

VGSA Manual



2018

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Mission Statement

Our primary mission is to provide opportunities for the growth, development and enjoyment of those individuals who participate in all sponsored or sanctioned activities.

Our mission consists of seven interrelated parts, which are:

- To develop the individual skills and knowledge of the rules and strategy for the game of girls' softball at all levels of competition.
- To upgrade the playing fields to genuine quality standard and maintain an excellent physical plant with dedicated resources.
- To implement an impartial and objective evaluation process for the equitable selection of players and coaches at all levels.
- To provide formal, continuing education and training for coaches.
- To provide formal, continuing education and training for umpires.
- To allocate appropriate resources on an annual basis for the acquisition of high quality equipment, supplies, and uniforms.
- To increase and facilitate communication with the community, educational institutions, coaches, participants and parents.



Letter to managers and coaches

Dear Managers,

A special thank you to all of you for the time you are donating to the children of VGSA Softball.

Often between trying to do all the things necessary to run an organization of this size, we forget to thank those who have helped us most by donating a lot of time. Our managers!! You are the mainstay of this program.

Those of you, who have managed in the past, know that we like to think that we are helping to build a stronger community - parents and children meet new friends, of which some become long and lasting.

We know that each of you believe in the VGSA Softball philosophy:

1. Children should have fun.
2. Managers and coaches teach softball to the best of their ability.
3. Everyone should do their best whether they win or lose - emphasis should not be placed on winning at all costs.

VGSA Softball stresses the importance of fair play and good sportsmanship. We all like to win but we hope we can teach the children the old adage that winning isn't as important as how you play the game.

We are enclosing in your packet a list of board members with phone numbers. Should a problem arise or if you have a question, please feel free to call any of us.

If you are unable to reach a player assigned to your team, please let your commissioner know at once.

Included in this packet is a list of rules for each age division. Should you have any questions please contact your division commissioner.

You must sign up in order to get a field for practice. Practices should have a 1-½ hour time limit.

Copies of the schedule will be provided as soon as they are printed. Please see that each player receives her copy.

Encourage parents to participate - even if it is just by attending games. Each player could also be responsible for one game to bring snacks for everyone on the team. Snacks are to be given out after the game.

Both managers are responsible for keeping the dugout and field area clean after each game!

All games must start on time. Please be sure your team is on the field 15 minutes prior to the game. Also when playing games, make sure your team hustles on and off the field.

Playoff schedules for those divisions having playoffs will be posted approximately one week prior to its start. Please notify your players immediately that they are on your team!!

We again thank you for your help and hope that you have a successful and fun filled season.

The Board

Managers/Coaches Responsibilities

1. The home team is responsible for providing two (2) game balls. One new and one in good condition.
2. The bases are also the responsibility of the home team. At the beginning of each game, the home team brings the bases out and at the end of the game they return them to the locked storage box. PLEASE LOCK THE COMBINATION LOCK ON THE OPEN DOOR ONCE YOU'VE OPENED THE SHED SO NO ONE TAKES IT!!
3. **First Aid kits are located in equipment shed. These will contain ice packs and materials necessary to handle minor injuries.**
4. Lining of the field, raking, etc., are the responsibility of both managers. Parents help should be enlisted for this.
5. The winning manager must call/email/text the final game score to their commissioner after each game, within 24 hours. This only applies to divisions that will hold playoffs.
6. The decision to play in the event of rain will be made by the commissioner of scheduling before 4:00 PM. After 4:00 PM but before the game, the managers of both teams will make the decision. Once the game begins the decision will be made by the umpire only if the umpire is over 21 years old and a trained official. Otherwise the decision will be made by the commissioner or both team managers. Postponed games will be continued from the exact point at which they were stopped.
7. Profanity or disrespectful comments or *texts* will not be tolerated by any individual involved with the program. This includes parents, relatives, players, coaches, managers, officials, commissioners, or board members. At the boards discretion this can lead to suspension or removal from the VGSA program.
8. NO negative posts on social media referencing VGSA, any coaches, players, managers, officials, commissioners, or board members will be tolerated. At the boards discretion this can lead to suspension or removal from the VGSA program.
9. All changes in the schedule must be done with the prior approval of the commissioner of scheduling. Any games canceled must be reported to this commissioner.
10. Throwing of bats, helmets, etc., is prohibited. A player throwing the bat unintentionally at any time during the first three games will be given a warning. After that the player will be given an out. Intentional throwing of equipment will be construed as unsportsmanlike conduct and could mean ejection from the game.
11. The equipment sheds must be locked when leaving the fields. Please don't assume that the other coach locked it up.
12. Managers are responsible for cleaning the dugout area after each game. Note: If you have the first game on a given day and the area is messy, please be responsible for cleaning the area.
13. Only managers, coaches, players, and those assisting in the game are permitted on the field during the game. When your team is at bat, all players are to remain in the dugout except for the batter, runners, and the batter on deck. Players on deck must remain in designated area at all times. Safety rules come first.

All managers must maintain a record of each game in the provided scorebook. Maintaining accurate records for both teams is in the best interest to help rectify disputes involving game scores, batting order, etc.

Safety

Recommendations and requirements to be a manager, coach, or helper

S.A.F.E.T.Y. Clinic

Coaches are required to have the National Youth Sports Coaches Association (N.Y.S.C.A.) certification. These certifications will bring the coach into compliance with the New Jersey Little League Law and add to the coaches' protection from liability lawsuits. **ANY coach or parent that helps out at a game or participates at practice must have this certification.**

Go to <https://www.nays.org/coaches/training/> sign up and take the softball specific course.

Heads up concussion training for coaches

Here is a link to online concussion training for Coaches. All coaches and Board members have to complete this training. Save the certificate to a file location on your computer and email the President a copy of the certificate. The training is free and will take about 40 minutes to complete. On the right side of the screen you will see a box titled "Launch the course". Click the link at the bottom of the box to start the course. There is also a free app available called Heads Up Concussion that is a useful on field guide for concussion basics. It also gives tips on the proper sizing for helmets. <http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training/index.html>

Effective immediately: Any player that is suspected of having a concussion is not permitted to return until they have submitted a Doctor's note saying they can return.

