

Eastern Lehigh Valley Softball



2018 Official Playing Rules

EASTERN LEHIGH VALLEY SOFTBALL LEAGUE

2018 FOURTH & FIFTH GRADE LEVEL RULES

General Rules

1. Game times
 - a. Weekday game time is 6:00 PM. Saturday game times begin at 11:00 AM. Exceptions are permitted and will be indicated on the schedules.
2. Length of game and minimum playing time of player.
 - a. Prior to May 14th, no inning may start after 7:45, unless fields have lights, then the game can continue until the set forth below. A five run rule will be used. An inning shall end when three (3) outs have been made or a maximum of five (5) runs have scored. The Five run rule doesn't apply in the fifth (5th) and sixth (6th) innings until May 14th, or any inning thereafter, where three (3) outs are required. **Starting with May 15th games the 6th inning will be considered the last inning.** The game also moves to a 2 hour time limit.
 1. Six (6) innings or a new inning may not begin after two hours (2:00) for regular season games.
 - b. If game is tied when time limit is met, the game will continue with the inning being the sixth (6th) inning and the sixth (6th) inning rules will apply. Games must be played until winner is declared. Games can only be called for weather or darkness.
 1. In the event that a game is defined as a continuation game suspended due to weather a new two hour time limit is observed.
 - c. Each player must play at least three (3) innings in the field in each five (5) inning game or a minimum of two (2) innings in any game of less than five (5) innings that is shortened due to darkness or weather. No player shall sit consecutive innings defensively. It is highly recommended that half a player's defensive innings are in the infield. The coaches can use their discretion for safety issues or if a player only wants to play the outfield.
 - d. A league warning will result upon the first offense of not playing all players.
3. Complete Games
 - a. In the event of bad weather or darkness, a game will be considered complete after:
 1. Four (4) innings, or three and one half (3½) if the innings if the home team is leading.
 - b. Mercy Rule:
 1. In the event that the home team is ahead by twelve (12) runs after 3 and a half (3½) innings, or the visiting team is ahead by twelve (12) runs after the fourth (4th) inning, or at the completion of any inning thereafter. Home team gets last at bat.
4. Dimensions
 - a. Length of bases shall be fifty-five (55) feet.
 - b. Pitching rubber shall be located thirty-five (35) feet from the back point of home plate.
5. Equipment
 - a. Balls
 1. The home team shall supply one new ball and one backup ball for each game.
 - a. An eleven (11) inch ASA .47 approved optic yellow softball shall be used for play. Red-stitching is mandatory.

b. Bats

1. All bats must be 2004 ASA or BESR certified softball bats.

c. Helmets

1. Batters and base runners must wear protective helmets with attached facemasks and chin straps.

d. Pitching Facemasks

1. Pitching facemasks shall be required.

e. First Aid Kits

1. All Coaches are required to have a first-aid kit available at all practices and games.
A pair of rubber gloves must be available at all games.

f. Use of the double first base is required.

g. Hit sticks may not be used during games.

h. Metals cleats may not be worn.

6. Rosters.

a. Minimum size

1. Minimum of 12 unless exception is approved by league board.

b. Minimum players needed for game is eight (8), at which the team will be assessed an

automatic out in the ninth (9th) batting position. No automatic out will be charged provided there are nine (9) players in the line-up. If there are less than eight (8) players, the offending team will FORFEIT the game to the opposing team.

c. Bringing up of players. A player(s) must be brought up from one age level below if a team knows they will have only eight (8) players or less for a regular scheduled game.

1. A player may be brought up as the ninth (9) or tenth (10) player. If brought up as the tenth (10) player, all ten (10) must play.
2. Any player who is brought up is NOT eligible to pitch.
3. No player is eligible to be brought up if her regular team has a game scheduled at the same time.

d. Game Cancellations, Rainouts and Make-Ups

All rainouts and cancellations must be replayed by the first Sunday following the date of the cancellation. In the event of two rainouts/cancellations in the same week, the second game must be made up by the second Sunday following the date of the second cancellation.

