

Mission Viejo Girls Softball General Policies



The following policies and rules are applicable to all Age Group Divisions in Mission Viejo Girls Softball (MVG). Division Age Group specific rules are shown on their respective document. Exceptions as approved by the Board may be allowed and can be made retroactive.

I. ADULT PERSONNEL

A. COACHES, ASSISTANT COACHES and TEAM ADMINISTRATORS

1. All Coaches must apply to and be approved by the MVGS Board and have attained their 21st birthday prior to the start of League play. League play begins with the team's first practice.
2. All Assistant Coaches must apply to and be approved by the MVGS Board and have attained their 18th birthday prior to start of League play.
3. Coaches are primarily responsible for player instruction, scheduling practices, ensuring the team has proper equipment, player line-ups, and other tasks necessary for the players to learn the fundamental of girls' fastpitch softball. Assistant Coaches directly assist the Coach and act in his or her behalf when he or she cannot be available.
4. The Coach will appoint a Team Administrator. Team Administrators will primarily be responsible for general administration such as uniform purchases, obtaining team flags or banners if desired, scheduling team activities and/or meetings, scheduling snacks for the players and other non-coaching tasks.
5. All Coaches, Assistant Coaches and Team Administrators must demonstrate proper roles for players showing good sportsmanship, respect for authority and that winning games is secondary to the molding of future health and productive citizens.
6. The MVGS Board may, by vote, remove, suspend, or place on probation Coaches, Assistant Coaches, Team Administrators and/or players for conduct it deems detrimental to the League, teams or players.
7. A player will, at no time, be subjected to language that in the opinion of the MVGS Board is abusive or profane.
Penalty: Offenders will be subjected to a warning, suspension, or expulsion from the League as approved by the Board.

B. FEMALE CHAPERONES

1. Each Team Administrator is responsible for providing a Female Chaperone in the immediate team area during practices and games. Teams without proper Female Chaperones present at the start of each game shall forfeit that game.
2. Female Chaperones must have attained their 21st birthday prior to the start of League play.

C. OFFICIAL SCOREKEEPER/TIMEKEEPER

1. The home team shall supply the official scorekeeper for the game.
2. The League will supply the official scorebook. All official game results and statistics shall be taken from the official scorebook.
3. The umpire shall be the official timekeeper for the game.

D. DUTIES

1. All Coaches, Assistant Coaches and Team Administrators must have a good working knowledge of the game rules, the field responsibilities and the possible penalties.
2. Each Coach, Assistant Coach and Team Administrator is responsible for the conduct of his or her players, parents and fans. It is not permitted to harass, make comments, or act in a manner that is unsportsmanlike or distasteful or is designed to confuse the other team's players, coaches or umpires.

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I. ADULT PERSONNEL

D. DUTIES (continued)

3. No Coach, Assistant Coach, Team Administrator, Female Chaperone, player or spectator will at any time:
 - a. Incite or try to incite by word or sign any opposing players, coaches, team administrator, spectators or umpire.
 - b. Use language directed at players, spectators or the umpire that is inflammatory or obscene.
 - c. Act to confuse or distract the opposing team.
 - d. Smoke in or near the dugout or playing area.
 - e. Be under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol while participating in an MVGS function.

Penalty – Section D2-D3 The offending person may be ejected from the playing area and be suspended or prevented from attending or participating in practices and games as approved by the Board.
4. All Coaches, Assistant Coaches and Team Administrators that have supervisory or disciplinary authority over the players in the MVGS League must sign a **Non-Felony Letter** to be kept on file by the MVGS Board.
5. Coaches, Assistant Coaches and Team Administrators that are ejected from a game will be suspended from the following game and will not be allowed on the field or in the stands for that game.
6. Coaches, Assistant Coaches, Team Administrators, Female Chaperones and players not currently in the game must remain within the dugout area or in an area designated for warming up pitchers while their team is on the field.
7. Coaches, Assistant Coaches, Team Administrators, Female Chaperones and players not coaching bases, running bases, batting/on-deck or a pitcher/coach warming up must be within the dugout area when their team is batting.

