



HGSL Rules

These rules are used for the Halton Girls Softball League. The league currently consists of teams for girls from Burlington, Georgetown, Stoney Creek, Waterdown and Oakville. Divisions are available at the SQUIRT, NOVICE, and BANTAM age groups where applicable.

Revised April 2018.

Amendments to the playing rules may be made at the Interlock meetings provided:

- a) **The proposed rule change (along with rationale) is forwarded to all Centers 14 days prior to the meeting**
- b) **Majority of delegates present at the meeting must vote in favour.**

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League Play

Regular Season

- Teams will be **awarded** a Win (2 pts), Loss (0 pts) or Tie (1 pt) for all games scheduled by the HGSL. Teams that forfeit games will receive a loss while their opponent will receive a win by the score of 7-0. In the event of a double-forfeit (both teams forfeiting), both teams will receive a loss of 7-0.
- At the completion of the regular season schedule the team with the most points will be considered the Pennant Winner and receive the top seed for determining the playoff matchups. Any teams tied in the points standings will be separated by following the tie-breaker rules mentioned below.

Tiebreakers (standings)

- In the event of a tie in the regular season standings or playoff results, the respective order of finish will be decided as follows:
 - a. Head to Head comparison. Results of games the tied teams played against each other (wins, losses, ties). *If there is still a tie then:*
 - b. Total runs AGAINST divided by games played between teams involved in the tie. Lowest differential advances. *If there is still a tie then:*
 - c. Total runs FOR divided by games played between the teams involved in the tie. Highest differential advances.
 - d. Total runs AGAINST divided by all games played. Lowest average will be placed higher in the standings.
 - e. Total runs FOR divided by games played. Highest average will be placed higher in the standings.
 - f. Coin flip.

Playoffs

- On the completion of the regular schedule, a playoff (Gala Day) will be held to determine the Division Champion.
- Note that playoff games may fall outside the agreed upon “game nights” and most likely will involve a weekend tournament
- All teams within a division will participate in the playoffs (Gala Day) and be guaranteed at least one playoff game depending on the format chosen (division formats may vary).
- Playoff format to be determined and reviewed by House/interlock authorities prior to the start of each regular season. (ie single, round robin, knockout, double knockout etc) and a schedule distributed to teams prior to the end of the season. Final team standings will not be determined until the end of the regular season.
- All players will receive a participation award which will be the same at each venue at the conclusion of the championships

Tie Games in playoffs

- ❑ No playoff games can end in a tie. If the game is tied after 7 complete innings (7th is open) or the “drop-dead” time has been reached and the score is tied, the *International Tie-breaker* rule will be used. Each team will start their next at-bat with a runner on second and nobody out. The runner will be the last person to have batted the previous inning.
- ❑ Note: until 7 innings have been completed, all rules regarding pitching limitations remain in place. I.e. If a Bantam pitcher has pitched her allotted 4 innings, she is ineligible to pitch until the 8th inning. After seven innings have been completed, all pitchers are eligible to pitch unless they have been ejected for exceeding the Hit By Pitch rule. (see *Pitching Regulations*)

Playing Rules



Softball Canada Official Fastpitch Rules used in all instances unless otherwise noted herein.

Playing Field

- ❑ The home team shall provide the bases, game balls and the official scorekeeper.
- ❑ The home team shall be responsible for placing the bases and the pitching rubber, at the proper distances, well before the start of the game.
- ❑ The double base will be used exclusively at 1st base.

Base and Pitching Distances

| Division | Bases (ft) | 2 nd base (ft) | Pitching (ft) | Ball Used |
|----------|------------|---------------------------|---------------|-----------|
| Squirt | 55 | 77 3 ¼ | 35 | 11” Hard |
| Novice | 60 | 84 10 ¼ | 38 | 12” Hard |
| Bantam | 60 | 84 10 ¼ | 40 | 12” Hard |

- ❑ Batter’s Box Measures 1.0m (3’) by 2.2m (7’) on each side of home plate. Inside lines should be 15 cm (6”) from home plate. Front line shall be 1.2m (4’) from a line drawn through the centre of home plate. Lines are considered inside the box.
- ❑ Pitching Circle shall be 8’ in radius measuring from center of pitcher’s mound.

