

Haverhill Girls Softball League
Local Rules and Policies
Updated: 4-12-2017

It shall be the policy of the League to conduct its activities so that the physical and moral welfare of the young people for whose benefit it is organized shall remain paramount and all matters of policy shall be determined on that basis.

Section 1. Authority

All rules and regulations will be based on USA Softball/ASA official rules of softball except where noted under each division.

Section 2. Registration

Registration for all players, new or returning, shall be held no later than the third Sunday of March of each year. The date, time, and location of registrations shall be determined by the League. These are subject to be changed without notice.

The League Secretary shall publicize the information regarding registration through the appropriate local media. Registration forms shall also be delivered to Recreation Department offices, the local schools, and sporting goods stores in the city. Registration forms require the signature of a parent or legal guardian. Registration information will be available to authorized personnel only. Girls will not be considered registered without receipt of all required information including Registration form, fees, and a signed medical release/waiver. All outdated registration information will be shredded and disposed of.

Section 3. Sponsors & Advertising

In order to secure suitable and adequate financial backing to carry out the purpose of the League, it shall be the policy of the League to permit only such sponsorship as is consistent with the purpose for which the League is organized and to select sponsors who are interested in the League solely or principally as a means of contributing to the welfare of young people.

Sponsors will be allowed to advertise on team shirts and pennants/banners with the exception of anything that may be detrimental to the players, League or USA Softball/ASA. Sponsor name **MUST** be on team shirts. Sponsors with daughters on a team are that team's sponsor.

It shall be the policy of the League to prohibit any direct advertising of alcoholic beverages or tobacco products in connection with the League or any of its programs. It shall further be the policy of the League to prohibit the use or consumption of alcoholic, tobacco, narcotic, or any prohibited substances during any League function including, without limitation, games.

Section 4. Awards

The awards, typically trophies will be at the discretion of the Board of Directors. NO special individual award will be presented to any girl for personal achievement in the League. Any other award, plaque, or trophy to be given must be approved by the Board of Directors.

Section 5. Fund Raising

The League shall, with the approval of the Board of Directors, engage in fund raising projects to augment League finances.

The principal fund raiser for the League may include a calendar raffle and tagging. The operation of League concession stand shall be carried out with the cooperative efforts of League coaches, parents, and volunteers.

All teams and players shall participate in League fund raising projects and/or tagging. The Board of Directors shall coordinate these projects with the help of committees & parents.

Section 6. General

The League shall be responsible annually for the procurement of insurance for the League's players, coaches, and Board of Directors. Along with meeting city permit requirements and fees. The League shall be responsible annually for the purchase of team uniforms and T-shirts for the coaches.

The League shall be responsible annually for the approval and securement of the services of a local photographer to provide individual player and team pictures.

Section 7. Conduct of Coaches and Players (*see coaching section*)

All League coaches and players shall promote and maintain good sportsmanship at all times, including at all League practices, games, and any additional League functions. Coaches shall comply with the Coaches' Code of Ethics and any additional League rules set down by the Board of Directors. Coaches shall treat all players, League officials, and umpires with courtesy and respect. Players, likewise, shall treat all Coaches, League officials, and umpires with courtesy and respect.

Coaches shall be volunteers from the community who are willing to instruct players in the fundamentals of softball and the ideals of good sportsmanship. A Coaches application form must be completed by anyone desiring to be a Coach along with a completed Cori form.

NO SMOKING will be allowed by ANYONE within the field of play or within the team dugout area. SMOKING IS ONLY ALLOWED IN THE PAVED PARKING LOT

Section 8. Scheduling

- A. No practices will begin prior to the City of Haverhill releasing the fields.
- B. Each team will have an equal number of games scheduled.
- C. Regular season games will start the week after April school vacation, weather permitting.

