



STAFFORD GIRLS SOFTBALL
ASSOCIATION

GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

ADOPTED FOR THE 2020 SEASON

(02/24/20 revision)

A. DIVISIONS

Player Divisions:

- 6U (formerly T-ball)
- 8U (formerly Minors)
- 10U/12U (formerly Juniors)
- 14U
- 16U/18U (formerly Seniors)

Note 1: (Pre-K exemption rule) Players wishing to register and play in the 6U Division shall reach the minimum age of four (4) on or before January 1st of the registration year.

B. GAME RULES

1) Defensive Players: Minimum number of Outfielders/Infielders (prior to pitch/Hit)

Total by Divisions:

- 6U- (Whole Team) 3 / 4
- 8U - Ten (10) 3 / 4
- 10U/12U - Ten (10) 3 / 4
- 18U - Ten (10) 3 / 4

*Note 4: Minimum of eight (8) players required to play in all divisions, to begin and end all games.

*Note 5: 18U and 10U/12U divisional players shall play a minimum of four (4) defensive innings per game. 8U divisional players shall play a minimum of three (3) innings per game.

EXCEPTIONS TO NOTE 5:

- 1) If a player becomes physically unable to complete the required innings due to injury or illness to the player.
- 2) The game is shortened because of darkness or weather conditions.
- 3) A disciplinary action by the manager, coach, or umpire which may result in the player not fulfilling this SGSA rule.

***When disciplinary action is initiated by the manager, the manager is to notify the umpire and the opposing team manager of such action prior to the start of the game, or as soon as such action is taken during the game.

*NOTE 6: 8U division shall be limited to six (6) infielders at standard infield positions.

2). Batting Line-Up:

*All teams will bat their full roster.

*Each inning will be ended with three (3) outs or the "Run Rule" for that division.

- *The batting roster will be made prior to the start of each game, and a copy given to the opposing coach.
- *NO CHANGE in the batting order can be made during any game.
- *If a player arrives late, she will be placed at the bottom of the batting order and opposing coach notified.
- *In the event of a player becoming injured or unable to continue play due to illness, the batting order will continue as listed except for the injured/ill player.
- *If an injured/ill player re-enters the game, they shall be placed into the batting order in her original spot at the start of the game.
- *NO OUT will be assessed to the batting team in this case for the missing player if the opposing manager/coach is notified of this change.
- * This rule applies to players who leave the game/fields prior to the completion of the game to attend other functions or family event.
- *Players remaining on the bench shall remain in the batting line up.

3). Substitution Rule

- *Open and free substitutions shall be permitted with the exception of the 10U/12U/18U division pitching rule.

4). Pitching

8U:

- *Players will be pitched to only by a member of the opposite team.
- * If the pitcher throws 4 balls before throwing 3 strikes, the coach (for the batting team) will then step in and throw 3 strikes.
- * If the player does not hit the ball then they are out.
- *The coach/pitcher shall also act as the umpire when pitching.
- *It is ONLY this person who can make the final rule of the game.
- *The coach/pitcher, on the mound, serves only to pitch the ball and to call the plays and shall not touch the ball at any time if it's in play.
- * If the coach acting as the pitcher accidentally comes in contact with said ball, the play will continue with the ball considered live.
- * At the midway point of the season, a player pitcher may be used by one or both teams.

***10U/12U:

- A pitcher's maximum number of innings per week shall be **six (6) innings** except as noted below.
- Fast pitch is to be utilized with windmill pitching encouraged.

***18U:

- A pitcher's maximum number of innings per week shall be **ten (10) innings** except as noted below.

***NOTE 8:

- If a pitcher is taken from the mound, either to the bench or to another position, she MAY NOT return to the mound until the following inning.
 - The pitching week begins on Monday and ends on the following Sunday.
 - Maximum numbers of innings are to be enforced by that division's player agent.
 - Penalty for non-compliance is forfeiture of game.
 - In the event of a team having three (3) games regularly scheduled in one week, non-travel/school pitchers may pitch an additional four (4) innings for that week only.
 - One (1) or more pitches per inning counts as a full inning pitched.
 - Managers/coaches are responsible to provide the league with their pitchers' name, numbers, and the number of innings pitched and shall report with the game results at the concession stand at the completion of the game.
- A text can be sent to the player agents with the information listed above.
- Any pitcher, who, intentionally or not, hits a batter with a pitched ball three (3) times during the course of one game, shall be removed for the remainder of the game.

