

Haverhill Girl's Softball

Bylaws and Rules

1. Purpose of the League

The objective of the Haverhill Girl's Softball League (HGSL) is to provide an instructional, spirited and enjoyable experience in the sport of softball to girls with ages 5 to 15 year old. HGSL is divided into four divisions, Instructional, Minor, Major and Travel (U10, U12, U14 and U18). The Instructional division is played by girls between the ages of 5 to 7 years old. The Minor division is played by girls between the ages of 8 to 11 years old. Exceptions are made for those girls that are younger than 8 that have developed higher level skills. The Major division is played by girls between the ages of 12 to 15 years old. Exceptions are made for those girls that are younger than 12 that have developed higher level skills. Additional exception will be made to girls that are 16 years of age but have yet to develop skill levels that allow them to compete at higher levels. The Travel division is established for girls that are interested in playing at a higher competition level. Travel division games are played during the summer against teams from other cities.

HGSL assumes the responsibility of entrusting the players with the most knowledgeable, dedicated and competent adults available to teach the game of softball in a safe, competitive and enjoyable environment.

All girls participating in the softball league will be taught the rules and basic skills of the game, including, but not limited to, throwing, catching, hitting, pitching and base running. In addition, the players will be taught to play the game with respect for coaches, umpires, parents, fans and each other. Sportsmanship will be stressed at all times.

HGSL will be used as a feeder program for the High School softball system. The intention is to provide girls to the level of skill necessary to play at higher levels of competition once they have graduated from the league.

Whenever possible, interaction between existing High School softball players and the league will take place. This will included, but not limited to, clinics on pitching, fielding and hitting.

Division	Ages
Instructional	5-7
Minor	8-11
Major	12-15
Travel	U10, U12, U14, U18

2. Government:

The understanding to all is that this league has been developed for the girls of Haverhill and the interest of the girls will be at the forefront of every decision voted on and implemented by the board of directors.

The league will be run by a committee in which all present at a league meeting will be able to vote on issues under discussion. The committee for the league will be comprised of coaches, assistant coaches or parents. Those present during league meetings in which voting will be conducted will be allowed one vote. There will be representatives for each division that are not involved directly with the division in which they are coaching or have a child in play. A treasurer will be appointed for control of all financial aspects of the league funds. During league meetings each member of the committee will be entitled one vote each on subject matter at hand. Majority rules on all voting situations.

All decisions for investment into the league will require board approval. This includes, but not be limited to, such issues as field improvements and equipment investments. The approval will be based on majority in favor of the investment.

The treasurer will report at all meeting the current financial balance of the league funds.

The committee established for the league will consist of the following positions:

President
Vice President
Commissioner
Secretary
Treasurer
Concession Stand Director
Open Day Director
Major League Director
Minor League Director
Instructional League Director
Umpire & Chief

3. Goals

3.1. Skill levels:

The continued development of playing skills of girls of all ages within the league will be an ongoing process throughout the lifetime of the league. This will include but limited to, coaches transferring of knowledge, drills, and clinics.

3.2. Fences (Short Term)

Enclose Major league fields with a fence that surrounds the entire playing field. The fence will have two fold benefits. The first will be increasing the professional appearance

of the Major and Travel Division play. The second benefit will be that it will provide a location for which to place sponsor advertisements. These sponsorship advertisements will produce revenue needed for future projects.

3.3 Relocation of all Fields

All four of the fields should be relocated so that the home plates of each field are at a centrally located. At the center of the park the home plate of each field will be located in order to have all four fields jutting out toward the outer boundary. This will allow for a centrally located concession stand and bathroom. Haverhill City Planners and Engineers will need to be involved prior to the commencement of this project.

3.4. Lights

The addition of a lighting system added to at least two of the fields. This would allow for night games which will be needed as the league grows in size. Playing games at 6 PM and 8 PM will ease the schedule dramatically.

4. Coach, Player and Parent Responsibilities

HGSL will enforce a Zero Tolerance policy for at all levels of play. This includes coaches, parents and players. The umpire will have authority to ensure that this policy is implemented and they will at all times have the full support of the coaches as well as league committee members.

The purpose of this section is to define a code of ethics that all coaches, players and parents are expected to abide by. The actions of players, managers, coaches, umpires, league officials and parents must be above reproach. Any player, manager, coach, umpire, league official or parent who is involved in a verbal or physical altercation, or an incident of unsportsmanlike conduct, at the game site or any other HGSL activity, is subject to disciplinary action by the local HGSL Board of Directors.

4.1 Coaches' Code of Conduct

- I will place the emotional and physical well being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.
- I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.
- I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players.
- I will provide a sports environment for my team that is free of drugs, tobacco and alcohol, and refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I will be knowledgeable in the rules of the game and I will teach these rules to my players.
- I will use coaching techniques appropriate for each of the skills that I teach.
- I will remember that I am a youth sports coach, and that the game is for the children and not adults.

- I will treat other coaches, players, fans, officials, with respect regardless of national origin, race, creed or ability.

