**GULF COAST GIRLS SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION, INC.**

**PURPOSE:** The Gulf Coast Girls Softball Association strives to provide a positive, competitive youth softball experience for each player, parent and coach. We are dedicated to the advancement and long-term player development of physical, emotional and social skills. While winning is what everyone is striving for in recreational softball, winning will not be placed above good sportsmanship (respecting rules, opponents, officials, teammates, parents and one’s self) or what is best for the team.

 We are resolved to commit ourselves to the advancement of fast pitch softball community in the Gulf Coast area. (Escambia, Okaloosa and Santa Rosa Counties) As well as continued player development by building character using the medium of softball as a tool to teach young athletes in a way that improves their self-confidence and self-esteem, while making them better and more productive citizens.

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

**A.** These by-laws may be changed or replaced by a simple majority vote of those parks present and voting at any of the general meetings in September, March, May or July. Meetings will be roughly on the first Sunday of the above months listed at or around 5:00pm. In the event that cannot happen a seven (7) day notice will be sent to all the parks so that they can make accommodations as necessary. If the first Sunday is a holiday, the meeting will automatically be moved to the second Sunday of that month.

Each park is encouraged to have a representative at each meeting either the park commissioner or a park designee.

In the event a situation arises that requires an emergency meeting concerning the by-laws, a meeting may be called with no less than one calendar week (7 days) notice.

**B.** A quorum of three-fourths (75%) of the participating members must be present to conduct a normal business of the GCGSA.

**C.** Meetings are to be conducted in an informal nature. Roberts Rules of Order (the latest version) will be used as a guide for parliamentary procedure.

**D**. All general GCGSA meetings are open to the public.

**E.** The parks Softball Commissioner/President or his/her designated representative at the time of roll call will be the voting representative eligible to cast the vote. (Only one (1) vote per park)

**F.** Failure to attend meetings and/or vote does not alter the decisions made by those present at any given meeting.

**G.** Because park leadership may change yearly, every effort should be made by the outgoing leaders to pass on a copy of these by-laws to his/her successor and to encourage its continuance.

**H.** Each park will pay a membership fee of $20 per park annually and $10 per team in March for the spring season. All teams must be sanctioned or the team will incur charge to participate in any sanctioned tournament. Parks in arrears will be unable to vote on issues until the fee is paid.

**II. ELECTIONS**

 Elections for officers will take place at the initial organizational meeting held in September. The vote will take place at the beginning of the meeting and then the meeting will resume as normal. Newly elected officers will assume their duties upon being elected to the office and having a proper pass down. Board office elections will take place every two (2) years or as needed to fill a position.

**III. DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

 Officers of the GCGSA Board can vote on issues that are brought to the association, if another representative for that park is not present at the meeting.

Any vote ending in a tie will go to the GCGSA Board, which will have the ability to break a tie.

The following elected positions will make up the GCGSA Board:

**PRESIDENT:** Will call and chair meetings of the GCGSA. The chairperson shall not serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.

**VICE PRESIDENT:** Will assist the Chairman in carrying out the duties of chair. In the event of the Chairman’s absence, he/she will chair the meeting.

**SECRETARY:** Will keep membership records, meeting attendance, and record of all minutes of each meeting, send out notices and/or verbally notify members of meetings, and perform such other duties as required of the position.

**TREASURER:** Will handle all monies received by park and shall be deposited in GCGSA checking account in a timely manner as to maintain an accurate bank account. He/she will give a full financial report at every meeting. The outgoing Treasurer will assist in the transfer of bank account records.

**IV. GCGSA MEMBERSHIP**

**A. EXISTING MEMBERS**

 Membership is renewable with each new spring season.

**B. NEW MEMBERS**

 Parks who have never been a part of the GCGSA or parks that have dropped out and would like to return shall comply with the following:

1. Must be sponsored by a membered park and seconded by another membered park. (Both must be in good standing)

2. Parks who have a desire to play in GCGSA sponsored tournaments must meet the following criteria:

 i. In park by-laws that include an active draft system which allows a maximum of six (6) players protected (freezes).

**NOTE:** Freezes would consist of: 1. Sister options count as 1 freeze per sister. 2. Transportation options count as 1 freeze per child. 3. Head coach has 2 daughters and assistant coach has 1 daughter this is 3 total freezes.

**V. GCGSA GENERAL RULES**

 The GCGSA will be governed under the USSSA rulebook with the following exceptions.

1. 6U Division

i. A protective mask is required at all infield positions.

ii. Coaches pitch from 30ft, the batter gets 2 pitches. If a player fouls the 2nd pitch, she gets a 3rd pitch. If the player does not put one of the 3 pitches in play, she will hit off the tee. NO STRIKEOUTS. The coach must leave the field after the ball has been put in play.

iii. Bunting and stealing are not allowed!

iv. Stopping the lead runner and/or getting the ball back to the pitching circle stops the current play.

v. All games will be played as long as each team has a minimum of 7 players present. Time limit is 60 minutes.

