



House League Softball Rules

Sprites K-1

Rev 2/2/2026

Philosophy: *The Northbrook Girls Softball Association is committed to providing a safe, enjoyable and instructional, yet competitive, softball experience for all of its House League players and coaches.*

1. Games and Innings:

1.1 Game Length: Games will be four innings or one hour and fifteen minutes, whichever comes first. No new inning may start after the official time limit.

1.2 Start Times: Official start of game shall be determined by first pitch. If an inning begins prior to the time limit, the game will not end until the inning is completed.

1.3 Extra Innings: If time has expired at the conclusion of six innings with the score tied, the game will be recorded as a tie.

1.4 Inning End: An inning will end after three outs, or four runs being scored, whichever comes first.

1.5 Official Games: Time limits notwithstanding, the following constitutes an "official game" when weather prohibits further play: 1 and one half (1 1/2) innings shall constitute an official game, unless the home team is losing, in which case two (2) innings constitutes an official game. If any additional innings are not completed, the score reverts to the score at the end of the last completed inning.

1.6 Resumed Games: Where a game has not been completed and not considered "official", teams may resume the game (at a later date) at the point where the game was called, keeping in mind time elapsed, runners on base, any runs scored, etc.

1.7 Cleats: No metal cleats are allowed.

1.8 Uniforms: Players should be in uniform. Players should be discouraged from wearing jewelry. Coaches are responsible for ensuring players wear their complete uniform. No shorts or skirt will be allowed in any game under any circumstances. Any player wearing shorts or skirt will not be allowed to play in the game until she changes into her softball pants. (Pants are required for safety during sliding).

1.9 Safety Equipment: Catchers and anyone warming up a pitcher must wear a helmet. Batters, base runners and girls in the on deck circle must wear a batting helmet and only the batter and on deck hitter are allowed to swing bats. All fielders must wear a facemask.

1.10 Catcher Backups: A defensive team coach may back up the catcher. (This is to speed up the games by having someone throw pitches not caught by the catcher back to the pitcher).

1.11 Bats: All bats used at games and practices must be ASA approved.

1.12 Balls: 10" soft yellow ball is used

1.13 Lightning: The NGSA and the Northbrook Park District uses the *Thor Guard Lightning prediction* and detection system. At parks where there is a lightning detector - one long Siren will sound when lightning is detected within 5 miles of a lightning detector. If you hear this siren, see lightning, or hear thunder, seek shelter immediately. Play may resume after 30 minutes have passed without lightning. You must wait 30 minutes even if the siren sounds two short blasts indicating all clear sooner than 30 minutes. Be vigilant in monitoring and reporting weather conditions. Sirens are located at Techny Prairie, Village Green, Meadowhill, Wood Oaks, and West Park. This rule applies to all NGSA games and practices.

1.14 Slaughter Rule: There is no slaughter rule.

2. Player Participation:

2.1 Playing Time: NGSA House League programs are fully inclusive and fully participatory. Every team member receives playing time in each game. The policy of the house league is that players should have, and coaches should strive for, equal participation by all players.

2.2 Position Involvement: Each player must be scheduled to play at least two innings in the infield during every game. Girls are encouraged to play all positions. Pitcher and Short-Center are considered to be infield positions and Catcher is to be considered neither an infield nor an outfield position.

2.3 Position Limits: No player may play all 4 innings in the infield and/or catcher unless a team is fielding 8 or fewer players. A player may not play the same position more than two innings in any game.

2.4 Benching: All players play the field in every inning. No players will be benched.

2.5 Batting Order: The batting order will be continuous, and all players present will be included in the batting order. A player will bat when it is her turn to bat regardless any field assignments.

2.6 Depleted Rosters: A team may play with 5 or more players. If a team can only field 4 players or fewer at the start of the game, it will be recorded as a forfeit regardless of whether the game is played. Substitutes not on the team roster must be within the age range for the league and approved by the league commissioner.

2.7 Advance Notice: If a team notifies NGSA 7 days or more in advance of a game that they will not be able to field the minimum required number of players, then NGSA and the Head Coaches of the two teams shall make a good faith attempt to reschedule the game at a date, time, and place agreeable to all parties. If an agreeable rescheduling cannot be worked out prior to the originally scheduled game day, then the game will be recorded as a forfeit. If a team notifies NGSA less than 7 days prior to a scheduled game or does not provide notice, the game will be recorded as a forfeit.

