

# NVGSA GAME RULES & REGULATIONS

## 1. General

1. Except as amended by these rules, Northern Virginia Girls Softball Association (NVGSA) shall adopt and abide by the current year's Official Rules of Softball published by the Amateur Softball Association (ASA).
2. The NVGSA Board of Directors reserves the right to make any decisions involving safety, general welfare, or overall league operations (protests, forfeitures, etc.) in carrying out its responsibilities for the well-being of the league.
3. **All rules are to be implemented in the spirit of sportsmanship.** NVGSA provides the opportunity, organization, instruction and support necessary for players to participate in the sport of fastpitch softball by providing a playing environment in which not only the skills of the sport are imparted, but the opportunity to develop individual and group character traits of respect, sportsmanship, fairness, team work, and leadership are provided. In those events where a rule does not explicitly cover the situation, members are to be guided by those principles.
4. All are expected to read and abide by the NVGSA Codes of Conduct for coaches, players and spectators.

## 2. Eligibility

### 1. Coaches

- i. All officers and members of NVGSA are eligible to coach teams therein.
- ii. All coaches must consent to and register for a comprehensive background check prior to the opening day for each season.
- iii. Any coach not abiding by the Coaches Code of Conduct may be called in front of the NVGSA Board of Directors to discuss the situation and can be removed from a coaching position as a result.

### 2. Players

- i. Any girl who is older than four (4) and less than nineteen (19) years of age on January 1st of the year in which she participates is eligible to play.
- ii. A player's age as of January 1st of the year in which she participates determines the age division in which the player is eligible to play. For example, a player participating in the 18U Division in 2017 must be born after January 1, 1999
- iii. NVGSA highly encourages players to remain in the age-appropriate division. However, with the written approval of the NVGSA Commissioners for the appropriate age divisions, a player may play in an age division younger or older than her eligible age division. For example, a 12U eligible player with significant playing experience and advanced skills may play in the 18U division, or a 12U eligible player with no experience may play in the 10U division. Commissioners may require an evaluation of a player's abilities before allowing her to play up in age divisions.

### 3. Rosters

- i. Team rosters for each season are assigned by the Commissioner of each age division.
- ii. Commissioners will make every reasonable attempt to limit team sizes to a maximum of 14 players.
- iii. Commissioners will make every reasonable attempt to assign players so as not to give a single team a dominating advantage based on player skill levels.
- iv. When doing so does not violate the spirit or intent of the above roster rules, Commissioners will make reasonable attempts to honor player registration requests for specific coaches and teammates.
- v. A player may be assigned to only 1 House team per season.
- vi. All team rosters must be approved by the NVGSA House Vice President and NVGSA President prior to the beginning of the season.
- vii. During games, teams that are short the required number of players to conduct a game may borrow players from another team so that games may be played and not forfeited. However, a team may not borrow another team's number one pitcher, as designated by the Commissioner, if the borrowing team's own number one pitcher is available for the game. The Commissioner may, at any time, re-designate a team's number one pitcher. Borrowing of pitchers must be approved in email or writing by the Commissioner prior to the play of the game.
- viii. In 12U and 18U, House teams may borrow NVGSA Firebirds or Dimensions pitchers when the team's number one pitcher, as designated by the Commissioner, is unavailable for a game. Pitcher-specific rules concerning the use of Firebirds/Dimensions pitchers is detailed within the 12U and 18U rules sections.
- ix. NVGSA House teams will only borrow Firebirds pitchers. Unless approved by the Commissioner, Firebirds players are generally not eligible for House play unless they are pitchers.

### 3. Protests

1. During the game, an umpire's decisions are final.
2. Following a game, protests should be made to the Commissioner for the appropriate age division. If necessary, the Commissioner will consult with the NVGSA House Vice President or NVGSA President prior to responding with a final decision on the protest matter.
3. Should it be determined that a formal complaint should be issued to the hired umpire organization for 12U or 18U umpires, the NVGSA House Vice President or the NVGSA President will file the complaint in collaboration with the NVGSA Umpire Coordinator. Neither commissioners nor parents have the authority to make direct complaints to the contracted umpire organization on behalf of the league.
4. Should it be determined that a complaint against a 10U teen umpire requires league interaction, the NVGSA House Vice President or NVGSA President, in collaboration with the NVGSA Umpire Coordinator, will be responsible for all

related communication with the teen umpire and his/her parents. Neither commissioners nor parents have the authority to communicate complaints with teen umpires or their parents on behalf of the league.

#### 4. Uniforms and Equipment

1. The minimum uniform for all players will be shirts alike in color, trim and style. All shirts must have a number on the back, with the number being of contrasting color and at least six inches high
2. Baseball-type hats, visors and/or headbands are allowed. Hats, visors and/or headbands are optional, may be mixed, and may be worn as desired by the player.
3. The catcher must wear a catcher's helmet in accordance with appropriate ASA rules, a mask with a throat protector, a chest protector, and shin guards.
4. Protective headgear covering both ears and temples must be worn by the batter, on-deck batter, all base runners, and player base coaches. Protective head gear must have a chin strap and mask over the face. The umpire will call out any base runner that intentionally removes her batting helmet while the ball is in play.
5. The wearing of football cleats or regular street shoes by a player is not permitted. The wearing of metal cleats is not permitted.
6. All non-coach pitchers shall wear either an ASA-approved fielding facemask or mouthguard.

