



Coaches Handbook

2024 Season

SVGSA Board of Directors – 2024

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10U Div Coordinator – Doug

McKesson

12U Division Coordinator –

14U Division Coordinator –

www.sonomagirlsfastpitch.com

Coaches Finger Printing Requirements:

(available at Coach's clinic or contact Player Agent to schedule)

Individuals that are accepted by the SVGSA Board of Directors to Coach or Assistant Coach must have their fingerprints recorded through a digital live scan system. Coaches or Assistant Coaches that fail to complete this process will be suspended from their position until their fingerprints are recorded. Fingerprints are required every two years. Fingerprints for other organization or schools do not apply to our league.

To begin the process, each individual will need the following:

- Complete Fingerprinting Form BCII_8016 "Request for Live Scan Service"
- Only complete the Application Information section.
- Billing Number and Misc. are not applicable
- One copy of the form is required at time of fingerprinting and an additional copy is required for fee reimbursement (see below)

- Driver's License Number

- Cash or check only for the scanning fee. Fees normally range from \$15 to \$30. The league will reimburse each coach. To be reimbursed, the Coach must turn in a completed copy to their Division Coordinator. Make sure before you leave the fingerprinting session that the "Live Scan Complete By" section is completed.

Fingerprinting service is available at Coaches Orientation. Individuals that are not able to complete the fingerprinting requirement at the orientation will need to make an appointment at a Live Scan location (see below). When making the appointment, reference the league's ORI number **A2230** and the application is for a volunteer coach.

Sonoma Police Department does it by appt.

UPS Store - Sonoma

ACE Coaching Certification: (on website coach's page):

All Coaches in SVGSA must be ACE Certified every year

NORCAL ASA Rules state that anyone in the dugout, including scorekeepers, team moms and any persons coaching the girls in any form must be ACE certified and fingerprinted for background check.

It is the policy of the SVGSA that all these persons will be insured, and our insurance carrier requires ACE certification to be insured.

The certification process requires a background check that ASA performs prior to certification, as well as testing.

The certification process and background check are performed online at the ASA website, www.registerasa.com

There is a minimal fee for this service, which can be paid online by credit card.

The process shows videos and then asks questions about what you have seen. There is no time limit for completion of the test, and you will have an opportunity to re-answer any missed questions at the end of the test. The ASA rulebook and ASA code book are online at the main ASA website, www.asasoftball.com

First year certified coaches will receive a copy of the ACE manual. This will be mailed to you after certification. First and subsequent years coaches will receive a current wallet card for proof of certification.

As ASA registration methods change, further instructions for this online certification will be forthcoming, when the SVGSA Board is informed of these changes.

League Rules and Regulations

CORE OBJECTIVES

Founded in 1992, the Sonoma Valley Girls Softball Association is a nonprofit, 501 c (3), tax- Exempt Corporation whose purpose is to provide recreational and competitive girls' fast pitch softball programs.

We field teams starting with girls in kindergarten all the way to 9th grade. Girls of any ability are welcome, and the main purpose is to teach/learn the great game of softball and to have fun. Divisions are provided for "Recreational" teams, intended for beginner to accomplished players, and more competitive travel teams, intended for girls with an above average ability and experience and/or players interested in a more competitive environment.

Our Core Objectives:

- To provide an educational, character, and self-esteem building program for the benefit of the community through teaching and promoting in the game of softball, particularly among the girls ages 4 thru 14.
- To promote the social welfare of the community through programs that combats juvenile delinquency.

- To act and operate exclusively as a nonprofit corporation pursuant to the laws of the State of California and the United States, and act as a charitable organization in lessening the burden to local government by enhancing and augmenting any community youth programs.

COACH RESPONSIBILITIES

It is generally up to the coach and assistant coach to decide who is the primary source of communication to your team, and who will do the administrative duties, like reporting scores, alerting the team of schedule changes, etc. It is up to you to run your team. The following are required:

Organize your Team Meeting:

- Call/email your players and inform them that you are their Coach/Assistant Coach for the season.
- Inform them (their parents) as to the date, time, and place for your first **team meeting**. Suggest that all parents/guardians and players attend.
- Use Sports Engine to communicate scheduling *Opening Day/Your First Game*.
- Refer parents to the website www.sonomagirlsfastpitch.com for updated information.

Team Meeting:

- Introduce everyone.
- RECRUIT HELP** – see your team needs below!
- Review information on SportsEngine for your team. ***Be sure that you have all emergency contact phone numbers.***
- Give your team some background on yourself and explain some of your general philosophies about coaching and playing the game.
- Discuss your rules for your team like players must call if they are to miss a practice or game, no swearing, good sportsmanship etc.
- Explain when your practices and games will be.
- Explain what appropriate attire for games and practices are. Girls should have proper softball equipment like sliding shorts and pants, with colors that match as a team. Team socks and belt color need to be determined.
- Go over the schedule and important dates. Stress how important it is to have all players and staff at all League events.

Recruit as many parents for this as you can. The more help you have at practice the more individual attention each player gets.

****If you cancel practice, please email the President at SGSAprez@gmail.com. We pay hourly for the fields and if we do not use them, we need make sure we get our name taken off the schedule.

MANDATORY

Assign a female parent as team mom:

This person would be present at all team functions, would assist with bathroom trips and act as a Safety Supervisor for the team. This person would oversee administering first aid like Band-Aids and ice packs if needed so the Coach and Assistant Coach can remain with the rest of the team. This can be co-opted between a few mothers. All injuries requiring first aid must be reported on the Injury Log form and to the Division Coordinator.

Have A Scorekeeper:

For 8U, 10U, 12U AND 14U, a representative need to keep score in a scorebook for the team at all games. Each game the Home Team is responsible for keeping score for Umpires. The scorebook must be available for the division coordinator upon demand.

Field Crew:

Each game, the home team is responsible for dragging and lining the field. Again, recruit a reliable crew for this as well. If you are stuck preparing fields before games, it will take time away from your coaching the team before games.

Practice Helpers:

Recruit as many parents for this as you can. The more help you have at practice the more individual attention each player gets. All persons coaching the players in any form must be ACE certified and fingerprinted for background check. NorCal USA Rule.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

The Coach

- To teach and instruct the players about the game of softball
- To be on time for practices, skill sessions and games
- To conduct practice sessions and plan for the game (i.e., batting order, positions, etc.)
- To give players an opportunity to play and learn multiple positions
- To encourage and be positive in correcting faults
- To respect the umpire and assist with conduct enforcement when necessary
- To know the rules of the game and to pass that knowledge on to your players
- To organize team procedures and pass on league information by providing copies of rules and this handbook to all players and parents

- To provide a team list with addresses and telephone numbers
- To provide a practice and game schedule and cancellation notices
- To discuss player progress with parents and provide practice suggestions
- To complete player evaluations to be used in choosing teams for the following year.

The Parent

- To make sure the player arrives at practices and games on time
- To make sure the player has proper equipment and attire
- To stay at practices and games whenever possible
- To support the player and the team and help whenever asked
- To inform the coach if a player cannot attend a practice or a game
- To encourage all participants and never insult or discourage the opposition
- To be enthusiastic and to acknowledge the oppositions good plays

The Player

- To arrive at practices and games on time with proper equipment and attire
- To perform to her potential (by the player's standards; not those of adults)
- To have ample playing and instructional opportunity
- To enjoy the game without undue pressure from the coach or parents

The Umpire

- To fairly administer the rules of the game with sensitivity to the level and quality of play reasonably anticipated in each division
- To be free from harassment and inappropriate conduct on the part of players, coaches, parents, and spectators

Do You Know the Rules?

These are simplified explanations of some of the USA and SVGSA rules that are most often misunderstood. The entire rule book with details and exceptions are found in the SVGSA Handbook or the ASA Participant Manual.

UMPIRES

The umpire makes the final ruling. Judgment calls, such as balls and strikes, safe or out, leaving base too soon, look-back rule, etc. cannot be appealed. ASA rule interpretations can be appealed to the umpire. SVGSA rule interpretations can be appealed to the Division Coordinator, or in his absence, an SVGSA Board Member. Their ruling is final.

Harassment of the Umpire is strictly forbidden, and violation can result in ejection and/or forfeit.

MANAGERS AND COACHES

Managers and coaches are responsible for the conduct of their players, team parents and fans during games and practices. Failure to alleviate negative behavior can result in a forfeit and other censures by the SVGSA.