Penalty – Section D5-D6: The offending person or team will be given a warning and subsequent violations may result in disqualification from the game.
8. **Adults in Dugout:** A maximum of four (4) adults will be allowed in the dugout at any one time, including Coaches, Assistant Coaches, Team Administrators and Female Chaperones. Any additional adults may be asked to leave the dugout area and to remain in the spectator area.
9. **Equipment:**
 - a. Will not be used for any other League or team without permission granted by the MVGS Board.
 - b. Found to be unserviceable must not be used and must be reported to the equipment board member as soon as possible for replacement.
 - c. Must be collected by the Coach at the end of the season and returned to the equipment board member.

Penalty (9a-c) Violations may result in disciplinary action as determined by the Board.
 - d. **Bats:** All bats used shall comply with certified/approved bats as designated in Rule 3, Equipment, ASA Official Rules of Softball. Player bats not meeting these requirements will not be allowed. No attachments (donuts, fans, etc.) are allowed for on-deck batters.
 - e. **Balls:** The League will attempt to utilize a brand of soft balls designated by ASA as official. However, the League reserves the right to select a non-ASA softball if it deems it appropriate for the situation.
 - f. **Sliding Pads:** Every player who will possibly be sliding must wear sliding pants and kneepads to be provided by the player.
 - g. **Other Equipment:** Catcher's equipment and batting helmets shall meet standards as allowed by ASA. ASA requires all batting helmets to be equipped with chinstraps. If a player elects to purchase their own batting helmet, they must comply with ASA and NOCSE standards. **All helmets must have a NOCSE approved face shield.** Each player must bring their own glove to all practices and games.
10. **Uniforms:** The League shall provide each player with a uniform, which consists of a cap and shirt. All players must wear shoes with cleats. Soccer style cleats are acceptable. Metal cleats are strictly forbidden.
11. **Communications:** The League web site (www.mvgs.org) will be used to communicate messages to the Board (E-mail), advise of calendar events, relate important urgent matters and inform members of League rules and other important information items. A League hot line (768-8847) has also been established, which may be used for passing on current information, advise of field conditions and leaving messages for Board members.
12. **Policy and Rule Compliance:** In the event that any Coach, Assistant Coach, Team Administrator, Female Chaperone, parent or other adult violates any of the League's General Policies, League Rules or ASA rules, the Board may take disciplinary action as determined appropriate for the situation. In order to ascertain the facts, adults are required to provide all information that relates to the incident under question. More serious violations may result in suspension or expulsion from the League as approved by the Board.

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13. All Coaches, Assistant Coaches, Team Administrators and Chaperones are responsible for the safety of their players at all times. Reasonable precautions must be taken to limit the inherent risks associated with playing softball. Those precautions include (but are not limited to) the following:
 - a. Adults/coaches must never hit a pitched ball during games or practice times. This includes balls pitched by a player, a pitching machine or another adult.
 - b. Any adult present at a practice or game who witnesses unsafe behavior on the part of coaches, players or other individuals present must report that behavior to the adult in charge, the Player Agent or the League's Safety Officer.

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II. PLAYER PERSONNEL

A. DIVISIONS

1. **Team Selection:** MVGS has an established methodology for all team formations with the intent of equitably distributing players of comparable playing skills on each team within Divisions. Some of the factors considered are pitching, catching, returning All-Star players and years of playing experience. Further and more detailed information is provided on the League web site and/or by written policy. Team formation steps are subject to change by the Board and may be made retroactive if deemed appropriate to do so.
2. **Age Groups:** The MVGS teams shall be divided into the following divisions (age groups):
 - a. 14/16 & under per ASA cut-off
 - b. 12 & under per ASA cut-off
 - c. 10 & under per ASA cut-off
 - d. 8 & under
 - e. 6 & under
3. **Maximum Number of Players:** Teams shall consist of a maximum of twelve (12) players unless the MVGS Board approves otherwise.
1. **Skills Day:** A Skills Day will be held in January for all registered players from each division, except the 6&U and the 8&U divisions. The purpose of Skills Day is for Coaches to evaluate each player's level of skill with respect to batting and fielding. Special evaluations will be conducted at the same time for pitchers and catchers. All evaluations are strictly confidential and are used by the Coaches for promoting balance in team drafts or draws.
5. **Play Up Policy:** Players who qualify for a younger division may "play up" in an older division with MVGS Board approval.
 - a. A player who wishes to "play up" must notify the MVGS Board at the time of registration that she would like to try out to play in an older division.
 - b. Players who successfully pass the skills evaluation shall be placed in the draft for the older division and will be eligible for all positions and honors for that division only. The player must remain in that division for the current League season and all-stars.
 - c. Under no circumstances shall a player or her respective team be penalized for a player "playing up".

