



## **Niskayuna Girls' Softball League, Inc. Rules and Regulations**

*Issued: June 4, 2024*

### **Rec and Travel Coaches Conduct**

As a member of Niskayuna Girls' Softball League Inc. ("Nisky Softball" or "Niskayuna Softball"), all coaches are to adhere to the following:

- To serve as a positive role model in all cases, both as a winner and in defeat;
- To display good sportsmanship in all cases, both as a winner and in defeat;
- To teach respect for all players, both teammates and competitors;
- To show respect for the rules, the officials and their decisions;
- To show leadership in building a team atmosphere, by using constructive advice and positive reinforcement;
- To help players develop a positive self-image for themselves, no matter what their skill level;
- To provide players with the enthusiasm to continue a life-long participation in sports;
- To teach the players that softball can be competitive and fun and not to let the competitive part destroy the fun part.

Coaches should be aware that when they are on the playing field, they are serving as representatives of Niskayuna Softball. Accordingly, your conduct should reflect the standards and values that we espouse to the girls of fair play and good sportsmanship. We cannot expect the players to develop a healthy attitude toward friendly competition unless we as managers and coaches are able to maintain our perspective on the game and remember that it is a game. We should remind ourselves that the lives of these young women do not just revolve around softball. Rather softball is just one of the many activities that they should use to socially develop into adulthood. Your conduct serves as a model for the girls and they will mirror your attitude about the game and how it's played.

All coaches of Niskayuna Softball have an obligation to familiarize themselves with the applicable league/tournament rules (e.g., Rec, USA Softball). Lack of knowledge of the rules is not an acceptable excuse for any rule violations. Coaches are forbidden from verbally attacking or ridiculing an umpire during or after a game. Any such action, whether intentional or not, will result in disciplinary action against that individual without exception. It is your responsibility to know what calls are judgment calls and what calls are procedural. It is not your prerogative to question judgment calls but it is your right to seek clarification from the umpire on procedural or rules calls. This should be done in a manner that is respectful to the official. You will sometimes have to accept a bad call as part of the game. If you feel that there is an umpire that consistently demonstrates a lack of

understanding of the rules, you should contact the Commissioner or the Umpire Coordinator.

All Niskayuna coaches are expected to foster a competitive, yet fun and friendly atmosphere during the game. This includes being friendly to the other team's players and coaches and immediately stopping any disrespectful or unsportsmanlike conduct by players. Coaches should not allow their team to direct derogatory or insulting cheers at the other team's players or coaches. The coach is also responsible for fostering a positive attitude from parents during games. We expect Niskayuna parents to be supportive of their team, but insulting or verbally attacking umpires, players, coaches, or other parents will not be tolerated. Parents should never lead "softball cheers" or make insulting comments about the opposing players. If a parent is being disruptive, it is the responsibility of the coaches to ask them to stop. If the problem persists, the coach should tell the parent to leave the field (or request that the umpire asks the parent to leave). The game will not continue until that parent has left. Finally, smoking or drinking alcohol is NOT permitted under any circumstances.

### **BEHAVIORAL POLICY**

As it is the continuing responsibility and charge of Niskayuna Softball to provide the best environment possible for our participants, the Board has adopted the following Behavioral Policy. This policy is intended to eliminate inappropriate behavior and to foster a positive environment through good sportsmanship that will serve as an example for our children to follow.

Therefore, the Board of Directors of Nisky Softball takes a zero-tolerance stance towards the following behavior:

- Abusive or derogatory language;
- Poor sportsmanship;
- Disrespect or intimidation of umpires, either physically or verbally;
- Other acts deemed inconsistent with the objectives of the league.

This policy applies to managers, coaches, Board members, players, umpires, parents, grandparents, siblings of players, and all others who visit our fields. This policy also applies to practices and games involving participants in our program that take place outside of Niskayuna facilities. The violator will be asked by the officer(s) of the day or a Board member to discontinue the negative behavior. Failure to abide by this policy may result in an immediate ejection from the softball complex. The violator(s) will be asked to appear before the Niskayuna Board (or designees) for a meeting to discuss the incident. Based on the aforementioned meeting, the Board will make a determination regarding reinstatement, term of suspension or permanent expulsion for the offender. The Board will notify the violator of its decision in writing as soon as reasonably possible.

