



**WAA 2019**  
**SOFTBALL RULES**

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## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Pre-Season Practice**

The head coach of your child's team will conduct practices during the days following team assignments and prior to the start of regular season play. Each head coach will have a practice schedule and you should assist your child in maintaining regular attendance. The players' skill, development and playing positions may depend upon this period of instruction.

### **League Play and Practice**

During the WAA season, each team will usually play 2 games each week. In addition, practices will be scheduled during the week **at the discretion of the head coach**. Many head coaches could use some help at practice, please offer your assistance. Parents who have some knowledge of the game of baseball and softball will find some modifications in the rules as played by WAA. Rules and strategy are altered for reasons of safety, size of the playing field, the size of the children and their ability. All rules are contained in this booklet.

### **Canceling Games and Rainouts**

- **Rainouts** – In the event of inclement weather OR poor field conditions, **the ONLY way game or field cancellations will be communicated is via our website at [www.waasports.org](http://www.waasports.org)**. Please go to the home page of the WAA website. [www.waasports.org](http://www.waasports.org). Under "Quick Links", the first link is the "WAA Rainout Line". Click on the link and it will take you to all the field locations WAA is using. Scroll through the list to find your field. Green means "It's a GO, Yellow means "pending", Red means "Cancelled".

Our goal is to update the status of game fields by **4:30pm** weekdays, **9am** on Saturday or as soon as we know about the playability of the field. PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE WAA OFFICE. We update the status as soon as crews contact us. Typically, we will not cancel games due to a weather forecast. Please note that all coaches and parents may download the free Rainout Line App, or sign up for email or text alerts for your team's specific fields. Sign up is easy and located on the left side of the Rainout Line status page. After 4:30 PM, continue to check the Rainout Line, but in most cases cancellations after 4:30, will be based on a game time decision at the field by the umpires and coaches

### **Uniforms**

All players must be in full uniform or they will not be permitted to play. A full uniform consists of the following:

1. Visor, team jersey, and socks will be provided by WAA for:
  - ◆ All Softball Rec levels: 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Grades
2. Players need to provide plain white/gray baseball pants or softball shorts.
3. Players must provide a glove.
4. **NEW in 2018, ALL players will be REQUIRED to provide and wear a protective fielding mask.**



## **1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> GRADE SOFTBALL RULES (Machine Pitch)**

### **A. Field Dimensions** - (To be played on Grass Rookie/T-Ball fields)

- ♦ The diamond will have fifty (50) foot base lines.
- ♦ The pitcher's mound will be thirty-five (35) feet from home plate.
- ♦ Home Team will provide pitching machine.

### **B. Equipment**

- ♦ **NEW in 2018, ALL players will be REQUIRED to provide and wear a protective fielding mask.**
- ♦ Each player must furnish her own glove.
- ♦ No metal or screw on cleats allowed.
- ♦ WAA will provide the players shirt, visor and socks.
- ♦ Players must provide their own white baseball pants or shorts.
- ♦ WAA provided visors must be worn on the field. All shirts must be tied at the waist or tucked in.
- ♦ WAA provided batting helmets must worn by players while in the on deck circle, batting, running the bases and the coach's box.
- ♦ ASA / USSA approved fast pitch softball bats only.
- ♦ The home team will supply an (11) inch "Soft" yellow softball as provided by WAA.
- ♦ The home team will supply the bases and pitching plate.

### **C. Games**

- ♦ Games will be 1:45 in length. No inning will start after the 1:45 time limit has been reached.
- ♦ All games will be scheduled for five (5) innings.
- ♦ Each half inning will consist of three (3) outs or four (4) runs whichever occurs first.
- ♦ The score will be kept, but standings will not be maintained.
- ♦ A regulation game, if called by darkness or weather, will be four (4) complete innings or, if the home team is ahead 3½ innings.
- ♦ The home team will always occupy the dug out on the 3<sup>rd</sup> base side of the field.
- ♦ Rescheduling games can be done by contacting the WAA office. Every attempt should be made to play the game as scheduled.
- ♦ Coach of the team batting will operate pitching machine.