Section 9. Local Age Divisions

- A. The division a player will play in is determined by their age as of January 1st of that year for which they are signing up to play.
- B. Little Ladies Division will consist of girls ranging in ages from 5-7. Siblings may submit a written request to be placed on the same team. The league will strive to place no more than 6 girls on a team unless necessary.
- C. The U10 Division will consist of girls ranging in ages from 8-10. For this division, girls will be evaluated by coaches and board members and placed onto a draft list. Players will then be drafted by the coaches for individual teams. Siblings will be drafted simultaneously and count as 2 picks. (See League Draft Procedures)
- D. The U12 Division will consist of girls ranging in ages from 11-12. For this division, girls will be evaluated by coaches and board members and placed onto a draft list. Players will then be drafted by the coaches for individual teams. Siblings will be drafted simultaneously and count as 2 picks. (See League Draft Procedures)
- E. The 14U Division will consist of girls ranging in ages of 13-14. For this division, girls will be evaluated by coaches and board members and placed onto a draft list. Players will then be drafted by the coaches for individual teams. Siblings will be drafted simultaneously and count as 2 picks. (See League Draft Procedures)
- F. The number of players on each team and in each division, will be decided by the Board of Directors prior to the draft/placement.
- G. Individual player cases will be brought to the Board of Directors through the affected Division Commissioner and the Player Agent.
- H. Request by a parent to have their child moved to another team will be noted by the Board of Directors, Division Commissioner, and Player Agent. This information will remain confidential between the parent and the Board of Directors. This information does not need to be provided to the coach from which they have requested a move.
- I. Any player that has requested a move cannot request another team and must be placed into the draft. The coach will not be allowed to draft the player that has requested the move.

- J. Coaches cannot recruit for their player vacancies; they must take girls from the draft list or as assigned by the Board of Directors, Division Commissioner and Player Agent.
Indoor/Summer players can not request their coaches as these are all star teams and need to return to their spring team/Coach.

Section 10. Uniforms

Players must wear the uniform as furnished by the League. Players will supply their own socks, sliding pants, gloves, and cleats/sneakers. Shirts must be tucked in at all times while on the playing field. If not, this could be cause for the team to be charged with a delay-of-game penalty, as set by USA Softball/ASA standards.

No player will be allowed to play out of uniform. Any alterations of uniforms by a team can be cause for forfeiture of the game. Teams may elect to wear shorts or pants. All players must have the same color and style. NO tight fitting or exposing shorts or cutoffs will be allowed. NO crocs, sandals or other footwear is allowed on the fields. The color of each team's uniforms will be determined by the Board of Directors.

Section 11. Equipment

The League will not be responsible for any personal equipment and/or items of the players, nor assume any liability for players using personal equipment. Personal equipment is required to meet the specifications and safety standards set by USA Softball/ASA.

Section 12. Safety

- A. No jewelry of any kind is to be worn during games or practices, due to the potential for injuries. Taping of pierced ears is not allowed. Only the player's parents are to remove the jewelry from the player.
- B. Players should wear rubber cleats. Metal cleats are not allowed.
- C. Hair should be secured or braided out of the player's face.
- D. Team members must be kept within designated areas during play (i.e. dugouts and benches).
- E. Any player under a doctor's care must have a doctor's release before she can resume playing or practicing for the League.
- F. All injuries that occur during practices or games must be reported to the Division Commissioner via the team Coach.
- G. Catchers must wear full catchers gear when warming up pitchers.
- H. Batting helmets must not be removed from a batter's head while on the playing field. If an umpire feels a batting helmet is intentionally removed, the batter/runner maybe called out.

- I. Form fitting helmets are to be worn by the player for which they were designed. Chinstraps and Face Masks are required on all helmets including form-fitting helmets.
- J. The double base (orange) on first must be used as a condition of Insurance under all circumstances.
- K. Sliding is optional. Coaches will decide when a player should slide. However, per USA Softball/ASA rules, the offensive player must avoid collisions with the defensive player.
- L. Composite bats will not be allowed in the Little Ladies, 10U and 12U divisions.