4.2 Parents' Code of Conduct

- I will provide positive support, care and encouragement for my child participating in youth sports.
- I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice or other youth sports events.
- I will place the emotional and physical well being of my child ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will insist that my child play in a safe and healthy environment.
- I will support coaches and officials working with my child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
- I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I will remember that the game is for my child and not for me.
- I will do my very best to make youth sports fun for my child.
- I will ask my child to treat other players, coaches, fans, and officials, with respect regardless of national origin, age, race, creed, or ability.
- I promise to help my child enjoy the youth sports experience by doing whatever I can, such as being a respectable fan, assisting with coaching, or providing transportation.
- I will require that my child's coach be able to teach the required skills of softball and that they uphold the Coaches' Code of Ethics.

4.3 Players' Code of Conduct

- I will be positive about my youth sports experience and accept responsibility for my participation.
- I will encourage good sportsmanship from fellow players, coaches, officials and parents at every game and practice by personally demonstrating good sportsmanship.
- I will attend every practice and game that I can, and will notify my coach if I cannot.
- I will expect to receive a fair and equal amount of playing time.
- I will do my very best to listen and learn from my coaches.
- I will treat my coaches, other players, officials and fans with respect regardless of national origin, age, race, creed, or abilities and I will expect to be treated accordingly.
- I deserve to have fun during my sports experience and will alert parents and coaches if it stops being fun.
- I deserve to play in an environment that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and expect adults to refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I will remember that sports are an opportunity to learn and have fun.

5. Equipment:

- ASA approved equipment must be used, including safety base at first and an approved helmet face-mask guard.
- Anyone warming up a pitcher must wear a mask.
- Home team will supply the two game balls for each game.
- Softball bats must be used at all times.
- Minor division will use an 11 inch softball
- Instructional division will use an 11 inch “softy” softball.

6. Rules:

6.1.1 Travel Division Rules:

The Travel division will follow all ASA rules for every level of travel play (U10, U12, U14 and U18). This holds true for both A and B divisions.

6.2.1. Major Division Rules:

The Major division will follow ASA rules with the following exceptions.

- The Major division will determine these rules at the beginning of the season and may amend them as the season progresses. Changing of rules during the season will need a majority vote by all coaches. The Major League Director will over see the voting process.
- Both Coaches will review rules with the umpire prior to the commencement of the game.
- Base coaches may be adults or players (player must wear a helmet).
- Pitchers removed during the inning can not resume pitching until the inning has been completed. Pitchers may then resume pitching the following inning. There is a maximum number of 6 innings that will be allowed during the week. There will be an exception during a 2 out of 3 playoff series. The 3rd game would reset the innings to zero.
- The mound will be a distance of 40 ft.
- Pitchers will be removed after hitting their 3rd batter of the game. This will be at the discretion of the umpire.

6.2.2. Six Run Rule:

An inning will end early if a team scores six runs before there has been three outs recorded. The play on the sixth run will end when the play has been completed. This means that if more than 6 runs have scored they all count. The six run rule is lifted in 6th inning. If the game is called prior to the 6th inning then the six run rule will be in effect.

6.2.3 Fielding a Team

There will be a maximum number of ten players on the field. A minimum number of players will be seven. Outfield players must stand in the outfield grass. There will only be 6 infielders allowed. They will consist of 1st base, 2nd base, 3rd base, shortstop, pitcher and the catcher. A short fielder may be used but they must stand on the outfield grass.

6.2.4 Roster

Each player on the roster will appear in the batting order if they are at the game, unless they are physically or emotionally not able to play. The decision will be the players' decision. Disciplinary situations may occur in which the player is not allowed to play even though they are at the game. Each player will play at least 3 defensive innings in the field.

6.2.5 Pitching Restrictions

There will be a six inning limit on a pitcher during a one week period. The week will consist of Monday through Saturday. Pitchers may pitch six innings on Thursday and six innings the following Monday, however both the coach and player must be in agreement for this to transpire. The exception will be made for a playoff series which is the best of 3. Innings will reset to zero for the 3rd game.

6.2.6 Time Limit

Games during the regular season will begin at 6 pm. No inning will begin after 8:00 pm. The umpire will decide the postponement of a game due to darkness.

6.2.7 Fielded Team

A team can only field a maximum of ten players defensively. Offensively the lineup will be a continuous batting order.

6.2.8 Uniforms

Uniforms will be worn by all players. Exceptions may be made at the coach's discretion to accommodate those girls that arrive from some other activity and are not in proper uniform. Proper shoe wear will be mandatory at all times. Shoes attire such as sandals and crocs are not appropriated foot ware for softball.

6.2.9 Substitutions

Substitutions that are defensive in nature can be made at any time during the game. However the batting order will not be affected. This rule also requires that 6.2.3 is met.

6.2.10 Batting

The batting box as dictated by ASA rules will be observed. Batting orders will be continuous. Should an injury occur that position in the batting order may be skipped without a penalty occurring. The batting order should be continuous during the entire season. That means that any player on deck when the last out is made should lead off the next game with the order staying as opening day.