Equipment

- ❑ Players must supply their own helmets. Face masks and mouthguards are highly recommended.
- ❑ It is recommended that all pitchers wear face masks
- ❑ Chinstraps are mandatory and shall be secured properly under the chin at all times.

- ❑ Bats must comply with current Softball Canada standards. If unsure, ask the Umpires for judgement. Note: The penalty for using an illegal bat is the batter will be called out. (www.softball.ca/download.php?id=556)
- ❑ The game umpire reserves the right to eliminate any equipment from game usage on his/her opinion that is deemed unsafe.
- ❑ A player should wear the complete team-issued uniform, in addition to proper running shoes/cleats. No metal cleats, or hard plastic spikes similar to metal cleats, are allowed in any division at any level of house league play.
- ❑ As per softball rules, exposed jewelry deemed unsafe by the umpire cannot be worn. Medical alert bracelets or neck-chains are exempt. Play will be stopped until the player either removes the jewelry in question or tapes it.
- ❑ Players are not to have cell phones, iPods or other technology to be present/used in the dugout or diamond once the game has started.

Game Rules & Regulations

- ❑ Games start times are 6:30 and 8:30 unless otherwise scheduled.
- ❑ Coaches and players should arrive at least 30 minutes before game time to allow for player warm-up and diamond setup. 2nd game teams must warm up outside the diamond
- ❑ Prior to the start of game, batting lineups must be exchanged between official scorers.
- ❑ A team consists of nine players: pitcher, catcher, 1st, 2nd, 3rd base, shortstop and three outfielders. Exception: Squirt consists of ten players (four outfielders).
- ❑ To start a game, teams require a min of 7 players (8 for Bantam) at official start time
- ❑ If a team is unable to field a minimum roster due to insufficient players, see Call-ups & Substitutes under *Player Guidelines* to best avoid defaults/forfeitures
- ❑ Mercy Guidelines per team at-bat (innings one to four);

| Division | Squirt | Novice | Bantam |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Max Runs | 4 runs | 5 runs | 5 runs |

Innings 5 to 7

| Division | Squirt | Novice | Bantam |
|-----------------|--------|---------|---------|
| Max Runs | 8 runs | 10 runs | 10 runs |

Season games will last no more than 7 complete innings.

- ❑ No new innings can start after 8:10 or 10:10, (1 hour, 40 minutes). All games end with a “drop dead” deadline of 8:20 and 10:20 (1 hour, 50 minutes). If the inning is not yet completed; and the home team has *tied* the game, then the game is recorded as a tie; if the home team is *leading*, the game is scored as a

home win; if the home team is *trailing* and has not yet started/completed their at-bats, the game score will revert back to the last completed inning.

Player Guidelines

- ❑ All players must be listed on the game scoresheet and bat in the subsequent order.
- ❑ Players arriving late must be allowed to play and are added to the end of the batting order.
- ❑ If a player(s) leaves the game early for any reason, the team will not be penalized in the batting order and the absent player will be skipped in the rotation.

Max innings pitched (Squirt-Bantam)

- ❑ Squirt: No player may exceed 2 consecutive and 3 total innings pitched per game
- ❑ Novice: No player may exceed 2 consecutive and 3 total innings pitched per game
- ❑ Bantam: No player may exceed 3 consecutive and 4 total innings pitched per game.
- ❑ Note: All innings are treated equally. ie. If a pitcher has already thrown her maximum number of innings, she is ineligible to pitch.
- ❑ A Bantam pitcher may only pitch a fourth inning if it is the seventh inning of the game,

Pitching Regulations

- ❑ At the beginning of each game the starting pitcher is allowed 5 warm-up pitches. Between innings, or when a change in pitcher occurs, the number of warm-up pitches is at the discretion of the umpire usually 3 to a maximum of 5.
- ❑ If a pitcher hits two batters in one inning the pitcher cannot pitch for the remainder of the inning. If the pitcher hits a fifth batter at any point in the game, she will be deemed ineligible to pitch for the remainder of the game. In both instances she is eligible to play elsewhere in the field. All pitchers will be charged with an *inning pitched* if a single pitch is thrown, at the discretion of the umpire.
- ❑ Only one charged “coach conference” per pitcher is allowed per inning. If a second conference is charged, the pitcher must be substituted for the remainder of the inning
- ❑ A pitcher substituted during an inning, cannot reenter during the same inning.
- ❑ Anyone warming up a pitcher must wear a catcher’s mask at all times.