Section 13. Umpires

- A. Umpires shall be hired by the League and paid for their services. The rate of pay for Umpires shall be determined by the Board of Directors and USA Softball/ASA.
- B. If Coaches insist on fair play, if Coaches concentrate on player enjoyment of the game and their overall, long term development, and if Coaches support the Umpire, the players and their parents will notice. If Coaches encourage (or allow) players to play outside the rules, if Coaches are overly concerned about results, and criticize the Umpire harshly, players and their parents will also notice. Poor sportsmanship WILL NOT be tolerated!
- C. The Umpire's jurisdiction begins when entering the field and ends when leaving the field following the completion of the game.
- D. Umpires shall arrive at the playing field 15 minutes before game time and start the game at the scheduled time (6 pm).
- E. The 10U, 12U and 14U Umpire shall wear:
 - A powder blue or navy blue, short-sleeve polo shirt.
 - Navy blue or heather colored gray shorts or slacks.
 - Navy cap (Note: Wearing of cap is optional).
- F. Umpires shall not work in any game in which the Coach, Assistant Coach, or player of either team is a direct relative of the umpire.
- G. Complaints regarding the ability or misconduct of an Umpire shall be directed to the appropriate Division Commissioner or to the Board of Directors who will consider the issue at hand and contact the Head Umpire for the USA Softball/ASA Region. The Commissioner and/or Head Umpire may dismiss an Umpire if that Umpire is deemed unsatisfactory.

Section 14. Cancellation/Rescheduling

- A. Only the game Umpire or President of the League has the authority to cancel a game prior to game time due to field and/or weather conditions. The President of the League will post game cancellations on the web page prior to 5 pm and will email the coaches that day to notify their parents. Please inform parents of this policy.
- B. Once a game has started, the Umpire shall be the sole judge as to whether and when play shall be suspended during a game because of unsuitable weather conditions or the unfit condition of the playing field. Resumption of play and termination of play are also at the discretion of the Umpire. In the case of Junior Umpires, the Board asks that the Coaches use their common sense to also help determine if field conditions are acceptable for the safety of their players on whether or not a game should continue.
- C. Only games cancelled because of field and/or weather conditions shall be rescheduled unless previously approved by the President of the League or Division Commissioner. Regularly scheduled games shall not be rescheduled unless both teams are unable to field a team for good cause within seven (7) days notification to the President of the League or Division Commissioner. Both teams must agree to reschedule.
- D. The President and/or Vice President of the League will coordinate with the Division Commissioner the rescheduling of games after discussion with Head Umpire. The leagues rules are the cancelled game will be played that week on the home coaches practice time. The Coaches of the respective teams will be notified of game time and field. The rescheduled games will be played on the date and time provided to each team unless there has been sufficient notification of the reasons prohibiting either team to appropriately field a team. Failure to provide sufficient notification or justifiable reason, as determined by the President and/or Vice President of the League, Head Umpire, and Division Commissioner, shall result in a forfeit by the team unable to field a team. It is the responsibility of the home team to work on rescheduling a game with the commissioner. If no attempt has been made to reschedule the game within 7 days the home team forfeits. If an attempt is made and not reciprocated by the away team the forfeit will be against the away team.
- E. Priority of rescheduling of games will be limited to acts of nature. **The Coaches are not to coordinate rescheduled games amongst themselves.**
- F. Games suspended because of weather will resume from the exact point of suspension. If a game is suspended for the above reason and 4 innings have been completed (i.e., the losing team has batted 4 times in the game), the game will be considered final and scores will be based on last completed full inning played.
- G. All rescheduled games will start with all players of record according to the suspended games scorebook. The Division Commissioner will do their best to reschedule **all** suspended games.
- H. Games will be rescheduled on the first available date after suspension of play in chronological order utilizing the home team's practice time first.

- I. If the game is tied and weather or darkness ends the game and the game is considered complete, the game will be scored as a half game in standings (except playoffs). At some point however it may become necessary to simply cancel those suspended games altogether.

Section 15. Fields

- A. Home team shall take the first-base side of the field and visitors will take the third-base side.
- B. Home team Coaches are responsible for lining the foul lines, batter's boxes and pitching circle; placement of bases; and raking the field (at least around the bases and home plate as well as the pitchers circle) prior to the game.
- C. After each game or practice, each team is responsible to make sure the fields and spectator areas are clean and not littered with debris. The Home team is responsible for returning all bases and removable pitching rubbers to the equipment room (shed or job box) at game's end unless another game is being played immediately following.

