

**NBSA
Instructional Softball League
2017 Rules and Guidelines**



Welcome to the 2017 NBSA Instructional Softball Program! We want this year's program to be very successful and fun for both the players and their parents. Last year's parental support was a major ingredient in the achievements of the program, in addition to the individual accomplishments of every girl. We encourage parents to become involved and support their child, her team and the program to the greatest extent possible. Please start your involvement by reviewing these guidelines with your child.

The Instructional Softball League is designed to teach the fundamentals and strategies of fastpitch softball. This will be accomplished by allowing each player ample opportunity to master the skills at this level as well as to prepare older players to play in Minor League. Winning and losing is to be treated as secondary to overall player and team improvement. You should consider the season a success if the player is playing better than she did at the start of the season.

Attend or volunteer to help at games and practices so that you may share your child's successes. Encourage team play by having your child inform her coach when she cannot make a game or practice. Inform the coach when someone other than yourself is picking up your child or when you are not going to be present at a game or practice (in case of emergency). Show your support by ensuring that your child is on time for games and practices and is picked up on time.

General Information

Coaches and parents are looked upon as role models. Coaches and parents are to refrain from cursing, arguing or making negative comments about players, coaches or teams. Coaches and parents are expected to conduct themselves properly and promote good sportsmanship at all times. Coaches are to refrain from smoking in front of players. **All participants, parents, and fans must abide by the NBSA Code of Conduct.**

Sore winners look as bad as sore losers. Players will not be allowed to “rub it in” when another player does not make a good play.

NBSA provides uniforms, bats, helmets and catchers gear. Players must provide their own gloves and can use their own bats and helmets. Helmets must be fitted with **a cage and a chin strap**. **It is strongly recommended that players purchase their own helmets. Though precautions are taken, we have had issues with lice in past years.** Bats must comply with the league –10 rule.

Players must wear their uniforms correctly at all times. **Players must be in uniform in order to play in any game.** Uniform includes shirt and pants.

NBSA will make the determination to cancel games due to weather. Every effort will be made to cancel games two hours prior to game time (if possible). Make-up game dates will be decided on by both coaches and must be approved by the league director.

Game Play

Games will be 5 innings with no inning starting after 1 hour 45 minutes. In the event of rain or darkness, three (3) innings will be considered a complete game.

Each half inning will consist of 3 outs or 5 runs.

Teams with less than 6 players at the designated game time are allowed to borrow players from the opposing team.

In an effort to speed up the pace of play, particularly in the area of in-between innings, coaches must prepare line-up cards prior to game time.

Base coaches are responsible for “out” and “safe” calls and must be fair in this assessment.

No food is allowed on the benches during the game unless required for medical reasons. Only water bottles (or other beverage containers) are allowed.

At the instructional level, there is no bunting, stealing, sliding or leading (players must remain on the base until the ball is hit).

Positions and Player Rotation

Each fielding team will play with 6 infield positions: Pitcher, Catcher, 1B, 2B, 3B and a short stop. Additional players, up to 4, should be positioned in the outfield. Outfielders should be positioned at least 10 feet behind infielders.

Players must be rotated between the infield and outfield. No player should play only the outfield for an entire game.

No player can stay in the same position for the entire game.

Each player should be given ample opportunity to play all positions at least once during the season unless

there is **significant concern** for a child's safety. At this level, no player should be assigned a set position. Every player should play every position

In the event that your team has more than 10 players, every player must sit out once before any player is forced to sit out a second time.

During an inning, players may be moved from one fielding position to another OR from the bench to the field ONLY if a player is injured.

Catchers must be in full gear. Catchers will stand and throw the ball back to the pitcher. Catchers must be in correct catching stance/position and encouraged to stop all balls.

First baseperson and pitchers are required to wear helmets. Coaches should ensure that players in these positions have good catching skills for safety reasons.

Pitching

This is a coach pitch league. Batting tees may not be used under any circumstance.

Instructional league players are not permitted to pitch in games or in practice.

A Coach or willing parent will pitch to his own team.

Coaches should pitch from the pitcher's circle and attempt to pitch so that players can hit the ball. The ball should be pitched, **not lobbed** as in slow pitch softball. It is very hard for players to hit an arcing pitch.