1. Failure to follow this rule will result in the offending team being charged with a forfeit or being fined \$25.00 at the league's discretion, or both for repeat offenders. The league will have the option to reschedule the game.
2. If coach moves a game after the umpire has been scheduled, a \$5.00 fine will be assessed to the requesting (offending) organization rather than having the league assume this cost. Any show up fees due the umpire shall be paid by the offending organization as well.
3. Lineups must be exchanged prior to the game and be approved by the umpire. Failure to present your opponent a line up prior to the start of the game MAY result in the game being forfeited. The lineup should have the player number, last name and first name initial.

e. Scorekeeping

1. Scores will be kept by both teams
2. Each team will hand in line-up to the opposing team that will consist of last name, first initial. All players playing up shall be identified with an asterisk (*). Failure to identify players playing up will be considered illegal players and a forfeit will be declared.
3. The winning team is responsible for submitting the scores and innings pitched by the pitchers on both teams to the statistician. Players playing up shall be submitted for each game as well.
4. Failure to send the information to the statistician within twenty-four (24) hours will result in a five dollar (\$5.00) fine, payable at the next league meeting.

f. Protest Fee

1. A fee of \$25.00 must accompany a written protest within 24 hours of the completion of the game being protested. The protest must be filed with the umpire in compliance with the 'protest rules". The fee will be returned if the protest is upheld. The league administrator must be notified of any protest within twenty-four (24) hours.

Pitching

1. A pitcher may pitch a maximum of three (3) innings per game. There are no per week pitching limitations.
2. In the event of a tie game and extra innings are played, a pitcher may pitch more than the maximum of three (3) innings per game and these extra innings are "free" innings.
3. One pitch in an inning shall be counted as a complete inning pitched.
4. A pitcher may re-enter the game only one time during the regulation game or extra innings.
5. PIAA pitching rules will be used and enforced. Illegal pitching styles shall be corrected with no penalty being assessed to the pitcher.
6. Pitcher must be removed after two trips to the mound per inning from either a coach(es) or player(s).
7. A maximum of three trips, from either a coach(es) or player(s), are allowed per game.
8. A pitcher shall be removed from the mound when she hits three (3) batters in the given game. Pitched balls hitting the ground prior to hitting a batter will not be considered a hit batter for the purpose of removing the pitcher. This rule applies to all innings pitched in a game, including any extra innings.
9. A pitched ball that is thrown out of play from the mound while in the act of pitching to the batter shall be considered a "ball".
10. The pitcher will be allowed a maximum of **five (5)** warm-up pitches prior to the start of their first appearance and **three (3)** each inning after the first appearance.
11. A pitcher **MUST** be removed after walking four (4) consecutive batters in an inning. A hit batter counts as a walk.
12. The strike zone shall be from the shoulder to the knees including the black and white portions of home plate.
13. All eligible pitchers must be 10 or older by August 31, 2017.

Batting

1. A running batting order that includes all players present shall be used.
2. A player arriving late shall be added to the end of the batting order. If players arriving after the lineups have been exchanged, and the other team is not made aware of the addition, the batter is declared out the first time that batting position comes up.
3. A five run rule will be used. An inning shall end when three (3) outs have been made or a maximum of five (5) runs have scored. The Five run rule doesn't apply in the fifth (5th) and sixth (6th) innings until May 14th, or any inning thereafter, where three (3) outs are required. **Starting with May 15th games the 6th inning will be considered the last inning.** The game also moves to a 2 hour time limit.
4. In the event a team has eight (8) players at the start of a game, they will be charged with an automatic out at the end of the batting order. A player arriving late shall take the place of the automatic out and shall be able to enter the game immediately.
5. If a team can field nine (9) players, there will be no automatic out.
6. In the event a player leaves the game early due to illness or injury, no automatic out is applied. Should the ninth (9th) player leave the game for any other reason other than injury or illness, that team will be charged with an automatic out in the player's batting position. Should a player leave a game due to injury, she may return at any time and will be put back into her original position in the batting order. The strike zone shall be from the shoulder to the knees and shall include the white and black portions of the plate.
7. Bunts are permitted with a player allowed unlimited attempted bunts per game. **Once a batter has shown a bunt she may not withdraw the bat and swing at the ball.** The batter shall be declared out should this occur.
8. If a batter is struck by a pitch, see pitching section for the rules.
9. One (1) warning per game shall be given to each team for throwing the bat. The batter shall be declared out on the second offense.
10. No advancement may take place on a dropped third strike.

Base Running

1. Play concludes when the ball is in possession of the pitcher in the circle.
2. Overthrows
 - a. Infielder/Outfielder throws to a bag but overthrows the bag
 1. Players can advance **one** base on all overthrows made to **any** base at the runner's own risk unless the ball goes out of play. If the ball goes out of play the runner is awarded the next base as per PIAA rules.
 2. No advancement may take place on a return throw from the catcher or infielder to the pitcher.
 3. No advancement may take place on an overthrow on a stolen base.
5. A base runner MAY NOT leave the base until a pitched ball passes the plate. Runners must return to the base immediately when the ball is returned to the pitcher. If the base runner leaves the base early the umpire shall issue a warning. There will be three (3) warnings issued per team per game. After the third (3rd) warning, the umpire shall declare the runner out.
6. A collision rule shall be in effect. A deliberate collision shall result in that player being ejected from the game. **A collision is defined as a violent coming together of two bodies. Running into the catcher's arm while she is attempting to make a tag or the brushing of the catcher by a runner is incidental contact. NOT A COLLISION.**
7. An Obstruction Rule shall be in effect
 - a. A fielder may not block the base unless she is in the possession of the ball. A runner must

slide or give herself up if the fielder is blocking the base while in the possession of the ball. If fielder is blocking the base while not in possession of the ball and any contact, incidental or otherwise occurs, an obstruction shall be declared and the runner shall be awarded the base.