This is to protect the children as well as our liability.

First aid kits

Every coach is responsible to have a first aid kit whenever they are placed in a direct or indirect supervisory role with children. Check with your division commissioner for what is available from CER. Please be aware of current first aid techniques and be able to perform all necessary first aid.

Injuries

Make notes of all injuries and be sure to fill out an injury form for any serious injuries. Turn this form into you commissioner and keep a copy for yourself. Notify parents of any suspected or observed injuries.

Health problems

You need to inform every parent that it is their responsibility to keep you informed of any medical, physical or other problem their child may be experiencing. Keep records of all problems with you for quick access in the event of an injury.

Warning

At your first meeting with the children, make sure that the players and parents understand the inherent dangers of this sport.

Rules of Play
Pee Wee Division - Kindergarten
NO JEWELRY

1. Games are considered structured practices and are geared for instructional play.
2. All play in the field each inning and rotate between positions equally. No girls sit the bench.
3. Each offensive inning, all girls bat. The batter or base runner is OUT if the throw is made before she reaches the base. Although outs are not counted, it is encouraged to remove the player from the bag when she is out so the players learn the game. However, it's up to the coaches as to whether this should be done.
4. It is encouraged that each game, a different batter bats first so everyone gets a chance to be first and last.
5. A base runner cannot advance to the next base on an overthrown ball. On a hit ball, the batter only gets 1 base no matter where the ball is hit.
6. Each girl is pitched 5 good pitches - if she doesn't hit, then she hits off a tee. Please encourage the players to hit a pitched ball but don't throw more than 5 pitches in a row as that will slow down the game immensely.
7. All peewee games will be 4 innings long but no longer than one hour fifteen minutes which should give each player 4 chances to bat and play the field.
8. Runs are not counted.
9. No walks or strikeouts.
10. All girls must wear helmets to bat, while on deck and when on base.
11. Five players in the infield and the rest in the OF. No catchers at this age level.
12. Two team warnings per game for throwing the bat. Each throw of the bat after that will be an out. THIS RULE PROTECTS THE PLAYER AND TEACHES OUR KIDS.

Notes:

- 40' Base Distance.
- Dead ball area should be marked in front of home plate using a semi-circle 5 feet from the plate.
- 11 inch "incrediballs" or similar will be used.
- Coaches will serve as umpires.

Rules of Play

Ponytail Division - 1st & 2nd grade

NO JEWELRY

Games are structured and are instructional.

General:

1. Home team prepares the field for play
2. Both teams cleanup all trash at the end of the game
3. All games will be 6 innings or no longer than 1-1/2 Hours.
4. Coaches will serve as umpires.
5. Two coaches may be on field when team is on defense.
6. Division will use 11 inch “incrediballs” or similar
7. 50’ Base Length
8. Dead ball area should be marked in front of home plate in a semi-circle 5 feet.

Fielding:

9. Catchers must wear all appropriate gear.
10. All players who come to a game play in the field during the team’s defensive inning – no players sit the bench.
11. Field only 6 infielders (1st, 2nd shortstop, 3rd, pitcher and catcher). Players playing outfield must be on the grass.
12. Rotate players in all field positions. Coach shall use discretion on players for safety reasons (i.e. not ready for 1st base). A girl may not play the same position (i.e. 1st Base) until every girl on the team has played the position.

Batting:

13. All players must wear helmets to bat or while on deck or on base.
14. Each batter receives one warning per game for throwing the bat. Each throw of the bat after that will be an out. **THIS RULE PROTECTS THE PLAYERS!**
15. The first 2 games:
Every girl will hit off the tee for their first at bat. The 2nd inning the coaches should pitch. Each girl is pitched 7 pitches. If she doesn’t hit, then have her hit off the tee. No walks or strikeouts.
16. All players bat each inning.
17. Catchers bat first every inning. Use Coach discretion on 1st inning home team.
18. No bunting
19. On a clearly hit ball through the infield, batter can go to second base and hold there.
20. Players leave the base when put out. Do not allow the players to stay on the base if an out is recorded against the player.
21. A base runner cannot leave the base until the batter has hit the ball. No stealing
22. A base runner cannot advance to the next base on an overthrown ball.

Rules of Play

Rookie Division - 3rd, 4th & 5th grades

NO JEWELRY –

Must avoid collision (can slide or veer).

1. All players must play both outfield and infield for at least two innings during each game.
2. All players on field during defense – There should be only 6 infielders (infielders consist of 1 girl on each of the following positions – 3rd, 2nd, 1st, pitcher, catcher, and shortstop between 3rd and 2nd).
3. All players bat - rotating order each game so everyone gets a chance to bat near beginning of lineup
4. Coaches pitch first 2 innings. Players pitch 2nd two innings using at least two pitchers. Coaches pitch last 2 innings.
5. Each batter is allowed 3 strikes and then she is out. An umpire will call the strikes using a large strike zone – from the knees to the armpits. If there are not 3 strikes by the time the batter has received 7 pitches, then she is given a walk. So on the 7th pitch, the batter strikes out, hits the ball, or walks. If the 7th pitch is a foul ball or a strike, then go to the 8th (go to 9th pitch is 8th is a strike and so on). The umpire keeps count of the number of pitches. In innings 3 & 4 when the players are pitching and bases are loaded the batter is not allowed to walk (Walked in runs are not allowed, home must be earned). With bases loaded the pitcher is allowed 7 pitches to get the batter out. After 7 pitches the coach will pitch to that batter. For example with bases loaded the player pitcher throws 7 balls to the batter, the coach replaces the player pitcher, and on the 8th pitch the batter lines out to 1st for 2nd out of inning. The Player pitcher returns to pitch and has 7 pitches to get next girl out.
6. No bunting, no stealing.
7. On an overthrow, if the ball goes into dead ball territory, the runner may advance 1 base without being put out. On an overthrow and the ball stays in play, the runner can advance only 1 base at a risk of being put out.
8. All play stops when ball is **RELEASED** from outfielders hand on throw to infielder unless the runner is tagging up to advance a base after a caught fly ball.
9. No bat throwing. For the first 3 games of the season, 1 team warning is given at each game and then the batter is out. From the 4th game on, no warnings and the batter is out. This rule Protects the PLAYERS!
10. Three outs or three runs per inning – 6 innings or 1 hour 45 minute time limit.
11. Last inning three outs or until everyone bats (whichever team has most players determines the number of batters allowed to bat)
12. If a pitcher hits 3 players in a game, the coach must change pitchers.
13. Players are allowed to pitch full motion (windmill, slingshot, underarm, etc.)
14. Pitching distance - 30 feet Base distance - 50 feet
15. Use 11-inch regular softball.
16. No infield fly rule – a runner may not tag-up & advance on a fly caught in the infield.
17. All coaches please make sure defensive players do not stand in the base path.