### **D. Positions**

- ♦ The team on the field will consist of ten (10) players: First baseman, second baseman, short-stop, third baseman, pitcher, catcher, and four (4) outfielders (left, left center, right, right center).
- ♦ Each player must play at least three (3) innings in the field.
- ♦ All players will bat and have a regular spot in the batting order.
- ♦ There is open substitution; however, each player must bat as scheduled within the line-up prepared before the game.
- ♦ No player may play more than two (2) innings at the same position. Every attempt should be made to balance each player's time between outfield and infield positions.
- ♦ Fielders must play in their designated position until the ball is hit, over-loading fielders to one side of the field is not allowed.
- ♦ Outfielders must all play in standard outfield positions and are not allowed to cover a base to gain a force out.

### **E. Batting**



- ♦ A batter will be called out if he/she throws the bat.
- ♦ A strikeout will consist of three (3) strikes. There are NO WALKS.
- ♦ 2 bunts per inning are allowed.
- ♦ A batter is awarded 1<sup>st</sup> base when hit by a pitched ball.
- ♦ A dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike rule is not in effect.
- ♦ A tee can be used at coach's discretion. If used after a 3<sup>rd</sup> strike out, the batter is officially out and baserunners cannot score on the hit. If the batter that used the tee scores her run doesn't count.
- ♦ On deck batter must be in the batter's box behind the hitter. If a left-handed hitter is up, on deck batter must be on first base side.

#### F. Base Running

- ♦ All bases must be held until the ball is batted. There will be no lead offs or base stealing.
- ♦ Base runners must tag up on caught fly balls or they will be called out. The infield fly rule will not apply.
- ♦ A coach may decide, prior to the game, that a tee will be used after a third strike is thrown to the batter. Each coach may decide whether or not to invoke this rule and it is not necessary for both coaches to agree. If a coach chooses not to use the tee after the third strike, then the batter is out on strikes and must return to the dugout. If the Tee is being used, then after the 3<sup>rd</sup> strike an out is recorded and the tee is placed at home plate and the ball is put into play and play continues. The batter is officially out and baserunners cannot score on the hit. If the batter that used the tee scores her run doesn't count. If it is the 3<sup>rd</sup> out, the play continues until the ball is dead and then the inning is over.
- ♦ Sliding must be encouraged to avoid injury.
- ♦ **There are no:**
  - Lead offs
  - Stealing bases
  - Advancing on passed balls

#### G. Pitching

- ♦ Pitching machine will be used to pitch entire game. Coach of team at bat will operate pitching machine.
  - ♦ Suggested Settings for Pitching Machine are:
    - Power level 3
    - Release block handle 4
    - Micro adjustment 2
- ♦ The catcher will be encouraged to throw the ball back to the player at the pitching position.
- ♦ There are NO WALKS.
- ♦ If the ball hits the pitching machine it is considered live and "in play".

#### H. Coaching

- ♦ The batting team is allowed the following coaches; on deck coach, first base coach, and third base coach. All other coaches must remain within the dugout area and supervise the remaining players.
- ♦ The fielding team is allowed ONE coach on the field. There must be **one** coach of the fielding team that remains within the dugout area to supervise the remaining players.
- ♦ The head coach is responsible for maintaining order on the sideline and keeping equipment and players seated behind the bench lines (dug out). Batting helmets and hats should be kept by the on-deck circle away from the dugout.
- ♦ All coaching must be positive and instructional, not vulgar, critical, or demeaning. Coaches who are abusive to players must be reported to the Softball Director. Abusive behavior will not be tolerated.
- ♦ Coaches must stay cool. Don't embarrass yourself or WAA by creating a scene on the field. Set a good example of sportsmanship in all game situations.
- ♦ Any coaches who will not adhere to the WAA rules, policies and philosophy should plan on being a spectator.
- ♦ Coaches are not permitted to smoke or chew tobacco products during games or practices.



## I. Umpires

- ◆ The home team will supply an umpire who will be positioned behind the pitcher's mound.
- ◆ The umpire's decision will be final unless both team coaches agree that an error in interpretation of the rules has been made.
- ◆ The Umpire is responsible for:
  - Determining when each play has ended and the ball is dead.
  - Calling fair and foul balls.
  - Calling all outs.
  - Calling balls and strikes.



