

Gig Harbor Community Softball League

All Divisions

**Rules Rev. 3
Summer, 2017**

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Web Site: www.ghcsl.org

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About the League

The GHCSL is a **slow-pitch, community based, softball league** playing modified Amateur Softball Association (ASA) rules.

The league is a great opportunity to meet new people where sportsmanship is emphasized and competition is friendly. The GHCSL is a premier summer sporting activity for the Gig Harbor area. The GHCSL has a division to fit most any style of play:

- ‡ Competitive - Co-ed (3 or more women in the field each inning)
 - 3 Females required to be on the field each inning
 - 1 Progressive Homerun rule
 - Play to win style of play
 - 15 year age minimum (unless previous authorization)
 - "Swing what you Bring" – No hot or rolled bats, USSSA or ASA stamps recommended.

- ‡ Recreational - Co-ed (3 or more women in the field each inning)
 - 3 Females required to be on the field each inning
 - 1 Progressive Homerun rule
 - Here to have fun style of play
 - 15 year age minimum (unless previous authorization)
 - "Swing what you Bring" – No hot or rolled bats, USSSA or ASA stamps recommended.

- ‡ **Attitude, Demeanor and Sportsmanship**
 - No foul, obscene, or abusive language or behavior will be tolerated
 - Any curse words will result in an immediate ejection from the game and the player will need to leave the park for the remainder of the game
 - If there is not an appointed umpire, it is the responsibility of the coach to uphold and enforce the rule
 - A league appointed umpire has the authority to eject any player for a violation
 - An ejected player must leave the field and bench for the remainder of the game
 - No alcohol, drugs, or tobacco products will be used by players, coaches, or fans during games

- ‡ **League appointed or team appointed umpires are to be treated respectfully at all times**

Competition Committee

The GHCSL is governed by a Competition Committee made up of current and/or former league participants, headed by the League Commissioner. The Committee's duties include determining league rules, resolving disputes, disciplining teams and players, and working with Pen Met Parks. The Competition Committee, League Commissioner, and Pen Met Parks reserve the right to change these rules at any time.

Competition Committee Members

Jason Lerew, *League Commissioner*

Email: GigHarborSoftball@outlook.com

General Guidelines

† The GHCSL will use the rules found in this rulebook in place of any official ASA rules regarding the same topics. However, the GHCSL will use official ASA rules to cover any topic not specifically outlined in this rulebook.

† GAME SPECIFICS

- **Bases are 70 feet apart at Homestead, 60 feet apart at PSD fields.**
- Game length is 7 innings, but 5 innings are all that are required for a game to count.
- Games will be called at the 1hr 15min mark to allow dugouts to switch, maintenance crews to reset the infield and the other team to warm up on the outfield.
- All games should start on time. A grace period of up to 10 minutes past the scheduled start time is allowed to prevent a forfeit.
- If a team forfeits a game during the regular season, the two teams may choose to intermix and play a scrimmage if there are at least 18 players present.
- If the game is tied after 7 innings, up to 2 extra innings may be played if weather / daylight / field availability permits and the terms are agreed to by the coaches; otherwise the game ends as a tie.
- There is a limit of 7 runs per inning. This rule is not in effect for the 7th (or final) inning of play thereby allowing an unlimited number of runs to be scored by either team.
- A mercy rule is not in place.
- The umpire has the discretion to call a dead ball situation at any time to protect the safety of players, and the umpire is empowered to call a game at any time because of rain, darkness or for any other cause which puts players, coaches and attendees at risk.
- **5 warm up pitches will be allowed by the umpire at the start of the game and 3 between innings. New pitchers will be allowed 5 warm up pitches when they enter the game for the first time.**

† **HOME TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Provide a First Aid Kit for emergencies.
- Supply a new 12" game ball and a new or suitable 11" game ball.
- Keep official game score coordinated with the away team scorekeeper. If the home team does not have a person available to keep books on both teams and can relay the score to the visitors on an inning to inning basis, and the visiting team does have such a person available, the visitors become the official scorer for the game.