B. JURISDICTION:

1. The current official softball rules, as published by the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) shall govern all tournament games sponsored by the MVGS League (except as published in the tournament rules).
2. The current official softball rules, as published by ASA, combined with the current official rules published by the MVGS League, shall govern all League and playoff games for all age divisions (except as published in the tournament rules).
3. In League play, when conflicts occur between ASA softball rules and the current MVGS rules, the MVGS rules will take precedence.
4. Board members on the rules committee have final authority for all League rule interpretations.

- C. STANDINGS:** Scores will be recorded but no standings will be kept for regular season games. Tournament Games will be played and standings will be retained at the mid-season tournament and at season end for final determination of championship teams.

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III. PLAYING RULES

- A. CLEATED SHOES:** Cleated Shoes are mandatory for all players in all age divisions. Cleats must be of a non-metallic type and otherwise conform to ASA rules for cleats.
- B. HELMETS:** Helmets with “Chin Straps” and NOCSE approved face masks must be properly worn by all offensive players and player-coaches in the on-deck circle or the first base and third base coaching boxes. They must also be worn when the offensive player is at bat or on base.
Penalty: An offensive batter or runner shall be called out if she is not wearing a helmet while on base, at bat, in the on-deck circle or outside the dugout area in playable territory. The base runner closest to home plate shall be called out if a player-coach in the coach’s box at either first or third base is not wearing a helmet. Adult Coaches and Assistant Coaches are exempt from this rule.
- C. CATCHER’S MASK:** A Catcher’s mask must be properly worn by any player who is playing the position of catcher during a game when the pitcher is pitching or warming up a pitcher on or around the playing field. This includes practices.
- D. TEAM SHIRT:** The team shirt provided by the MVGS League must be worn during all games and shall be completely tucked into the uniform pants/shorts while the player is in the team area or playing area.
Penalty: Any player refusing to completely tuck the shirt into the uniform pants/shorts shall be disqualified from the games and shall be subject to disciplinary action by the MVGS Board.
- E. HATS AND VISORS:** Hats or visors may be worn. No visor may be worn around the player’s neck.
- F. COLD WEATHER CLOTHING:** During cold weather, players may be allowed to wear a sweatshirt or turtleneck shirt after giving notice to the other team’s scorekeeper for batting order purposes. Cold weather clothing must not restrict players’ movement to the point of possible injury.
- G. JEWELRY:** No jewelry shall be worn, including earrings, watches, rings or friendship bracelets during practices or games. Tape over pierced ears with the studs in place is not allowed. Medical alert bracelets are excluded provided they are taped to the player’s wrist.
- H. STARTING AND COMPLETING GAMES:**
1. All games shall start at the scheduled time or earlier provided the umpire has the agreement of both teams’ Coaches. If a game begins early, the time limit begins from the actual start time of the game. Games that start late must still end as scheduled to allow the next game to begin on time.
Note: The actual start time will be the official start time of a game should a game start late through no fault of either team.
 2. A forfeit shall be declared if a team is unable to take the field with a minimum of eight players within five minutes of the time that the plate umpire calls “play ball” to start the game. This rule does not apply to the 8&U and 6&U divisions. Both teams may still play the game with opposing players used in outfield positions only if both Coaches are agreeable.
 3. A team may start and complete a game with a minimum of eight players for regular season games. No out is taken for the 9th batter position for regular season games only.
 4. Games not completed due to rain, time limitations or other reasons approved by the Board are not required to be made up.
 5. Games other than certain tournament games or playoff games can end in a tie.
- I. THREE (3) INNING MINIMUM:**
Any player who presents herself at the start of the game properly attired, including having the proper equipment, shall play a minimum number of innings as defined in the age specific rules.

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III. PLAYING RULES (continued)

J. MALICIOUS PLAY RULE

The runner is out when the defensive player has the ball and is about to make a play on the base runner at any base or home plate and the base runner deliberately crashes into the defensive player. If in the judgment of the umpire the base runner's action was malicious in nature, the runner must be disqualified from the game.

