



# ***ELV Softball***

## ***Eastern Lehigh Valley Softball League***

### **2019 5<sup>th</sup> & 6th PLAYING RULES**

#### **→ General Rules**

- 1) **Game Times** - 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 players.**
  - A. Prior to May 14<sup>th</sup>, no inning may start after 7:45, unless fields have lights, then the game can continue until set forth below. The 5 run rule shall not apply starting with the sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) inning, or any inning thereafter, where three (3) outs are required prior to May 14<sup>th</sup>. Starting with your May 15<sup>th</sup> games the **7<sup>th</sup> inning will now be considered the last inning**. The 6<sup>th</sup> inning will have a 5 run limit. Also the games move to a 2:15 time limit. Of course if darkness comes into play umpires should use their own discretion for safety reasons.
  - B. Game is seven (7) innings long.
  - C. A running batting order consisting of all the players is mandatory
  - D. Each player must play at three (3) Innings in the field in each game of six (6) or seven (7) innings or a minimum of two (2) innings in any game of five (5) innings or less is shortened due to darkness, weather or mercy rule. No player shall sit consecutive innings defensively.

- E. A league warning will result upon the first offense of not playing all players.
- F. No inning shall start after two hours and 15 minutes (2:15) have been played.

### 3) Complete Games

- A. Five (5) innings, or four and a half (4½) innings if the home team is leading.
- B. Mercy Rule:
  - I. In the event that the home team is ahead by ten (10) runs after four and a half innings (4½) innings, or the visiting team is ahead by ten (10) runs after the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) inning, or at the completion of any inning thereafter.
- C. In the event of bad weather or darkness, a game will be considered complete after three and one half (3 1/2) innings if the home team is winning or four (4) innings if the visiting team is winning. In the event that a game is defined as a continuation game suspended due to weather a new two hour time limit is observed and you pick up where you left off.

### 4) Dimensions - Length of bases shall be sixty (60) feet. Pitching rubber shall be located forty (40) feet from the back point of home plate.

### 5) Equipment

- A. The home team shall supply one new ball and one backup ball for each game.
  - I. A twelve (12) inch ASA .47 approved optic yellow softball shall be used for play. Red-stitching is mandatory.
- B. Bats
  - I. All bats must be 2004 ASA or BESR certified softball bats.
- C. Helmets
  - I. Batters and base runners must wear protective helmets with attached facemasks and chin straps.
- D. Pitching Facemasks shall be **required** for all pitchers. All organizations are responsible for providing at least one pitching facemask per team.
- E. All coaches are required to have first aid kits at all practices and games. A pair of rubber gloves must be available. Individual first aid kits are not required if your organization has a general first aid kit on location. During games the home organization is required to have a first aid kit on location at the playing fields
- F. Use of the double first base is required
- G. Hit sticks may not be used during games.
- H. Metal cleats may not be worn.

### 6) Rosters

- A. Minimum of twelve (12), unless exception is approved by league board.
- B. Minimum players needed for game is eight (8), no automatic out will be charged provided there are eight (8) players in the line-up. If there are less than eight (8) players, the offending team will FORFEIT the game to the opposing team. The opposing team has the option of supplying a player (s). The Forfeiting team is responsible for paying the umpire.
- C. Bringing up of players
  - I. A player must be brought up from the one age level below if a team knows they will have only eight (8) players or less for a regular scheduled game.
  - II. A player may be brought up as the ninth (9) player. If brought up as the ninth

- (9th) player, all nine (9) must play. Players who have been brought up cannot play more innings in the field than any regular rostered player.
- III. Any player who is brought up is **NOT** eligible to pitch.
  - IV. No player is eligible to be brought up if her regular team has a game scheduled at the same time.

## 7) Game Procedures

- A. Game rainouts, cancellations and make ups
  - I. 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.
  - II. 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.
  - III. Lineups must be exchanged prior to the game and be approved by the umpire. Lineups must include the last name and first initial and uniform number as well as position of the starting players.
  - IV. 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.
- B. Scorekeeping
  - I. Scores will be kept by both teams
  - II. Each team will hand in line-up to the opposing team that will consist of last name, first initial, number and position. 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. Failure to submit a line up may result in the game being forfeited and the offending coach being suspended.
  - III. The winning team is responsible for submitting the scores to the statistician. The last names of the pitchers from both teams and innings pitched also need to be submitted to the statistician. Players playing up shall be submitted for each game as well. Failure to identify the players playing up will be considered illegal players and a forfeit will be declared.
  - IV. 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.