General Guidelines

† **GAME SCORES**

- The winning team is responsible for reporting the score **before leaving the field**. A website will be made available for submitting scores.
- Report scores to the League Commissioner: GigHarborSoftball@outlook.com

† **CANCELLATIONS**

- Cancellations will be available via the Pen Met Parks phone number. If no notice has been posted, teams are expected to report to the field ready to play. If weather conditions worsen as game time approaches, the umpire may decide to cancel the game at the field. If this happens, coaches should contact the Commissioner to report the cancellation.

† **LEAGUE COMMISSIONER**

- The Commissioner will be appointed by the previous year's coaches when the current Commissioner steps down. The Commissioner holds the final say regarding all league and tournament rules and interpretations but should rely on the majority decision of the Competition Committee in most cases.

† **SUGGESTIONS AND RULE CHANGES**

- Any suggestions or rule change requests should be submitted to the Commissioner via email at: GigHarborSoftball@outlook.com

Game Equipment

† FOOTWEAR

- Shoes must be worn by all participants.
- Metal cleats are not allowed.
- Players wearing metal cleats after being warned by the umpire shall be EJECTED.

† BATS

- Swing what you bring
- Recommended to have an ASA or USSSA stamp on it.
- League asks that no "Hot" or "rolled" bats be used.

† SOFTBALLS

- Softballs must be league provided balls.
- Females will use the 11" ball.
- Males will use the 12" ball.
- The Home team will provide the game balls.
- The Away team will provide suitable backups.

† STRIKE ZONE MAT

- Teams must use a Pen Met Provided Strike Mat
- If mat is not available the strike zone is 18" deep from the point of the plate and 21" wide.

Pitching

† **STRIKE ZONE**

- GHCSL strike zone mat, plus a 2" addition on all sides of mat.
- Pitches that land with a portion of the ball, if viewed from directly above, over the strike zone mat, will be called a strike.
- Pitches hitting the beveled edge of home plate will be called a strike.

† **PRIOR TO PITCHING**

- The pitcher must take a position with both feet firmly on the ground and with one or both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate.
- The pitcher must come to a full and complete stop with the ball in front of the body. The front of the body must face the batter. This position must be maintained at least one second before starting the delivery.
- Any infraction will result in a dead ball being called, an illegal pitch ruled, and a ball added to the batter's count
- The correct rubber is at the back of the pitching circle.

† **LEGAL DELIVERY OF A PITCH**

- The pitch starts when the pitcher makes any motion with the ball that is part of the delivery after the required stop.
- The delivery is a continuous motion.
- The pitcher must not use a delivery in which there is a stop or reversal of the pitching motion.
- The pitcher must deliver the ball toward home plate on the first forward swing of the pitching arm past the hip with an underhand motion. The palm of the hand can be over or under the ball.
- The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate until the pitched ball leaves the hand. If a step is taken, it can be forward, backward, or to the side, provided the pivot foot is in contact with the pitcher's plate and the step is simultaneous with the release of the ball.
- The pitcher must not pitch the ball behind the back or through the legs.
- The ball must be delivered with perceptible arc and reach a height of at least 6 feet from the ground, while not exceeding a maximum of 12 feet from the ground.
- The pitcher shall not deliver a pitch from the glove.
- The pitcher shall not attempt a quick return of the ball before the batter has taken a position in the batter's box or when the batter is off balance as a result of a previous pitch
- Any infraction is an illegal pitch. The umpire will signal an illegal pitch. If the batter swings at or contacts any illegal pitch, it is nullified and all play stands. Otherwise a ball shall be called.

Batting / Running / Offense

† BATTING

- **All batters, in all divisions, start with a 1 ball, 1 strike count.**
- All active players must be included in the batting order.
- If a qualified player arrives late, the player may be added to the end of the official line-up without penalty (notify other team and umpire).
- Each coach must submit an official lineup of available and eligible players to the official scorer and umpire prior to the start of the game.
- No bunts or chopping the ball deliberately downward (either fair or foul) Results in a dead ball and a strike is called (foul ball) or the batter is out (fair ball).
- No stepping across the plate with the pitcher in pitching position or the batter is out.
- A batter is allowed to hit one foul ball after they have two strikes. A second foul ball, with a two strike count, will result in the batter striking out.
- Only the on-deck batter and the base coaches are allowed to be outside of the dug-out during play.
- **Number of players on a game day lineup is limited to 18, which is what the scorebook holds**