Section 16. Coaching

Purpose and Objective:

The purpose of this League is to establish organized softball with ultimate objectives of social, physical, mental, and moral development of girls aged 5 -15 years. A program of friendly competition with the goal of educating players about the ideals of good sportsmanship, teamwork, honesty, courtesy, courage, integrity and reverence so they may be finer, stronger, and happier girls who will grow to be good clean healthy adults. All adults will exemplify examples of these ideals, whether involved in HGSL activities or as a spectator.

The coaches, parents, and spectators shall bear in mind at all times that the attainment of exceptional athletic skill or the winning of games is secondary and that the molding of future citizens is of prime importance.

Conduct of Coaches and Players:

All league coaches and players shall promote and maintain good sportsmanship at all times, including at all league practices, games, and any additional league functions.

Coaches shall comply with the Coaches' Code of Ethics and any additional league rules set down by the Board of Directors. Coaches shall treat all players, League Officials, and Umpires with courtesy and respect. Players, likewise, shall treat all Coaches, League Officials, and Umpires with courtesy and respect.

Coaches shall be volunteers from the community who are willing to instruct players in the fundamentals of softball and the ideals of good sportsmanship. A Coaches application form must be completed by anyone desiring to be a Coach along with a completed Cori form & license.

NO SMOKING will be allowed by anyone within the field of play or within the team dugout area.

Application Process:

Completion of a Coach/Assistant application form does not guarantee that the applicant will be assigned a team. All Coach/Assistant positions are filled as vacancies occur and require Board of Directors approval. All Coaches/Assistants must attend the Coaches/Assistants meeting scheduled by the Board of Directors. Failure by either a Coach/Assistant to attend this **MANDATORY** meeting can be grounds for rescission of his/her position, unless notification is given and satisfactory just cause is demonstrated to the Board of Directors prior to the meeting.

Coaching Philosophy:

- A. The League's coaching philosophy will be approved and modified if needed. Approval will be retroactive at the end of the meeting as voted on by all Board members present.
- B. People coach for many different reasons. Some coach because they love the sport, some because they enjoy developing and influencing young people, some because they have a child who will play on the team. They are all good reasons to coach youth softball. In fact, no matter why you choose, taking the time to help young athletes learn softball is an important contribution to their development and, consequently, to our community.
- C. You are now facing the upcoming softball season. Have you coached softball before? Have you thought about what you plan to do? Have you ever worked with beginning players? Do you know how to teach specific skills? Even if the answer is yes, you will need to upgrade and be informed on the most current information. If you are determined to help the players on your teams have a **POSITIVE** and **SUCCESSFUL** softball experience, you must take the time to attend the League clinics, study and keep up with the League, and tournament rules. As a result you will be on your way to a successful season.
- D. It is important for every coach to establish a **COACHING PHILOSOPHY**. For this philosophy will help you and the League determine common goals and allow all of us to head in the same direction. You should think about how your goals support the goals of the League and how you plan to, along with the League, accomplish these goals.
- E. You may want to consider one of two major coaching philosophies. You might choose to emphasize winning as the most important objective, or you might stress participation, fun, and skill developments as the most important objective.

This is the League's philosophy:

- F. We advocate through our program **ATHLETES FIRST, WINNING SECOND**. By this statement we mean that every decision you make as a coach should first be in the best interest of your young athletes, and second the desire to win. The League hopes that helping

young girls to develop physically, psychologically, and socially will always be more important to you as a coach than winning at all cost.

- G. ATHLETES FIRST, WINNING SECOND does not mean winning is unimportant, or said more accurately that striving to win is unimportant. You should instill in your players a desire to win, to strive to do their best, to pursue excellence. However, the outcome of the game, the winning or losing, is not the most important objective. The most important objective is that your players try to win, that they try their best and have fun! If they do their best, they will have been successful regardless of the outcome of the game.
- H. This philosophy is reflected in how you present yourself to the players on your team. As a Coach, you are in an influential position. Thus, HOW you teach will be as important as WHAT you teach.

