



LEAGUE POLICES AND PROCEDURES

# MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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## Welcome to Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball Youth Recreational League

Participation in youth sports plays a valuable role in the development of children. Aspects of teamwork, dedication, discipline, physical fitness, self-esteem, and fair play all contribute to the overall growth and maturation of young women. Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball takes this responsibility seriously and strives to offer quality programs which will aid in this development. This handbook is presented to serve as a reference for you as a parent or a member of our volunteer team staff, so you will understand the philosophies of this organization regarding youth recreational softball and allow you to do your part to make our program a success. If everyone works together and does their best to enrich the lives of youth in Sarasota County and the surrounding area, we can accomplish remarkable things! We look forward to your involvement with our league.

Sincerely,

Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball Board of Director

<https://www.missvenicefastpitch.com/Default.aspx?tabid=860611>

mvfpfastpitch@gmail.com

## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### MISSION

Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball aspires to be an outstanding educational-athletic organization that provides a high-quality experience to our young athletes. We are also committed to promoting opportunities for parents to engage their children in positive ways.

We strive for all our athletes to be:

- Coached using the principles of positive coaching
- Have fun at practices and games
- Feel like an important part of the team regardless of performance
- Learn “life lessons” that will benefit them not only on the field but as community members.
- Learn the skills, tactics and strategies of the game and improve as a player. We are committed to creating a positive culture, in which coaches, parents, fans, umpires and athletes work together to achieve this goal.

### PHILOSOPHY OF YOUTH SPORTS

Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball believes in the benefits of participation in organized youth sports. Participation in sports has proven to build self-esteem, promote teamwork, develop the body as well as the mind, and is an integral part of the maturation process. Therefore, the goal of Miss Fastpitch Venice Softball is to provide programs and services to young women of all backgrounds that will build the foundation for them to grow up healthy, competent, and caring individuals in our community. In order to operate successful youth sports programs; we will enforce the following five philosophies:

1. **Everyone Plays:** Our program goal is for kids to play. No child should be placed in 1 position (or solely in the infield or outfield) the entire season. With safety in mind, we place players in different positions throughout the game and season so that she may learn the game and have fun while doing so.
2. **Balanced Teams:** Each year we draft new teams as evenly balanced as possible because it is fair and more fun when teams of equal ability play.
3. **Open Registration:** Our program is open to all girls between the ages of 4 – 16.
4. **Positive Coaching:** Encouragement of player effort provides for greater enjoyment by the players, and ultimately leads to better skilled and better motivated players.
5. **Good Sportsmanship:** We strive to create a positive environment based on mutual respect, rather than a “win-at-all costs” attitude.

## **FAIR PLAY CONCEPTS**

Playing sports can be an exciting and enjoyable struggle, both with you and others. The feelings of being excited and having fun are closely tied to your attitudes - what you think and feel about the game, the other team, and yourself. Top athletes have a set of attitudes that we call "fair play". But what exactly is fair play? Here are some of the key points.

### **Respect for the Other Team**

You need the other team. Without the other team you can't play. You need to show respect for the other players by treating them as needed partners, not as enemies. When you play against a good, strong team that you respect, you usually play a better game.

### **Respect for Yourself**

We know that how people look at things influences what they do. So, if you think of yourself as a good player, and as an important part of the team, you are more likely to play like one-to set goals for yourself, practice on your own, and perform well in games. Fair play means that you believe in yourself and see yourself as important in some things, not everything.

### **Cooperation with Umpires**

The rules of the game help you play the game better. Fair play means that you go along with the rules and cooperate with the referees, who are there for one main purpose-to make sure the game is played better. If you are honest with yourself and with the referees, you'll usually get more out of the game. Getting involved A good player wants to get into the game but also wants others to play. Fair play means you defend the right to play both for yourself and for others.

### **Building the Team**

To be a good team member, you need to get to know all your teammates and the coach and to let them get to know you. We are all different in ability and in skills. Fair play is listening to each other, sharing ideas and feelings, and helping each other increase strengths and reach goals.

### **Sticking Up for What You Believe**

If you believe in fair play and stick up for it, you will be respected. It means taking a stand in favor of the things listed above. It means letting others know that you value your teammates, the other team, yourself, and the rules of the game. We all like to win but it shouldn't be at the cost of giving up what we believe in.

## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### CREATING THE PROTECTIVE SHIELD

This youth sports program exists to help children in the development of positive life skills and self-concepts. Our goal is to provide safe, enjoyable recreation opportunities for participants. We are against any forms of abuse or maltreatment of children in youth sports. We each have a responsibility to do what we can to prevent all forms of child abuse.

We intend to take reasonable and intentional action to protect participants from any form of abuse or maltreatment, and to deal with any transgressions in a timely and appropriate manner. Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball uses all reasonable efforts to screen employees, and/or volunteers in order to avoid instances where young athletes may be endangered, neglected, or abused.

Although no organization can make every participant 100% safe from all forms of abuse, through screening, training, supervision, and steps to create a healthy environment for children to thrive in youth sports, we are taking critical steps toward protecting all our participants.

It is our mission to teach the basic skills which young people need to play sports in a safe and nurturing environment, where all children get an equal chance to play regardless of play level. Every child in our leagues has the right to have fun while participating in our program. We will not tolerate any abusive behaviors that may jeopardize a child's well-being.

*Adopted from the National Alliance for Youth Sports Child Abuse and Youth Sports: A Comprehensive Risk Management Program*

If you are 18 years of age or older, you are a MANDATED reporter by law, and obligated to report any behavior you feel may place the child's emotional well-being or safety at risk. The call is anonymous, confidential, and will never be traced back to you.

Report any concerning behavior anonymously to 1-800-962-2873. You may also report online: Anonymous - Report Suspected Abuse [Abuse Hotline - Florida Department of Children and Families \(myflfamilies.com\)](https://myflfamilies.com)

## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### GENERAL LEAGUE POLICIES PARTICIPATION

Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball's youth sports program is participatory in nature and does not require participants to try-out to participate. We do host what we refer to as "evaluations" at the beginning of the season in order to help coaches draft teams fairly, and to evaluate pitchers and catchers, when applicable. These evaluations are taken place on a designated day (always a Saturday morning) and required for players to attend in order to be drafted onto a team.

Our program will emphasize the pleasure of skill development and physical fitness and avoid preoccupation with winning and perfectionism. Each child should receive playing time as outlined in this manual. Every player participates for a significant period in every game or practice.

### LOCATION

Field and facility location is at Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball Complex, 1300 Ridgewood Ave, Venice.

### REGISTRATION

Our program has registration deadlines and unique rules on how our league must assemble teams. The Board of Directors will establish sign-up periods for each season and will allow enough advance time for complete teams to be assembled before league registration deadlines. No experience is required at any age level to register your child. Many children start playing softball for the first time between the ages of 4 and 16. We have new girls in every division, and on every team, so please do not be concerned if your child is inexperienced. All are welcome.

The minimum age is 4, and the oldest is 16. At the age of 4, they register for T-ball; 8-10, they register for 8U; 8-10 they register for 10U, 10-12, they register for 12U; 13-16, they register for 16U(13+). Based on your child's birth date that you enter, the website will automatically suggest the specific division to sign her up for. The parents of a physically or mentally challenged child may request that their daughter be allowed to play in a younger age group. Although our age limit is 16, a girl may play the fall season if she does not turn 17 before the last day of the fall season for that year.

Players who so desire will be allowed to move to Coach Pitch after one spring season of T-ball regardless of age. Further division moves will follow MVFP guidelines. Once a player plays Coach Pitch in the fall, she has the option to stay in Coach Pitch in the spring. She can play T-ball, age permitting, if desired. If you wish to discuss another division you feel your child would be best suited for, please send us an email at [mvfpfastpitch@gmail.com](mailto:mvfpfastpitch@gmail.com).

### Registration Fee

- T-ball (4-6): \$100
- 8U Coach Pitch: \$100
- 10U Mini Minors: \$100
- 12U Minors: \$100
- 13+ Majors: \$100

Your registration fee goes towards

- Uniforms (jerseys & socks)



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- Umpires & umpire equipment
- Team equipment – practice balls, game balls, tees, nets, catchers gear
- Background checks for volunteers
- Mid-season/All-star tournament fees
- Building fees i.e., electric, water & internet
- County fees for field maintenance, lights & rentals (the county owns the fields)
- Concession equipment/upkeep

### Discounts

A \$20 “early bird” discount will be applied when you register your child early (except for T-ball). “Early bird” dates for each season will be announced via mass email, Facebook, and our website. A \$25 voucher will also be given to any parent at the end of the season that registers to volunteer and follows through with their commitment throughout the season. It can be used for up to 1 year after you complete 1 full season of volunteering.

Players currently on a roster with a travel ball team registered in the state of Florida now receive a \$100 discount in divisions 10U, 12U and 16U. It is no secret in youth rec softball leagues across the state: adding travel ball players to your league adds another level of competitiveness, it motivates the underdeveloped players to “play-up”, and aids in overall team cohesiveness.

Years ago, travel ball only existed outside of the spring and fall seasons, and travel ball players were required to play in local recreational leagues to maintain their development, remain on the team, and get their reps in during these breaks.

As the sport of fastpitch softball evolves, this seasonal schedule has most certainly changed. Travel ball has now become a year-round sport, leading to a decline in rec league registration across the state of Florida – except in the leagues that are still requiring it. However, being enrolled in both rec and travel at the same time can become too much for some families, and we’d like to recognize that.

We believe any organization that is truly looking out for the child’s best interest, should NOT force their travel ball teams to register players in the spring or fall seasons. We feel this approach tends to create a strained and unhealthy working relationship. We would prefer to offer welcomed incentives for players that are interested in participating in both, instead of requiring it. We have seen that over time, this outdated requirement quite often results in burnout of the sport all together. Also, this approach does not allow families to make their own decisions regarding what they feel is best for their child. Why are leagues deciding that for the parents? Registering in both recreational and travel can be taxing on time and money, can take away from the other children in the family, and if we are being honest...is NOT always in the best interest of the child’s emotional, mental, and physical well-being.

However, we DO recognize that all children and families are very different, and some children LOVE to play both! We encourage any player that would like the extra practice and involvement in both travel and rec, to come join us! This discount is to show gratitude for the commitment, and acknowledgement of the value it brings to our league. So, if this section applies to you, we sincerely thank you!

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### Financial Aid

You may apply for a financial aid scholarship online, under the tab “Financial Aid Scholarship”. Each scholarship is weighed by individual family circumstances. Please submit all paperwork to mvfpfastpitch@gmail.com. Please note that any discounts given for registration require volunteer hours at the complex.

### Payments and Refunds

Payments are due for all programs at the time of registration. If you register early enough, you can choose to pay on a payment plan that is to be completed by Evaluation Day for that season.

If a registration cancellation request is submitted 24 hours prior to the season’s Evaluation Day, the participant is entitled to a full refund or credit to the individual’s household account for use within the current fiscal year.

Refunds to those who choose to drop a program will be determined on a case-by-case basis and are only honored in extenuating circumstances reviewed by the Board of Directors. In order to cancel and receive a refund (minus a \$60.00 processing fee) you must personally contact the Board of Directors in writing (mvfpfastpitch@gmail.com) within seven (7) days of registering your player. Please allow 2 weeks for processing.

### Team, Player or Coach Requests

The Board of Directors realizes requesting certain teams/coaches for reasons of transportation, childcare, friends, etc., would be appreciated by parents, but it’s not what’s best for all involved for us to draft balanced teams. We will honor these requests in our T-ball division ONLY. **Special requests are not permissible in divisions 8U, 10U, 12U & 16U.**

### SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

We offer many types of sponsorship levels - from individual team sponsorships to corporate sponsorships. With just a few clicks, you can fill out our online form and submit it through our website or emailing mvfpfastpitch@gmail.com.

