



## Burnt Hills–Ballston Lake (BHBL) Girls Softball

### 2026 Recreational League – Instructional Division Rules

The Instructional Division is designed to provide a fun, safe, and supportive environment where players learn the fundamentals of softball. Emphasis is placed on skill development, participation, and enjoyment, not competition.

#### **1. Safety & Weather**

1. At the first sign of visible lightning or the sound of thunder, all play must be immediately suspended for a minimum of thirty (30) minutes. There are no exceptions. The 30-minute clock resets with any additional lightning or thunder.
2. Fielding masks are strongly recommended for all defensive players.
3. Anyone under the age of 18 MUST wear a catcher's mask when warming up a catcher, whether on the field or behind the dugouts.

#### **2. Offensive Rules**

4. The batting order will consist of all players in attendance for that game.
5. Batters will be pitched to by an adult coach or parent. A defensive player must be positioned in the pitching circle to field the position.
6. Each batter will receive a maximum of six (6) pitches per at-bat. If the sixth pitch is fouled off, the at-bat may continue. If the ball is not put into play after six (6) pitches, the batter is out. No walks are permitted.
7. Any batter reaching three (3) strikes will be called out.
8. Base runners may advance one base per hit while the ball remains in the infield. If the ball is hit out of the infield, runners may continue advancing at their own risk until the ball is returned to the pitcher.
9. An inning will end when either three (3) defensive outs are recorded (excluding strikeouts) or the batting team has batted all players in the lineup. Strikeouts do NOT count as outs.
10. There is no stealing or advancing on overthrows. Once the ball is ruled out of play, runners must stop at the next open base.

#### **3. Defensive Rules**

11. All defensive players will be on the field each inning, including pitcher, catcher, first base, second base, shortstop, and third base. All remaining players will be positioned along the outer edge of the infield.

12. Full catcher's gear is mandatory for any player playing the catcher position. An adult coach or parent is recommended to stand behind the catcher to assist and help maintain game flow.

#### **4. General Rules & Safety**

13. Eleven-inch (11") safety softballs will be used for all games.

14. No jewelry may be worn on the field. All hair past shoulder length must be securely tied back.

15. There will be no scorekeeping in this division. All games will end in a tie.

16. No new inning may begin after one (1) hour and twenty (20) minutes from the scheduled start time.

17. Up to two (2) coaches are permitted on the field at all times to instruct and assist players.

18. Players and coaches will line up at home plate to shake hands following the game.

19. Both teams are responsible for post-game field cleanup, including raking and leveling home plate, pitcher's mound, and base areas. All bases and field equipment must be returned to the dugout storage area and properly locked after each practice and game.

#### **5. Instructional Division Addendum (Final Four Games)**

20. Each batter will receive three (3) pitches from a player-pitcher, followed by three (3) pitches from a coach-pitcher if needed.

21. A batter reaching three (3) total strikes (combined) will be called out.

22. If the ball is not put into play after six (6) total pitches, the batter is out.

23. No walks are permitted.

24. To encourage hitting and development, strikeouts will NOT be counted as outs toward ending the inning.

#### **6. Philosophy**

Remember, above all else, the Instructional Division exists to ensure that softball is fun and that players are learning the game in a positive, encouraging environment.