## **General Rules for Niskayuna Softball**

1. If the local rules are silent on the issue, the National ASA rules shall prevail.
2. All batters and base runners will wear protective helmets with facemasks. Chin straps are encouraged and must be securely fastened if used. All catchers will wear the required catcher's gear during games and when catching for batting practice. The protective helmet shall be worn when warming up a pitcher.
3. Infield defensive players are strongly encouraged to wear facemasks. Coaches should recommend that players in the pitching, third base and first base positions wear a facemask.
4. Travel players are required to play in the Niskayuna recreational league (unless they play for a school team). If not on a school team, travel players should make at least 50% of the recreation league games. See Travel Teams, "Rec League Requirements" section.
5. Players may try out above their eligible age group. Players will only be considered for teams they try out for. Coaches will make their selections and will collaborate with the Tryout Coordinator to finalize rosters, if needed, in accordance with the Board's rules and regulations.
6. Select advanced players are eligible to be "called up" for games with the upper level team, as long as the games don't conflict with games at the appropriate age group. The Board, parents, and the coaches involved must give explicit permission for a player to play with an upper level team if this requires that the player misses a game with their appropriate age group.
7. Player eligibility:
  - A. Travel – A player's age as of January 1 determines the appropriate age in which the player is eligible to play that year.
  - B. Rec – Eligibility for recreation teams will be determined by grade level. This allows classmates to play together at the recreation level. A third grader selected to play 10U travel will be eligible to play 4-5 Rec level. A fifth grader selected to play 12U travel will be eligible to play 6-8 Rec level.
8. Travel team players shall be assigned to recreation teams as fairly as possible based on ability.
9. No registrations for the recreation team will be accepted after the second week of the regular season.
10. Once placed on a team, players will not be allowed to permanently transfer to another Niskayuna team (except in extraordinary circumstances, at the discretion of the Board). Requests for transfer must be petitioned to, and are subject to, Board approval.
11. Parental Complaints about Travel or Recreation League coaches shall be formally submitted in writing to the Board President. The President will advise the Board. All complaints will be kept anonymous as reasonably possible. The Board will review the complaint with the coach and take appropriate actions to rectify the problem if needed. Failure of the coach to respond to complaints deemed valid by the board may result in dismissal of the coach.
12. Recreation coaches will be recruited and appointed by the Recreation League commissioner or president.
13. Travel coaches will be appointed by the Board prior to tryouts. Prospective Travel coaches must submit an application to the board by June 1<sup>st</sup> for the team the next summer. A prospective coach will be assigned to a team if they receive a simple majority of affirmative votes. If multiple coaches wish to coach the same team, the

Board will vote for one of the coaches. The coach receiving the most votes will be assigned to the requested team. In selecting a candidate to manage a travel team, the Board will look for a person who has a strong coaching background, has a good understanding of the game, has strong organizational skills, interacts well with players/families, and would be a good representative of the league.

14. Travel assistant coaches will be recruited by an approved head coach. The Board does not need to formally approve assistant coaches.
15. All Rec head coaches must be ASA certified. All travel (head and assistant) coaches must be ASA certified. All coaches (head and assistant) must successfully complete a background check.
16. Travel tryouts should be held in late July or early August for next year's team. Tryout dates will be determined by the Board (with input from coaches) and dates must be finalized by May 1st.
17. The goal of Niskayuna softball will be to maintain at least one travel team at the 8U, 10U, 12U, and 14U levels.
18. Head coaches of the 14U and 16U travel teams should not be parents of any of the players. If possible, paid coaches should be recruited by the travel coordinator for these levels.

## **Recreation Coaches Responsibilities**

### *Preseason*

1. At least one representative of every team shall attend required league and division meetings.
2. Become familiar with all league rules.
3. Promote player registration and any league fundraising program.
4. Obtain team equipment including balls, bats, helmets, catcher's gear, uniforms, lineup sheets, and a scorebook from the Equipment Manager.
5. Hold sufficient practices prior to the start of the season. The Field Scheduler must be consulted to secure times for field and batting cages for all practices held at either River Road or Van Antwerp Middle School Fields.
6. Distribute uniforms to players.
7. Help with the beginning of the year skills clinic.
8. Distribute your team's playing schedule, roster, and practice schedule to the players and their parents.
9. Communicate with the parents. The coach serves as the link between the league and the parents by informing the parents of league plans, expectations, and events. The manager should also convey his/her team policies to the parents on such matters as attendance, conduct, playing time, etc., so the parents are aware of them.

### *During Season*

1. Attend league and division meetings as required.
2. Maintain continual communication with parents.
3. Inspect and maintain equipment and request replacement by the Equipment Coordinator when necessary.
4. Promote player safety during practices and games by assuring that appropriate protective equipment is worn.
5. In the event that a team loses a player for any reason, the manager must notify the Recreation commissioner within one week. The commissioner will assign replacements, if possible, to complete team rosters.
6. If a coach knows prior to a game that he/she will not have enough players, he/she may request additional players from the commissioner. Games will be re-scheduled only if the players' absence is due to religious or mandatory school activities.
7. Any coach or player ejected from a game will serve an automatic one game suspension. If ejected from a second game within the same season, the coach or player will be suspended for the rest of the season.
8. The coach is responsible for making all parents, players, and assistant coaches aware of the League's Behavior policy.

