

## **Kitchener-Waterloo Ladies Fastball Association RULES AND REGULATIONS**

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## **1. GOVERNING RULES**

- 1.01 The Kitchener-Waterloo Ladies Fastball Association (“KWLFA”) is governed by its current versions of:
- a. KWLFA Constitution;
  - b. KWLFA Rules and Regulations (this document); and
  - c. Softball Canada Official Rulebook, except for the amendments approved in KWLFA Constitution and KWLFA Rules and Regulations.
- 1.02 In exceptional circumstances, the Executive may make exceptions to the KWLFA Rules and Regulations if passed by a majority vote. The guiding principle in making exceptions shall be the KWLFA’s mission statement in the KWLFA Constitution.

## **2. REGISTRATION and FEES**

- 2.01 No one may play in the KWLFA before submitting a completed registration form and paying a registration fee to their respective Team Representative, or the league directly.

In order to be eligible to play in the first game of the season, each team/player must:

- a. Submit all registration forms to the Statistician
- b. Collect and pay all team fees to the Treasurer

No grace periods will be granted, as insurance will not be valid without these documents.

- 2.02 The Executive will set the league fees for each season. Fees will be calculated on a per player cost structure. Teams may elect to have players pay the league directly, or submit fees on behalf of their team as a single payment.
- 2.03 If a player resigns from the league and wishes to receive a refund, she must submit a request to her Team Representative directly.
- 2.04
- a. Each team must pay a \$200 league deposit fee, deemed “performance fee” which is in addition to their team fees and non-refundable. This fee must be paid at the Annual Pre-Season meeting. For new teams, this fee is a sign of their intention to become members of the league. The submitted fee will be applied to the entry fee if they are accepted as members or returned if the application is withdrawn before the Rules and Regulations meeting.
  - b. The performance fee serves to fund any fines imposed on the team during the season (ie. forfeiture fines). Should a team complete the season with no fines (or fines less than \$200) they will have the option to have the fee returned or have it carried forward to the next season. Team Representatives must inform the Treasurer of their decision at the Annual Pre-Season Meeting. If teams are fined during the season, the fine will automatically be taken out of their performance fee.
- 2.05 Each Team Representative must submit their final roster to the statistician no later than June 15<sup>th</sup> in order for their players to be eligible to compete in the season.

### **3. PLAYERS**

- 3.01 Teams may register twenty-five (25) players all of whom must achieve or have achieved the age 17-years, by April 1<sup>st</sup> in the year of play.
- 3.02 Teams shall submit team lists before May 1<sup>st</sup> which include the names, addresses, phone numbers, birth dates, and email addresses of all players, as well as names and phone numbers of coaches/managers. Failure to meet this deadline will result in a \$25 fine being imposed and the possible ineligibility of players/the team. Players may be added before June 20<sup>th</sup> by notifying the statistician. Each player must also submit the online registration form in order to be eligible to play their first game of the season.
- 3.03 Teams must field at least eight players at each game.
- 3.04 Teams playing with eight players will receive an automatic out in its batting line up.
- 3.05 Teams that begin a game with eight players may add a ninth player to the game:
- defensively when a regular stoppage in play occurs; or
  - offensively, in the ninth spot in the batting order.
- 3.06 If teams determine they will be short players (only having 7 or 8 players present for a game), they are allowed to seek out other players from other teams to prevent forfeiting the game (to a max of 9 players). Players that are “borrowed” will not count these games towards their minimum game requirement to qualify for playoffs.
- Pitchers are allowed to be borrowed from other teams but must wear their own team uniform to distinguish themselves. While teams are expected to use their own available pitchers first, additional pitchers may be used even if a team has 9 or more players, recognizing that arm management of our players and their well-being is important.
- 3.07 Courtesy Runners: Each team may use unlimited courtesy runners per game. The runner used must be the last available player to bat. A courtesy runner may only be used for a player:
- Once the player has batted, and has safely reached only first base.
  - For each at bat, at the initial time that they have safely reached first base, with exception for 3.08/Catcher’s rule, and 3.11/Injury.
- 3.08 Catcher’s Rule: After two outs in an inning, a catcher on base may be replaced with the last person out in that inning.
- 3.09 Substitution and Re-entry: All players present are eligible to be in the batting lineup. Any player in the batting lineup is eligible for unlimited substitution in the field, both in innings and positions played. If a player joins a game late, they are to be entered as the last batter in the lineup, regardless of the number of players present at the start of the game.
- 3.10 Designated Player: Teams may use the designated player rule as set out in the [Softball Canada Official Rulebook](#)