5). Bunting:

6U: NOT PERMITTED

8U, 10U/12U and 18U: Sacrifice bunting and bunting for a base hit is allowed.

***Fake bunt-pull back swing is only allowed in the 18U Division.

6). Sliding:

6U: Sliding is NOT PERMITTED

8U: Sliding is encouraged

10U/12U: A runner must attempt a slide to avoid contact with the defensive player.

At the umpire's discretion, a player may be called out for not sliding and making contact with a defensive player.

18U: A runner must attempt a slide to avoid contact with the defensive player.

At the umpire's discretion, a player may be called out for not sliding and making contact with a defensive player.

7). Leading and Stealing:

6U: Leading and stealing is NOT ALLOWED.

8U: A runner may lead upon the pitchers release, and shall return to the base when pitcher/coach has possession of the ball.

Dancing or baiting of a defensive player between bases is NOT ALLOWED.

***NOTE 9: Stealing should be introduced and taught at this level of play, therefore, prior to the start of the game, the managers may agree to attempt stealing. If both managers agree, players may attempt to steal from 2nd base to 3rd base only.

***NOTE 10: If the player successfully steals 3rd base, the player is frozen until a batted ball is put in play. The runner shall not advance from a bad throw from the catcher. Catchers therefore should be encouraged to make throws without fear of runners advancing.

10U/12U:

*A runner may lead upon the pitchers release, and shall return to the base when pitcher has possession of the ball.

*Dancing or baiting of a defensive player between bases is NOT ALLOWED.

*The umpire shall issue one (1) warning per game per team, explain the rule, and call the runner out on the next rule infraction.

*Once the player has stopped their lead, their next move is considered their "committed" move and must continue to the next base, or return to the original base.

*If the runner stops their lead (pauses), then commits to the next base, it is counted as a steal regardless if the runner stops again prior to reaching the next base and returns to the "starting" base.

****Stealing:

- Shall be limited to five (5) steals per inning per team.
- If a team has reached its limit of five (5) steals per inning, and a runner attempts a sixth (6th) steal, the runner will be returned to the base at which the play began with no penalty to the runner.
*****However, if the runner attempts the sixth (6th) steal of the inning and is tagged out in the process, the runner shall be called out with no safe return.
- Continuation rule is allowed. However, this will count as one of the five steals permitted per inning.
- This includes a "passed" ball four (4) or "wild" pitched ball four (4).
- Regardless of the play, the walked batter is frozen at first base, until the next delivered pitch.
- All other runners may attempt to advance with the play, in accordance with the rules, at their own risk.

18U: Open stealing is permitted upon the pitchers release.

8). THE CATCHERS RULE (10U/12U only)

a). During a steal attempt, if the catcher makes a bad throw to any base, the runner at that base is frozen to that base until the next pitch is delivered.

The runner can't advance from the over throw.

b). During pick off plays from the catcher to any base, the runner cannot advance on an over throw from the catcher.

If the catcher makes a good throw and the ball is fielded by the defender, the runner may attempt to advance to the next base at the runners own risk.

If the runner proceeds to the next base safely, this will count as a steal against the offensive team for that inning.

If the offensive team has used their allotted steals for that inning, and the runner makes it safely to the next base, the runner will be returned to the original base at which the play began.

During this play, if the defensive team tags the runner out prior to reaching the base safely, the runner shall be called out.

c). When a catcher misses a pitch, it is considered a passed ball or a wild pitch.

If the runner advances, it will be counted as a steal for that inning.

9) **Dropped 3rd Strike:** The dropped 3rd strike rule applies to the 12U and 18U Divisions only.

10). Complete Game Rules (DIVISION: Maximum Innings: Minimum Innings)

- 6U 3/2
- 8U 4/3
- 10U & 12U 6/4
- 18U 7/5

****NOTE 11

- 10U/12U games will try to begin at 5:30pm and will have a mandatory start time of 5:45pm.
- Last inning will be called between 6:45pm and 7pm with “drop dead” finish time being 7:15pm.
- 18U games will try to begin at 7:15pm and will have a mandatory start time of 7:30pm.
- Last inning will be called 1.5 hours after the start time with “drop dead” finish time being 2 hours from start time.
- If a started game is suspended by the umpire due to inclement weather or darkness before the minimum number of innings is completed, the game will freeze, and play will resume at the point of delay and continue until the minimum innings required is completed.
- If last inning is called after the minimum number of innings is completed, each time will bat until 3 outs are called or the entire line up bats one time, whichever occurs first.

****NOTE 12:

- Girls not present at the original game, shall be added to the bottom of the lineup when play resumes and enter the game.