- b. **Plays at the plate** - In the event of a play at the plate the catcher **MUST** be positioned **IN FRONT** of the plate when not in possession of the ball and **MUST** allow the runner complete access to the plate. If the throw takes the catcher into the path of the base runner and a collision or incidental contact occurs the runner will be awarded the plate. ***The fielder has the right on a batted ball, the runner on a thrown ball.*** Possession is defined as the fielder actually holding the ball in her hands or glove A thrown ball on the way to the plate that has not yet been fielded IS NOT possession.
 - c. This does not apply to a force play at the plate. In this instance the catcher may place one foot on the plate but must allow the runner access to the plate.
Plays at second or third base – The fielder **MAY NOT** stand with her foot on the base while awaiting a throw or making a tag. She **MUST** allow direct access to the base. The proper positioning on a tag play is for the fielder to straddle the base, catch the ball and put her glove down in front of the base.
 - d. PIAA RULE for Double First Base
 1. The defensive team may only retire the batter/runner using the white base when the throw is on or inside the base line. In the event the throw is outside of fair territory the fielder may use the orange base.
 - e. Sliding is strongly encouraged when the runner is in the act of attempting to achieve a base or when the fielder is in possession of the ball before she gets to the base.
8. Courtesy runner **MUST** be used when the catcher is on base and there are one or more outs. A courtesy runner may be used for the pitcher when there are two outs. The courtesy runner will be the last person to make an out.
9. Stealing
- a. Each team will be allowed eight (8) attempts stealing per game (This includes all bases including home.) Advancement on a pitched ball will be considered a steal.
 1. The scorekeeper/coach shall declare when a given team is out of steals. One warning will be given for an attempted steal after the limit has been obtained by returning the offender to her prior base. Additional attempts will be considered an out
 - b. A **steal is defined** as any advancement on a pitched ball. This advancement must take place when the ball crosses the plate and must be a direct and expedient (running) attempt to achieve the next base. Walking, moving slowly or shuffling toward the next base is not defined as expedient. If the runner does not proceed expediently (running) toward the next base she must return to her previous base.
 - c. No delayed steals are allowed. A runner may not advance when the catcher throws the ball back to the pitcher for the purpose of resuming play. If the offensive team tries a delayed steal, the runner will be declared out.
 - d. Double steals are permitted and will count as two (2) steals.
 1. In the case a team has seven (7) steals with runners on bases other than third base where the team attempts to steal home and the trailing runner(s) follows, the play stands with the runner attempting to steal home, however the runners will need to be returned to their original base without penalty. No advancement may take place by any runner when the catcher is attempting to throw a runner out who is attempting to steal. No advancement on the overthrow.
 - e. If a runner is thrown out at home plate and the trailing runner has not proceeded directly to third (3rd) base, she must return to the second (2nd) base.
10. No Pickoff Plays

Defense/Fielding

- a. Ten (10) defensive players are allowed on the field. They are the pitcher, catcher, four infielders and four outfielders.
- b. The outfielders must be positioned a minimum of fifteen (15) feet behind the baseline prior of the start of the play.
- c. Outfielders cannot cover or run to a base for the purpose of making a putout.
- d. At the start of each pitch and until the pitcher releases the ball, each infielder shall be in their assigned playing position, which cannot be more than 5 feet in front of the base bag. Failure to comply will result in a warning, and then the results of the play or the pitch begin declared a ball.
 - i. Exception: Infielders may leave their assigned position when a batter has committed to bunt.
- e. Fielders are not permitted to stand in the baseline at the start of each pitch. This rule applies only when runners are on base, or going to the affected bases.
- f. Catcher's interference will be enforced. The offensive team will have the option to choose between the result of the play or award of first (1st) base. An umpire may move the catcher at his/her discretion for safety reasons.
- g. Catchers must make an effort to accurately throw the ball back to the pitcher. Rolling the ball will not be allowed.
- h. There will be no infield or outfield warm-up between innings.
- i. The pitcher will be allowed a maximum of three (3) warm-up pitches prior to the start of each inning.
- j. Any new pitcher, regardless of when she enters the game, will be allowed a maximum of five (5) warm-up pitches.
- k. There will be NO infield fly rule.