### *Pregame*

1. Coaches should arrive at the field 45 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the game and players should arrive no later than 30 minutes before the scheduled game time.
2. Pre-game practice on the field will be divided equally by both teams. Starting one-half hour prior to the scheduled game time, the Home Team will have exclusive use of the field for ten minutes. Starting twenty minutes prior to the scheduled game time, the Visiting Team will have the exclusive use of the field for ten minutes. If there is less than a half-hour of field time prior to the scheduled start of a game, no more than twenty minutes is allowed before starting the next game. The two coaches will divide this time equally while ensuring sufficient time to prepare the field for their game. No practice will be allowed on the field ten minutes prior to the start of the game to allow for final preparation of the field.
3. Supervise team warm-up.
5. In a potential rainout situation, both coaches should be in communication with the league commissioner to determine if the game should be canceled. Coaches are responsible for notifying their team of any cancellations. All rainouts will be rescheduled by the coaches / Rec commissioner at the first available date. The commissioner will notify the scheduled umpires of a rainout on the day of the rainout. The home team on each field is responsible for preparing and lining the field for the game.

### *During the game*

1. Ensure that only players on a team's roster and coaches are on the playing field or in the dugout
2. Ensure that all players on the batting team remain in the dugout at all times, except the batter, the on-deck batter, coaches, pitcher warming up, player (wearing proper equipment) warming her up, and base runners, if any. The on deck batter shall remain in the designated area.
3. Ensure that all players on the defensive team not assigned a position in the field are in the dugout.
4. Control team behavior on the field and in the dugout and promote safety.
5. Abide by the league rules.
6. Make sure the girls have fun playing!!!!

### *Post-game*

1. Both teams are responsible for raking major problem areas in the infield and cleaning their respective dugouts.
2. The Home Team is to return the bases, etc., to storage if it is the last game of the day.

### *Postseason*

1. Attend any required league meetings.
2. Assist in player evaluation.
3. Help recruit players to travel teams.
4. Return league equipment at times/locations designated by the board.

*Failure to carry out and adequately perform the responsibilities set forth will result in the coach not being offered a team the following season.*

## Niskayuna Recreation Softball League Rules

### Kindergarten – 1<sup>st</sup> Grade (K-1)

1. An 11-inch ball will be used.
2. Coaches will pitch from 30 feet away from the back of home plate.
3. Base paths will be 40 feet.
4. Batters and base runners must wear a batting helmet.
5. Catchers must wear a full set of catcher's equipment
  - a. K-1 catchers will stand behind a coach, behind the batter, without catcher's gear. Coaches will catch any missed pitches and return the ball to pitcher. Once a ball is in play, coach will remove the tee and catcher will play the catcher's position.
6. Players will hit off a Tee for the first 4 games. Coaches will pitch beginning with the 5<sup>th</sup> game.
7. The coach should make sure that the defensive team is prepared before putting the ball on the tee, or pitching. After the ball is hit, the coach shall remove the Tee from the plate / get off the playing field.
8. Coaches should pitch underhand. There will be no strikeouts. Each batter will be allowed 4 swings after which the ball shall be placed on the tee. The idea is to let the players make contact and build up their confidence.
9. Players can be called out at the bases. Defensive coaches of the team in the field will serve as umpires. Their decision will be final.
10. All players will be placed in the batting order.
11. A half-inning will consist of all the players batting. Each team must bat all players in rotation and the last player batting must run all bases. A half-inning should NOT end on the third out.
12. A "fair" ball must travel both within the regular field boundaries and out of the batter's box. The coach setting the ball on the tee shall or pitching should say "fair" or "foul" as soon as it can be determined.
13. The bat must be dropped in the batter's box before the batter runs to first base. A batter will be called out if she throws the bat after one warning by the coach putting the ball on the tee or the coach behind home plate.
14. If a ball is hit in the infield, one base is allowed. If a ball is clearly through the infield, both the batter and all runners may advance a maximum of two bases but only if reached safely. Runners should not advance on an overthrow at first base.
15. There are no strikeouts, bunting, leading, or stealing.
16. Sliding is not encouraged but a player will not be called out for sliding unless she is actually out.
17. K-1 is an instructional and fun league. No awards are given for best record and records should not be kept. Scores should not be kept and every game should truly be a tie. No protests allowed under any circumstances.
18. The first ½ hour of the allotted time should be used for warm-ups and practicing fundamentals. Once the game begins, a five inning OR 1-hour time limit, whichever is shorter, will be in effect. No inning should start 1 hour after play has commenced.
19. Free substitutions are allowed.
20. Coaches are permitted in the outfield while on defense to help direct players.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade (2-3)