RULES THAT ARE OFTEN MISINTERPRETED

- Pitchers must start every pitch with both feet on the rubber and may not step back. If the ball slips from the pitcher's hand, a ball is called, and the ball is live.
- Outfielders must start with both feet on the grass in outfield and may not move onto the dirt until the pitch has left the pitcher's hand.

Dropped Third Strike:

- A dropped third strike allows the struck-out batter to attempt to advance to first base and beyond.
- There are less than 2 outs, and first base is unoccupied
- Or there are 2 outs even with a runner on first base.
- A dropped third strike is a pitched ball that is called a strike or swung at and missed, that either touches the ground before being caught by the catcher, or dropped by the catcher, or missed by the catcher completely.
- The defense can employ any legal method to force or tag out the runner.

Look-Back Rule USA RULE 8 sec 7T:

- The lookback rule governs the actions of the base runners ONLY when the pitcher has control of the ball in the circle, and after the batter/runner has touched first base or is called out.
- When the pitcher has control of the ball in the circle, all runners off base and stopped, must immediately return to the last base touched or proceed to the next base. Only 1 choice is allowed, and once committed to either base, that choice must be completed without reversal.
- If the pitcher makes or fakes a play on any runner, all runners may stop, continue or reverse direction.
- Umpire's judgment determines what is committing to a base.
- Once pitcher has control of the ball in the circle, any runner stepping off the base before the ball leaves the pitcher's hand is called out.

Sliding and Contact ASA Rule R/S 13.

- There is NO rule in USA or SVGSA that requires sliding!**
- Players may NOT crash into another player.
- When a defensive player has the ball and the runner remains upright and crashes into that defensive player, the runner is out, the ball is dead, and all other runners return to the last base touched.
- If a crash is deliberate or flagrant, the offender is ejected.
- If the ball and the runner arrive at the same time it is only incidental contact therefore the interference and obstruction rules do not apply.
- Umpire ruling is the final determination on interference or obstruction.

Interference ASA R/S 33

- An offensive player that impedes, hinders, or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play is interfering.

Obstruction ASA R/S 3

- A defensive player not in possession of the ball or not in the act of fielding a ball, that impedes the progress of a batter/runner legally running the bases is obstructing.
- Defensive players may not block the base or base-path unless they have the ball.
- Direct access to the base or plate must be provided until the defensive player has possession of the ball, or if the runner and ball arrive simultaneously.
- The runner still cannot crash into the defensive player.
- The runner can slide into the defensive player.

Batting & Running

- All batters and runners playing in the SVGSA must always wear approved batting helmets with approved faceguards during games, practices, warm-ups and demonstrations, while batting or running.
- A runner may not run more than 3 feet outside the base path, unless avoiding Interfering with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball.

Foul Ball vs. Foul Tip

- A foul tip is a batted ball that goes directly and sharply into the catcher's glove and is caught. It is scored as a strike on any count.
- A foul ball comes off the bat in a perceptible arc, and if a defensive player catches it in fair or foul territory, batter is out, and runners may advance.

Infield Fly Rule ASA RULE 1

- An infield fly is a fair fly ball that can be caught with ordinary effort by an infielder, catcher, or pitcher, when 1st and 2nd or 1st, 2nd, or 3rd bases are occupied with less than 2 outs.

GENERAL LEAGUE RULES

COACHES AND ASSISTANT COACHES:

A. Coaches and assistants of all teams shall be approved by the Executive Committee and shall register via online registration.

B. Each team shall have one (1) Coach and up to three (3) Assistants and (1) Team Parent. They shall be responsible for their team's conduct on or off the field, while acting in their capacity as a Coach or an assistant. At least one coach shall be female.

C. Each Coach and Assistant shall conduct himself/herself at all times in such a manner as to be a credit to this association. Coaches and/or assistants shall be subject to removal or asked to resign by majority vote of the Executive Committee for justifiable reasons.

D. Each Coach may have their own child play on the team they manage. Assistant Coaches may have their child play on the team they assist provided the child does not already play on an established team. To transfer an Assistant's child to their team shall require the consent of the Executive Committee.

E. Any Coach ejected from a game may be brought before the Executive Committee and will be subject to any disciplinary action deemed appropriate. The Coach will be given at least 24 hours advance notice of the meeting at which time a decision will be made with or without their presence.

F. Any Coach who has outstanding financial obligations to SVGSA or any other softball organization or related business will not be allowed to coach until proof of restitution is provided in writing to the SVGSA Executive Board.

G. Any Coach who has been sanctioned by SVGSA, placed on probation, or having been issued a suspension by USA Softball, shall not be allowed to manage, or coach a team until proof of the suspension being lifted is, in writing, on file with the SVGSA Executive Board.

H. Anyone that will enter the dugout (Coach, Assistant Coach, Scorekeeper, Team Parent, etc.) shall follow the current training, rules, certifications, and policies set in place by State Law, NORCAL USA, USA Softball, or the SVGSA.

PARTICIPATION:

A. Participation in this association shall be in accordance with USA Softball rules and shall be governed by SVGSA.

B. Each player shall conduct themselves at all times in such a manner as to be a credit to this organization and the City of Sonoma. Each player shall be subject to removal from the assigned team upon recommendation of their Coach to the Executive Committee.

C. Any player with outstanding financial obligations to SVGSA will not be allowed to participate within SVGSA until proof of restitution or agreement is provided in writing to the SVGSA Executive Board.

D. Any member of a team that does not attend two (2) successive scheduled practices and does not have valid reason suitable to the Coach's approval (illness or vacation) may be prohibited from playing the following league game.

REGISTRATION AND PLAYER PLACEMENT

A. All registrations shall be submitted by the date determined by the Executive Committee for the spring league and before the start of play for the fall league, or as soon as possible thereafter.

B. Each player must furnish a bona fide birth certificate with their registration showing the date of birth. A copy of the birth certificate will be kept by the SVGSA Secretary.

C. For late registration, no player can participate in any practice session until their registration has been turned in to a member of the Executive Committee, a team has been assigned, and they have been added to the USA Softball Insurance.

D. A team may select a pick-up player(s) from an opposing team in the same league, to play a game to meet the minimum number of players (8) to play. Players may only play up in a division. Pick-up players may only play in a pick-up game if it does not conflict with their regularly scheduled games.

DIVISIONS AND TEAMS

A. The Executive Committee shall form divisions of this association after the signed registrations and birth certificates of players wishing to participate have been received. No newly formed team shall exceed twelve (12) players.

B. No teams shall be allowed to participate in two different SVGSA age divisions in the same season (i.e., 14U and 16U).

C. SVGSA divisions shall consist of the following age groups:

1. Fourteen & under (14U) division
2. Twelve & under (12U) division
3. Ten & under (10U) division
4. Eight & under (8U) division
5. Six & under (6U) division

D. No team can play up an age group without approval of the Executive Committee. A roster with player names, and birth dates must be submitted in writing to the Executive Committee for consideration. A parent's written consent must also be submitted to the Executive Committee with the petition.

E. A player may only play up one (1) age division (i.e. A 12-year-old can play 14U, but a 10 year old cannot play 14U) Exceptions may be made for safety concerns with Executive Committee approval.

SVGSA PROCEDURES

The goal of the SVGSA team assignment is to ensure parity between the teams in their respective divisions, so all teams are competitive throughout the season. This will provide an enjoyable experience for the girls, parents and league alike.

All 10u, 12u and 14u players, new and returning, will be skill rated on a scale of 1 to 3, 1 being the top rating. New players, as well as those moving up a division will be rated at tryouts (SKILL EVALUATIONS).

Coaches do not present at the team assignment, or if a coach has not been selected for a team, a representative will be appointed for draft purposes by SVGSA staff.

The purpose of rating is to ensure an equal number (as close as possible) of #1, #2 and #3 players on each team.

Once players have been evaluated and assigned a skill level, a consensus between division coaches as to the accuracy of the rating will be necessary. Discussions among the coaches should accomplish this, but input from SVGSA staff and other coaches could be solicited. Any player (coach's child or not) that does not attend a skills evaluation, will automatically be assigned a rating of #1.

The first part of the selection process will be to ensure that the teams all have a pitcher and catcher. Each team is assigned an equal number of #1's, #2's and then finally #3's. In 6U and 8U, requests for specific teams or coaches may be accommodated on a case by case basis and must be requested at skill evaluations.

Again, coaches should discuss among themselves all evaluation rating, with the purpose of agreement, so the procedure will be expedited and as fair as possible. SVGSA staff will be present at team assignment for any help or advice required.