K. PLAYERS LEAVING GAME EARLY:

1. For regular season games, there is no penalty if a player must leave during game play and the opposing team is notified prior to that player's turn at bat. An out is recorded if there is no notification and at least one pitch (legal or illegal) is thrown to the next batter.
2. For tournament games, an out will be recorded each time for a ninth batter if the team has only eight players. If a player leaves early with ten or more players, an out is recorded each time at bat until the responsible team formally advises the umpire and the opposing team of the departure. The out is recorded after one legal or illegal pitch has been thrown to the next batter or called by the umpire respectively.

L. PITCHING RULES:

1. A pitcher and catcher or coach may be allowed a maximum of five (5) warm up pitches or one minute at the beginning of each half inning of play. The umpire for each pitch in excess of five may call a "ball". The plate umpire shall call "play ball" if in his judgment the game is being delayed. No penalty shall be awarded for excess warmup pitches if the umpire or opposing team is not ready for play.
2. If the pitching distance is determined to be incorrect during play, it must be corrected when first discovered.
3. Any player may be designated as a pitcher (Designated Pitcher) by the appropriate Player Agent for that player's age group. The designation shall be based on the player's previous pitching experience. Any player may be removed from the list of Designated Pitchers by signing a pitching waiver. Once the waiver is signed, the player will not be permitted to pitch during the current season Tournament Games unless a subsequent approval to pitch is gained from the Board.

M. INJURIES:

1. If an injury occurs to either an offensive or defensive player, and they cannot continue to play, they may be replaced by a player on the bench. The player who made the last out shall replace an injured offensive player.
2. An injured player who is removed from the game cannot return in any playing or coaching capacity in that game if she does not take her turn at bat.
3. When an injured player is scheduled to bat and is passed over because of her injury, no out is recorded provided the opposing team is notified prior to the first pitch to the next batter. The next batter takes her turn at bat.
4. Coaches are responsible for submitting a written document within five days to the MVGS president detailing injury situations where professional medical care was given or may be required in the future.
5. Before an injured player may return to active participation in practices and games due to an injury described above, the player must provide to their Coach a medical release statement from the player's licensed physician or a representative of the medical care facility that authorizes the player to specifically participate in both softball practices and softball games.
6. Any player wearing a splint or cast (soft or hard) may not participate in League play until it is removed and a release from a doctor is obtained.

N. HIT BATTERS:

If a pitcher hits two opposing batters with pitched balls in a single inning, the umpire will issue a warning to the pitcher and her Coach. If the same pitcher hits a third opposing batter in the same inning, the pitcher will be removed by the umpire for the remainder of that inning plus the next inning of that game but may return later in that game according to the age group division rules.

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III. PLAYING RULES (continued)

O. **SLIDING:**

1. Sliding is a common way to avoid collisions although other methods can achieve the same results. Runners can slow down, change directions, stop entirely or even run around a defensive player.
2. Some methods of sliding or avoiding collision may still result in the runner being called out by the Umpire.
3. The use of sliding has been adopted by the League's Board of Directors and shall be at the discretion of the individual team in each League. Foremost, sliding is at the discretion and desire of the individual player.
4. Every player who will possibly be sliding must wear sliding pants and kneepads. The Umpire will call out any player who slides without the required sliding gear.
5. Coaches who desire to teach sliding must do so with continual practice time under safe and supervised conditions.

P. **SUBSTITUTIONS:**

1. There is free defensive substitution throughout the game. Substitutes may enter at the beginning of an inning or during an official time out.
2. With the exception of courtesy runners for the pitcher and catcher, there are no offensive substitutions.
3. Players arriving late to a game may not be entered into the game after the beginning of the 5th inning. Players arriving late but before the 5th inning must be added to the bottom of the lineup with proper notification to the opposing team.

IV. LINE UP

- A. **STARTING LINE UP:** The Coach, Assistant Coach or Team Administrator shall present a starting line-up to the scorekeeper, the opposing team and the plate umpire at the Coaches/umpire meeting approximately 10 minutes prior to the start of a game. Line-ups shall not be official until officially accepted by the plate umpire.
- B. **LINE UP CHANGES:** The Coach, Assistant Coach or Team Administrator must notify the official scorekeeper of **pitching changes** in tournament games. Field position changes need not be reported. The notification to the opposing Coach, Assistant Coach or Team Administrator of line-up changes not involving the pitcher is a courtesy only. The official scorekeeper shall have the responsibility of ensuring that line-up changes and pitching changes are according to the rules.
- C. **COURTESY RUNNERS:** Courtesy runners may be used for the pitcher and catcher of record or those scheduled to pitch or catch for the next inning. The last player making an out (or the last two players in the case of courtesy runners for both pitcher and catcher) are the only players eligible to run for the pitcher and/or catcher.