- 3.11 **Injury Rule:** Any player may enter or re-enter a game to replace an injured player if the umpire deems an injury serious enough that the injured player cannot continue to play.
- 3.12 **Blood Rule:** Any player may enter or re-enter a game as a temporary substitute for an injured player who must tend to an open wound. Once the wound is dressed, the injured player will re-enter the game for the temporary substitute. The player who entered as the temporary substitute shall not be deemed to have been entered, re-entered, or removed from the game.
- 3.13 **Protective Equipment:** Catchers must wear masks with a throat protector, a chest protector, shin protectors, and a helmet. No one may catch without this equipment. All batters, on deck batters, and runners must wear helmets with a foam liner, two earflaps, and a peak. Pitchers and infielders may choose to wear a facemask or mouthguard, to their discretion.
- 3.14 **Jewelry:** players may only wear studded earrings or facial jewelry during games. Umpires will issue one jewelry warning per game per team if jewelry extends beyond this. Any player wearing jewelry after this warning will be called out. An exception will be granted for Medic Alert bracelets and/or necklaces, rings are at a player's discretion.
- 3.15 **Player Eligibility**
- a. Players must participate in a minimum of 25% of regular season games, to be eligible to participate in playoff games. If the calculation results in a fraction, the number used will be the next whole number. Innings are not a factor in determining if the player has played the game. A player is considered to have participated, once they have joined the team in full uniform and are ready to be entered into the game. Exceptions may be considered for players who are(were) in good standing (with the league in the previous year) or new players who have shown intent to register/submitted an electronic registration form prior to May 1<sup>st</sup> but are unable to fulfill the four-game requirement due to medical reasons. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Executive team if/when the team brings this request forward via email.
  - b. Pitchers registered with Softball Canada or NCAA within Midget, Junior, or Senior, may not pitch in our league any year they are registered. These players may play any other position.
  - c. Teams using an ineligible player/(s) will forfeit all games in which the players participated.
  - d. All players registered with the KWLFA must submit the electronic registration form prior to their first game in order to play and receive insurance coverage.
  - e. All borrowed players must be from the KWLFA exclusively, for insurance purposes.

#### **4. OFFICIALS (UMPIRES)**

- 4.01 All umpires working in the KWLFA regular season and playoff games must be registered with and carded by Softball Ontario.
- 4.02 Umpires officiating games played under protest will appear at a protest hearing when summoned.

- 4.03 If only one umpire shows up for a game a vote will be taken between the umpire present and one representative from each team. A unanimous vote must occur in order for the game to continue. If not, the game will be canceled and rescheduled by the Scheduler.
- 4.04 Umpires are the official timekeepers in all situations. Any comments, concerns, or complaints regarding the umpires not adhering to these Rules or Softball Canada Rules or any inappropriate behavior should be submitted in writing to the Executive. In the regular season and playoffs, the Umpires have the discretion to end a game due to weather or unsafe playing conditions. If an Umpire ends the game due to weather or unsafe playing conditions, five innings, or four and a half innings if the home team is winning, will qualify as a game.