Uniforms & Equipment:

The uniform adopted by this association shall be matching shirts in the designated team color and coordinating pants or shorts. If desired by the sponsor, the sponsor's name can be displayed on the shirt. Each shirt must prominently display (meet USA Softball requirements) the number assigned to that player by the team Coach. The team Coach, working in conjunction with their team, will select the appropriate uniform. The uniform shall be provided by each participant and will be worn in every game.

The registration fee will entitle each player to a team jersey which must be worn during games. Each player is responsible for keeping her uniform clean. A player shall not wear anything that is considered by the umpire to be dangerous to themselves or other players. The umpire will check each player prior to the start of the game and the coaches are expected to support the umpire in the enforcement of this rule. Each team will be given the following equipment, all of which the coach is responsible for returning at the end of the season (except for player's uniforms):

- Assorted regulation softball bats and helmets. ***The league recommends players to have their own regulation helmet, but not required.***
- A set of catcher's equipment (mask, shin guards, and chest protector)
- Several new and used softballs, and an equipment bag.
- Coaches should review their equipment and notify the SVGSA of any and all issues with equipment.
- The league will maintain training equipment for practice sessions including a pitching machine, hitting tees, hitting nets, a supply of extra balls, and sliding mats.
- The catchers gear must be worn by any girl positioned as the catcher during any game, practice or warming up a pitcher.
- Batting helmets with chin straps and face guards bearing the NOCSAE stamp are required for all divisions when batting and will be worn when running bases, during practices and games. **Defensive masks, ASA approved, must be worn by all players pitching to a batter.**

- SVGSA will supply each team with batting helmets, bats, Defensive Mask, and balls. The League does not supply softball mitts/gloves or cleats.
- All equipment will be checked out and assigned to a coach/team by the equipment manager to the League. It must be returned within a **10 days** time after the conclusion of the season.
- Only registered players may use League equipment.
- Pitching machines (if used) must be operated by an adult only.

All players wearing vision corrective lens eyewear must wear defensive mask while playing defense. Catcher helmet OK.

All divisions will follow the Junior Olympic, FAST PITCH softball rules in the ASA Official Rules of Softball for the current season, which is the official rulebook for SVGSA. WHEN SVGSA RULES CONFLICT WITH THOSE IN THE ASA RULE BOOK, SVGSA RULES SHALL OVERRIDE ASA RULES. Except where indicated otherwise below, these SVGSA League Rules apply to all divisions. In case of conflict or dispute, binding interpretation of these rules should be sought from the Umpire-in-Chief or Coordinator. Only a quorum of the SVGSA Board of Directors can overrule rules interpretations made by the Umpire-in-Chief or Coordinator. Only the SVGSA Board of Directors may modify portions of these rules changed or deleted, at any time.

Rules of the Game:

All players, coaches and parents are expected to be familiar with this handbook and the league rules for their respective division.

Parent Concerns:

If a parent has a concern about team management, he or she should talk to the Coach of their child's team first on an individual basis. If the parent does not feel that is possible, then he or she should talk with the Division Coordinator or League President.

Parent's Responsibility:

Your children are your responsibility before, during and after each practice and game. If you are unable to attend, please decide with another adult. Notify the coaches or umpires of any hazards on the field, or indications that your child should be removed from the game.

Sportsmanship:

Good sportsmanship is required of all players, parents, coaches and spectators. Coaches are responsible for their players' conduct and well-being on the field. Parents are always responsible for their children's conduct on and off the field. Umpires are instructed to foster good sportsmanship. Any player, parent, coach or spectator not acting in a sportsmanlike manner, as determined in the sole discretion of the umpire, may be subject to ejection from the field. If ejected, you should quietly and appropriately remove yourself from the area and thereafter address any concerns to the Division Coordinator or League President for review of the incident and to determine the appropriate course of action.

Playing Time:

SVGSA intends that all players be afforded the opportunity to bat and play in the field. All players will bat in a set order and no player should sit out on defense for more than one inning during a game unless all other players have sat at least one inning. A player engaging in disruptive behavior can be suspended from play by head coach temporarily. The player may bat in regular order one time. If player continues disruption, the player can be removed from the game. Although the coach is not expected to play a player at their desired position in every game, the coach is responsible for assuring that all players are provided an opportunity to play and learn different positions including infield and outfield.

PITCHING: In the 8U, 10U, 12U and 14U, the players will pitch to batters.

Umpires:

Umpires will enforce the rules of the game, considering the skill levels of the players in each division. In some instances, coaches or parent volunteers may be asked to act as umpires with alternation between teams each inning. Coaches or parent volunteers filling in as umpires are expected to be fair and impartial and should be treated no differently than any other umpire as detailed in the league rules. The umpire will control the game and negative action or verbal abuse of umpires will not be tolerated and will result in warnings, ejection from the game/field, suspension from future games, or ejection from the league.

The Umpire has the right, within USA and SVGSA guidelines, to bench or dismiss any player, coach, assistant coach, or any other participant or spectator who harasses an umpire. Umpires may also terminate a game if coaches, assistant coaches, players and/or spectators, in the Umpire's view, get, or continue to be, disruptive, verbally harassing and/or threatening in nature after a warning has been given.

If an umpire is unavailable or does not show up for a game, the coaches from both teams can approve of a substitute umpire to allow the game to proceed.

SVGSA will not tolerate harassment of any Umpire. Harassment of an umpire is grounds for dismissal from the league.

Any grievances or complaints with any umpire shall be submitted in writing to the Division Coordinator, Umpire Coordinator and the SVGSA Board President.

NO ONE OTHER THAN THE COACHES SHALL ADDRESS THE UMPIRE DURING THE GAME AND FOUL LANGUAGE IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN!!

At no time may a coach, player, or spectator:

- Question the calling of balls and strikes or any other judgment call
- Call out balls and strikes from the sideline
- Yell or argue loudly about a call on the field
- Address an umpire in an unfriendly or confrontational manner

- Attempt to harass or intimidate an umpire, player or coach
- Be disrespectful to an umpire, player, or coach
- If the umpire forfeits the game, directs a person to leave the field or issues a caution, the umpire shall attempt to contact the League President or a Division Coordinator immediately and send a report to the League President for further review.
- Coaches must support the umpire and follow the umpire's instruction. Failure to do so may result in suspension or ejection from SVGSA. Any dispute should be resolved in a professional manner with the focus being on the well-being of the players. All unresolved disputes should be reported to the League President.
- The umpire is given broad authority to forfeit or suspend games in the event any of the game rules (or requirements for conduct) are being ignored by players, coaches, or spectators.

Game Postponement:

SVGSA will attempt to play all games unless postponed due to inclement weather or field conditions. SVGSA will inspect the field, and post results on SVGSA website. Coaches should not take it upon themselves to postpone games or practices in advance without notifying and receiving the approval of the League President or Division Coordinator. All coaches are expected to notify their players when games are canceled. **Information can also be found on the website.**

In some cases, the weather may become inclement just before or during the game. When this occurs, the coaches and the umpire shall confer about the weather and decide about the suspension or postponement of play. After the completion of three full innings, or when the trailing team has completed at least three at bats, the game is considered "official" and the final score shall revert to the last complete inning unless the home team is ahead during the final incomplete inning. Every effort should be made to play complete games and mildly inclement weather should be tolerated. Outcomes include completed full games, completed shortened games, and incomplete games.

Postponed games may be made up and future games should proceed as scheduled. In some cases, the League President may reschedule games if time and field availability permit.

Zero Tolerance Policy:

All persons responsible for a team and all the spectators shall support the umpire. Failure to do so will undermine the umpire's authority and has the potential of creating a hostile and dangerous environment for players, the umpire, coaches and all other participants and spectators.

Any player, coach or spectator that is ejected from a game is automatically suspended from the next game. A player, coach or spectator that is ejected for a second time will be suspended from the league for the remainder of the season, including playoffs.

Disciplinary Action and Sanctions, as referenced in this handbook, include, but are not limited to, warning, probation, suspension, and expulsion from SVGSA.

The Division Coordinators have the power to impose sanctions on players, coaches, and spectators, suspend temporarily or forfeit games. The League President has full power and authority to impose

or remove sanctions (e.g., suspensions, forfeits, or expulsion from the league) in its sole discretion. All decisions of the League President shall be final.

Safety:

- All accidents and injuries shall be reported to the SVGSA division coordinator.
- Coaches must keep a copy of the consent to play form for each player at all practices and games.
- Coaches and Assistant Coaches should have access to first aid kits and ice packs at all practices and games

LEAGUE AND DIVISION GOALS

REMEMBER – BEFORE YOU ACT, SAY OR DO SOMETHING, THINK ABOUT HOW YOU WILL FEEL ABOUT YOUR WORDS AND ACTIONS TOMORROW.