2.8 Forfeit Recording: Forfeits will be recorded as a 9-0 score, with forfeiting team losing.

3. Defensive Alignment

3.1 Defensive Positions: There will be ten defensive positions, as follows: First Base, Second Base, Third Base, Shortstop, Short Center, Left Field, Right Field, Center Field, Pitcher and Catcher. If a team has 11 players present, they must all

play, so a 4th outfielder will be used. The pitcher is a fielder only (coach pitches). The catcher plays by the backstop and must wear a batting helmet (no other catching equipment provided).

3.2 Infield Positioning: Infielders may not be positioned more than three feet in front of the baseline. An infielder may play behind the baseline, but no further than 10 feet. This must be brought to the coach's attention before the next pitch is thrown to correct the defensive positioning.

3.3 Baseline Positioning: Defensive players may not stand on the base or in the baseline unless attempting to force a runner out, tag a runner, or field a ball in play.

3.4 Outfield Positioning: Outfielders may play on the dirt, but be at least 10 feet behind the infielders.

3.5 Pitching Distance: Coaches must pitch within the circle, which is around a 30' mound distance.

3.6 Base Lengths: Base lengths are forty five (45) feet.

3.7 Substitutions: Once defensive players have been positioned for an inning, they may not be substituted or repositioned except for an emergency or injury.

4. Pitching

4.1 Balls and Strikes: Balls and strikes will be called by the offensive team's coach from behind home plate. If three strikes are thrown by the offensive team's coach to a single batter, the batter will hit off a tee until that batter is able to hit the ball into play. (During this time, the player-pitcher shall either have both feet in the circle or have one foot in or on the circle to the right or left of the coach-pitcher.) THERE WILL BE NO BASES ON BALLS OR STRIKEOUTS. When the adult throws pitches, the objective will be to allow the batter to hit the ball.

5. Batting and Base Running

5.1 Bunting: There will be no bunting or intentional half-swinging allowed. A batter violating this rule will be called out.

5.1.1 Chopped Ball: A player may, however, chop the ball into the ground with a full swing.

5.2 Thrown Bat: A batter who throws a bat unintentionally will be given a warning. If necessary, the coach/umpire will instruct the player or her coach on the proper technique. A player who throws a bat for the second time in a game after receiving a warning will be called out.

5.3 Dead Ball Arc: A batted ball from the tee that travels less than 3 feet from the plate may be declared a foul ball by the home plate coach ONLY if it is done so immediately and loudly.

5.4 Infield Fly Rule: The infield fly rule does not apply.

5.5 Tagging Up: Runners may advance to any base, including home plate, by tagging up after a fly ball is caught, regardless of whether the catch is made in fair or foul territory. The advance is at the runner's risk.

5.6 Foul Flies and Foul Tips: A batter who hits a foul fly which is caught by any fielder is out. A batter who hits a foul tip which is caught by the catcher is out if there were two strikes on her when the foul tip was hit. A caught foul tip with fewer than two strikes on the batter is considered to be a strike.

5.6.1 Foul Tip: A "foul tip" is a foul ball which does not exceed the height of the batter.

5.6.2 Foul Fly: A "foul fly" is a fly ball higher than the batter's height, in foul territory.

5.7 Strikes: There are no strikeouts. See rule 4.1.

5.7.1 Pitch hits plate: A ball not swung at that hits home plate shall not be called a strike.

5.7.2 Dropped Third Strike: A runner may not advance to first base on a dropped third strike.

5.8 Hit By Pitch: If a coach pitch hits a batter, this is just a dead ball.

5.9 The Strike Zone: The strike zone is the space over any part of home plate, when a batter assumes a natural batting stance adjacent to home plate. The strike zone shall extend from the batter's chin to the mid calf, and one inch inside and outside the plate when the batter is in a normal batting stance.

5.10 Sliding: Sliding is at the discretion of the base runner. However, base runners should be encouraged to slide into bases on close plays to avoid collision, base runner interference and possible injury.

5.11 Lead Offs: There are no lead offs and a runner may not leave the base until the pitched ball passes home plate. If the runner leaves a base early, the coach/umpire shall immediately stop play, the ball is dead (regardless of whether it is hit into play) and the runner shall receive a warning.

