

The Greater Keene Women's Softball Association, Inc.
2026 By-Laws

Article I: Rules

Section 1.01: The team players, coaches and managers shall abide by the Constitution and By-Laws of the Greater Keene Women's Softball Association, Inc.

Section 1.02: Modified Pitch division players, coaches and managers shall abide the current USA Softball modified pitch softball rules with the following exceptions.

- (a) The Greater Keene Women's Softball Association is an Open Pitch League. Our pitching rules are as follows:
 - (i) All divisions will pitch from 43'
 - (ii) "A Division" – Open Pitch Including Windmill
 - 1) Will follow USA Softball Rules for JO play
 - (iii) All other divisions – Modified Pitch
 - 1) Will follow USA Softball Rules for modified pitching.
 - 2) The pitcher must start with both feet on the pitcher's plate.
 - 3) The pitcher must not throw overhand or use a windmill. These shall be called an "Illegal Pitch" by the umpire(s).
 - 4) The pitcher who steps, hops or drags off the front of the pitcher's plate, replants the pivot foot, thereby establishing a second impetus, or starting point, pushes off from the newly established starting point and completes the delivery shall be called for "Crow Hopping" and an "Illegal Pitch" will be called by the umpire(s).
 - 5) Any act by the pitcher when both feet become airborne on the initial move and push from the pitcher's plate shall be considered "Leaping" and will be called an "Illegal Pitch" by the umpire(s).
 - 6) In the act of delivering the ball, the pitcher must take one step forward simultaneously with the release of the ball. Both feet must always remain in contact with the pitching plate prior to the forward step. Any step backward will be considered an "Illegal Pitch".
- (b) GKWSA Free Substitution rule:
 - (i) Defensive:
 - 1) No reporting requirement & number of change limitations
 - 2) Anybody in/out as often as you want
 - 3) Defensive players do not need to be offensive players or listed in the batting order

- (ii) Offensive:
 - 1) Batter or Substitute Runner/Player must run and/or bat in same line up position every time throughout the game. Cannot run/ bat in another line-up position.
 - a. For Example, if a player was a substitute runner for the 5th position and later becomes the batter/runner they must bat in the 5th position. They have the option of returning as a substitute runner again later in the game in the 5th position.
 - 2) NO limitation on times in or out offensively in that position, however every time an Offensive substitute is made, it MUST be reported.
 - 3) No limitations on the number of batters that have substitute runners.
- (c) A shoe shall be considered official if it's made with either canvas or leather uppers or similar material. The soles are to be smooth, soft, or hard rubber cleats or hard plastic cleats. Soles with metal heel plates or metal spikes and shoes with rounded metal spikes are illegal. Any player who fails to abide by this rule will be ejected from the game.
- (d) Pitchers will be required to wear a facemask that is NOCSAE certified.
- (e) The USA Softball rule regarding the Designated Player (DP) is not applicable in league play.
- (f) Any player may enter/re-enter at any time as long as the act does not cause a delay in the game. Once a person has batted or entered the game offensively, that person can bat only in the position stated in the score book.
- (g) Teams may have ten (10) batters in their line-up.
- (h) For the 6:00PM game only, there is a 10-minute (15 minutes @ Brown Field) grace period to field eight (8) players. Upon arrival of the eighth player the team must immediately take the field.
- (i) No swinging of bats outside of the fences.
- (j) Run Ahead Rule of 15 runs after three (3) innings, 12 runs after four (4) innings and 8 runs after five (5) innings shall apply per USA Softball guidelines.
- (k) The USA Softball rule regarding pitching distance is applicable in league play. The pitching distance for league play shall be 43'.
- (l) All league play games shall have a time limit of one (1) hour and 30 minutes of playing time, provided there is not a tie. Time limit starts when an umpire states "take the field." A game is complete after one (1) hour and 30 minutes of play and a team is winning upon completion of that inning, if the home team is ahead the inning shall be deemed complete, and they will not bat again. In the event of a tie, after one (1) hour and 30 minutes of playing time, the International Tie Breaker rules apply, regardless of the inning when time limit is reached, and game is not considered complete by score. League mercy run rules still apply for 3rd, 4th, and 5th innings. The Board member on duty shall alert the umpires and teams when there is approximately fifteen (15) minutes left to the game.
- (m) Pitchers will be allowed five (5) warm up pitches in the first inning or upon their first entry into the game. Following the first inning of the game only pitchers will be allowed to warm up, with a maximum of three (3) pitches, there will be no infield, outfield, or "throw downs" by the catcher to warm up. Teams and the new batter will be allotted two (2) minutes to take the field, step in the batter's box, and throw the first pitch at the transition of each half inning. Penalty for not adhering to this time-limit will defer to the USA Softball rule book.
- (n) If there is a safety concern for any player's action, a warning will be given, if the action happens again this player may be ejected from that game at the umpire(s) discretion. Example, may be but not limited to: throwing bat or helmet, dangerous slide, pitching at player with intent to hit the batter, etc.

