

STAFFORD GIRLS SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION, INC.

GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

Adopted for the 2007 Season

It is the intent of the SGSA to follow the current "Official ASA Softball Rules" for the Coaches Pitch, Junior and Senior Divisions (see T-Ball rider) with the following rule modifications:

A. Player Divisions:

<u>Division</u>	<u>Grades</u>
T-Ball	Kindergarten & 1 st Grade
Coaches Pitch	2 nd & 3 rd Grade
Junior	4 th , 5 th , & 6 th Grade
Senior	7 th through 12 th Grade

Note: In the Senior Division, 11th and 12th graders may play in the league subject to SGSA Executive Board approval.

B. Game Rules:

1) Defensive Players:

<u>Total</u>	<u>Minimum # In Outfield/Grass Until Ball is Hit</u>
T-Ball – (Whole Team)	4
Coaches Pitch – Ten (10)	4
Junior – Ten (10)	4
Senior – Ten (10)	4

Note 1: Eight (8) players required to play in all divisions, to begin and end all games.

Note 2: Senior Division Players must play a minimum of three (3) defensive innings. Junior Division players must play a minimum of three (3) innings. Coaches Pitch Division players must play a minimum of two (2) defensive innings. Exceptions to this would be injury to player, a game called early due to darkness, or weather conditions where a complete game has been called. An additional exception would be disciplinary action by the manager, coach, or umpire which may result in the player not fulfilling this SGSA rule. When disciplinary action is initiated by the manager, the manager is to notify the umpire and the opposing team manager of such action prior to the start of the game, or as soon as such action is taken, if during a game.

Note 3: Coaches Pitch Division opposing coaches are to agree on number of outfielders before each game starts. Number of infielders shall be limited to six (6) standard positions.

2) Batting Line-Up:

All teams will bat their full roster. This batting roster will be made prior to the start of each game, and a copy given to the opposing coach. No change in the batting order can be made during any game. If a player arrives late she will be placed at the bottom of the batting order and the opposing coach notified. In the case of a player being injured or leaving early, the batting order will continue as listed except for said player. No out will be assessed to the batting team in this case for missing a player if the opposing coach is notified of the change.

3) **Substitution Rule:**

Open and free substitution will be permitted.

4) **Pitching:**

Coaches Pitch Division – Players will be pitched to only by a member of their own team’s coaching staff unless pre-arranged prior to the start of the game being played. Each batter will be pitched seven (7) pitches. She will be encouraged to swing, and will be called out only when she has not connected with the ball into fair territory after seven (7) pitches. The coach/pitcher shall also act as umpire when pitching. It is only this person who can make the final rule of the game. The coach/pitcher, on the mound, serves only to pitch the ball and call the plays, and may not touch the ball any time it is in play. If the coach acting as pitcher accidentally comes in contact with said ball, the play will continue with ball considered live. Halfway through the season, a pitcher may be used by one or both teams.

Junior Division – A pitcher’s maximum number of innings per week shall be seven (7) innings except as noted below. Fast pitch is to be utilized with windmill pitching permitted.

Senior Division – A pitcher’s maximum number of innings per week shall be eight (8) innings except as noted below. Fast pitch is to be utilized with windmill pitching encouraged. No high school varsity pitchers may pitch in the SGSA.

Junior/Senior Division:

- ? Open substitution of pitchers allowed.
- ? If a pitcher is taken from the mound, either to the bench or to another position, she may not return to the mound until the following inning.
- ? The week goes from Sunday to Saturday. In the event of a team having three (3) games in a week as the result of a rain out, suspended game, or an official schedule change, a pitcher will retain her inning count of the suspended week and carry all innings cumulative to the following week. There are no inning restrictions for pitchers during league playoffs. Maximum numbers of innings are to be enforced by that division’s player agent. Penalty for non-compliance is forfeiture of game.

- ? In the event of a team having three(3) games regularly scheduled in one week, a pitcher may pitch an additional four (4) innings for that week only.
- ? One of more pitches per inning counts as a full inning pitched.
- ? Pitchers' names, numbers, and the number of innings pitched shall be posted with the game results at the concession stand.
- ? Any pitcher, who, intentionally or not, hits a batter with a pitched ball three (3) times during the course of one game, shall be removed as pitcher for the remainder of the game.