5.12 Stealing: There is no stealing and runners may not advance on a passed ball.

5.13 Overthrows: There is no advancing on any overthrow.

5.14 Running Through 1st Base: A runner running through 1st base may not be tagged out unless she shows intent to advance towards second base. Simply turning left instead of right does not show intent to advance. The red/orange "Runner's Base" should be utilized when running through the base for safety purposes.

5.15 Dead Ball: On batted balls in play, if a ball is hit outside the infield as designated by the base lines, runners may continue to advance until the ball has arrived back in the infield (regardless of if the throw has been caught). If they are less than halfway, they must go back to the previous base.

5.16 Fielders Interference: Fielders may not block the path of the base runner or the base a runner is trying to reach without the ball. The base runner will automatically be awarded the appropriate base when a fielder blocks the path of a runner or be called safe at a base that was obstructed when a fielder does not have control of the ball. Interference will not be called on the fielder when making a play on the ball or runner.

5.17 Runners Interference: Base runners may not intentionally collide or intentionally attempt to dislodge the ball from the fielder. A base runner intentionally doing either of these will be called out and ejected from the game. A runner has the right to slide into a base in an attempt to avoid a tag and, if in doing so, the ball becomes dislodged, said runner is not in violation of this rule.

5.18 Baserunner Touching Ball: If a batted ball hits the batter or a base runner in fair territory before it is touched by a defensive player or before it passes an infielder, that batter or base runner will be called out and the play resulting in a dead ball. The pitcher is not considered an infielder in this case and the ball may pass the pitcher with the batter or base runner still being called out. Once the ball is touched by a defensive player or passes an infielder (excluding the pitcher), the batter or base runner will not be called out if they come in contact with the ball and it will remain a live ball.

5.19 Backstop: A batted ball that hits the backstop screen will become a dead ball. If it is caught by a fielder before it hits the ground it is considered a foul strike and the batter will not be called out.

5.20 On Deck Placement: On deck hitters must not be placed in front of the entrance to any dugout, must wear a batting helmet and must stay in the on deck area in front of their own dugout until it is her turn to bat and the current play is over. Interference

will be called on the on deck hitter if she impedes with a live ball or a fielder attempting to make a play.

6. General

6.1 Behavior and Conduct: Coaches are responsible for the behavior of all players, assistant coaches and parents/family/spectators of their players. The Association's Code of Conduct shall be in effect at all times, the head coaches (as there is no umpire) of both teams shall enforce the code in cooperation.

6.2 Coaches Placement

6.2.1 Offensive Coach Placement: A first base and third base coach. A coach pitching as described in Rule 4.1. A coach to back up the catcher and get the ball back to the coach-pitcher. NOTE: That coach is responsible for A) loudly calling foul or dead balls by the hitter and B) quickly removing the tee from home plate immediately after a ball is hit off the tee.

6.2.2 Defensive Coach Placement: Up to two coaches positioned behind the infielders for player positioning and guidance.

6.3 Fields: All softball fields are designated as no smoking areas prior to and during games. Alcoholic beverages are also prohibited from all softball fields.

6.4 Game Scores and Summaries: Each team will keep score and submit a report as directed to the NGSA House Director.

6.5 Rescheduled Games: In the event a game is rained out or cancelled due to inclement weather or other circumstances, the game will be made up, on the next available date and field, as long as a date, time, and field can be arranged.

6.6 Blood: A player or coach who is bleeding or who has fresh blood on their uniform or clothing shall be prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment can be administered.

6.7 Suspended Play: The head coaches may suspend play for up to 30 minutes or terminate play when, in the coach's combined opinion, atmospheric conditions, temperature, or the amount of light is not appropriate for playing the game.

6.8 Players on the Field: Besides playing a defensive position, batting, base running or base coaching, players are to remain in the dugout. Only one player is allowed to be on deck.

6.9 Readyng Players: All teams should have defensive field assignments and be ready to take the field immediately following the 3rd out.

6.10 Negativity: Derogatory cheers with negative comments towards the other team or done loudly to interfere with the concentration of the opponent are not allowed.