1. An 11-inch ball will be used.
2. Batters and base runners must wear a batting helmet.
3. Catchers must wear a full set of catcher's equipment
4. Each player should play at least 2 of every 5 innings in the infield (the only exception is if they do not want to play the infield).
5. Each player should be rotated to all positions throughout the season (with the exception of pitching).
6. Pitchers and first base positions will be required to wear a facemask.
7. Coaches will pitch (underhand) to their own team for at least the first 8 games.
8. Each batter will be pitched a maximum of 6 pitches. If still at the plate after the 6th pitch has been thrown (and the 6th pitch was not fouled off), the batter will be declared out. Balls and strikes are not called, only the amount of pitches thrown will be counted. A batter can strike out swinging. The at bat cannot end on a foul.
9. Players can attempt to pitch beginning in the 9<sup>th</sup> game after 2 innings (first 2 innings would be coach pitch) provided she has the ability to throw a pitch in the air to home plate. If the player pitcher reaches 4 balls, the coach will pitch starting at the pitch count the player pitcher reached (up to another 6 pitches total). Batters will be out after three swinging or called strikes. The coach of the batting team will call balls and strikes from behind the pitcher. Hit by pitch by a player pitcher will result in the batter taking a base. There is no bunting allowed and dropped 3rd strike does not apply to this division.
10. There will be no infield fly rule in this division.
11. A safely hit ball to the infield will allow both the batter and all base runners to try and advance one base with the liability of being put out (regardless if a play is made on them or not – it is still one base).
12. A safely hit ball to the outfield grass, whether in the air, on the ground, or after being touched by a defensive player (ball must reach the outfield grass) allows both the batter and all base runners to advance with the liability of being put out until the ball is returned to the infield (crosses dirt/grass line). Once the ball crosses into the infield, no advance beyond the base the runner is going to regardless of overthrows etc.
13. Base Runners cannot leave their base until the ball crosses the plate. First time a team has runners leave early the defensive coach will inform the offensive coach. If players continue to leave early, the defensive coach will call them out. Runners taking a lead as the ball crosses the plate are subject to being put out by the defense.
14. A defensive player will occupy the pitcher position on either side of the adult pitcher. Player must stay inside (one foot) the pitcher circle until the ball is hit.
15. Any batted ball touching the adult pitcher will constitute play being halted and no pitch being declared. The batter will return to the plate and resume the previous count, all base runners will return to the bases previously occupied. The adult pitcher must immediately attempt to get out of the way of defensive players once the ball has been pitched, and cannot impede a player from making a catch or throw.
16. Two coaches are allowed to be on the field to provide instruction when his/her team is on defense, both must be in the outfield grass. If a coach that is on the field with

the defensive team is struck by a batted ball, the batter and all base runners will be awarded (2) bases.

17. Games will be 6 innings in length. Games can end in a tie.
18. A maximum of 4 runs can be scored in all innings except for the last inning where runs scored are unlimited. The last inning is the 6th inning only.
19. A continuous batting order will be used (all players bat). Should a player be unable to take her turn at bat for any reason, proceed to the next scheduled batter without penalty. Free defensive substitutions when continuous batting order is used.
20. 10 defensive players are allowed in the field, 6 in the infield, 4 in the outfield. The four outfielders must start on the outfield grass.
21. A minimum of 8 players are required for a game to begin. If a game is started with fewer than ten players, and a player arrives late, this player can immediately be inserted in the game and will be placed last in the batting order. If one team does not have 8 players to start the game, it shall be a forfeit. If neither team has eight players, the game shall be rescheduled if possible. If a game is started with fewer than ten players, and a player arrives late, this player can immediately be inserted in the game and will be placed last in the batting order.
22. There will be no tag up and advance on a pop fly caught by an infielder. A pop up or fly ball must be caught behind the infielders, by an outfielder in order for a runner to tag up and advance.
23. Air horns and other noise makers are not allowed.
24. Team cheers will be positive in nature and should be designed to rally the team that is doing the cheering, not to razz the opponent.
25. A coach should be placed behind home plate to retrieve passed balls.
26. Players can be called out on the bases. Defensive coaches of the team in the field will serve as umpires. Their decision will be final. A player that is out shall leave the field and enter the dugout and an out will be recorded.
27. Sliding should be taught and encouraged.
28. The first ½ hour of the allotted time should be used for warm-ups and practicing fundamentals. Once the game begins, a six inning OR 1 ½ -hour time limit, whichever is shorter, will be in effect. No inning should start 1-½ hours after play has commenced.
29. There is no arguing, questioning or commenting on the calls of the opposing coach. Any concerns should be brought to the NGS� Rec Commissioner or a board member after the game.
30. We are building Niskayuna's softball program – we are all on the same team!

#### 4<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade (4-5)

1. Pitching distance is 35 ft.
2. Base paths are 60 ft.
3. An 11 inch ball is to be used
4. A game shall consist of 7 innings unless called by the umpire. An official game shall consist of 4.5 innings (3.5 innings in the case of darkness). No new inning may start after 1 hour and 40 minutes.
5. There is a FIVE run limit per inning with the exception of the 7th and extra innings for which there shall be no limit. In innings 1 to 6, the inning ends when three outs