## **3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> GRADE SOFTBALL RULES (Player and Coach Pitch)**

### **A. Field Dimensions**

- ♦ The diamond will have sixty (60) foot base lines.
- ♦ The pitchers plate will be thirty-five (35) feet from home plate.

### **B. Equipment**

- ♦ **NEW in 2018, ALL players will be REQUIRED to provide and wear a protective fielding mask.**
- ♦ Each player must furnish her own glove.
- ♦ No metal or screw on cleats allowed.
- ♦ WAA will provide the players shirt, visor and socks.
- ♦ Players must provide their own white baseball pants or shorts.
- ♦ WAA provided visors must be worn on the field. All shirts must be tied at the waist or tucked in.
- ♦ WAA provided batting helmets must worn by players while in the on deck circle, batting, running the bases and the coach's box.
- ♦ ASA / USSA approved fast pitch softball bats only.
- ♦ The home team will supply an (11) inch "Hard" yellow softball as provided by WAA.
- ♦ The home team will supply the bases and pitching plate.
- ♦ The catcher must wear a mask, shin guards, chest protector with a protective flap, and a catcher's helmet as provided by WAA.

### **C. Games**

- ♦ Games will be 1:45 in length. No inning will start after the 1:45 time limit has been reached.
- ♦ All games will be scheduled for six (6) innings.
- ♦ Each half inning will consist of three (3) outs or four (4) runs whichever occurs first.
- ♦ The score will be kept, but standings will not be maintained.
- ♦ The home team will always occupy the dug out on the 3<sup>rd</sup> base side of the field.
- ♦ Rescheduling games can be done by contacting the WAA office. Every attempt should be made to play the game as scheduled.

### **D. Positions**

- ♦ A team on the field will consist of ten (10) players. First baseman, second baseman, shortstop, third baseman, pitcher, catcher, and four (4) outfielders (left, left center, right center, right).
- ♦ A game can be played with as few as eight (8) players. If either team has less than 8 players, an attempt should be made to balance the teams so the game may be played.
- ♦ Each player must play at least three (3) innings in the field and must bat as scheduled within the lineup prepared before the game.
  - *Each player is given a batting position regardless if she plays in the field or sits out an inning.*
  - *Each player must have an opportunity to play infield and outfield in every game.*
- ♦ Except for the pitcher, a player may not play the same position for more than two (2) innings in a game.
- ♦ Fielders must play in their designated position until the ball is hit. Over loading fielders to one side of the field is not allowed.
- ♦ Outfielders must all play in standard outfield positions (on the grass where applicable) and are not allowed to cover a base to gain a force out.

### **E. Batting**

- ♦ A batter will be called out if she throws the bat. The umpire's decision is final.
- ♦ There are NO walks.



- ◆ Bunting is allowed.
- ◆ A batter is awarded 1<sup>st</sup> base when hit by a pitched ball.
- ◆ On deck batter must be in the batter's box behind the hitter. If a left-handed hitter is up, on deck batter must be on first base side.

#### **F. Base Running**

- ◆ All bases must be held until the ball reaches the plate.
- ◆ Base runners may steal when the pitched ball reaches the plate.
- ◆ There will be no stealing home.
- ◆ The infield fly rule will not apply.
- ◆ On any infield overthrow the base runner may only advance one base and the ball will be considered dead.
- ◆ Sliding is encouraged to avoid injury.
- ◆ The umpire can rule the play dead if the ball comes in from the field and is then within a six foot radius of the pitching mound.

#### **G. Pitching**

- ◆ Players will pitch each inning, until batter has reached 4 balls, at which point the coach of the team at bat will finish pitching to the batter. Strikes will carry over, and NO WALKS will be issued. Once batter has finished her "at bat", coach will allow player to begin pitching to next batter.
- ◆ There are NO walks.
- ◆ No individual player will pitch more than 3 innings per game.
- ◆ A coach or assistant coach will pitch to his/her own team.
- ◆ The player at the pitching position, when the coach is pitching will stand within 2 steps to the side of the coach. Right handed player to the right, left handed player to the left.
- ◆ The coach, when pitching, will wear a glove for protection.
- ◆ The coach will pitch underhand and at approximately the same speed as that of the players.
- ◆ The catcher will be encouraged to throw the ball back to the player at the pitching position.
- ◆ The batter must either hit the ball into play or strike out in this situation.
- ◆ Any ball touched by the adult pitcher is live and "in play".