6.11 Authorized Personnel: Other than the NGSA board approved coaches, no parent, sibling, or any family member or spectator shall be allowed in the dugout, on the field of play. Only approved coaches and players are allowed in the dugout or on the field during a game. If a team is short-handed with coaches, a parent will be allowed to help in the dugout, back up the catcher or coach a base but must be approved by an NGSA board member.

6.12 Coaches Interference: If a coach for the hitting team intentionally interferes with a live ball, batter/base runner or fielder, the batter or base runner shall be called out. If a coach for the defensive team interferes with a live ball, fielder, or batter/base runner, the batter or base runner shall be called safe.

6.13 Rule Clarification: In the instance of a rules question, the teams' head coaches will work cooperatively to come to a decision (no umpires in Sprites).

6.14 Postseason: There is no postseason.

SPRITES PRE-GAME CHECKLIST

This short checklist is intended to get both coaches on the same page prior to every game. These items tend to cause the most confusion among coaches – especially at the beginning of the season and it is recommended that they are discussed in the pre-game coaches meeting.

- ☐ No new innings after 1 Hour and 15 Minutes of play
- ☐ 3 Strikes results in hitting off the tee.
- ☐ A batted ball from the tee that travels less than 3 feet from the plate may be declared a foul ball by the home plate coach ONLY if it is done so immediately and loudly.
- ☐ Inning is ended by 4 runs scored OR 3 outs made by the defense. The entire batting order is NOT completed every inning and will resume where left off in the next inning at bat.
- ☐ Runners may continue to advance until the ball has arrived back in the infield (regardless of if the throw has been caught). If they are less than halfway, they must go back to the previous base.
- ☐ No advancing on ANY overthrows

LIGHTNING WARNING SYSTEMS

The Northbrook Park District has recently upgraded the lightning warning systems within the District. There are two main units. One (Strike Guard) is located at Heritage Oaks Golf Club with ancillary units at West Park and Wood Oaks Green. Another unit (ThorGuard) is located at Techny Prairie Park and Fields with ancillary units at the Chalet in Meadowhill Park and Village Green.

ThorGuard

- Techny Prairie Park and Fields: strobe light located on top of the building next to the lake
- Village Green: strobe light located on top of the Village Green Center
- Meadowhill Park: strobe light located on top of the Chalet next to the Velodrome

ThorGuard, a lightning **prediction** system will sound when there is an immediate threat of lightning. ThorGuard functions by evaluating the dynamics of the electrical energy within the atmosphere. This type of prediction system can generate false alarms so it is very important to be vigilant in monitoring weather conditions when participating in outdoor activities. One long (15-second) siren will sound and a strobe will flash on the unit when there is an immediate threat of lightning. Seek shelter immediately.

The siren will sound three 5-second blasts and the strobe will go off after the ThorGuard system determines conditions are safe. Play may resume only after the all clear siren.

Strike Guard

- Heritage Oaks Golf Club: strobe light located on the clubhouse, on the pump house near 17th hole, #5 green/#11 tee on the 18-hole course, the #4 tee on the east-9 course
- West Park: strobe light located on the Sports Center roof (NE corner)
- Wood Oaks: strobe light located on the tennis building in the middle of the park

Strike Guard, a lightning **detection** system will sound when actual lightning strikes have been detected within a 5-mile radius of Sportsman's Country Club. Strike Guard monitors cloud and cloud-to-ground lightning within a user-set radius and the technology prevents false alarms. It is imperative that warnings are adhered to immediately since the system has actually detected lightning in the area. The alert will be the same as the ThorGuard system. One long (15-second) siren will sound and a strobe will flash on the unit when lightning has been detected. Seek shelter immediately.

The siren will sound three 5-second blasts and the strobe will go off after the Strike Guard system determines conditions are safe. Play may resume only after the all clear siren.

Be vigilant in monitoring threatening weather and always err on the side of caution. Seek shelter immediately if:

- You hear one long siren.
- You hear thunder (regardless of siren).
- You see lightning (regardless of siren).

Avoid open areas, water, tall trees, metal fences, overhead wires, power lines, elevated ground, golf carts, mowers, cellular phones and radios.

30/30 Lightning Safety Rule

Go indoors if, after seeing lightning, you cannot count to 30 before hearing thunder. Stay indoors for 30 minutes after hearing the last clap of thunder.

The Northbrook Park District strives to provide a safe environment for participation in all activities.