Call-ups/Substitutes:

- ❑ During heavy periods of team absenteeism, concerted efforts should be made to complete a roster with younger players, or share rosters in order to ensure games are being played!

- ❑ Once at the diamond, if a team is unable to field a min roster due to insufficient players, a 15 minute grace period will be extended to find an appropriate call-up or to borrow a substitute
- ❑ If a team does not have the required min players after a 15 minute grace period, or falls below the minimum threshold during the game (injury, absenteeism) there are two options;

Option 1: Call-ups

- ❑ Call-ups must play in a lower division within the house league or interlock.
- ❑ A team may only call-up enough players for the purpose of fielding a 9-player team and not to purposely “boost” a team’s ability or to sit weaker players.
- ❑ If the call-up is invited to play and arrives at the diamond, she must be allowed to play.
- ❑ If during the course of the game, the team can now complete their roster with designate team players, the call-up will continue to play.
- ❑ Call-ups absolutely may not pitch. (Encourage player development within your team and division)
- ❑ Call-ups are eligible for playoff games and must adhere to all call-up stipulations
- ❑ Call-ups are a player privilege solely at the Coaches discretion, and coaches should look to alternate their call-ups and provide opportunities for other girls.

Option 2: Borrowed players

- ❑ If call-ups are unavailable, and the opposing team has more than 9 players, teams should borrow substitutes from their opponent in order to play the game. (this ensures families travelling great distances are rewarded with games played and girls are provided necessary development and fitness.)
- ❑ Borrowed players must come from the opposing team, designated by the opposing coach
- ❑ The lending coach will choose players at their discretion, but will make efforts not to lend the same player(s) in consecutive games, or exclusively.
- ❑ As late opposing players arrive, borrowed substitutes will be returned to their home team
- ❑ The games involving borrowed substitutes are considered “legal” results and recorded

Defaults/Forfeit

There are **four** circumstances in which games may be forfeited:

- 1) A team is unable to field the required numbers of players
- 2) A team refuses to play a scheduled game (including rescheduled rainout dates)
- 3) The home team does not post the scores to the designated web-site within 7 days (sending scores to the convenor for the purpose of having the convenor enter the scores will be treated as a forfeit)

- 4) A player, coach, or fan who has been ordered by an umpire to leave the park and refuses to do so within a reasonable period of time will result in a forfeiture of the game by the offending team. (See Ejections)
- ❑ Coaches and players are required to be at the scheduled diamond at the scheduled time unless otherwise instructed by the league/convenor who, has been in direct contact with the league/town regarding possible field closures. (see *Weather Rules*)
 - ❑ Only when call-ups and balancing the teams is not possible will the offending team Default the game. The intent should always be to play a house league game
 - ❑ Default/Forfeits will be scored 7-0 in the standings for the winner
 - ❑ If *both* teams are unable to field a team due to insufficient players, both teams default and each will have a 0-7 *loss* recorded in the standings.
 - ❑ In all Default/Forfeit situations, coaches should hold an impromptu practice for attendees
 - ❑ All Defaults/Forfeits must be reported to the appropriate convenor by both teams

Weather Rules

- ❑ Teams should assume the game is to be played and arrive at the diamond ready to play
- ❑ Softball is an outdoor sport and can be played in less than optimal climate conditions. Safety is the determining factor and coaches, umpires, associations and the Towns will make the necessary precautions to ensure safe playing conditions for all and at all times.
- ❑ If both teams have the minimum required players for the game, Rain delay/ Cancellation rules are applicable. If one or both teams do *not* have the min players, see default/forfeit

