

**Northern Valley Girl's Softball League Junior (5<sup>th</sup> –6<sup>th</sup> grade)**  
**Softball RULES 2019**

The United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA) official regulations and playing rules will apply, except as they vary from the following which shall take precedence;

1. This is a recreational and instructional girl's fastpitch softball league.
2. **Sportsmanship**; The actions of managers, coaches, parents, players and umpires must be beyond reproach. By agreeing to coach a girl's softball team in this league, all managers are agreeing to abide by the rules set forth by the NVGSL town directors, and agree to abide by the rulings set forth by the NVGSL town directors. Managers must conduct themselves as having the responsibility for the conduct of the entire game and not merely partisans of one team. In addition, managers are responsible for the sportsmanship and appropriate behavior of assistant coaches, parents, fans and the players. No one shall be permitted to stand at, near or behind the backstop at any time during a game. To set a positive example for the players, smoking anywhere on the premises of a practice or a game is prohibited. All managers, assistants must be Rutgers certified or equivalent.
3. **Use of profanity**; there shall be no warning for either manager, assistant, fans or players and the offending person shall be removed from the game and an incident report form shall be appropriately filed. If a fan is involved, they shall be ejected from the location and an incident report form shall be appropriately filed.
4. **Throwing bat or equipment**; A team will be warned once in a game if a player throws a bat or a helmet or when a base runner intentionally knocks off her helmet while the ball is in play. Every incident thereafter will result in the offending player being declared out. If a player, manager or assistant intentionally throws a bat or helmet, or otherwise abuses equipment, she shall be immediately ejected from the game and an incident report form shall be appropriately filed.
5. **Umpires**; Judgment decisions by the umpires are final. Carded umpires are to be used. The scorebook of the home team should note the name of umpire appearing. If an umpire does not appear for a game, the game may be played with such substitute umpire(s) upon which the managers may agree. **When an umpire does not show for a game it must be reported to the towns Softball Commissioner.** When an umpire does not show, that fact should be recorded in the home scorebook. Ground rules are to be discussed with the umpire before the game begins. It is the responsibility of the home team to supply the umpire with a copy of these rules prior to each game.

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6. **Balls**; The home manager must supply two new Dudley T.P. 12 inch “Yellow” balls (or the equivalent USSSA, ASA or NFHSA approved balls, .47 core with 375 or less compression) to the umpire prior to the start of the game. The home team manager shall also be prepared to supply such further balls, in good condition, as may become necessary to finish the game.
7. **Batting order**; ”Cinderella” batting order (everyone bats) shall be used. If a player arrives after the start of the game, she is to be added at the bottom of the order and the other manager must be advised. If a player gets injured or leaves the game before it is over for any reason, the empty spot in the order shall NOT be an out.
8. **Players**; Rosters must be submitted to the League prior to the scheduling meeting. Up to ten players may play in the field. If there is a short fielder used, that player must begin either 10 feet behind second base or on the outfield grass, whichever is further. A team may play with 7 players. If a team has less than 7 players 15 minutes after the scheduled game time, the game shall either be declared a forfeit or the opposing team may lend player(s) so that the game may be played and the players enjoy playing rather than going home disappointed.
9. **“Playing up”**; If a team has less than 10 players, player(s) from 4<sup>th</sup> grade may play up so as to allow the team to field 10 players. Any such 4<sup>th</sup> graders are to bat last and play the outfield positions. If a team unexpectedly has 11 players or more, the 4<sup>th</sup> grader(s) present may participate in the game.
10. **Catchers, batters and equipment**; Catchers must wear full protective gear when in position. This includes a mask, chest protector, throat protector (or catchers mask with an extended mask that protects the throat) and shin guards. Any player warming up a pitcher must wear a mask with throat protector (or catchers mask with an extended mask that protects the throat). A pinch runner (the last batted out) may be used for the pitcher or catcher when there are two outs. The batter, on deck batter, all base runners and any player base coaches must wear approved batting helmets (facemask & chinstrap required). Chinstraps and helmets can be shared between teams. Only ASA approved bats are to be used. No jewelry is to be worn (including rope bracelets). Managers and coaches are responsible for advising players’ parents of the rule.