Article II: Finances

Section 2.01: The entry fee for the teams shall be determined by the Executive Board based on the number of teams entered, number of games to be played and estimated expenses. Entry fee total is \$675.00 per team, binder fee will be deducted from this total. Increase of entry fee initiated for the 2022 season as determined in the 2021 post-season meeting on October 19, 2021.

Section 2.02: A \$100.00 binder fee must be paid with submission of a partial roster. It will not be refunded but shall be considered as part of the entry fee. The deadline is set at a pre-season scheduled meeting. Any check returned for insufficient funds, will be charged a \$35.00 return fee.

Section 2.03: Each member as defined by the Constitution shall pay a fee, as determined by the Executive Board:

- (a) Each player will pay a player's fee of \$65.00. Increase of player's fee initiated for the 2023 season as determined in the 2022 post-season meeting on December 5, 2022.
- (b) Each Manager and/or Coach will pay a fee of \$20.00. Manager / Coach fee initiated for the 2026 season as determined in the 2025 post-season meeting on December 2, 2025.
- (c) Any check returned for insufficient funds; the player will be charged the return fee plus a \$10 administration fee charge. The TEAM will be ineligible to play until the fee and amount of the original check is paid.

Section 2.04: The add/drop deadline is June 15th for the current year.

Section 2.05: All league teams must pay a league fee as set by the league each year. Upon submission of Final Roster, the team must submit a check for all players' fees and a check for balance of league fees. These fees may be combined or submitted separately with a maximum of (2) checks. Any check returned for insufficient funds, will be charged the return fee plus a \$10 administration fee charge.

Section 2.06: The league agrees to give each team one (1) new ball for each home game. The game ball is to be supplied by the home team and given to the umpire prior to the start of the game.

Section 2.07: Any team wishing to hold a raffle must notify the League President. Permits are required and can be obtained from the City of Keene only. Teams are not to contact the Keene Parks & Rec. Dept. for raffle permits. Winners will be posted immediately at Wheelock Park. Running a raffle without a permit may result in suspension of the team and all players for one (1) calendar year.

Section 2.08: Umpires will receive payment of \$56.00 for each completed game. The UIC will present the Treasurer and President with the number of completed games by Umpire for review and final disbursement at the end of each month. Should an Umpire complete a game solo, they will receive \$84.00 for that game. For games that are postponed due to weather and the same umpires are unavailable for the rescheduled game, they shall be paid as follows: Completed innings: \$8/inning/umpire; remaining innings: \$8/inning/umpire. If the same umpires are procured for the continuation of the game, they will receive the full \$56.00 for the game. Umpire pay rates increased for the 2026 Season, see notes from the December 2025 meeting.

