



# **PETALUMA GIRLS SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION**

## **2024 League Rules, Policies & Procedures**

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## **MISSION STATEMENT:**

It is PGSA's mission is to provide a safe, inclusive, positive space where young athletes can grow as softball players as well as individuals. Along with our dedicated coaches and community volunteers, we are committed to helping players become the best version of themselves, creating healthy habits, developing a positive mindset, and making lifelong friends.

We strive to instill a love for the game and a deep respect for its traditions while fostering a strong sense of community. Through teamwork, sportsmanship, dedication, and fun, our players grow into well-rounded individuals who not only excel in the game of softball, but also demonstrate exceptional character on and off the field. PGSA aims to produce not only skilled athletes but also responsible, respectful, and confident young people who are well-prepared for a successful future.

## **GENERAL BEHAVIOR:**

All individuals involved in PGSA, including players, managers, and coaches, are expected to uphold exemplary conduct at all times. This entails refraining from the use of profanity or any form of harsh language during games or practice sessions. Additionally, the consumption of alcoholic beverages and smoking are strictly prohibited in these settings. Managers, coaches, and players are urged to consistently project a positive image of PGSA, both on and off the field. The coaches have the responsibility of ensuring that their players and parents adhere to the established standards of behavior in the code of conduct. This includes abstaining from any form of illegal conduct, and alcohol consumption, at any team-related event, whether official or unofficial. Furthermore, the use of tobacco, marijuana products, and smoking/vaping paraphernalia is strictly prohibited on the playing fields during games or practices.

Failure to comply with these regulations will result in immediate dismissal from the league. Harassment directed towards players, coaches, or umpires will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Any individual affiliated with a team who engages in such behavior will receive a single warning. Subsequent violations will result in immediate forfeiture of the game, as determined by the head umpire.

## **PLAYERS ELIGIBILITY:**

Any girl between the ages of 5 and 16 on or before September 1st of the playing year is eligible to play.

## **SIGN-UPS:**

Sign ups open on October 1st and close on December 31st. At the board of directors discretion, the sign up date could be opened early or closed late. Sign ups and

registration fees will be facilitated through the team snap app. Every player that signs up by the deadline will be placed or drafted on a team.

### **QUITTING OR DROPPING A TEAM:**

Once teams and players have started practice, there will be no refund of the registration fee for any player that quits, with the exception of injury or moving outside of the area. That player may not return to the league for that season. Managers have 48 hours to report the drop of a player to their division chairperson. Any player that accrues 3 unexcused absences may face removal from their team.

### **TEAM MAKE-UP:**

Each team will have approximately 12 players. If a team loses a player prior to the first game, a player from the waiting list will be placed on that team. Players will not be replaced once season games have started. There will be no trading of players. All ages are determined by USA age definitions as of September 1 of the playing year. Exceptions to the foregoing ages may occur. See: challenge up guidelines below. Players will not be permitted to play in a lower division than their age according to the USA age guidelines.

### **PLAYER PLACEMENT:**

T-ball and minis:

The division chairs will use the following priorities for assigning players to team.

- Coaches will have their child on their team.
- Sponsors will have their child on their sponsored team.
- Siblings are automatically placed on the same team unless otherwise requested.
- Players will be placed with other players from their school when possible.
- Effort will be made to balance the teams by age levels.
- Individual requests will be honored when not in conflict with other priorities.

Rookies, minors, and majors: See Drafting Procedures

Managers are not authorized to add players that are not assigned by the division. All games played with unauthorized players will result in a forfeit. There will be no trading of players.

### **DRAFTING PROCEDURES:**

Rookies, minors and majors players will be drafted by the coaches on draft night. This is to help even out the abilities of the teams. Each team will first draft pitchers and then catchers. All known pitchers and catchers will be drafted in this round, regardless of their evaluation decisions. All players in each division will be drafted and placed on a

team.

### **WAIT LIST:**

Players that sign up after registration has closed will be put on a waiting list. The waiting list will be prioritized in the order their registration is received. These players are not guaranteed a team. If a player from the waiting list declines a team, the player will be removed from the list. Waiting list players will not have the ability to request a specific team placement. When there are players available in the player waiting list, the priority goes to the team with the fewest players. The second priority shall go to the team, which is first to call the player representative with a player request.

