SOFTBALL *GIRLS' SPORT 2027*

1. See General Regulations Governing Sporting Competitions.

2. Softball is conducted under the rules of the Softball Australia unless otherwise stated.

3. Prior to the commencement of any game, player names, and batting order must be recorded on the scoresheet.

4. **Team Composition:**
   a. For the Firsts Team: A team shall consist of 9 players, 7 of whom must be present to start or continue a game. A maximum of fourteen players per side is permitted.
   b. **For all Teams other than Firsts Teams: The rules governing the sport shall apply. The minimum number of players to commence a game is 7 and the blanks shall fill the last positions in the batting order. These will not be ruled as automatic outs through the normal course of the game. Late arriving players must fill these blanks.**

5. **Uniform:**
   a. All players must wear complete uniforms i.e. School softball uniform.
   b. All playing tops are to be alike.
   c. Metal cleats or spikes are not permitted in any AGSV/APS Softball competition game.
   d. Jewellery must not be worn. If it is impossible to remove, it must be securely taped.
   e. Catchers MUST wear: helmet, mask, throat guard, chest protector and leg guards.
   f. Batters MUST wear a two-eared helmet until out or completes a scored run.

6. **Umpires**
   At Firsts level, where possible, two umpires are provided, at least one of whom should be Level 1 qualified. Wherever possible, experienced umpires should be appointed. The home team is responsible for providing the umpires. Umpires should be provided with appropriate protective equipment. Coaches must accept umpires decisions based on judgement calls and rule interpretations to ensure the game is played in a sportsmanlike manner. Errors will occur with the standard of play and coaches must wear those calls. **Criticism of the umpires is regarded as inappropriate** and is not in the spirit of the game played in AGSV/APS competition. If you have an experienced umpire, you have the right to question a decision in an appropriate manner if you believe it to be a misinterpretation of the rules; not a judgement call.

7. **Pitchers** and catchers must stand in their prescribed areas. Other players may stand anywhere in fair territory.
   For Firsts competition, **That the compulsory pitching change will occur when the leading team is 10 or more runs ahead at the end of a complete innings (i.e. when both teams have had equal number of innings).** In the event the score reverts to within 10 runs, any of the pitchers may return to the pitching position. Coaches need to confer before the start of play to ensure that both have a clear understanding of the rotation of pitchers and the intent of this regulation.

8. **Game Balls**
   * Each team is to provide a new ball of official size as outlined below.
   * All Senior and Intermediate teams to use a regulation 12" hardcore yellow ball.
   * **In Inter B/C a softcore ball 12" will be used.**
   * Junior A teams and all other Junior teams to use an 11" Softcore ball.

9. **Protests:** There is no protest procedure in AGSV/APS competitions.

10. **Procedure Prior to the Game:**
    Captains meet 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start time to toss to decide which team will bat and/or field first. The Home Team will occupy the third base bench and the Away Team batting will occupy the first base bench. Firsts Coaches should ensure they exchange line ups and match balls prior to the start of the game. Each team shall be allowed a 5 minute warm up on the diamond prior to the commencement of the game. The team batting first should commence their warm up 10 minutes prior to the start of the game and the team batting second to follow. The team batting second should stay on the diamond for

the commencement of their fielding inning. The home plate/Central Umpire shall determine the start time of the game by calling "Play Ball".

11. **Hustle - Maintaining the pace of a game:**
It is the intention of the AGSV/APS to have a non-time wasting attitude for its competitions. It relies on both coaches to ensure this culture prevails at all times with players and themselves.
Rule 6, Section 9 states: At the beginning of each half innings or when a pitcher relieves another, not more than one minute may be used to deliver no more than five pitches to the catcher or other team-mates.
Catchers should wear their gear at all times, except when batting and coaches need to have fielding changes organized in advance to minimise wasted game time.
    a. **Catcher "Hurry Up" Rule**
    Replacement of a Catcher on Base: When the batting team has two out in the innings and the catcher is safe on base, they may be replaced by the last out in that innings for the purpose of changing into their catching gear to avoid time wasting between innings.