## 5. GAME DETAILS (TIMES & FORFEITS)

- 5.01 Schedule: The schedule is broken down into regular season, and playoffs.
- 5.02 Duration max. 7 innings/Regulation game/When games can end in a tie:
- Regular season games will be a maximum of seven (7) innings.
  - For regular season or playoff games five (5) innings, or four and a half (4 ½) innings if the home team is winning, qualify as a regulation game.
  - During the regular season or playoffs where standings are applicable, a game may end in a tie with both teams receiving one (1) point.
- 5.03 Official game times, durations, and parameters are:
- Scheduled game start times are identified as per the league schedule.
  - The umpire will announce the time of the first pitch to both teams.
  - No new inning shall begin after 1 hour 25 minutes following the first pitch.
  - The game will be called by the umpire when:
    - Weather conditions dictate.
    - The lights go out on the field, and are necessary for play.
    - 1 hour 45 minutes have elapsed from the time of the first pitch.For these three (i,ii,iii) conditions, if the game is a regulation game per 5.02 i.e. at least the end of five innings (4 ½ innings if the home team is ahead in the score) has been reached, the score will revert back to the last completed inning that did not end in a tie. If every inning of the game was tied, the game will be declared a tie.
  - A **Game mercy** occurs. The Game Mercy Rule is 10 runs, and will be in effect starting in the 5<sup>th</sup> inning (4 ½ innings if home team is ahead). The no. of runs and inning is per Softball Canada rules.
- 5.04 Inning mercy: There will be a 5-run cap per inning (per team) limit (**Inning Mercy**) from innings 1-5. Innings 6-7 are unlimited runs per inning; therefore considered "open" innings. This rule will be in effect for the regular season and playoffs.
- 5.05 Grace period: If a team does not have the required (8 players, per rule 3.03) number of players to start the game at the official game time, that team:
- Will be granted a 15-minute grace period;
  - May be granted a short extension of the grace period if:
    - that team has confirmed that an additional player is en route and expects to arrive within a few minutes; and
    - both teams agree to the extension of the grace period;

- c. Will forfeit the game after the expiry of the grace period and any extension of the grace period if it still does not have the required number of players to start the game.

5.06 Warmups: Teams must finish infield warmups 5-minutes prior to game time.

5.07 Forfeits:

- a. A forfeit occurs when a team fails to field at least eight players by the expiry of the grace period or any extension of the grace period.
- b. A team responsible for a forfeit will be assigned a loss and their opponents will receive a win for the forfeited game and the score will be recorded as 7-0.
- c. A team that exceeds two forfeits in a season may be subject to sanctions determined by the Executive including, but not limited to, exclusion from playoffs that season or expulsion from the league.

5.08 Authorized reschedule: An authorized reschedule is when a team provides the Scheduler and/or President and Team Representative and its opponent with notice of its inability to field a team at least 2 weeks before the scheduled game time. An authorized reschedule will not result in a loss and will be rescheduled by the Scheduler.

5.09 Game Cancellations for uncontrollable circumstances (rainouts, blackouts, weather conditions, etc.) will be made by the Scheduler or an Executive Member by 5:30pm. Teams are encouraged to check the City of Kitchener website for field conditions on bad weather days. On nights where there is only a 9:00pm game, cancellations may be issued via email by the Scheduler or an Executive Member no later than 7:30pm.

- a. Teams will be notified of game cancellations by email only. If teams have **not** been notified by 5:30pm, they must show up at the diamond.
- b. If your game has been canceled due to weather by the umpires, the home team must contact the President and Scheduler immediately; particularly if you are the first game of the evening.
- c. Games will be rescheduled to the next available rainout date as communicated to both teams, by the Scheduler.

5.10 Diamond Issue: If there is an issue with the diamond (e.g. no lights, no bases) please notify the President/Scheduler immediately. You are also asked to call the City of Kitchener Call Centre (519-741-2345) and inform them of the sports field location you are at, for example "Rosenberg Sportsfield #1 or #2".

## **6. REGULAR SEASON**

6.01 The Executive will create the regular season schedule before the season begins. Once approved by the Executive, the schedule is not subject to change except to reschedule canceled games.