5) Bunting:

Bunting is not permitted in the T-Ball and Coaches Pitch Divisions. Bunting is permitted in the Junior and Senior Divisions.

6) Sliding:

Sliding is not encouraged in the T-Ball Division. Sliding is encouraged in the Coaches Pitch, Junior and Senior Divisions. A runner must attempt to avoid contact with the defensive player or she will be called out.

7) Leading:

Leading is not permitted in the T-Ball and Coaches Pitch Divisions. In the Junior and Senior Divisions, a runner may lead upon the pitchers' release.

8) Stealing:

T-Ball and Coaches Pitch Divisions – Stealing is **NOT** permitted.

Junior Division – Stealing is permitted upon the pitchers release. Stealing shall be limited to a total of three (3) bases per inning. Subsequently runners attempting to steal a base shall be returned to the base of origin without penalty. There shall be no stealing by the batter or any runner after a called base on balls (walk), in the division.

Senior Division – Open stealing is permitted upon the pitchers release.

9) Base Running:

Play is no longer live when the pitcher has control of the ball within the pitchers circle. Diameter of the circle shall be sixteen (16) feet. Runners are permitted to advance if the ball is outside the circle as the result of an overthrow, and is not counted as a steal. When a catcher misses a pitch, it is considered a passed ball, and it is counted as a steal.

Coaches Pitch Division – Bases shall be set at 55 feet apart.

10) Dropped Third Strike Rule:

The dropped third strike rule applies **only** to the **Senior Division**, in accordance with ASA Rules.

11) Complete Game:

Complete Games are defined as follows:

<u>Division</u>	<u>Maximum Innings</u>	<u>Minimum Innings</u>
T-Ball	3	2
Coaches Pitch	4	3
Junior	6	4
Senior	7	5

- ? If a game is suspended by the Umpire due to weather or darkness before the minimum number of innings is completed, play will resume at point of **last completed inning**, girls not present at the original game may be added at the end of the batting lineup when play resumes and enter the game. The Score book shall be signed as an official record by both teams and the Umpire.
- ? If game results in a tie after the maximum number of innings have been played, each team shall be awarded ½ win. **In the Junior and Senior Division** the games will continue for **one (1) inning** with the International Tie Breaker in effect. If there is still a tie each team will be awarded ½ win.
- ? All rescheduling of incomplete games will be done by the SGSA League Player Agent for that division within two (2) weeks of the originally scheduled game. There will be only one postponement of the make-up game.
- ? Games can be rescheduled only for unforeseen school functions with 24 hour notice to the player agent.

12) Maximum Runs per Inning:

<u>Division</u>	<u>All innings except Last</u>	<u>Last</u>
T-Ball	Open	Open
Coaches Pitch	4	12 Run Limit
Junior	4	Open
Senior	5	Open

For the **Junior Division**, if a team trails by ten (10) or more runs after batting in the fifth inning, the game shall be declared completed. For the **Senior Division**, if a team trails by ten (10) or more runs after batting in the sixth inning, the game shall be declared completed. There shall be a two (2) hour time limit in each game where you cannot start a new inning after two (2) hours.

13) Distance from Pitching Rubber to Apex of Plate:

<u>Division</u>	<u>Distance</u>
T-Ball	35 feet
Coaches Pitch	35 feet
Junior	35 feet
Senior	40 feet

14) Junior and Senior Division Temporary Draft:

Senior Division teams may temporarily draft no more than three (3) sixth (6th) grade players from the Junior Division in accordance with the rules of the league, through the Junior Division's Player Agent. Fifth (5th) grade players from the Junior Division may also be temporarily drafted with player agent approval. Any drafted player must play the entire game. Any Senior Team with eight (8) players may draft two (2) players. Any team with less than eight (8) players may draft three (3) players.

Note: Junior Division teams may draft from the Coaches Pitch Division

15) Infield Fly Rule:

The infield fly rule as defined in the ASA Rule Book shall apply to the Senior Division only.