Section 2.09: GKWSA sponsored Tournament Director and UIC will each receive \$300.00 for their work and effort to coordinate the tournament. All tournaments sponsored by GKWSA must be approved by the Executive Board and obtain the proper sanctions, insurance, and liability waivers.

Article III: Team Responsibility

Section 3.01: League uniform requirements are as follows:

- (a) USA Softball uniform guidelines apply with following exceptions: headwear not required, if worn, hat, headbands, and visors must be worn correctly; pants and/or sliding pads do not need to match in color.
 - (i) Shorts or the layer directly touching the skin of the legs must have a minimum seven-inch (7") inseam and must not be intentionally pulled up to be shorter.
 - (ii) Jersey's can be tucked into pants or untucked if the midriff does not show. Jerseys cannot be folded up to be tucked into a bra or undershirt.
- (b) Modified Pitch division shoe requirement is as noted in Article 1 section 1.02 c.
- (c) Although recommended prior to, if possible, June 1st is deadline for teams to be in proper matching jerseys.
 - (i) All League Officers will be responsible for enforcement of the rule.
 - (ii) Resulting in the inability for that player to play until a proper shirt is worn.
 - (iii) The League officer may waive this requirement if significant extenuating circumstances are present.
- (d) Coaches must wear similar matching sponsor/team attire by the June 1st deadline for matching team jerseys.
 - (i) Shirt must reflect the sponsor's logo and/or team name but does not specifically need to be the jersey.
 - (ii) Closed toed shoes are required when on the field.
 - (iii) Hat is optional.

Section 3.02: Rosters will be on file with the league Secretary after the league Treasurer has calculated team fees. All drop/add slips will be on file with the league Secretary.

Section 3.03: Only members on the official rosters, the scorer, the bat boy/girl, coach, and sponsor will be allowed to sit on team benches or be in the dugout.

Section 3.04: The home team shall have the 3rd base side team bench, and the visiting team shall have the first base side.

Section 3.05: Any player, coach or team found consuming alcoholic beverages during the game is subject to disciplinary action. If an umpire and/or board member(s) have any reason to believe that a player, coach, or team appears to be impaired they will be ejected from the game and will be subject to disciplinary action and subject to suspension.

Section 3.06: All teams shall be USA Softball sanctioned. The USA Softball fee is included in the entry fee.

Section 3.07: Make up games will be played as assigned by the President of the League.

Section 3.08: Known forfeits require 24-hour notice to the league President. Upon the third forfeit the team will forfeit the rest of the season games and Playoffs. (Note: should this happen prior to the June 15th* Add/Drop cutoff date, those players on the season forfeited team can still move to another team). If notification of forfeit in advance of 24 hrs. and a rain-out should occur, no forfeit shall be charged, and the game will be rescheduled as a normal rain-out. *Date changed 10/29/2024.

Section 3.09: It will be the responsibility of both teams to report game score to the Senior Vice President immediately after their game via text or email. (No phone calls please).

Article IV: Player Restrictions

Section 4.01: After the add player cutoff, A team that lacks nine (9) players on their roster due to undo hardship caused by job, military, injury, or an emergency, may add a player who is not already on a league roster. A minimum of 24-hour notice must be provided in writing with reason as to why an additional player is needed and the majority of the Executive Board must approve that player.

Section 4.02: Under penalty of forfeit, no non-rostered players will be allowed to play for any team, all approved Add Slips will be considered rostered. Any add-on requests to a roster will be given to the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, or Division Representative up to 24 hours prior to the league game in which the player is requesting to play, this does not mean that a player is automatically approved if the slip is received within 24 hours. The add-on will need to be approved by majority of the Board. Coaches will be notified immediately upon an approved/disapproved decision and must attain approval prior to the player being eligible to play. Any required fees must be paid at the time of the add-on. No player may sign more than one Modified Pitch roster. NO player may be added after June 15th* except as noted in section 1 of this article. All fees must be paid by check or cash to be accepted. *Date changed 10/29/2024.