#### **H. Modified Pitching**

- ◆ Pitchers will take a position with both feet on the ground and in contact with the pitchers plate.
- ◆ The pitcher may use any windup desired, provided:
  - She does not continue to wind up after releasing the ball.
  - She does not pitch behind their back or between their legs.
  - It is a continuous motion.
  - No sling shot deliveries.
  - Windmill is permitted.

#### **I. Coaching**

- ◆ The batting team is allowed a 1<sup>st</sup> base coach, 3<sup>rd</sup> base coach and an on deck coach.
- ◆ The fielding team is allowed one coach on the field for the first 3 games. All other coaches must remain within the dugout area and supervise the remaining players.
- ◆ The head coach is responsible for maintaining order on the sideline and keeping equipment and players seated behind the bench lines (dug out).
- ◆ All coaching must be positive and instructional, not vulgar, critical or demeaning. Coaches who are abusive to players must be reported to the Softball Director. Abusive behavior will not be tolerated.
- ◆ Set a good example of sportsmanship in all game situations.
- ◆ Any coaches who will not adhere to WAA rules, policies and philosophy will be asked to step aside for the remainder of the season.
- ◆ Coaches are not permitted to smoke or chew tobacco products during games or practices.



## **J. Umpire**

- ♦ One umpire will be scheduled and provided by the league.
- ♦ The umpires' decision is final. THERE WILL BE NO PROTESTS.
- ♦ Softball rules for modified play will prevail where not previously stated or replaced herein.
- ♦ If league umpires are not present each team will furnish one adult umpire. The field and plate umpires will alternate positions after 3 field innings. In this situation the plate umpire will call balls and strikes from behind the pitcher.



## 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> GRADE SOFTBALL RULES

### A. Field Dimensions

- ♦ The distance between bases will be sixty (60) feet going from home to first and so on.
- ♦ The pitchers plate will be forty (40) feet from home plate.

### B. Equipment

- ♦ **NEW in 2018, ALL players will be REQUIRED to provide and wear a protective fielding mask.**
- ♦ Each player must furnish her own glove.
- ♦ No metal or screw on cleats allowed.
- ♦ WAA will provide the players shirt, visor and socks.
- ♦ Players must provide their own white baseball pants or shorts.
- ♦ WAA provided visors must be worn on the field. All shirts must be tied at the waist or tucked in.
- ♦ WAA provided batting helmets must worn by players while in the on deck circle, batting, running the bases and the coach's box.
- ♦ ASA / USSA approved fast pitch softball bats only.
- ♦ The home team will supply a twelve (12) inch "Hard" yellow softball as provided by WAA.
- ♦ The home team will supply the bases and pitching plate.
- ♦ The catcher must wear a mask, shin guards, chest protector with a protective flap, and a catcher's helmet as provided by WAA.

### C. Games

- ♦ Games will be 1:45 in length. No inning will start after the 1:45 time limit has been reached.
- ♦ All games will be scheduled for six (6) innings. A seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) inning can be played if the game is tied after six (6) innings and the overall time limit has not been exceeded.
- ♦ Each half inning will consist of three (3) outs or five (5) runs whichever occurs first.
- ♦ The score will be kept, but standings will not be maintained.
- ♦ The home team will always occupy the dug out on the 3<sup>rd</sup> base side of the field.
- ♦ Rescheduling games can be done by contacting the WAA office. Every attempt should be made to play the game as scheduled.