Team sponsorships are first come, first serve. However, if the Head Coach wishes to sponsor their team, they have first right of refusal.

### CREATING A BALANCED TEAM

We are dedicated to making teams as BALANCED as possible. Before you register a participant for this program, please know the league comprises teams of equal age groups. Only the Head Coach's daughter is guaranteed a slot on the team he/she is coaching, and one additional saved child of their choosing, with written permission from the parents. Any siblings will also be guaranteed a spot on the team if they

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are in the same age division. We cannot guarantee a specific coach, team or any other player in the league, as this would take away from the purpose of our philosophy of developing balanced teams. Thanks in advance for your support.

### Team Size

Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball establishes minimum team sizes for softball, based upon experience. This is done to reduce forfeited games and to assure that players have reasonable rest breaks that we would expect for that sport. We establish maximum team sizes for softball, based upon experience. This is done to assure reasonable levels of playing time for each registered player and to assure that each can receive appropriate amounts of direction from the coaches. The Board of Directors, from time to time, will approve minor changes to the minimum or maximum team sizes to deal with unique circumstances that may arise. The Board may consult a coach if we are considering making changes.

### Age Exceptions

The Board of Directors will allow a child to move up to an older age division in the fall or spring season, especially if the younger division has an abundance of players and the older division is short of players. A child moving up must have played at least one season at Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball for the request to be considered. If there is a special request to move a player up, the Board of Directors will consider the request. The Board will make the final decision after they confer with the player's past coach(es) and future coach(es). The Board will not allow any child to play down in any age group, unless they are a beginner to the sport, and it is the fall season.

### TEAM COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

Though this may change as technology develops, MVFP currently uses the free app called GroupMe for our main source of timely communication to all Head Coaches and Team Managers. We also require that our Team Managers (or Head Coach if a Team Manager has not been allocated yet) create their team group chat, through GroupMe. This allows all legal guardians or parents of the child the opportunity to be in timely communication with their player's practice and game schedule, as changes can sometimes be made in under 24 hours, though mostly due to inclement weather.

MVFP does not get involved in any domestic/family disputes, and unless there are legal documents submitted to the Board stating otherwise - any legal mother, father, or guardian of the child registered in our program can request to be added to their child's team group chat. However, any communication in the team group chat that is high conflict and/or deemed inappropriate by the Head Coach or Team Manager, will result in that parent or guardian being promptly removed from the chat. The team chat is for relevant communication purposes only. Please see PARENT CORRECTIVE ACTION POLICY for more details.

## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### SEASON TIMELINE

Our rec softball league seasons take place every year in the spring and fall seasons. Fall season typically starts mid-August and ends the Thursday before Thanksgiving. Weather permitting, each division plays 12 games for the season, with practices mixed in between.

Spring season typically starts about mid-January and ends May 1st. Weather permitting, each division plays 16 games for the season, with practices mixed in between. We run a free fundamental softball clinic every summer, to help young athletes brush up on their skills, or allow children that are brand new to the sport, come check what our softball league is all about. These summer clinic dates are emailed out to current/past participants and posted on our Facebook page.

Registration for fall season opens no later than June 1st and will be announced on our website and Facebook page. Registration for spring opens no later than December 1st and will also be announced on our website and Facebook page.

### SEASON SCHEDULE

Except for Evaluation Day (Saturday), Halloween Tournament (fall season only), Opening Day (Saturday), and End of Season Tournament/Closing Day (Saturday), ALL games and practices are on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. There will be OPTIONAL Monday team practices for girls interested in developing their skills, if coaches are available.

Earliest practices start at 5:30 pm, and the latest practices starts at 7:00/7:30 pm. Practice times vary, based on age group. All practices and games are at Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball Complex. For T-ball, 8U & 10U, games and practices will be from 6pm-7pm (t-ball) and 6-7:15 pm (8U & 10U). The older divisions (12U & 16U) will have the 7:30 pm-8:45 pm time slot.

In some divisions, we play inter-league games with other recreational leagues in Sarasota County. Some nights we will travel to their fields, and some nights we will host them at our fields. These will be scheduled in advance so that you may plan.

### Practices and Game Schedules

Practice and game schedules are prepared according to the following criteria:

- A. 2 field complex availability. There may be times, with enough notice, that regularly scheduled activities may be canceled. This is typically due to severe weather, natural disasters, or unanticipated field repairs.
- B. Coach's availability: For some divisions, coaches are only available for the regularly scheduled Tuesday and Thursday practices and games. Some coaches are available for the additional Monday practices offered to them at the beginning of the season. Most times we do not know who is coaching until registration has been completed and coaching applications have been accepted.

## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### Game Cancellations/Rescheduling

If a game is canceled due to weather or other unforeseeable circumstances, all efforts will be made to reschedule that game. However, due to time restraints and/or complex usage conflicts, some games may not be rescheduled. It will be the decision of Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball Board of Directors and Head Coaches/Team Managers of some of the divisions to decide if and when the games will be made up.

### UPCOMING 2023 SEASONS

#### Spring 2023

- Our spring 2023 season is from January 14th - May 1st.
- Registration opened on Monday, November 28th, 2022.
- Mandatory Evaluations for 8U, 10U, 12U & 16U are Saturday, January 14th @ 9:00am (we do not evaluate T-ball).
- Spring Practices start January 17, 2023.
- Our Opening Day is Saturday, February 4<sup>th</sup> @ 10am.
- Mid-Season Tournament is Friday, March 31st through Sunday, April 2nd. Miss Sarasota is hosting it this year, and there will be 100-130 rec league teams participating in all divisions from all over Florida.
- All-Star Tournament is Friday, May 19th through Sunday, May 21st. It will be hosted at the Auburndale Softball Complex, 299 Florida Citrus Boulevard, Winter Haven, FL 33880.

#### Fall 2023

- Our fall 2023 season will begin with mandatory evaluations on Saturday, August 26th .
- Our first day of practice will be on Tuesday, August 28<sup>th</sup>
- Opening Day will be on Saturday, September 16th, and is also the first game of the season.

### EQUIPMENT

#### Requirements

- Balls - Your team will provide balls that will be used for practices and games.  
You can purchase balls to practice with your daughter at home.
  - o T-Ball, they use an 11" compression ball (soft).
  - o Coach Pitch (8u), and Mini Minors (10U) all use an 11" softball.
  - o Minors (12u) and Majors (13+) both use a 12" softball.
  - o Softballs are hard, tennis balls are a good training tool when first teaching a young child to catch.
- Bats - All fastpitch softball bats have a 2 1/4" barrel but come in a variety of length and weight combinations. Factors such as height, strength and swing speed will dictate the proper sizing. Players must use a fastpitch bat. Baseball bats are not permitted for safety reasons.
- Gloves - As a general rule, an infielders glove works well for all age divisions and the sizes would be (a) T-Ball: 10" - 11", (b) Coach Pitch (8u): 11" - 12" and (c) Mini Minors (10u), Minors

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(12u) & Majors (13+): 11.5" - 12.5". Especially for younger girls with a weaker grip, it is very important to break-in a new glove to maximize performance.

- Fielders Mask - Fielders masks are optional in t-ball and 8U, but required in 10U, 12U and 16U when playing infield positions.
- Helmets -All helmets must have a facemask. When purchasing a helmet, it is recommended to purchase a helmet with a facemask already attached. Helmets and facemasks can be purchased separately and installed at home, but installation can be challenging.
- Shoes - Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball does not allow metal cleats. A proper sports shoe, such as running shoes or molded cleats, is required. Open toe shoes, flip flops, and crocs are not acceptable footwear for softball.
- Uniforms - All players will be provided a jersey to be worn during games. Black pants are preferred, however, any color of softball pants, or sweat or athletic pants are acceptable. For cold weather games, a long sleeve shirt under the jersey is allowed.

### **Suggestions by Division**

- T-ball (4-6): Cleats (new or used) or sneakers, a glove (new or used), and a batting helmet with a face guard (new or used). If your child is new to softball, talk to your head coach or a board member one on one about what specific bat would be best for you to purchase for your child.
- 8U Coach Pitch: Cleats (new or used), a glove (new or used), and a batting helmet with a face guard (new or used). At this age a youth softball face mask is recommended, but not required. If your child is new to softball, talk to your head coach or a board member one on one about what specific bat would be best for you to purchase for your child.
- 10U Mini Minors: Cleats (new or used), a glove (new or used), and a batting helmet with a face guard (new or used). At this age a youth softball face mask is required. If your child is new to softball, talk to your head coach or a board member one on one about what specific bat would be best for you to purchase for your child.
- 12U Minors: Cleats (new or used), a glove (new or used), and a batting helmet with a face guard (new or used). At this age a youth softball face mask is required. If your child is new to softball, talk to your head coach or a board member one on one about what specific bat would be best for you to purchase for your child.
- 16U Majors: Cleats (new or used), a glove (new or used), and a batting helmet with a face guard (new or used). At this age a youth softball face mask is required. If your child is new to softball, talk to your head coach or a board member one on one about what specific bat would be best for you to purchase for your child.

### **Where to Purchase**

- Play it Again Sports (used cleats/equipment)  
5407 Fruitville Road Sarasota, 34232 941-378-1477
- Dick's Sporting Goods (new cleats/equipment)  
181 N. Cattleman Road Sarasota, 34242 941-296-7042 and 18219 Tamiami Trl North Port, 34287.
- Amazon.com, plus they have a great price for youth softball face masks
- Wal-Mart

## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### SELECTION OF VOLUNTEER STAFF

Registration Procedure: In order to ensure the safety of all participants in the Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball youth softball program, all individuals wishing to volunteer as a head coach, assistant coach, team manager or team mom for a youth sports team within the Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball youth softball program, MUST register online under their created account through our website, <https://www.missvenicefastpitch.com/Default.aspx?tabid=860611>

**Please note: we are not always able to give every volunteer a position, just because they applied.** Head Coaches are voted on by the Board of Directors, and how many we need is typically based on the number of registrants in that division. Furthermore, Head Coaches are not guaranteed that position the upcoming season, just because they were a Head Coach any season prior. This will of course be taken into consideration, but overall feedback and/or complaints/issues filed in previous seasons will also be taken heavily into account.

Head Coaches choose all their team staff. They may or may not need the position you applied for. If you are not chosen for the position, you applied for and would still like to help the team in another capacity, please speak to the Head Coach to see what positions he/she still needs to fill.

### Background Checks

All head coaches, assistant coaches, team managers and team moms are required to undergo a criminal background investigation. This process is to further ensure the safety and well-being of all participants. All coaches will be subject to random background and criminal investigations. Simply put; if they are in the dugout or on the field with the kids, they need a background check.

A person will be disqualified and prohibited from serving as a volunteer with Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball if the person:

1. Fails to consent to a personal criminal background search; or
2. Has been convicted (including crimes whereby a plea of “no contest” was entered) of a crime of child abuse, sexual assault, child neglect, murder, voluntary manslaughter, felony assault, arson, robbery, burglary, indecent exposure, public lewdness, terrorist threats, any offense against a minor, kidnapping, or felony violations of the Controlled Substance Act; or,
3. Has been convicted, in any combination, of the following offenses: Misdemeanor Assault, or any violation of the Controlled Substance Act; or,
4. Has been subject to any court order involving any sexual abuse or physical abuse of a minor, including but not limited to domestic order for protection.
5. Has been adjudged liable for civil penalties or damages involving sexual or physical abuse of children; or
6. Has been subject to any court order involving any sexual or physical abuse of a minor, including but not limited to domestic order for protection. Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball board of directors shall have final decisions on all personnel matters. Robbery, burglary, indecent

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exposure, public lewdness, terrorist threats, any offense against a minor, kidnapping, or felony violations of the Controlled Substance Act.