****NOTE 13:

- The score book shall be crossed checked at the end of each inning.
- The score book shall be signed as an official record by both managers or assistant coaches and game umpire.

****NOTE 14:

- If the game results in a tie after the maximum number of innings is played/completed:
 - *6U: All games end in a tie. (NO WINNERS OR NO LOSERS)
 - *8U: Each team shall be awarded a ½ win.
 - *10U/12U: The games will continue for one (1) additional inning with the “International tie breaker” rule in effect until a winner is determined, the time limit is reached (2 hours) or the game is called due to darkness. If no winner is determined, each team shall be awarded a ½ win.
 - *18U: The games will continue for one (1) additional inning with the “International tie breaker” rule in effect until a winner is determined, the time limit is reached (2 hours) or the game is called due to darkness. If no winner is determined, each team shall be awarded a ½ win.

****NOTE 15:

- The International Tie Breaker Rule is defined as follows:
 - Each new $\frac{1}{2}$ inning will start with a runner, the last batted out of the previous inning on second base with no outs.
 - The game will resume as normal with all applicable games rules applied.

****NOTE 16:

- All rescheduling of incomplete games will be done by the SGSA Field Coordinator after consulting with both coaches for that division within two (2) weeks of the originally scheduled game.
- There will be only one postponement of the make-up game.

****NOTE 17:

- Games can only be rescheduled for inclement weather conditions, and for any unforeseen school functions with a 24 hour notice to the player agent.

11).Maximum Runs Per Inning (Divisions: All innings except last: Last)

- 6U Open/Open
- 8U $\frac{4}{8}$ Run Limit
- 10U/12U 4/ Open
- 18U 5/ Open

12). Mercy Rules

- 10U/12U
 - If a team trails by twelve (12) or more runs after batting in the fourth inning.
- 18U
 - If a team trails by fifteen (15) or more runs after batting in the fifth inning.

13).Time Limits

- 6U
 - 60 minutes (1 hour)
- 8U
 - 90 minutes (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours)
- 10U/12U
 - 120 minutes (2 hours)
- 18U
 - 120 minutes (2 hours)

14). Pitching Rubber Measurements (Division: Distance)

- 6U: 35 Feet
- 8U: 35 Feet
- 10U: 35 Feet
- 12U: 40 Feet
- 18U: 43 Feet

15). Regulation Softball Size (Division: Softball Size)

- 6U: 11"Ball
- 8U: 11"Ball
- 10U: 11"Ball
- 12U: 12" Ball
- 18U: 12" Ball

17). Infield Fly Rule

- The infield fly rule as defined in the USA Rule book shall apply to the 18U division only.

C. Existing Teams *****Valid Through 2020**

- An existing team in any division is defined as a team from the previous season, regardless of new sponsor or new head coach, has one (1) or more players from the previous year's roster remaining on the new season's roster.

D. Choosing of Coaches

1).Head Coaches

- Each season, head coaches shall be selected and approved by the Executive Board.
- The March meeting shall be mandatory for all head coaches.
 - All coaches must show proof of taking the Babe Ruth Coaches Certification course or proof of taking the Rutgers Safety Certification course before the season begins.

2). Assistant Coaches

- Each season, all assistant coaches shall be selected and approved by the Executive Board.
- All assistant coaches must be chosen after the draft from new or existing coaching applications.

3). Volunteers

- All volunteers must show proof of taking the Babe Ruth Coaches Certification course or proof of taking the Rutgers Safety Certification course before the season begins.

4) Each team may have one (1) manager and three (3) assistant coaches.

E. Drafting Procedures

1). If more than one Expansion team is in the draft, order of the draft for the new teams only will be picked from a hat.

2). All girls that attend evaluation will be drafted first. Upon completion of the draft, the remaining girls' names will be drawn from a hat continuing in order of the draft.

3.) Siblings (with guardian's permission) have the choice to play on the guardian or sibling's team.

4). Late sign ups shall be chosen from a hat in order of draft by those coaches needing additional players.

*Late sign ups shall be allowed a date to be determined by the Executive Board.

5). Children of all SGSA recognized coaches have the option to play on guardian/siblings team.

Any extended family relation or hardship case must be reviewed by the Executive Board on a case by case basis.

6). Any player not advancing as their age group requires to the next division must be evaluated and approved by the Executive Board.

7). New coaches of existing teams draft position is based on the previous year's standings.

- Coach's daughter(s) will not be considered a draft pick.
- The assistant coach's daughter would be considered the first draft pick.

