

## Sliderz 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> Grade Softball Rules

### Team and Players

- Emphasis of this league is on developing basic softball skills- batting, fielding ground balls and fly balls, throwing, catching, pitching, rounding bases, sliding and making cut off throws.
- ASA rules apply for this age group for all aspects of the game not addressed by the below rules.

### Positions

- **Each team will field (10) girls. The infield will play with a first baseman, second baseman, shortstop, third baseman, pitcher, catcher, and (4) outfielders (left field, left center, right center and right field).**
- A game can be played with as few as eight (8) players. If either team has less than 8 players, an attempt should be made to balance the teams so the game may be played.
- Every player on the team roster must play all defensive positions during the season. All attending players will play the maximum number of innings possible given the number of players present. This means that no player will sit out 2 innings unless all players have sat out 1 inning and no one will sit 3 innings unless all players have sat out 2. No player may sit out 2 innings in a row. Play should be equalized as much as possible.
- During a complete 6 inning game, every player must play at least one inning in the infield. Please rotate players around to different positions, both infield and outfield, allowing the girls to experience other positions.
  - *Each player is given a batting position regardless if she plays in the field or sits out an inning.*
  - *Each player must have an opportunity to play infield and outfield in every game.*
- Fielders must play in their designated position until the ball is hit.
- Over loading fielders to one side of the field is not allowed.
- Outfielders are required to play in standard outfield positions and should be positioned in the outfield grass; they may not stand on the dirt infield and they may not cover a base to gain a force out. Covering a base is the job of the infielders. A runner shall be declared safe if the out is the result of an outfielder covering a base.
- **A pitcher may pitch a maximum of 3 innings per game. A pitcher must be removed from that inning if she hits 3 batters in the same inning.**
  - *At 3-4gr. levels, it is essential that every coach focus on developing as many pitchers and catchers as possible. This is important both for your own team, As well as for Naperville Park District as a league. The game of softball revolves around pitchers and catchers, who can either make or break a game. And as pitchers improve, having a well-trained player in the catcher's position becomes just as important.*
- A continuous batting order is mandatory. If a batter or runner is injured, the player that recorded the last out will replace the injured player. If the injured player is at bat, the replacement player will assume the ball/strike count. Everyone bats whether playing in the field or not. Should a player arrive late to the game, that player is put at the bottom of the batting order.
- Substitutes may enter the game at any time that play is stopped.

### Game

- A regulation game shall consist of six innings, or 1hr. and 40min., whichever comes first unless called on account of darkness, rain, or dangerous field conditions. No new inning may begin after the time limit elapsed unless it is a tie.
- Each half inning will consist of three (3) outs or five (5) runs whichever occurs first.
- The score will be kept, but standings will not be maintained.
- An official game shall be declared after the losing team has had four at bats.
- There are **NO UMPIRES** for this level during the regular season, a coach or parent volunteer can call balls and strikes from behind the mound. The Naperville Park District will provide Umpires for the end of season Tournament.