### WEATHER

The safety of participants, umpires, and spectators is the primary concern in cases of inclement weather. Once the game has begun, the umpires will have the responsibility to remove the players from the field if the conditions become extreme.

Throughout the season, most games are played rain or shine. Cancellations occur only due to severe weather or persistent and/or heavy rain, creating standing water on the fields. Standing water on the fields poses a safety issue and is not covered by our insurance. Please register with the Sarasota County Rainout Line for time sensitive updates for our field. If there is an old message or no message pertaining to the day you are inquiring about, then no cancellations have occurred.

Every season a Coaches & Managers group chat is created through the GroupMe, and they are immediately notified no later than 4:30 if the county has closed the fields, due to inclement weather. We ask that parents do not ask prior to this time, as they will not be able to inform you of any change until they are notified by the county. In the case that the county notifies the board of directors sooner than 4:30, they will immediately relay the message in the Coaches and Managers group chat. The Team Manager or Head Coach will then relay the message to you in your team group chat.

**City of Venice owns the 2 fields, but Sarasota County maintains and runs the fields at Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball complex and has final authority over any and all field closure decisions.** Our fields are maintained daily and are living and breathing organisms with processes and cycles in place to keep them playable for our league. Certain field conditions due to weather may result in the county deeming the fields “unplayable” that evening due to the damage that can now be caused by walking, practicing and playing on the fields in such conditions.

### Lightning

Lightning is common in Florida, and quite frequently accompanies many of our rainstorms. **Our lightning policy: If lightning has struck within 8 miles of our location (MVFP), we automatically go on a 30-minute delay, until lightning is 10 miles + from our location.** The Board of Directors utilizes many different weather apps to determine this. The Directors on Duty will be in communication with Head Coaches and Team Managers in a timely manner to make sure everyone is well informed and up to date. If ordered to do so, please find a safe shelter in an automobile or building until instructed to return to the playing field or told that the game has been canceled.

### Natural Disasters

Natural disasters may happen from time to time (i.e., tropical storm or hurricane). In this case, the county will keep MVFP informed of any closings or changes to any field conditions, as soon as they are safely able to do so. Local counties may temporarily close schools during this time. If the county schools



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are closed and the fields are open, MVFP board will make the final decision whether the league will continue their schedule, keeping safety of utmost importance.

### **SAFETY/MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

For any injury or accident that requires something other than a cleaning and covering with a bandage, coaches and parents are required to seek professional medical assistance through 911 calls. If medical transportation is required, the charges incurred will be the responsibility of the parents and/or the parent's/guardian's insurance policy. Please notify the league if your child has a pre-existing condition (i.e., allergies, medications, physical or mental impairments, etc.) on the registration form; the league will then inform the coach of the situation. This is essential in order to determine the severity of an accident and to assist the medical personnel who respond to the scene. A safe playing environment is essential to provide a high-quality recreational sports program. Coaches should report all findings or accidents to the Board of Director(s) on duty, regardless of the nature of the incident. Our league safety rules regarding uniforms and equipment: Uniforms and Equipment.

### **ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES**

Alcoholic beverages are not permitted at any parks and recreation sports venues. No volunteer staff shall participate in any Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball sponsored event, including practices and games, while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

### **SMOKING**

There is no smoking permitted on the Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball complex.

### **DOMESTIC ANIMALS**

Per Sarasota County, no dogs are allowed at Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball complex. Service dogs MUST be wearing appropriate gear so they can clearly be designated as a service animal. This is for the safety of everyone at the park.

## PLAYER SECTION

PARENTS, PLEASE READ THIS SECTION CAREFULLY WITH YOUR PLAYERS. THEIR COACH WILL HOLD ALL PLAYERS TO THESE STANDARDS THROUGHOUT THE SEASON.

### PLAYER CODE OF ETHICS

Participation in youth sports programs can have a lasting and meaningful effect on children's lives. Therefore, it is the goal of Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball to provide the highest quality of athletic programs to ensure that a child's experience with sports is a positive one. It takes the cooperation of everyone involved, including the participant, to make this happen. Therefore, Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball has established the following responsibilities for players, and they are required to adhere to them:

1. Players are expected to listen to their coaches and be respectful of all teammates and volunteer team staff.
2. Players are expected to understand that it is best for the entire team that each player is present for all games and practices. This is a TEAM sport! If a player needs to miss a practice or game, they will need to notify their coach as soon as possible.
3. Players are expected to take care of the facilities, equipment, and uniforms in which they are given.
4. Players are expected to avoid all types of taunting, bullying, and belittling remarks to their teammates, coaches, or opponents.
5. Players will always show good sportsmanship, win or lose; this applies to their team, AND the opponent.
6. Players will not make sports a priority over schoolwork or family.
7. Players will refrain from horseplay and all other dangerous activities, in which they may become hurt, in the dugout and on and off the field.
8. Players will participate for the love of the game and competition, and not to win at all costs.
9. Players are expected to cheer on their teammates and are encouraged to pay attention at all times during the game.
10. Players will not be permitted to use electronic devices during practices or games at any time; they are there to play and learn the game of softball. They need to stay present in the moment.
11. Players are expected to understand they have the right to have equal playing time, but they may need to sit out more than other players if their coach feels they are not behaving appropriately and practicing good sportsmanship. This is at the coach's discretion. If the player does not agree with the coach's decision, they may speak to the coach in private once the game or practice is over.

### PLAYER CORRECTIVE ACTION POLICY

Players who fail to adhere to the Code of Ethics, or do not live up to their responsibilities or expectations, will be subject to disciplinary action. Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball recognizes that uncooperative players run the risk of spoiling the experience of youth softball for the other children and

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families in the program. Therefore, Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball has instituted a Corrective Action Policy to establish appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

The Corrective Action Policy is a guide to Head Coaches, Team Managers and the Board of Directors at Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball to run a quality program. The Corrective Action Policy is a 3- step system designed to forgive a mistake, but to firmly address chronic misbehavior.

### **Step 1– Verbal Warning**

Coach (or Team Manager) will discuss undesirable conduct with the player(s) and parent(s) and stress that this behavior will not be tolerated. The player will be warned that the next offense will result in a game suspension. This verbal warning will be reported to the Board of Directors.

### **Step 2 – Game Suspension**

This time the player and the parent(s) must attend a meeting with the Head Coach (or Team Manager) and a Board Member before the player is allowed to resume play. The player will be warned that the next offense will result in being expelled from the league.

### **Step 3 - League Expulsion**

Head Coach or Team Manager will file a written complaint (email is sufficient) to the Board of Directors at [mvfpfastpitch@gmail.com](mailto:mvfpfastpitch@gmail.com), who in turn will investigate and analyze the situation with the entire Board. The result of the Board of Directors investigation of the complaint will determine the corrective action for the player. This action can consist of game or game(s) suspension. The participant on the 3rd offense will be expelled from the league and no refund will be given. The parent(s) will then have to make a formal, written request to be reinstated into the league. The child and parent(s) will then have to meet with an Executive Board Member prior to the start of the following season to determine if the child can play within the guidelines of the program.

## PARENT SECTION

Being a parent is a tough job, and when a member of the family decides to join a youth sports team, it gets even tougher.

You've done a lot already to bring up your child. You've created the environment in which your child has grown. You've shared your values with your child by the structure you've given her life and by the model you have been for her. You've exposed her to the world as she knows it.

Since your child joined a youth softball team, you've been involved in a whole new set of things. You have had to adjust the family routine; a lot of your time has gone into transporting your child to practice at inconvenient times and to some weekend games. You have sacrificed some of your own interests, and others in your family have had to adjust, but you have gotten some returns too. There is the pride you feel as your daughter plays. There is some kind of expression of thanks your child has "said" to you. You have met other parents and gained new friends.

Being a youth sports parent isn't easy, but the rewards are great!

## PARENT CODE OF ETHICS

Few youth programs are successful without the support of parents. Below are a few guidelines for concerned parents as they strive to support their young athlete(s). Parents are expected to:

1. Support mastering sport skills and strategies rather than on competitive ranking.
2. Decrease the pressure to always win. That's not what this program is all about.
3. Support that the sport's primary value is the opportunity for self-development.
4. Understand the risks that competition places on a child.
5. Communicate your true concerns directly with the Head Coach or Team Manager, not with their child or other parents.
6. Understand and respect the differences between parental roles and coaching roles.
7. Control negative emotions and think positively.
8. Avoid the use of fear and punishment to get your child to perform better.
9. Alternatively, avoid the use of guilt to manipulate your child to perform the way you want them to.
10. Recognize and understand expressions of insecurity, and provide support when necessary.
11. Show empathy for the young athlete.

**It is also very important that parents:**

1. Don't put yourself in the place of your daughter on the field. Your child is in the game, not you. Glory or grief, it is her game.
2. Realize the "big game" might not be as important to your child as it is to you. Your child will most likely keep the game in its proper perspective if you do.
3. Don't criticize your child or other children on your child's team or other teams. Not even in private, and certainly NOT at any game or practice. This goes for any member of volunteer team staff as well.

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4. Don't relay instructions to your child from the stands or anywhere on the outside of the fence; that is the coach's job. Besides, your child will be able to hear your voice over the crowd, which will make her even more nervous and confused. Please shout positive encouragement only. If you cannot comply, you will be given one (1) warning, then asked to leave the park. If you refuse to leave when asked, we will make it easy on ourselves and call the Sarasota County Sheriff's office and have a police officer escort you out.
5. Don't start analyzing your child's performance right after the game. Your child may just want peace, quiet, and something to eat. This is acceptable.
6. Never criticize the coach, even if it is apparent that he/she doesn't understand the game. Before you are ready to complain, decide whether you are ready to give up YOUR valuable free time to step into the shoes of the coach. If not, please don't complain. If you're solution oriented and you'd like to submit a formal complaint, please email it to [mvfpfastpitch@gmail.com](mailto:mvfpfastpitch@gmail.com)
7. Don't abuse or criticize the umpires. This type of behavior does not promote the respect for authority that you expect from your children. You will be given one (1) warning, then asked to leave.
8. Don't decide that your child has a future with a professional team, but don't write her off either. Kids mature athletically at different paces.
9. Praise your child for simply performing!
10. Praise all the players after a game, even if they lost.
11. Don't take sports so seriously. Even the "big game" can't solve the world's problems. Just let the kids have fun! We do not WIN AT ALL COSTS!
12. Remember that it's unlikely your child will remember 10 years from now how many games her team won in any of her youth softball seasons, but she certainly will remember how you made her feel during this experience.

### RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

For a program to be truly successful, it takes the cooperation of everyone involved: players, coaches, umpires, board members, volunteers, and especially parents. Parents have the following responsibilities and expectations when participating in the Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball youth rec program.

- **Parents have a responsibility to their children.** To make sure that your child gets the most out of her playing experience, parents should show their unwavering support, including positive reinforcement of your child's performance and effort. This is essential, especially at an early age, to ensure their healthy development. Parents should also be positive role models, including, but not limited to, always showing proper sportsmanship and refraining from negativity of any kind.
- **Parents have a responsibility to the coaches.** Coaches volunteer their personal time to spend it with your child. They need you to be supportive of their decisions and not undermine their efforts. If you don't agree with a coach, you are expected to tell that coach, but make certain it is done at the right time and place and not in front of the children. **It is not acceptable to approach a coach before or during a game – not even to discuss playing time.** Parents are also expected to drop off and pick up their children on time for games and practice and are highly encouraged to stay.