Delay/Suspension of Play

- ❑ Once at the diamond, Rain Delay/Suspension or Play Resume/Cancellation will be solely at the discretion of the umpires;
 - o Softball Canada uses the 30/30 rule for lightning:
 - o 30-30 Rule: Determine the threat of lightning in your area.
 - o •30 Seconds:Count the seconds between seeing lightning and hearing thunder. If this time is less than 30 seconds, lightning is still a potential threat. Seek shelter immediately.
 - o •30 minutes: After the last lightning flash, wait 30 minutes before leaving shelter. Half of all lightning deaths occur after the storm passes. Stay in a safe area until you are sure the threat has passed.
 - o when the field conditions become unplayable during a rain delay; the umpire in consultation with the coaches will determine if the diamond is unfit to resume

Cancellations

- The decision to *cancel* a game is made one of two ways;
 - (i) The Home Center's **Association** may cancel a game in the event of bad weather/unplayable fields if they notify the convenors/teams well in advance of scheduled game time (by 5:00 for early starts and 7:00 pm for late games)
 - (ii) The Umpire will delay/cancel the game *on-field* at the scheduled game location
 - **Coaches cannot arbitrarily cancel games due to weather** under any circumstances. Such incidents will be reported to the teams' home Association.
 - If play has started, and a game cannot be completed prior to the bottom of the third, the game will be ruled "DNP," and will be rescheduled.
 - If play has started in the bottom of the third and the home team is leading, the game is recorded as a home win; If the home team is trailing and has not completed their at-bat, the game will be ruled "DNP," and will be rescheduled.
 - Starting in the fourth, if the home team is trailing and has not yet started/completed their final at-bats, the game score will revert back to the last complete inning.
 - If the home team has taken the lead during this at bat, the score is recorded as a home team victory, whether the inning is complete or not.
- If play has not started at the time of the *cancellation*, no score will be recorded in the standings and the game is ruled a DNP "did not play," and will then be rescheduled.

Rescheduling games

Every attempt will be made to reschedule games that have been cancelled. Within two weeks, the home center is responsible for providing two alternative dates for the game to be played. Please see **Schedule A** for the Rescheduling Process.

Conditions:

- The coach of the home team is responsible for confirming a diamond and umpire are available for those dates
- The dates must be submitted by email to the visiting team's coach and the Convenor.
- No weekend dates (Friday, Sat, Sun) will be considered unless both teams agree.
- The starting game time must coincide with the normal starting time of the home team.
- Neither team can have a previously scheduled game on the same date, unless agreed upon by all participating teams.
- The visiting team must accept one of the given dates or forfeit the game.

Umpires

- The umpire should inspect the playing field and boundaries, equipment and clarify association-specific ground rules at the beginning of each game. Coaches should ensure that all association and division rules are clear to the umpires.
- Decisions to suspend/continue/cancel play are made at the scheduled game time, at the scheduled diamond

- ❑ The umpires shall determine when play is suspended/delayed/canceled due to unplayable/unsafe field conditions; (see weather rules) or injuries.
- ❑ Such decisions are indisputable.

Umpire's Judgement

- ❑ In case either team does seek a reversal of a decision based solely on a point of the rules, the umpire whose decision is in question shall, if in doubt, confer with his associate before taking any action.
- ❑ Coaches can request counsel with the umpire to get clarification of the rule as applied.

Protests

- ❑ Under no circumstances shall any player or person other than the coach of either team have any legal right to protest on any decision and seek its reversal.
- ❑ Protests shall not be considered if they are based solely on a decision involving the accuracy of judgement on part of an umpire, or if the protesting team won the game.
- ❑ An example of a valid in-game protest is as follows;
 - ❑ Misinterpretation by an umpire of a playing rule
 - ❑ Failure of an umpire to apply the correct rule to a given situation
 - ❑ Failure of an umpire to impose the correct penalty for a given violation
 - ❑ Illegal substitute. ie ineligible batter/runner; breaching the maximum allowable innings at a position.
- ❑ Protests for the above must be made to the plate umpire before: next pitch; or all infielders have left fair territory; or the last play of the game, before the umpires leave the playing field.
- ❑ All valid protests with the intent to overturn a game result (e.g. blatant rule violations; ineligible players, roster fixing etc) must be filed in writing to the division convener within 48 hours after the protested game.
- ❑ See schedule B for the Protest Process.

