

Orillia Girls' Softball League 2026

Participant & Coach Handbook



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Section 1: League Overview

The Orillia Girls' Softball League is a community-based recreational league designed to promote skill development, teamwork, and a love for the game in a fun and supportive environment. Our league serves players of all skill levels and is structured into three age-based divisions: Junior, Intermediate, and Senior.

League Administration

The league is organized and overseen by the Sport and Senior Recreation Coordinator in collaboration with the Summer Sport Coordinator (league convenors).

- **Summer Sport Coordinator (Primary):** Brenna Carroll | bcarroll@orillia.ca
- **Recreation Coordinator:** Jeff King | jking@orillia.ca

Weekly Schedule

- **Junior Division:** Practice (Sundays) | Game (Tuesdays)
- **Intermediate & Senior Divisions:** Practice (Weekdays) | Game (Sundays)

Communication

Coaches serve as the main point of contact for their team, responsible for relaying updates and team-specific information. **League Convenors** are responsible for creating teams, providing the schedule, and relaying league-wide announcements.

Player Development Focus

- **Fun First:** A fun environment keeps athletes engaged and wanting to return.
- **Equal Opportunity:** Every player deserves the chance to participate and try new positions. Equal playing time is mandatory.
- **Growth:** We prioritize personal and team improvement over winning.
- **Teamwork:** We value respect, communication, and resilience.

Team Selection

- **Player Requests:** Each player may request up to **one** teammate; however, requests are not guaranteed. Coaching requests are not accepted.
- **Balance:** Convenors strive for balanced teams. Adjustments may be made no later than the third week of the season.

Section 2: Coach Responsibilities

As a coach, you are a role model. You are responsible for the players' safety, development, and enjoyment.

Requirements & Commitment

- **Compliance:** Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Screening and attendance at the Mandatory Coaches Meeting.
- **Time:** Weekly game and practice, plus the **Day of Champions on Saturday August 15th, 2026** (Rain date: Sun Aug 16th).
- **Equipment:** Coaches are responsible for their assigned equipment bag and its return at the end of the season.

Primary Responsibilities

- **Main Liaison:** Act as the main liaison between the league convenors and players.
- **Information Sharing:** Share updates and team information with families.
- **Practice Management:** Communicate cancellations of practices requested by coaches (i.e., cancelling practice due to rain, scheduling conflict, etc.).
- **Support:** Answer questions as they come up from players and their parents.
- **Uniform Standards:** Ensure that jerseys are appropriate (league-issued).
- **Roster Integrity:** Ensure all players on the game sheet are on the roster and are eligible to play.
- **Mediation:** Act as the on-field mediator between players and officials.

Reporting

Any incidents compromising safety or sportsmanship must be reported to convenors immediately via City of Orillia Incident Forms.

Section 3: Rules and Regulations

Play follows **SPN (Slo-Pitch National)** rules unless otherwise stated.

3.1 Registration & Insurance

ALL PARTICIPANTS MUST BE REGISTERED PRIOR TO TAKING PART. Absolutely NO unregistered participants are allowed on the diamond. Insurance will NOT cover the team if an unregistered player is present. (Coaches/Assistants are exempt).

3.2 Player Minimums & Borrowing

- **Mandatory Cooperation:** In the event of a team shortage, the opposing team is expected to lend players as needed to field a full defensive team and allow the game to proceed.
- **Borrowing Protocol:** All borrowing requests must be handled strictly **Convenor-to-Coach**. Under no circumstances is a coach to approach a player directly.
- **Eligibility:** Borrowed players must come from the **same division or a lower division**. All such arrangements must be approved by the **Summer Sport Coordinator** or the **Recreation Coordinator**.
- **Full Participation:** Borrowed players are to participate as full members of the team for the duration of the game, which includes taking their regular turn in the batting lineup.
- **Roster Limits:** To prevent a forfeit, teams are permitted to add only enough players to the game sheet to reach the required **seven-player minimum**.
- **Day of Champions:** Teams must field at least seven players to compete. If a team cannot meet this minimum, they may borrow players from the opposing team to ensure the game is played.

3.3 Equipment Rules (NEW)

- **Cleats:** Metal or steel cleats are strictly prohibited. Players must wear molded rubber cleats or athletic shoes.
- **Bats:** Only bats with **USSSA 1.10 BPF** or **1.20 BPF** compliance stamps (commonly known as "thumb prints") are approved for play. Bats lacking a visible thumb print stamp are strictly prohibited for game use.
- **Official Game Ball:** Hot Dot Slo-Pitch balls will be used for the 2026 season.
- **Jewelry:** Participants are prohibited from wearing exposed jewelry, including watches, earrings, and neck chains. Medical alert bracelets or necklaces are exempt; however, they must be taped down if an official determines they pose a safety risk. All final rulings regarding jewelry safety remain at the umpire's discretion.