- are recorded or the play that scores the 5th run is completed, whichever occurs first. There shall be a 15 run mercy rule in effect after 4.5 innings.
6. Each player should play at least 2 of every 5 innings in the infield (the only exception is if they do not want to play the infield).
  7. Each player should be rotated to all positions throughout the season (with the exception of pitching).
  8. 10 defensive players are allowed in the field, 6 in the infield, 4 in the outfield. The four outfielders must start on the outfield grass; An outfielder cannot make a play in the infield unless the play is unassisted, (i.e. an outfielder cannot play over the second base bag and accept throws).
  9. A minimum of 8 players are required for a game to begin. If a game is started with fewer than ten players, and a player arrives late, this player can immediately be inserted in the game and will be placed last in the batting order. If one team does not have 8 players to start the game, it shall be a forfeit. If neither team has eight players, the game shall be rescheduled if possible. If a game is started with fewer than ten players, and a player arrives late, this player can immediately be inserted in the game and will be placed last in the batting order.
  10. Coaches are allowed free substitution. A continuous batting order will be utilized (everyone is in the lineup and will bat, even if they aren't playing in the field).
  11. Players will pitch. Windmill pitching or slingshot only. There will not be any walks. After four balls, a coach will come in and finish the at bat. The number of strikes will carry over to the coach pitcher.
  12. Standard ASA rules will apply.
  13. Bunting is allowed and should be taught.
  14. Players may lead off once the pitcher releases the ball.
  15. Base runners may steal.
  16. Stealing home on a ball that goes past the catcher is not allowed.
  17. There will be unlimited advancement on hits and any overthrows and errors following that hit.
  18. Sliding is allowed and should be taught.
  19. If for any reason a paid Umpire is not available to umpire, volunteers may be used with the consent of both managers. Every effort should be made to play the game.
  20. The dropped third strike rule will be utilized.
  21. The first ½ hour of the allotted time should be used for warm ups and practicing fundamentals. Once the game begins, no inning will start 1 hour and 30 minutes after play has commenced unless 4 innings have not been completed (3.5 innings is an official game if the home team is ahead.). The managers may complete the game if it is tied after the last complete inning subject to field availability.
  22. Coaches are encouraged to provide players with experience at multiple positions. However, players at this level have a huge variation in skill level. Coaches are required to take this into consideration when assigning defensive positions. For example, players that aren't proficient at catching should never be put at pitcher, first base or third base.
  23. The infield fly rule will be utilized.
  24. There is no arguing, questioning or commenting on the calls of the umpire. Any concerns should be brought to the NGSL Rec Commissioner or a Board member after the game.

25. Coaches are permitted in the outfield while on defense to help direct players, but are encouraged to coach from the sidelines.
26. We are building Niskayuna's softball program – we are all on the same team!

6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade (6-8)

1. A game shall consist of seven innings.
2. A 12" ball will be utilized.
3. Pitching distance will be 40 feet.
4. Base paths will be 60 feet.
5. 10 players on a team will play on the field on defense. Infield will be regulation with the remaining 4 players in the outfield to be positioned at least ten (10) feet behind the base
6. A FIVE run mercy rule will be in effect for innings 1 through 6. The seventh and any extra innings shall not have a limit. The 15 run mercy rule will be in effect after 4.5 innings.
7. Stealing is permitted in accordance with ASA Rules.
8. A minimum of 8 players are required to play.
9. A game is official after 4.5 innings.
10. Pitchers cannot pitch more than seven (7) innings in two (2) consecutive games.
11. Every player, except in the case of a pre-game or game injury, must play a minimum of three (3) defensive innings unless injury prevents this. If for any reason a player does not meet the minimum requirement, such player must start the next game and play the full minimum requirement without substitution.
12. Every girl on the team is to be placed in the batting order and bats. Once the batting order is completed and handed to the other manager and the umpire and another girl shows up, she will be placed at the bottom of the batting order.
13. If for any reason a paid Umpire is not available to umpire, volunteers may be used with the consent of both managers. Every effort should be made to play the game.
14. A one hour and forty five (1:45) time limit will be in effect. No inning will start one hour and forty five minutes after play has commenced unless 4 innings have not been completed (3.5 innings is an official game if the home team is ahead.). The managers may complete the game if it is tied after the last complete inning subject to field availability.
15. Pitchers must pitch a legal windmill pitch in accordance with ASA rules.
16. Bunting, stealing and sliding is allowed and should be taught.
17. Players may lead off once the pitcher releases the ball.
18. The dropped third strike rule will be utilized.
19. The infield fly rule will be utilized.
20. There will be unlimited advancement of base runners on hits, overthrows and errors.
21. Base runners may advance on passed balls / wild pitches. Base runners can advance home.
22. There is no arguing, questioning or commenting on the calls of the umpire. Any concerns should be brought to the NGSL Rec Commissioner or a board member after the game.

Remember: We are trying to build up Niskayuna's softball program – we are all on the same team.