Ejections/Suspensions

- ❑ Each team's coach will be accountable for their behaviour and that of their respective supporters.
- ❑ Any persons, players, coaches, managers or supporters, ejected for any reason must immediately leave the playing area, and park.
- ❑ Umpires have the authority to eject/banish any disorderly person(s) from the playing area
- ❑ All ejections will be reported by the umpire to the necessary association authority.
- ❑ All ejections will be reviewed by the necessary association authority and may result in further disciplinary action.

- see Schedule C for the Disciplinary Process

League Rules that are not part of Softball Canada:

Batting

- Squirt and Novice; no dropped third strike rule. Batter is out and the ball is live.
- In the Squirt Division: The player pitching to the opposing team until the batter receives a 4th ball, which would normally result in a walk; this is where the game changes. After the 4th ball, the batter will have a count against her. It will either be 4 balls-0 strikes, 4-1, or 4-2. The hitter's coach or designate for the offensive team will now come in to pitch to his/her batter and carry on the count, resulting in the batter either hitting the ball or striking out. **The hitter's coach or designate will get a maximum of 3 pitches to do so and if after 3 pitches the batter does not get a hit they will be out.** While the coach/designate is pitching, no base-runner will be permitted to steal. A runner may advance only when a ball has been hit. The coach must pitch from the mound, do his/her best to stay out of the play and avoid coaching the base runners as well. The defensive pitcher must remain in the eight-foot circle while the pitch is being completed.

NOTE: If a batter is hit by an opposing team's pitcher, they may be granted first base by the umpire if an attempt to avoid the ball has occurred.

Stealing

- Squirt can attempt to advance (steal) as the ball crosses the plate.
Novice/Bantam may make their attempt as the ball leaves the pitchers hand
- In Squirt, while the coach/designate is pitching, no base-runner will be permitted to steal.
- Novice and above can steal home.
- Squirt cannot steal home on a pitched ball
- Squirt and Novice cannot advance to second base on a walk.

Overthrows

- When the ball is in play and overthrown beyond the playing area boundaries, all runners are awarded 2 bases from their last legally held base at the time the ball was thrown. Exception: Squirts will receive one base only.
- Squirt base runners may only steal one base at a time and must be hit home.
- On a wild pitch within the playing boundaries, base runners can advance at their own risk. If the ball goes under/over or lodges in the backstop, the ball is dead and runners are awarded one base only. This rule does not apply to Squirt.



Schedule A:

How to Reschedule Rainout Games

revised March 7, 2017.

Step One: Home Team

Responsibilities:

Within two weeks of the rainout,

- a) Contact the person in charge of scheduling parks for your Center
- b) Contact the person in charge of scheduling umpires
- c) Provide two alternate dates to visiting team
(must be a night of the week that is commonly used in that age group unless mutually agreed upon by both teams)
- d) Send email to visiting team with proposed dates
- e) Include the HGSL Convenor for your age group in the email

Bantam: bantamconvener@hgsl.ca

Novice: noviceconvener@hgsl.ca

Squirt: squirtconvener@hgsl.ca

Step Two: Visiting Team

Responsibilities:

- a) Send email confirming accepted date for Re-Scheduling.
- b) Include the HGSL Convenor for your age group in the email.

Step Three: Home Team

Responsibilities:

- a) Confirm final date with your home town Park Scheduler.
- b) Confirm umpires with your Association.
- c) Email the HGSL Convenor.

Step Four: HGSL Convener

Responsibilities:

- a) Ensure that home team has sent out proposed dates within two weeks.
- b) Contact HGSL President (President@hgsl.ca) if a team is deliberately non-compliant.
President@hgsl.ca.
- c) Send email to Web-site Manager (webmaster@hgsl.ca) confirming age bracket, teams involved, and the new date.

Step Five: Website Manager

Responsibilities:

- a) Update the Official Schedule on the website.