† BASE RUNNING

- **No leading off** - runners must stay on their base until the ball is struck. If the runner leaves the base prior to the ball being struck, the runner is out (not in effect when a batter swings and misses).
- On the initial throw to First Base, the batter must touch the orange safety base and not the white standard base (exceptions: the runner may use the standard base to avoid a collision with the fielder on a wild throw, or if the runner is attempting to advance to second base).
- The batter-runner will be called out if the safety base is not used. This is not an appeal play by the defense.
- The defensive player must always use the white portion of the base.
- This rule is in effect only on the initial play at first base. If the base runner uses the safety base any time after the initial touching, they will be considered in foul territory and in jeopardy of being put out by the defense.

† INJURED PLAYER

- An injured player may be removed from the line-up without penalty, (No auto-outs will occur because of the injured player being removed) if the player cannot continue playing. If the injured player is a female and only two female players are left, teams may field one less female than required, but must play short-handed in the field (9 players on defense).

Batting / Running / Offense

† INTERFERENCE

- Interference is the act of an offensive player or team member that impedes, hinders or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play. Interference may be in the form of physical contact, verbal distraction, visual distraction, or any type of distraction that hinders a fielder in the execution of a play. Defensive players must be given the opportunity to field the ball anywhere on the playing field or throw the ball without being hindered.
- In an effort to prevent injury and protect a defensive player attempting to make a play on a runner, a runner must be called out when they remain on their feet and crash into a defensive player who is holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag. To prevent the out ruling, the runner may slide, jump over the defender holding the ball, go around the defender (within the three-foot lane) or return to the previous base touched.

† COURTESY RUNNERS

- **Courtesy runners will not be used to replace a slower runner with a faster one when there is no injury to the player on base.**
- Prior to the start of the game (at line-up exchange) coaches must notify each other which players require a courtesy runner. This will be noted on the line-up card of the official scorer. These runners must use the courtesy runner each time they safely reach base. There is no penalty for these predetermined courtesy runners.
- A courtesy runner is to be used for a player that is injured and cannot successfully negotiate the bases without possibility of further injury. All runners must safely reach first base and time must be called before the courtesy runner can enter the game. The courtesy runner will be the last player that recorded an out, regardless of gender. If no outs have been recorded, the last person in the batting order will be the courtesy runner. If the last out also requires a courtesy runner, the previous out will be used.

Fielding / Defense

† ENCROACHMENT

- **All** outfielders may not come within a 45' distance of the infield before the ball is struck. This is a 45 foot arc area as measured from each base.
- **League will attempt to mark 45' mark with a cone on the left and right field lines**

† INFIELD FLY RULE

- Any pop-up fielded by an infielder with ordinary effort, with less than 2 outs, and runners are on 1st and 2nd, or if the bases are loaded, is an automatic out (dead ball situation); runners cannot tag up and advance, nor can they be put out for being off their base. The batted ball does not have to be over the infield to be an infield fly, but it does have to be a fair ball.

† FAKE TAG

- A fake tag occurs when a fielder without the ball deceives the runner by impeding their progress, for example causing a runner to slide, slow down or stop running. Obstruction is called when a fake tag is made. The obstructed runner, and each runner affected by the obstruction, will be awarded the base or bases that in the judgment of the umpire they would have reached had the obstruction not occurred.

† OBSTRUCTION

- Obstruction is the act of a fielder not in possession of the ball, or not in the act of fielding a batted ball, which impedes the progress of a batter-runner who is legally running the bases.