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11. **Bench behavior**; All players not on the playing field, or on deck, must remain in the dugout, seated on the bench and NEVER with their fingers through the fencing. Only players, managers and assistants are permitted in the dugout or on the bench. No food, candy or gum is permitted on the playing field or in the dugout while the game is underway. Managers and coaches must remain in the dugout or in the coaching boxes and may never take a position on the side of, or in back of, the backstop.
12. **Bunting**; Bunting is allowed. Faking a bunt (slash/slap hitting) and then swinging away is not permitted. Such faking and swinging away shall constitute a dead ball. The batter shall be declared out and all runners shall be safely returned to their original bases.
13. **“Slide or avoid” rule**; **CAUTION**; this is one of the most argument inducing plays/calls in the game and all manager/assistants should be keenly aware of the potential for sportsmanship issues. **GO OVER THIS RULE WITH THE UMPIRE BEFORE THE GAME AND DO NOT ARGUE ANY CALLS MADE BY THE UMPIRE DURING THE GAME.** A base runner who intentionally runs into a fielder who has the ball will be declared out. If there is a play at a base, **the base runner must slide or otherwise completely avoid ANY contact with the defensive player.** Any contact with a defensive player the runner will be called out. It is the umpire’s decision to make this call as he sees it. No offensive or defensive player may block a base or run into another player when there is no play at the base or position. When a play is in process, it is the umpire’s discretion to award a base or declare a base runner out.
14. **Defensive players**; Once the defensive team take the field for an inning, player’s positions may not be changed except in the event of injury or pitcher’s substitution. All players must play at least three innings in the field unless the game is shortened and the three-inning rule is impossible to follow. If there is a conflict between this rule and a particular Town rule, the Town rule shall take precedence over this rule.
15. **Cheering**; Dugout noise is to be limited to healthy encouragement.
16. **“Dropped third strike”**; The “dropped third strike” rule is NOT in effect.
17. **Tagging up**; Tagging up IS permitted only if the ball is caught in the outfield, whether fair or foul ball. Each base runner may advance only one base on a tag up play.

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18. **Infield fly rule;** NO infield fly rule.
19. **Continuous walk rule;** Continuous walk rule is **NOT** in effect (batters who walk must stop at first base).
20. **Game length;** A games consists of six innings and may go such extra innings as is necessary, unless the home team has a time limitation which is to be enforced A game is considered official if it has gone four innings (3 & ½ if the home team is ahead) and therefore, not in need of rescheduling or completion. Managers are encouraged to reschedule games, which do not reach official status. If the “No inning may start after 8 pm rule”, darkness or weather becomes an issue, the umpire may declare the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> inning the “last inning” for purposes of this rule. The umpire shall make such a declaration as soon as reasonably practical.

Fields with lights which host double headers:

Game 1

- Game 1 must start no later than 6:00pm
- No inning may start after 7:45pm

Game 2

- Game must start no later than 8:00pm

No inning may start after 10:00pm

21. **Darkness, weather etc;** The home team is responsible for canceling a scheduled game in the event of inclement weather. Notice must be given to the visiting manager and the umpire at least one (1) hour before the game. The home team must supply two (2) alternate game dates. **ONCE A GAME HAD BEGUN**, it is the umpire's decision to call any game because of darkness, bad weather, or adverse field conditions, regardless of the score. Managers shall take no purposeful action or inaction so as to delay a game for the purpose of winning or preventing the other team from winning due to darkness or weather. **If Thunder is heard or lightning spotted, the field must be cleared and all players and spectators should move to safer ground (i.e. cars, clubhouse, etc.). At this time, the game will be stopped for 30 minutes. If Thunder or Lightning is spotted during this time, the 30-minute clock will be reset. Example: If thunder has been heard the game is stopped for 30 minutes, if after waiting for 20 minutes another clap of thunder is heard or lightning is spotted, the clock will be reset and another 30 minutes will begin before you can retake the field. This will continue until it is too late to start an inning.**

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22. **Base coaches**; There is to be a base coach for 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base. Players may coach 1<sup>st</sup> base. Coaches must stand a minimum of three feet away from the baseline and may not touch runners as they approach or round the base during live ball play. If touched by a coach while the ball is in play, the runner shall be declared out. This is the umpire's decision to call as he sees it.