16) Choosing Coaches as Assistants:

Each Head Coach shall declare to the SGSA one (1) assistant coach in writing on or before the **February** meeting. **FAILURE TO DO SO WILL RESULT IN NOT BEING ABLE TO CHOOSE AN ASSISTANT UNTIL AFTER THE DRAFT HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND WILL HAVE TO BE CHOSEN FROM WITHIN THE EXISTING TEAM.** All other coaches must be chosen after the draft.

The **February** meeting shall be mandatory for all coaches. All coaches must show proof of taking the Rutgers Safety Course or an equivalent before the season begins.

Note 1: In the instance that expansion teams are necessary in any division, the following shall apply:

- ? Any coach accepted by SGSA as manager of an expansion team ONLY may choose one (1) assistant coach before draft of said division. Choice must be made from existing applicants.

C) General Provision Rules:

- 1) Inclement weather which causes unplayable field conditions as determined by the Umpire, or official cancellation by the SGSA, are the only basis for game cancellation and rescheduling. A team unable to field the minimum number of players within fifteen

minutes of scheduled start time shall receive a forfeit for that game. Should both teams be unable to field the minimum number of players, each will receive ½ a loss.

- 2) Alcoholic beverages are prohibited on Township playing fields and associated areas during all practices and games, or during any official activity sponsored by the SGSA.
- 3) Smoking is prohibited on Township playing fields and associated areas during all practices and games, or during any official activity sponsored by the SGSA.
- 4) Protests are allowed in the Junior and Senior Divisions. Protests must be filed on the field as per applicable ASA rules. Protests must be filed in writing to the SGSA for resolution within one (1) week of the game being protested.
- 5) Any person calling strikes and balls in any given game, whether he or she be paid or volunteer, will be considered the Official Umpire of said game, and is granted full authority as Umpire, and is required to follow the SGSA rules.
- 6) In additions to the foregoing, all other rules and regulations contained in the written agreement with the Township of Stafford must be adhered to.

D) Safety Rules:

Refer to current High School Softball Safety Rules. These are supplemented as follows:

- 1) Wearing of regulation batting helmets is mandatory to protect against possible head injuries. Helmets must be worn by the batter, base runners, on-deck batters, and any player at the first and/or third base lines. Chin straps must be worn properly with the helmets at all times. Catchers must wear the catcher's mask with the catching throat protector.
- 2) Any batter who deliberately throws a bat or any other item or equipment may be ejected from the game at the discretion of the Umpire.
- 3) If the Umpire judges a player to have subjected another player, Umpire, Coach, or anyone on or off the field, to the risk of injury by unintentionally throwing a bat, the Umpire shall notify a warning to the coaches of both teams. Upon a second occurrence the player throwing the bat shall be declared out.
- 4) In order to participate, a player must wear the full team uniform for all games. The uniform consists of any articles of clothing supplied by SGSA. **Black** shorts, not provided by SGSA, may be worn **only with sliders**. Any player participating in school sports, on the day of a SGSA game, may wear that team uniform for their SGSA game.

- 5) Players, managers, coaches, and volunteers authorized by the manager are the ONLY people permitted to be in the Dugout. The total number, including the manager, is limited to a maximum of four (4). Players are to remain in the vicinity of the dugout during the course of the game. Non-coaches may help out on the field during a game only if they have been certified with the Rutgers Safety Course. All coaches are responsible to make sure that their team's dugouts are clean from debris before they leave the playing area.
- 6) All purpose shoes may be worn by all players in the T-Ball and Coaches Pitch Divisions. In the Junior and Senior Divisions, rubber cleats are encouraged. Metal cleats are prohibited in all Divisions.
- 7) At the discretion of the Umpire a runner may be declared out if she does not attempt to avoid a fielder who has the ball and is attempting to make a defensive play, or if she runs maliciously into any defensive player.
- 8) Only one (1) player at a time is allowed in the batters on deck circle.
- 9) Players jewelry is limited to post earrings only.
- 10) The catcher shall wear a head protector, a protective mask with throat protector, body protector and baseball/softball protective shin guards. Any player warming up a pitcher at any location shall wear a mask and throat protector. Only players, coaches, or authorized volunteers will be allowed to warm up the pitchers.
- 11) Spectators are prohibited from behind the backstop area. The Umpire shall have the power to remove spectators who do not comply with this rule after being requested to move.