MOST OF ALL HAVE FUN!!

NON-PROFIT SVGSA:

Sonoma Valley Girls Softball Association is a strictly volunteer non-profit organization. All parents are encouraged participate in helping with the success of SVGSA by volunteering for Field Preparation and Maintenance, Practices, Games, and any other areas needed.

REGISTRATION:

All players must be registered before participating. Registration includes payment of the appropriate registration fee and completion of the registration form, which includes the parent's signature/consent and Medical Release Form. Player eligibility and team placement shall be determined in the sole discretion of the SVGSA Division Coordinator and Head Coach.

The Division Coordinator must approve any change of a team roster. To the extent possible team, coach and "buddy" requests were considered when organizing teams. However, the overriding goal was the formation of fair and balanced teams with comparable numbers from each grade. Player switching is not permitted unless there are exceptional circumstances as determined by the Coordinator and League President.

Submission of a SVGSA registration application shall be deemed consent to all the terms and conditions of this handbook.

Division RULES

THIS IS AN INSTRUCTIONAL LEAGUE! ALL MANAGERS AND COACHES ARE TO TEACH THE FUNDAMENTALS OF SOFTBALL INCLUDING CATCHING, THROWING, BATTING, HITTING, RUNNING, AND TO REGULARLY ROTATE ALL PLAYERS TO ALL DEFENSIVE POSITIONS.

Regular season games for all leagues shall consist of seven (7) innings or time limit stated below, whichever occurs first. No inning will start after the time limit has expired. The next inning officially starts immediately after the final out of the previous inning. In the event the score is tied after regular play (7 innings or time limit, whichever comes first), the international tiebreaker rule (ITB) will be used in extra innings until there is a winner (excludes 8U). The ten (10) run rule after four (4) innings and eight (8) after five (5) applies to all games. A five (5) run per inning rule is in effect which completes the half inning, the same as the third (3rd) out. The five (5) run per inning rule is in effect through six (6) innings. No run rule per inning is in effect after six (6) innings. It is the scorekeeper's responsibility to notify the umpire after the run limits have been reached.

Home Team Dugout: Home team shall use the first base dugout.

Home Team Responsibilities: Home team shall be responsible for setting up the field which includes lining the baselines, batter's box, and pitching circle, installing the bases and setting up a batting tee before the start of the game; for returning bases and batting tee to storage when the game has ended.

Sweatshirts or Jackets on Cold Days: Sweatshirts or jackets with or without numbers may be worn in the field and up at bat on cold days and nights. If numbers are not visible, the player's number on her jersey must be shown to the opposing team when requested. Colors of sweatshirts or jackets need not match.

Jewelry and Medical Alert: Jewelry shall not be worn during an official game. Medical alert bracelets and necklaces are not jewelry and may be worn but must be taped to the body in such fashion that the medical alert information is visible.

Game Time: 6U - one (1) hour and ten (10) minutes.

Game Time: 8U – one (1) hour and ten (10) minutes.

(8U) modified coach pitch league, the following applies:

1. Play with ten (10) players, but must field a minimum of seven (7) to start and continue a game. No out will be taken when the number eight (8) or nine (9) batter position is not used. If the player(s) shows up after game time begins, they may be entered at any time.
2. The coach may arrange the batting order any way they wish, but it must include all players and cannot be changed for the duration of that game. Every player must bat in the order listed, failure to comply with the consecutive batting order will result in an out being recorded. All defensive substitutions will still go through the home plate umpire.

3. Coaches must make substitutions of all bench players who have not played a defensive position at the top of the third inning, or one half of game time, whichever comes first. All defensive changes must be reported to the home plate umpire.
4. Stealing is permitted once the ball has been released from the player-pitcher's hand. Stealing home is not allowed.
5. Third drop strike rule does not apply. Batter cannot advance on dropped third (3rd) strike.
6. Infield fly rule does not apply.
7. Baseline distance is sixty (60) feet.
8. Pitching distance is thirty (30) feet.
9. One (1) offensive conference rule (USA Softball) is waived.
10. When the ball/strike count reach ball four (4), no walk will be awarded, instead the following will occur:
 - a. A coach-pitcher will come to the pitching rubber to complete the at-bat. They will have up to three (3) pitches with which to complete the at-bat. The strike count will continue with the coach's pitches. If after three (3) pitches by the coach-pitcher, no hit or strike out has occurred, the batter may hit off a tee.
 - b. A foul ball does not constitute a 3rd strike or strike out. The player-pitcher position shall have one (1) foot in the pitcher's circle until the ball is hit.
 - c. If a batted ball hits the coach-pitch there, it is ruled a dead ball and the batter shall proceed to first base.
11. Bunting should be encouraged.
12. An U.S.A. Softball approved safety balls are to be used.
13. No extra innings will be played; the game will end when time has expired.
14. No protest will be allowed.

15. No play-off games will be played.

Game Time: 10U - one (1) hour twenty (20) minutes.

Ten & under (10U) division, the following applies:

1. Play with nine (9) players, but must field a minimum of eight (8) to start and continue a game. No out will be taken when the number nine (9) batter position is not used. If the ninth player shows up after game time begins, they may be entered at any time.
2. The coach may arrange the batting order any way they wish, but it must include all players and cannot be changed for the duration of that game. Every player must bat in the order listed, failure to comply with the consecutive batting order will result in an out being recorded. All defensive substitutions will still go through the home plate umpire.
3. Dropped third strike rule does apply.
4. Infield fly rule does apply.
5. Baseline distance is sixty (60) feet.
6. Pitching distance is thirty-five (35) feet.
7. One (1) offensive conference rule (USA Softball) is waived.
8. Stealing home is allowed.

Game Time: 14U and 12U – one (1) hour (45) forty-five minutes.

Twelve & under (12U) Division, the following applies:

1. Play with nine (9) players, but must field a minimum of eight (8) to start and continue a game. No out will be taken when the number nine (9) batter position is not used. If the ninth player shows up after game time begins, they may be entered at any time.
2. Pitching distance is forty (40) feet.
3. One (1) offensive conference rule (USA Softball) is waived.

Fourteen & under (14U) division the following applies:

1. Play with nine (9) players and must field a minimum of eight (8) to start and continue a game. No out will be taken when the number nine (9) batter position is not used. If the ninth player shows up after game time begins, they may be entered at any time.
2. The starting home team is to take the field at. Or prior to. Game time and be allowed five (5) warm-up pitches with the usual simultaneous infield warm-up and the game is then to start.
3. No practice on infield (infield defined as inside base path) prior to the game will be allowed.
4. If only one (1) umpire is present at the start of the game, for the game to begin, both Coaches must agree to play the game with only one (1) umpire. If one (1) or both Coaches do not agree to start the game with one (1) umpire, the game will be rescheduled. (Does not apply to T-ball or modified coach pitch.)
5. All games are to start as scheduled, or immediately following the previous game. No game will start early without approval of both Coaches. Game time is forfeit time.
6. If a protest has been declared, it is to be noted in the scorebook. Any details the scorekeeper has regarding the protest will be written in the scorebook. The protesting Coach must, within 48 hours, file the written protest with a member of the Executive Committee with a fifty (\$50) dollar deposit, non-refundable in the event the protest is not allowed.
7. Any violation of the SVGSA rules that occur may be reported to the Executive Committee.
8. If a rain out has not been declared by 5:00 p.m., then you must go to the field. After 5:00 p.m. the umpires will decide if the game will be canceled.
9. No pitching or warming up during Coaches and umpires meeting (at home plate) prior

to start of game, for safety reasons.

10. Refer to the current SVGSA Coaches Handbook for further rules and game

expectations.

6U DIVISION PLAY

50 ft base path. 25 ft pitching rubber. All Batters bat through line up once, then rotate teams. Reverse the batting order in the next inning. Filed positions must change every inning. Make this fun! This is where the love of the game begins!

8U DIVISION PLAY

1. 10 players may be allowed on defense in the field at any one time, four of which are outfielders. Outfielders must position themselves with one foot in the grass at the beginning of the pitch. An adult/coach may be the catcher during rookie games

Players: Minimum number of players is six (6). A team may have a maximum of ten (10) players on the field. However, additional fielders may be allowed if agreed upon by both coaches. If a team does not have six players, teams may share players so that the girls can still play a game.