- **Parents have a responsibility to keep timely communication with their Head Coach and/or Team Manager**, especially regarding games and practices. Any parent or guardian that will be transporting the player to and from practices and games at any point have a right to be included in the team group chat. For further information on this subject, please see TEAM COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES.
- **Parents have a responsibility to the league.** MVFP Board of Directors cannot be at all games and practices of all teams at all times. Therefore, in order to maintain the protective shell around these programs, it is essential for parents to report abusive behavior or any other situation that needs to be addressed to the Board of Directors. This is the only way that these programs can achieve their intended goals.
- **Parents have a responsibility to the other parents.** Personal gain and satisfaction should not be derived from your child's performance. Competition and taunting between parents is never acceptable, and no parent should ever feel embarrassed or disappointed by their team or child's performance. Good plays should always be cheered, and disappointments should always be consoled, no matter whose team it affects.
- **Parents have a responsibility to themselves.** It is your responsibility to enjoy watching your child and other children participate and learn. The joy and pride associated with watching children participate in sports should be experienced to the fullest, because a lifetime of memories is being created before your very eyes.

#### PARENT CORRECTIVE ACTION POLICY

Parents who do not follow the Code of Ethics will be subject to a Corrective Action Policy. It is the philosophy of Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball that parents should not be permitted to spoil the rec softball league experience for other families. We also make every attempt to take all steps possible to refrain from punishing a child for the poor actions of her parent(s). For violations of the Code of Ethics or Responsibilities and Expectations, the following steps will be taken:

**Step 1: Verbal Warning** – Head Coach, Team Manager or Board Member will discuss undesirable conduct with parent(s) and stress that this behavior will not be tolerated and notify the Board of Directors within 24 hours. The parent(s) will be warned that the next offense will result in a written warning.

**Step 2: Written Warning** – Coach, Team Manager, or Board Member will notify the parent(s) the continued breach of Code of Ethics and will bring parent(s) in for a meeting to discuss actions and what the proper behavior is. Furthermore, there will be a formal letter of reprimand given to the parent(s) stating that the next offense will lead to parent(s) being banned from the sporting event venue for a period of 1 game.

**Step 3: Game/Practice Suspension** – Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball will ban the parent(s) from attending the next scheduled practice or game, and another letter will be given to parent(s) stating that the next offense will lead to the parent(s) being banned from all future games and practices.

**Step 4: Season Suspension** – The parent(s) will be banned from attending all league contests after a 4th offense. The parent(s) will then have to make a formal request to be reinstated into the league. The parent(s) will then have to meet with the Division Director prior to the start of the season to determine if the parent(s) is capable of behaving within the spirit and letter of the guidelines of this program.

These guidelines are not absolute in dealing with behavioral problems. Severe situations could merit harsher sanctions and more immediate action against the parent(s).

#### **PARENT COMPLAINT AGAINST VOLUNTEER STAFF**

(Head Coach, Assistant Coach, Team Manager, Team Mom, or Board Member) In order to continue to develop our program, it's important for parents to have the opportunity to voice any pertinent feedback, constructive criticism or behavior they feel may not be appropriate or conducive to the development of their child/the children on the team. The procedure for any parent to file a grievance against any of our volunteers is as follows:

1. Email the Board of Directors (mvfpfastpitch@gmail.com) with written documentation of the grievance including: date of incident(s), name(s) of person(s) involved, name(s) of any witness(es), and a brief description of the incident(s).
2. We will then require the specified volunteer(s) to attend an in-person meeting with members of the Board to address the issue and to offer his/her side of the incident or issue. A non-partial Board Member to the situation will always be present.
3. The Board of Directors will then determine the severity of the situation and whether the affected volunteer has violated any of the expected behaviors outlined under each of the sections of the Code of Ethics. They will then report back to the parent the decision that was made.
4. If the volunteer has indeed violated the Code of Ethics, the VOLUNTEER TEAM STAFF CORRECTIVE ACTION POLICY will be followed.
5. If the Board concludes the Code of Ethics have NOT been violated, no further action will be taken at this time.
6. Parents are encouraged to go back to step 1, should another issue or situation arise they feel is worth reporting. All submissions will be added to the volunteer's file.

**The Board of Directors has the authority to enforce any appropriate range of disciplinary actions they deem necessary.**

#### **UMPIRE SPECIFIC AUTHORITY**

Umpires may initiate/enforce an ejection of a player or coach as necessary if they are exhibiting inappropriate conduct. Any ejection from an umpire would also result in a one game suspension for the ejected player/coach. Umpires may also eject a parent, relative, or spectator who behaves in an inappropriate or unruly manner. Any ejection will be reported to a director on duty **immediately** so follow-up actions can be pursued.

Questions/concerns/challenges related to calls or rule interpretations should be discussed with the Head Coach ONLY. Umpires are neither required nor expected to explain rules/calls to parents, relatives, or spectators. (Rules/calls may occasionally be explained to players if there is developmental/instructional value in such explanation).

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If field conditions become unsafe, and a director is not readily available, umpires may decide about the need to stop or suspend gameplay. A Director should be alerted as soon as possible if this becomes necessary.

For additional league ground rules regarding umpires, please see Umpires. We are always hiring umpires and pay competitively. If you are interested in becoming an umpire, please email us at [mvfpfastpitch@gmail.com](mailto:mvfpfastpitch@gmail.com).

### WEATHER POLICY

Every season a Coaches & Managers group chat is created through the GroupMe, and Sarasota County notifies MVFP at 4:30 if the county has closed the fields, due to inclement weather. We ask that you please do not ask prior to this time, as they will not be able to inform you of any change until they are notified by the county. In the case that the county notifies the board of directors sooner than 4:30, they will immediately relay the message in the Coaches and Managers group chat. The Team Manager or Head Coach will then relay the message to you in your team group chat as soon as they are notified.

If you'd like to be proactive, please register with the Sarasota County Rainout Line to stay current on field conditions. Sarasota County owns the fields and updates the conditions as soon as there are changes. If it rains after 4pm, it's up to the Directors that get to the fields first (typically around 5pm) to check the status of the fields and weather. Again, they will notify Head Coaches and Team Managers immediately of any changes. Please do not speculate, and plan on business as usual unless you are told otherwise. See the WEATHER section under our general policies, for more details.

### ALL-STARS (SPRING SEASON ONLY)

#### Guidelines, Deadlines, and General Information

All-Stars is a compilation of the girls voted the "best overall athletes" in their division, at the end of the spring season. The coaches vote them in, and a team of 12 girls (maximum), per division, is formed. In order to be voted into All-Stars, the parent(s) **MUST** fill out a form to submit the child for them to be considered. The form will be emailed to ALL parents no later than March 1st. This form will need to be filled out on-line and submitted back to MVFP no later than March 10th.

At Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball, for a child to be considered an "All-Star athlete", they are seen as not only a skilled softball player but display good sportsmanship on and off the field throughout the season...mainly observed towards their teammates, coaches and umpires. If a child is a skilled softball player, but does not display good sportsmanship throughout the season, they will not be considered. In addition, they must have played in  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the spring season games, or a total of 10 games, whichever is greater.

Once all forms have been electronically submitted, a list is given to each Head Coach and Team Manager in that division for all girls that have an application in to be considered, on Monday, March 13th. This list will have all girls in their division, not just the girls on their specific team. The Head Coaches and Team



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Managers will then observe the girls on the list for approximately 2 weeks and cast their vote into the board of directors on Friday, March 24th.

Only the head coaches in the divisions are allowed to be considered for the division All-Star head coach position. These candidates will be sent to you electronically via email, and you will cast your vote (2 votes per household allowed). The head coaches chosen will then decide who they would like to be their assistant coach. They can select from any head coach or assistant coach from any team this spring season.

After the end of season tournament is complete, the Board of Directors will email the All-Star coaches their team roster. The coaches will then reach out to the parents individually. Any child that did not make the All-Star team will receive an email from the Board of Directors that evening, letting them know they did not make the team.

All-Stars starts directly after our spring season ends on May 1st, and practices are Monday through Friday evenings for two weeks until the weekend of the tournament. Exact dates and location will be disclosed as soon as we receive them from the Miss Florida organization.

For a child to be considered, they must be able to make **ALL** evening practices and attend the tournament, which is typically out of town 1-3 hours away. There is a \$75 up-front fee if they make the All-Star team (they won't pay if they don't make the team), plus the cost of lodging and food, etc. for the tournament.

### **VOLUNTEER SECTION**

Interested in becoming a volunteer? This section is for you! Outlined below are our league volunteer opportunities, should you wish to be involved this season.

#### **HEAD COACH**

For the players, the coaches (you) are the single most important adult leader. You will help the players have fun, learn skills, develop sportsmanship, and discuss values in a meaningful way.

#### **Requirements:**

- You **MUST** be registered on the website to volunteer as a coach, manager, team mom, etc. This is 100% mandatory for ALL VOLUNTEERS (minus the scorekeeper). If you are unsure of who qualifies to register, it is any adult that is in the dugout or on the fields with the children, no exceptions. They **MUST** be registered so they can enter in appropriate info so that we may conduct a background check. Any questions regarding this matter, please direct them to a Board Member.
- Registering online also ensures the appropriate emails go to the appropriate group of people. Email and GroupMe are our primary forms of communication.

### **Our Philosophies on Being a Head Coach in our League**

As the coach, forget the professional and college coach models and the win at all cost approach. Do not try to get your feeling of self-worth from your team's win-loss record. Coaching youth sports calls for teaching the fundamentals properly, developing the basic team concepts, working on fair play values, and encouraging all players to participate and enjoy the sport. The most important element is the relationship between the coach and the team. The coach is a leader, role model, teacher and friend. This relationship is far more significant than points scored, or the games won.

The quality of the coach-team relationship is the ultimate measure of success for youth sports coaches. Your main responsibility in our youth rec softball league program is to:

- **Keep it simple:** Most sports are relatively simple to play and can be enjoyed by all ages. Overcomplicated formations, plays and strategies tend to confuse and frustrate youth. By keeping it simple, it will build self-esteem and confidence.
- **Work on basic skills:** Younger teams especially should concentrate on fundamentals. Teach skills and concentrate on the basic. Help players become conscious of the importance of proper execution. Stop the action often to help individual players improve, but don't interfere excessively.
- **Work with every player on your team:** The most highly skilled and least skilled players on your team should be given equal attention. Every player should be helped to improve in ability and to enjoy the game. It is important that every player participates and has fun, rather than just a few good players dominating the action.
- **Teach 'Fair Play':** Playing fair is an essential part of youth sports. Respect for oneself, teammates, the other team, the rules and the officials who uphold them.
- **Help players set and evaluate individual goals:** Competing against oneself is perhaps the best way to improve skills, help players measure their skills, set goals for the future and work to reach those goals. What is important is not so much how players measure up against each other, but how much each player learns and reaches new levels of skills and enjoyment.
- **Keep winning in perspective:** Winning games is only one of the many goals that are important in sports. Help players and their parents become aware of other important goals: learning skills, becoming better physically fit, being a good leader and a good follower, dealing with the emotions of sports and having fun.

Over the years, there has been an increasing realization that we need to provide more resources for our coaches, so we created a Head Coaches' Manual, and it can be found on our website by going to [www.missvenicefastpitch.com](http://www.missvenicefastpitch.com) and clicking on "HEAD COACH MANUAL". We expect all our Head Coaches, new and veteran, to read this manual with an open mind and a learner's mindset. The best coaches in history will admit their faults, know their strengths and weaknesses, and are never finished learning and growing as a coach. If you feel you align with our philosophies, then you're in the right place.

## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Every season, your goal should be to develop every child on your team into a much better ball player than they were when they joined our program, no matter what stage of development they were at when they were placed on your team.

The intent of the HEAD COACH MANUAL is to assist new coaches, who may need help to be a better mentor, and to provide some new or different ideas to veteran coaches. The manual will go through regular updates, and we hope that all our coaches consider contributing to future versions.

We hope to encourage all of our coaches, whether new or experienced, T-Ball or 16U, to focus more on teaching girls the fundamentals of the game of softball. This is based on a simple philosophy, shared by many of the best coaches in sports:

“Winning isn't the goal. Learning the fundamentals well is the goal. Winning comes from that.”