6.02 The Scheduler and/or an Executive member may cancel games due to weather up until 5:30 pm on the game day. If a game is canceled, the Scheduler and/or Executive member must advise the applicable Team Representatives, who must advise their teams about the cancellation.

6.03 If both teams scheduled to play at a game arrive at the park to play the game and the weather or condition of the field prevents the game from beginning, then the umpires

shall determine if the game will begin, be temporarily postponed, or be cancelled and rescheduled. The Team Representative from the Home team must contact the Scheduler and/or President if this occurs.

- 6.04 Once a game begins, it is within the discretion of the umpire to cancel any game due to weather.
- 6.05 If a game is canceled due to weather, the Scheduler will reschedule it on any day prior to the end of the regular season.
- 6.06 (removed, consolidated in 11.02 Scorekeeping)

## **7. PLAYOFFS**

- 7.01 The playoff format including where seeding will be applied, and schedule shall be finalized before the season starts, at the Pre-Season meeting.
- 7.02 All teams will play in the playoffs unless one of the exceptions in these Rules applies or unless otherwise ordered by the Executive.
- 7.03 The home team will supply two (2) regulation balls for the game.
- 7.04 The length of games during the playoffs will be determined as follows:
  - a. **For Gold Championship game(s)** (there may be multiple games, for example if a team receives its first loss in a double knockout playoff format, or a game ends in a tie):
    - (i) The game(s) are scheduled to play a full seven innings, the time restrictions in rule 5.03 do not apply.
    - (ii) If a game is tied at the end of seven innings, an unlimited number of international tiebreaker innings will be utilized to determine a winner. The time limitations in rule 5.03 will not apply. When applying the international tiebreaker rule, the last available batter from the previous inning starts the inning at second base at the beginning of each team's at-bat. There will be 0 outs to begin the inning as per [Softball Canada](#).
    - (iii) If a game ends due to 5.03 d (i) (weather) or 5.03 d (ii) (no lights) and the game is a regulation game per 5.02, the game will not be rescheduled and the champion will be the winner of the shortened game.
    - (iv) If a game ends in a tie, the teams will play again in a newly scheduled game.
  - b. All other playoff games will be a maximum of seven innings, unless the seventh inning ends in a tie. For these games, if a game is tied after seven innings, the international tiebreaker rule will be used, if the time limits in 5.03 have not been met. When applying the international tiebreaker rule, the last available batter from the previous inning starts the inning at second base at the beginning of each team's at-bat. There will be 0 outs to begin the inning as per [Softball Canada](#).
  - c. If a pool/single championship/consolation playoff format based on pool standings is being used:
    - (i) Pool games may end in a tie.
    - (ii) If a championship/consolation round game other than the Gold Championship game ends in a tie, the teams are declared co-winners.
    - (iii) The single championship/consolation round games, are scheduled for a full seven innings, the time restrictions in rule 5.03 do not apply.

## **8. STANDINGS**

- 8.01 League standings will be determined by awarding the following points to regular-season and playoff games, playoffs where applicable:
- a. 2 points – Win
  - b. 1 point – Tie
  - c. 0 points – Loss or default/forfeit
- 8.02 Where seedings are being used to determine position and home team for subsequent play, a tie will be broken in the following hierarchy:
- a. Games for and against (“head to head”) with the teams involved in the tie and if the tie persists,
  - b. Run differential (calculated by runs scored by the team, less runs scored against) in games for and against (“head to head”), and if the tie persists,
  - c. Run differential (calculated by runs scored by the team, less runs scored against) across the league for the teams involved in the tie and if the tie still persists,
  - d. A randomized draw to select the highest seed.
- Note: This could apply to a tie involving more than two (2) teams.
- 8.03 Where seedings are being used to determine position and home team for play, the higher seed is the home team. If there is a conflict in the designated home team for a game (e.g. seedings vs. a published schedule), the seeding position prevails.
- 8.04 In the event a playoff game has been scheduled and a team is unable to field a team for the game, the game will be considered a forfeit, with stipulations per rule 5.07. Their opponents will receive a win for the forfeited game and the score will be recorded as 7-0.
- 8.05 Standings will be updated weekly on the league website by the Statistician.