E) Sportsmanship Rules:

The following rules have been established to instill good sportsmanship:

- 1) Ridicule, disparaging remarks or acts by anyone is prohibited.
- 2) The decisions of the Umpires are to be considered FINAL.
- 3) Use of profanity by anyone is prohibited. The use of air horns by anyone is prohibited
- 4) Violators of the above sportsmanship rules shall receive one (1) warning from the Umpire. After a second infraction, the Umpire has the right to eject the violator from the field.
- 5) All infractions are subject to review and action by the SGSA Executive Board.

F) Tie Breaker Rules:

Play Offs will be established by the Executive Board on an annual basis.

G) T-Ball Division Rider:

T-Ball is instructional in nature and as such, a teaching and learning atmosphere should prevail. Coaches should stress basic skills and team concepts so players can improve their game. It is far more important to show the girls how to win and lose graciously by mixing in plenty of understanding and fun, than to teach them an obsession to win at any cost. The T-Ball Division will follow the current SGSA rules with the following exceptions:

- 1) Only one (1) base shall be granted, per runner on any one (1) overthrow that goes into dead ball territory. All other misplaced balls will be considered live and bases must be earned.
- 2) Each inning is complete when all players have batted once.
- 3) The team player/pitcher will stand in the vicinity of the pitcher's mound.
- 4) Play is ended when the ball is in the pitcher's circle. The player/pitcher must have made an attempt at possession of the ball within the circle.
- 5) Two (2) defensive coaches are allowed on the field to guide their players on all games played during the first three weeks from opening day.
- 6) Bunting, Stealing, and Leading are NOT permitted.
- 7) If the field conditions are unplayable, it is the responsibility of the coaches to cancel the game and contact their players. The decision to play make-up games for cancellation, suspension, or rain must be agreed upon by both coaches, and the player agent notified
- 8) The team coaches shall decide on dead ball areas, outfield limits, fair and foul lines and the pitcher's circle prior to the start of the game.
- 9) No official score book or standings will be kept by any T-Ball Team.
- 10) Aggressive base running is not permitted (i.e. the base runner is waved "home" on an outfield hit where the fielder attempts to throw out the "hitting" base runner going to first base.) The purpose of this rule is to: a) Prevent runaway scores b) Encourage skills other than just running and base running.
- 11) No out will be declared when a player intentionally rolls the ball to any base to complete an out.
- 12) If a batter makes an out, she must leave the base. For every three (3) outs, the bases must be cleared.

H) Drafting Procedures:

- 1) Picking order will be based on previous season's official regular season record. Last place team will pick first
- 2) New teams get the first two (2) picks in the first round. **The Coach's child and the assistant coach's are automatically placed on that team and are not considered a pick. The sponsor's child is considered a draft pick and one of the first two draft picks.**
- 3) If more than one new team is in the draft, order of the draft for the new teams only will be picked from a hat.
- 4) All girls that try out will be drafted first. Upon completion of draft, the remaining girls names will be drawn from a hat continuing in order of draft.
- 5) Draft will be held within one week of tryouts and will be supervised by that division's Player Agent.
- 6) Siblings (with guardian's permission) have the choice to play on the guardian or sibling's team.
- 7) Late sign-ups shall be chosen from a hat in order of draft by those coaches needing additional players. Late sign-ups shall be allowed on a date to be determined by the board.
- 8) Children of all SGSA recognized coaches have the option to play on guardian/sibling's team. Any extended family relation or hardship case must be reviewed by the SGSA Executive Board on a case-by-case basis.
- 9) Trading of players after the draft will NOT be permitted unless approved by the SGSA Executive Board.
- 10) Any player not advancing as their age group requires to the next division must be evaluated and approved by the SGSA Executive Board.

F) Miscellaneous:

- 1) When a team has outstanding equipment that is not returned, SGSA with the Executive Board may disqualify said coach if deemed appropriate.
- 2) The removal of any litter left on the field and in the dugout is the responsibility of the teams playing on that given day. Litter is not to be left on any of the fields or in dugouts by any participants of the SGSA.
- 3) SGSA as referred to throughout these rules is an abbreviation for Stafford Girls Softball Association, Incorporated.