† DEAD BALL OVERTHROW

- When the ball is in play and is overthrown (beyond the boundary lines) or is blocked:
 - **EFFECT:** All runners will be awarded two bases, and the award will be governed by the positions of the runners when the ball left the fielder's hand. Runners may return to touch a missed base or base left too soon. If two runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner. Once a base runner advances to the next awarded base, the runner may no longer return to touch any missed base or any base left too soon.
 - **EXCEPTION:**
 - 1) When a fielder loses possession of the ball, such as on an attempted tag, and the ball enters the dead ball area or becomes blocked, each runner is awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the ball entered the dead ball area or became blocked.
 - 2) When the ball becomes dead, runners may return to touch a missed base or a base left too soon if they have advanced, touched, and are a base beyond the missed base or the base left too soon. Runners must be given the opportunity to complete their base running responsibilities. A runner shall not be declared out if a fielder deliberately carries or throws the ball into dead ball territory to prevent that runner from returning to a missed base or a base left too soon. Once a runner has

entered dead ball area, they cannot return to touch a missed base or one left too soon.

3) If the ball becomes blocked due to offensive equipment not involved in the game, the ball is ruled dead and runners are returned to the last base touched at the time of the blocked ball. If the blocked ball prevented the defense from making an out, the runner being played on is called out.

4) If an awarded base is in error, after one pitch is thrown (legal or illegal), the error cannot be corrected.

Umpires

† **SUSPENSION OF PLAY**

- If a dispute arises, the game is halted, the umpire makes a final decision and play resumes. Disputes will be discussed between the coaches and the umpire ONLY. No games shall be played under official protest. All disputes are resolved immediately.
- During Tournament / Playoff play, the umpire may contact the GHCSL Commissioner for the final ruling BEFORE play resumes.
- Regular season games that have 5 innings completed will be considered final in the event of a delay. Less than 5 innings played will be incomplete and the game will be rescheduled assuming there is a field available.

† **UMPIRES**

- Teams are responsible for umpiring their own games when a league provided umpire is not available. However, if a league umpire is available, that umpire will be the official umpire of record for the game. Coaches should carry a copy of the league rules to each game in the event there is no league appointed umpire.
- Player umpires may participate in the game.

† **CANCELLATION AND FORFEIT**

- Upon direction of the umpire or agreement of the team coaches when a game is cancelled, it may be made up based on field availability, contact the Commissioner
- Each team has a 10 minute (grace period) past the scheduled start time of a game to field a team to prevent a forfeit.
- Forfeits will not be made up.

† **RULE ISSUES**

- When a rule is in question and not addressed in the official rules, please bring it to the attention of the League Commissioner. A decision can be made mid-season by the Competition Committee or by Commissioner discretion in the event of a split opinion.

† **TIME CALLED**

- **Only the umpire may call time.** Players or coaches may only request that time be called. The umpire should verbally call time at the conclusion of each play. This is discretionary as to when the play is over, and will help avoid confusion as to when the play is actually over. Exceptions include: a walk, a strike out, a foul ball or when there are no runners on base.

Tournament / Playoff

† ELIGIBILITY

- Players must be on the official team roster.
- A player must have participated in at least half of the team's regular season games, any exception must be granted directly by the Commissioner.
- Team Rosters will be reviewed before tournament play, any player not on the team's official roster will be disqualified from the tournament and the offending team risks forfeit of the current game played.

† TOURNAMENT / PLAYOFF PLAY

- Two umpires will be used for all tournament games, when available.
- Game length is 7 innings.
- If a game is tied after 7 innings, the game will continue until a winner is decided.
- Due to weather, injury, or emergency, tournament games can be delayed for up to 90 minutes. After 90 minutes, if 5 innings have been completed the game will be considered complete. If less than 5 innings are complete, the game will resume with the exact same scenario at the earliest possible make-up day. Lineups will remain the same, and auto-outs will occur for players not present at the make-up.

† DISPUTES

- Coaches will suspend play and confer with the umpire apart from their dugouts and players. If needed, the umpire may call the GHCSL Commissioner to determine a judgment.
- If a player eligibility protest is lodged during the Tournament / Playoff play and cannot be resolved at the time of the protest, the game shall be completed. If it is subsequently found that the involved player(s) are ineligible, the team shall forfeit the game and a loss will be recorded in the standings.

† TOURNAMENT / PLAYOFF STANDINGS

- Standings will be determined by team win-loss records.
- If two or more teams are tied at the end of the regular season, team standings will be determined using the following methods:
 1. Head-to-head record
 2. Lowest Regular season runs allowed
 3. Coin Toss