23. **Pitchers**; All pitchers are required to wear a face while pitching live. A pitcher may pitch no more than 3 consecutive innings in a particular game. For purposes of this rule, one pitch shall constitute an inning in computing the pitcher's three innings. Once a pitcher has thrown at least one pitch and is removed from the position, she may not return to the pitching position during the regulation portion of that game.

In the event of extra innings, any pitcher may be used for up to three further consecutive innings. There must be at least one full inning, consisting of three outs, before a pitcher may be reinserted (i.e.; if a pitcher pitches the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> innings and the game is tied, she may not pitch the 7<sup>th</sup> inning because that would be 4 consecutive innings. However, she could pitch the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> innings of that game). Managers may visit the mound twice per pitcher, on the third visit a pitching change must be made.

24. **Pitching distance**; The front of the pitching rubber must be forty (40) feet front the back of Home Plate and rubbers must be secured to the ground.

25. **Walks and hit by pitch**; Unlimited walks. A hit batswoman does not count as walks. Any pitcher who hits, directly or on a bounce, two batters in an inning or three in the regulation portion of a game, must be removed from the pitching position but may return to the pitching position in the event of extra innings. There is a reset of hit batswomen if the game goes into extra innings. Hit batswomen does not count as walks. A batter must make a reasonable effort to avoid being hit by a pitch or she shall not be awarded first base nor shall it count as a hit batswoman. It is the umpire's discretion to make this call and there shall be no questioning same. **GO OVER THIS RULE BEFORE THE GAME SO THERE IS NO NEED TO INQUIRE OF THE UMPIRE DURING THE GAME.**

26. **Stealing & leading**; Stealing second or home base is not allowed. Base runners may not leave the base until the ball has crossed the plate or been struck by the batter's bat. Stealing of **THIRD BASE** is allowed only and in no event, may the runner advance beyond third base. If the runner slides or runs past third, she may

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be tagged out. The “slide or avoid” rule is in effect. When there are two (2) outs, there is an option to pinch run for the pitcher or catcher who will be pitching or catching the upcoming ½ inning.

27. **Mercy Rule**; There is a maximum of five (5) runs allowed per team per inning. Additional runs are not allowed even if scored on the same play on which the sixth run scored. The final inning is exempt from this rule.
28. **Cleanup**; Each team is responsible for cleaning up it's dugout/bench area as well as the immediate vicinity at the conclusion of the game.
29. **Ending a play**; Runners may not advance when the ball has been returned to the pitcher as the play is over at that time. The pitcher must be in possession, with control, of the ball within eight (8) feet of the pitching rubber for the play to be over and the ball to be declared dead. The halfway rule is in effect. Once the ball is declared dead, runners who had not passed the halfway point between bases, shall be returned to the base from which the player came. Runners who make it to the next base & were more than halfway when the ball was declared dead, may keep the base to which they proceeded. If the umpire has not declared dead ball and a runner is advancing, the pitcher may make a play on the runner. If she chooses not to make a play and the umpire signals dead ball, the runners are subject to the halfway rule.
30. **Overthrows**; If the ball enters the dead ball area on an overthrow to first or third base, runners will be awarded one base.
31. **Double Bag First base**; At first base a “double base” will be used. In the event that a double base is not available the game will still be played with a single base.
32. **Thunder and Lightning Rule**; **If Thunder is heard or lightning spotted, the field must be cleared and all players and spectators should move to safer ground (i.e. cars, clubhouse, etc.). At this time, the game will be stopped for 30 minutes. If Thunder or Lightning is spotted during this time, the 30-minute clock will be reset. Example: If thunder has been heard the game is stopped for 30 minutes, if after waiting for 20 minutes another clap of thunder is heard or lightning is spotted, the clock will be reset and another 30 minutes will begin before you can retake the field. This will continue until it is too late to start an inning.**

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**33. Bats:** Composite bats are allowed in the Northern Valley Girl's Softball League, **PROVIDED** they have the USSSA stamp as shown below. All other composite bats are not permitted by the NVGSL.



**34. Face Masks and Heart Guards:** as composite bats are allowed in the NVGSL, it is mandatory that all defensive players in the infield wear both face masks and heart guards. While encouraged, face masks and heart guards are not required to be worn by outfielders.