#### 5. Field & Games - General

1. Prior to the start of the game, each team shall provide the umpire with one new game ball. A team may provide a new-like game ball so long as one new ball is available. When a doubleheader is being played, new game balls are not required for the second game.
2. The home team must update the game results on the NVGSA website within 24 hours.
3. A team may start or continue to play a game with at least seven players.
  - i. Players arriving after the beginning of the game shall be placed at the bottom of the batting order.
4. Unless otherwise noted on the league schedule, the first team listed on the game schedule shall be the home team.
5. The home team is responsible for preparing the field prior to playing the game. Preparation includes raking of the field, chalking of the lines, batter's boxes and pitching circle, and ensuring no trash, debris, or obstruction is present on the field at the time of the game.
6. The home team is responsible for ensuring all field boxes and batting cages (if present) at the game location are closed and locked following the game or responsibility is clearly turned over to the home team playing a subsequent game. Not doing so more than twice within a season will cause a team to forfeit home team status in all remaining games for the season.
7. Three players from a team participating in the game (pitcher, catcher and one other to protect the other two) may, at the discretion of the umpire, be allowed inside a fenced field after dark, when the field lights are on, for the purpose of warming up the pitcher, while a game is in progress. Said players must be in the

outfield, in foul territory down either the right or left field lines, and pose minimal obstruction to the game in progress This rule will apply at all fields where there is inadequate room or lighting available outside the fenced playing area to adequately and safely warm up a pitcher.

8. Every effort will be made to avoid delaying play. Players will be ready to take defensive position in the field and teams will use a courtesy runner for the catcher. The courtesy runner shall be the player on the same team who was last called out in the current or previous inning (A courtesy runner, when utilized, is not considered a substitute in the game.)
  9. All players present for a team at the time of game will bat in the batting order.
6. Scorekeepers & Scorebooks
1. Each team shall provide a scorekeeper who shall maintain a scorebook throughout each game.
  2. The HOME team scorekeeper and scorebook shall be the official record of the game.
7. Game Times & Scoring Limits - General
1. Single Game time limits - The first game starts at the time on the game schedule provided by the league scheduler. The time limit for single games will be one hour and fifty minutes (1:50) with no new inning beginning after one hour and thirty-five minutes (1:35). The home plate umpire will enforce the time limit on games. If the time limit is reached while a player is at bat, the player will be permitted to complete her turn at bat and then the game will be declared completed.
  2. League games will start as scheduled; any team not ready to play within fifteen minutes after the scheduled starting time will forfeit the game, provided the opposing team has at least seven players present.
    - a. Game time limits are outlined in each division's specific rules.
    - b. Under no circumstance will a game be played after 10:00pm.
    - c. The league scheduler may adjust the game times as necessary.
    - d. A game may be started prior to the scheduled game time, provided both team head coaches, the umpire(s), and the league scheduler(s) agree. The game time limit will be calculated from the actual starting time.
    - e. Should the time limit expire, the winner will be the team that was ahead at the end of the last fully-completed inning, unless it is the bottom of an inning and the home team is ahead when time expires. In this case, the home team shall be the winner. The league commissioner for the appropriate age division will have final decision authority on any disputed final game scores.
    - f. After one specific warning to the head coach, a forfeited game may be declared by the umpire in favor of the team not at fault if a team employs tactics NOTICEABLY designed to delay or hasten the game in order to create a favorable outcome for that team. Exceptions to this rule can be granted, if both

coaches and the umpire agree, for moments of teaching opportunity during the game. Any time taken as corrective action during a game shall be charged to the team as a coach's conference.

- g. For standings purposes, a game is considered official after the completion of the third inning (or the top of the third inning if the home team is ahead). A game that is stopped for any reason prior to becoming official shall commence at the point play was stopped if restarted or rescheduled.
8. Missed Games (Weather, Player Availability, Other)
1. Teams shall inform their commissioner of their inability to field a team of at least seven players at least 24-hours in advance of the scheduled game time. Failure to do so may result in forfeiture of the game.
  2. Make-up games or re-scheduling will be allowed at the discretion of the league scheduler, and with permission of the commissioner of the appropriate age division. Before contacting the scheduler, coaches will use the online facility manager and master calendar / league schedule to determine a suitable open field on a date that works for both teams. Once the coaches are agreed on a date, they should email the league scheduler with the request and include the original date, time, and location of the game and the rescheduled date, time and location.
  3. Make-up games re-scheduled within less than 48 hours of the new date and time may have difficulty scheduling an umpire (primarily 12U & 18U). Should an umpire not be available, coaches may self-umpire the game or re-schedule – whichever is agreeable to both coaches.

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