

Gage Park Softball Association

House League Rules



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The Game

Softball is a game between 2 teams of ten players. A T-Ball game is run under the direction of coaches. Junior and Intermediate Softball are played under the authority of an individual who plays in the GPSA Senior Softball division. Senior Softball games are umpired by official Softball Ontario Umpires

GPSA Goals

T-Ball Goals

- Swinging the bat and hitting the ball
- Running to the correct bases and knowing when to advance
- Basic fielding (catching ball)
- Throwing
- Positions (e.g. infield, outfield, pitcher, bat catcher)
- Team effort and team play

Junior Softball Goals

- Hitting a pitched ball
- Understanding basic plays
- Understanding of a “force out”
- Fly ball & tag-up
- Hitting techniques
- Understanding overthrows
- Team effort and team work
- Accuracy of throwing
- Introduction to various fielding positions
- Understanding rules of the game

Intermediate & Senior Softball Goals

- Hitting a pitched ball & to specific locations
- Bunting
- Fielding techniques
- Executing plays
- Knowing what is required at different playing positions
- Maintaining alertness (ready position)
- Base stealing techniques

Goals for All Divisions

- Show good sportsmanship
- HAVE FUN!!!

DEFINITIONS

Appeal

- A play in which an umpire cannot make a decision until requested by a coach or a player of either the offensive and defensive teams. The appeal must be made before the next pitch. There are 6 types of appeals.
 1. Missing a base
 2. Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched
 3. Batting out of order
 4. Attempting to advance to 2nd base after making a turn at 1st base
 5. Illegal altered bats
 6. Illegal glove

Catch

- A legally caught ball occurs when the fielder catches a batted or thrown ball with his/her hand(s) or glove. If the ball is held in the fielders' arms or prevented from dropping to the ground by his/her body or clothing, the catch is not completed until the ball is in his/her hand or glove. A valid catch shall be holding the ball long enough to prove he/she has complete control of the ball, as determined by the umpire.

Double Safety Base (First Base)

- 1) A batted ball hitting the white portion is a fair ball.
- 2) A batted ball hitting the orange portion is a foul ball.
- 3) A pitched ball hit or the batter runs on a third strike and the batter/runner fails to touch the orange portion of the base on their first attempt at first base and if a play is made, the batter/runner is out.
- 4) Defensive player must touch ONLY the white portion of the base.
- 5) After over-running the base, the batter/runner must return to the white bag.
- 6) Should the batter/runner round the base on a hit through the infield or the outfield they must return to the white portion.
- 7) When tagging up on a fly ball, the white portion must be used.
- 8) On an attempted pick-off play, the runner must return to the white portion.
- 9) Once a runner returns to the white portion, should he/she stand on the orange portion only, he/she is considered not in contact with the base and the runner shall be called out if:
 - a. The player is tagged with the ball
 - b. The player leads off from the orange portion on a pitched ball

Ejection from Game

- Anyone who violates the Rules of Field Decorum will be ejected from the game and/or the baseball field. Failure to do so will result in forfeiture of the game.

Fair Ball

Is a legally batted ball that:

- 1) Settles or is touched on fair ground between home and first base or between home and third base.
- 2) Bounds past first base and third base on or over fair ground.
- 3) Touches first, second, or third base.
- 4) While on or over fair ground, touches the person or clothing of an umpire or player.
- 5) First falls on fair ground beyond first or third base.
- 6) Hits a foul line on the fly.

Force Out

- Is an out when a runner loses the right to the base which he/she is occupying because the batter becomes a runner, and before the batter or succeeding runner has been put out.

Foul Tip

- Is a batted ball, which goes directly from the bat, not higher than the batter's head, to the catcher's hands and is legally caught by the catcher. It is not a foul tip unless caught and any foul tip that is caught is a strike. The ball is in play. A strike is called, the ball remains in play and runners may advance with liability to be put out.

Foul Ball

- 1) Is a legally batted ball that settles on foul territory between first base and home, or between home and third base.
- 2) Bounds past first or third base on or over foul territory.