## TRAVEL TEAMS

### Overview

In addition to Niskayuna's recreational league, we offer players an opportunity to play at a higher level of competitive softball through a travel season. Travel teams will typically play approximately 25 to 30 games between Hudson-Mohawk League play and tournaments. Hudson-Mohawk League play typically occurs against other teams that are located in the Capital District. Niskayuna Softball will aim to field at least one travel team for Hudson Mohawk Travel League in 16U, 14U, 12U, 10U and 8U Divisions. Because of the higher competitive nature of travel teams, players are required to make a full commitment to attending practices, games, and tournaments.

The travel playing season begins the first Sunday in June and ends in early August. Travel teams participate in the Hudson Mohawk travel league and tournaments throughout the playing season. The first two Sundays are double header Sundays. The teams will play 2 games each Sunday. After the school year ends, travel teams will play two nights per week beginning at 6:15 P.M., but may have more or less games during a week, depending on the Hudson Mohawk schedule. Unlike recreational play, games are not necessarily held on the same day from week to week and are not held at the same location. The team will play 12-14 games, half away and half home. Players are expected to be at the game location at least one hour prior to the start of the game. The locations of most away games are local (i.e. Clifton Park, E. Greenbush, Saratoga), but may be as far as Amsterdam or Hoosick Falls).

### Head Coach Selection

Travel coaches will be appointed by the Board. Prospective travel coaches must submit an application to the Board (see travel coach application) by June 1<sup>st</sup> for the following calendar year season. The Board will vote "yes" or "no" for the application. A prospective coach receiving the majority of "yes" votes will be assigned to the requested team. If multiple coaches wish to coach the same team, the Board will vote for one of the coaches. The coach receiving the most votes will be assigned to the requested team. In selecting a candidate to coach a travel team, the Board will look for a person who has a strong record of coaching experience, a good understanding of the game, has strong organizational skills, interacts well with players/families, and would be a good representative of the league.

### Tryouts

Tryouts for 16U, 14U, 12U, 10U, and 8U will occur in late July or early August and each team should have at least two separate tryout dates, with a third "rainout date". The Board will work with coaches to determine the precise dates of Travel Team tryouts. **Tryout dates must be finalized by June 1<sup>st</sup> so that they can be adequately advertised.** Tryout dates should be sent to all recreation players via email, and posted on the Niskayuna Girls Softball website and the Niskayuna Softball Facebook page.

Tryouts will be organized by the head and assistant coaches for each team. Coaches for the other Niskayuna softball teams will be recruited to run drills, allowing the coaching staff to focus on evaluating players. Coaches should evaluate players using the Niskayuna player evaluation rubric with the assistance of a third-party evaluator. Participants will be

evaluated on a series of drills. Evaluations will be done by a point system of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest. The points of the evaluators will be totaled and then averaged. The point system is based on the following criteria:

- Player skills and positions
- Attitude and coachability
- Athleticism and potential.

### Team Selection

Coaches will work with their assistant coaches and the travel coordinator to select 12 to 13 players for their team. If enough minimally proficient players tryout to field two competitive teams, then a second team will be established. The board will recruit a head coach to coach the second team. A coach for the second team will be recruited before tryouts if the Board is reasonably confident that enough players will be trying out to field two teams. If multiple teams are being put together, there should be a clear "A" team comprised of the most highly ranked players from the tryouts, and a "B" team comprised of lower ranked players. In the event of conflict over player assignment, the travel coordinator will meet with the Board to determine player distribution based on the player evaluation rubrics.

Niskayuna travel teams should be made up of mostly players residing in the Niskayuna school district ("Niskayuna Residents"). At the 10U and 12U levels, priority will be given to Niskayuna Residents (with sufficiently proficient playing ability) over non-Niskayuna Residents provided that no more than 2 non-Niskayuna Residents are allowed per team unless the Board approves additional non-Niskayuna Residents on an individual case-by-case basis. At the 14U level, priority should be given to Niskayuna Residents, provided that no more than 3 non-Niskayuna Residents are allowed per team with the possibility of more with approval from the Board on an individual case-by-case basis.

### Player / Parent Commitment

Because of the competitive nature of player evaluations and the high commitment level required by players and parents, the League requires all travel players and their parents to sign a Parent / Player agreement. All players are expected to be respectful of each other, coaches, umpires, and opponents at all times. Players are also expected to work hard and hustle. Should a player choose to quit a team once they've been selected, then that player will not be allowed to play on any other Niskayuna Travel Team for the remainder of the season. In subsequent years' player evaluations, the Travel Team selection committee may take into account a player's past behavior when determining if they've earned a spot on a team.

### Rec League Requirements of Travel Players

All 8U, 10U and 12U Niskayuna Travel team players are required to participate in the Rec League or on a school (e.g., modified, JV) team. If not on a school team, travel players must play in at least 50% of their Rec team games. Players who fail to play the minimum will be subject to the following penalties:

1. For each game missed above 50%, the player must sit out one Travel game.
2. A player that misses more than 8 Rec games may be removed from the Travel team.

Travel coaches are responsible for following these rules and enforcing the penalties. Failure to do so will result in penalties on the travel coaches to be determined by the Board.

