

*NOR-GWYN*  
*Pony Division*  
*SOFTBALL*

**Rules and Guidelines**

**Version 1.0**  
**April 2008**

# NOR-GWYN Softball

## Pony Rules and Guidelines

### I. LEAGUE OBJECTIVE:

Nor Gwyn Softball offers the girls in our local communities an athletic forum to help develop both their physical and social skills through the game of softball. Our supervised program is designed to provide softball instruction in recreational and competitive environments, while promoting the ideals of good sportsmanship, fair play, honesty, loyalty and a respect for authority. We want to offer an enjoyable and positive experience for the girls enrolled in the program. All directors, officers, coaches and members shall bear in mind that, although important, the attainment of exceptional athletic skill and the winning of games are secondary to the goal of helping to mold the future women of our community.

Although Nor Gwyn Softball does provide a competitive environment for girls with better than average skills, through our Select and Travel programs, the majority of the girls enrolled will play in the recreational divisions, which are intended to provide the players with an environment where they can learn the game of softball and have fun at the same time. These are instructional divisions with an emphasis on providing the player with the proper development and guidance needed to learn and acquire the necessary skills to grow in the sport and progress through each division.

### II. DIVISIONAL OBJECTIVES:

Pony division is an instructional and developmental division and a very important transition for 7 & 8 year olds. An 11" softball is introduced at this level and a coach will pitch. As this division precedes the level (Minors) where girls will begin to pitch, player pitching may be introduced as the season progresses. Score and standings are not kept. Catcher is a new position introduced at this level. Players should be exposed to all positions that they are capable of playing erring on the side of player safety.

The divisional objectives should exemplify the goals of each coach with respect to what each player should learn. They should be the outline of what is to be taught to the players. The divisional objectives are as follows:

- A player should be able to throw from third to first with some bounces accurately.
- A player should use proper technique when catching a ball and should be able to catch the majority of balls thrown at her.
- A player should understand when a player is forced to run and when she is not.
- A player should learn to listen to the coach as to when to run through first base and when to take extra bases.
- A player should understand "strike zone" and be aggressive at the plate.
- A player should know the proper glove position for fielding fly balls and ground balls, learn proper position when covering the base, and know how to catch and tag.
- A player should be able to determine where the ball should be thrown.
- A player should begin to learn how to judge fly balls and catch them properly.
- A catcher should learn proper technique and become comfortable in the catching equipment.

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### III. RULES OF THE GAME:

#### A. General

- 1) During warm up the home team will have use of the field from thirty (30) minutes prior to the game for fifteen (15) minutes and visiting team use fifteen (15) minutes prior to the game for fifteen (15) minutes.
- 2) All games will be six (6) innings or 90 minutes which ever comes first.
- 3) An 11" optical yellow ball will be used.
- 4) Team must have a minimum of 8 players to start game and must have at least 7 to finish or team will forfeit game.
- 5) Score can be kept, but official scoring and standings will not be maintained at this division.

#### B. Responsibilities

- 1) Home team
  - a) Setting up bases and pitching rubber.
  - b) Providing two game balls.
  - c) Returning bases to appropriate location.
  - d) Responsible for calling off the game due to rain or field conditions and rescheduling through Division Commissioner.
  - e) Home team sits on first base side.
- 2) Visiting Team
  - a) Visiting team will sit on the third base side.

#### C. Players

- 1) All players must be in proper uniform (i.e., shirts, shorts, socks and visor).
- 2) Shirts should be tucked in and visors worn forward.
- 3) No jewelry should be worn during game or practice time (i.e. necklaces, watches, bracelets, rings or earrings).
- 4) Mouthpieces are recommended, but not required.
- 5) Plastic cleats are recommended, but not required. Metal spikes are forbidden.

#### D. Offense

- 1) After three swinging strikes, the batter is out (a foul ball counts as a swinging strike, except for the third strike). There will be no walks or called strikes. Once the batter has struck out, there will be no more balls pitched to that batter for that at bat.
- 2) The end of an inning occurs after three (3) outs or after the tenth batter. The tenth batter automatically causes three outs on the offense. Any runs that score during the tenth batter's at bat will count toward the score.
- 3) All players bat whether they are playing the field or not, the batting order is continuous.

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- 4) All batters and base runners are required to wear helmets at all times, with chinstraps attached.
- 5) If a base runner is to be catcher in the next inning they can have a substitute runner. This is to occur with two outs or tenth batter.
- 6) Throwing of bats is not permitted. On the first occurrence, their coach will warn the player. On the second occurrence they will be called out. This is a per batter rule.
- 7) Aluminum or wooden bats are permitted.

### E. Defense

- 1) The defense shall consist of 10 fielders in normal playing positions. 10 fielders will consist of 5 infielders (including a pitcher), 4 outfielders and a catcher.
- 2) All players are required to play two innings in the infield if they arrive at the beginning of practice, and the game lasts the maximum 6 innings.
- 3) Outfielders must position themselves in the grass behind the dirt infield.
- 4) There should be no more than five players in the infield.
- 5) If fielding ten players, a catcher in full gear is required. With less than 10 fielders, an outfielder is removed first, and whatever position is appropriate after that.
- 6) If a ball is overthrown and goes out of play, the runners may only advance one (1) base. However, if a ball is overthrown and remains in the field of play, play continues until the ball is returned to the pitcher.
- 7) A live ball is declared dead when a fielder throws the ball to the pitcher. The play stops at this point.
- 8) If a runner is less than half way to the next base when the ball is in the hands of the pitcher, then that runner must return to the base they came from, otherwise, they are entitled to the next base.
- 9) Coaches are permitted on the playing field to assist with instruction to the players.

### F. Pitching

- 1) The first half of the season will be coach pitch. The second half will move to player pitch under the following provisions:
  - a) Coaches will pitch to their own team.
  - b) Players will pitch to the opposing team.
  - c) The player is to pitch from the regulation distance outlined in section G (2), or at a safe distance as determined by both coaches.
  - d) If the player pitches three (3) un-hittable balls, the coach will step in and finish pitching to that hitter.
  - e) Coaches will determine "un-hittable" balls for their own pitcher.
  - f) Rule D.1 will apply to the hitter during player and/or coach pitching.

### G. Umpires

There are no umpires required at the Pony level.

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## **H. Field Layout**

- 1) Base paths will be fifty (50) feet.
- 2) Pitching distance will be thirty-five (35) feet from the back of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber.

## **I. SAFETY:**

- 1) At the first sign of lightening – game is called. Manager to use best judgment.
- 2) Any bleeding caused by impact with ball, player or anything else will require player to come out of the game and appropriate medical attention given. Manager to use best judgment to decide if a player may return to the game.

## **IV. RULE CHANGES**

The Nor Gwyn Softball Pony Division Rules and Guidelines contained herein may be changed during the season by the Pony Softball Commissioner to allow for changes in League Policy, introduction of piloted training programs, or any other factor that seeks to improve the quality of instruction and recreation for the player.