### **EVALUATIONS:**

Every player in rookies, minors and majors will have an evaluation score. This score will come from their previous head coach. If no score is available, the player will need to be evaluated prior to the draft.

Evaluations will happen approximately 3 weeks after registration closes. Pitchers and catchers are encouraged to evaluate accordingly. Any player who does not have an evaluation score will be drafted last or placed at random on remaining teams.

### **CHALLENGE UP GUIDELINES:**

We do encourage players to play with their appropriate age group, but we can make exceptions for advanced players to challenge up to the next level. We require that they are evaluated at challenge-ups to ensure the placement is safe and appropriate. Challenge ups will be held approximately 3 weeks after registration closes. The players will be evaluated on hitting, running and fielding, and can choose to also be evaluated on pitching and catching.

Age 4.5-5 challenging their eligibility to play T-Ball:

The player can demonstrate the basic skill set at the challenge-up evaluation, as determined by the division chair. Some skills we are looking for at this age include but are not limited to: Basic understanding of team sports, ability to follow directions, safety swinging and around swinging bats.

The player must show the ability to follow directions and be deemed safe and aware on the field at all times. It is very rare that we allow a 4.5 year old to play T-ball due to team development and safety concerns. Prior team sport participation is highly recommended at this age.

T-Ball aged players challenging up to Minis:

The player must have played one year in their appropriate division; AND  
The player can demonstrate the basic skill set at the challenge-up evaluation, as determined by the division chair. Some skills we are looking for include but are not limited to: Understanding of the basic rules of softball, ability to follow directions, field safety and awareness.

Minis aged players challenging up to Rookies:

The player must have played one year in their appropriate division; OR  
The player played on the Steal Breeze summer ball or fall ball team in the immediately preceding season (or an equivalent travel ball team, as the board directors shall determine); AND The player participates in the scheduled draft for the division they wish to enter, and receives a proficient enough rating to be drafted, as determined by the rookies division chair.

Rookies aged players challenging up to Minors:

The player must have played one year in their appropriate division; OR  
The player played on the Steal Breeze summer ball or fall ball team in the immediately preceding season (or an equivalent travel ball team, as the board directors shall determine); AND The player participates in the scheduled draft for the division they wish to enter, and receives a proficient enough rating to be drafted, as determined by the minors division chair.

Minors aged players challenging up to Majors:

The player must have played one year in their appropriate division; OR  
The player played on the Steal Breeze summer ball or fall ball team in the immediately preceding season (or an equivalent travel ball team, as the board directors shall determine); AND The player participates in the scheduled draft for the division they wish to enter, and receives a proficient enough rating to be drafted, as determined by the division chair.

In addition, the following general criteria will apply in all circumstances in the interest of player safety, health, skill development and positive experience:

- No player may challenge up from their age appropriate division to a league beyond the next immediate higher league level (e.g. Mini to Rookies, Rookies to Minors, Minors to Majors).
- All players seeking to challenge-up must sign up and bring the required form.
- Each division reserves the right to conduct one or more separate skill evaluations for all players seeking to challenge-up.

- All decisions by division chairs with respect to challenge-up player evaluations and rankings or placement shall be final.
- All division chairs reserve the right to refuse a challenge-up player's admittance into the higher league in any situation where the league director determines that the challenge-up player would not be well served by playing in the higher league for any reason that might jeopardize the player's health or safety, or the health and safety of other players, including, but not limited to ability, emotional maturity, and/or inability to follow basic instructions.

## **THE SEASON:**

The season will begin in mid to late March and will end before Memorial Day weekend. After teams are formed, each division chair will be responsible for setting up a schedule of practice times and locations. A league schedule, which includes the date, time and location of all games, will be provided to each manager as soon as possible. The schedule chairperson will develop the schedule and distribute it to the division chairs. To the best of our ability, each team will play all other teams in the league. The schedule is created based on the number of teams and dates available. T-Ball and minis will not record standings. In the rookies, minors, and major division final standing will be determined by best overall win/loss record. If two (2) teams tie for a playoff position at the end of the regular season, following criteria will be used, in this order.

