If a player is used as a base coach (this is encouraged), that player must wear a protective helmet.

6.5 There shall be only one (1) charged offensive conference allowed between the manager (or other representative) and the batter and/or runner(s) in an inning. The umpire shall not permit more than one such meeting per offensive inning.

7.0 Base Running

7.1 When a thrown ball (not pitched) leaves the field of play (the area past the fence lines or backstop), the umpire shall immediately declare the ball out of play. The umpire shall award all base runners the base to which they were going when the ball left the hand of the thrower, plus one additional base.

7.2 If the umpire calls a dead ball, base runners may not advance (unless legally awarded base by the umpire).

7.3 Base coaches are not allowed to touch, push or pull a base runner other than to congratulate a runner after a hit.

7.4 Runners may lead off only after the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. If a runner leaves too soon, the umpire shall declare "no pitch", and the runners caught leading off too soon will be called out.

7.5 If a runner takes a lead and the catcher throws, the runner can be tagged out. However, NO runners may advance on the catcher's throw or overthrow. (Rule is intended to control runners' leading while encouraging catchers to attempt throws, without risk or penalty).

7.5 Runners are allowed to steal with these restrictions:

- a. **Stealing is only permitted from second to third base**
- b. **There is a maximum of two steals per offensive inning**
- c. **There is no stealing while a coach is pitching**

7.6 A base runner will be called out if they intentionally run into a fielder (including the catcher) attempting to put a tag on them. If the umpire views the act as malicious, the runner will be ejected from the game. No appeal is permitted.

7.7 If a runner misses a base, the umpire shall call the runner out. No appeal is necessary.

7.8 Sliding is not required (although it is strongly encouraged). Runners must be taught to slide or otherwise avoid contact with fielders. A base runner that interferes (or makes significant contact) with a fielder – shall be called out.

7.9 Runners shall be called out if they slide headfirst (except if they dive back to a base they overran).

7.10 Runners do not have to turn to foul territory on an overrun at first base as long as (in the opinion of the home plate umpire) they make no movement towards second base.

7.11 When an overthrow occurs but remains in play, runners may advance at their own risk (the ball is in play and runners can be thrown out) but may not advance farther than would have been awarded if the throw went out of play. There is a limit of one overthrow per play.

Note: Advancing on an overthrow is NOT to be considered a stolen base

7.12 Once the ball is in possession of the pitcher in the pitching circle, runners may stop once, but then must *immediately* return to the base or attempt to advance to the next base. (There can be no indecision and no “dancing” to draw a throw.) Once the runner stops at a base for any reason, (if the pitcher has control in the pitching circle) the runner will be declared out if they leave the base. Note: Once the ball leaves the pitching circle, runners may continue to the next base, at their own risk, and may be put out. (Use the 10U Division mind-set when sending runners.)

7.13 A courtesy runner may be used to replace the pitcher or catcher (if she is on base). The purpose of this rule is to keep the game moving. The courtesy runner must be the player on the bench who was the last to previously earn an out.

8.0 Official Game

8.1 There shall be six (6) innings per game. At least three (3) complete innings (or 2-1/2 innings if the home team is ahead) must be played for an "official" game. Games halted (i.e. due to rain, lightning, or other reasons) prior to becoming "official" will be replayed from where they left off. New players shall be placed at the end of the batting order.

- 8.2** Each team must have a minimum of SIX players present to start a game. If there are less than eight players at the posted start time the game will only be played at the discretion of the (2) coaches. If it is deemed a forfeit, the score will be recorded as 6-0. However, so it's not a total loss, the teams may use the field for a practice game. If there are only eight players at the start of the game, players **may** be borrowed from the opposing team for defense only. The "borrowed" player will be the last person in the batting order for each inning. (The last person to make an out during the previous at-bat). **IMPORTANT NOTE:** The team batting order must consist of at least 9 batters. If a team is playing with less than 9 players, an out is to be recorded each time the 9th position in the batting order is reached.
- 8.3** **If after the fourth inning and either team are ahead by 10, runs, or more, the game may be ended at the discretion of the losing team's manager. If after the fourth inning, either team is ahead by 15 runs or more, the game shall be called. Note: After the 4th inning, this rule only applies to completed innings (unless the home team is ahead).**
- 8.4** No game shall continue for more than two hours from the official start time, if another game is scheduled to follow it. Regular season games may end in a tie.
DURING PLAYOFFS: After 6 completed innings **or before** any inning which begins more than one hour and forty minutes (1:45) after the game started, the **ASA TIE-BREAKER RULE WILL TAKE EFFECT:** Each inning from that point on begins with the last person who previously batted being placed on 2nd base to start the inning. If the last person to bat was an automatic out (if playing with 8 players) no out is declared and the second to last batter is placed on 2nd base.
- 8.5** One extra inning may be played as long as the extra inning begins within the game time limits described below - in section 9.0. The ASA TIE-BREAKER RULE (see above) will be in effect for this extra inning.
- 8.6** **Lightning:** At the first flash of lightning, games will be suspended immediately, and all players must leave the field for the safety of their cars. No game can resume until 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning is seen.
- 8.7** A game can be postponed for school and community activities only if a team is unable to field 9 players. Twenty-four hours notice must be given to the commissioner and opposing coach. The coach who cancels the game is responsible for re-scheduling – and also for calling the umpire.
- 8.8** The home team is responsible for keeping the "official" scorebook and must report the game score to the commissioner following the conclusion of the game. Please review the score with the opposing team to avoid disputes.