2. Stealing is allowed from 1st to 2nd and 2nd to 3rd. Players may steal only one base per attempt.

3. **Overthrows:**

- **On a throw to first base.** No batter can advance to second base as a result of an errant throw to first base. All other runners may only advance one base past the base they are going with liability of being put out.
- **On a throw to any other base or position.** If on a throw to any other base an errant throw occurs all runners and batter/runner may advance one base past the base they are going to with liability of being put out.
- The umpire will only award a base to the runners if the ball has been thrown out of play.
- Batter/Runner and Runner may be put out if they advance beyond the base they were going to on the errant throw. At the end of play the umpire will return all runners to the base they are entitled to if they have not been put out.

4. No Infield Fly Rule.

5. Play stops when ball hit to outfield gets in the control of the pitcher

6. Everyone bats and free defensive substitutions throughout the game

7. No dropped 3rd strike

8. Bunting is encouraged

9. Pitching

- Pitching distance: Player and Coach 30 feet.
- Players will pitch to opposing team. 2 inning limit for pitchers, plus 1 additional if the game goes more than 4 innings. One pitch in an inning constitutes a complete inning. We encourage you to change pitchers often
- No Walks.
- A coach/pitcher will enter the circle when ball 4 has been called.
- The coach/pitcher shall pitch from pitching rubber.
- The pitcher/coach must pitch consistent with the ASA pitching rules.
- Based on the batter's strike count the coach/pitcher may throw a maximum of three pitches with the umpire calling balls or strikes.
- If the pitch is not put into play by the last pitch, the batter may use a tee or soft toss.
- **Exception:** If the last pitch is a foul ball.

NOTE: While the coaches should try to give every player that desires to pitch an opportunity to pitch in a game, players and parents should understand that they must be able to pitch from the pitcher's rubber according to the rules for each division, except 8U Division. Coaches must be able to use their judgment when selecting or removing pitchers so that the pace of play remains reasonable.

10. Batting

- If the pitcher hits the batter – runner is not awarded first base. Instead, the coach/pitcher will pitch up to three pitches to the batter.
- Batter will NOT be awarded a base on a Hit by Pitch from the coach/pitcher. The pitch will count as a ball.
- If a batted ball hits the coach/pitcher the ball is dead.
- At no time shall the coach/pitcher obstruct play. Ruling: Interference – ball is dead; runner closest to home is out; and all runners return to base occupied at time of pitch unless force to advance by the batter becoming a runner

11. Player/Pitcher must have one foot in the circle at the time of coach/pitcher is pitching. Ruling – Dead ball runners advance one base.

12. Coach/Pitcher must stay in the circle during play and **MAY NOT** provide Coaching assistance. Ruling: Interference – ball is dead; runner closest to home is out; all runners return to base occupied at time when interference occurred unless force to advance by the batter becoming a runner.

13. **Stationing of Coaches, Managers and/or Parents:** Coaches, Managers and/or parents may be stationed at each base to help base runners while their team is at bat. Coaches, Managers and/or parents may be in the outfield to help the defense while their team is in the field

THE GAME

- A. **Starting Times:** Consult schedule for weekend games. The umpire will announce the official starting time of the game to the Official Scorekeeper at the start of each game.
- B. **Starting Line-ups:** Starting line-ups shall be presented to the Official Scorekeeper and/or opposing coach at least ten (10) minutes prior to the scheduled starting time of the game and must include the names and uniform numbers of the players present.
- C. **Game Balls:** The league shall provide two game balls to the umpire prior to the start of the game. New game balls are located in the equipment sheds.
- D. **Home Team/Third Base Dugout:** Home team will normally occupy the third base dugout. An exception is that in the event of a double header, teams will not change dugouts, regardless of whether they are the home or visiting team for the second game.
- E. **Game Length:** Games shall be seven (7) innings or one hour and thirty (1:10) minutes in length, whichever limit is reached first. No new inning may start after 1:10 minutes have elapsed. A new inning starts when the final out is recorded in the prior inning, and a new inning shall begin if any amount of time is left on the official game clock. That new inning shall be played to its conclusion whether or not time expires during the playing of that new inning.
- F. **Official Games:** A game is "official" when the maximum number of innings are reached **OR** Time expires (regardless of the number of innings completed), whichever occurs first.
- G. **Stopping or Ending a Game Early (Rain, Darkness, and Other Reasons):** In the event a game ends due to rain, darkness, or some other reason determined necessary by the umpire or league (other than for time expiring), the game shall be deemed "official" based on the score at the end of the last fully completed inning of play, if minimum 3 completed innings have been played.
- H. **Rescheduled and Resumed Games:** If possible, games will be rescheduled and resumed only when canceled or not completed due to rain, darkness, or some other reason determined necessary by the umpire or association.
- I. **Tie Games and Tie-Breaker Rule:** If the score is tied when time expires or after seven (7) innings, the game will end in a tie.
- J. **Team Play:** The maximum number of players participating on the field on defense at any time by one team shall be ten (10); the minimum number of players shall be 6 (6). (If one team can field only six (6) players, the opposing team may still field ten [10].) Any team with fewer than six (6) players at the start of the game will lose by forfeit. If both teams are unable

to field minimum teams at game time, a double forfeit will be declared resulting in a half-win/half-loss for each team.

K. Minimum Play: Each player shall participate on the field on defense a minimum of two (2) innings (6 defensive outs). No player shall sit out on defense for more than 1 inning during a game unless all players have sat out at least 1 inning. A player engaging in disruptive behavior can be suspended from play by head coach temporarily. The player may bat in regular order one time. If player continues disruption, they can be removed from game. Sick or injured players are an exception, until they miss their next scheduled time at bat, at which time the player is removed from the game. Failure of any team to observe this rule may be grounds for disciplinary action against the coach and forfeiture of the game. Coaches are encouraged to allow players to play longer than the minimum during the season so that the girls will learn through experience to play better softball. Each player must play in an infield position at least one inning per game, unless the payer refuses, or a safety issue. **A player that exhibits a pattern of missing practices or games can be suspended, and placed on the bench.**

L. Positioning of Players: Prior to the release of a pitch, teams shall have their outfielders positioned:

On the grass in fair territory.

A team fielding ten (10) players shall have four (4) outfielders; a team fielding nine (9) Players shall have three (3) outfielders; and a team fielding eight (8) players shall have two (2) outfielders.

M. Ten-Run Rule: If after five (5) innings one team is ahead by ten (10) runs or more, the game shall be concluded by the umpire.

N. Runs Per Inning Rule: There will be a maximum of three (3) runs scored in the first 4 innings. Unlimited runs may be scored after 4 innings are complete. The umpire shall advise both teams that a particular inning shall be the last inning if the 70 minute time limit for commencement of a new inning is reached during the top of an inning or if it appears highly likely, based on the time required to play each inning to that point in the game, that the limit will be reached prior to the conclusion of the full inning. In the event that the time limit is actually not reached prior to the conclusion of that inning, the next inning shall be played under the same last-inning run scoring limit rules.

O. Players Held Out of Games: A player maybe held out of game if the player exhibits a pattern of missing games or practices.

PITCHING REGULATIONS (ASA Rule 6)

A. Changing Pitchers: An individual player may only be brought into the pitcher's position twice throughout a game. A team shall not be allowed to transfer a pitcher back and forth from pitching

to a fielding position or from the bench to a pitching position in order to put a specific pitcher against a specific batter or batters throughout the entirety of the game. This may be considered contrary to fair play and/or delay of the game. Coaches guilty of this practice may be subject to disciplinary action.

- B. Defensive Mask:** All players pitching to a batter must wear an ASA approved Defensive Mask. Face masks are recommended for ALL defensive positions – this helps players gain confidence.

BATTING (ASA Rule 7)

- A. Rotation Batting Order:** All players who are in attendance shall be listed in the line-up and take their turn batting. Some players will be batting even though they are not playing defense. Since all players in attendance are listed in the line-up, the batting order will remain the same throughout the entire game.

BATTER-RUNNER AND RUNNER (ASA Rule 8)

- A. Infield Fly Rule:** Infield Fly Rule is not in effect.
- B. Base Runners Advancing and Scoring:** Base runners may advance or score in the following ways:
- When a pitched ball is hit into play by a batter.
 - By being played upon by the defense.
 - When forced to advance by base-on-balls or being hit by a pitch.
 - When stealing a base, as per ASA rules. No stealing of home is permitted
 - When otherwise directed to advance by the umpire.

PROTESTS (ASA Rule 9)

- A.** There shall be no protests.