- Head to head record, then
- Fewest runs allowed, then
- Coin Flip

## **MANAGERS AND COACHES:**

The minimum age for a head coach is 21. All managers and head coaches must be approved by the board of directors. Any assistant coaches under the age of 18 must have board approval. To ensure the safety and integrity of PGSA all coaches over the age of 18 who are on the field or with the players must have USA ACE Certification, SafeSport and have a cleared background check. Additionally, they must complete any additional education required by USA Softball. Each coach is also required to sign a code of conduct.

Each team will have one official manager or head coach, who can appoint up to three official assistant coaches. These coaches will be allowed in the dugout and provided with team shirts. Teams may have other, non-official coaches, but any adult associated with the team who will be with the players must be ACE certified. In the event that an official manager or coach cannot attend a game, they may designate a temporary replacement. This replacement must be an adult at least 21 years old who has completed the ACE certification and background check. The division chairperson must be notified if a replacement is required before or during the game. All managers and coaches must be able to present proof of certification at any game or practice. Failure

to do so will result in the removal of that person.

PGSA reserves the right, as the board of directors, to remove any coach or manager from their position if they fail to uphold the spirit of the league regarding sportsmanship, rules, and procedures.

### **PRE-SEASON MEETING:**

The chairman of each division will hold a meeting, either in person or virtually, prior to the start of each season. For the T-ball and Mini leagues expectations, rules and game play, and all seasonal events will be discussed. Rosters will be delivered at this time, if they have not been communicated prior. For the rookies, minor and major leagues expectations, rules and game play, and all seasonal events will be discussed along with the process of the draft to create the team rosters.

### **EQUIPMENT AND GEAR:**

Only the equipment chairperson may purchase equipment in the name of the Petaluma Girls Softball Association. It is the managers responsible to keep track of all equipment during the season. Equipment will be picked-up & signed for by the manager at the beginning of the season and must be turned in at the end of the season. The manager will be billed for any missing equipment, this includes softballs. It is the coaches responsibility to communicate to the equipment chairperson if any gear is broken. All catcher's gear must be properly worn whenever the catcher is in position behind the plate during practice sessions or games. Players may use their own equipment as long as it meets all safety standards and is not tampered with in any way to void safety. All offensive players must wear a helmet when base coaching, batting, and base running at practice and games. All helmets must have a face guard. Defensive players will wear a softball facemask when playing in the field. Mid-calf or ankle length softball pants shall be worn at all times during games and practices. Black is the preferred color. Foot wear will consist of soft-soled shoes or rubber cleats. Metal cleats and sandal-type shoes are not permitted. All players must wear team jerseys and they must be visible while they are in the game. There will be no alteration of any league supplied uniform. If damage occurs, the player must replace the item. League issued sweatshirts are allowed, only if the player's number is visible. Players will be restricted from play if not in the correct attire.

### **FIELD PREPARATION:**

Before the season begins PGSA will prep and maintain fields for the current playing season. During the season, the fields are maintained by volunteers. Home team coaches will be expected to drag fields and put away bases after the last game of the day and league volunteers will be called on to do any extra work on the fields to keep them in safe playing condition. Each team is responsible for cleaning their own dugout,

their stands, and their side of the field.

## **UMPIRES:**

T-Ball & Minis: The home team will provide the plate umpire and the visiting team will provide the base umpire. Rookies, Minors & Majors: A paid umpire will be provided by the league. This will be the home plate umpire; if the umpire requests a base umpire the visiting team will furnish one. The minimum age of umpires is 13 and will be part of the Junior Umpire and/or NCOA. The home plate umpire is required to wear a facemask for all league games. The home plate umpire is to call the balls and strikes, infield fly, and the plays at third base. The base umpire is to cover the play at first and second base. When there is not a base runner on first or second, the umpire must position himself in foul territory near first base. When there is a base runner, the umpire must stand in the outfield side of the base between first and second. The home plate umpire is the head umpire. They can reverse a decision upon appeal only. They are to hear and record official protests by managers and they are to make decisions regarding calling the game because of darkness, rain, etc. Only the umpire will have the authority to stop a game before it is completed. In case of protest, a manager cannot call an end to the game unless that manager wishes to forfeit the game to the opposing team. The home plate umpire can replace the base umpire after one warning if needed.