The Board has the discretion to waive penalties if the Travel player's absences were for limited legitimate reasons (such as injury, illness or religious observances).

### Tournaments

Travel teams may play in a number of tournaments as determined by the head coach. Each team is encouraged to play in at least two tournaments. Some tournaments may be out of the area and such tournaments will involve overnight stays. It is the parents' responsibility to cover their child's expenses associated with travel/accommodations. It is the responsibility of the Travel Coordinator and the Head Coaches to ensure that Niskayuna Travel Teams are participating in tournaments that are at an appropriately competitive level.

### Travel Coach Responsibilities

1. As indicated above, head coaches must be approved by the board. Once a head coach is selected for a travel team, the coach can select their staff, subject to Board review. It is that manager's responsibility to communicate to all players and parents the date/time of practices, team expectations, game schedule, tournament schedule, etc.
2. Travel Head Coaches are responsible for completing a Hudson Mohawk roster and an ASA team roster and having these rosters signed by the governing officials. It is the Coach's responsibility to verify that all players on their roster are eligible by collecting birth certificates, that all players are of the proper age for their level, and that they are registered with the League.
3. Travel Head Coaches are responsible for coordinating with the Uniform Coordinator for the purpose of ordering team uniforms prior to the season. Each Coach is responsible for returning all League equipment at the end of the season.
4. Travel Head Coaches are responsible for holding a parent's meeting for the purpose of discussing rules, regulations, coaching philosophy, behavioral policy, and team information.
5. Travel teams are responsible for maintaining the fields when they have a home game. Travel coaches will work with the Field Coordinator to ensure that the field is properly lined and safe to play on, and that pitching mounds are set according to league rules.
6. Travel Coaches will submit to the Niskayuna Softball Board all participants' "Parent Player Agreement" forms. Every player and the player's parent(s) must sign this form.

### Playing Time

While travel teams allow for players to improve their skill level, players and parents need to be aware that as a competitive team, players are not guaranteed equal playing time. Playing time is mostly at the discretion of the head coach, but factors such as ability, effort, and attitude should be given relatively equal weight. However, the 8U, 10U and 12U levels are primarily a time to develop fundamental skills and have fun. While we want to be competitive, winning should not be the top priority or the only priority. Thus, 8U, 10U and 12U coaches are expected to get each player at least two innings in the field and a minimum

of two at-bats / game. Failure of 8U, 10U and 12U coaches to consistently do this may result in the coach not being allowed to coach a team the following year.

### Player Call Ups

During the course of the season, if a team is short players for a game or tournament, then a player can be called up provided that there are no conflicts with the 'called-up' player's team schedule and the 'call-up' player's coach has no objections. The coach in need of player(s) should discuss the situation with the Travel Coordinator and the other coach before approaching any players.

### **TRAVEL TEAM FUNDS AND EXPENSES**

1. Niskayuna Softball will designate League funds to be set aside for Travel Team expenses as follows:
  - a. All equipment (excluding uniforms) necessary for the function of the team;
  - b. Insurance coverage;
  - c. ASA fees;
  - d. Hudson Mohawk league dues;
  - e. Umpire fees at Hudson Mohawk games for which Niskayuna is designated as the home team; and
  - f. Entrance fees for up to two tournaments.
2. Individual travel players will be responsible to purchase the official Niskayuna Softball uniform including jersey, shorts/pants, and socks. Visors and additional uniform pieces may be made available at an additional cost.
3. All players must pay a travel registration fee, determined by the Board, to play on the travel team. The Board will set fees, determined by level and amount of play, at the beginning of each calendar year.
4. For Hudson-Mohawk play, coaches will be given checks for the purpose of paying umpires. Any unused checks given to the coaches for the purpose of umpire payment shall be returned to the league at the end of the travel season.

### Fundraising

1. Any funds raised or donations collected ("Funds") for the benefit of a travel team are covered under the organization's 501c3 tax-exempt status and must be processed through the League Treasurer. All Funds must be deposited into the appropriate League account immediately after they are collected. All Funds raised in the name of "Niskayuna Softball" will be distributed equitably amongst all travel teams.
2. Sponsorships are defined as donations requiring either printed recognition or a tax exemption. Sponsorships are encouraged; however, disbursement of those funds will be equitably distributed amongst all league sponsorship needs. Team-specific fundraising could include securing additional sponsors (80% raised goes to the team, 20% goes to the league) only once all league-wide sponsorship needs are met. All sponsorship efforts must be managed by the Sponsorship Coordinator. All monies must be submitted to and dispersed by the Treasurer, either back to the coach or the entity requiring payment and that the additional funds are board-approved. The board needs to review and approve all team fundraisers (including securing additional team sponsors).