Notes:

Home team prepares the field for play

Both teams cleanup all trash at the end of the game

GIRLS PLAYING OUTFIELD MUST BE ON THE EDGE OF THE GRASS AND MAY NOT COME INSIDE THE BASE PATH OR IN FRONT OF ANY INFIELDER

Rules of Play

Majors Division (6th, 7th, 8th grade)

(ASA Rules with some exceptions)

NO JEWELRY IS TO BE WORN ACCORDING TO ASA RULES & UMPIRES RULING

1. Ten players on field with 4 being in the outfield. MAKE SURE GAMES START ON TIME
2. An offensive player should avoid a collision with a defensive player who has the ball in her possession and is waiting to make a tag. If the offensive player does not avoid a collision when a play is being made by the fielder, the following EFFECT: The runner is out, ball is dead, and each other runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference. If the runner slides while the fielder is making the play and the runner makes contact, the runner is not automatically out. Please teach proper sliding techniques.
3. Players are allowed to pitch full motion (windmill, slingshot, underarm, etc.) Pitcher must have 1 or 2 feet in contact with the rubber at start of pitch: non-pivot foot must be on or near, but not on the side of the rubber. She may only step forward and the pivot foot must remain in contact with the rubber until the ball is released. If a pitcher hits 3 batters in an inning or 5 batters in a game, she must be removed from the pitcher's mound and cannot return for that game. (Pivot foot is right foot for right handed pitchers, left foot for left-handed pitchers.) Pivot foot cannot leave contact with the ground.
4. Each player must play minimum of three innings. All players bat whether they are playing in the field or not.
5. No leads, run at the release of the ball from the pitcher.
6. No limited on Steals. Runners can steal home, unless the pitcher has the ball in the pitcher's circle or the when the catcher is throwing the ball back to the pitcher. Everywhere else is a live ball, unless the umpire calls it dead.
7. Bunting allowed. Fair territory- anywhere in front of plate.
8. Infield fly rule applies. An infield fly is a fair fly ball (not including a line drive nor an attempted bunt), which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, when first and second, or first, second and third bases are occupied, before two are out. The ball is alive and runners may advance at their own risk of the ball being caught, or retouch and advance after the ball is touched, the same as on a fly ball. Umpire shall immediately declare "Infield Fly" and umpire's call rules. If the ball is intentionally dropped, the runners are awarded 1 base — they may take more at the risk of being put out.
9. Five runs or three outs per inning with no limit on final inning. If at the beginning of the 6th inning, one team is up by 10 or more runs, the game is over. MOVE YOUR PLAYERS ON OR OFF THE FIELD QUICKLY.

10. Regular dropped third strike rule: if the catcher drops the 3rd strike and there are fewer than 2 outs, the batter may run to 1st if it was unoccupied before the pitcher released the ball. OR anytime there are 2 outs. The batter is out only if the catcher throws the ball to first and the 1st baseman touches the bag before the batter arrives or touches the batter before she steps on 1st. The ball is alive and all other runners may advance at the risk of being put out.
11. Six innings or if in the middle of an inning at the 1 hour 30-minute time limit, you must finish playing the inning and the next inning is the last unlimited inning.
12. Pitch distance = 43'. Base Distance = 60'.
13. When after being declared out or after scoring, a runner interferes with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play on another runner. EFFECT: The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out.
14. Playoffs at end of season. Double elimination tournament will be played. Regular season games will not go into extra innings, only playoff games will go into extra innings.
15. Clarification of regular ASA rules. Game called because - If game is called because of darkness, if the teams have played 5 full innings, then the game is over. If the game is halted in the middle of the 6th inning because of darkness, rain, etc. the score reverts back to the previous inning and the game is over.
16. When the ball is thrown to the pitcher and she has the ball in the 8' diameter circle of the pitching rubber, play is dead and the runners must go forward or go back to the closest base.
17. Batter being hit by pitched ball - When a pitched ball not swung at nor called a strike touches the batter while she is in the batter's box she is awarded first base. It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting her, EXCEPTION - if no attempt by the batter is made to avoid being hit, the umpire calls either a ball or a strike!
18. Pitching - Each pitcher can pitch no more than three innings per game and only the starting pitcher may re-enter the game once as a pitcher after being removed as a pitcher. Pitcher is allowed 5 warm up pitches between innings. Same rule applies in extra inning playoff games with the exception that if the starting pitcher and the second pitcher has pitched four innings a piece, then we will allow you to put in any pitcher into pitch (even the starting pitcher) to finish the game.

Rules of Play

Junior Division - (9th - 12th grade) NOT OFFERED THIS YEAR

(ASA Rules with some exceptions)