6.2.11 Stealing

Stealing will be allowed in the Major division. There will be a maximum number of 2 steals of home plate per any inning. This includes extra innings and playoff games.

6.2.12 Walks

There will be an unlimited number of walks for the Major division.

In the Major division once a walk has been issued the runner must either stop at first base or continue to run to second base. Any turn toward second base without a commitment to continue will be ruled out, unless the pitcher attempts to make a throw. At that point the base runner may stop and go back to first base. ASA rules apply.

6.2.13 Bunting

Bunting will be allowed at all division levels.

6.2.14 Mercy Rule

There will be a mandatory 15 run mercy rule established. Any team ahead by more than 15 runs after 4 1/2 innings will automatically win.

6.2.15 A “called” game

Regular season games called on account of rain or darkness after 4 innings will be considered official. The team ahead at the beginning of the inning will be considered the winner. Games called before the 4th inning will not be an official game and will be made up if agreed to by both coaches.

6.2.16 Rain Outs/Make Ups

Games that are rained out will be made up based on the coaches' agreement on date. The decision does not have to be immediate.

6.2.17 Umpires

Umpires for Major division games will be ASA certified. Minor league umpires will be under the direction of the ASA umpire chief. Major league umpires will be paid according to an agreed upon fee. Umpires will still be paid for games that are called on the account of rain. Umpires will be paid if a team can not field enough players and must forfeit. Payment for Minor leaguer umpires will be agreed upon prior to the beginning of the season. The umpire must be notified in advance of games that are postponed so that the league does not incur umpiring fees unnecessarily.

6.2.18 Sliding

Sliding into home plate will be mandatory when there is a playable situation. There will be no collisions allowed. Players that do not slide into home plate will be called out when there is a playable situation. Sliding into other bases is also mandatory when there is a playable situation. The umpire will use their discretion as to playable situation.

6.2.19 Hit By Pitch

A batter is entitled to 1st base when the batter is touched by a thrown ball from the pitcher in which the batter is not attempting to hit, unless 1) the ball is in the strike zone when it touches the batter, or 2) the batter makes no attempt to avoid being touched by the ball.

6.2.20 Throwing the Bat

If a batter intentionally throws a bat in anger, she may be ejected from the game. This will be at the umpire's discretion.

6.2.21 On Deck Batters

On deck batters will be the only ones allowed to hold a bat. They must in a designated area in front of the fence inside the playing field. Attention must be paid at all times to the game as they prepare themselves for batting.

6.3.1 Minor League Rules

6.3.2. Roster Size:

At least twelve players will be assigned to each team at the beginning of each season. Coaches may add up to four players to a maximum of sixteen. If your roster falls to ten, call the commissioner and players will be added from a waiting list or another division.

6.3.3. Defensive Alignment:

During the game, ten players will be in the field. The short outfielder may be used as an extra infielder (this will be left up to the each coach to decide how to align the 10th player). The key is to teach positions to the girls in order from them to develop further understanding of the game.

6.3.4. Game Length:

Each game will be a maximum of six innings. Darkness, weather or length of innings may prevent a complete game. There will be no extra innings. An inning will not be started if the home team will not have opportunity to bat.

6.3.5. Pitching:

Pitchers may throw six innings per week. When a pitcher walks three batters in an inning, the umpire will have a coach throw the rest of the inning. Any batter facing a coach will either hit or strike out. Windmill pitching is strongly encouraged.

6.3.6. Pitching Distance:

Players of all ages will throw from 35 feet. This distance may be increased to 40 ft during the season. This decision will be agreed upon by coaches.

6.3.7. Run per inning:

A five run maximum in each inning remains in effect.

6.3.8 Basepaths:

The distance of the base path will be 60 feet and will be marked on all fields.

6.3.9. Baserunning:

There will be no stealing or advancing on a passed ball at this level. Tagging and advancing on caught fly balls will be permitted. Runners may take one base from their previous base on overthrow errors.

6.3.10. Backstop:

A coach, spectator or player (with a catcher's helmet) will be positioned at the backstop to return passed calls to the pitcher. This person must not interfere with foul pop-ups being fielded.

6.3.11 Batting Order:

A continuous batting order of all available players is mandatory. Keeping a book to track your order and tracking runs is suggested in order to report results to the website. The batting order should be continuous during the entire season. That means that any player on deck when the last out is made should lead off the next game with the order staying as opening day.

6.3.12 Umpires:

Teenage umpires will be assigned to all minor league games. If the umpire is not present at 6 PM, ask a parent or coach to take their place until they arrive. The games must start on time. REMEMBER, NO ABUSE OF UMPIRES BY ANYONE WILL BE TOLERATED (see section 4). Umpires will report a problem to the division commissioner or league committee member. Payment for umpires in the Minor league division will be determined at the beginning of the season. The intention is to utilize teenage umpires for community service.