## Pitching

- Pitchers must follow the A.S.A. Fast Pitch Rules. **Our intent is to permit any A.S.A. - allowed pitching style. The following is intended as simplified guideline, but in the event of a discrepancy, the wording in the A.S.A. rule book takes precedence.**
- Pitching distance is 32-feet for 3-4 grades. **BALL SIZE IS 11" SOFTIE**
- Pitchers struggling to get the ball over the plate may move closer to the batter if doing so will help her put a ball in play **but, must remain within the pitching circle.**
- Pitcher must initially have both feet on the pitching rubber and take one step forward toward the plate with the pitch.
- Players will pitch each inning, until the batter has reached 4 balls, at which point the coach of the team at bat will finish pitching to the batter. Strikes will carry over, and NO WALKS will be issued.
- The batter must either hit the ball into play or strike out in this situation.
- Once the batter has finished her "at bat", the coach will allow the player to begin pitching to her next batter.
- The coach or assistant will pitch to his/her own team.
- The player at the pitching position, when the coach is pitching will stand within (2) steps to the right or left side of the coach.
- The catcher will encouraged to throw the ball back to the player at the pitching position.
- The coach when pitching will wear a glove for protection.
- Any ball touched by the adult pitcher is live and "in Play".
- No individual player will pitch more than 3 innings per game.
- A legal delivery shall be a ball which is delivered to the batter with an underhanded motion.
  - *The release of the ball must be on the first forward swing of the pitching arm past the hip. The release must have a complete smooth follow through, with no abrupt stop of the arm near the hip.*
  - *The ball must be outside the pitcher's wrist.*
  - *The pitch is completed with a step toward the batter.*
- The pitcher may use any wind-up desired, providing the following:
  - *She may not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.*
  - *She may not use a wind-up in which there is a stop or reversal of the forward motion.*
  - *She does not make two revolutions of the arm on the windmill pitch. A pitcher may drop her arm to the side and to the rear before starting the windmill motion.*
  - *She does not continue to wind-up after taking the forward step, which is simultaneous with the release of the ball.*
- No pitch shall be declared when:
  - *The pitcher pitches during the suspension of play.*
  - *The pitcher attempts a quick return of the ball before the batter has taken position or is off balance as a result of a previous pitch.*
  - *The runner is called out for leaving the base prior to the pitcher releasing the pitch.*
  - *The pitcher pitches before a base runner has retouched his base after a foul ball has been declared, and the ball is dead.*
  - *No walks will be issued, except on a hit batter. Batter may take first base.*
  - *After a pitcher has thrown four "balls", the batter's coach must take the mound. The batter's count doesn't reset when their coach starts pitching. The coach continues to pitch until the batter puts the ball in play or strikes out.*
- Notes on Coach's Pitch
  - ***Coaches are encouraged to pitch from the pitching rubber. Occasionally, a coach may move closer to the batter if doing so will help her put a ball in play. However, if this becomes a habit it is counterproductive to the girl's development. Furthermore, if a coach does move closer, he/she must pitch from within the pitching circle.***
  - *Coaches should pitch level (verses with an arc) and swift. It is harder to hit pitches with arcs than flat itches. Slow pitches encourage girls to develop poor hitting mechanics. All teams should ensure that they have 2-3 coaches or parents that can throw proper strikes to the girls during games and practices.*

### **Batter**

- A foul ball caught shall be an out. A foul tip caught by the catcher on a 3<sup>rd</sup> strike is an out.
- There are NO walks.
- If a batter is hit by a pitch, she receives first base, as long as an attempt was made to avoid the pitch.
- There shall be no bunting. A batter is out if she bunts.
- There is no drop third strike in this league.
- Throwing the bat. A batter will receive a warning the first time a bat is thrown, second time the batter will be called out. Intentionally throwing the bat results in the player being ejected from the game. The umpire's decision is final.

### **Base Running**

- Base distance is 60-feet.
- Base runner may advance on a batted ball as many bases as she can, at the risk of being thrown out.
- No stealing is allowed in this division.
- No lead-offs are allowed.
- On a foul ball, the base runner must return to her base. If a ball is caught on the fly, the runner must tag-up and then proceed at her own risk.
- A player may advance only one base on an overthrow. If a ball is caught on the fly, the runner must tag-up and then proceed at her own risk.
- No player may advance on a wild pitch or passed ball. A player may advance only one base on an overthrow.
- Sliding is permitted.
- A base runner must avoid a collision when a defensive player has the ball and is waiting to make the tag or she is out. The base runner must walk into a tag, slide or otherwise avoid contact without leaving the baseline.
- A base runner has full responsibility to avoid contact with a fielder who is attempting to make an initial play on a batted ball.

### **Scoring**

- Five (5) run limit per inning. Once the batting team has scored five (5) runs the half inning is over. If a team is behind by more than five runs that team can score as many runs as possible, up to a tie score. Once the tie score is reached the half inning is over. If the game ends in a tie, the game will continue for one more inning with no run limit for either team. If after one tie breaker inning, the teams are still tied, the game will end in a tie. Refer to tie breaker rule in provided ASA rule book.

