**SOUTH JERSEY GIRLS SOFTBALL**

**ASSOCIATION**

**2023 TRAVEL RULES AND REGULATIONS**

**I. BASIS**

A. All SJGSA divisions will be following the rules set forth by the National Federation of State High School (NFHS) in their rule book, unless otherwise changed or altered by the following amendments or descriptions.

**II. CONDUCT**

A. It is the responsibility of all managers and coaches to follow and remind their players, parents, and fans to maintain a proper code of conduct when at games. Managers are responsible for their coaches, players and fans conduct. Teams can be penalized due to unruly behavior by anyone affiliated with the team.

B. The umpires have complete control of the game from the beginning until completion of the game. The umpire has the right to take any action necessary to uphold the structure and dignity of the game.

**III. PLAYING REQUIREMENTS**

A. All players must have a common uniform, including a shirt (with numbers), pants/shorts, and socks/stirrups. A player may be permitted to wear her high school pants/shorts during a game (cannot wear high school shirt). Hats/ headbands optional.

B. There will be nine (9) players on the field with a manager’s option to bat the roster in Senior I, Senior II, Junior Olympic, Junior National, and Junior American divisions. There will be ten (10) players on the field with the manager’s option to bat the roster in the Junior Patriot, Major, and Minor divisions.

*C.* A minimum of eight (8) players is needed to play an official game. Forfeits occur with only seven (7) or less players. Teams may not finish the game with less than eight (8) players. An ineligible substitute (as chosen by the opposing manager) may be used if injury or illness occurs and the team will only have seven (7) players left. If a player is removed from the game due to illness or injury and no substitute is available, **that player’s batting position is passed over (not an out).** *SENIOR DIVISION ONLY: If a team does not have the required eight (8) players coaches may agree that one team may lend players to play the field only and it will count as an official game.*

D. Each game will be played with one (1) new ball and one (1) good condition ball (acceptable to umpire) **provided by the home team.**

* Majors - Seniors (u12-U18):
	+ Each team must use a twelve (12) inch .47 maximum core ball with leather cover
* The minor division (U10):
	+ Each team will use an eleven (11) inch ball. Game balls must be the same color and manufacturer.

E. Dimensions of the field (See NFHS rule book).

F. All batters and base runners must wear protective helmets with cages. Helmets will not be removed while the ball is live. Base runners removing helmets while the ball is live will be called out.

G. Catchers must wear a throat guard and headgear/hockey style mask in addition to the regular catcher’s gear.

H. Under no circumstances will any player warm up a pitcher without at least wearing a protective headgear mask and throat guard. This does not apply to managers and coaches.

I. Metal cleats will be permitted in u14-u18. Metal cleats are not permitted at u8-u12.

J. Infield Masks for all players are strongly recommended, especially pitchers.

K. All batting line-ups will be recorded in all record books showing first name, last name, and uniform number for each player. This rule may be spot checked at games by SJGSA board members and division commissioners. Rule violations will be subject to a $10 fine.

L. At no time will anyone but the manager, or such person who has been designated as the manager in the absence of the regular manager, be permitted to question the umpire on any judgment calls, balls/strikes, fair/foul, safe/out etc. The manager may question the umpire on a rule interpretation in a respectful manner.. Excessive questioning will result in an ejection. Problems with umpires must be formally submitted to the Division Commissioner 12 hours after the game unless there is an extreme incident that needs to be addressed immediately.

**IV. DURATION OF GAME AND GAME TIMING**

A. Games start at 6:30pm or 8:00pm unless otherwise designated on the schedule. Rosters must be exchanged no later than five minutes before game time. A forfeit will be recorded if a team is not present thirty-one (31) minutes after game time. If a field is not available for use within thirty (30) minutes of game time, the game may be rescheduled if both managers agree (also see Article IV, Section E). If there are a minimum of eight (8) players, adult supervision (must be rostered coach) and at least one (1) umpire (for regular season games), the game must start.

B. In all divisions except Minors, games stopped due to rain or darkness that have gone at least one (1) full inning, but less than four (4) innings, 3 1/2 innings if the home team is winning, will be considered an incomplete game and will be played from the point of suspension until completion. (See Article IV, Section F). The Minor division will be required to play three (3) innings, 2

1/2 innings if the home team is winning for the game to be deemed an “official” game.

C. Games consist of seven (7) innings with the exception of the minor division. The Minor division will be allotted six (6) innings. At the conclusion of ground rules, the clock will begin at one hour twenty minutes (1:20). Once the 1:20 time limit is reached - the umpire will set his timer for an additional 30 minutes. At the conclusion of the 1:50 time limit, the game will be terminated after finishing the last batter. If no pitch has been thrown, the game will be ended with no new batter. The score will revert back to the previous inning. If the game is in a division that is playing with run limits per inning, a final inning shall be designated as the "rally or unlimited" inning. As the time gets close to 1:20, umpire and/or team managers should designate a final inning with no run limits. This may occur in the top of an inning if the 1:20 time limit is reached and the home team has not yet batted. This would be the final inning.