### D. Positions

- ♦ A team on the field will consist of nine (9) players: First baseman, second baseman, shortstop, third baseman, pitcher, catcher, and three (3) outfielders (left, center, right).
- ♦ A game can be played with as few as eight (8) players. If either team has less than 8 players, an attempt should be made to balance the teams so the game may be played.
- ♦ Each player must play at least three (3) innings in the field and must bat as scheduled within the lineup prepared before the game.
  - *Note: Each player is given a batting position regardless if she plays in the field or sits out an inning.*
  - *Each player must have an opportunity to play infield and outfield in every game.*
- ♦ Except for the pitcher, a player may not play the same position for more than two (2) innings in a game.
- ♦ Fielders must play in their designated position until the ball is hit. Over loading fielders to one side of the field is not allowed.
- ♦ Outfielders must all play in standard outfield positions (on the grass where applicable) and are not allowed to cover a base to gain a force out.

### E. Pitching

- ♦ Coach pitch is left to the coach's discretion, and will be used ONLY when a team has exhausted all player pitching options.



- ◆ No individual player will pitch more than four (4) innings per game. The adult pitcher cannot walk in a run with the bases loaded. The batter must either hit the ball into play or strike out in this situation.
- ◆ The adult pitcher cannot walk 2 batters in a row, regardless of the number of runners on base. The batter must either hit the ball into play or strike out in this situation.
- ◆ Any ball touched by the adult pitcher is live and "in play".

#### **F. Modified Pitching**

- ◆ Pitchers will take a position with both feet on the ground and in contact with the pitchers plate.
- ◆ The pitcher may use any windup desired, provided:
  - She does not continue to wind up after releasing the ball.
  - She does not pitch behind their back or between their legs.
  - It is a continuous motion.
  - No sling shot deliveries.
  - Windmill is permitted.

#### **G. Batting**

- ◆ A batter will be called out if she throws the bat. The umpire's decision is final.
- ◆ Bunting is allowed.
- ◆ A batter is awarded 1<sup>st</sup> base when hit by a pitched ball.
- ◆ A dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike rule is not in effect.
- ◆ The infield fly rule will be in effect.
- ◆ On deck batter must be in the batter's box behind the hitter. If a left-handed hitter is up, on deck batter must be on first base side.

#### **H. Base Running**

- ◆ All bases must be held until the ball leaves the pitchers hand.
- ◆ Runners may advance on a passed ball. Only one base can be advanced on each passed ball.
- ◆ When attempting to steal, the runner cannot leave the base they occupy until the ball leaves the pitchers hand.
- ◆ The infield fly rule will apply.
- ◆ On any infield overthrow the base runner may only advance one base and the ball will be considered dead.
- ◆ Sliding is encouraged to avoid injury. A base runner shall be called out for failing to slide and causing a collision.
- ◆ Runner may steal home on a passed ball.

#### **I. Coaching**

- ◆ The batting team is allowed a 1<sup>st</sup> base coach, 3<sup>rd</sup> base coach and an on deck coach.
- ◆ All coaching must be positive and instructional, not vulgar, critical or demeaning. Coaches who are abusive to players must be reported to the Softball Director. Abusive behavior will not be tolerated.
- ◆ Set a good example of sportsmanship in all game situations.
- ◆ Any coaches who will not adhere to WAA rules, policies and philosophy will be asked to step aside for the remainder of the season.
- ◆ Coaches are not permitted to smoke or chew tobacco products during games or practices.

#### **J. Umpire**

- ◆ Umpires will be scheduled and provided by the league.
- ◆ The umpire is responsible for:
  - ◆ Determining when each play has ended and when the ball is dead.
  - ◆ Calling fair and foul balls.
  - ◆ Calling all outs.



- ♦ Calling balls and strikes.
- ♦ Determining base runner movement.
- ♦ Rules interpretation, are not to be argued on the field. The umpire has the final say. A review process will be set up post season to make corrective actions for the future.
- ♦ If league umpires are not present, each team will furnish one adult umpire. The field and plate umpire will alternate after 3 full innings. In this situation, balls and strikes will be called from behind the pitcher.