9.0 Game Time

- 9.1** Games begin at 6:00 on weeknights..
- 9.2** Time permitting; the home team will occupy the field until 20 minutes prior to the game time, at which time the visiting team will take the field for practice. Home team has the field from 5:25 until 5:40, and the visiting team has the field from 5:40 until 5:55. **PLAYERS ARE NOT ENTITLED TO TAKE BATTING PRACTICE!** It is the coach's responsibility to get all

players warmed up during their 15 minutes on the field. No accommodation will be made for players who arrive late!

- 9.3** Weekend games must stay on schedule. If an earlier game runs late, pre-game warm-ups must be cut short. No game should start more than 10 minutes after it is scheduled to start.
- 9.4** Games that must be halted due to time constraints may end in a tie (regular season only).
- 9.5** If an official game is called during an incomplete inning and is not continued, the official score reverts to the end of the last completed inning, unless the home team ties the game or takes the lead (in which case the score at the moment the game ends becomes official). Tie games are permitted.

10.0 Safety

- 10.1** Each team shall have a designated team parent in charge of first aid. It is the responsibility of that parent to bring natural ice to games and practices.
- 10.2** There is no headfirst sliding permitted.
- 10.3** Catchers must wear facemasks with a throat protector, chest protectors and shin guards during practices, warm-ups and games.
- 10.4** On-deck batters are not permitted to take practice swings.
- 10.5** Players may wear sneakers or shoes with rubber cleats only – no metal cleats or spikes are permitted.
- 10.6** Instruct players to bring water bottles, and be sure they drink during practices and games.
- 10.7** Coaches should encourage the use of mouth-guards for all players, especially pitchers.
- 10.8** Only 11” softballs and approved softball bats will be permitted during games or practices.
- 10.9** Practices and games can only be conducted on designated fields that are covered by Lenape Valley Softball insurance. **NO PRACTICES MAY BEGIN UNTIL OFFICIAL APPROVAL OF THE DIVISION COMMISSIONER.**

11.0 General

- 11.1** The home team shall sit behind the first base line and the visiting team shall sit behind the third base line. Home team designation shall be defined on the schedule.
- 11.2** Teams are not permitted to schedule additional practices without the express approval of the Division commissioner. Intent of this rule is to prevent any team from gaining an unfair advantage by practicing more than an opponent. (Also see rule 10.9). The only exception to this rule will be for one-on-one pitching practice. Unlimited visits to area batting cages are permitted.

- 11.3** Remember coaches, how you treat the players, other coaches, umpires and spectators will be what is viewed as normal and acceptable behavior. This is also an opportunity for instructing parents on how to behave during games!!
- 11.4** Good sportsmanship will be practiced by all. Please make every reasonable attempt to keep the score competitive. Stop stealing bases, hold runners on balls hit into the outfield, etc. if you have a significant lead.
- 11.5** This is still an instructional league. During the course of a game, if there is an unusual call, or interesting situation, feel free to stop the game to explain what is going on to the players of both teams.
- 11.6** The 10U Division is for players who are either 9 or 10 (not yet 11) years old on January 1, prior to the start of the season. The Division commissioner must approve any exceptions to the age restriction. Parents, who wish to have an 11-year-old stay in the 10U Division, must notify the head coach of their team and the Division commissioner prior to the end of the season so that the player can be evaluated. Any player who wishes to remain in the 10Us over the objections of the league will be ineligible to pitch in the 10U Division.
- 11.7** HAVE FUN and remember it's only a game. Our goal is for 100% of the players to sign up again next year. If they have fun, we'll achieve our goal.