F. General Provision Rules

1). Inclement weather which causes unplayable field conditions as determined by the umpire, or official cancellation by the SGSA, are the only basis for game cancellation and rescheduling.

2). A team unable to field the minimum number of players within fifteen (15) minutes of the scheduled start time shall receive a forfeit for that game.

Should both teams be unable to field the minimum number of players, each team will receive a ½ loss.

3). Alcoholic beverages are strictly prohibited on Township playing fields and associated areas during all practices and games, or during any official activity sponsored by the SGSA.

- 4). Smoking is strictly prohibited on Township playing fields and associated areas during all practices and games, or during any official activity sponsored by the SGSA.
- 5). Protest is allowed in the 10U/12U and 18U.
 - Protests must be filed on the field as per applicable USA rules.
 - Protest shall be filed in writing to the Executive Board for resolution within one (1) week of the game being protested.
- 6). Any person calling balls and strikes in any given game, whether he or she be paid or volunteer, will be considered the "Official Umpire" of said game, and is granted full authority as Umpire, and is required to follow the SGSA rules.
- 7). In addition to the foregoing, all other rules and regulations contained in the written agreement with the Township of Stafford shall be adhered to.

G. Safety Rules

Refer to current High School Softball rules.

These are supplemented as follows:

- 1) Wearing of approved regulation batting helmets is MANDATORY in all divisions to protect against possible head injuries.
 - Helmets shall be worn by the batter, base runners, on-deck batters, and any players at the first and third base lines.
 - This rule includes any player retrieving equipment/bats in the infield, home plate area, and dug out areas not protected by the fence.
 - This includes batting cages.
- 2) Any batter who deliberately throws a bat or any other item or equipment may be ejected from the game at the discretion of the Umpire.
- 3) If the Umpire judges a player to have subjected another player, umpire, coach, or anyone on or off the field, to the risk of injury by unintentionally throwing a bat, the umpire shall notify a warning to the coaches of both teams.
 - Upon a second occurrence, the player throwing the bat shall be declared out.
- 4) In order to participate, a player must wear the full team uniform for all games.
 - The uniform consists of any articles of clothing supplied by the SGSA.
 - Sliders are not provided by the SGSA and are the responsibility of the player/parent to obtain.
- 5) Players, managers, coaches and volunteers authorized by the manager are the only people allowed in the dugout.
 - All managers, coaches, volunteers in the dugout or on the field of play shall have the mandatory coach's certification course as stated above in Article C.

- 6) The total number of non-players allowed in the dugout including the manager, assistant's coaches and volunteers is limited to a maximum of four (4).
- 7) Players are to remain in the vicinity of the dugout during the course of the game.
 - Non-coaches may help out on the field during a game only if they have been certified as stated above in Article C.
- 8) All coaches from both teams are responsible to make sure that the team's dugouts are clean from debris/trash before leaving the playing area.
- 9) All coaches from both teams are responsible to return all field equipment to the equipment shed on completion of use.
- 10) All managers and coaches are to report any broken or missing field equipment to the SGSA equipment manager and are responsible for noting it on the field equipment discrepancy log.
 - The field equipment log will be kept in the concession stand.
- 11) Home teams are responsible for lining the fields prior to the start of the games.
 - Visiting managers and coaches should assist in their effort.
- 12) All-purpose shoes may be worn by players in the **6U Division ONLY**. In the **8U**, 10U, 12U and 18U divisions, rubber cleats are encouraged.
 - METAL CLEATS ARE PROHIBITED IN ALL DIVISIONS.
- 13) At the discretion of the umpire, a runner may be declared out if she does not attempt to avoid a fielder who has the ball and is attempting to make a defensive play, or if she runs maliciously into any defensive player.
- 14) Only one (1) player at a time is allowed in the batters on deck circle.
- 15) Player's jewelry is limited to post earrings only.
- 16) The catcher's shall wear a head protector, a protective mask with throat protector, body protector and baseball/softball shin guards.
 - Any player warming up a pitcher at any location shall wear a mask and throat protector.
 - Only players, coaches, or authorized volunteers will be allowed to warm up the pitchers.
- 17) Spectators are prohibited from sitting or standing behind the backstop area.
 - The umpire shall have the authority to remove spectators who do not comply with this rule after being requested to move.
- 18) The pitcher in the 8U division is required to wear a heart guard and facemask. The league will provide both to each team's coach.
 - This is now MANDATORY.
- 19) All players in every division will be required to wear a facemask. Additionally, heart guards are strongly encouraged for all infielders for the 12u+ divisions.