### → Game Protest

- A. 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 'PIAA protest rules'. The protest is for rules only, not judgement calls and the protest must take place before the next pitch. Both coaches must initial the book and the umpire must sign it. The fee will be returned if the protest is upheld. The league administrator must be notified of any protest within twenty-four (24) hours.

## → **Batting**

- A. A running batting order that includes all players shall be used.
- B. A player arriving late shall be added to the end of the batting order. If players arriving after the line-ups have been exchanged, and the other team is not made aware of the changes prior to the first pitch being thrown, the team will take an out when that batting position comes up the first time.
- C. An inning shall end when three (3) outs have been made or a maximum of five (5) runs have scored.
- D. The five (5) run rule shall not apply starting with the sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) inning, or any inning thereafter, where three (3) outs are required prior to May 14th. Starting with your May 15th games the **7th inning will now be considered the last inning**. The 6th inning will have a five (5) run limit. Also the games move to a 2:15 time limit. Of course if darkness comes into play umpires should use their own discretion for safety reasons.
- E. In the event a team has eight (8) players at the start of a game, they will not be charged with an automatic out at the end of the batting order. A player arriving late shall be placed at the bottom of the batting order.
- F. Should a player leave a game due to injury or illness, she may return at any time and will be put back into her original position in the batting order.
- G. The strike zone shall be from the shoulders to the knees and shall include the white and black portions of the plate.
- H. Unlimited bunting will be permitted. Fake bunt and swing will be prohibited and the batter shall be declared out and the runners are to be returned to their original bases.
- I. Slap Hitting is permitted as long as the player doesn't fake bunt.
- J. 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.
- K. Advancement may take place on a dropped third strike.

## → **Pitching**

- A. A pitcher may pitch a maximum of four (4) innings per game. There are no per week pitching limitations.
- B. In the event of a tie game and extra innings are played, a pitcher may pitch more than the maximum of four (4) innings per game and these extra innings are "free" innings. A pitcher may NOT enter a game for the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) time in extra innings.
- C. A pitcher may re-enter the game one time provided her maximum of four (4) innings have not been met.
- D. One pitch in an inning shall be counted as a complete inning pitched.
- E. A pitcher shall be removed from the mound when she hits three (3) batters in a 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 pitches in a game, including any extra innings.
- F. If a batter is struck by a pitch, **directly or indirectly (hit ground first), the batter shall be awarded first base**. The batter must make every effort to get out of the way of the pitch. If this is not done, the pitch will be considered a ball and a base will not be

- awarded. This is at the discretion of the umpire.
- G. PIAA pitching rules will be used and enforced.
    - I. Pitcher must be removed after two trips to the mound per inning from either a coach or player(s).
    - II. A maximum of three trips, from either a coach or player(s), are allowed per game.
  - H. 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.
  - I. The strike zone shall be the shoulder to the top of the knees including the white and black portions of the plate.

