

2021

**WICOMICO COUNTY JUNIOR GIRLS
SOFTBALL**

PONYTAIL LEAGUE 8U



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**WICOMICO COUNTY/OPTIMIST JUNIOR GIRLS SOFTBALL
PONYTAIL LEAGUE**

GENERAL INFORMATION

- I. **ELIGIBILITY:** Born in 2013 or later
Players of a younger age classification may play in an older age classification (one year early) with parent's approval.

All participants may only play in one softball league sponsored by the Wicomico County Dept. of Recreation & Parks per season. No girls can change from one team to another unless both managers agree to the change.
- II. **REGISTRATION**
Every girl must register at the Recreation and Parks office or online at www.wicomcorecandparks.org. To register, a parent must fill out a registration form and pay the registration fee. A birth certificate must also be presented for any new girls to the Junior Girls program.
- III. **ROSTERS**
A team roster must be submitted to the Recreation & Parks office at the final organizational meeting.
- IV. **ENTRANCE FEE**
Each team must submit a \$225 entrance fee to the Recreation & Parks office by the first game.
- V. **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE VISITING TEAM AND HOME TEAM**
 - A. **OFFICIATING:** For each game, the coaches will be the umpires for each game. The pitching team will call balls and strikes and batting team will be the base umpire.
- VI. **CANCELLATIONS**
If a scheduled game is not called off because of inclement weather by 5 p.m., both teams will be expected to be present and ready to play at 6 p.m. In the event a double header is scheduled on a given night, and the 6 p.m. game is canceled due to weather or field conditions, the 8 p.m. game should be canceled as well. If you have any questions whether the game is postponed, call the Recreation office at 410-548-4900 X5 before 5 p.m. If your game has been postponed, it will be re-scheduled at a later date.

THE GAME

1. Practice Sessions: Each Practice session will begin at 6:00pm. Before each game teams will participate in a 30-45 minutes of a practice/warm up session. These sessions are designed to help the player learn the game of softball. Each team will help assist a practice coordinator with the day's skill session work.
2. All games are scheduled to begin at 6:45pm. a team may begin a game with a minimum of six players.
3. Four (4) innings constitute a complete game. Each game will have a 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ hour curfew including the practice session. No new inning of a game may begin after the curfew. The curfew is from the time the game actually begins, however, if an inning has already started when the curfew time expires, the inning must be completed. In case of rain, darkness or curfew, a complete practice session plus two (2) complete innings will constitute an official game.
4. There will be no protests.
5. Coaches should have a conference prior to the game to discuss ground rules, disciplined players, bat slinging & jewelry, etc.

PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES

1. Teams will play with a maximum of 12 players in the field, and will bat a continuous line up.
 - a. However, they may not bat through the lineup more than once in any inning. (Three outs will also end the inning.)
 - b. Teams may play with a minimum of 6 players.
 - c. If other players arrive after the game has started, they may play and be placed at the end of the line-up.
 - d. In case of an injury, a player may be re-substituted into the game if everyone has already played. If no substitutes are available that player is skipped in the lineup and no out is recorded.
2. **POSITIONING:**
 - a. Playing with 12 players: P/C/1B/2B/SS/3B/MI --- LF/LC/CF/RC/RF
 - b. Catcher must kneel until the ball crosses the plate.
 - c. Infielders except for the pitcher's helper must be at least 40' back from the batter. The pitcher's helper must be behind the pitcher's plate (35') until the bat contacts the ball.
3. Before each game
 - a. The opposing coaches must hand in their starting lineups to the opposing team.
 - b. All late arriving players should be announced to the opposing coach and placed at the end of the lineup.
 - c. Please utilize first and last names.
 - d. Batting orders do not change once submitted.
 - e. All teams must bat all players present at the game.

4. Playing Time
 - a. If a team has 12 girls or less present at a game, all girls will play the entire game in the field and at bat.
 - b. EXCEPTION: If a coach wishes to discipline a player (sit her out), the coach must notify the opposing coach either prior to or during the game.
5. **Three** coaches are allowed to stand in the field (outside of the base paths) to give players verbal instructions (on defense).

PLAYING FIELD AND EQUIPMENT

1. The pitching distance will be 35 feet. The base distance will be 60 feet.
2. A chest protector, mask, helmet, throat protector and shin guards must be worn at all times by the catcher while playing in the field.
3. Rubber cleats or tennis shoes must be worn by all players.
4. As long as a bat meets the requirements listed in Rule 1, Section 5, Article 2 of the Federation Rulebook, the bat is legal. If a bat does not exceed the 2 1/4' diameter and follows the other specifications, the bat is considered legal.
5. Players should not be permitted to wear jewelry. Coaches or umpires should ask for removal of all jewelry.
6. Batting helmets must be worn by the batter, all base runners, and on-deck batter.