- 3) First falls on foul territory beyond first or third base.
- 4) While on or over foul territory, touches the person or clothing of an umpire, player or any foreign object to the natural ground.
- 5) Touches the batter or the batter's hands while in the batter's box.

Infield Fly Rule

- Is a fair ball not including a line drive or an attempted bunt that is caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when first and second bases or all bases are occupied before 2 outs.
- The pitcher, catcher or any outfielder who positions him/herself in the infield on the play shall be considered infielders for the purpose of this rule.
- The umpire shall declare infield fly, if fair, the batter is out.
- The ball is alive and runners may advance at their own risk, or may re-touch and advance after the ball is caught.
- If the hit becomes a foul ball, it is treated as any foul.

Lead Off

- Is not allowed for T-Ball and Junior and if a runner is off his/her base when the batter hits the ball the base runner is out. For Intermediate and Senior games, the runner may leave the base when the ball leaves the pitcher's hand at risk of being put out.

Overthrow

- A ball thrown from one fielder to another resulting in the ball going beyond the boundary lines of the playing field or becoming blocked.

Stealing

- The act of a runner attempting to advance during a pitch to the batter.

Strike

- Is when the ball is swung at by the batter and is completely missed.
- Is when the ball is dead hit or fouled by the batter when he/she has 1 or fewer strikes. A strike cannot be called in a dead hit or foul ball when there are already 2 strikes.

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

In association with the City of Hamilton

Definition of Violence

The focus of this policy is on the behaviour of non-players, except for those in which a player engages in a violent act outside the area of play. For the purposes of this policy violence includes, but is not limited to, the following behaviours:

- Loud verbal assaults
- Threats and attempts to intimidate
- Throwing of articles in a deliberate or aggressive manner
- Aggressive approaches to another individual
- Physical striking of another individual
- Attempts to goad or incite violence in others
- Vandalism to building or property
- Racial or ethnic slurs
- Illegal consumption of alcohol or drugs

- Any intimidation by the coaches, players or parents shall result in an expulsion from the game and/or the park.

Field Decorum

- 1) The actions of players/coaches/umpires/league officials and spectators must be above reproach.
- 2) ***Smoking is not allowed in Gage Park, as per city by-law. As a result there is no smoking on or around the field of play***
- 3) Coaches, players and parents engaged or persisting in conduct contrary to the spirit, principles, or objectives of good sportsmanship shall receive a single warning from the umpire. If the offences continue, offenders will be ejected from the game and the field.
- 4) Zero tolerance will be upheld.
- 5) Any offences under the above, will result in the filing of an incident report with punitive action to be taken by the executive committee of the GPSA.

Equipment

Uniforms

- Uniforms shall consist of a shirt and cap for T-Ball and Junior and a shirt for Intermediate and Senior. Long pants are recommended to be worn by all players and coaches while participating in a game. All uniforms are the property of the league until the end of the season.
- **All players must wear their full uniform during all games. If unforeseen circumstances arise an executive decision will determine if the player can play.**

Footwear

- All players must wear running shoes to play. Failure to do so will result in the player not being allowed to play. Shoes with metal cleats are prohibited. Shoes with rubber cleats may be used.

Athletic Supports

- A fibre or plastic cup-type athletic support must be worn. It is mandatory that all players in all divisions wear athletic supports.

Helmets

- Protective helmets must be worn when the players are at bat, while running the bases, while acting as bat boy, while in the batter's circle, while playing the pitcher's position, or until the player leaving the field reaches the players' bench.
- Chinstraps must be worn as designed by the manufacturer.
- Players may use their own helmets, which should meet CSA standards. The league is not responsible for injuries resulting from private helmet use.
- Anyone playing the pitcher's position must wear a helmet at all times.
 - Pitchers in T-Ball and Jr. Softball must wear the caged helmet.
 - The cage is optional in the Intermediate and Senior Softball divisions. *League is not responsible when no cage is worn.*
 - Face shields for pitchers are also permitted by the league

Jewelry (For safety reasons)

- No jewelry is allowed to be worn by any player. Jewelry consists of but not limited to earrings, rings, watches, bracelets, chains and medallions etc.
- The umpire will give only one warning and the player must remove the jewelry to continue to play. If a subsequent player is caught, then an automatic out will be given each time.
- It is strongly recommended that coaches also refrain from wearing jewelry for safety reasons.
- Any medical alert jewelry items are permitted.