3.4 Batting & Defense

- **Batting:** Continuous batting order. **Bunting is prohibited** (automatic out).

- **Rotation (Junior/Intermediate):** Players cannot play the same position for more than 2 innings (Pitchers exempt)

3.5 Mercy Rule

- **Junior & Intermediate:** Max 5 runs per inning for all innings.
- **Senior:** Max 6 runs per inning. The last inning is "Open."
- **Note:** If the home team leads after the top half of the final inning, the bottom half is not played.

3.6 Bayview Diamond – Ground Rule Double

- Any ball that carries the gap in the outfield where there is no wall will be considered a home run.
- Any ball that bounces at least once past the outfield fence where there is no wall will be considered a ground rule double.

3.7 Ejection Rule (NEW);.

- **General:** All participants must adhere to the Softball Canada Code of Conduct **City of Orillia's Acceptable Behaviour Policy 7.3.6.1**. The umpire has the authority to eject any player, coach, or fan for disrespectful or abusive behavior.
- **Players:** Ejected players must leave the field and dugout. If age-appropriate supervision is unavailable, they may stay in the dugout silently.
- **Coach Ejections:** Any coach ejected from a game must immediately leave the park premises (remaining out of sight and sound). Ejections result in an **automatic one-game suspension**, subject to final review by League Administration.
- **Fans:** Fans are the responsibility of the Head Coach. If a spectator is ejected they must leave the park immediately or the associated team will **forfeit** the game.
- **Reporting:** All ejections require a written Incident Report submitted to the League within 48 hours.
- Any suspensions that are issued are subject to be submitted to the **City of Orillia Respect+ Program for further review and possible additional actions.**

Section 4: Weather

- Coaches have the discretion to cancel practices due to the weather.
 - In some cases, such as extreme weather warnings, league convenors may cancel practices in advance and will communicate this with all players.

- When needed, diamond conditions will be checked at 3:00 PM. If practices need to be called off due to poor conditions, a mass-email will be sent to all players in the affected division of the cancellation by 4:00 PM.
 - Parent/guardians are responsible for providing updated contact information if any changes have occurred since registration.
- For games, league convenors will make the final decision for cancellations based on weather.
 - In some cases, such as extreme weather warnings, league convenors may cancel games in advance and will communicate this with all players through mass-email.
 - The decision will be made and communicated by 4:00 PM to all players in the affected divisions.

Due to limited diamond availability and nature of the league, practices and games will not be rescheduled if cancelled.

The following policy has been taken from the **City of Orillia Emergency Procedure Manual - 3.4 Weather and Environment-Related Emergencies** and has been modified to meet the needs of this program.

4.1 - Extreme Weather

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants, staff, and community members involved in activities organized by the Parks and Recreation Department during periods of extreme weather.

Procedure

1. When a supervisor is alerted that a weather watch has been issued, staff must ensure they are near an indoor location.
2. Staff and participants should not be on the water and must ensure they can relocate participants indoors quickly if the watch escalates to a warning.
3. Staff should not take participants near or on the water, biking, or too far from suitable shelter during a weather watch.
4. When a weather warning is issued, staff will be advised to remain indoors until the warning has passed, following the supervisor's discretion.
5. If the warning escalates to an imminent threat, staff will be advised to Shelter in Place (refer to [Section 3.2 - Shelter in Place](#)).
6. By following these steps, staff can ensure the safety and well-being of participants during extreme weather conditions.

4.2 - Extreme Heat

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants, staff, and community members involved in activities organized by the Parks and Recreation Department during periods of extreme heat.

Procedure

1. In cases of a heat wave or warning, the Parks and Recreation Department will provide notices to PRD program participants during heat warnings and heat waves. The notice will include the following information:
 - a. Decisions regarding heat will be made under careful consideration of any statements from Environment Canada or the local Public Health Unit.
 - b. Personal Considerations for Heat Safety: When deciding whether or not to participate in activities during high heat, it is important for individuals to consider their unique health profiles and personal factors. Key considerations include:
 - i. Existing Medical Conditions or Medication Usage: Be aware of how existing medical conditions or medications might affect heat tolerance.
 - ii. Level of Acclimatization to Heat: Consider how accustomed you or your participant are to high temperatures.
 - iii. Level of Hydration: Ensure you are adequately hydrated before and during activities.
 - iv. Level of Physical Conditioning and Fitness: Take into account your overall physical fitness and conditioning.
 - v. We encourage you to visit Health Canada for more information on keeping children cool in extreme heat- <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/keep-children-cool-extreme-heat.html>
2. When temperatures reach 35°C or above with the humidex supervisors will begin discussions with staff regarding the safety of continuing planned activities.
3. As per the Humidex Based Heat Response Plan in [Policy 3.13 Heat and Cold Stress](#):
 - a. 30°-37°C: coaches are to encourage everyone to drink water before becoming thirsty, during both practices and games.
 - b. 38°-39°C: coaches are encouraged to give adequate water breaks.
 - c. 40°-41°C- A decision will be made on running practices or games for the safety of our staff and participants. Several factors will be considered when cancelling programming. These factors include:
 - i. Access to shaded areas
 - ii. Access to water
4. Coache's will be informed of a decision before an e-mail via Activenet is sent to the parents/guardians of the players.