UMPIRES (ASA Rule 10)

- A. Umpires for Games:** If no official ASA or other league designated umpires are available at game time, each team will be asked to provide one volunteer to umpire the game. If one team cannot provide a volunteer, the other team may provide two or the game may proceed with just one volunteer. If one or more official umpires arrives after the game has started, the umpire(s) will take control of the game in progress (games will not start over). The Official Scorekeeper shall record the time and point in the game that the official umpire takes over.

SCORING (ASA Rule 11) (also known as scorekeeping)

- A. **Official Scorekeeper or Scorer:** The home team shall be Official Scorekeeper/Scorer for each game. If a competent scorer is not available to the home team, the coaches may by mutual agreement appoint someone not from the home team to act as Official Scorekeeper. If agreement cannot be reached, the umpire shall designate the Official Scorekeeper/Scorer.
- B. **Records:** The official scorekeeper or scorer shall keep records of each game based on the rules/guidelines of ASA Rule 11. Each team Coach is responsible for keeping track of their team's wins/losses/ties. The scorebook will be made available for inspection by the division coordinator upon request.
- C. **Disqualified Players:**
1. A **disqualified player** is one who is removed from playing in a game as a penalty for a specific rule violation. The violation may have been caused by the coach substituting the player improperly or some other rule violation. **Effect:** The violating team must play the remainder of the game without that particular player. If the player disqualification results in the team being reduced to eight players, the game shall continue to be played. If the disqualification results in the team being reduced to seven players, the game will be stopped and a forfeit declared. Any disqualified player discovered participating in the game shall also be grounds for a forfeit.
 2. An **ejected player** is a player *or coach* removed from a game by the umpire, usually for an unsportsmanlike act or conduct. If considered by the umpire to be flagrant, the player or coach will be required to leave the grounds for the remainder of the game. **Effect:** The team with the ejected player must play the remainder of the game without that particular player. If the ejected player is a runner or batter, the player shall be declared out even though she may have reached base safely.
- D. **Suspension of Players**
1. A Player engaging in disruptive behavior can be suspended from play by head coach temporarily. The player may bat in regular order one time. If the player continues disruption, they can be removed from game.
 2. **A player that exhibits a pattern of missing practices or games can be suspended from a game, and placed on the bench.**

10U DIVISION RULES

The following rules are organized and based on the Amateur Softball Association Official Rules of Softball, Team Edition. Current year ASA Official Rules shall apply, unless modified in the following rules. Rules stated herein may restate official rules for added emphasis or clarity, may make local

exceptions to the Official Rules, or may add rules that are otherwise not embodied in the Official Rules. In case of a conflict, the rules stated herein shall apply.

DEFINITIONS – Definitions shall be as stated in the ASA Official Rules.

THE PLAYING FIELD

- A. **Field:** The playing field shall be as prescribed in the ASA Official Rules. If an end of outfield demarcation line is utilized (as opposed to an open, unrestricted field), the distance to that line shall be set at 150 feet. The pitching distance in the 10U division shall be 35 feet.
- B. **Set-up:** Home team shall be responsible for setting up the field, including installing bases before the start of the game and for returning bases and field equipment to storage when the game has ended.

EQUIPMENT

- A. **Uniforms:** Uniforms must be worn by each player on a team and must be alike in color. An **exception** is when a player from another division is filling out the roster for another team and none of that team's uniforms are available. In this instance, the player shall wear the uniform from her own team even though it may be different in color and style.
- B. **Sweatshirts or Jackets on Cold Days:** Sweatshirts or jackets with or without numbers may be worn in the field and up at bat on cold days and nights. If numbers are not visible, the player's number on her jersey must be shown to the umpire and opposing team, when requested. Colors of sweatshirts and jackets need not match.
- C. **Jewelry and Medical Alert:** Jewelry shall not be worn during an official game. Medical alert bracelets and necklaces are not jewelry and may be worn but must be taped to the body in such fashion that the medical alert information is visible.
- D. **Replacement Gloves and Mitts:** If during play, a glove or mitt breaks or is otherwise determined to be unusable by the umpire, the player may immediately and without delay obtain a legal replacement glove or mitt and is entitled to three warm-up catches prior to restarting the game. To avoid any conflict with the ASA excessive warm-up rule, a pitcher participating in this warm-up shall throw the ball overhand.
- E. **Batting Helmet Masks:** All batting helmets shall be outfitted with a securely fastened face mask. NOCSAE approved face masks are required.
- F. **Balls:** The official softball is 11 inch as furnished by SVGSA.
- G. **NO metal cleats or spikes allowed in SVGSA**

- H. **Defensive Mask: All players pitching to a batter must wear an USA approved Defensive Mask.**

PLAYERS, COACHES, SUBSTITUTES

- A. **Players:** A player is defined as a girl of the proper age for her division of play. A team must have the minimum number of players present in the dugout or team area to start or continue a game. **Though the 10U division is locally allowed to play with ten players, the minimum number of players is eight.** A game may begin or finish with eight players, but no fewer.
- B. **Players Arriving Late:** If playing shorthanded and a substitute arrives late, that player shall be inserted in the vacant position in the batting order. If a player arrives prior to the start of the third inning, she is eligible to play and shall be inserted as the last batter in the line-up. Players arriving after the start of the third inning are **not** eligible to play.
- C. **Players Leaving Early:** Any player leaving a game prior to its completion will have her turn at bat counted as an out. **Exceptions** to this rule are players leaving because of (1) illness, (2) Injury, (3) emergency, and (4) notification by one coach to the other **prior to the start of the game** that a particular player or players will be leaving the game prior to its completion. After the game has started, a team shall not be entitled to exception (4) above. If a player leaves the game for reasons other than those provided in the exceptions above, the batter's position in the batting order will be taken as an out when the player is due to bat, unless agreed otherwise between coaches.
- D. **Players from a Lower Division Filling Out a Roster:** When a team is short of players for a particular game, players may be brought up from a lower division of the league to fill out the roster up to 10 players. The player(s) shall only play the outfield and shall be placed last in the batting order (rotation). A regular rostered player who is not expected to start a game but arrives prior to the third inning may be inserted in the last position of the batting order. The player who was brought up to fill out the roster shall play at least six (6) outs on defense (i.e., the minimum playing time required in a game). The same rules are applied to borrowing players from the same division's teams, if allowed by division coordinator. **These rules are for SVGSA in-league games only. Interleague games will have their own rules, which SVGSA will follow.**
- E. **Defensive Substitutes:** Defensive substitutions may be made at the coach's discretion to meet the minimum participation requirements.
- F. **Courtesy Runner Substitutes:** SVGSA permits the use of courtesy runners for a pitcher, catcher, injured or ill player. The coach may use as a courtesy runner the player scheduled to bat last in the line-up prior to that player's position in the batting order.
- G. **Injured Players:** An injured player shall not be allowed to play in a game.

THE GAME

- A. **Starting Times:** Consult schedule for weekend games. The umpire will announce the official starting time of the game to the Official Scorekeeper at the start of each game.
- B. **Starting Line-ups:** Starting line-ups shall be presented to the Official Scorekeeper and/or opposing coach at least ten (10) minutes prior to the scheduled starting time of the game and must include the names and uniform numbers of the players present.
- C. **Game Balls:** The league shall provide two game balls to the umpire prior to the start of the game. New game balls are located in the equipment sheds.
- D. **Home Team/Third Base Dugout:** Home team will normally occupy the third base dugout. An exception is that in the event of a double header, teams will not change dugouts, regardless of whether they are the home or visiting team for the second game.
- E. **Game Length:** Games shall be seven (7) innings or one hour and twenty (1:20) minutes in length, whichever limit is reached first. No new inning may start after 1:30 minutes have elapsed. A new inning starts when the final out is recorded in the prior inning, and a new inning shall begin if any amount of time is left on the official game clock. That new inning shall be played to its conclusion whether or not time expires during the playing of that new inning.
- F. **Official Games:** A game is "official" when the maximum number of innings are reached **OR** Time expires (regardless of the number of innings completed), whichever occurs first.
- G. **Stopping or Ending a Game Early (Rain, Darkness, and Other Reasons):** In the event a game ends due to rain, darkness, or some other reason determined necessary by the umpire or league (other than for time expiring), the game shall be deemed "official" based on the score at the end of the last fully completed inning of play, if minimum 3 completed innings have been played.
- H. **Rescheduled and Resumed Games:** If possible, games will be rescheduled and resumed only when canceled or not completed due to rain, darkness, or some other reason determined necessary by the umpire or association.
- I. **Tie Games and Tie-Breaker Rule:** If the score is tied when time expires or after seven (7) innings, the game will end in a tie.
- J. **Team Play:** The maximum number of players participating on the field on defense at any time by one team shall be ten (10); the minimum number of players shall be eight (8). (If one team can field only eight (8) players, the opposing team may still field ten [10].) Any team with fewer than eight (8) players at the start of the game will lose by forfeit. If both teams are unable to field minimum teams at game time, a double forfeit will be declared resulting in a half-win/half-loss for each team.