## **THE GAME:**

Any rule not covered in this document will default to the most current USA softball rulebook at [www.usasoftball.com](http://www.usasoftball.com). The second team listed on the schedule is designated as the home team and is responsible for providing the game ball. They will occupy the third base dugout, while the visiting team will be in the first base dugout. Defensive coaches are required to remain in the dugout unless there is a timeout. Base coaches must be either a coach or player, and all players must wear a batting helmet while on the field.

It is considered a violation to throw a bat if the bat travels with force over six feet from the batter. Any unintentional throw will warrant a warning from the umpire, which will be recorded in the score books. If the same batter repeats the offense during the game, they will be called out. Intentional throwing of the bat will result in immediate ejection from the game, with the ball declared dead and base-runners prohibited from advancing.

In the case of tie games, play will continue until the end of the time limit. If the game remains tied and the umpire deems it safe to continue, the international tiebreaker rule will be implemented. This rule involves placing the last batter from the previous inning on second base at the start of each subsequent inning. Saturday games for Rookies, Minor, and Major leagues will adhere to a drop-dead time limit. If the time expires before the inning is completed, the score will be based on the previous completed inning unless the home team takes the lead during the bottom of the inning. There will be no



drop-dead time restrictions during playoffs and championship games. If a game is interrupted due to darkness or rain, it will be rescheduled at a later date determined by the division chairperson. The roles of any players not originally included in the game that was stopped will be decided by the board or division chairperson. Coaches are responsible for ensuring the safety of players while they await their turn at bat in the on-deck area. The area behind the plate must remain clear at all times. Batters running to first base must use the orange base to avoid collisions. The first basemen must use the white base to make a play.

Team line-up cards will be given to each manager. Each team manager will complete the card prior to each game. The cards will then be exchanged between the two teams to be entered into their respective score books. Once the entries are made in the scorebooks the cards will be given to the umpire for their verification. Scorebooks do not apply for t-ball or minis.

### **FORFEITS:**

If less than eight girls from a team show up for a game, that team forfeits the game. There will be a grace period of 15 minutes after the scheduled start of the game for the players to be on the field before the umpire can call a forfeit. If, for any reason, a team drops below 8 players during the game, the game may continue. Winning team must notify the league chairman of the forfeit immediately. Names of head umpire and managers of each team are to be given to the division chairperson. If neither team can field eight players, it is a double forfeit and recorded as a loss for each team.

### **POSTPONEMENTS AND RESCHEDULE GAMES:**

All requests for postponements must be made one week in advance and submitted to the division chairperson for approval and rescheduling. Games will not be rescheduled or postponed, except in emergency situations, without one week's advance notice. No game shall be postponed or rescheduled if a team is capable of fielding nine or more players. In the event a team calls to postpone or reschedule a game due to insufficient players, the names of missing players will be provided to the division chairperson for verification purposes.

### **SCORES, BOOKS, AND TIMEKEEPING:**

For rookies, minors, and majors, each team will keep books. The umpire's name must be recorded in both teams' scorebooks. The umpire is the official timekeeper. Last pitch of the inning will be used to determine if time has expired during a game. A new inning will not begin after the expiration of time. The score of the game is to be updated by the winning team in TeamSnap before 10:00 PM on the night of the game.

## **EVERYBODY PLAYS:**

If a player is present but unable to participate in the game, it is the responsibility of the manager to inform the umpire of the player's absence. Every player is required to fulfill a minimum number of innings in a fielding position per division rules. Failure to adhere to the rules regarding innings played and ensuring all players participate will result in forfeiture by the offending team. In the event of an injury to a player during an at-bat or while on base, rendering them unable to continue according to the umpire's judgment, the batter who made the last out will take over the at-bat, maintaining the ball/strike count. Should the injured player return to the game, they resume their original place in the batting order. However, if they are unable to return, their spot in the batting order is skipped without incurring an automatic out. Unless a player is incapable of participating, all players present at the game will be included in the batting lineup.