2. 8u Division

 i. A protective mask is required at all infield positions.

 ii. Game length is 75 minutes & can end in a tie for regular season play.

 iii. Stopping the lead runner or getting the ball back to the pitching circle stops the current play.

 iv. Catchers are required to wear catchers gear. (Shin guards, chest protector, & helmet)

3. 10U Division

 i. A protective mask is required at all infield positions.

 ii. Game length is 75 minutes & can end in a tie for regular season play.

 iii. Players can steal home.

4. 12U Division

 i. A protective mask is required at all infield positions.

 ii. Game length is 75 minutes & can end in a tie for regular season play.

 iii. No metal cleats.

5. 16U Division

 i. A protective mask is required at all infield positions.

 ii. Game length is 75 minutes & can end in a tie for regular season play.

 iii. No metal cleats.

 iv. The age limit is 17yrs old in this age group to allow non-high school players to participate, with the exception that the 17-year-old player cannot pitch. The day the girl turns 18 she is no longer allowed to participate due to safety concerns.

6.BATS

i. Due to girls having older bats and non-USSSA bats we do not require a USSSA stamp on GCGSA bats for league and tournament play.

7. JEWELRY RULE

i. There will be no jewelry on any player during a game. The umpire should give one warning to each coach, after that the player will be ejected for a violation.

8. LEAGUE PICK-UP PLAYER:

 i. For friendship games, you may pick up 1 player to get to 9 players (10 for 8u) and that player must play outfield and bat last in the order.

 ii. For inter-park games please go by your park rules.

9. THE 6-9 RULE

 **i.** The 6-9 run rule is always in effect through the completion of the fifth inning. This is in effect to limit or reduce the risk of serious injury to the defensive/offensive player while attempting to take extra bases after the sixth run has crossed the plate. After the sixth run crosses the plate and once one of the current runners stop or hesitate running, the inning will be stopped at that point. This will allow a maximum number of 9 runs per inning. After the 5th inning, the teams can score unlimited runs.

The Mercy Run Rule is always in effect as followed:

12 after 3 innings, 10 after 4 innings, & 8 after 5 innings

**VI. GCGSA SPONSORED TOURNAMENTS**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

 The GCGSA will sponsor on a seasonal basis a Mid-Season and an All-Star Tournament. All other tournaments that carry the GCGSA name must be voted on by the membership to be sanctioned and sponsored by GCGSA. All games will have a 1 hour and 15-minute time limit and finishing the inning, if applicable. If you are not a member in good standing with the GCGSA you will not be able to play or host any GCGSA tournaments. This also includes the participation rule which must be adhered to within the year.

**A. PARK PARTICIPATION RULE**

 In order to participate in the All-Star tournament your park must have 75% participation of your total parks softball team in the GCGSA Mid-Season tournament.

**B. GATE FEE**

 The host park will charge s gate fee of $5 per person per day. (6 and under free) The host park also has the option of doing a weekend pass. Up to 3 coaches passes will be provided for each team participating.

**C. INSURANCE**

 The host park(s) will add the GCGSA members and officials to their existing insurance policy as an additional rider and must carry the required Liability Insurance needed to cover the GCGSA officers, host parks and officials calling the games.

 If a host park is unable to add the GCGSA as a rider, (this must be made known prior to the “draw” for each tournament) then GCGSA will purchase the required tournament policy.

**D. AWARDS**

 Team trophies or plaques will be awarded to each team finishing top 3 in each division and age group. Player’s awards will be individual trophies, plaques or rings for 1st and 2nd place teams and medals for 3rd place. This is a minimum requirement by the GCGSA. However, each tournament host may exceed this requirement.

**E. TOURNAMENT UIC/OFFICIALS**

 The GCGSA membership will vote yearly on the position of UIC. (Umpire in Charge) He/she will be in charge over all matters concerning game officials and rules pertaining to the tournament. He/she can take recommendations from the host parks president and/or softball commissioner for use of the host park’s umpires or use their own. However, this is the discretion of the UIC and is not required to use the host park’s umpires.

All tournaments will consist of a minimum of two (2) umpires for each game in the 10u, 12u and 16u divisions. Only one (1) umpire will be provided for each game in the 8u division.

 The exception to this rule is for the championship and/or “IF” game in the 8u division which will require two (2) umpires during those contests.

**F. LOCATION OF TOURNAMENTS/ROTATION**

 Park locations and dates for the Mid-Season and All-Star tournaments will be assigned on a rotational basis. When the rotation has been completed it will start over with a blind draw.