BATTING

1. All bats must have the USSSA stamp
2. Strike Zone: armpits to the top of the knees.
3. Three strikes constitute a strike-out, whether or not the catcher fields the pitch.
4. Bunting is prohibited.
5. The infield fly rule does not apply in this league.
6. Dangerous slinging of bats will not be permitted. Players will be given one warning per game and the next time called out by the coach/umpire, and the play is dead. All base runners must return to their original base.

Completed Inning

1. A completed ½ inning will be determined by either 3 outs being made or by the entire lineup batting in the inning.
2. Once either one of those has happened teams shall change sides.

PITCHING

Ponytail League

- Coaches will provide the pitching when their team bats for all innings.
- The player positioned in the pitching area during this time, called the pitcher's helper, must be at least as far back as the 35 ft. pitching rubber; and only she, not the coach pitching, is allowed to field balls hit or thrown to her position.
- Three swinging strikes or four good pitches (fouls or misses, except for foul on the third strike will constitute an out.
- There will be no walks and a player does not take her base if hit by a pitch (the ball is dead if a player is hit by a pitch.)

BASE RUNNING

1. Once the pitcher is in control of a ball thrown to her by a teammate (inside the pitching circle or pitching area) it automatically stops a play.
2. A batted ball fielded by the pitcher and held will stop runners when they reach their immediate destination.
3. A batted ball that rolls into the outfield a runner will be allowed to advance no more than one base, regardless of whether the ball is returned to the infield.
4. Runners must be more than half way (closer to the base she is seeking than the base she has already passed) when the pitcher has control of the ball, to be permitted that base at no risk.
5. If she is halfway or less, she must return to the base she just left, at no risk.
 - a. If a batted ball hits or touches the adult pitcher, the ball will be dead and a no pitch will be declared.
6. Base stealing is not allowed.
4. Base runners cannot advance on passed balls or during ball exchanges between the catcher and the pitcher.
5. A base runner cannot leave the base until the ball is hit. If a base runner leaves the base early the play will be stopped dead and return the player back to the base and play it over. A no pitch will be declared and the play will be considered dead.
6. When a fielded ball is over-thrown, the base runner is not permitted to advance; they must remain at the base they are heading to. (Field of play is defined as the area within the boundaries of the fence or if a field does not have a fence, the imaginary line extending from the backstop).
9. A base runner hit by a batted ball will be out unless the ball has already passed the infielder, (doesn't include the pitcher). The ball is dead. The batter gets first base; other base runners get the base they are going to.
10. In the event two base runners are on the same base at the same time; play shall be halted and the runners will be explained as to what was done incorrectly and the runners shall be sent back to the base where they belong with no penalty.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT / DISCIPLINARY ACTION

There is absolutely no room in youth recreational programs for unsportsmanlike behavior. The Wicomico County Junior Girls Softball League endorses a zero tolerance toward any unsportsmanlike behavior exhibited during the program. Federation members of each league have pledged to police unsportsmanlike conduct. All coaches need to make an effort to keep players and parents behaving in a sportsmanlike conduct.

The use of profanity or unsportsmanlike conduct by either players or coaches will be grounds for dismissal by umpires. A player, coach, or parent who is dismissed from a game for unsportsmanlike conduct must leave the field/park immediately. If a coach refuses to leave, the game will be forfeited by that team. In addition, a player or coach ejected from a game will be automatically suspended from the next two (2) games that are played. A coach that is ejected must call the recreation office to make an appointment to come in for a meeting with the appropriate league or department official. This meeting must take place before he/she is allowed to coach again. This includes practices and games. Any coach that is thrown out a 2nd time in a single season will be removed from coaching for the remainder of the season.

The umpire's decision in all matters is final and there shall be no protests. The official shall report all ejections to the umpire assignor and/or recreation department as soon as possible after the game is completed, along with a brief statement to the recreation department of the occurrence. Please contact the Program Coordinator concerning these incidences.

SMOKING AND CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ARE PROHIBITED

NOTE: It is recommended that the teams give a cheer at the conclusion of the game and shake hands with the opposing team.

USSSA Softball Bat Marks Rules*

- Have the new permanent¹ USSSA Mark on its taper OR
- Be a Wood Bat

ALL of the above must be manufactured by an approved USSSA Bat Licensee



***Bats which meet these rules will be allowed in USSSA play, unless the bat is listed on the **USSSA Withdrawn/Non-Compliant Bats List** (found under Licensed Equipment – New Bat Rules section of the USSSA Baseball website) as a bat withdrawn by the manufacturer or found by USSSA to be non-compliant.**

¹USSSA marks and other graphics of the bat must be applied permanently and must be applied by the USSSA licensed manufacturer. No stickers or decals are allowed and no one may add graphics to a bat once manufactured. Use of a bat with graphics not applied by the manufacturer will be use of an altered bat and subject to suspension under the USSSA Altered Bat rules. In addition to being violation of the USSSA Altered Bat rules, any use, creation or application of a USSSA mark without written permission of USSSA is a violation of Federal Trademark law and may result in prosecution by USSSA. If you have any concern about the person selling or providing you a bat, do not accept the bat, because you will be held responsible for any bat you bring into or use in a USSSA facility.