## **GAME RULE MODIFICATIONS BY DIVISION:**

### **TBALL:**

#### **PLAYERS AND FIELD AREA**

Each team will field 10 players on defense but at times may play with fewer if necessary. If a team is short players the managers may agree to borrow players in an effort to play the game. Placement on the field will be: one pitcher, one catcher, four infielders and four outfielders. No player may be in front of the pitching mound before the ball is hit. All players must regularly be rotated through all the defensive positions.

#### **PITCHING**

Tee placement: The tee shall be placed immediately in front of the permanent home plate to keep the permanent plate clear for runners as well as plays being made at home plate.

Coach Pitch: Introduce live coach pitching with the first game. Pitching distance will be 25-30 feet. Each coach shall determine prior game start which players are safely ready for coach pitch for that game. If the player is not ready for coach pitch per the coach, the player will hit off the tee. If coach pitch, the player will get 3 pitches maximum. Players will then get the opportunity to hit from a tee. Each player will start their at-bat the same throughout that game (either hit from tee or coach pitch). This can change from game to game, but not during a game.

The last 4 games of the season, every player will have coach pitch with a 7 pitch maximum. After 7 pitches the player will return to the dugout. The batting order shall be continuous all season. All players shall be in the batting lineup whether or not they are playing defense on the field.

#### **GAME PLAY:**

Each player shall get the opportunity to swing the bat from the tee until they hit the ball. A ball that travels less than 10 feet in fair territory from home plate is called a foul ball.

Every offensive player bats every inning. Outs are recorded, and if a player is out, they return to the dugout. If the offensive team bats through their lineup once before 3 outs are recorded, then the team at-bat ends. If 3 outs are recorded before they have batted the entire line-up, then the player making the 3rd out and any players on base during the play return to the dugout. The outs are reset to 0 and the next player in the lineup bats. This continues until all offensive players have had a chance to bat in the inning. If a batted ball hits a runner, the runner is out and the batter continues to 1st base. If a batted ball hits a coach the ball is dead, base runners do not advance, and the batter starts over. There is no score keeping in T-ball. Runners may advance one base on any infield hit. On a ball batted into the outfield, runners may advance until the ball is thrown into the infield. Runners not halfway to a base must return to the previous base

## MINIS

### PLAYERS AND FIELD AREA

Each team will field 10 players on defense but at times may play with as few as 8 players if necessary, eliminating outfield positions. Placement on the field will be: one pitcher, one catcher, four infielders and four outfielders. No player may be in front of the pitching mound before the ball is hit.

### PITCHING

March games:

Inning 1- coach pitch (7 pitches), all batters get an at bat

Inning 2: Coach pitch (7 pitches), 3 outs or 6 run max

Inning 3 & 4: Kid pitch, 3 outs or 6 run max

April Game:

Inning 1- coach pitch (7 pitches), all batters get an at bat

Inning 2-4: Kid pitch, 3 outs or 6 run max

Last 4 games:

All kid pitch, 3 outs or 6 run max

Kid pitch is defined as follows:

Kids will pitch up to 3 strikes (resulting in an out) or 4 balls. There will be no walks. At 4 balls, the batters coach will pitch the remaining strikes (if the kid pitches 1 strike, the coach will have two pitches before the at bat is over)

### GAME PLAY:

The batting order will be continuous for the whole season. During coach pitch, balls and strikes looking will not be called, however three swinging strikes shall constitute an out. A foul ball is a strike except on the third strike. The batter will be called out after 7 pitches, unless the last pitch is a foul that is not caught. A ball that travels less than 10 feet in fair territory from home plate is called a foul ball. If a batted ball hits a runner, the runner is out. The batter continues to 1st base. Scores will be kept at each game; however team standings will not be kept. All players must regularly be rotated through

all the defensive positions. All players must play at least one inning per game in an infield position. The coach pitcher cannot coach any base runner; this includes the batter once the ball is hit. The coach pitcher will immediately give the ball to any player upon request in order for the fielding team to make a play. If a batted ball hits the coach pitcher, the ball is dead, base runners do not advance, and no pitch is called. When the ball is in possession of the pitcher in the circle, it is dead. Runners less than halfway to the next base when the ball becomes dead must return to their base. Runners may advance one base on any infield hit. On a ball batted into the outfield, runners may advance until the ball is thrown into the infield. On an overthrow, there is no advance by runners. Coaches will call their players balls and strikes during kid pitch.