 A park on the rotational list may request to be dropped down on the rotation list once. Any new park(s) who wish to host a tournament will be placed at the end of the rotation for the intended tournament.

 **Mid-Season Tournament Rotation List** (*Draw done on 7 December 21)*

2022 – NEP

2023 -

2024 -

**All-Star Tournament Rotation List** *(Draw done on 7 December 21)*

2022 – Navarre

2023 -

2024 -

**NOTE:** Because of the growing number of team in the GCGSA some smaller parks will not be able to host the Mid-Season Tournament. Tournaments should be held at one park for all age groups. The Mid-Season Tournament is scheduled around the 1st weekend of April and should be within 1 week of that date. The All-Star tournament is scheduled to begin on the first or second weekend of June. Any changes to those dates can be discussed at any of the four annual meetings.

**G. LACK OF INTEREST**

 Parks must have 2/3 of total parks representation in the Mid-Season and All-Star tournaments or they will forfeit their next rotational tournament.

**VII. MID SEASON TOURNAMENT**

**A. Type:** Double elimination tournament format.

**B. Fee:** Entry fee is $150 per team for all age groups, this fee includes ball for tournament play. (The host park will purchase the tournament balls)

**C. Balls:** The GCGSA approved balls will be a USSSA .47 core leather optic softball.

1. 12u and 16u divisions will use a 12” ball

2. 8u and 10u divisions will use a 11” ball

**NOTE: *All balls used during tournament play must be the “Same Type” and/or “Same Manufacturer.***

**D. Pre-Tournament Administration**

 Entry fees, tournament rosters and certificate of insurance for the Mid-Season tournament will be collected at the GCGSA meeting held on a pre-set date prior to the tournament (aka- tournament draw meeting). Non-participating teams will forfeit entry fees. A park commissioner or a park representative should be available at this meeting.

**E. Rosters**

 The official roster is turned in to the GCGSA Board, UIC and the host park at the mid-season tournament meeting. A team should not be composed of more than 15 players during the mid-Season tournament. Teams that do not turn in rosters, fees and insurance at the draw meeting will not be allowed to participate in the draw. Park Commissioners are required to go through all participating teams birth certificate prior to the mid-season meeting.

**F. Participation Rule**

 All girls on the official roster that are in attendance and dressed out must play three consecutive defensive outs and all teams must “bat” the bench. Prior to the start of a game, the umpire and the opposing coach must be notified of a reason any player is held out from playing. Failure to adhere to this rule will result in forfeiture of the game. Discipline cannot be used as a reason for non-participation.

**G. Eligibility**

 To be eligible for the participation in the Mid-Season tournament a girl must have played a minimum of (2/3) two-thirds of the scheduled regular season games up to the tournament. Any girls(s) on a high school roster (freshman, JV, Varsity) for that season are not eligible to play in the tournament. No girl that has reached the age of 18 will be allowed to participate in this tournament.

**H. Split Divisions**

 The overall win-loss record of each team will be used at the Mid-Season draw to determine which teams are in the A or B bracket with the approval of the GCGSA Board. All parks should have at least one A bracket team in each division.

**I. Tournament Pick-up Rule**

 The player pick-up rule, is implemented to help a team that falls to seven players, (eight for the 8u division), which would result in a forfeit. The team would have to use the following rules.

1. A team is only allowed one pick-up 1 player bringing the starting roster to eight, with the 9th batter being an automatic out or nine with the 10th batter being an out for the 8u division.

2. The pick-up player must bat last in the order and play in the outfield.

3. The same pick-up player must come from the immediate age group below and must be registered in the same park that has been eliminated or has not participated in the tournament.

4. The 8u division may pick up from across the board if another player’s team has been eliminated or from a t-ball team from the same park. Once any of the regular rostered players arrive at the contest the pick-up player must be removed from the game.

5. Make sure to list all players rostered on your team who are not present on the official line-up presented at the plate as substitutes.

6. All pick-up players must wear their regular team’s uniform during the game.

7. All pick-up players must be identified to the home plate umpire prior to the start of the contest.

8. The player is then added to the team’s roster.

**J. Courtesy Runners**

Courtesy runners may be used only for the pitcher and/or catcher at any time and shall be the last completed a bat player in the batting order. In the event the last batted player was a pitcher or catcher then the previous batter must be used.

**K. Run Rules**

 The 6-9 run rule is always in effect through the completion of the fifth inning. This is in effect to limit or reduce the risk of serious injury to the defensive/offensive player while attempting to take extra bases after the sixth run has crossed the plate. After the sixth run crosses the plate and once one of the current runner stop or hesitate running the inning is stopped at that point. This will allow a maximum number of 9 runs an inning. After the 5th inning, the teams can score unlimited runs.