**35. Penalties:**

- a. Managers or coaches who willfully break league rules are subject to suspension, and possible expulsion from the league.
- b. Use of illegal players will result in an immediate forfeiture of the game and the game will canceled on the spot. Offending managers may face disciplinary actions from the league for using illegal players.
- c. Disciplinary hearings will be held with a minimum of 5 town representatives in attendance. Suspended coaches may not coach in any games until the disciplinary hearing is held.

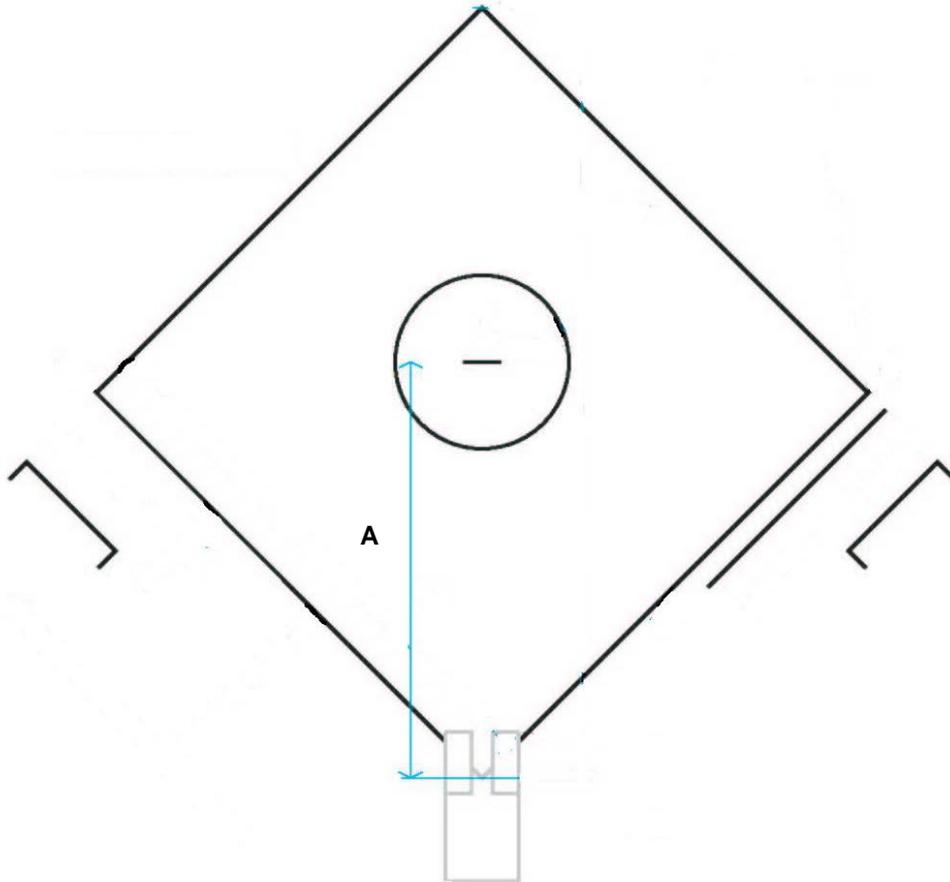
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**36.Suggestions/Comments:**

- Meet with managers and umpire before the game to express any concerns, special needs, etc and to review the ground rules.
- Attempt to give several players the opportunity to pitch in games during the season and give all players the opportunity to play all the defensive positions.
- Try to use three pitchers in a game (2-2-2) or (3-2-1) etc.
- Encourage players to run into dugout and out onto the field that substantially shortens time between innings and allows for more game time for the players.
- Have lineup prepared before the game and post the batting order in the dugout.
- Be sure players have their shirts tucked in, laces tied and hats/visors worn properly.
- If you have a large lead (i.e. > 8 runs), try to control the situation so as to promote the dignity and self esteem of the players. (have players not take “the extra base, try an inexperienced pitcher, give fielders more opportunity to play all defensive positions, etc)

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## Pitching Rubber Distance



A = Distance from pitching rubber to back (point) of home plate.

Sophomore (3 & 4 grade) 35 feet

Junior (5 & 6 grade) 40 feet

Senior (7 & 8 grade) 40 feet