V. PROTESTS

Because MVGS is a recreational League, protests will not be allowed. Umpire decisions are final.

VI. GAME CANCELLATIONS

- A. **WEATHER:** If a game is canceled due to poor weather conditions or natural disasters, Coaches, Assistant Coaches or Team Administrators should contact the League's information line (768-8847) to verify the game cancellation. The League shall attempt to have that information available on weekdays by 4:00 pm and on Saturdays by 7:00 am.
Note: For Saturday games only, field-playing conditions may change during the day to allow games to be played. For example, although city fields may be too wet to play early games, the fields may have dried sufficiently to allow play for later games. School fields may also be available under similar circumstances. Coaches, Assistant Coaches or Team Administrators should, when in doubt, continue to call the information line for game cancellation information.
- B. **UNPLAYABLE GAME:** A game can only be declared unplayable by the tournament director, the umpire-in-chief or the plate umpire on the field.
- C. **NOTICE OF CANCELLATION:** In the event of a game cancellation, the team canceling the game is responsible for promptly advising the opposing team, the umpire scheduler, and the League Mud Line. Because Divisions may have an odd number of teams, another team may be able to play.

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VII. ALL STAR AND TOURNAMENT TEAMS

- A. **ALL STAR TEAM:** An all-star team is the official team selected by a method determined by the MVGS Board to represent the League in official ASA tournament competition. This team is made up of girls who have participated in their division prior to the tournament and who have complied with League and ASA player requirements. An all-star player can only participate on the team representing the division she played in during the League season.
- B. **TOURNAMENT TEAM:** A tournament team is any group of girls selected by an officially approved League Coach to participate in a tournament, and team members meet all of the tournament qualifications they play in.
- C. **ALL STAR SELECTION:** All-star teams are selected in accordance with All-Star Selection Rules as approved by the Board. Multiple teams may be selected dependent on Board approval.
- D. **OUTSIDE TOURNAMENTS:** MVGS teams may not enter in outside tournaments or other League games without the expressed approval of the MVGS president, vice-president and/or designated board members.
- E. **ADDITIONAL ALL STAR RULES AND POLICIES:** Coaches, Assistant Coaches or Team Administrators should reference the specific rules document and/or web site for further information.

VIII. FIELD AND FACILITY RULES

- A. **FIELD PREPERATION:** The home team Coach, Assistant Coach or Team Administrator is responsible for ensuring the fields are properly watered, dragged and lined for scheduled games. The use of League vehicles is limited to licensed drivers only.
- B. **FIELD CLEAN UP AND EQUIPMENT:** All Coaches, Assistant Coaches or Team Administrators are responsible for ensuring that all dugouts and surrounding areas are left free from trash at the end of practices or games and that League equipment is properly stored and locked when no longer in use.
- C. **DUGOUTS:** Dugouts are to be cleaned and vacated within 10 minutes of the completion of the game so that the next team can set up for their game.

IX. TOURNAMENT GAME RULES

- A. MVGS Board Rules Committee shall determine the game time length and rules.
- B. Unless otherwise indicated in the tournament rules, all regular season rules will be in effect for both the mid-season and end-of-season tournaments.

X. RULES CHANGES

- A. No playing rule may be changed without approval of the MVGS Board or designated rules committee.
- B. The spirit of the playing rule, as interpreted by the Rules Committee, may supercede the literal interpretation of the rule.
- C. Coaches, Assistant Coaches or Team Administrators are reminded to read all new rules and changes located in the front section of the current year ASA rulebook.

XI. INSURANCE

Bollinger Insurance, the official carrier for ASA, covers the League insurance requirements. This insurance is secondary liability and accident coverage and has a nominal deductible. If you do not have a primary carrier of your own, this will become your primary insurance. All coverage is limited to maximum limits of liability as stated in the policy.