- If a player is injured due to hidden jewelry, then the player and their parent(s) or guardians are responsible.

Catcher's Equipment

- Catcher's equipment shall consist of a chest protector, shin guards, facemask and helmet, which must be worn during practice, game warm-ups and regular games.

The Bat

- Only official approved softball bats are to be used during regular and playoff league games. One warning will be given and after that, any subsequent warnings will be considered automatic outs.
- Anyone bringing their own softball bat **must share** with both teams otherwise the bat is removed from the game.

The Ball

- Only official balls supplied by the league will be used during regular season and playoff games.

The Batting Tee

- The batting tee shall be a stand that will be placed on home plate for the purpose of holding the ball for the players to swing at. It should be portable and adjustable to the height of the player.

Field Dimensions

<u>Division</u>	<u>Distance between bases</u>	<u>Distance for pitching mound</u>
T-Ball	50 feet	30 feet
Junior	55 feet	30 feet
Intermediate	55 feet	40 feet
Senior	60 feet	46 feet

General Rules

If there is a play to first base, then the runner must touch the orange safety base. The first baseman or any other defensive player cannot touch the orange safety base under any circumstance. Otherwise the runner is automatically safe.

- All bases must be pegged down prior to the start of the game.
- Base coaches must be 3 feet away from the base.
- Coaches should encourage players waiting to bat to sit on the bench.

Time Outs

- Maximum of 2 timeouts are allowed during the game except for injuries occurring during play. If any player is injured during play on the field, the play is dead and all advancing runners must go back to the last originating base.

Batting Lineup & Order

- Prior to the start of the game coaches will exchange batting line-ups.
- A player must be listed to bat.
- The batting order must be followed for each inning.
- A batter who fails to bat in his/her proper batting position shall be declared out on an appeal by the defensive team if another player completes a time at bat in his/her place.
 - However, the proper batter may take his/her place in the batter's box at any time before the improper batter becomes a base runner or is put out and the proper appeal is made.
- It is the duty of the umpire to:

- a) declare the proper batter out and
- b) nullify any advances or scores made by base runners because of a ball batted by an improper batter.
- After the decision of the umpire the next player in the lineup will become the batter. If the appeal is made too late then the improper batter becomes legal and the player who should have batted is considered to have completed his/her turn at bat. The batting line-up continues as normal.
- 1) If at the time a game is scheduled to begin a team does not have the minimum of 7 players, a maximum of ten minutes will be allowed before the plate umpire declares the game forfeited to the non-offending team.
- 2) The non-offending team will receive a score of one run for every inning of a regulation game.
- 3) If ten minutes past the scheduled time to begin play, neither team can field the minimum of 7 eligible players, the umpire shall declare a tie game and award 1 point to each team with a score of 0-0.

Each Defensive Team Shall Have

- 1) A catcher who shall play a position normally taken by the catcher behind home plate, far enough back so they do not interfere with the batter while batting.
- 2) A pitcher who shall play in the infield and must assume a set position with one foot on the pitcher's rubber until the ball is released and must wear a pitcher's helmet.
- 3) A 1st baseman, a 2nd baseman, a 3rd baseman and a shortstop shall play in their regular played positions as infielders, and not cross the baseline until the ball is hit. (Softball only) 4 outfielders are allowed.
- 4) Coaches are encouraged to rotate the positions of the players in each. Every player should have equal opportunity to learn and play infield and outfield.

Regulation Game

- Will consist of 2 complete innings for T-Ball. 4 complete innings for Jr. Softball, 5 complete innings for Int. and 7 complete innings for Sr. All weather and time permitting.

Official Game

- Consists of 2 complete innings for T-Ball and Jr. Softball,
- 3 complete innings for Int. Softball, and
- 5 complete innings for Sr. Softball.
- If an official game cannot be completed, the game must be replayed in its entirety. It is the responsibility of team coaches to re-schedule make-up games within a two week period.
 - If this is not possible, the game will be called a tie and each team will receive 1 point and a score of 0-0. If in a re-scheduled game a team cannot field the minimum of players, the forfeit rules apply. A regular league game can end in a tie.