To implement the League philosophy, consider the following points:

- I. Be a good role model. Present a model for behavior that you want emulated. Set positive examples at practice and games.
- J. Everyone is important. Treat each player as an important human being. Each player will have a different personality and different needs. Be sensitive to these differences and show interest and concern for each team member.
- K. Consider the age and skill levels of your players. Your athletes will be full of energy and eager to try many skills. However, they are also young and not yet capable of performing as adults. This means you must approach your athletes at their skill level. Do not expect them to play at your level.
- L. Consider individual differences. Teach fundamental softball skills according to the ability of each player. Some players will be fast learners with whom you can progress rapidly. Other players will not learn, as quickly, so you will need to progress more slowly with them.
- M. Keep everyone active. Organize your practices and games so that each player is able to participate as much as possible. Young players want to play softball for many reasons; one of the most important is to have fun participating. If they are not kept active in practices, or allowed to play in games, they will quickly lose interest.
- N. Include athletes in the decision making process. Young athletes should have input as to what skills they practice and how to practice them. Ask your players what they need to work on, how they want to be grouped for practice, and what positions they would like to play. Naturally, young athletes should not control the practice, but do consider their interests and ideas when designing practices and playing games.
- O. Be patient. You will need to have patience with beginning players who are learning softball. Softball skills require timing, coordination, and glove control that can only be developed by repeated practice. Encourage your players to develop their skills, and reinforce players for

their effort and skill development. When young players learn new skills, both you and your players will be proud.

Disciplinary Action:

Enforcement of playing rules at League games shall be the sole responsibility of the Umpire who has been assigned to the game. Enforcement of additional League conduct rules shall be the joint responsibility of the Umpires assigned to the game, the Division Commissioner, any Board member present at the game, and any other League official who has been given authority by the Board of Directors. For any incidents regarding a player, Coach, spectator, or Umpire, the Division Commissioner shall inform and consult with the Board of Directors.

Dismissal of any volunteer shall be decided only by a Board of Directors vote. Violations of League conduct rules for Coaches and players include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Fighting;
- Foul language;
- Derogatory remarks made to Umpires, Coaches, or Board members;
- Improper decorum in the dugouts or on the fields;
- Cheating or fraud of any kind;
- Destruction of League or city property;
- Continued use of improper equipment or wearing of an improper uniform after being warned;
- Malicious conduct of any kind.

If there is an incident report on file from the previous season(s) between Coaches/Assistants and a player/player's parents, the incident will be discussed prior to the draft with the affected Coaches/Assistants. If the Coach/Assistant feels the situation would be disruptive to the team, the card will be marked as such.

The President of the League may immediately suspend any person with a serious enough charge against them to warrant such action, until after a special Board meeting is held. Persons who fail to comply with all rules and regulations set forth in these bylaws or who falsify any records or applications are subject to disciplinary action. Every effort will be made that such action will not be at the expense of players. It is the responsibility of Coaches/Assistants to inform all players and parents of the rules.

Coaches/Assistants, or Spectator Ejection:

- A. An Umpire may eject a player, Coach/Assistant, or parent from the game when in their opinion the individual is intentionally placing themselves or someone else in jeopardy, creating a safety hazard or displaying un-sportsmanlike conduct.
- B. If a Coach, player, or spectator is ejected from a game for any of the aforementioned violations, he/she must leave the playing field immediately and the park within ten (10) minutes of the ejection.

- C. A coach or spectator may only return to the park to pick up a player once the game is completed.
- D. Within 24 hours of the end of the game, any game Umpire who ejects a Coach, player, or spectator will, in writing, report the incident to the Head Umpire and/or the Division Commissioner, identifying the ejected individual and the team with which the individual is associated.
- E. Within 48 hours after being notified by the game Umpire, the Head Umpire and/or Division Commissioner will, in writing, report the incident to the President of the League, at which time the President will notify the ejected Coach, player, or spectator of the term and conditions of his/her suspension.
- F. If it is his/her first ejection of the season, any Coach, player or spectator ejected from a game by the game Umpire will be suspended from the next game played by his/her associated team, in addition to the game from which the Coach, player or spectator was ejected.

