

**2024 BIRMINGHAM GIRLS SOFTBALL RULES**  
**Major Divisions 1 & 2**

Revised 03.20.24

The Birmingham Girls Softball Division operates under the 2024 NFHS Rules of Softball, except as superseded or modified by the local rules listed below.

**1) Field and Equipment**

a) THE FIELD

- i) Bases shall be 50 feet apart.
- ii) The rear tip of home plate and the front edge of the pitcher's plate shall be 36 feet apart.
- iii) The pitcher's plate shall be set inside a 14-foot diameter circle.
- iv) The home team shall be responsible for setting the bases, pitching plate and chalking the field prior to the game (there is no on-deck circle).
- v) The coaches shall designate imaginary out of bounds lines before the game. In the event of an overthrow past the imaginary lines, the ball shall be considered dead and all runners shall be awarded the base they were going to (not necessarily the forward base) plus one more.
- vi) The home team coach shall also be responsible for removing and storing the bases at the end of the game.
- vii) The home team shall sit on the third base side and the visiting team shall sit on the first base side of the field.

b) SOFTBALLS

- i) The Minor Division and Major Division 2 shall use a 10-inch "soft compression" ball.

c) BATTING HELMETS

- i) A batting helmet is mandatory (a face mask is recommended) for each batter, on-deck batter, runners and retired runners.
- ii) The batting helmet shall protect both the top of the head and the base of the skull and have extended earflaps which cover both ears and temples.

d) FIELDER'S EQUIPMENT

- i) A fielding mask is recommended for all players.

e) CLEATS

- i) Metal cleats shall be prohibited from being worn.

## f) EQUIPMENT

- i) All equipment shall be kept off the field of play, stored neatly behind the screen and out of pathways to avoid injury to the players during the game.

## 2) Umpires

- a) No umpires shall be used. Coaches are expected to make judgment calls in the best interests of developing the players.
- b) The batting team coach shall act as “umpire” and is encouraged to consult with the defensive team coach as the situation may warrant.
- c) Coaches are encouraged to err on the side of the defensive player.

## 3) Players, Substitutes and Coaches

### a) PLAYERS, POSITIONS

- i) Each of the two teams must start with at least five players. A team shall forfeit the game if it fails to have five players in uniform and ready to play within ten minutes of the scheduled game time.
- ii) The Minor Division and Major Division 2 teams shall field a maximum of ten players, including five outfielders.
- iii) No more than five players, including the pitcher, may be positioned in the infield. A player catcher is not permitted in the Minor Division and Major Division 2. No player, except the pitcher, shall be positioned closer than ten feet inside the base path. The second baseman and shortstop are to be within two feet of the base path until after the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand.
- iv) On most fields, the outfield is clearly distinguished as the grass past the infield dirt, however, both managers and the umpire should agree upon the areas to be classified as infield and outfield prior to the start of the game. At the time of the pitch, all outfielders shall be positioned in fair ground, on the outfield grass and in a semi-circle to the infield until the ball crosses the plate. Under no circumstances may an outfielder be positioned closer to a base than the nearest infielder.

### b) SUBSTITUTING

- i) Teams shall bat the entire roster of players in good standing who are present and in uniform. In the event a player in full uniform arrives after the start of the game, that player shall be automatically placed at the end of the batting order. The coach shall notify the opposing coach of the addition to the batting order.
- ii) There are no limits to substitutions for all fielding positions, assuming the substitutions comply with Rules 1(b)(iii), (iv), (v) and (vi) below. Coaches are encouraged to use the regular

season games as an opportunity to develop players and expose them to as many positions as possible.

- iii) All players in good standing and in uniform shall play at least fifty percent of the defensive innings, assuming the player arrives on time. Whenever possible, a player should not sit out two innings in a row unless injured.
- iv) Each player shall play at least one inning in the infield and one inning in the outfield.
- v) A player shall not be removed from the field or moved to a different position during the middle of an inning for making an error (i.e., missing the ball). This rule does not apply if the coach customarily rotates positions during an inning (i.e., each time an out is recorded).
- vi) A substitute runner may be used in the event of an injury to a batter/base runner, which occurred while the player was batting or running the bases. The substitute shall be the last player in the batting order to have made an out. There are no "courtesy" runners as a player with an injury which prevents her from running, shall be removed from the game.

#### c) COACHING

- i) All coaches must pass a background check and complete a concussion training course prior to coaching.
- ii) A maximum of three defensive coaches shall be permitted on the field at any one time.
- iii) Only adult coaches may occupy the coach's box.
- iv) Coaches are responsible for communicating the goals of good sportsmanship to players, parents, grandparents and all other spectators. Uncivilized, unruly, uncontrollable, abusive or any other behavior unbecoming to the sport will not be tolerated.