Post Season

1. All playoff games must be played in their entirety. Any game that isn't completed will be completed the following night. In the event there is a game scheduled the following night, the incomplete game will take precedence and shall be completed prior to the start of the regularly scheduled playoff game.
2. Team eligibility
 - a. 4/5 and 6/7 Levels
 1. The top three, four or five teams from each division will be eligible for the playoffs (see below)
 2. In the event a balanced schedule has been played and a fifth (5th) place team in one division has a better record than the fourth (4th) team in the other division, a play-in game between them will be held with the winner qualifying for the playoffs as the fourth (4th) seed.
 3. In the event of an unbalanced schedule, a one-half (1/2) game differential in the final standings caused by one team having an additional regularly scheduled game, shall be considered a tie for the standings position in question.

Example: One team finishes the season with an 8-8 record and a second team has an 8-7 record.
 4. After the first round of playoffs have been completed, the seeding of the remaining teams will be established as follows:
 - a. Season Record
 - b. Head-to-Head Competition

- c. Divisional Playoff Winning Percentage
- d. Runs Allowed
- e. Coin Toss

Game Conduct

1. Cheering - Players from the offensive team will be allowed to cheer for the batter and the batter only, until the pitcher steps on the mound and addresses the plate. At this point the offensive team must cease cheering. This rule shall apply to the offensive team's coaches and fans. After one warning has been given, the batter shall be assessed a strike.
2. Coach and Player Conduct
 - a. Any coach or player ejected from a game is automatically suspended from their next game. The ejected person will not be allowed to participate, coach or attend the game.
 - b. Assistant coaches will be permitted to coach the other team's players if it is done in a positive manner. They may not address or engage the opposing coaches or umpire. Arguing or discussing any rule or call with the umpire will result in a warning. A second offense shall result in a suspension of no less than two games. The warning will be carried forward for the balance of the season. **ONLY THE HEAD COACH MAY APPROACH THE UMPIRE(S).**
3. Parents on the Field
 - a. All levels
 - a. Any parent who steps on the field of play for reasons other than an injury will be ejected from the game.
4. Persons behind the Backstop
 - a. All levels
 - a. No one will be permitted behind the backstop. One warning will be issued by the umpire. On the second offense, the offending team will be assessed an out.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- Have the girls arrive a minimum amount of time before the game. Have them take warm-ups to prepare themselves for the game. If you make the preparation important the game will be even more important.
- Concentrate on teaching the fundamentals, particularly throwing and catching the ball. It's imperative that these two skills be learned. A girl can't progress in learning the other skills until they can throw properly and catch the ball.
- Keep up the level of enthusiasm. Get the adrenalin flowing. Girls who leave with enthusiasm will return with enthusiasm.
- Positive reinforcement is the key. Have a lot of patience. If they learn that it's fun from you, it'll be fun. Remember, the girls must have fun.
- Every girl needs to think that's she's important and that she belongs (so do we). Every girl needs a "win", good throw, good catch, good hit, etc.. Cheer her accomplishments and have her teammates do so as well.

- Be cognizant of the tone and volume of your voice. You don't want to scare some of the girls. Be aware of their reactions when you speak to them.
- Make it fun. If it's not fun they won't be back. Don't take things too seriously and remember they will feed off of your attitude. Be well organized, keep things moving.
- Make up your line up and batting order before the game. You can always adjust if someone doesn't show up. Have the girl's sit in batting order so they are ready to go.
- Have numerous coaches to assist. This will keep the girls motivated and ready to go. You can break down into numerous stations.
- Make sure your girl's hustle on and off the field between innings and at practice going out to their positions.

INSTRUCTIONS

- **Play all the games.**
- In the event of rain call the opposing coach a minimum of 1 ½ hours prior to scheduled game time in order to cancel the game. Reschedule the game as soon as possible.
- The schedule and directory will be posted on the league's website. The website is elvsoftball.org
- If you have any rule questions please email or call the 4/5 Statistician.
- **The Winning team is to notify Bill Ryker, your statistician when the game has been played with the scores from both teams and pitching information. Also, any issues and problems with games or other coaches, Bill should be notified immediately.**

ryker44@verizon.net

[Click here to Post your Game Results and Pitching Innings](#)

IF THEY ALL RETURN NEXT YEAR YOU'VE DONE YOUR JOB VERY, VERY WELL. WE DON'T WANT TO LOSE ANYONE BEFORE THEY'VE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN AND ENJOY THE GREAT GAME OF SOFTBALL!