### TEAM MANAGER

Requirements:

- You **MUST** be a female, and registered on the website to volunteer as a coach, manager, team mom, etc. This is 100% mandatory for ALL VOLUNTEERS (minus the scorekeeper). If you are unsure of who qualifies to register, it is any adult that is in the dugout or on the fields with the children, no exceptions. They **HAVE** to be registered so they can enter in appropriate info so that we may conduct a background check. Any questions regarding this matter, please direct them to a Board Member.
- Registering online also ensures the appropriate emails go to the appropriate group of people. Email and GroupMe are our primary forms of communication.

General Job Duties:

- In charge of and oversees the entire team, including the Head Coach. The Team Manager can remove the Head Coach from the team. If you foresee this happening, please speak to a Board Member first.
- First point of contact for all parents, should they have any questions or concerns.
- Responsible for communicating all pertinent information throughout the season.
- Point of contact for all children on the team, should they have any issues or concerns.
- All divisions in the league (T-ball through Majors) must make sure a Team Mom (also referred to as Dugout Mom) is in the dugout each game, and it must always be a female.
- Once the teams are drafted and you are designated as the Team Manager, you are responsible for coordinating with the head coach and creating a team group chat for regular time sensitive information and easy communication with your team, throughout the season. The easiest app to do this with now is GroupMe. It's free and most parents are already familiar with it.
- Once all parents are added to the team group chat, you will need to add all practices and games (as they become available) to the calendar in the team group chat.
- You and the Head Coach are required to be on the Coaches and Manager group chat so that the Board of Directors can easily communicate important time sensitive information throughout

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the season. It is mainly your responsibility to be on the app and communicate any and all info shared that is necessary to the coaching staff and team.

- The Scorekeeper duty/responsibility falls on the Team Manager, should no one else volunteer to keep a scorebook for the season. You will be trained on how to do it at the Team Manager meeting, so that you are able to train any volunteer from your team that comes forward and is interested in doing it. Try to recruit a parent from the team if you can. They don't need a background check to keep a scorebook, and they can do it from the stands or anywhere they can watch the game in close proximity.

### **Concession Duty:**

- Your team may or may not have concession duties throughout the season. If this is the case, It is mandatory that your team shows up to run the concessions. You must have at least 3 adults in concession each shift. If your concession shift(s) are not covered, your team will automatically forfeit a winning game of the season.

### **Fundraising:**

- The Board of Directors will decide at the beginning of each season, what fundraisers we will be participating in during the season. They will communicate this information to you, and it is your sole responsibility to relay this in a timely manner to the parents on your team.

### **Scores:**

- Whoever is designated as the Home Team is responsible for entering the score for that game. It is strongly encouraged that BOTH teams keep score, in case there are any discrepancies.
- How to enter the score:
  - o Go to [www.missvenicefastpitch.com](http://www.missvenicefastpitch.com), Team Central at the top, click on Directory, Team Home, Calendar, Results, Input Score, then Save.

### **Team & Individual Photos:**

- These are NOT optional. Parents purchase team photos, so ALL children must be present. You will coordinate directly with the Board of Directors on a time slot for your team.

### **Injury Reports:**

- Any and all injuries are required to be reported for insurance purposes. You will be handed injury reports at the beginning of the season. If you run out, please ask a Board Member for more.

### **Incident Reports:**

- PLAYER/PARTICIPANT CORRECTIVE ACTION
- PARENT CORRECTIVE ACTION POLICY

### **ASSISTANT COACH**

#### **Requirements:**

- You MUST be registered on the website to volunteer as an assistant coach. This is 100% mandatory for ALL VOLUNTEERS. If you are unsure of who qualifies to register, it is any adult that is in the dugout or on the fields with the children, no exceptions. They HAVE to be

## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

registered so they can enter in appropriate info, so that we may conduct a background check. Any questions regarding this matter, please direct them to a Board Member.

- Registering online also ensures the appropriate emails go to the appropriate group of people. Email and GroupMe are our primary forms of communication.

### General Job Duties:

- View yourself as the extra set of hands available to help the Head Coach with their team practices and games. It's imperative to be on the same page and work well together.
- When one-on-one time is required of you, ask the Head Coach who you should work with.
- Talk to the Head Coach about tips on working with the child you are paired with.
- Be a learner. The child you are working with, the coaches, and the parents all have great things they can teach you. No coach should ever stop learning and growing in the sport.
- Ensure that the children are respectful of one another's personal space.
- Try to prevent, stop or de-escalate arguments between children. It is helpful when the children are focused on encouraging each other. They have less time to get into fights.
- Any physical altercation between players needs to be brought up with the Head Coach or Team Manager, who will bring it up with the parents.
- Talk with the Head Coach or Team Manager if a child is being extremely rude to their peers. They can help by speaking to their parents directly, if need be.
- Go over the practice agenda with the head coach before each session and help set up the equipment.
- Demonstrate and/or lead drills as directed by the Head Coach.
- Create smooth transitions between drills by setting up the field for the next drill while the current drill is ending.
- Help the Head Coach keep track of how each player is progressing in their friendships and skills.
- Please remember that the Head Coach is in charge and ask them what they need. It's confusing to the children if they have more than one volunteer that acts as a Head Coach.

### TEAM MOM

#### Requirements:

- You MUST be a female and registered on the website to volunteer as a team mom. This is 100% mandatory for ALL VOLUNTEERS. If you are unsure of who qualifies to register, it is any adult that is in the dugout or on the fields with the children, no exceptions. They HAVE to be registered so they can enter in appropriate info so that we may conduct a background check. Any questions regarding this matter, please direct them to a Board Member.
- Registering online also ensures the appropriate emails go to the appropriate group of people. Email and GroupMe are our primary forms of communication.

#### General Job Duties:

- Assist the Head Coach and Assistant Coach(es) with keeping the children on the team organized in the dugout during game time.
- Help the children acknowledge their batting order on the lineup provided by making sure they are lined up along the inside fence of the dugout with their helmet on, ready to run out to the batter's circle or batter's box when it's their turn to hit or be waiting "on deck".

## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Assist the catchers (if applicable) in getting their gear on in a timely manner in between innings.
- Remind the children to drink water in between defense and offense, wear their face masks (if applicable), get their bats ready when it's time, and help them keep their equipment organized so they can quickly grab what's needed before they go out to the field.
- Encourage listening to the coaches so they know what position to take when they go out on the field
- Encourage standing up on the fence in the dugout, cheering for and encouraging their teammates, and paying attention to the game.
- Report any issues directly to the Team Manager or Head Coach.

### SCOREKEEPER

#### Requirements:

- Background checks or officially registering on the website as a scorekeeper is not required, as you are not required to interact with the children during this position and are not on the field or in the dugout during practices or games.

#### General Job Duties:

- Coordinate with the team manager what games you are able to score keep, once the schedule is posted
- Scorekeepers are only required to keep score during designated "home" games
- There will be a scorekeeper's clinic at the beginning of each season you will need to attend, to learn how to keep score in the scorebook given to you (it's easy), if you don't already know how to keep score.

### VOLUNTEER TEAM STAFF CODE OF ETHICS

As a Coach, Assistant Coach, Team Manager and/or Team Mom, I understand that I am expected to:

1. Read and review all league rules and paperwork pertaining to the season prior to the first scheduled day of practice.
2. Arrive to practice at least 15 minutes early to set up.
3. Stay until every child has been picked up by a parent/guardian (this only applies to the Head Coach).
4. Provide all players a fun, safe and positive environment to develop their softball skills.
5. Treat players, parents, umpires, board members and opposing coaches with respect at all times. I'm aware that at no time is verbal or physical confrontation allowed at games or practices. If I have an issue with a parent or player, I will follow the procedures provided to in the manual here:
  - a. PLAYER CORRECTIVE ACTION POLICY
  - b. PARENT CORRECTIVE ACTION POLICY
6. Notify a Board Member IMMEDIATELY of any altercation of any kind occurring during a game or practice between coaches, players, parents or umpires. There are always at least 2 board members on duty...I am expected to utilize them and not try to handle it on my own.
7. Demonstrate good sportsmanship at all times and remember that my behavior serves as an example to all the players. This means I will not complain about the parents, umpires, or the

## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

opponent's team staff. The players on the teams are always listening, and will have poor attitudes and mimic any poor example of behavior I have set. The goal is to teach players accountability and respect for others.

8. Place the emotional and physical well-being of the players in front of my own personal desire to win.
9. Be familiar with and abide by all the league rules provided to me, and guidelines spelled out in the parent code of conduct I acknowledged at the beginning of the season.
10. Understand that this is a rec league, and the purpose is to expose all players to all positions they are willing to play, and that no player will sit out more than 2 innings per game. No child should only play outfield an entire game, unless that is their desired position.
11. Contact parents and players when necessary (Head Coach and Team Manager only).
12. Conduct parent/player meetings at the beginning of the season, to set correct expectations (Head Coach only).
13. Distribute all materials given to me by the Board of Directors in a timely manner.
14. Self-reflect and explore my own motivations, values and goals. If my main reason for being a coach is to win as many games as possible, and NOT to help develop ALL players on my team this season, I understand that this league is not for me.
15. Listen to and share with other adult leaders.
16. Explain my discipline procedures for behavior problems, missed practices, etc., (nothing too severe - refer to our PLAYER/PARTICIPANT CORRECTIVE ACTION POLICY).
17. Inform parents about proper equipment: appropriate clothing, good fitting shoes and water.
18. Let your players know that they are responsible for their own equipment; this includes carrying it themselves to and from the field.
19. Stress the need for players to maintain good school grades.
20. Get parents involved by having them register to be a volunteer staff member on your team. It takes a village.
21. Verify your roster, making sure all player information is correct; pass on any corrections to the Board of Directors.
22. Have a question-and-answer period after practices and games.

### **VOLUNTEER TEAM STAFF CORRECTIVE ACTION POLICY**

Head Coaches, Assistant Coaches, Team Managers and Team Moms (referred to as "team staff member") that do not follow the Code of Ethics outlined to them in this manual will be subject to a Corrective Action Policy. It is the philosophy of Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball that ANY team staff member shouldn't be in their position if they cannot follow the same guidelines we expect of the parents and children registered in our program. For violations of the Code of Ethics, the following steps will be taken:

**Step 1: Verbal Warning** – A Board Member will discuss undesirable conduct with the team staff member in a private setting and stress the behavior will not be tolerated. The team staff member will be warned that the next step is a written warning. The Board Member will document this conversation and disclose it with the remaining Board of Directors. If the team staff member feels this verbal warning is unmerited, they are encouraged to email the Board of Directors at [mvfpfastpitch@gmail.com](mailto:mvfpfastpitch@gmail.com), explaining their perspective of the situation, and that email submission is then required to be shared

## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

with all members of the board to review and discuss. An impartial Board Member will reach out to the staff member by phone or email within 48 hours to discuss the decision made regarding the merit of the verbal warning. (In some cases, a team staff member may be called into a meeting with the Board to discuss in person).

**Step 2: Written Warning** – A Board Member will notify the team staff member of the continued breach of Code of Ethics and will bring the team staff member in for a meeting with Board Members to discuss actions and what the proper behavior is. Furthermore, there will be a formal letter of reprimand given to the staff member stating that the next offense will lead to the staff member being banned from the sporting event venue for a period of 1 game.

**Step 3: Game/Practice Suspension** – Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball will ban the team staff member from attending the next scheduled practice or game, and another letter will be given to the team staff member stating that the next offense will lead to the team staff member being banned from all future games and practices.

**Step 4: Season Suspension** – The team staff member will be banned from attending all league contests after a 4th offense. The team staff member will then have to make a formal request to be reinstated into the league. The team staff member will then have to meet with the Division Director prior to the start of the season to determine if the team staff member is capable of behaving within the spirit and letter of the guidelines of this program.