## → **Base Running**

- A. A base runner may leave the base when the ball is released by the pitcher. The runner must immediately return to the base when the pitcher is in possession of the ball while standing in the circle. If the base runner leaves the base early the umpire shall issue a warning. The second (2<sup>nd</sup>) occurrence will result in the runner being called out.
- B. Delayed steals will not be permitted. If the offensive team tries a delayed steal, the runner will be called out. **Delayed steal is defined as when the ball is being returned from the catcher or infielder to the pitcher.**
  - I. Example: If the catcher makes a poor throw to the pitcher, the runners may advance. This rule applies to an overthrow from any position on the field. A ball that is caught, bobbled, or dropped by the pitcher or any fielder is NOT considered an overthrow. A ball that does not leave the circle is NOT considered an overthrow.
  - II. Pitcher must receive the ball back from the catcher within the circle, or else the ball is considered live. **The batter-runner cannot be frozen at first base on a base-on-balls by merely returning the ball to the pitcher in the circle.** The batter-runner after reaching first base may continue on, without stopping, in an attempt to reach second base. Said runner may stop in the baseline after rounding first base. At this point, the umpire should begin a three-second count on the runner. If the runner again begins movement to advance or retreat before the count reaches "three" and does not stop again, this is a legal action and should not be penalized. **However, if the runner stops a second time, without an attempt by the defense, that runner is out immediately.**
- C. [Look Back Rule Clarification](#)
- D. A play is not considered "dead" when the ball is in secure possession of an infielder. She has to either make a play at a base or return the ball to the pitcher in the circle. Once the pitcher has the ball in the circle, the runner must return to her original base.
  - I. Example: If a runner is one (1) step from second (2<sup>nd</sup>) base when the pitcher gains possession of the ball in the circle, the runner is entitled to 2<sup>nd</sup> base. If the runner is one step past second (2<sup>nd</sup>) base, she has the option to proceed to third (3<sup>rd</sup>) base, and the defense has the option to make a play on her. If the runner stops or hesitates after touching 2<sup>nd</sup> base, she must return to 2<sup>nd</sup> base.
- E. A collision rule shall be in effect. A deliberate collision shall result in that player being ejected from the game. 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.
  - I. 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.

F. Sliding is strongly encouraged.

G. Courtesy runner **MUST** be used when the catcher is on base and may be used for the pitcher and there are two outs. The courtesy runner will be the last person to make an out.

H. Stealing

I. Each team will be allowed fourteen (14) attempts stealing, including home plate, per game from any base. Double steals will be counted as two (2) steals. In the event of extra innings each team will be given two steal attempts per each extra inning. **NOTE:** If you only used 10 steal attempts previously those are lost. Extra innings start fresh with each team getting two steal attempts per every inning played after the 7<sup>th</sup> inning.

01. **A steal is defined as any advancement on a non-batted ball.**

02. No delayed steals will be 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.

03. All runners may advance one base when the catcher is attempting to throw a runner out who is attempting to steal. The ball is considered live where the baserunner may advance one additional base at their own risk if the throw is misplayed. This additional advancement does not count against the steal totals.

**CLARIFICATIONS:** Runner on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> where both runners attempt to steal the next base on a pitched ball. This counts as a double steal (2). The catcher then attempts to throw the runner advancing to third where the ball sails into left field. The runner originally on second can advance to home at her own risk and the original runner on first can advance to third at her own risk with no additional steals counted. Runner on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> where the runner on second attempts to steal 3<sup>rd</sup> base on a pitched ball. The runner on 1<sup>st</sup> initially only takes her lead and watches the play develop. The catcher then attempts to throw out the runner advancing to third base and the ball sails into left field. The runner originally on second can advance to home at her own risk with no additional steals being charged. The runner on first base can advance no further than third base. However, while her initial move was not to steal second base while the catcher is putting the ball in play, her advancement to second base will count as a steal. Her advancement to third base will not be counted as a steal.

04. If a runner is thrown out at third (3<sup>rd</sup>) base and the trailing runner has not proceeded directly to second (2<sup>nd</sup>) base, she must return to the first (1<sup>st</sup>) base

05. The scorekeeper/coach shall declare when a given team is out of steals. **NO** warning will be given for an attempted steal after the limit has been obtained as the play will be called dead and the runner called out.

06. If a game is tied at 7 innings, each team will receive two (2) additional steals for each inning starting with inning 8. All steals left from the first 7 innings will be forfeited.

I. Pick-off plays will be permitted at all bases. The ball is live on a pickoff throw and the ball must be returned to the pitcher in the circle to stop play. There is no limit on the

number of bases a runner can advance. Runner continues to advance at her own risk.

01. Any advancement on a pick-off play is NOT considered an attempted steal and will not count towards the number of maximum steals allowed per game.

- J. The ball will become live if the return throw to the pitcher from the catcher leaves the circle.
- K. When the catcher attempts to throw out a runner on a dropped third strike the ball becomes live until it is returned to the pitcher in the circle. Any runner not forced to move can proceed at their own risk and this **will not** be considered a stolen base. Play is considered live until the ball is returned to the pitcher in the circle. If a runner illegally advancing to first base on a dropped third strike confuses the catcher and draws a throw allowing other base runners to advance, all the runners will go back to their original base they were at. If coaches are constantly instructing their batters to run on third strikes that are not dropped to trick and confuse the opposing team to throw the ball into play, the umpire may declare the lead base runner out on an interference.