NO JEWELRY IS TO BE WORN ACCORDING TO ASA RULES & UMPIRES RULING

1. Ten players on field with 4 being in the outfield. MAKE SURE GAMES START ON TIME
2. An offensive player should avoid a collision with a defensive player who has the ball in her possession and is waiting to make a tag. If the offensive player does not avoid a collision when a play is being made by the fielder, the following EFFECT: The runner is out, ball is dead, and each other runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference. If the runner slides while the fielder is making the play and the runner makes contact, the runner is not automatically out. Please teach proper sliding techniques.
3. Players are allowed to pitch full motion (windmill, slingshot, underarm, etc.) Pitcher must have 1 or 2 feet in contact with the rubber at start of pitch: non-pivot foot must be on or near, but not on the side of the rubber. She may only step forward and the pivot foot must remain in contact with the rubber until the ball is released.
4. (Pivot foot is right foot for right handed pitchers, left foot for left-handed pitchers.) Pivot foot cannot leave contact with the ground.
5. Each player must play minimum of three innings. All players bat whether they are playing in the field or not.
6. No leads, leave on release from pitchers hand.
7. 5 steals per 1/2 inning.
8. If a runner has not yet stopped at third and a play is made to another base, the ball is considered live until it is returned to the pitcher and that runner may advance to home at her own risk.
9. Bunting allowed. Fair territory- anywhere in front of plate.
10. Infield fly rule applies. An infield fly is a fair fly ball (not including a line drive nor an attempted bunt), which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, when first and second, or first, second and third bases are occupied, before two are out. The ball is alive and runners may advance at their own risk of the ball being caught, or retouch and advance after the ball is touched, the same as on a fly ball. Umpire shall immediately declare "Infield Fly" and umpire's call rules. If the ball is intentionally dropped, the runners are awarded 1 base — they may take more at the risk of being put out.
11. Five runs or three outs per inning with no limit on final inning. If at the beginning of the 6th inning, one team is up by 10 or more runs, the game is over. MOVE YOUR PLAYERS ON OR OFF THE FIELD QUICKLY.
12. Regular dropped third strike rule: if the catcher drops the 3rd strike and there are fewer than 2 outs, the batter may run to 1st if it was unoccupied before the pitcher released the ball. OR anytime there are 2 outs. The batter is out only if the catcher throws the ball to first and the 1st baseman touches the bag before the batter arrives or touches the batter before she steps on 1st. The ball is alive and all other runners may advance at the risk of being put out.

15. Six innings or 1 hour 45 minute time limit - if in the middle of an inning at the 1 hour 45-minute time limit, you must finish playing the inning
16. Pitch distance = 43'. Base Distance = 60'.
17. When after being declared out or after scoring, a runner interferes with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play on another runner. EFFECT: The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out.
18. Playoffs at end of season. Double elimination tournament will be played.
19. If at the beginning of the 6th inning, one team is up by 10 or more runs, the game is over.
20. Clarification of regular ASA rules. Game called because - If game is called because of darkness, if the teams have played 5 full innings, then the game is over. If the game is halted in the middle of the 6th inning because of darkness, rain, etc. the score reverts back to the previous inning and the game is over.
21. When the ball is thrown to the pitcher and she has the ball in the 8' diameter circle of the pitching rubber, play is dead and the runners must go forward or go back to the closest base.
22. Batter being hit by pitched ball - When a pitched ball not swung at nor called a strike touches the batter while she is in the batter's box she is awarded first base. It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting her, EXCEPTION - if no attempt by the batter is made to avoid being hit or the batter reaches out to touch the ball, the umpire calls either a ball or a strike.
23. Pitching - Only the starting pitcher may re-enter the game once as a pitcher after being removed as a pitcher. Pitcher is allowed 5 warm up pitches between innings.

CONDUCTING A PRACTICE

When conducting a practice, it is important to have your activities pre-planned so things don't get out of control. Parents will volunteer to assist. Let them.

Secure a field and set up a regular practice schedule.

Have a general meeting at first practice to let both players and parents your philosophy and expectations. Set guidelines firm and clear from the start.

A Suggested Practice Schedule:

1. Be on time and expect the same of every player. If a player is going to be late, she should have a way to contact you at least 2 hours before practice begins.
2. 10-minute warm-up. All players should loosen up by throwing to each other. Stretching should be mandatory to avoid injury and pre-practice jogging is a good way to create blood flow to the muscles and joints.
3. Individual drills. Players from each position should work together demonstrating fundamentals inherent to that position. For example, infielders could practice backhands and catchers could run down slow rollers.
4. 30-minute batting practice in rotating groups. Each player should get 6-8 good swings and groups not hitting should be practicing bunting, base-running, fielding balls off the bat, etc.
5. 45-minute "dummy" game. This gives players "real game" experience and lets you concentrate on teaching the fundamentals - batting, throwing, fielding, running and situations. But don't just talk fundamentals. Have the players practice them repeatedly until you think they have them mastered. This will make execution more automatic in a game situation.

Also Consider:

1. Try not to get in a rut as you set up practices. Change things upon occasion.
2. Ask your players to obey instructions - no exceptions.
3. Practice means work, but make it as enjoyable as possible. You'll receive a much more enthusiastic response.
4. Make it a requirement that all players give their best efforts. They might have different levels of talent, but all players can try. Effort and hustle should be expected and rewarded.
5. Require that players encourage their teammates at all times. Stress the "all for one and one for all" concept. Make it clear that one player criticizing another will not be accepted.
6. Understand the difference between correction and criticism. Correction deals with the problem rather than the player as an individual. Criticism is directed at the player as a person and almost always has a negative effect.
7. Remember that each player is someone's daughter. They are special. Develop a caring relationship with each one. Just because she may not be playing well, it doesn't mean that she's not a good person. and she needs to know that - especially young players.

Suggested practice schedule

1. Warm-up = 5 minutes
 - slow jog around bases (2 times)
 - stretching exercise (toe touch and reach up to sky, etc.)
 - jumping jacks
2. Throwing instructions 15 minutes
 - match kids by ability to catch and throw
 - provide basic instructions on foot placement, arm motions, and body motion plus follow through
3. Base running 10-15 minutes
 - running through first base
 - structure of bases
 - listening to coaching instructions
 - rules for running (ex. can't pass runner in front of you)
4. Fielding 15 minutes
 - varies by age
 - establish positions
 - fielding instructions as well as drills for all ages and abilities
 - team fielding by position
5. Batting 15-20 minutes
 - instruction using batting tee especially at beginning of the season and periodically (all ages)
 - pitched ball hitting after batting tee
6. Pitching and catching
 - catchers should be instructed on use of safety equipment and monitored for proper use
 - pitchers should have an opportunity to warm-up at each practice (10-12 pitches)
 - develop as many pitchers as ability permits

Teaching Batting Skill

Taken from Louisville Slugger/How Winners Play The Game.

By Joe Arnold - Head Coach, University of Florida

When teaching young hitters, it is important to keep one fundamental thought in mind: *consistent contact makes hitting fun and leads to success*. Coaching should be geared toward hitting the ball hard and down, rather than hitting the ball far. Here are some helpful hints to help young players become better hitters.