 The Mercy Run Rule is always in effect as followed:

12 after 3 innings, 10 after 4 innings, & 8 after 5 innings

**NOTE:** ***No game will start after 9:00pm.***

**VIII. ALL –STAR TOURNAMENT**

**A. Type:** Double elimination tournament format.

**B. Fee:** Entry fee is $150 per team for all age groups, this fee includes ball for tournament play. (The host park will purchase the tournament balls)

**C. Balls:** The GCGSA approved balls will be a USSSA .47 core leather optic softball.

1. 12u and 16u divisions will use a 12” ball

2. 8u and 10u divisions will use a 11” ball

**NOTE: *All balls used during tournament play must be the “Same Type” and/or “Same Manufacturer.***

**D. Pre-Tournament Administration**

 Entry fees, tournament rosters and certificate of insurance for the All-Star tournament will be collected at the GCGSA meeting held on a pre-set date prior to the tournament. Non-participating teams will forfeit entry fees. A park commissioner or a park representative should be available at this meeting.

**E. Rosters**

 The official roster is that which is turned in to the GCGSA, UIC and host park at the meeting prior to the tournament. A team cannot be composed of more than 15 players during the All-Star tournament.

**F. Eligibility**

 To be eligible for the participation in the All-Star tournament a girl must have played a minimum of (2/3) two-thirds of the scheduled regular season games and be registered with the same park. Any girl(s) on a high school roster (freshman, JV, Varsity) for that season are not eligible to play in the tournament. Any girl that has reached the age of 18 will be able to participate in the tournament.

**G. Courtesy Runners**

Courtesy runners may be used only for the pitcher and/or catcher at any time and shall be the last completed at bat player in the batting order. In the event the last batted player was a pitcher or catcher then the previous batted player must be used. A pinch runner may also be used and is defined as a substitute player who has not entered into the game. A pinch runner will lose her re-entry rights, if you re-enter the original starting player back to their respective position.

**H. Run Rules**

 The 6-9 run rule is always in effect through the completion of the third inning. This is in effect to limit or reduce the risk of serious injury to the defensive/offensive player while attempting to take extra bases after the sixth run has crossed the plate. After the sixth run crosses the plate and once one of the current runners stop or hesitate running, the inning is stopped at that point. This will allow a maximum number of 9 runs in an inning through the third inning. After the 3rd inning, the teams can score unlimited runs.

 The Mercy Run Rule is always in effect as followed:

12 after 3 innings, 10 after 4 innings, & 8 after 5 innings

**NOTE: *No game will start after 9:00pm.***

**I. Player participation / Substitutions Rule**

 The coaches have the option to “bat” the entire bench if they choose too. The second option is to play the 9 (10) players and to include up to 2 EP’s (these are (extra players) hitters and can be put anywhere in the batting order and don’t have to play defense. The 3rd option is to use a DP/Flex which allows a player to hit and a player to play defense. (\* If you are using option three, please review the USSSA rulebook).

**NOTE:**Not all players are required to play but coaches are strongly encouraged to have players participate.

**IX. PROTEST PROCEDURES**

1. A protest bond of $75.00 cash must be posted at the time a protest is initiated.

2. The game will be stopped with an official time-out and will not continue until the protest is settled.

3. A protest committee will be appointed by the UIC at the time of the protest using guidelines set up by the GCGSA Board.

4. To file a protest, the head coach must call for and receive time from either official. Once time out has been given, the coach must inform the home plate umpire that they would like to make a formal protest and present the $75.00 cash to the home plate umpire. At that time the home plate umpire will do the following.

 i. Stop play

 ii. Record all remaining time left in the game and pass it to the official scorebook

 iii. Call for the tournament UIC and the Director

5. The protesting head coach will receive five minutes to state the grounds for said protest; the opposing head coach will then receive 5 minutes to respond. After that, the UIC will make a ruling, which will be final.

6. If the ruling of the official is over-turned by the protest committee the $75.00 cash will be returned.

7. If the ruling of the official is up-held, the protesting team forfeits the $75.00 to the host park.

8. Play will resume at that point, with whatever time is remaining on the official scorebook.

**NOTE:**After the umpires have left the confines of the playing field, a protest can’t be made. The game is considered over! You can’t protest any judgment calls (ball, strikes, safe, outs, fair or foul calls etc…)

**X. SPECIAL TOURNAMENT GUIDELINES AND COACHES CONDUCT**

 If a coach is ejected from a game during a tournament, he/she will be suspended for the next game following the ejection.

1. The result of an incident requires the ejected player or coach removed from the game and can no longer participate.

2. A flagrant act will require the player or coach to leave the grounds for the remainder of the game.

3. Any ejected player or coach discovered participating in the contest in anyway will constitute a forfeit.

4. Any team found to have an ineligible player by protest will forfeit the remaining games of the tournament.