Coaches should use discretion regarding the number of pitches allowed to a batter. Recommendation is 6-8 pitches. If the batter is watching pitches, the coach should encourage them to swing. If the batter is not swinging, the coach should advise the batter that they will receive 2 more pitches or the at bat will end.

The coach who is pitching will not field at the pitching position but allow the opposing team's pitcher to field. The only exception is if there is a safety concern. The coach can knock a ball down or similar, as needed, to protect a player.

Balls and Strikes

There will be no called balls or strikes against a batter.

Batters will not be granted a base on balls (walk) or a base if hit by a pitch.

Batter will be called out for: (1) strike out swinging, (2) hitting into an out, or (3) being called out for not swinging.

Hitting and Base Running

Helmets are to be worn by all batters and base runners.

Batting orders are to remain the same for the entire game unless an injury forces a player to leave the game. Every player gets to bat. Batting orders are to change so that all players bat at least once in each slot of the batting order.

Coaches of hitting teams will advise the opposition when a very strong hitter is up (mainly to prevent injuries).

Only the batter will have a bat in her hand. All other players are to be seated on the bench. This is the area of

greatest injury because coaches are pitching and coaching bases at this time and cannot be watching every player. Team parents are encouraged to volunteer their assistance in managing the players on the bench.

Extra base hits can only be earned on balls hit on the fly into the outfield (beyond the dirt of the infield). Ground balls into the outfield will constitute a single only. For fly ball extra base hits, the runner may advance at risk of being put out – it is not an automatic extra base.

Fielders should not block the base paths. Runners impeded by players in the base paths will automatically be awarded the base.

There are no advances on overthrows or pitches that get past the catcher.

Fielding

A player will be in the pitching position for fielding. The Coach pitching to his/her team will attempt to get out of the way of the ball so the other team can field it. Any hit pitch coming in contact with a coach will be considered dead and the pitch will not count.

Coaches will constantly check the position of fielders for proper position (outfielders have a tendency to creep into the infield) and make sure their attention is focused on the play for safety reasons.

Players should be encouraged to stay in their position and not interfere with another player attempting to make a play. Backing up a play is to be stressed.

Coaches are to be in the field to position players and to advise on what they should be doing during a play but, hopefully, will not be doing so at the end of the season.

Players should be encouraged to field the ball and throw to the appropriate base.

What the players should learn

Hitting

Players will learn proper stance – keeping the bat off the shoulders, back elbow down and parallel to the ground. Players will also learn their position in relation to the plate.

Players will learn to shift their weight from their back leg to their front when swinging. Players will learn to step straight at the pitcher when swinging (not towards the plate or a base).

Players will learn to follow the ball from the pitcher's hand to the bat. Players will learn to swing, drop the bat **(NOT THROW THE BAT)** and run to first base.

Players will learn to recognize the strike zone and wait for good pitches.

Running

Players will learn that first base is the only base that can be overrun. Players will learn that there is only 1 player to a base. Players will learn to listen to base coaches.

Players will learn to recognize and know when a runner has to advance (force play) and when to hold. Players will learn to recognize when to run part way and watch if a fly ball is caught in order to advance. Players will learn to avoid wide turns when running the bases.

There is no tagging up on fly balls, fair or foul.

Throwing

Players will learn to look where they are throwing and use a target like a glove or a child's chest to throw at. Players will learn to wait until the player they are throwing to is facing them and ready. Players will learn to throw overhand not sidearm.

Players will learn to step into a throw for more velocity. Players will learn to hold the ball across the seams. The players will learn crow hopping to insure a better throw and use of the whole body.

Players will understand which foot to lead off when throwing. Players will learn how to completely follow through all the way with their throwing arm.

Fielding

Players will learn where to stand in each position on the field. Players will understand who should get the batted ball and when. Players will learn to pay attention to the play at all times. Players will learn never to turn their head or back to the play.

Players will learn how to hold their glove correctly – fingers up for a high throw or bounce and fingers down for a low throw or ground ball. The player will learn to put the glove all the way to the ground for a ground ball.

Players will learn where to move to when the ball is hit, which base to throw the ball to, and where the next play is.

Players will learn to call for fly balls. Players will learn to use cut off person and how to use two hands when catching.