- 1. Choke-up on the bat a little. This leads to better bat control and creates greater contact percentage.
- 2. Weight and hands should be back. This helps you use the strength of the large muscle groups to start your swing.
- 3. Swing down and directly to the ball. Remember: the fastest path to the ball is a direct one.
- 4. Keep a short stride with stride foot down at a 45-degree angle.
- 5. Keep your head down through the swing. This helps to track the ball and maintain balance.
- 6. Your stance should be wide enough so that your feet are 1.5 times the width of the hitter's shoulders at point of contact.
- 7. Grip the bat with your fingers relaxed. This will allow the bat to move smoothly toward point of contact.
- 8. For the best look at the strike zone, stand in the box with the plate in the middle of your stance.
- 9. Know which pitches you can handle and which ones you can't. It's your plate. Keep command of it.
- 10. A hitter's stance should be consistent (stand in the same place every time), simple (feet wide, hands off back shoulder, square), relaxed with weight in the balls of the feet.
- 11. Swing the bat hard and out front every time. Your bat should be moving at full speed at point of contact.

Remember - the ball can't be hit if the bat is not swung hard.

When teaching youngsters, keep the mechanics simple to allow them to be mastered easily. This method also makes it easier for the coach to make adjustments when working with the player. Also, remember to stay positive. Use terms such as "easy" and "tough" rather than "wrong" and "right," and when helping a player choose a bat, have her use one he can stop and start easily.

KEEP IT SIMPLE. KEEP IT FUN.

Teaching Fielding Skills

Taken from Louisville Slugger/How Winners Play The Game.

By Joe Arnold - Head Coach, University of Florida

The biggest mistake youngsters make in fielding is that they get too fancy or cute when making a play. Your role as a coach is to instill basic fundamentals into your players. With practice, all outfielders and infielders can improve their play. These tips can help:

Infielders

1. Get in the proper position. Stay low with your glove out and your back parallel to the ground.
2. When fielding grounders, go after the ball. Don't wait for it to come to you.
3. Watch the ball. By keeping your head down and your eye on the ball, you can track it all the way into your glove.
4. Always use two hands. You will substantially increase your chances of catching the baseball.
5. Use proper footwork. Keep your feet moving as you field the ball. For right-handers, the proper footwork consists of: right foot-left foot-field the ball, right foot -left foot - throw the ball. For left handers: left foot - right foot - field the ball, left foot - right foot - throw the ball.
6. Catch the ball away from your body. Right-handers field the ball from the inside of your left foot and the middle of your body. Left-handers field the ball from the inside of your right foot and middle of your body. Use both hands like shock absorbers on a car to "give" with the hop of the ball.
7. If a "hot" grounder is not playable, try to stop it to prevent extra bases. And remember to keep your eye on the ball. Looking away will only increase your chances of injury.
8. When throwing, hold the baseball across the seams and aim for a specific target (i.e., the letters on a jersey).
9. Follow the throw to the target. Let your momentum go to the base you're throwing to and take three steps toward the target after releasing the ball.
10. Always use two hands on pop-ups. Call the ball out loud at least three times to avoid a collision and always secure the ball with both hands.
11. If you bobble the ball, pick it up with your bare hand and finish the play. Never give up.
12. When tagging a runner, keep both hands on the ball.
13. Minimize your throws on a "run-down" play (maximum of two). Try to force the runner back to his original base.
14. Back up other players.

Teaching Fielding Skills

Taken from Louisville Slugger/How Winners Play The Game.

Outfielders

1. Don't stand flat-footed when the batter comes to the plate. Watch the ball closely as the pitch is made and expect the ball to be hit to your field.
2. When fielding a hit, always look to the cut-off man for instructions on where to throw the ball.
3. Catch fly balls over your head so you'll be in a good position to release for a quick throw.
4. When pursuing a fly ball, try to keep your eye on the ball as much as possible. If hit to your right, turn right and look over your shoulder. If the ball is hit to your left, turn left and look over your right shoulder.
5. If you can't field a grounder cleanly, block it to prevent extra bases.
6. Keep throws low and bounce them to the infield if you can't reach it on the ground accurately.
7. "Call-out" all fly balls to avoid collisions.
8. A glove with an open web is the preferred out-fielder's glove because of maximum visibility.
9. Back up your fellow outfielders.

One last mental tip. All fielders should be thinking "what do I do if the ball is hit to me?" before the batter even comes to the plate. For more details, see the Louisville Slugger Playmaking Guide.

Dealing with parents

Taken from Louisville Slugger/How Winners Play The Game.

Coaching a Youth League team is exciting and rewarding. But from time to time, you may experience difficulty with parents. Some may want their children to play more or they might question some of your judgments as a coach. This is normal, so don't feel that you're alone if this happens.

Here are a few thoughts to remember when dealing with parents:

- Always listen to their ideas and feelings. Remember, they are interested and concerned because it is their children that are involved. Encourage parental involvement.
- Express appreciation for their interest and concern. This will make them more open and at ease with you.
- No coach can please everyone. Don't try.
- Know what your objectives are and do what you believe to be of value to the team, not the parents.
- Make certain all parents know your ground rules. Have rules, regulations, and your philosophy, practice dates and times, etc. printed on a sheet of paper you can pass out to all parents. Have a parent meeting before the season begins to discuss your operating procedures if necessary.
- Resist unfair pressure. You are the coach and it's your responsibility to make the final decisions.
- Most important, be fair. If you treat all players equally you will gain respect.
- Be consistent! If you change a rule or philosophy during the season, you may be in trouble. If you do change something, make sure the parents are informed as soon as possible.
- Handle any confrontation one-to-one and not in a crowd situation. Don't be defensive. Don't argue with parents. Listen to their viewpoints, and thank them for it.
- Don't discuss individual players with other parents. The grapevine will hang you every time.
- Ask parents not to criticize their children during a practice or game. Don't let your players be humiliated, even by their own parents. Explain that you must be in control of your team when they are on your "turf".
- Don't blame the players for their parent's actions, if negative. Try to maintain a fair attitude.
- Parents must accept the fact that umpires, coaches and other league officials are volunteers and should not be subjected to criticism during ball games.