### 4) Starting and Ending Game

#### a) STARTING A GAME

- i) All games shall start promptly at 6:30 PM and end no later than 8:00 PM. There shall be no extra innings, regardless of game score.
- ii) The home team shall take the field and warm-up between 6:00 PM and 6:15 PM and the visiting team between 6:15 PM and 6:30 PM.
- iii) The home team shall provide two new game balls.
- iv) Games may be postponed or rescheduled due to inclement weather or unplayable field conditions. Unless otherwise directed by the League President, the umpires shall decide whether the grounds and other conditions are suitable for starting the game.
- v) The League President shall be responsible for rescheduling postponed games. After determining field availability, the League President shall notify the managers as to the date

and time for the make-up game. It may not be possible to reschedule all postponed games. Postponed games which are not rescheduled shall be considered a tie game.

b) ENDING A GAME

- i) No new inning may begin more than 90 minutes after the actual start time.
- ii) At the conclusion of the game, teams shall line up for handshakes, “high-fives” or any other congratulatory expression.

**5) Pitching**

a) PITCHING REGULATIONS

- i) Each team shall designate a coach pitcher (and catcher). There shall be no strike outs, walks, fouling out or first base awarded for hit-by-pitch.
- ii) The ball is live and in play when the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand.
- iii) The defensive player pitcher shall be positioned within the pitching circle, behind and to the side of the coach pitcher. In the event the coach pitcher interferes with the player pitcher (or is hit by the ball), a “no pitch” shall be declared and the batter shall return to continue her at bat.
- iv) Play shall stop once the ball is in control of any infield player with both feet inside the base path. Runners in the base paths who have not yet made it at least one-half way to their forward base shall return to the preceding base.

**6) Batting**

a) BATTING REGULATIONS

- i) For the first half of the season, after four strikes, a batting tee must be used. A strike shall be defined as swinging as missing. For the second half of the season, if the player is known to hit the ball on a regular basis, an additional two pitches may be awarded before a tee is used.
- ii) Bunting shall not be permitted.

**7) Batter-Runner and Runner**

a) BATTER-RUNNER

- i) A batter-runner shall be warned when the batter-runner throws her bat.
- ii) The infield fly rule shall not apply.

b) RUNNER

- i) There is no stealing in the Minor Division or Major Division 2.

- ii) Base runners may not leave the base they are on until the pitched ball has been hit. In the event a runner leaves the base early, they shall either be required to return to the original base or, if the base is occupied, a no pitch shall be declared and the batter and all runners shall return to their original position.
- iii) A runner may advance on a fair or foul fly out if caught with less than two outs, provided the runner tags the base after the catch.
- iv) If a base runner interferes with any fielder's effort to catch a ball, the runner shall be out.

## **8) Scoring**

### **a) SCORING LIMIT**

- i) Scores shall be kept but no standings shall be kept.
- ii) A "Batting Mercy Rule" shall be in effect for all innings, regardless of score. In the event the defensive team is unable to record three outs, the offensive team is limited to the number of batters the larger of the two teams has for that game per inning, unless otherwise decided by the coaches from both teams prior to the start of the game.

## **9) Rule Changes**

- a) The League President reserves the right to make changes to these rules and/or adopt new rules throughout the season.

## **10) Ejection of Players, Managers, Coaches and Spectators**

- a) The League President has the power and authority to eject players, managers, coaches and spectators from both the game and the field (as defined by our field permit).
- b) When a player, manager, coach or spectator is ejected from a game, they shall leave the field immediately and take no further part in the game. They may not sit in the stands or otherwise be present at the game site for the remainder of that game. Any player, manager, coach or spectator ejected from a game is automatically suspended for his or her team's next played game and may not be in attendance at the game and the field.
- c) Any player, manager, coach or spectator ejected from a game must meet with the League President, who may elect to take further disciplinary action, including expulsion.
- d) Additionally, any player, manager, coach or spectator who is not ejected from the game but whose poor conduct is reported to the League President, may face the same disciplinary action as stated above.
- e) Managers are responsible for controlling the behavior of the team's parents. In the event that a spectator is ejected, they will be ordered to leave the field immediately. If they refuse to go and continue to cause a problem, the umpire will halt the game and ask the manager of the team to handle the problem. If that does not work, the umpire will find a board member to enforce his or her ruling.