H. Approved Bats

Only official fast pitch softball bats may be used in the league.

***All bats will be laid out prior to start of each game for check by each team**

Players may use their personal bats with the following exceptions:

- 1) Any bat that bears the ASA and USSSA stamp is acceptable
 - Any injury as a result of use of an illegal bat, liability will fall to the (Player/Parent/Guardian) provider of the illegal bat.
- 2) All bats are subject to Executive Board approval.

I. Sportsmanship Rules

******All participants, managers, assistant coaches, volunteers, umpires, parents, guardians, relatives, guests, and any spectators SHALL abide by the Stafford Township Code of Conduct.***

The following rules have been established to instill good sportsmanship:

- 1). Ridicule, disparaging remarks or acts by anyone is prohibited
- 2). Decisions of the Umpires are to be considered FINAL.
- 3). Use of profanity by anyone is strictly prohibited.
- 4). Violations of the above sportsmanship rules shall receive one (1) warning from the Umpire. After a second infraction, the Umpire has the authority to eject the violator from the field and surrounding areas.
- 5). All infractions are subject to review and action taken by the SGSA Executive Board.

J . Play Offs

- 1) The play-off format will be established by the SGSA Executive Board on an annual basis.
- 2) For seeding purposes, the first place team will be determined by the team with the highest winning percentage.
 - In case of a tie, the first tie breaker is head to head and the second tie breaker is a coin flip.
- 3) Pitching rules and inning limits apply.

K. 6U Rules

******6U is considered in nature and as such, a teaching and learning atmosphere and should prevail. Coaches should stress basic skills and team concepts so players can improve their game. It is more important to show the girls how to win and lose graciously by mixing in plenty of understanding and fun, than to teach them an obsession to win at any cost.**

The 6U Division will follow the current SGSA rules with the following exceptions:

- 1). Only one (1) base shall be granted, per runner on any one (1) overthrow that goes into dead ball territory.
 - All other misplaced balls will be considered live and bases must be earned.
- 2). Each inning is complete when all players have batted once.
- 3). The team player/pitcher will stand in the vicinity of the pitcher's mound.
- 4). Play is ended when the ball is in the pitcher's circle.
 - The player/pitcher must have made an attempt at possession of the ball within the pitching circle.
- 5). Two (2) defensive coaches are allowed on the field to guide their players on all games through the first three (3) weeks from opening day.
- 6). Bunting, leading and stealing are NOT permitted.
- 7). If the field conditions are unplayable, it is the responsibility of the Field Safety Coordinator to cancel the game and contact the coaches. It is then the responsibility of the coaches to contact their players.
 - The decision to play make-up games for cancellation, suspension, or rain must be agreed upon by both coaches, and the player agent notified.
- 8). No official score book or standings will be kept by any 6U team.
- 9). Aggressive base running is not permitted (i.e. the base runner is waived "home" on an outfield hit where the outfielder attempts to throw out the "hitting" base runner going to first base).
 - The intent of this rule is to:
 - a). Prevent runaway scores.
 - b). Encourage skills other than just running and base running
 - c). No out will be declared when a player intentionally rolls the ball to any base to complete an out.
 - d). If a batter makes an out, she must leave the base.
For every three (3) outs, the bases must be cleared.

L. Miscellaneous

- 1) Managers in all divisions are responsible for ALL issued SGSA equipment during each season.
 - Managers and coaches shall inspect ALL equipment (SGSA issued or player owned) after each practice, game or sponsored SGSA Softball event to ensure the equipment is in good working order.
 - Player safety is a PRIORITY and shall be placed in front of any other objective.
- 2) Any broken equipment shall be immediately reported to the SGSA equipment manager for repair or replacement.
- 3) At the beginning and end of each season, a date will be announced for equipment issue and equipment return.
 - Please ensure all equipment is cleaned and accounted for prior to turn in.
 - All equipment will be issued and returned from the equipment shed located between field 2 and field 3.
 - DO NOT LEAVE YOUR EQUIPMENT AT THE CONCESSION STAND OR OUTSIDE THE EQUIPMENT SHED!
 - This is NOT considered proper equipment return!
- 4) When a team has outstanding equipment that is NOT returned, the SGSA Executive Board may disqualify said coach from further participation in the league.
- 5) No jewelry is to be worn by players in all divisions.
- 6) Recreational team jerseys must be worn by all players for all games.
 - All players must change out of their travel or school team jerseys when playing a rec game