

2011 Frederick County Girls Softball League

GENERAL RULES

Revised Feb. 2011

A. LEAGUE OPERATIONS & GOVERNING RULES

1. Rules for specific AGE GROUP have precedence over all other rules. Rules outlined in the Frederick County Girls Softball League (FCGSL) GENERAL RULES have precedence over rules defined in the **INDEPENDENT SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION (ISA) & FREE STATE UMPIRE ASSOCIATION** rulebooks. If a rule has not been set-forth or modified by the specific AGE GROUP or FCGSL GENERAL RULES, play is governed by the ISA rules for fast pitch.

NOTE: It is the responsibility of each coach to be familiar with the rules, and to carry a copy of the rulebook with him/her to each game.

Mandatory Coaches Clinic: 1 coach from each team is to attend a demonstration and explanation of the age group rules. Completion of this clinic will certify your team to play in the league for the year. Without certification, your team will forfeit all games until your team is certified.

2. Protests must be lodged within 48 hours of the protested incident and signed and dated by the umpire of the game (**or both coaches in the absence of an umpire**) that the incident happened and using the procedure set-forth in the League By-Laws. The protest fee is \$25.00; refundable if the protest is upheld.
3. Starting time for games scheduled Monday through Friday is 6:00 p.m. Starting time for Saturday games (8 and Under) should be between 9:00 a.m. and noon. Sunday games (first week) for 15 and Under will start at 4pm. Any team, home or visitor, not arriving at the playing field within 15 minutes past the scheduled game time, with at least seven (7) eligible players, will forfeit the game to the opposing team. There is a maximum 15-minute warm-up time for the team arriving late. **Visiting teams are to be provided with 15 minutes of warm-up on the game infield, unless arriving late. ALSO EVERY NEW PITCHER GETS 5 PITCHES.**
4. Teams must start and finish with at least seven (7) active eligible players or the game is forfeited to the opposing team. In games where a team begins play with at least seven (7) players but less than the maximum number of fielders allowed (due to a shortage of players), those players arriving late for the game are added to the bottom of the batting order and entered into vacant field positions upon their arrival at the game field. NO automatic outs are assessed to a team playing shorthanded due to lack of players.
5. A regulation game for 8U and 10U is **6 innings**. A regulation game for 12U, 15U, and 18U is **7 innings**. **All games will have a 2-hour time limit. Once top of inning starts, you must complete that inning unless it is called for darkness. If called for darkness, winner of game is determined by reverting back to the previously completed inning. No new inning will start after the time limit has expired. A new inning is considered started at the time of the last out of the previous inning. An inning started prior to the time limit will be completed. The time limit constitutes a complete game regardless of the number of innings played. 8 & under—A complete game consists of 6 innings. If there is a tie but there is still time left in the 2 hour time limit—they may play out the tie. 12 and 15 and under—a complete game is 7 innings. If there is a tie after 7 innings but there is still time left in the 2 hour time limit—they may play out tie.**

6. In the event of a lightning strike and/or the sound of thunder is heard, 30 minutes will be allowed to pass before play is allowed to resume. Each new lightning strike and/or sound of thunder starts a new 30 minute delay. The game's total time limit is suspended during the lightning/thunder delays.
7. **Suspended games shall resume at the point at which it was suspended.**
8. **Both teams** should phone/email game results to the appropriate scorekeeper within 24 hours after completion of the game, so that wins, losses, and forfeitures are properly recorded (except as otherwise noted in Rule D-14f). Exception being the 8 & Under Division for which there are no league standings. **Results should include age group, team name, game date, and score.**
9. FCGSL standings will use a point system for determining placement of teams in each age group except for the 8 & Under Division for which there are no league standings. For each game played, **three (3)** points will be awarded for a **Win** (played or by official forfeit), **two (2)** points for a **Tie**, and **one (1)** point for a **Loss**. Regular season/makeup games that never get played and official **Forfeit** losses will be awarded **zero (0)** points.

B. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

1. Qualifying birth date for all age groups will be **January 1**. Proof of age and team rosters to verify eligibility is required to be on file with each respective FCGSL Recreation Association Representative. Failure to do so will constitute a forfeit of the scheduled game by the offending team, as verified by the League President or designated representative. Late registration of a player requires filing of the birth certificate or proof of age prior to that player participating in league play.
2. Players may be listed on more than one FCGSL team roster, as long as the teams are in different age groups. Players can "play up" on a team in a different age group (example - an eligible 15 and Under player playing on an 18 & Under team). **Players cannot "play down" to play in a different age group (example - a league age 9 year old player on an 8 & Under team).**

C. SPECIFICATIONS (Equipment & Field)

1. **IN 2011 ONLY SOFTBALLS APPROVED BY LEAGUE WILL BE ACCEPTED.** Official game balls for the 2011 season will be the Worth Dream Seam or Dudley SB-12 Softballs.
2. **Only official softball bats with stamps will be used, exception being use of T-Ball bats for 8 & Under games.**
3. **Facemasks must be used on all batting helmets for the teams. MUST be NOSCAE approved with stamp on helmet.**
4. Uniforms will consist of shirts (numbered on the back) of the same color, style and trim. Regular uniform pants are optional. Team uniform for managers and coaches are optional.
5. Bases will be at a distance of 60 feet for all age group league games. Safety bases (i.e., double-sized 1st base) are allowed but not mandatory.
6. Pitching will be from within a clearly marked 8-foot radius circle. The pitching distance is to be measured from the rear part of home plate to the center of the circle. For 8 and 10 & Under league games this distance is 35 feet. For 12U league games the distance is 40 feet. **For 2011 15U and 18U games the distance will be 43 feet the same distance as dictated by MD high school rules.**