Time Limits

- No new innings to start after 8:00pm for games and last inning will be called at 7:40pm during May and August.
- No new innings to start after 8:15pm for games and last inning will be called at 7:55pm during June and July.

Protesting a Game

- Will be handled by the director and/or co-director.

End of Play

- Is when any defensive player has control of the ball in the infield area and/or in the judgment of the plate umpire there is no attempt to make a play on any of the base runners. Time will be called and the base

runners will be held on the base last occupied or the base they were approaching (at least half-way), in the judgment of the umpire, when time was called.

Thrown Bat

- A thrown bat occurs when, in the opinion of the umpire, the batter has thrown his/her bat with force that could hurt someone.
 - First occurrences will receive a warning.
 - A second occurrence will result in the offending player being called out, the ball is dead and the runners may not advance.

Playing Rules

- To begin the game the plate umpire shall instruct the home team to take their positions in the field, and for T-Ball, the coach places the ball on the tee and call "PLAY" for the first batter of the offensive team.
- The umpire for all divisions will remind the coaches to replace the catcher if on base with 2 outs, the player must be replaced by the last out.
 - In the event that the bat catcher is not ready the umpire will issue 1 warning only per team. Any subsequent failures will result in the first batter being called out.

A Batter Is Out When:

- 1) Foul fly or fly ball put into play is caught by a member of the defensive team. The ball is alive and in play until time is called.
- 2) The player has 3 strikes called. The ball is dead and runners may not advance. The batter can run on a dropped 3rd strike in Sr. Softball only.

A Base Runner Is Out:

- 1) On a forced play.
- 2) When the player is tagged.
- 3) When running off the baseline by more than 3 feet to avoid a tag.
- 4) When the player intentionally hits or kicks a fair-batted ball, either on or off the base. The ball is dead and no runners may advance.
- 5) A team will be charged an out if a player removes their helmet prior to reaching the bench.

Hits Batsman

- In the event that a pitcher hits a batter with a pitched ball, the umpire will give the pitcher a warning and if the pitcher hits another batter in the same inning with a pitched ball, the pitcher must be replaced.
- If the same pitcher returns in another inning and a third batter is hit with a pitched ball, the pitcher must be replaced and cannot pitch again for the duration of the game.

Overthrows

- If an overthrown ball breaks the fence line, all runners advance two bases from the time of the throw. If an overthrown ball does not break the fence line, the runners advance at their own risk.

The Offensive Team's Turn At Bat Ends When:

- 1) For T-Ball the catcher (only) places the ball on the tee after the last batter has hit a fair ball.
- 2) For softball three outs are recorded.

Umpires

- Once the batting line-ups have been exchanged the home plate umpire takes charge of the game and takes position behind home plate. After the first pitch, the umpire will call time and announce the start time to both coaches.

- The decision of the umpire shall be final; however, the coaches of each team shall be entitled to ask permission to approach the umpire for an interpretation of the rules. No umpire shall overrule any other unless invited into consultation.
- The umpires are the only ones that can call “TIME” to end play.
- To resume play after time has been called, the home plate umpire will call for the next batter and after that batter is ready, the umpire will call “PLAY”. The batter is then allowed to hit.
- The home plate umpire must call all strikes, dead hits and foul ball as quickly as possible.
- The home plate umpire shall notify opposing coaches if there are any changes or additions to the original line-up as reported to them.

Base Umpires Shall:

- 1) Judge the position of the runners when an overthrow occurs.
 - 2) Watch for lead-offs and make the call.
 - 3) Watch and make the call for runners that do not re-touch a base after a fly ball is caught.
 - 4) Hold up runners when time is called.
- All umpires must make sure that the fielders are behind the playing line and the pitcher is in the correct position before play is called for the next batter.