### **Ground Rules**

- The Infield Fly rule does not apply at this level.
- Drop third strike rule doesn't apply to this level.

### **Equipment**

- NPD will provide a Jersey and Visor.
- Players provide their own baseball pants or shorts and fielding glove or catcher's mitt.
- NPD provides the catchers gear, pitchers mask, practice balls, game balls, throw down bases, bats, batting helmets and a first aid kit.
- NPD provided helmets must be worn by players while on deck, batting, running the bases and the coach's box.
- Every defensive player must wear a mitt or fielding glove when pitching, catching, or playing infield or outfield.
- Shoes: Cleats are allowed as long as they are rubber. No metal spikes will be allowed. Gym shoes are permitted.
- Catcher: Must wear a mask, chest protector, and shin guards.

- Batter/ Base Runner: Must wear a helmet.
- Pitcher: It is **mandatory** that a pitcher wear a pitcher's mask when pitching.
- Bats: Must be ASA/USSA certified or say Official Softball.

### Reporting Scores

- Standings will NOT be kept. We will provide and end of the season tournament with a Blind Draw so coaches will not focus on the standings.

### Coaching

- The batting team is allowed a 1<sup>st</sup> base coach, 3<sup>rd</sup> base coach and an on deck coach.
- The head coach is responsible for maintaining order on the sideline and keeping equipment and players seated in the dugout area.
- All coaching must be positive and instructional, not vulgar, critical or demeaning. Coaches who are abusive to players must be report to the Program Manager. Abusive behavior will not be tolerated.
- Set a good example of sportsmanship in all game situations.
- Any coaches who will not adhere to NPD rules, polices and philosophy will be asked to step aside for the remainder of the season.
- Coaches are not permitted to smoke or chewing tobacco products during games or practices.

### Rain Information

- In case of rain, all practices decisions are made by the **coach**.
- It is the coach's responsibility or designated assistant or parent to call or e-mail all the players on the roster and notify them of any canceled practices.
- Game cancelations will be made by the park district and will be posted to the website at [www.napervilleparks.org](http://www.napervilleparks.org). No decisions will be made before 4:00 p.m.
- On the rainout website you can opt in to have cancelation text messages sent to you. You will need to register on the rainout website.
- There is also a Naperville Park District Mobile App for your Apple or Android cell phone. You can go to [www.napervilleparks.org](http://www.napervilleparks.org) for instructions.
- Frontier Park and Knock Park are equipped with the Strike Guard Lightening Detection System. When the system activates a loud horn blasts and a yellow strobe will also flash during the warning period, indicating lightening has been detected within 10 miles- all play will cease and participants shall take cover (not under a tree) until the all-clear (a loud blast) sounds and no strobe light will be flashing. Those teams playing at Frontier should be able to hear Strike Guard and see the strobe light. Those teams playing at Gartner will be able to hear Strike Guard but not see the strobe light. Any teams playing at Meadow Glens (or if Strike Guard is not working for some reason) should use the 30 minute rule. If Thunder or Lightening is seen or heard all play will cease and participants shall take cover (not under a tree) until 30 minutes has gone by from the last seen lightening or the last sound of Thunder. League schedules and **make-up information** will be posted on [www.quickscores.com](http://www.quickscores.com) and [www.napervilleparks.org](http://www.napervilleparks.org)

### First Aid

- Each team has a first aid kit. Should you run out of ice packs or Band-Aids, please contact your coordinator and let them know, so they can issue you replacement equipment.
- Should someone get hurt enough to require first aid, an enclosed accident report form must be filled out and dropped off to the park district administration building, within 24 hours. Should the injury be serious enough to require an ambulance, please call me that night and leave a message giving us a heads up.

**PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT THIS PROGRAM IS ABOUT HAVING FUN.  
THE PLAYERS COME FIRST...WINNING COMES SECOND.**