Section 4.03: To change from one team to another in the league, a player will need to submit a drop/add slip 24 hours prior to the next game and must be on file with a league officer. A division player is allowed (1) Drop/Add per season and is subject to board approval. Additional Drop/Add requests require majority Executive Board approval. A player having a uniform from a previous team is to return that uniform or pay for the cost of the uniform. This is to be done prior to changing to a team and/or prior to the April meeting of the league. Otherwise, her playing on any team will be prohibited until this has been turned in or paid for. This rule applies to one prior season.

Section 4.04: No player shall drop more than one (1) Modified Pitch division per season. All players dropping divisions are subject to approval by the Placement Committee prior to season start and the majority of the Executive Board after season start.

Section 4.05: All members and players must sign “hold harmless” agreement. By signing the roster or Add/Drop Slip this relieves GKWSA of any liability.

Section 4.06: Any Modified Pitch division player or coach must be the age of 15 by September 1st for the current year. A parent or guardian for players or coaches under age 18 must sign a waiver.

Section 4.07: Any member of the league may be eligible for suspension and/or expulsion from the league for inappropriate behavior prior to, during and/or immediately following a game. The following sanctions for the specific behaviors listed below will be imposed without exception and will not be subject to appeal, any incident that is not specifically listed is to be managed based on the USA Softball *Official Rules of Softball*, as distributed to Coaches/Managers at the start of the current season:

- (a) Physical Altercation: Ejection and immediate suspension for remainder of the season and next full season.
- (b) Verbal Threats, Bullying: Ejection immediate suspension for remainder of season.
- (c) Excessive Aggressive behavior: Ejection immediate three game suspension.
- (d) Profanity that can be heard off field: Ejection from game and one game suspension.

- (i) All suspensions will occur immediately, based on the team schedule. Understanding that other types of inappropriate behavior might take place, (misrepresentation on league rosters, violations of league By-Laws, etc.) this behavior should be reported to an Executive Board Member as soon as possible for discussion. Once reported the Executive Board will take the following actions:

- 1) League President and/or his/her designee will discuss accusations with the accused league member (and their coach when appropriate).
- 2) League President and/or his/her designee(s) will collect witness statements of such behavior.
- 3) Executive Board will decide on the complaint based on the information collected.
- 4) League President will deliver such determination to the accused. Should the accused feel their sanction is excessive and/or unfounded, they reserve the right to pursue further review with the Arbitration Board. An Arbitration Board meeting will be scheduled within seven (7) days of request. It is the league members' responsibility to personally appear during the scheduled Arbitration Board hearing as this will be their one and only opportunity to discuss the incident with the Board. The decision of any grievance brought before the Arbitration Board is final.

Section 4.08: Following with USA Softball Shorthand rule, "A game may begin or finish with one less than required to start" this refers to eight (8) rostered players of the team. Teams will be allowed a "pick-up" of a ninth (9th) player. That player must be a League rostered player. The player must be currently on a roster in an equal or lower division than she will be picked up for. No "pick-up" player may be used as a pitcher. At the time of the pick-up, notification must be made to a League Officer prior to playing. If a team rostered player shows up the "pick-up" player will no longer be allowed to be on the team. It will be the Executive Board's discretion as to the number of times that a same player is allowed to be picked up by teams. This rule does not apply to playoffs where no "pick-up" players will be allowed.

Section 4.09: The placement of all high school players will be at the discretion of the board at any point during the season. No high school player will be allowed to pitch in the lowest division. Current year college player will only be allowed to pitch in the highest division. *Revised 2/26/2024

Article V: Protest

Section 5.01: As per USA Softball rule, there shall be no protests of an umpire's judgment call.

Section 5.02: All protests must be entered at the time of occurrence and before the next pitch. The umpire must sign both books and announce that the game is being played under protest. Exceptions: (1) If the protest is for an ineligible player, the protesting team has 36 hours to make this appeal. (2) During Division Playoffs ALL protests will be resolved before the continuation of play. Protest Fee will apply per Section 5.03 less the "written account" requirement.