## ROOKIES

### PLAYERS AND FIELD AREA

Each team will field 10 players on defense but at times may play with as few as 9 players if necessary, eliminating one outfield position. Placement on the field will be: one pitcher, one catcher, four infielders and four outfielders.

### PITCHING

Rookies is solely kid pitch. Any one pitcher can pitch no more than two consecutive innings, and no pitcher can pitch more than 3 innings per game. There are no pitching restrictions in an extra inning(s) of any given game beyond the regulation five (5) innings. In the event that time is called prior to the 5th inning, pitching rules will still apply until the 5th inning has been played even if the international tie breaker is used. There will be an adjusted strike zone to promote area of play. The strike zone will start at mid-calf and continue to the armpits.

### GAME PLAY

Stealing one base per pitch is allowed. There is no stealing of home. The only way a runner on third can go home is on a hit ball, a walk, or a dead ball. During a play in which the ball is hit and is considered "live", runners may continue to advance until the ball has been controlled by the pitcher in the circle. A player who receives a base on balls to first base may not round first and continue onto second base. Outfielders shall not be positioned anywhere in the base path, and must start each play in the outfield area or the edge of the outfield grass of the infield area, as the umpire shall determine. On a third strike that is not tipped or fouled, the batter is out whether the ball is caught by the catcher or not. Each player must play a minimum of two (2) innings per game; however, at no time will a player sit for any two (2) consecutive innings or more during a game, except in cases of player injury, suspension or disciplinary action. Intentional walks are not allowed.

## MINORS

### PLAYERS AND FIELD AREA

Each team will field 9 players on defense. Placement on the field will be: one pitcher, one catcher, four infielders and three outfielders.

#### **PITCHING**

There is no pitch count limit. There will be an adjusted strike zone to promote area of play. The strike zone will start at mid-calf and continue to the armpits.

#### **GAME PLAY**

Stealing any base is permitted. During a play in which the ball is hit and is considered "live", runners may continue to advance until the ball has been controlled by the pitcher in the circle. A player who receives a base on balls to first base may round first and continue onto second base. Outfielders shall not be positioned anywhere in the base path, and must start each play in the outfield area or the edge of the outfield grass of the infield area, as the umpire shall determine.

On a dropped third strike by the catcher that is not tipped or fouled, the ball is considered live and the batter may advance. Each player must play a minimum of two (2) innings per game. Intentional walks are not allowed.

#### **MAJORS**

If the majors are playing against other organizations within an interleague style of play, the PGSA major league teams will play by interleague rules even in the event that 2 PGSA teams are playing one another.

#### **PROTEST PROCEDURES:**

A faulty interpretation of the rules is cause for protest. Judgment calls by the umpire shall not be protested. If a situation involves a rule, which a manager feels was interpreted wrongly by the umpire, then they must protest before the next pitch is made. Protest must be entered in both scorebooks and signed by the head umpire. Rule violations by the opposing manager or team may also be protested. The protest must be submitted on the official protest form to the division Chairperson, within seventy-two hours of the violation.

#### **PLAY OFFS:**

Rookie and Major league teams will participate in a double elimination tournament and Minor league teams will participate in a single elimination tournament. Seeding will be based on the final standing for the season. The tournament will determine the final standings for the season. The higher seed will be the home team during the playoffs. During the championship game, home/visitor will be determined by a coin flip. The higher seed will still be in the 3rd base dugout. Seeding for playoffs will be based on percentage of wins within the season. In the event of a tie, head to head will be the first tie breaker, then runs allowed, then runs scored.

## **AWARDS & ALL STARS:**

Each division will end their season with an awards ceremony. The PGSA trophy coordinator will provide awards that will be handed out at the closing award ceremony. Rookies, minors & majors will also have an all-star game. All Stars should be selected based on their overall contribution to the team during the regular season, not solely based on stats.