12. Coaches or players dismissed from the game, or forfeiture: If any of these occur, the umpire shall submit a written report to the APS Sport Office. After consideration of the report, the APS Sport Chief Executive Officer, with recommendations, will refer to the Delegate of the school concerned for action.

13. **Scorers and Scorebooks:**
Each team is expected to have a competent scorer to record the actions of the game and scores as per ASF methods. If the scorebook is illegible, it cannot be used as the arbiter of the events in question. In such cases the umpires ruling will be final.

14. **Regulation Games**
For Firsts Games: Games shall be 1 hour and 30 minutes, or in the event of weather interruptions, **60%** of the playing time i.e. **54** minutes required for a legal game. If a team is 10 or more runs ahead after the completion of 1 hour and 15 minutes, the game shall be called. **No Firsts match should commence before 8.30am.**
    a. For all other Games: Games shall be 1 hour and 15 minutes, or in the event of weather interruptions, **60%** of the playing time or **45 minutes** is required for a legal game. ACK, GC, GGS and PEN teams playing in Melbourne should not commence prior to 9.00am.
        * Regulation games shall be read in conjunction with the official ASF rules. Rule 5 Section 3.
        * Innings must be equal at the completion of the game, or the score shall revert back to the last complete equal innings score. If the team batting second passes the opponents score in the "bottom" half of the innings, then the score shall stand.
        * APS By Laws:
        * In "time" games, an innings is NOT to commence with five minutes or less remaining in the game
        For a time game to be regulation, **60%** of the time for the game must have elapsed, or five complete innings have been played, or if the team second at bat has scored more runs than the other team scored in five offensive innings. There can be a regulation tied game that occurs if the score is equal when the game is called at the end of five or more completed innings, or if the second team at bat has equalled the score of the other team at bat in the incomplete inning.
        The batter in the box shall complete their turn at bat before "time" is called.
        * **No intentional walks are permitted.**
        * Weather: the AGSV/APS supports the premise that softball is an all weather game. If the weather is doubtful, the decision to play or stop play is the responsibility of the two coaches. If the coaches fail to agree, the umpire shall ultimately decide. Players who do not have suitable footwear are at a disadvantage, but this is not a reason for the game to be abandoned.
        * **Final Result: For any incomplete innings for timed games, refer to the Softball Australia table as per Softball Regulations.**

15. **Blood Rule**
In accordance with other AGSV/APS sports, in the event of a "blood related injury", the game shall stop with the injured player removed and replaced before the game continues. The injured player may return at any time once the bleeding has ceased.

In all competitions the home run line must be marked. If the ball bounces before the home run line and continues past it then it is a 3 base hit. If the ball is hit over the line it is a home run.

16. **7 Run Rule:**
Applies to ALL Senior, Intermediate and Junior games
A team continues to bat until 3 outs or they have scored 7 runs (7 runs must be scored in one innings).

17. **"Live off the Net"**
Balls hitting the back net will be considered in play at all levels of APS competition. It is suggested a suitable net in good condition with no holes, at least 4 metres long and 3 metres high be used for all games. **The net should be a minimum of 7.62m (25ft) from the home plate.**

18. **Infield Fly Rule: The Infield Fly Rule does not apply for any levels below Firsts competitions**.

19. **Junior B games and below**
    a. The Batting Tee: The tee shall be used when the umpire call is "Ball Three". No bunting is allowed and the hit must take place irrespective of the number of swings. The ball must be hit in fair territory and past an arc of 12 ft from the back of home plate.
    b. All Junior C and below competitions, the pitcher, catcher and outfielders MUST be changed after two complete innings. Rotation to be encouraged at the A & B levels.

Softball Incomplete innings for time games

* Please note that the 'score reverts back' means to the last completed (equal) innings.