Section 5.03: The protesting team will submit in writing a full account of why the game was protested with a \$25.00 fee. The fee will be refunded if the protest is upheld. The statement and fee must be given to a league officer within 36 hours. Officer cannot be a member of a team involved in the protest.

Article VI: Umpires

Section 6.01: Scheduling of two (2) umpires per game will be the responsibility of the Umpire-in-Chief (UIC). If only one (1) umpire shows up for a game, it is the responsibility of the home team coach/manager to notify a board member immediately.

Section 6.02: Due to an umpire shortage, teams that refuse to play with only one (1) umpire will be forfeiting the game. Any protest cannot be related to having one (1) umpire.

Section 6.03: Forfeits will need to be announced to the UIC by noon of game day to avoid payment for umpires that were assigned.

Section 6.04: The Umpire-In-Chief (UIC) is responsible for the following duties:

- (a) Hold umpire sessions for both new and veteran umpires in the pre-season.
- (b) Make sure umpires are informed and have copies of all GKWSA by-laws and constitution.
- (c) Make sure umpires are properly trained, USA Softball attired and USA Softball sanctioned.
- (d) Schedule umpires for all GKWSA games including makeups, playoffs, and any tournament sponsored by GKWSA, and making sure there are no conflicts.
- (e) Make sure that umpire removal of players or managers is given in writing to the President within 48 hours of the incident.
- (f) Select umpires for City playoffs with assistance of the Executive Board.
- (g) Receive money from the treasurer, within 7 days of payment submittal, for umpire pay and disperse to any umpire who worked games the previous month.

Section 6.05: UIC shall not participate as an Umpire on the field during Tournaments or Play-Off's, unless it is necessary, to allow them to be available for any issues that may arise.

Section 6.06: Executive Board reserves the right for selection of umpires. In addition, the Executive Board reserves the right for input to the final selection of umpires for playoffs.

Article VII: League Placement

Section 7.01: Each division will have a playoff to determine the City Playoff Champions for each league.

Section 7.02: All teams in a division will be eligible for Playoffs, if they have not had more than two (2) forfeits in the current regular season. If a team has had more than two (2) forfeits in the current regular season then they are deemed ineligible for Playoffs and forfeit the ability to compete to be a City Playoff Champion for their division within the league.

- (a) Divisions will be split for playoffs.
- (b) 8 teams in a division the top four (4) will play in the upper half of the combined division, while the bottom four (4) will play in the lower half of the combined division.
- (c) 9 teams in division the 5th place team will be placed base on their performance against each of the teams in the upper half vs the lower half of the combined division based on record, runs scored, and runs allowed as a whole.

Section 7.03: In the event of a two (2) way tie for any of the positions:

- (a) The division record (head-to-head) between the tied teams shall determine final placement in the playoffs.
- (b) In the event the teams are still tied: the fewest runs allowed (head-to-head) shall determine the final placement in the playoffs.
- (c) If the teams remain tied after applying a) and b) the following will occur: If the tie is for First place: 1 one (1) game playoff shall determine the final placement of the teams. All other positions will be decided by a coin flip.

Section 7.04: If a team places 1st in their division for two (2) consecutive years that team will move up to the next division the following season if they have a minimum of five (5) returning players. All other team placement will be at the discretion of the placement committee.

Article VIII: Awards

Section 8.01: The first place and second place teams in division play will receive sponsor trophies or plaques. In the event of a tie (i.e. Two teams tie for first) each team will receive an Award for the tied position.

Section 8.02: Only the first-place team for each division in City Playoffs will receive individual awards. Second place teams will receive a Team award.

***These By-Laws were accepted by the GKWSA Executive Board on 01/01/2026. _____
The Executive Board reserves the right to rule on any item not specifically mentioned in these By-Laws on an as needed basis.***