### → **Defense/Fielding**

- A. There will be nine (9) defensive players
- B. The outfielders must be positioned a minimum of twenty (20) feet behind the baseline prior of the start of the play.
- C. 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 (1<sup>st</sup>) base. An umpire may move the catcher at his/her discretion for safety reasons.
- D. Catchers must make an effort to accurately throw the ball back to the pitcher. Rolling the ball will not be allowed.
- E. 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.
- F. 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.
- G. Infielders are not restricted to starting position within the diamond, and may play up to deter the bunt. It is recommended that infielders wear masks if routinely playing up in bunting/non-bunting situations.
- H. Infield fly rule **DOES** apply

### → **Game Conduct**

- A. Cheering
  - I. 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 offending team's head coach will be ejected.
- B. Coach and Player Conduct
  - I. 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.

- II. 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 team's coaches or the umpire(s). 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 (2) games. The warning will be carried forward for the balance of the season. **ONLY THE HEAD COACH MAY APPROACH THE UMPIRE(S).**

C. Parents on the Field

- I. Any parent who steps on the field of play for reasons other than an injury will be ejected from the game.

D. Persons behind the Backstop

- I. 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.

→ **Post Season**

- A. 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.
- B. Team eligibility
  - I. The designated number of teams from each division or conference will be eligible for the playoffs (see below)
  - II. In the event a balanced schedule has been played and a fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) place team in one division has a better record than the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) team in the other division, a play-in game between them will be held with the winner qualifying for the playoffs as the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) seed. This would apply to fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) and third (3<sup>rd</sup>) place in the event three teams qualify from each division.
  - III. 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.
    01. Example: One team finishes the season with an 8-8 record and a second team has an 8-7 record.
  - IV. After the first round of playoffs have been completed, the seeding of the remaining teams will be established as follows:
    01. Season record
    02. Head-to-Head competition
    03. Divisional Playoff winning percentage
    04. Runs allowed
    05. Coin Toss
- C. Player Eligibility
  - I. A player must play in at least one half (1/2) of the regular season games. In the event of injury the player will be given credit for a game played provided she attend her team's game and signs the scorebook.



## → **THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND**

- Make the game important to the girls. They will respond in kind.
- Have the girls arrive a minimum of 30 minutes 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. Hitting will come later when the coach pitches at mid-season.
- Keep up the level of enthusiasm. Cheer your opponent as well as your own team. Get the adrenalin flowing. Girls who leave with enthusiasm will return with enthusiasm.
- Positive reinforcement is the key. Have a lot of patience. Remember, they know absolutely nothing about the game. 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.
- Play little games with them. Challenge them to see if they can make 3 outs before the other team has batted all of their batters. When accomplished, challenge them to do it a second time.
- Remove the batter from first base if she is made out. Some girls will be upset and cry because they think they've failed or done wrong. Use some psychology here and explain that they had a good hit, it's just that the fielder made a very good play.
- 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 lineup 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. One Hour practices are plenty enough time, as long as you have help. You can break down into numerous stations. If you are having a great practice you can go longer.
- 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.** It's a very short schedule
- **Check with your coordinator** to make sure the **field is available** on your scheduled home dates. The other age levels have started and it's possible games have been moved on the field you are using.
- 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 5th/6th Grade Statistician.
- All contacts with opposing coaches are to be DIRECT VERBAL contacts. DO NOT make any game changes by email or voicemail. Doing so is a recipe for disaster. If you want to email in advance, make sure you get confirmation, if not call the coach and make sure you speak.
- **The Winning team is to notify 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.**

**[Click Here to Report that your game has been played](#)**

**IF THE MAJORITY OF PLAYERS RETURN NEXT SEASON, YOU'VE DONE YOUR JOB VERY, VERY WELL. WE DON'T WANT TO LOSE PLAYER, BEFORE THEY'VE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN AND ENJOY THIS GREAT GAME OF SOFTBALL!**