**Majors Division Rules of Play**

**SPRING 2014**

**Westport Little League Girls Softball**

1. **Continuous batting order** of all players present for the game. Late players added to end of lineup.
2. **Seven players are required to start** a game or a forfeit is declared. With 7 players, the team can borrow ONE outfielder and they will have only 2 outfielders. Also, with 7, there will be an 8th spot on the lineup card that will be an automatic out. With 8 players, the team can borrow an outfielder and will have a full 3 person outfield. There will not be an automatic out with 8 players present. In the event that only 6 or fewer players show up coaches are encouraged to lend players and **play anyway** so as not to penalize the girls who did show up. Call-ups are encouraged as needed but should not pitch or catch. The game is 6 innings.
3. **No player should sit 2 innings before all of the other players have sat 1**, with the exception of the pitcher.  If the pitcher is removed partway through the game and everyone else on the team has sat one inning, then that player should sit one inning.
4. All players should be given the opportunity to play **2 or more innings in the infield. Call-ups may be limited to just 1 inning in the infield.**
5. **Unlimited substitutions** of players in the field. Pitchers may re-enter the game as pitcher, but only one time, and not during the same inning (unless you absolutely don’t have anyone else who can throw strikes).
6. Max. **9 players defensively**, meaning 3 outfielders on the grass. Teach the infielders to cover second base, and the outfielders to back up the bases.
7. **Bunting is permitted** and unlimited.
8. **Stealing is unlimited** (permitted on passed or dropped balls, or when the ball is in catcher’s glove. Stealing home and delayed steals are permitted).  Runners can leave the base on release of the pitch. Runners leaving early are subject to be called out without warning.
9. Sliding is not mandatory, but the **runner must slide or avoid contact** or she will be ruled out.
10. Following a play, **once the ball is in the pitcher’s possession**, and she is inside the pitcher’s circle, **the runner off of a base must continue to the next base, or return.** A runner leaving a base after the ball is in the circle will be called out.
11. **5-run rule for each inning**, except the 6th inning (or what is expected to be the final inning due to time-limit or darkness if agreed in advance of that inning). The inning ends when the 5th run crosses the plate. There is **NO continuation** of the play. In the final inning scoring is unlimited. There is no other “mercy rule” in effect.
12. **Pitching rules** are **4 innings per game. If your pitcher takes the mound and throws even 1 pitch, that constitutes an inning.** Try to give as many girls as possible a chance to pitch during the season. Pitching distance is 40’.
13. Time limit: **No new inning can begin after 1 hour 45 minutes.** Exception: In the case of a tie 1 extra inning with a 4-run rule may be played if there is no game waiting to start on the field.
14. **Scorebook must be maintained** during the regular season. Coaches are encouraged to compare scoring after each half inning.
15. **1 minute between innings.** Have your defensive plan for the game prepared in advance. ALWAYS courtesy run for your catcher-to-be with 2 outs. The courtesy runner should be the last BATTED out. 3 warm-up pitches (5 for a new pitcher)
16. Remember that we play **Dropped Third Strike and Infield Fly Rule.**
17. **Home team managers MUST confirm the game with the opponent 48 hours in advance.** Visitor provides 2 game balls.
18. **Patch umpires MUST be used.**