1st Offense - Suspension for the next game.
- G. If it is his/her second ejection of the season, any Coach, player or spectator ejected from a game by the game Umpire will be suspended from the next three (3) games played by his/her associated team, in addition to the game from which the Coach, player or spectator was ejected.

2nd Offense - Suspension for the next three (3) games.
- H. If it is any Coach, players or spectator's third ejection of the season, they will be suspended for the remainder of the season.

3rd Offense - Suspension for the remainder of the season.
- I. If during the term of his/her suspension, a Coach, player or spectator is present at any game played by the team with which the individual is associated, any completed game(s) will be forfeited to the opposing team.
- J. Additionally, the League may pursue criminal trespass charges if the police are required to remove someone from the park.
- K. If the offense occurs in the last game of the season, the suspension will be effective for the following season or the next season that the violator participates in.

Adult Responsibility:

- A. Coach:

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1. Coaches will be women/men at least 18 years of age. She/he may have one assistant of either sex. No team functions will be held unless an adult woman is in attendance.
2. Each coach should have a team parent meeting at the beginning of the season to explain safety, discipline, substitutions, League activities and their own goals.
3. For disciplinary reasons only, the coach may suspend a player from game play, not to exceed one full game, but must notify the opposing team's coach, the Division Commissioner, and the Player Agent prior to the game, along with the President and record the action in the scorebook. This is the only form of discipline by a coach permissible.
4. Allows only team personnel and players on the team bench. All people who are working with the players either during practice or games needs to have a CORI check performed prior to working with the girls.
5. The coach will be given an 'Injury Form' for all players and must have these forms in his/her possession at all practices and games. These forms are needed should a player need medical aid.
6. Team coaches must request an additional player from the Division Commissioner and Player Agent within 24 hours when a player drops from the team. No team may fall below the minimum number of players determined by the Board of Directors for each division.

B. Team Organization:

1. Obtain a chaperone and scorekeeper, if you desire.
2. Understand your team players and your responsibilities.
3. Select a team captain, if you desire, be fair, assign duties for safety, cleanup, etc.
4. Establish good sportsmanship, whether winning or losing, set a good example.
5. Maintain a good Umpire image.
6. Keep bats, balls and other equipment away from the playing area.
7. Know rules of the game,
8. Be prompt to games, practices and meetings. Promote parent participation, promote your sponsor and arrange for the team banner to be made (optional).
9. Work with the assistants on lineup, positions and strategy.

10. Prepare lineups properly and have them ready for scorekeepers before game time.

C. Equipment

All equipment received from the League at the beginning of the season must be kept in good condition and returned at the end of the season. Do not loan equipment to other coaches. If additional equipment or repair is needed, contact the Equipment Coordinator.

D. Assistants

1. Assistants will help teach the players softball fundamentals.
2. Work together with the coach to prepare the team lineups, positions, and strategy.
3. Know the rules.
4. Be fair, impartial, and patient. Give constructive criticism and advice to all team players.
5. Promote safety and instill good sportsmanship and respect. Conduct yourself with professional and sportsmanlike conduct at all times.
6. Attend team function, coaching clinics and League meetings.

E. Chaperone (if selected)

1. Assist the Coaches in assigning treats and snack bar duty, making phone calls and help with team pictures, picnics, parties, and fundraisers.
2. Assist with any player needing first aid.
3. Work with Coaches to achieve a good team organization.
4. Be aware of safety hazards, and stress safety at all times.
5. Encourage sportsmanship, cooperation, and good team spirit.

F. Scorekeeper (if selected)

1. Will keep accurate records of each game, keeping the scorebook neat and legible using a pencil at all times.
2. Know lineups and position numbers, keep accurate changes. Spell names correctly, using both first and last names to alleviate any confusion over similar names.
3. Keep track of balls, strikes, and outs and may assist Umpire when asked.

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4. Record all illnesses, absences, benching, suspensions, and injuries in the scorebook.
5. Know the game.

G. Parents

Parents should conduct themselves in an orderly manner at all times. They should support the League, players, Umpires, Coaches, and assistants. The League is a voluntary organization of people who work together to make it successful.

ENCOURAGE – don't DISCOURAGE. The presence of parents is encouraged by the League and is a source of encouragement to do well.