There may be an additional fifteen (15) minutes allotted for unusual delay i.e. injury or rain. Games played under the lights will not be permitted to start a new inning after 10:00pm. Lights may be used to finish up any game as long as time permits.

D. If the umpire is late thirty-one (31) minutes from game time; the game should be played with a parent / volunteer.

E. Any game stopped because of a time limit will be an official game regardless of innings played, as of the last completed inning.

F. Regular season games may end in a tie after seven (7) innings or when the last inning is declared. Tie games during playoffs will be decided by the International Tie Breaker (ITB) Rule. Tie games in the playoffs will go to ITB after the time limit has been reached or 7 innings have been played (6 for Minor division). There is no 1:50 drop for playoff games.

G. Managers will see that their players quickly leave the field between innings in order not to delay the playing of the game. NFHS rule book allows only one minute, pitchers are only permitted five (5) warm-up pitches in the beginning of the first inning and three (3) warm-up pitches between subsequent innings. After the start of the first inning there will be no balls in the infield or outfield during warm-up pitches.

H. Any sight of lightning will immediately suspend the game (delay). All persons should remove themselves from the field immediately. (See Article IV, Sections B and C).

I. Standings, Point System and Playoffs:

* 1 points awarded to a played game winner
* .5 will be awarded for a tie

Total points will then determine playoff seedings except in the case where a “round robin” playoff system is utilized.

Time limit rules will be in effect for all playoff games as we have during the regular season except for the 1:50 drop. The ten-run rule will be in effect for all playoff games. Any game not completed will be a suspended game and finished before the start of the next game.

**V. PLAYING RULES**

A. Infield fly rule is used (see NFHS rule book) in Senior, Junior and Major divisions.

B. Unlimited stealing is permitted in ALL divisions. Stealing home is permitted in all divisions.

C. Base runners may not leave the base until the pitcher releases the ball. D. Dropped third strike applies in Major thru Senior division.
E. Interference and obstruction (see NFHS rule book).

F. An offensive player must not collide with any defensive player who has the ball in her possession and is waiting to make a tag. Any offensive player who, in a manner found excessive by the umpire, does collide as stated will automatically be called out. Any offensive player that maliciously and intentionally runs into a defensive player awaiting to make a tag will be ejected from the game and will be subject to suspension. Keep in mind that there is no “slide or veer” rule in effect for softball. No player can be forced to slide.

G. An optional courtesy runner will be allowed and encouraged at any time during the inning when the pitcher and/or catcher is safely on base. The courtesy runner may be any player on the bench not legally in the lineup. If there are no substitutes on the bench, legal or illegal, the courtesy runner will be the last completed at bat (not on base). There is no charged substitution for instituting the courtesy runner. A mandatory courtesy runner must be used for the catcher with 2 outs. The same courtesy runner may not run for both the pitcher and catcher in the same inning.

H. Strike zone (see NFHS rule book).

I. There are free defensive substitutions, however all re-entries must be inserted into their original slot in the batting order. A starter or substitute may only re-enter once.

J. A team is permitted only three (3) defensive conferences per game.. Changing pitchers is not a charged conference. Any defensive conferences after three, the pitcher must be changed. (This is a High School Rule).

K. A team is permitted only one offensive conference per inning.

L. Fake tags (in order to deceive the runner) are not permitted and are considered unsportsmanlike. Player is subject to ejection; the obstructed runner is bound by the obstruction rule.

M. Coaches may bat their entire roster in all divisions.

N. An intentionally thrown bat (or other equipment) may be subject to ejection by the umpire. Thrown bat rule will be used. First offense - team warning (both teams); thereafter, batters will be called out by the umpire.

O. Bunting is permitted in ALL divisions.

**VI. RUNS AND SCORES**

A. There is a limit of ten runs per inning per team for Senior Divisions. There is a limit of five runs per inning per team for Majors (American) thru Juniors National.

B. There is a limit of 3 runse per inning per team for Minors, and Majors Patriot divisions.

C. Mercy rule is in effect for ALL divisions. Majors (American) thur Senior divisions is 12 (after 4), 10 (after 5) , 8 (after 6).

Mercy Rule for U10 and Majors Patriot is 9 (after 4), 6 (after 5).

**VII. GAME RESCHEDULING**

A. Rescheduling of games (after the final schedule) is in accordance with SJGSA bylaws Article XI, Section 1, Part D-E

* Fines will be assessed ($10 for 1st game, $20.00 for 2nd game etc). Teams do not get fined for games that need to be rescheduled due to inclement weather.

B**.** Umpires will be scheduled (for make-up games) by SJGSA board members only. Managers and/or coaches should cancel games by contacting a SJGSA board member. **At no time will any manager or coach contact the umpire association.**