## **9. UNIFORMS**

- 9.01 Each team must supply its own uniforms.
- 9.02 From July 1 onward, players must wear uniforms during games, or they are not eligible to play.
- 9.03 Uniforms must consist of a team jersey with an assigned player number, in a colour approved by the Executive, and softball shorts or pants (or an acceptable equivalent).
- a. Team jersey may be considered a t-shirt of a matching colour as long as a visible number is placed on the back. The number must be unique to all other players, but may be temporarily affixed to the shirt (i.e. via tape, etc.).
- 9.04 All borrowed players should wear either their own team’s jersey, or preferably if possible, a shirt matching the colour of the team they are joining.
- 9.05 Any uniform exceptions due to weather will be at the discretion of the umpires.
- 9.06 Metal cleats are not permitted.

## **10. LEAGUE CONDUCT**

- 10.01 Smoking or drinking alcohol on the field, in the dugout, or in the parking lot is not permitted.
- 10.02 Drinking alcohol during a game while playing or coaching is not permitted.
- 10.03 Any player who appears to be drunk or under the influence of drugs will be ejected from the game at the discretion of the Executive, or Umpires. Please inform the executive of any player who falls into this situation at the completion of the game/within 24-hours as the player's eligibility to continue in good standing with the league will be reviewed.
- 10.04 Any player or coach who verbally or physically abuses, threatens, or swears at an umpire, a player, or a coach during a game at the discretion of the umpires will be ejected from the game and
- a. The ejection shall be noted on the official score sheet;
  - b. The ejected player will receive a suspension, in addition to the game she is ejected from, as follows:
    - i. One game for the first offense;
    - ii. Three games for the second offense; or
    - iii. Expulsion from the league for the third offense.
- 10.05 Any player ejected from a game may appeal her suspension to the Executive. Each team not directly involved with the game in question shall have one vote to be shared by its Team Representative to resolve the appeal.
- 10.06 At the umpires' discretion, any inappropriate or distracting actions and verbalizations such as:
- a. Negative comments or actions at pitcher or catcher.
  - b. Negative comments or actions directed at the batter.
  - c. Negative comments or actions used to distract fielders.
- from coaches or other players, which are directed towards any players during game time or an opposing team, may be addressed. The following action may be taken:
- i. First incident: warning is issued to team and individual;
  - ii. Second incident: the coach or player is ejected; and,
  - iii. Third incident: the team forfeits the game.

## **11. GENERAL**

- 11.01 Dimensions: Bases are 60 feet apart and the pitching distance is 43 feet measured from the back of home plate to the front of the pitching plate, as per Softball Canada.
- 11.02 Scorekeeping: the home team is the official scorekeeper and must:
- a. Include the first name or common name or nickname & last initial, and uniform number of each player on the score sheet. The name is to correspond to what was provided by the teams for player eligibility tracking;
  - b. Include and delineate as substitute, the name of all substitute players in attendance at the game on the score sheet;
  - c. Email the score sheet to the Statistician by the day after the game is played.

- 11.03 Weather: Discussion regarding game cancellations due to weather (i.e. canceling a game before it is completed due to rain) is only to take place between the home plate and base umpire. If an impartial third party (i.e. Executive) is in attendance they may be involved in the discussion.