**These guidelines are not absolute in dealing with behavioral problems. Severe situations will merit harsher sanctions and more immediate action against the team staff member. Board Members are not exempt.**

### MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL RECREATIONAL GROUND RULES

**THE RULES LISTED BELOW ARE SPECIFIC TO MISS SARASOTA SOFTBALL. ANY RULES NOT PROVIDED IN THE TEXT BELOW, PLEASE REFER TO USSSA FASTPITCH SOFTBALL RULES, WHICH CAN BE FOUND ONLINE HERE: <https://www.ussa.com/fastpitch/fastpitch-rules-legal-information>**

Miss Venice Fastpitch Softball participants in the T-Ball, Coach Pitch (8U), Mini-Minor (10U), Minor (12U) and Major (16U) divisions during regular season play, will follow USSSA Softball Fast Pitch Rules with our own league specific rules below.

### GENERAL

#### Uniforms and Equipment

1. All players will be dressed out in full team uniform. This may include head gear (hats or soft visors), socks, jersey and softball pants. Pick-up players must wear their own full team uniform. Sweatshirts of any solid color (including white) may be worn under the jersey (including the pitcher) and do not have to match. Umpire will rule on exceptions (weather, etc.).
2. Personal helmets must have a face guard, either plastic or metal. This is MANDATORY. Any player without one will be removed from the game.
3. Any child playing an infield position that is in the division of 10U, 12U, and 16U will be required to wear a face mask. Refusal to wear a face mask will result in PLAYER/PARTICIPANT CORRECTIVE ACTION.
4. If a player has a bat in their hand, they MUST have a helmet on - whether at bat, on deck, in warm-up, at soft toss or in batting cages.



## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

5. Warm-up catchers MUST wear proper protective gear, at minimum a full catcher's helmet.
6. Shoes with steel spikes are prohibited, except the Majors division. They are allowed to wear metal spikes during regular season games only. No metal spikes for any division in Miss Florida's Mid-Season and All Star Tournaments.
7. No jewelry will be worn except for earring studs.

### **Innings, Time and Run Limitations**

1. All games will be one hour and 15 minutes (Coach Pitch, Mini Minor, Minor and Major divisions). T-ball time limit is one (1) hour.
  - a. No new inning may start after the time limit.
  - b. IF the time has expired mid-inning, and the Umpire rules that the home team is unable to tie or win the game, they may rule that the game is over. This rule exists mainly to respect the time of the players, parents, coaches and umpires for the 7:30 time slot games proceeding the 6:00 games. The umpire makes the final call on this decision - it is not up to the coaches.
2. Coach Pitch, Mini-Minor, Minor and Major divisions will play with a straight five runs per team per inning limitation. There will be no limit on runs scored in the seventh (7th) inning. No score is kept in T-ball.
3. In season playoffs or interleague tournament, at the expiration of the time limit, the International Tie-Breaker Rule (a.k.a. Texas Tie-Breaker) shall go into effect. The last batted out in the previous inning shall be put onto second base and the batting order shall proceed normally with NO OUTS. All regular season rec league games will end in and be recorded as a tie if time has expired and the final inning has been completed.
4. If a game is suspended before two (2) complete innings, due to the weather and/or field conditions, the game is not official and will be made up in its entirety.
5. If a game is suspended after the completion of the two (2) complete innings, the game will be considered official and complete. The final score will revert back to the completion of the prior inning.
6. A new inning begins immediately after the third out is made or when the final run crosses the plate. No exceptions.

### **Roster Minimum, Substitutions, and "Pick-up" Players**

1. A team must have six (6) players from their own roster to start or to continue a game.
2. If a team has six (6), seven (7) or eight (8) players to begin a game, one (or two) players may be "picked up" from another MVFP team in the same age division or from the next lower division to play (if eight) or to be in reserve (if nine) in case of injury or illness.
  - i. Reserve players can enter the game only to avoid forfeit as in (A) above.
  - ii. All pick-up players may play in an outfield position and bat last. If the rostered player appears, the "pick-up" player must leave the game and the rostered player is placed in the line-up in the "pick-up" position.
  - iii. A "pick-up" player for injury only (listed as a sub on the line-up card before the game begins) can only play the outfield and has to bat last in the lineup.
  - iv. To avoid forfeit, if a team has less than nine players AND is unable to find a "pick-up" player as in "B" above, the manager of the opposing team will select one or two

## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

players from her team to “lend” to the other team to play in the outfield. It works best for the team at bat to “loan” their last batted out from the previous inning.

3. “Pick-up” players are allowed to play in unlimited games per season, per team, in their own division in the Fall season. They are allowed to pick up only (2) games either in their own division or “up” a division in the Spring season. However, if no injury or illness occurs and the “pick-up” player(s) does not play, player(s) are not charged as having played one of their two (2) eligible games. A legal at-bat is considered an eligible “game.”
4. All players must play a minimum of two (2) CONSECUTIVE innings (1 extra inning can end in a tie), complete defensive innings every game at which they are present and able to participate. The field position must be reported to the opposing scorekeeper when players enter the game. This rule is subject to Rule 2 Innings, Time and Run Rule.
5. If a player is removed from a game because of injury, she must submit a written release signed by her doctor (if the injury requires medical attention) to play in the next game
6. If a base runner is removed from the game for any reason, the last batted out will replace her as a runner. If the removed player cannot continue on offense or defense, that player is subject to the “automatic out” rule as in 5(A).

### Pitching

1. T-Ball and Coach Pitch see specific division section below for pitching rules.
2. Mini Minors, Minors and Majors – a pitcher is allowed to pitch two innings; no pitcher may pitch a third inning until the fifth inning.
3. Coaches must submit pitching change to Umpire and record all pitchers used in a game.

### Batting

1. All teams will bat their complete roster every game. Example – All players who are present for the game. Later arrivals will be added to the bottom of the order.
2. Any player who cannot appear at bat because of injury or illness will be considered an “automatic out” and the order will proceed normally.
3. Stealing, Drop Third Strike, and Infield fly rules apply to Mini Minor, Minor and Major Divisions only.

### Team Staff

1. Each team shall have one-woman manager (minimum age 21 and MUST be a female), and two or three coaches (male or female). Having a Team Mom on staff is encouraged, but optional. Only staff members are permitted in the dugout. A Team Manager or Team Mom will be in the dugout at all times and will be present at practices and batting cages.
2. If you are under the age of 16 and want to assist in coaching the Coach Pitch and T-ball, must be enrolled in school. In all other divisions, the coaches must be 16 years of age or older.
3. Any coaches in the infield who are under the age of 16 are strongly encouraged to wear a batting helmet. If they choose not to, they choose to do so at their own risk.
4. Each team will provide a scorekeeper every game. The “home” scorekeeper will keep the “official” scorebook and have the book signed by the plate umpire at the end of the game unless questioned by the plate umpire.

## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### Umpires

1. Umpires will be at least 14 years of age, and will not be allowed to umpire in the field without signed written consent from a legal parent or guardian.
2. 16 + years of age may umpire behind the plate; however, they must be in full gear.
3. If MVFP is unable to secure an umpire, a member of the team's coaching staff is required to take turns umpiring the game. If umpire gear is unavailable, the volunteer umpire will be required to call balls and strikes behind the pitcher in the field.
4. If time has expired mid-inning, and the Umpire rules that the home team is unable to tie or win the game, they may decide to rule that the game is over. This exception exists mainly to respect the time of the players, parents, team staff and umpires for the 7:30 slot games proceeding the 6:00 games. The umpire makes the final call on this decision, and it is not up to the coaches.
5. Umpire specific authority rules can be found here: [UMPIRE SPECIFIC AUTHORITY](#).

### Forfeits

1. If applicable, teams will forfeit one victory per incident for failing to staff the concession stand with (3) adults. The penalty will be assessed at the end of the season by taking away a win.

### Pitching Distances

1. The pitching rubber will be the following:
  - a. Coach Pitch Division: 30 feet
  - b. Mini-Minor Division: 35 feet
  - c. Minor Division: 40 feet
  - d. Major Division: 43 feet

**If any of these rules are unclear, please speak to a Board member, or submit your concerns in writing to the Board of Directors at [mvfpfastpitch@gmail.com](mailto:mvfpfastpitch@gmail.com)**

## T-BALL SPECIFIC LEAGUE RULES

### Safety

1. No throwing the bat.
2. No sliding.
3. Throwing the bat by the batter constitutes an out. Speak with the player first, point out the danger that is caused by throwing the bat, but if the problem continues the player will be forced to lose an "at bat turn".
4. The home team is responsible for providing the ball and tee.
5. There are no protests of any kind. All rule disagreements will be settled on the field between coaches. Judgment calls by the coach are not to be protested.

### Players and Positions

1. On defense, the players will be positioned at 1B, 2B, SS, 3B, and pitcher. All other players will be positioned evenly in the infield.

## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

2. It is recommended that coaches rotate their players at the different defensive positions. Generally, try to have a player play the same position for no more than one inning. They get bored very easily and it's best to keep them moving.
3. Coaches will ensure that all players play every inning, every game.

### **Coaches and Assistants**

1. Each team is encouraged to provide an adult to be an umpire (which can be a coach) or a parent willing to assist.
2. Coaches or assistants will be at the batting tee instructing the children while their team is at bat.
3. Coaches are not allowed to physically assist base runners; e.g. pushing the runner or helping the runner off the ground, while the ball is in play.
4. A maximum of 3 coaches from the defensive (fielding) team are allowed on the playing field. These coaches should be situated behind 1st, 2nd and 3rd bases. These coaches are on the field for instructional purposes only, such as re-positioning the fielders and relaying information.

### **Play of the Game**

1. During the game, all players must remain in the designated team areas and on benches, except the batter at the plate.
2. The next batter will not approach the plate until called by the batting coach or umpire.
3. The batting coach or umpire will place the ball on the tee and verify that the tee is adjusted within the strike zone (between the knees and the armpits of the batter). The batting coach may adjust and reposition the batter at any time as long as the ball is not in play.
4. The batter hits the ball off the tee after the umpire or batting coach calls "ball in play."
5. The batting coach will remove the tee from the playing field after the ball is hit.
6. An arc (approximately 8 feet) will be drawn from the 1st base foul line to the 3rd base foul line. A hit ball must go past the line to be considered a fair ball. A foul ball is one hit inside the 15 foot arc line. In other words, the ball must travel 15 feet in order to be judged as a fair ball. Official softball rules apply to a ball that stops on the line, i.e., foul ball rule. If a ball leaves the tee as a result of the tee being struck rather than the ball, then the ball shall be declared dead and another attempt shall be made to hit the ball.
7. In Tee Ball the play is considered 'over' when the ball is returned to a player at the mound or any base.
8. Upon fielding a hit, the pitcher must attempt a play at either 1B, 2B or 3B.
9. At the time the ball is declared dead, the umpire shall award a runner the next base only if the runner is half the distance or more to that base. If the runner is not half the distance to the next base, he shall be returned to the base she had safely reached.
10. When the umpire calls the ball dead, it stays dead until the umpire calls the ball in play again.
11. Runners may advance to the next base on an overthrow out-of-bounds. Runners cannot advance on any foul ball.
12. The runner may not leave the base until the ball is struck by the batter.
13. Leading off is not permitted.
14. Base stealing is not permitted.

## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

15. An inning is not three outs. An inning will end after all of the batters in the batting lineup have batted.
16. In setting up defensive positions, the pitcher shall not play closer to home plate than the pitching rubber in place on the field (either 35 or 40 foot)
17. Runners Overrunning a Base: First base and home plate are the only bases a runner may touch and run past. If a runner should overrun 2nd and 3rd base, and an alert fielder who is in possession of the ball touches the runner while off the base, the runner shall be declared out. A fielder may not push or force a runner off the base that a runner has gained in an attempt to tag him out. First base is treated like second and third bases when a runner makes a turn toward second base after touching 1st base. Should a runner make a turnaround 1st base toward 2nd base and then tagged by the fielder, while in possession of the ball, prior to returning to 1st base, the runner shall be declared out.
18. Tagging-Up: A base runner will be allowed to tag-up after a fly ball out (base runner leaves base after fly ball is caught) only if the ball is caught in the outfield grass. TaggingUp is not allowed on infield fly outs.
19. A batter-runner or base runner that is put out must return to the dugout.

### 8U SPECIFIC LEAGUE RULES

Play will be governed by USSSA Softball Rule Book, unless specified in this section.

#### Pitching

1. Coach will make a maximum of five (5) pitches for the first 3 innings of the game.
2. After 2 innings, a player pitcher will pitch to the batter. Player pitcher will be allowed four (4) pitches.
3. If batter is not struck out, a coach will enter the circle and have up to three (3) pitches.
4. Pitch counts from player pitcher will carry over to the coach pitcher. If the fifth pitch or 3rd strike is fouled the batter may continue to bat until there is a strike out or the ball is hit into fair territory.
5. The player pitcher must have at least 1 foot in the pitcher's circle when the batter's coach is pitching. No other defensive players may be positioned inside the pitcher's circle at any time.
6. The defensive coach may move the pitcher behind 2nd base for safety reasons and must stay a minimum of ten (10) feet outside of the baseline until the ball is hit.

#### Defense

1. There will be no infield fly rule. The ball remains alive and in play until play is stopped. Any/all runner(s) are in jeopardy of being put out or advancing.
2. The coach in the outfield cannot instruct his players after the ball has been pitched.
3. The coach that is pitching cannot instruct players on the field. The base coaches are allowed to coach the base runners only.
4. To stop runners from advancing, the ball must be in front of the lead runner or in possession of the pitcher player inside of the pitching circle before time can be called. If the runner is more than halfway to the next base when time is called, the runner will be awarded the next base. • If

## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

the ball is overthrown in an attempt to make a play, the runner will be awarded one base on overthrow.

5. If the pitching coach is unintentionally hit with a batted ball, it is an immediate dead ball and a no pitch. If the pitching coach intentionally makes contact with the ball or in the umpire's judgment interferes with a defensive play, the ball is dead, and the batter is out. The coach will be given a warning and a second infraction will result in the coach being ejected.

6. The base distance will be 60 feet.

7. A team may play with an optional tenth (10th) player on defense. This optional player must be positioned in the outfield and must stay a minimum of ten (10) feet outside of the baseline until the ball is hit.

8. There will be a maximum of 10 defensive players on the field, but no more than 6, including the catcher, can be positioned inside the infield baselines. If a ball is hit in fair territory, there is no minimum distance it must travel to be a fair ball.

9. Upon fielding a hit, the pitcher must attempt a play at either 1B, 2B or 3B.

10. At the time the ball is declared dead, the umpire shall award a runner the next base only if the runner is half the distance or more to that base. If the runner is not half the distance to the next base, he shall be returned to the base he had safely reached.

11. When the umpire calls the ball dead, it stays dead until the umpire calls the ball in play again.

12. In setting up defensive positions, the pitcher shall not play closer to home plate than the pitching rubber in place on the field (either 35 or 40 foot).

### Offense

1. There will be no designated hitter (DH).

2. There will be no stealing. Any/all runner(s) are liable to be put out if they are off the base. Base runners cannot advance on any passed balls.

3. Runners cannot leave the base in this division before the ball crosses the plate. If the runner leaves the base early, they shall be called out.

4. Runners may advance to the next base on an overthrow out-of-bounds. Runners cannot advance on any foul ball.

5. The runner may not leave the base until the ball is struck by the batter.

6. Leading off is not permitted.

7. Base stealing is not permitted.

8. There will be no base on balls.

9. There will be no hit by pitch.

10. There will be no drop third strike.

11. There will be no bunting.

12. Runners Overrunning a Base:

a. First base and home plate are the only bases a runner may touch and run past. If a runner should overrun 2nd and 3rd base, and an alert fielder who is in possession of the ball touches the runner while off the base, the runner shall be declared out.

b. A fielder may not push or force a runner off the base that a runner has gained in an attempt to tag him out.

## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- c. First base is treated like second and third bases when a runner makes a turn toward second base after touching 1st base.
  - d. Should a runner make a turnaround 1st base toward 2nd base and then tagged by the fielder, while in possession of the ball, prior to returning to 1st base, the runner shall be declared out.
13. Tagging-Up: A base runner will be allowed to tag-up after a fly ball out (base runner leaves base after fly ball is caught) only if the ball is caught in the outfield grass. TaggingUp is not allowed on infield fly outs.
14. A batter-runner or base runner that is put out must return to the dugout.

### **MID-SEASON TOURNAMENT & ALL STAR TOURNAMENT ONLY**

#### **MISS FLORIDA GENERAL RULES (WE ARE REQUIRED TO FOLLOW)**

MISS Florida Softball will play under official USSSA fast pitch rules, as modified by FL USSSA, with the following exceptions:

1. All players must be rostered on a Miss Florida Softball team during the regular season. All cities must provide Miss Florida with individual team rosters for their whole organization (Player's names, uniform number, and birthdates) and pay all fees PRIOR to being placed in the tournament brackets. The mid-season roster will be turned in at check-in time. These will be verified against league rosters. Any discrepancies will be reported to the league president and the Florida Board.
2. Entire roster must bat in all age divisions. Each time a player fails to take their turn at bat, she will be declared an out.
3. Every player on the team is required to play two (2) full innings during every game. Girls will play for a minimum of three (3) consecutive defensive outs (one (1) inning). If a team has more than ten (10) players on the roster, a player may not sit more than one (1) inning during each game. The team's core players must start the game and receive more or equal playing time than any of the team's pickup players. Substitutions are to be made every inning. If the game does not last more than two (2) innings, or a player is pulled for an injury, the team is not penalized. This rule resets at the end of every game. PENALTY: Failure to play each player two (2) full innings or three (3) consecutive outs is a protest-able offense resulting in a forfeit.
4. Teams will be allowed to play ten (10) defensive players, with the 10th players playing an outfield position.
5. There will be a maximum of 5 runs (NOT MODIFIED) scored or 3 outs per half innings, whichever comes first. Run rules are 12/10/8 after 3/4/5/ innings.
6. Time Limits (Mid-Season Tournament) a. T-Ball – One hour. b. 8U and above – one hour 15 minutes
7. A team is allowed pick-up players (which must be from your own organization). Pick-up players are allowed as follows: 8 from your roster playing – may pick up (3) three players; 9 from your roster playing may pick-up (2) two players; 10 from your roster playing may pick-up (1) one player. If 11 or more from your roster are playing NO pick- up players are allowed. Pickup players MUST wear their own team uniform, play the outfield, and bat last in the batting order. NO pick-up player may play more innings than any regular team rostered player. The penalty is a protest-able offense – if found you did violate the rule - the game is FORFEITED.
8. Home team will be decided by coin toss (mid-Season)

## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

9. "COURTESY RUNNER" – will be THE LAST RECORDED OUT. They can run for the pitcher or catcher of record ONLY. If you fail to report a pitching or catching change your new pitcher or catcher cannot have a courtesy runner.
10. No infield practice prior to game time.
11. Home team and visitor team are both encouraged to have scorekeepers, though the HOME TEAM will be designated the official scorekeeper. Beginning time must be recorded. Umpire must sign the book after the game. All pitchers MUST BE identified. Pitchers for each game will be listed on the bracket board. The pitcher information will be obtained from the official scorebook and the plate umpire. The host city will provide scoresheets for each game.
12. The tournament format will be Single Elimination with a two (2) game guarantee. If a team received a bye in the 1st round, it is considered a win. If a bye team from the first round loses before they can play two games, a consolation game will be played "IF" possible.
13. TROPHY REQUIREMENTS – ALL DIVISIONS a. 1 ST Place Team – 24" Gold b. 1 st Place individuals – 10" Gold c. 2 nd Place Team – 24" Silver d. 2 nd Place Individuals – 10" Silver e. 3 rd Place Individuals - Medallions
14. PITCHING RULE: No pitcher can pitch any more than 2 of the first 4 innings and no more than 3 of 6 innings. Innings do not have to be consecutive. (If game goes to 7 innings (or tie breakers after 6 innings, pitching can restart with no more than 2 of 4 innings or 3 of 6 innings or you can bring in a third or fourth pitcher). IF a pitcher pitches 1 pitch, it constitutes an inning. IF a team has more than 2 pitchers, the same number of innings rule applies. The pitching rules reset after every game. PENALTY FOR VIOLATION OF PITCHING REGULATIONS IS: Ejection for the head coach for the rest of that game and the next. Pitcher is also ejected (restricted to the dug-out) for the remainder of that game and the next. Her position in the batting order will be an automatic "OUT" for the remainder of the first game of ejection. She would not be listed in the batting order for the second game and can't play any position on the defensive. (Approved 2/24/20)
15. Once the tournament has begun, the "host city" in consultation with the Miss Florida Board has the right to change the tournament format to successfully conclude the tournament, if weather or other unforeseen issues arise.
16. Protest fee is \$75 CASH will be handed to the plate umpire at the time of the protest. Umpire will turn over the money to the designated Miss Florida Tournament Director. The protest committee consisting of the Tournament Director and the Umpire in Chief will hear all protests, and the TD will always have the final say.
17. All games played must have a timer, scoreboard timer or time keeping device under the control of the plate umpire.
18. NO METAL CLEATS will be allowed in any division of any Miss Florida Event.
19. ALL DEFENSIVE CHANGES MUST BE GIVEN TO THE PLATE UMPIRE IN WRITING (EXAMPLE: Top of 3 24 for 12). This includes all your pitchers and catcher changes. Since the entire lineup bats, there should NOT be any offensive changes.

Approved 2/28/10 Miss Florida Board  
Changes approved 2/24/13 Miss Florida Board  
Changes approved 1/8/17 Miss Florida Board  
Changes approved 2/18/18 Miss Florida Board



## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Changes approved 2/23/20 Miss Florida Board

Changes to rule 3 approved 3/27/22 Miss Florida Board

### MISS FLORIDA 8U COACH PITCH RULES – LEAGUE & TOURNAMENT

USSSA Eight & Under Coach Pitch rules, as modified by Florida USSSA, will be followed unless superseded by one of the following Miss Florida Softball rules for Eight & Under Coach Pitch.