D. THE GAME

1. The minimum number of fielders (per team) in the game at all times:
All Age Groups: Seven (7)
2. The maximum number of fielders (per team) in the game at all times:
8 and 10 & Under: Ten (10) - (P, C, 1st, 2nd, SS, 3rd, and 4 outfielders)
12, 15, and 18 & Under: Nine (9) - (P, C, 1st, 2nd, SS, 3rd, and 3 outfielders)
3. There is no restriction on the number of innings any pitcher can pitch in league games.
4. Use of a Designated Player (DP), as identified in the **ISA** rulebook, is not allowed in league games.
5. There is no arc limit.
6. **There is NO must slide rule. But if a play is being made at a base the runners must slide to avoid a collision with the fielders. Fielders are not permitted to block the base prior to controlling the ball.**
7. ***When a catcher is on base with one or more outs, an optional courtesy runner may be used, that runner being the last player to make an out.***
8. When a runner is legitimately off a base after a pitch, or as a result of a batter completing a turn at bat, and while the pitcher has the ball within the circle (an 8 foot radius of the pitchers plate), the runner may stop **ONCE**, but then must immediately return to the base or attempt to advance to the next base. Failure to *immediately* return non-stop to the base or proceed non-stop to the next base will result in the runner being declared **out**. Once the runner stops at a base for any reason, she will be declared **out** if she leaves the base, with the exception being if a play is made on her or another runner, the pitcher no longer has possession of the ball in the circle, or the pitcher releases the ball on a pitch to the batter.
NOTE: This rule is not applicable to the 8 & Under Division since play is automatically stopped by the umpire once the coach pitcher has control of the ball within the circle.
9. ALL players must play a minimum of 3 innings in the field (8 & Under and 10 & Under), or 2 innings in the field (12, 15, and 18 & Under). This rule is suspended in the event of injury, sickness, or disciplinary action taken by the coach before or during the game.
10. A pitcher can change from pitcher to another position back to pitcher in an inning if coach only visits her once on the mound. If coach visits pitcher twice in the inning the pitcher must be removed from pitching position for the remaining part of that inning.
11. Running batting order and free substitution for all age groups (8U, 10U, 12U, 15U & 18U). Re-entry of a substitute player will be allowed in all the above age groups.
12. There are no limitations as to the number of times a players' defensive field position can be changed.
13. Scorebooks and/or lineup cards should include the player's name (first and last) and must include uniform Number. **It is suggested that both scorekeepers note the starting time of the game in their scorebook.**
14. **Players are not allowed to wear ANY exposed jewelry of ANY kind. Prior to the start of the game, these items must be removed or taped over in order to eliminate the risk of injury.**

15. Home team responsibilities:

a. Call visiting team, verifying time and place of game, at least 72 hours in advance to designate field location if more than one site is listed in the FCGSL handout, or if field directions are different than those posted in the FCGSL handout.

b. Softballs will be provided by the home team (General Rule C1).

c. **8 & UNDER DIVISION ONLY**-Provide home plate umpire, at least 16 years of age. **Be sure to alert the umpires to the FCGSL special rules.** *8 & Under Division umpire may be at the discretion of the teams playing and may be a coach, parent or anyone deemed acceptable by both teams.* If the home team cannot provide a home plate umpire, the visiting team has the option of providing one. If a home plate umpire is not found, the HOME team forfeits the game. **Playing field for 8 & under will have hash marks in-between each base.**

d. Clearly mark 8-ft. radius (16-ft. diameter) pitcher's circle, foul lines, and batter's box. 10 & Under will have a hash mark on the field 10ft. from the leading edge of the base clearly marked.

e. All bases, home plate, and the pitcher's rubber must be attached to the ground by means of spikes or posts.

f. Notify visiting team and umpire of game postponed, only due to inclement weather, or in other special circumstances. If a game is postponed, it must be rescheduled within **seven** (7) days of the original game date, and must be played within **twenty-one** (21) days. If within **five** (5) days the home and visiting team cannot agree on a mutual date, BOTH TEAMS call their respective Age Group Coordinator to set the date, time, and place for the makeup game. If a team does not show, then it is considered a forfeit for the "no show" team. If neither team calls, then it's a forfeit for BOTH teams and cannot be made up. The FCGSL President will act on behalf of the Age Group Coordinator in situations where a conflict of interest exists.

NOTE: Any game postponed or not played during the last two weeks of the season need to be made up no later than five (5) days from the last regular scheduled game of the season.

g. Notify visiting team, Umpire, group coordinator and appropriate scorekeeper, of any postponements and/or rescheduled game date.

16. Visiting team responsibilities:

8 & UNDER DIVISION ONLY-Provide a base umpire, at least 16 years of age. The base umpire *may be at the discretion of the teams playing and may be a coach, parent or anyone deemed acceptable by both teams.* If the visiting team cannot provide a base umpire, the home team has the option of providing one. If a base umpire is not found, the game is played, with no penalty involved.

17. **Rescheduled and cancelled games**-7 days advanced notice is required to postpone and reschedule any game--Only valid reason to reschedule a game is when a team does not have a minimum of 7 or more players due to school activities

18. **2011—Each team will pay the Umpire \$35.00 before the start of their games.** (Umpire fee only applies to the 10U, 12U, 15U and 18U). If Umpire shows up and game is called for rain or the other team forfeits—the umpire is still paid the fee from each team.

19. **2011—To be eligible to play in the end of season Play-Offs and All Star Games all players MUST have played in 7 games during regular season.**