Additional Rules for T-Ball Only

- Any players on the offensive team who are base runners when the last batter is at bat are regarded in the same manner as the last batter and no defensive play can be made on them on the bases. They are all forced to home plate when the last batter has hit a fair ball.
- Defensive coaches must not touch the ball while in play.
- In the event that the last batter of the offensive team or any runner with last batter status is obstructed in any manner by any defensive player while running the bases, it shall be the discretion of the coaches as to how far he/she would have advanced had there been no obstruction.

A run doesn't count when a runner with last batter status:

- 1) Reaches home after the catcher has touched the top of the tee with possession of the ball.
 - 2) Has led-off and reached home place safely.
 - 3) Has not tagged up and reached home plate safely.
- All infield positions must play behind the pitcher except the catcher, until the ball is hit, with a maximum of 8 infielders. Outfielders must play 10 feet behind the baselines until the ball is hit.

Additional Rules for Junior Softball

- No stealing is allowed in Junior Softball.
- All infielders must play behind the baseline until the ball has been hit.
- Outfielders must play at least 10 feet behind the baseline until the ball is hit.
- Defensive player pitches 4 pitches to the batter. If the batter has not hit the ball, or been called out after 4 pitches, the offensive team coach will come in and pitch the remaining 3 pitches
- If the pitching coach is hit by the batted ball, then it is a dead ball. Replay the pitch.
- Batters will face up to a maximum of 7 pitches. If the ball is put in play before the seven pitch limit is reached, the batter does not receive the balance of pitches. If the ball is not put in play after the seventh pitch then the batter is out.
- Both players and coaches must pitch from the designated 30 feet from the plate.
- Pitchers (not coaches) are allowed to pitch a maximum of 2 innings.
- Strikes will be called starting the 3rd game of the season.

- No walks or hit by pitch resulting in a free base will be allowed.
- 5 run mercy limit per inning except for the last inning.

Additional Rules for Intermediate Softball

- Stealing bases is allowed except from 3rd base to home plate. The player is allowed to steal when the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. If the runner leaves the base before, the runner will be called out.
- All infielders must play behind the baseline until the ball is hit.
- Outfielders must play at least 20 feet behind the baseline.
- Pitchers are allowed to pitch a maximum of 3 innings per game and no more than 2 consecutive innings.
- All strikes and balls are called.
- Play is dead when runners are no longer attempting to advance and/or called by the discretion of the home plate umpire.
- A maximum of 1 pitching change is allowed per inning unless in the case of injury.
- 5 runs per inning except for the last inning.

Additional Rules for Senior Softball

- Pitchers are allowed to pitch a maximum of 4 innings per game and not more than 2 consecutive innings.
- A "Balk" will be called on the pitcher at the discretion of the home plate umpire. If so, the batter will automatically get 1st base.
- Stealing is permitted when the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. No leadoffs
- Infield fly rule applies
- A maximum of 1 pitching change is allowed per inning unless in the case of injury.
- 7 runs per inning except for the last inning.

Playoff Rules

- All regular season rules apply.
- All playoff games except the championship games will consist of 4 innings for Junior Softball, 5 innings for Intermediate Softball, and 7 innings for Senior Softball or and 1½ hours from the start of the game, or whichever comes first.
 - In the event of a tie, the game will be rescheduled and it will commence from the last completed inning played.
- After 1 hour and 10 minutes, the umpire must call last inning. If there is an inning being played when the time limits occurs, last inning must be called after the inning is complete
- After a regulation game in the event of a tie, or if time runs out, revert to last completed inning.
- In the event of a rain delay, the Director will adjust all subsequent game times accordingly.
- The championship game will consist of 4 complete innings for Junior Softball, 5 complete innings for Intermediate Softball and 7 complete innings for Senior Softball, or extra innings to declare a winner without a time limit. In the event of a rain out, the director will call a 20 minute game delay. After which time the rain persists, the game will be called and re-scheduled. Re-scheduling is the responsibility of the Director and Rules Committee.
- All teams must be ready to play at their schedule times.
- If a team cannot field the required minimum of players by game time, no substitutions will be allowed and the game will be forfeited. Additional innings may be required to break a tie.
- Any violation of the rules will cost the offending team the game.