Always remember that you will be dealing with all types of children and parents with different backgrounds and ideals. One of your main challenges as a coach is to deal with these differences in a positive manner so the team's season will be exciting and enjoyable for all.

Make sure your parents know and comply with the following VGSA rules:

1. Profanity or disrespectful comments or texts will not be tolerated by any individual involved with the program. This includes parents, relatives, players, coaches, managers, officials, commissioners, or board members. At the board's discretion this can lead to suspension or removal from the VGSA program.
2. NO negative posts on social media referencing VGSA, any coaches, players, managers, officials, commissioners, or board members will be tolerated. At the board's discretion this can lead to suspension or removal from the VGSA program.

Playing up explanation

To the parents

Teams are divided by age as of July 31 (Rookie and lower division) or January 1 (Majors and higher division) of the playing year.

- Pee wee Division = 7 year olds and under - Kindergarten
- Ponytail Division = 1st and 2nd grades -
- Rookie Division = 3rd and 4th graders
- Major Division = 11 & 12 year olds - 5th-7th grades
- Junior Division = 13, 14, & 15 year olds
- Senior Division = 16, 17, & 18 year olds (Travel only)

In-house team players are allowed to play up to grade level. (Example: A 12 year old in seventh grade would be allowed to play with 13 year olds since most of her classmates are that age).

A parent must make a written request for their child to play up to grade level. The board must give approval.

Written request should be turned in to the VGSA before the end of evaluations.

In order to give the maximum amount of players the opportunity to play, the above age guidelines may be modified at the discretion of the board.

Accident report form

To be turned into VGSA president after accident

Injured party

Name _____

Age _____ Sex _____

Address _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Program _____

Injury

Describe the injury. (What part of the body? Nature of the injury?)

Action taken

When were parents notified. _____

Was professional assistance needed? _____

Explain nature of assistance by professionals including times and events.

Accident Date _____ Time _____

Place _____

Description of how it occurred _____

Person in charge at time _____ Phone _____

Witnesses _____

Date of report _____ Prepared by _____ Position _____

Player position form

To be posted at each game

	Position	Position	Position	Position	Position	Position
Players Name	Inning 1	Inning 2	Inning 3	Inning4	Inning 5	Inning 6

Voorhees Girls Softball Association By-laws

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The following By-Laws have been read and adopted by the board of commissioners of the Voorhees C.E.R. SOFTBALL program at the Regular Meeting for February of 1995, amended in June 1999, amended December 2001, amended in February 2003, amended in March 2005, and amended in September 2015.

ADOPTED ON: September 9, 2015

President

Secretary

ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this Association shall be Voorhees Girls Softball Association, hereinafter referred to as the Voorhees Girls Softball Association or VGSA.

ARTICLE II

Objectives

The objective of this organization is to provide to the communities of Voorhees, Gibbsboro, and Berlin the human and physical resources necessary to support all facets of the program.

ARTICLE III

Philosophy

The philosophy of this organization will be consistent with the philosophy of the American Coaching Effectiveness Program also known as ACEP. Their philosophy is "Athlete first; winning second".

With this philosophy, it becomes clear that this organization must act in a way that puts the development of the individual as a priority. Our charges are of differing ages and therefore different social, emotional, physical, and psychological needs. Our goals will reflect an understanding of their needs, as members of our society, not just members of a team.

This philosophy coupled with quality adult leadership can help our children to build self-esteem, learn sportsmanship, develop tolerance, teach leadership skills, and develop a cooperative attitude; all of which are important for them to succeed in their future endeavors.

ARTICLE IV

Governance

1. The program shall be governed by a board of commissioners, consisting of thirteen elected citizens from Voorhees, Gibbsboro, Berlin, or other nearby towns. A majority of the board, however, must consist of Voorhees residents.

2. All rules and policies shall be approved by a majority vote from the board.

Membership

1. Each team may provide one adult as a representative to the board who shall act as a non-voting member of the VGSA general membership.
2. The children shall have the right to be represented and the board should provide an open avenue for them to be part for the whole process.
3. "Honorary" membership will be given to anyone (minimum age 18) who is willing to put forth the effort and cooperation for the betterment for the VGSA. "Honorary" members do not have voting privileges, but should attend meetings and participate in any matters discussed at the meeting.

ARTICLE VI

Intentionally left blank.

ARTICLE VII

Election of Board Members and Officers

1. To be considered for an elected position on the board a person must be of legal voting age, of good character and generally known to be free of any criminal record.
2. Elected positions will be held for two years.
3. Nominations will be accepted by the board beginning in June and elections will be held in August and the new board will convene at the first September meeting.
4. The elected officers of this VGSA shall be President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary. The terms for all officers are for one year, or until replaced.
5. Nominations for officers of the VGSA will be held at the regular meeting for the month of September. Officers will be elected by and from the Board of Commissioners. Election will be by secret ballot.

6. The President will serve as Chairman of the Board. The President, with the approval of the Board Members, may appoint such other officers as shall be deemed necessary, who shall have

such authority and shall perform such duties as from time to time may be prescribed by the President and Board Members.

7. The Treasurer shall be able to spend up to \$1,000.00 with approval from the President or Vice President. All other expenditures must be approved by the Board Members.

8. Any board member of the VGSA could be subject to removal upon written charges brought before the other Board Members at a set hearing. A vote of two-thirds of the general voting members present is necessary for removal from office.

9. Any board member who misses more than three (3) consecutive meetings will lose all voting privileges and be subject to removal upon a two-third majority of the other board members. Voting rights can only be reinstated after the board member attends two consecutive board meetings.

10. Any board member who, by his/her conduct or failure to abide by the rules and regulations and/or By-Laws, subjects himself/herself to suspension or removal upon a two-thirds vote of the other remaining board members.

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Article VIII Duties of Officers

1. The President shall give notice of all regular meetings as required. The President, shall when present, preside at all official meetings, and have power to call special meetings when deemed necessary. The President shall appoint a Commissioner for each age division; appoint members to the Board in case of vacancies to fill the un-expired term; and appoint or fill any other vacancies within the VGSA. The President shall make and sign contracts and agreements in the name and on behalf of the VGSA, with the approval of the Board Members. He/she shall have the general management and control of the business affairs of the VGSA; and shall generally do and perform all acts incident to the office of President, or which are authorized or required by law.