Schedule B:

Protest Process

When a protest is filed, using the process outlined on page 9 of the HGSL Rules, the following procedure will take place:

- The HGSL Chairperson will take leadership of the protest committee and a three person committee would be formed.
- The HGSL Chairperson will set a meeting time, date and location for the Protest Committee meeting.
- The committee would include one representative from each of the “offending” Associations and then an impartial party from one of the other Associations. The HGSL Chairperson will contact the Presidents of each of these Associations, requesting a representative to sit on the committee. Each partnering Association has a commitment to ensure that they are providing an individual to ensure due process.
- This third representative (from the uninvolved Association) will then be the chair of the meeting.
- If required, all involved parties would be invited to speak at this meeting.
- Once all evidence has been heard, the Protest Committee will come to a decision.
- Within 24 hours of the meeting, the chair would report back to the HGSL Chairperson with the decision of the group, based on the protest.
- The HGSL Chairperson will then send an email to all involved parties, informing them of the decision of the Protest Committee.

Example of a Proper Process:

- Burlington and Oakville Novice teams are playing a game. The Oakville coach brings his pitcher back in for her 4th inning of pitching in the 7th inning. The Burlington coach allows the Oakville player to pitch one pitch, and then

approaches the umpire and Milton files a protest. The Burlington Coach then goes home and composes an email, which is filed with the Novice convener within 48 hours of the situation. Once received, the convener would contact the HGSL Chairperson to let her/him know about the situation and forward her a copy of the formal protest. The Chairperson would set a meeting time, date and location, then contact the OGSA President and the Burlington President to ask for two representatives to sit on the committee. The Chair would then connect with the Presidents of the remaining Associations to have a third representative for the committee. The committee would meet, listen to all parties involved and after reviewing all of the facts, a decision would be made on whether the protest has validity or not. The Protest Chair would then send an email to HGSL Chairperson, to let her/him know the decision of the Committee. The HGSL Chairperson would then send an email to the involved coaches, and the Association Presidents to let them know the decision of the Committee.

If applicable, one of the Associations' Umpire-in-Chiefs or the Provincial Women's Softball could be consulted for advice.



Schedule C

Disciplinary Process

Revised March 2015.

The execution of the game falls under the responsibility of the umpires. In a instance where there is a situation that exceeds the umpire's jurisdiction on the field, or where the game officials feel that the situation was excessive and requires further invention by the HGSL Committee, a hearing with the Disciplinary Committee may be required or when a complaint is filed.

- ❑ The umpire must ensure that any ejected player, coach, manager or team official is made aware of the ejection when it occurs.
- ❑ The umpire is responsible for informing his/her Associations Umpire in Chief of the suspension, as soon as possible, at the conclusion of the game.
- ❑ In the case of a player or coach being ejected from a game, she must completely leave the vicinity of the ballpark. She will receive an automatic one game suspension to be served during the offending team's next game. Any suspended person shall not permitted to attend any game(s) that she has been suspended from.

First and foremost, disciplinary actions must be communicated with the President of the offending league, and this individual should be included in the judicial process, provided that he/she or a family member is not the offending party. If this is the case, a representative must be appointed by offending league to represent the league.

- ❑ Within 24 hours of an infraction, the Umpire shall complete a full game report to their Association's Umpire In Chief, outlining the situation and the parties involved.
- ❑ The individual Association UIC is then responsible for forwarding this report to both the individual Association's President and the Chairperson of the HGSL within 24 hours of receipt.

- Any coach or player wishing to appeal the one game suspension shall do so in writing within 24 hours to the Chairperson of the HGSL.
- The HGSL Chairperson, after compiling the facts, shall decide whether the appeal merits a Special meeting. If she believes that there is insufficient grounds to merit a meeting, she shall decline the meeting. The Chairperson does not have the authority to approve an appeal, only the committee can do so.
- If it is deemed it is necessary to hold a Disciplinary hearing, the HGSL President Chairperson will form a committee (following the guidelines of the Protest Committee process found in Schedule B) and call a meeting.
- The committee may, at its option, invite or decline to invite any person subject to discipline, to the meeting at which the discipline is considered.
- Any individual who is subject to discipline and is invited to the meeting is entitled to representation.
- The automatic suspension may be delayed by the HGSL Chairperson provided an appeal has been properly filed by the injured party and the HGSL Chairperson has agreed to hear the appeal. Written confirmation must be received by the suspended party, otherwise the suspension must be served.
- Within 48 hours of the completion of the hearing, the Committee shall forward their recommendations to the HGSL Chairperson. The HGSL Chairperson will then inform all involved parties of the recommendations.