3. Any fundraising that reduces the league's travel fees must be league sponsored and be open to all teams and players. All funds raised for this purpose will be equitably distributed by the Board amongst the participating teams. Team-specific donations for the purpose of reducing the travel fees are prohibited.
4. Although league-wide fundraising is preferred, team-specific fundraising is permitted with prior Board approval. All funds raised must be transferred over and managed by the NGSL Treasurer. Board approval for disbursement of these funds back to the teams is not required for normal team operations (i.e., facility rentals, team trainings/lessons, additional tournaments, and team bonding activities). Board approval is required for non-normal team operations (i.e. team swag, equipment, additional uniforms, etc.). These funds are not to be used to reduce league travel fees, but generally should be used to help fund a special event such as an away tournament. Funds raised shall be collected by the League Treasurer and redistributed to the coach prior to the event. Coaches are responsible for the written accounting of the use of these funds. Under no circumstances will these funds be distributed to individuals without proper documentation of reimbursement. Leftover funds become property of Niskayuna Softball to be used in the general fund.
5. No player will be forced to participate in fundraising activities.
  - a. If a player does not participate in fundraising activities that are to be used specifically to defray general travel expenses, that player will be responsible for the total travel fee.
  - b. If a team does not participate in a specific fundraising event, that team may not share in the profits from that fundraiser.
6. Under no circumstances will funds raised by a team be paid out to the team members even if all funds raised have not been spent. Unused funds will not be carried forward to the next season. Funds not spent or approved to be spent by the last game played by that team become league funds to be used as part of the general league budget.

#### Parent Involvement and Participation

Parent involvement and participation is a big part of being on a travel team. Parents will be required to bring their daughter to practices, games and tournaments. Parents should consider the team's Hudson Mohawk and tournament game schedule when scheduling vacations and other activities. If there is a conflict, parents are expected to notify their daughter's coach well in advance. Parents will also be required to help with the concession stand and field preparation for home games and tournaments. If a parent is not able to attend their scheduled work assignment, they shall be responsible to find a replacement.

## **TRAVEL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS**

The Niskayuna travel softball program is a competitive, yet fun way to play after the Rec softball season is over. Commitment from both the player and parent is a very big part of being on the travel team. It is expected, with limited exceptions, that all players attend all practices and games.

### **Travel Tryouts**

Travel tryouts for 8U, 10U, 12U, 14U and 16U age groups are held in August after the Hudson Mohawk Travel season ends. Each division will have at least 2 tryout dates. Participants are only required to attend one of these dates. If additional players are needed to fill teams, additional tryouts may be scheduled by the Executive Board. Tryout dates and times will be published on the Niskayuna Softball Website and Facebook page and prospective players may also be sent notices via email.

### **TRAVEL TEAM ROSTERS**

Each age group should strive to have an "A" and "B" level team. Each team will try to carry 12-13 players. The exact number of players on a team is at the discretion of the manager/coach.

### **PRACTICES**

Coaches may hold a few outdoor practices during August and September, especially if the team will be playing fall ball. Indoor practices will usually begin in early December in an indoor facility. The cost of the practice facility will be divided amongst the girls on the team. When field conditions permit, outdoor practices will begin. Practice with your travel team will be in addition to your recreation games and practices. Rec softball games take priority over travel softball practices, but travel practices will take precedence over Rec practices.

### **TRAVEL PLAYING SEASON**

The travel playing season begins the first Sunday in June and ends in early August. Travel teams participate in the Hudson Mohawk travel league and tournaments throughout the playing season. The first two Sundays are double-header Sundays. The teams will play 2 games each of those Sundays. After the school year ends, travel teams will play two nights per week beginning at 6:15 P.M., but may have more or less games during a week, depending on the Hudson Mohawk schedule. Unlike recreational play, games are not necessarily held on the same day from week to week and are not held at the same location. The team will play 12-14 games, half away and half home. Players may be expected to be at the game location at least one hour prior to the start of the game. The locations of the away games are local (i.e., Clifton Park, E. Greenbush, Saratoga but may be as far as Amsterdam or Hoosick Falls). In addition to the Hudson Mohawk games, your team may participate in tournaments from May-August. Most local tournaments begin with one game on Friday, two-three games on Saturday and single elimination games beginning Sunday morning. Each player is expected to attend these games. Teams may choose to play in tournaments out of town that would require an overnight stay. Parents are responsible for the overnight expenses.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Parent involvement and participation is a big part of being on a travel team. You will be required to bring your daughter to practices, games and tournaments. When planning your vacation or other activities, you will need to consider the team's Hudson Mohawk and tournament game schedule. If there is a conflict, you are expected to notify your coach well in advance. You will also be required to help with the concession stand and field preparation for home games and tournaments. If you are not able to attend your scheduled work assignment, it will be your responsibility to find a replacement.

## PLAYING TIME

The travel program is a competitive program and is a separate program from the Niskayuna Softball Rec softball program. Positions and playing time are earned and based on the needs of the team as well as players' ability, effort, and attitude. There is no guarantee of playing time or the position your daughter will play.

## CONSEQUENCES

Failure to comply with any of these rules could affect your daughter's playing time. If there is a player with excessive absences during a season, it could affect whether she is selected on a future team.