** A coach/team can declare their innings closed without having to wait for three outs.

Last completed innings by both teams	If time is now called during the current inning when	Batting situation	Final score
1st Team at bat is winning	1st Team at bat	1st Team goes further ahead	* Score reverts back
	2nd Team at bat	2nd Team doesn't draw or go ahead	* Score reverts back
		2nd Team draws or goes ahead	New score stands
2nd Team at bat is winning	1st Team at bat	1st Team doesn't draw or go ahead	New score stands
		1st Team draws or goes ahead	* Score reverts back
	2nd Team at bat	2nd Team doesn't go ahead	* Score reverts back
		2nd Team draws	Score reverts back (local rule)
		2nd Team goes ahead and stays in front	New score stands
Either team winning	Both complete their innings		Final score stands

Reference: Softball Australia Level 2 Scoring manual

20. **Code of Conduct:**
Barracking is part of Softball culture and shall be allowed from the benches and bleachers, but no personal or disparaging remarks shall be allowed. Shouting or gesturing to mislead or distract the pitcher or any player from the bench is to be actioned by the Umpire.
Umpires shall have the power under Rule 10. Sec. 9 to take action for these specific problems. The Umpire should exercise care and a warning on the first occurrence should suffice.
The current APS Code of Conduct shall apply with the modification in regards to barracking outlined here.

21. **Procedure after the Game:** After the game, it is customary to line up at the home plate and walk past and shake hands with all opposition players and coaches as a mark of sportsmanship. Coaches to note this is done at the walk and no 'high fives' or 'slapping' should occur.

22. **Standards of Behaviour:**
a. Players
Players are responsible for conforming to the spirit as well as the letter of the rules. Players must understand and distinguish between fair play and gamesmanship with taking advantage of loopholes in the rules. These comments are intended to assist participants in the occasion to avoid thoughtless and unintentional breaches of sportsmanship.
The home captain should extend the normal courtesies of a host to a visiting team.
b. Spectators
* Whatever interferes with the orderly conduct of an event or the comfort and freedom of others to watch and enjoy the event is unacceptable.
* Spectators are encouraged to applaud good play by both sides
* There should be no streamers, either in rolls or bunches, banners, bugles, car horns or other noisy instruments
* Barracking is permitted based on the guidelines set out in section 6.
* Areas used by spectators should be left litter free.

23. **Coaches:**
Coaches are expected to set the example to others at all times and ensure the spirit of the game and the essence of the regulations are upheld. Coaches are to stay in the coaches' box when their team is in offence and behind the foul/dead ball line when their team is on defence.
Any person under the age of 18 years must wear a helmet when coaching at first or third base when their team is on offence.
Coaches are expected to ensure that all their safety equipment is in good order and in use at all times as part of their duty of care.
A list is given for your guidance:
* safety base at first base
* batting helmets are in good condition and being worn appropriately
* catchers equipment is in good condition and being worn appropriately
* equipment on benches is left in a tidy state and behind the dead ball line
* equipment used, particularly bats, are of an approved specification by ASF

24. Softball fixtures should be made in conjunction with the APS Sport Office to ensure ground availability, particularly in relation to APS Cricket matches.

25. **Diamond sizes:** Refer to the APS Sport website (www.apssport.org.au) for the required ground dimensions for each section.

Diamond Sizes

	Pitching Distance		Base Distance	
Open	40ft.	12.20m	60ft.	18.30m
Intermediate	40ft.	12.20m	60ft.	18.30m
Intermediate B & below	35ft.	10.67m	60ft.	18.30m
Junior	35ft.	10.67m	55ft.	16.76m
Primary	35ft.	10.67m	55ft.	16.76m

26. **Bases: For all AGSV/APS Softball matches heavy weighted bases are required, unless the match is being played at a recognised Softball venue. Home plates are to be level with the ground.**

27. **Redraws where required – Refer to General Reg 17 for method of calculation.**

28. **Semi Finals: Semi Finals will be conducted following the conclusion of the regular season.**
    a. Format: 1v4 and 2v3 with the winner of each match progressing to the Grand Final.
    b. In the event of a tied result at the conclusion of regulation time in the Semi Final match, an extra innings will be played. If scores remain tied thereafter, the team that finished higher on the ladder at the end of the home and away season will progress to the Grand Final
29. **Grand Final/Premiership:**
    a. Allocation of points: Win: 2 points; draw/washout: 1 point, loss: 0 points.
    b. Where teams are equal on Premiership points refer to General Regulation 17 for determination of ladder position.
    c. In the event of a tied result at the conclusion of regular time in the Grand Final, an extra innings will be played. If scores remain level thereafter, the Premiership or ladder position shall be declared shared.