- K. **Minimum Play:** Each player shall participate on the field on defense a minimum of two (2) innings (6 defensive outs). No player shall sit out on defense for more than 1 inning during a game unless all players have sat out at least 1 inning. A player engaging in disruptive behavior can be suspended from play by head coach temporarily. The player may bat in regular order one time. If player continues disruption, they can be removed from game. Sick or injured players are an exception, until they miss their next scheduled time at bat, at which time the player is removed from the game. Failure of any team to observe this rule may be grounds for disciplinary action against the coach and forfeiture of the game. Coaches are encouraged to allow players to play longer than the minimum during the season so that the girls will learn through experience to play better softball. Each player must play in an infield position at least one inning per game, unless the player refuses, or a safety issue. **A player that exhibits a pattern of missing practices or games can be suspended, and placed on the bench.**
- L. **Positioning of Players:** Prior to the release of a pitch, teams shall have their outfielders positioned:
- On the grass in fair territory.
 - A team fielding ten (10) players shall have four (4) outfielders; a team fielding nine (9) Players shall have three (3) outfielders; and a team fielding eight (8) players shall have two (2) outfielders.
- M. **Ten-Run Rule:** If after five (5) innings one team is ahead by ten (10) runs or more, the game shall be concluded by the umpire.
- N. **Runs Per Inning Rule:** There will be a maximum of five (5) runs scored in the first 4 innings. Unlimited runs may be scored after 4 innings are complete. The umpire shall advise both teams that a particular inning shall be the last inning if the 90 minute time limit for commencement of a new inning is reached during the top of an inning or if it appears highly likely, based on the time required to play each inning to that point in the game, that the limit will be reached prior to the conclusion of the full inning. In the event that the time limit is actually not reached prior to the conclusion of that inning, the next inning shall be played under the same last-inning run scoring limit rules.
- O. **Players Held Out of Games:** **A player maybe held out of game if the player exhibits a pattern of missing games or practices.**

PITCHING REGULATIONS (ASA Rule 6)

- A. **Changing Pitchers:** An individual player may only be brought into the pitcher's position twice throughout a game. A team shall not be allowed to transfer a pitcher back and forth from pitching to a fielding position or from the bench to a pitching position in order to put a specific pitcher against a specific batter or batters throughout the entirety of the game. This may be considered contrary to fair play and/or delay of the game. Coaches guilty of this practice may be subject to disciplinary action.

- B. **Defensive Mask:** All players pitching to a batter must wear an ASA approved Defensive Mask.

BATTING (ASA Rule 7)

- A. **Rotation Batting Order:** All players who are in attendance shall be listed in the line-up and take their turn batting. Some players will be batting even though they are not playing defense. Since all players in attendance are listed in the line-up, the batting order will remain the same throughout the entire game.

BATTER-RUNNER AND RUNNER (ASA Rule 8)

- A. **Dropped Third Strike:** Dropped Third Strike rule is in effect. The Dropped Third Strike Rule is applicable to 10U, 12U and 14U divisions. A dropped third strike occurs when the catcher fails to catch the third strike (swung at or not swung at by the batter) before the ball touches the ground. The ball can be missed entirely, dropped, and/or the ball strikes the ground prior to being caught. Upon a dropped third strike the batter becomes a batter-runner and may attempt to reach first base. The batter-runner may be put out (force out) at first base or tagged. The Dropped Third Strike Rule only applies when:
- There are fewer than two outs, i.e. zero or one out, and first base is unoccupied at the time of the pitch. First base is occupied even if a steal from first base is in progress at the time.
 - Anytime there are two outs. Hence, on two outs, batters can always attempt to reach first base whether it is occupied or not.
- B. **Infield Fly Rule:** Infield Fly Rule is in effect.
- C. **Base Runners Advancing and Scoring:** Base runners may advance or score in the following ways:
- When a pitched ball is hit into play by a batter.
 - By being played upon by the defense.
 - When forced to advance by base-on-balls or being hit by a pitch.
 - When stealing a base, as per ASA rules.
 - When otherwise directed to advance by the umpire.

PROTESTS (ASA Rule 9)

- A. There shall be no protests.

UMPIRES (ASA Rule 10)

- A. **Umpires for Games:** If no official ASA or other league designated umpires are available at game time, each team will be asked to provide one volunteer to umpire the game. If one team cannot provide a

volunteer, the other team may provide two or the game may proceed with just one volunteer. If one or more official umpires arrives after the game has started, the umpire(s) will take control of the game in progress (games will not start over). The Official Scorekeeper shall record the time and point in the game that the official umpire takes over.

SCORING (ASA Rule 11) (also known as scorekeeping)

- B. **Official Scorekeeper or Scorer:** The home team shall be Official Scorekeeper/Scorer for each game. If a competent scorer is not available to the home team, the coaches may by mutual agreement appoint someone not from the home team to act as Official Scorekeeper. If agreement cannot be reached, the umpire shall designate the Official Scorekeeper/Scorer.

- C. **Records:** The official scorekeeper or scorer shall keep records of each game based on the rules/guidelines of ASA Rule 11. Each team Coach is responsible for keeping track of their team's wins/losses/ties. The scorebook will be made available for inspection by the division coordinator upon request.

- D. **Disqualified Players:**
 - 1. A **disqualified player** is one who is removed from playing in a game as a penalty for a specific rule violation. The violation may have been caused by the coach substituting the player improperly or some other rule violation. **Effect:** The violating team must play the remainder of the game without that particular player. If the player disqualification results in the team being reduced to eight players, the game shall continue to be played. If the disqualification results in the team being reduced to seven players, the game will be stopped and a forfeit declared. Any disqualified player discovered participating in the game shall also be grounds for a forfeit.

 - 2. An **ejected player** is a player *or coach* removed from a game by the umpire, usually for an unsportsmanlike act or conduct. If considered by the umpire to be flagrant, the player or coach will be required to leave the grounds for the remainder of the game. **Effect:** The team with the ejected player must play the remainder of the game without that particular player. If the ejected player is a runner or batter, the player shall be declared out even though she may have reached base safely.

- E. **Suspension of Players**
 - 1. A Player engaging in disruptive behavior can be suspended from play by head coach temporarily. The player may bat in regular order one time. If the player continues disruption, they can be removed from game.

 - 2. **A player that exhibits a pattern of missing practices or games can be suspended from a game, and placed on the bench.**

12U and 14U DIVISION RULES

The following rules are organized and based on the Amateur Softball Association Official Rules of Softball, Team Edition. Current year ASA Official Rules shall apply, unless modified in the following rules. Rules stated herein may restate official rules for added emphasis or clarity, may make local exceptions to the Official Rules, or may add rules that are otherwise not embodied in the Official Rules. In case of a conflict, the rules stated herein shall apply.

If SVGSA finds it in the best interest of the league and its players to compete in a neighboring cities League, then, these rules would be modified to incorporate that cities league rules. Should a conflict between the rules arise, the neighboring cities rules would supersede these rules.

DEFINITIONS – Definitions shall be as stated in the ASA Official Rules.

THE PLAYING FIELD

- A. **Field:** The playing field shall be as prescribed in the ASA Official Rules. Bases are 60 feet apart and the pitching distance is 40ft for 12U **and 43 ft for 14U.**
- B. **Set-up:** Home team shall be responsible for setting up the field, including installing bases before the start of the game and for returning bases to storage when the game has ended.

EQUIPMENT

- A. **Uniforms:** Uniforms, if available, should be worn by each player on a team and should be alike in color.
- B. **Sweatshirts or Jackets on Cold Days:** Sweatshirts or jackets with or without numbers may be worn in the field and up at bat on cold days and nights. If numbers are not visible, the player's number on her jersey must be shown to the umpire and opposing team, when requested. Colors of sweatshirts and jackets need not match.
- C. **Jewelry and Medical Alert:** Jewelry shall not be worn during an official game. Medical alert bracelets and necklaces are not jewelry and may be worn but must be taped to the body in such fashion that the medical alert information is visible.
- D. **Replacement Gloves and Mitts:** If during play, a glove or mitt breaks or is otherwise determined to be unusable by the umpire, the player may immediately and without delay obtain a legal replacement glove or mitt and is entitled to three warm-up catches prior to restarting the game. To avoid any conflict with the ASA excessive warm-up rule, a pitcher participating in this warm-up shall throw the ball overhand.
- E. **Batting Helmet Masks:** All batting helmets shall be outfitted with a securely fastened face mask. NOCSAE approved face masks are required.