## **7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> GRADE SOFTBALL RULES**

*All rules will follow the current IHSA (Illinois High School Association) fast pitch rule book unless noted. A copy of the rules is available in the WAA office for review.*

### **General Rules**

1. NEW in 2018, ALL players will be REQUIRED to provide and wear a protective fielding mask.
2. A team shall field nine (9) players, but may play with eight (8). Any team not able to field eight (8) players within 15 minutes of the scheduled game time shall forfeit the game. A team playing with eight (8) players will record an out when the 9<sup>th</sup> position in the batting order comes to bat.
3. The first team listed on the schedule is the HOME team and will occupy the 3<sup>rd</sup> base dugout.
4. The HOME team is responsible for placing all bases and pitchers plate on the field. They shall also be responsible for putting them back in the equipment box and ensuring the ball field/dugouts are clear of any debris.
5. Pitching distance is forty (40) feet.
6. No inning will start after the 1:45 time limit has been reached.
7. If after 7 innings and the score is tied, extra innings may be played within the time limit. If the time limit expires and the score is tied, the game will be recorded as a tie.
8. Players arriving after the game has begun will be added to the end of the batting order.
9. Every player must play at least one (1) innings in the field for a four (4) inning or less game.
10. Every player must play at least three (4) innings in the field.
11. Teams are limited to five (5) runs per inning.
12. Pitchers may not pitch more than five (5) innings in a game.

***Managers shall be responsible for keeping their coaches, players and spectators from shouting or making derogatory comments to players on both teams and umpires. Use of profane language by anyone associated with the team will not be tolerated!***

**Each participating program has a Code of Conduct for players, coaches and parents. The Code of Conduct rules are to be enforced by the team's parent program.**



## **Special Needs Children in the Recreational Baseball/Softball Program**

It is the philosophy of Wheatland Athletic Association to progressively develop children's skills by offering programs for various age levels. As they develop, the children are taught the value of good sportsmanship and teamwork. Our intent is for children to have FUN and to enjoy the sport they play while learning the character building lessons that come from participating in team sports.

WAA has children participating at all ability levels, including some children with special needs. Our goal is to create a fun, positive and safe environment for all of the children on the team as well as to teach that all people are not the same. For all grade levels, WAA asks that coaches institute a Buddy system for the teams with special needs children. This system was instituted in the 2009 baseball season for recreational players and worked well. Coaches and umpires should talk prior to the start of the game and agree that the "Buddy system" will be used for at least 3 innings of the game. Preferably the special needs child/children will play every other inning, and non-buddy play will occur the remaining innings of play.

WAA asks that one player be assigned to the same position as the child with special needs. The buddy should be rotated so that no one teammate has to be a buddy more than any other. The buddies should have a chance to play at least one half the game without a buddy. Please place the special needs child in the outfield or second base. The team with the special needs child will be allowed to have 10 players on the field. If the special needs child can throw and catch the ball, the Buddy should encourage him or her to do so. We do not want the Buddy to be making plays, they are there to encourage and help to keep the child focused on the game. When the special needs child is batting, the opposing team should go easy on them from a pitching standpoint. We do want to encourage the rules of the game be followed, so if the child is thrown out, he is to sit on the bench like the other kids. At the end of the game, we ask that the teams stay on the field and allow the special needs child to run the bases with encouragement from both teams. What we are trying to do is create a positive experience for the child.

If at any time the special needs child becomes difficult or poses a safety threat to him or herself or anyone on the team, they should not be allowed on the field. If needed, the special needs child's parent or guardian can be the Buddy. The best situation, however, is to have a teammate be the Buddy. Parents of special needs players are encouraged to assistant coach on their team in order to assist with the Buddy program as well as their child. Under certain circumstances, parents/guardians may be required to be present at practices and games.

On the waiver portion of the registration form, WAA asks for parents to note any limitations that their child may have and to communicate these limitations to the coach. This does not always happen so it is important that coaches evaluate and determine the child's level of disability and discuss any concerns with the family. Effective immediately, Wheatland Athletic Association will be adding the following sentence to the registration forms; "Under certain circumstances, parents/guardians may be required to be present and involved at practices and games".

Thank you, coaches and parents, for your continued commitment to youth sports. What we are trying to do is foster knowledge of the game, team work and create a positive experience for all participants. Please remember, this is a recreational league and we want it to be more about fun than about winning. The experiences of helping a teammate will last well beyond the memory of who won or lost. Parents of special needs children have told us that little things like what we are trying to do above make a world of difference to them and their children.