2. The Vice-President shall be vested with all the powers and shall perform all the duties of the President in the absence or disability of the latter, or until the Board Members shall otherwise determine.

3. The Treasurer shall have the custody of all funds, securities, and receipts of the VGSA. Softball and shall receive and give cause to be given receipts for moneys paid in and as a result of the VGSA and shall pay out of the funds on hand for all just debts. All amounts to be paid must be authorized by the President. The Treasurer shall keep all records of moneys received or paid out and submit a written report each regular meeting and a written report at the end of each year.

4. The Secretary will be responsible for recording of the proceedings in a book kept for that purpose; and shall handle any correspondence, either incoming or outgoing, as directed by the President; and perform any other such duties as prescribed by law and the Board Members.

ARTICLE IX Board Meetings

1. The regular VGSA's Board meetings are to be held according to a schedule at a specified place approved at the reorganization meeting.

2. The presence of not less than seven (7) members of the Board of Commissioners will constitute a quorum and shall be necessary to conduct business and hold elections of VGSA.

3. The year for the VGSA will begin on September 1 and will end on August 31.

ARTICLE X Intramural Coaches and Players

1. All head coaches must be age 18 or older and all assistant coaches must be age 16 or older, unless otherwise approved by the board.

2. Each head coach of in-house may choose one assistant coach before teams are chosen and their children will automatically become a member of that team. All other assistant coaches will be chosen from parents of team members or volunteers who have no children on the team but are residents of the VGSA's registration area.

3. Only rostered team officials are permitted on the field and in the team bench area.

4. All coaches must maintain proper control and supervision of their teams (and fans) at all times.

5. Any coach who, by his/her conduct or failure to abide by the rules and regulations and/or By-Laws, subjects himself/herself to game suspensions, pending written charges to be brought before the President. Upon reviewing with the Board Members, a hearing date will be set and a decision rendered by the Board. Any appeals shall be made to the Board of Appeals.

6. Depending on division level, all VGSA players shall be evaluated and rated by ability, then divided into teams of equal ability. Any player who has a conflict with any particular coach may submit a written request to be placed on another randomly chosen team.

7. Possession or use of alcoholic beverages and/or controlled dangerous substances, and the smoking of tobacco products, are strictly prohibited at all VGSA fields, buildings and complexes at all times.

8. In the event of fighting between players, both or all parties will be suspended for a minimum of one game, and will be subjected to whatever additional penalty deemed necessary by the Board Members.

9. There is a minimum playing time of at least three (3) innings per player.

10. Rostered players must be from designated VGSA area.

11. In-House team eligibility is by grade level with the option to play up one division level. A player cannot play down under any circumstances.

12. All coaches must hold a valid certification from "National Youth Sports Coaches Association" or NYSCA.

ARTICLE XI

Age Divisions and Playing Rules

1. Peewee division. Peewee division consists of girls five years old and younger. Peewee division is intended to be an instructional league with t-ball games and coach-pitching depending on individual player's ability.

2. Ponytail division. Ponytail division consists of girls in the 1st and 2nd grades. Coaches pitching with use of batting tee if needed.

3. Rookie division. Rookie division consists of girls in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades. Coaches pitching innings 1, 2, 5, and 6 (if played). Players pitching innings 3 and 4.

4. Majors division. Majors division consists of girls in 6th, 7th and 8th grades, and, if there is no Juniors Division, 9th graders.

5. Juniors division. Juniors division consists of girls in 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades, if a sufficient number of players exist.

6. Travel Teams. Travel teams are divided into separate age divisions consisting of 10 & Under, 12 & Under, 15 & Under, and 18 & Under.

7. For non-travel divisions, registration is based on the current grade level of the player during the season of play. Travel divisions will utilize January 1 of the registration year for the official league age for a player.

ARTICLE XII

Affiliation for Traveling Teams

Any affiliations with other organizations must be approved by Board Members and the majority of the general voting membership.

ARTICLE XIII

Committees

Any Committees of the VGSA can be created and members be appointed by the President as shall be deemed necessary, who shall have such authority and perform such duties as from time to time may be prescribed by the President.

ARTICLE XIV

Protests and Board of Appeals

1. A Board of Appeals will be appointed by the President for each case to be heard in the event of any appeals of VGSA decisions pertaining to the Rules and Regulations, or Suspensions.
Administrative decisions (By-Laws) cannot be appealed.

2. The Board of Appeals shall render a written report and decision within seven (7) days of the hearing.

ARTICLE XV

Intentionally left blank.

ARTICLE XVI

Travel Coaches and Players

1. All coaches must be age 21 or older.

2. Each travel team head coach must submit a resume letter to the VGSA Board no later than June 30th of the year preceding the new softball season in order to participate in August try-outs. The VGSA Board will meet and after considering the resumes vote for the head coach for each team at each level (i.e. 1 for 10U team; 1 for 12U team; etc). The vote shall be a secret ballot and every board member gets one vote (including the President). The President shall tally the votes and declare head coach at each level. The President will also notify all the candidates of the decision of the board either in writing or verbally. This process (selection of the head coach) will take place prior to the travel team tryouts. Only the head coach will be selected. All assistant coaches will be selected by the head coach after the team has been selected. If it is determined to put a second team, in a particular division, together, then the board will select a head coach after the team has been assembled (Note: a letter to the board for the second team is not necessary). The VGSA Board has the option of selecting a candidate that was unsuccessful in becoming the head coach of the first team in any division, a parent of one of the players on assembled second team or another qualified individual.

3. All traveling team players shall be rated and chosen by a committee of five (5) people. The selection committee shall be made up of five members – two (2) board members, the travel team coach, and two (2) other qualified people, preferably neutral parties who are non-affiliated with VGSA.

4. Rostered players must be from designated VGSA area as determined by the Travel Association we are associated with at that time.