1. OFFICIAL SOFTBALL will be the 11" Optic Yellow Softball.
2. THE GAME – The game shall consist of seven innings or a 1 Hour 15 Minute time limit.
3. DEFENSIVE PLAYERS – All defensive players must play by position. Outfielders must be positioned on the outfield grass or behind a line 10' outside the base path, if marked. Minimum of 8 and maximum of 10 defensive players on the field, with the 10th player playing an outfield position.
4. DEFENSIVE COACHES – One (1) defensive coach will be allowed on the field and must be positioned behind the outfielders. Defensive coach will be allowed to give continual instructions to defense. No catcher/coach will be allowed.
5. BATTING – The batter will be allowed five (5) pitches or three (3) strikes to hit the ball into fair territory. If the fifth pitch or 3rd strike is fouled the batter may continue to bat until there is a strike out or the ball is hit into fair territory.
6. OFFENSIVE COACHES – The offensive team will be allowed three (3) coaches as follows: One first base coach, one third base coach, one coach serving as pitcher.
7. The pitcher/coach will pitch from a thirty-five (35) foot pitching rubber. The pitcher/coach may receive the ball from the player positioned as pitcher or catcher ONLY. The pitcher/coach shall NOT give base running instructions to the batter/base runner or any other base runner. a. PENALTY: First offense – warning. b. Second offense – Ejection of the offending coach.
8. The pitcher/coach must make every effort to avoid interfering with the defensive players.
9. If the pitcher/coach is unintentionally hit with a batted ball, it is an immediate dead ball and a no pitch.
10. If, upon an immediately batted ball, the coach intentionally makes contact with the ball or, in the umpire's judgment, interferes with a defensive play, the ball is dead, and the batter is out, and all runners return to the base they occupied at the time of the pitch.
11. If the coach makes contact with the ball or, in the umpire's judgment, interferes with a "delayed" defensive play, the ball is dead and the runner closest to home is out and all runners return to the base they legally occupied at the time of the interference. a. PENALTY: First offense – draws a warning or ejection, based on the severity. b. Second offense – draws an automatic ejection of the offending coach.
12. BASERUNNING – The base runners must be in contact with the base until a legally pitched ball is hit. PENALTY: "No Pitch" will be called and the runner will be declared out.
13. CATCHERS – The catcher may be positioned anywhere from the catcher's box to the backstop screen.
14. If the catcher is positioned within the catcher's box, she must be properly equipped with shin guards, chest protector, and wear a NOCSAE approved helmet with protective mask.
15. If the catcher is positioned outside the catcher's box, (between the catcher's box and the backstop screen) she must wear a NOCSAE approved helmet with facemask.

## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

16. MODIFIED TWO STEP RULE: a. Hash marks must be placed halfway between 1st and 2nd and 2nd and 3rd and 3rd and home. b. Player fields ball on one side of line, fielder is allowed to run to closest base. (ex. Second baseman fields a ball on the first base side of hash mark, they are allowed to run to first base to record out.) c. Player fields ball on the far side of line, fielder must call time or throw to base in front of them. (ex. Shortstop fields a ball on the second base side of hash mark, to record out at third, they must throw to 3rd baseman before crossing hash mark).
17. Pitchers are allowed to run a player down going home as long as they fielded the ball on the home plate side of hash mark.
18. All hash marks are not enforced in case of rundowns or “pickle” situations.
19. There will be hash marks halfway between 1st and 2nd, 2nd and 3rd, and 3rd and home. These will be used to direct a runner to the next base or return to the last base touched (umpire judgment) when “time” is given by umpire.
20. Time will be called when a defensive player has possession of the ball in advance of the lead runner (stop progress of lead runner) or the ball is returned to the pitcher with at least one foot inside the circle (e.g., Request “time” from the umpire).
21. Teams may use one Additional Player (AP), for a total maximum of 11 players in the batting order. (All-Star tournament only. League and Mid-season bat entire lineup.)
22. No bunting or stealing will be allowed.
23. Courtesy Runner will be LAST RECORDED OUT (for pitcher and catcher only).
24. There will be a maximum of 5 runs scored or 3 outs per each half inning, whichever comes first. Run rules are 12/10/8 runs after 3/4/5 innings.
25. Overthrows (This pertains to first base only) (rec and midseason)
  - a. There will be only one base allowed (not awarded) on the first overthrow on a play. The one base is not automatically awarded the player can still be put out. Any runners not being played on will also be controlled by the one base allowed. (ie: base runner at first, ball is hit and batter runner proceeds towards first base, ball is overthrown – the runner from first base will have to stop at third (1+1 but the +1 is not guaranteed). Once the batter runner reaches second base or stops at first, play is dead for all runners.
26. OVERTHROWS BACK TO PITCHER ARE TO BE CONSIDERED LIVE BALL PLAY UNLESS TIME HAS ALREADY BEEN GRANTED BY THE UMPIRE.

Approved by Miss Florida Board 2/24/2013

Approved by Miss Florida Board 1/15/2018

### MISS FLORIDA T-BALL MID-SEASON AND ALL-STAR RULES

1. Ball: 11-inch poly soft ball will be used.
2. Distances:
  - a. Pitching rubber set at 35 feet.
  - b. Restraining Arc is 35 feet from point of home plate
  - c. Catcher’s Arc is 10 feet from point of home plate
  - d. Base length is 60 feet.
3. Innings: Regulation game is 5 innings. Tiebreaker Procedure will be used in the 6th inning or in any inning that begins after time has expired.

## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

4. Time Limit: 55-minutes.
5. Runs per Inning: Maximum of 5 runs can be scored each inning for each team.
6. Run Rule: If either team is behind and cannot catch up or go ahead, the game shall be over immediately. Effectively that is 13 runs after 3 innings, 7 runs after 4 innings.
7. Offensive Lineup: the batting lineup may be any number from nine up. If a player is removed for any reason other than ejection, the spot in the batting order will be skipped with no out recorded.
8. Defensive Positions: the defensive team must have a minimum of 8 and may have a maximum of 10 players in the field.
  - a. Defensive players must remain behind the pitcher's plate line until the batter has hit the ball.
  - b. Only players playing an "in field" position can position themselves on the infield. The rest must be in the outfield. The outfield is defined as at least 10 feet outside the base line of fair territory.
  - c. One player shall be in the pitcher's position on the pitching mound with at least one foot with 8 feet of the pitcher's plate at the start of each play and cannot leave it position until the ball is hit off the "T".
  - d. CATCHERS – The catcher may be positioned anywhere from the catcher's box to the backstop screen. If the catcher is positioned within the catcher's box, she must be properly equipped with shin guards, chest protector, and wear a NOCSAE approved helmet with protective mask.
9. If the catcher is positioned outside the catcher's box, (between the catcher's box and the backstop screen) she must wear a NOCSAE approved helmet with facemask.
10. Offensive: The batter will be allowed three swings. If the batter misses the ball it will be counted as a swing (strike). If the ball goes foul, or the ball does not go over the 10' Tee Arc, this will be considered a swing (strike). If the batter fouls a third strike the batter will be called out. a. The batter will be allowed only one practice swing prior to each swing in the batter's box; Any excess practice swings will be called a strike. b. All offensive players must wear NOCSAE approved batting helmets with face mask.
11. Runners may not leave the base until the ball is hit. Penalty: dead ball, runner is out.
12. One base on an over-throw.
13. Stealing is NOT permitted.
14. All throws must be overhand, except when momentum or close distance requires an underhand toss. NO BALL ROLLING.
15. Modified two step rule: a. Hash marks must be placed halfway between 1st and 2nd, 2nd and 3rd, and 3rd and home. b. Player fields ball on one of line, fielder is allowed to run to closest base (ex. Second baseman fields a ball on the first base side of hash mark, they are allowed to run to first base to try to record an out) c. Player fields ball on the far side of line, fielder must throw to base in front of the runner. (ex. Shortstop fields a ball on the second base side of hash mark, to record out at third, they must throw to 3rd baseman before crossing hash mark) d. Pitchers are allowed to run a player down going home as long as they fielded the ball on the home plate side of hash mark. e. All hash marks are not enforced in case of rundowns or "pickle" situations.
16. Defensive player (in control of the ball) must be in the pitcher's circle or stop progress of lead runner to have play stopped (e.g., Request "time" from umpire).
17. \*\*\*In the umpire's judgment, "time" will be called when any player requests it if all other play has stopped.

## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

18. There will be hash marks halfway between 1st and 2nd, 2nd and 3rd, and 3rd and home. These will be used to direct a runner to the next base or return to the last base touched (umpire judgment) when "time" is given by umpire.

19. Defensive coaches – Two (2) defensive coaches will be allowed on the field and must be positioned behind the outfielders. Coaches will be allowed to give continual instructions to defense.

20. Offensive coaches – The offensive team will be allowed three (3) coaches as follows: 1 first base coach, 1 third base coach, and 1 coach at home plate to manage the batting tee and assist batter. Home plate coach will be responsible for moving the tee from the field of play, without interfering with the play. Penalty: The runner closest to home will be called out and all runners will return to the last base legally occupied.

Adopted by Miss Florida T-Ball Committee 3/06

Revisions approved April 15, 2007.

Revisions approved May 3, 2009.

Approved by Miss Florida Board 1/15/2018

### **MISS FLORIDA All Star Rules (ages 10U thru 16U)**

1. All cities must participate in "MID-SEASON TOURNAMENT" to be able to attend "ALL STARS".

2. All players must have played 2/3 or 10 games, whichever is greater to be eligible as an all-star player.

3. A pick-up player may only be picked-up two (2) times during a regular season to be eligible as an all-star player. (A pick-up player is defined as a player who is being 'picked-up' to play a regular season game by a team no more than one division above her own. There is no limit on the number of times a player may be 'borrowed' by a team in her own division.)

4. All Star Tournament will be a double-elimination format and must use Official USSSA Brackets.

5. All Divisions will be played in accordance with the current years USSSA Official Rule Book modified by Florida USSSA rules and Miss Florida.

6. Games will be 1 hour and 15 minutes or 7 innings, whichever comes first.

7. Game time is forfeit time. Only tournament Director or UIC may forfeit a game.

8. There will be an official scorekeeper at each field. The umpire will give any changes to the official scorekeeper only. The official score sheet (along with the lineup sheets) will be turned in to the Tournament Director immediately after the game. HOME TEAM WILL BE OFFICIAL SCORE. YOU WILL GIVE HOME TEAM COACH THE SCORE SHEET TO GIVE TO THEIR SCOREKEEPER

9. Home Team scorekeeper is responsible for running the scoreboard (if operational) during the game. HOST CITY WILL PROVIDE SCORESHEETS FOR EACH GAME.

10. Home team will be decided by coin toss.

11. All games must have a timer, scoreboard timer or time keeping device that will be controlled by plate umpire.

12. Courtesy runner for the pitcher or catcher of record can be either a sub (someone that has not been in the game) or the (last recorded out). Miss Florida rule.

13. Per board approval - No metal cleats will be allowed at any MFS event in any age group. Miss Florida Softball rule.

14. Protest fee will be \$75 CASH paid to Miss Fla. Any protest not made during the game (i.e.: player eligibility) must be made in accordance with USSSA Rules to the Miss Florida Tournament Director within

## MISS VENICE FASTPITCH SOFTBALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

10 minutes following completion of the game. Player eligibility protest will be presented to the Miss Florida Board of Directors and if the team is found to be in violation of the eligibility rule, the offending league will be fined \$500.00 with the possibility of not being able to participate in All Stars the next year. The offending coach could be suspended from coaching in Miss Florida. Player eligibility protest will not be decided at the tournament.

### 15. TROPHY REQUIREMENTS:

- a. 1 st Place Team = 24" Gold
- b. 1 st Place Individual = 10" Gold
- c. 2 nd Place Team = 24" Silver
- d. 2 nd Place Individual = 10" Silver
- e. 3 rd Place Individual = Medallion

Approved 02/28/10 Miss Florida Board

Changes approved 2/24/13

## MISS FLORIDA SCOREKEEPER RULES FOR MID-SEASON & ALL-STARs

1. Your team goes on the top of the book at every game.
2. Home team and visitor team are both encouraged to have scorekeepers, though the HOME TEAM will be designated the official scorekeeper. Beginning time must be recorded. Umpire must sign the book after the game. All pitchers MUST BE identified. Pitchers for each game will be listed on the bracket board. The pitcher information will be obtained from the official scorebook and the plate umpire. The host city will provide scoresheets for each game.
3. The line-up for every game must include a LAST NAME, FIRST NAME, and A JERSEY NUMBER.
4. Home team must have umpires sign the book after the game.
5. Make 2 line-ups; one goes to the opposing coach and one goes to the plate umpire.
6. Keep up with the pitching rotation. Document on the score sheets total outs pitched by EACH pitcher for every game.
7. All books must be legible for All-Star verification.
8. Highlighters are not to be used in the books; they are for All-Star verification only.
9. NOTE: Any deviation will result in your players not being verified for All-Stars