F. **Balls:** The official softball is a 12 inch, as furnished by SVGSA.

G. **Defensive Masks:** All players pitching to a batter must wear an USA approved defensive mask.

PLAYERS, COACHES, SUBSTITUTES

- A. **Players:** A player is defined as a girl of the proper age for her division of play. A team must have the minimum number of players present in the dugout or team area to start or continue a game. A game may begin or finish with eight players, but no fewer.
- B. **Players Arriving Late:** If playing shorthanded and a substitute arrives, that player shall be inserted in the vacant position in the batting order. If a player arrives prior to the start of the third inning, she is eligible to play and shall be inserted as the last batter in the line-up. Players arriving after the start of the third inning are **not** eligible to play.
- C. **Players Leaving Early:** Any player leaving a game prior to its completion will have her turn at bat counted as an out. **Exceptions** to this rule are players leaving because of (1) illness, (2) Injury, (3) emergency, and (4) notification by one coach to the other **prior to the start of the game** that a particular player or players will be leaving the game prior to its completion. After the game has started, a team shall not be entitled to exception (4) above. If a player leaves the game for reasons other than those provided in the exceptions above, the batter's position in the batting order will be taken as an out when the player is due to bat.
- D. **Players from a Lower Division Filling Out a Roster:** When a team is short of players for a particular game, players may be brought up from a lower division of the league to fill out the roster up to 10 players. The player(s) shall only play the outfield and shall be placed last in the batting order (rotation). A regular rostered player who is not expected to start a game but arrives prior to the third inning may be inserted in the last position of the batting order. The player who was brought up to fill out the roster shall play at least six (6) outs on defense (i.e., the minimum playing time required in a game). The same rules are applied to borrowing players from the same division if allowed by the division coordinator. **This rule applies to SVGSA in-league games only. Interleague type games have their own rules, and SVGSA complies.**
- E. **Defensive Substitutes:** Defensive substitutions may be made at the coach's discretion to meet the minimum participation requirements.
- F. **Courtesy Runner Substitutes:** **SVGSA** permits the use of courtesy runners for a pitcher, catcher, injured or ill player. The coach may use as a courtesy runner the player scheduled to bat last in the line-up prior to that player's position in the batting order.
- G. **Injured Players:** An injured player shall not be allowed to play in a game.

- H. **No metal cleats or spikes are allowed in SVGSA.**

THE GAME

- A. **Starting Times:** Consult schedule for weekend games. The umpire will announce the official starting time of the game to the Official Scorekeeper at the start of each game.
- B. **Starting Line-ups:** Starting line-ups shall be presented to the Official Scorekeeper and/or opposing coach at least ten (10) minutes prior to the scheduled starting time of the game and must include the names and uniform numbers of the players present.
- C. **Game Balls:** The league shall provide two game balls to the umpire prior to the start of the game.
- D. **Home Team/Third Base Dugout:** Home team will normally occupy the third base dugout. An **exception** is that in the event of a double header, teams will not change dugouts, regardless of whether they are the home or visiting team for the second game.
- E. **Game Length:** Games shall be seven (7) innings or one hour and thirty (1:30) minutes in length, whichever limit is reached first. A new inning starts when the final out is recorded in the prior inning, and a new inning shall begin if any amount of time is left on the official game clock. That new inning shall be played to its conclusion whether or not time expires during the playing of that new inning.
- F. **Official Games:** A game is "official" when the maximum number of innings are reached **OR** time expires (regardless of the number of innings completed), whichever occurs first. A game is "official" if the game is stopped while time remains on the official game clock and at least four (3) full innings have been completed.
- G. **Stopping or Ending a Game Early (Rain, Darkness, and other Reasons):** In the event a game ends due to rain, darkness, or some other reason determined necessary by the umpire or league (other than for time expiring), the game shall be deemed "official" based on the score at the end of the last fully completed inning of play, if 3 innings have been completed.
- H. **Rescheduled and Resumed Games:** Games will be rescheduled and resumed only when cancelled or not completed due to rain, darkness, or some other reason determined necessary by the umpire or association.
- I. **Tie Games and Tie-Breaker Rule:** If the score is tied when time expires or after seven (7) innings, the game will end in a tie.
- J. **Team Play:**
- **12U** – The maximum number of players participating on the field on defense at any time by one team shall be ten (10); the minimum number of players shall be eight (8). If one team can field

only eight (8) players, the opposing team may still field ten (10). All players will bat. Any team with fewer than eight (8) players at the start of the game will lose by forfeit. If both teams are unable to field minimum teams at game time, a double forfeit will be declared resulting in a half-win/half-loss for each team.

- **14U** – The maximum number of players participating on the field on defense at any time by one team will be nine (9); the minimum number of players shall be eight (8). If one team can field only eight (8) players, the opposing team may still field nine (9). All players will bat. Any team with fewer than eight (8) players at the start of the game will lose by forfeit. If both teams are unable to field minimum teams at game time, a double forfeit will be declared resulting in a half-win/half-loss for each team.

- K. **Minimum Play:** Each player shall participate on the field on defense a minimum of two (2) innings (6 defensive outs). Failure of any team to observe this rule may be grounds for disciplinary action against the coach and forfeiture of the game. Coaches are encouraged to allow players to play longer than the minimum during the season so that the girls will learn through experience to play better softball. Each player must play in an infield position at least one inning per game, unless the player refuses, or a safety issue. **Infield play rule does not apply to 14U.**

- L. **Positioning of Players:** Prior to the release of a pitch, teams shall have their outfielders positioned on the grass in fair ball territory.

- M. **Ten-Run Rule:** If after five (5) innings one team is ahead by ten (10) runs or more, the game shall be concluded by the umpire.

- N. **Runs Per Inning Rule:** There will be a maximum of five (5) runs scored in the first 4 innings in the 10U, 12U AND 14U. Unlimited runs can be scored after 4 innings are complete. The umpire shall advise both teams that a particular inning shall be the last inning if the 90 minute time limit for commencement of a new inning is reached during the top of an inning or if it appears highly likely, based on the time required to play each inning to that point in the game, that the limit will be reached prior to the conclusion of the full inning. In the event that the time limit is actually not reached prior to the conclusion of that inning, the next inning shall be played under the same last-inning run scoring limit rules.

PITCHING REGULATIONS (ASA Rule 6)

- A. **Changing Pitchers:** An individual player may only be brought into the pitcher's position twice throughout a game. A team shall not be allowed to transfer a pitcher back and forth from pitching to a fielding position or from the bench to a pitching position in order to put a specific pitcher against a specific batter or batters throughout the entirety of the game. This may be considered contrary to fair play and/or delay of the game. Coaches guilty of this practice may be subject to disciplinary action.

- B. **Defensive Mask:** All players pitching to a batter must wear an ASA approved defensive mask.

BATTING (ASA Rule 7)

A. Rotation Batting Order: All players who are in attendance shall be listed in the line-up and take their turn batting. Some players will be batting even though they are not playing defense. Since all players in attendance are listed in the line-up, the batting order will remain the same throughout the entire game.

BATTER-RUNNER AND RUNNER (ASA Rule 8)

- A. **Dropped Third Strike:** Dropped Third Strike rule is in effect. The Dropped Third Strike Rule is applicable to 10U, 12U and 14U divisions. A dropped third strike occurs when the catcher fails to catch the third strike (swung at or not swung at by the batter) before the ball touches the ground. The ball can be missed entirely, dropped, and/or the ball strikes the ground prior to being caught. Upon a dropped third strike the batter becomes a batter-runner and may attempt to reach first base. The batter-runner may be put out (force out) at first base or tagged. The Dropped Third Strike Rule only applies when:
- There are fewer than two outs, i.e. zero or one out, and first base is unoccupied at the time of the pitch. First base is occupied even if a steal from first base is in progress at the time.
 - Anytime there are two outs. Hence, on two outs, batters can always attempt to reach first base whether it is occupied or not.
- B. **Infield Fly Rule:** Infield Fly Rule is in effect.
- C. **Base Runners Advancing and Scoring:** Base runners may advance or score in the following ways:
- When a pitched ball is hit into play by a batter.
 - By being played upon by the defense.
 - When forced to advance by base-on-balls or being hit by a pitch.
 - When stealing a base, as per ASA rules.
 - When otherwise directed to advance by the umpire.

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There shall be no protests.

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