5. All traveling teams are subject to traveling association playing rules and VGSA by-laws.

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6. Traveling team eligibility is by age on January 1. Ten-year-old players may tryout with eleven and twelve year old players and will be chosen by ability. Fifteen-year-old pitchers and catchers are allowed to play up, as needed, as well as on their regular Junior team. Those persons playing up shall do so with the approval of Junior and Senior coaches and parental approval. Only a pitcher or

catcher can play up one level. If there is a compelling reason for a player (not a catcher or pitcher) to play up it will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

7. Every player shall play a minimum of 2 innings and 1 at bat per game, barring disciplinary action.

8. Attendance at practice and games will be handled as follows:

A) Unexcused absences will be reported in writing, by the coach, to the Commissioner within two (2) days. Legitimate absence excuses are as follows:

- 1) School function
- 2) Illness
- 3) Family emergency
- 4) School (high school or middle school) mandatory practice / game
- 5) Work

B) After two unexcused absences the commissioner will call the coach and discuss. If the coach and commissioner feel it is necessary, the commissioner will call the parents and discuss absences with the parent.

C) Disciplinary actions available:

- 1) Warning – notice that more unexcused absences will result in suspension for the next game
- 2) Suspension – player will be required to attend game but will not be participating (2 innings – 1 at bat) in game.
- 3) Probation – player may be placed on probation (either for the remainder of that year or the next year {if problem persisted for entire year}) with the understanding that if the problem continues the player will be removed from the team.
- 4) Removal – If problem persists the player may be removed from the roster.

NOTE: Disciplinary action cannot be enforced without prior notification to the player and/or parents (prior notification is for this purpose any time prior to the game day but not the game day), by the commissioner.

D) Appeal – All disciplinary actions are appealable to the VGSA Board. Parent/player must submit in writing an appeal of the disciplinary action and request a hearing. Parent/player will be allowed to present reasons for why the disciplinary action should

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not be enforced (Note: if the action is a suspension – the suspension will not take effect until the VGSA Board has decided if the action is appropriate). The VGSA Board will weigh the evidence and render a decision. The VGSA Board's decision is final. The VGSA Board will respond to the appeal within 72 hours.

9) Selection of travel team players

A) The coach will take the first nine (9) players defined by the rating system and any other players selected will be via discretionary picks.

B) Rating System – Players are rated on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest on skills demonstrated during the tryout process.

10) The selection process will be to select one (1) team at every level and if enough players come out, it makes sense, is possible and is approved by the VGSA Board, then a second team will be made up in that age bracket.

11) VGSA holds that no “out of drawing area” girl should displace an “in drawing area” girl unless there is a need for a pitcher or catcher. Drawing area is defined as: Area allocated by the organization, to which the travel teams are associated with, considered to be base area and from which the players are not considered “exceptions”. **VGSA Exception** – Any girl who does not reside in the drawing area but has played in the organization (VGSA), either as an “in-house player” or “travel player” for three (3) years shall be considered a drawing area player (by VGSA) after the third year.

12) All travel coaches and assistant coaches are to present themselves and the organization in a positive manner and are subject to the following regulations:

A. All coaches must hold a valid certification from NYSCA, “National Youth Sports Coaches Association”.

B. Only rostered team officials are permitted on the field and in the team bench area.

C. All coaches must maintain proper control and supervision of their teams and fans at all times.

D. Any coach who, by his/her conduct or failure to abide by the rules and regulations and/or By-Laws, subjects himself/herself to game suspensions, pending written charges to be brought before the President. Upon reviewing with the Board Members, a hearing date will be set and a decision rendered by the Board. Any appeals shall be made to the Board.

E. All coaches agree to abide by the rules and regulations of whatever organization VGSA decides to affiliate itself with for the travel teams. However, VGSA reserves the right to bring disciplinary action against any coach based on the VGSA bylaws. Any disciplinary action taken by the VGSA will be in addition to any other action taken by the affiliated

organization(s). VGSA disciplinary actions will be taken if it is determined that the actions are warranted by the VGSA Board after a hearing by the Board on the matter. The available actions are:

Probation – Coach is reprimanded for behavior and is notified that any subsequent similar behavior will result in harsher disciplinary action. Length of probationary period will be set by the board.

Suspension – Coach is not permitted to coach, attend or be within sight or sound of a game(s). Suspensions can range from 1 game to the amount of games deemed appropriate by the VGSA Board.

Removal – Coach is removed as coach of the team for behavior.

Expulsion - Coach is removed as coach of the team and is banned from any further involvement with VGSA as coach or board member.

ARTICLE XVII

Amendments

Any member in good standing will be eligible to submit in writing, possible amendments to these By-Laws at a regular meeting, and voted upon at another meeting. Such amendments must be passed by a two-thirds majority of the general voting membership present. All by-law amendments become effective after being passed.

Original By-Laws

Revised 12/12/95

Second reading 12/14/95

Adopted 1/96

Second Revision

Revised 2/10/99

First reading 4/10/99

Second reading 5/11/99

Adopted 6/99

Third Revision

Revised 9/14/01

First reading 9/14/01

Second reading 10/09/01
Adopted 12/11/01- - 31 -

Fourth Revision

Revised 12/10/02
First reading 12/10/02
Second reading 1/21/03
Adopted 2/25/03

Fifth Revision

Revised 12/8/04
First reading 1/12/05
Second reading 2/9/05
Adopted 3/9/05

Sixth Revision

Revised 7/8/15
First Reading 7/8/15
Second Reading 8/5/15
Adopted 9/9/15

The following is a list of all the equipment you should have in your bag:

1. 1 catcher's helmet
2. 1 catcher's chest protector
3. 1 set catcher's shin guards
4. 8 practice balls
5. 3 ice paks
6. 1 scorebook
7. 4 new game balls (more will be available as season progresses from division commissioner) Please be aware

that you are responsible for this equipment!

Should anything break return the broken item for replacement.

- NAME _____
- AGE GROUP _____
- TEAM COLOR _____
- HOME PHONE _____
- WORK PHONE _____
- DATE ISSUED _____
- RETURNED BY _____
- DATE RETURNED _____
- CONDITION _____
- ACCEPTED BY _____
- Deposit Accepted _____ - Initialed _____

* Equipment bags are due back within two weeks of the end of your season.