## **12. PROTESTS**

- 12.01 The Executive will settle any grievances, protests, or problems.
- 12.02 At the time of the protest, an announcement of the concern must be made to the umpire(s) and the opposing team, before resuming the game and prior to the next pitch being made. The game will be played out. If the losing team wins the protest, a new game will be replayed from the start. If the protest is successful, the protest fee will be returned, and a new game will be played from the start.
- 12.03 A protest fee of \$25.00 and a written letter must be submitted to the Executive within 24hrs of the game in question. A phone call/email to the President may be made to notify of an incoming protest. Another Executive Team member may be contacted if the President's team is involved. During playoffs, the submission must be made immediately following the game in question. This is the only time a phone call/email protest will be accepted.
- 12.04 A meeting of the Executive, plus a Representative from the two teams involved with the protest, and the Umpires will be convened in person. An email or written report by the umpire(s) will be accepted in lieu of their physical attendance at this meeting, for the convenience of scheduling. Both teams will receive the decision in writing. If the protest is won, the \$25 will be refunded to the protesting team.
- 12.05 Acceptable reasons to protest include:
- a. Misinterpretation of a playing rule
  - b. Failure of an umpire to apply the correct rule to a given situation
  - c. Failure to impose the correct penalty for a given violation
  - d. Misapplication of one of the time rules
- 12.06 Protests based solely on a decision regarding the accuracy of an umpire's judgement will not be considered. Submission of protests of this nature will result in an automatic loss of the \$25 protest fee.

## **13. FEES AND FINES**

- 13.01 Any team that has outstanding fines of any kind by the end of the regular season is not eligible to play in the playoffs and is not eligible to return to the league until all fines are paid.

## 14. KWLFA RULES & REGULATIONS SUMMARIZATION

- 3.03 Teams must field at least eight players at each game.
- 3.04 Teams playing with eight players will receive an automatic out in its batting line up.
- 3.08 Catcher's Rule: After two outs in an inning, a catcher on base may be replaced with the last person out in that inning.
- 5.02 Duration max. 7 innings/Regulation game/When games can end in a tie
- Regular season games will be a maximum of seven (7) innings.
  - For regular season or playoff games five (5) innings, or four and a half (4 ½) innings if the home team is winning, qualify as a regulation game.
  - During the regular season or playoffs where standings are applicable, a game may end in a tie with both teams receiving one (1) point.
- 5.03 **Official game times, durations, and parameters**
- Scheduled game start times are identified as per the league schedule.
  - The umpire will announce the time of the first pitch to both teams.
  - No new inning shall begin after 1 hour 25 minutes following the first pitch.
  - The game will be called by the umpire when:
    - Weather conditions dictate,
    - The lights go out on the field, and are necessary for play,
    - 1 hour 45 minutes have elapsed from the time of the first pitch.For these three (i,ii,iii) conditions, if the game is a regulation game per 5.02 i.e. at least the end of five innings (4 ½ innings if the home team is ahead in the score) has been reached, the score will revert back to the last completed inning that did not end in a tie. If every inning of the game was tied, the game will be declared a tie.
  - A Game mercy occurs. The Game Mercy Rule is 10 runs, and will be in effect starting in the 5<sup>th</sup> inning (4 ½ innings if home team is ahead). The no. of runs and inning is per Softball Canada rules.
- 5.04 There will be a 5-run cap per inning (per team) limit (Inning Mercy) from innings 1-5. Innings 6-7 are unlimited runs per inning; therefore considered "open" innings. This rule will be in effect for the regular season and playoffs.
- 5.05 Grace period: If a team does not have the required number (8 players, per rule 3.03) of players to start the game at the official game time, that team:
- Will be granted a 15-minute grace period;
  - May be granted a short extension of the grace period if:
    - that team has confirmed that an additional player is en route and expects to arrive within a few minutes; and
    - both teams agree to the extension of the grace period;

As discussed in 2024 pre-season rules meeting:

- Umpires do not call last inning

This is not a specific KWLFA rule.

- if the game is a regulation game, the top of an inning completes, the home team is leading and the 1 hour 25 minute time limit is being approached, the home team will start their at bat in the bottom of the inning. If the home team is still batting when the 1 hour 25 minute time limit is reached, the batter at the time will complete their at bat and the game will then be called as completed by the umpires. The score at the time that the game is called, will be the recorded game score.