4.3 Poor Air Quality and Wildfire Smoke

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants, staff, and community members involved in activities organized by the Parks and Recreation Division during periods of poor air quality, including events caused by wildfire smoke.

Climate change is contributing to more frequent and severe air quality issues, which can negatively impact health. Children and youth, older adults, individuals with pre-existing respiratory conditions, and those participating in outdoor sports and exercise are particularly at risk.

Procedure

In cases of poor air quality, the Parks and Recreation Division will provide notices to PRD program participants, user groups, and staff. The notice will include the following information

The Parks and Recreation Division will monitor local air quality conditions using the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) and will respond to any:

1. Special Air Quality Statements (SAQS) triggered at AQHI 7–10 (High Risk) – when AQHI is forecasted or reaches 7–10 (high risk), or when wildfire smoke is expected to deteriorate air quality. This is a warning that poor air quality is either occurring or expected.
2. Air Quality Advisories (AQA) triggered at AQHI 10+ (Very High Risk) – when AQHI reaches 10+ (very high risk) due to wildfire smoke. This is a strong advisory that air quality is dangerous due to wildfire smoke. Notices will be provided to program participants, staff, and user groups when AQHI is elevated. These may include advance notice, when available, to support planning and preparedness.

Personal Considerations for Smoke Safety- Individuals should assess their risk before participating in outdoor activities. Key personal considerations include:

- Respiratory or cardiac conditions (e.g., asthma, COPD, heart disease)
- Age (children under 5 and older adults are more vulnerable)
- Pregnancy
- Socioeconomic factors that may increase vulnerability
- Level of physical exertion
- Sensitivity to air pollution and wildfire smoke

Staff Precautions & Responsibilities

- Limit prolonged/strenuous outdoor activity when AQHI is elevated.
- Adjust intensity and duration of outdoor programming
- Relocate programs indoors or to shaded/sheltered areas when possible
- Provide additional water breaks and opportunities for rest
- Monitor participants and staff for both mild symptoms (e.g. cough, irritation, headache) and severe symptoms (e.g. shortness of breath, chest pain, wheezing).

Air Quality Response by AQHI Level

Alert Type	AQHI Level	Action
No Alert	1-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue programs with light precautions • Begin moving activities indoors where possible • Cancel or postpone outdoor programs that involve strenuous physical activity, especially with vulnerable groups (e.g., camps, outdoor fitness)
Special Air Quality Statement (SAQS)	7-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue low-intensity programs outdoors only if there's no indoor alternative and the activity is mild (e.g., arts & crafts in the shade) • Check in frequently with children and staff for symptoms

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cancel all outdoor programs, regardless of activity
Air Quality Advisory	10+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move all programs indoors where air quality is acceptable • Limit even indoor activity intensity if needed (e.g., replace gym time with board games) • Monitor all participants, even those indoors, for symptoms

Communication: Participants and coaches will be informed of any program changes or cancellations as soon as decisions are made, using email and/or phone communication.

Section 5: Code of Conduct

All players, coaches, parents/guardians and spectators are expected to uphold the highest standards of behavior, fairness, and sportsmanship. Your conduct, on and off the field, directly impacts the experience of every player in the league.

City of Orillia Respect+ Program

All participants must adhere to the **City of Orillia's Acceptable Behaviour Policy 7.3.6.1**, which promotes positive, respectful behavior in all recreational settings.

- The full policy will be provided to each player at the start of the season.
- The policy is also available at: **orillia.ca/respect**.
- If any player is involved in a Respect+ investigation, they *may* be removed from the league, until the investigation is complete.

The Respect+ Program reinforces our shared commitment to a safe, inclusive, and enjoyable softball environment for all participants.

Section 6: Health, Safety, and Medical

6.1 First Aid & Emergency Procedures

- Kits are located at all diamonds. Call **911** for serious injuries.
- **Concussions (Rowan's Law):** Suspected concussions require immediate removal from play. Medical clearance is mandatory before returning.

6.2 Allergies & Medical Conditions

- Coaches are informed of any relevant medical information (e.g., allergies, asthma) of participants at the beginning of the season that were identified during registration. This information is strictly confidential.
- Please ensure emergency medications like EpiPens or inhalers are available during games and practices.
- If you did not disclose a medical condition during registration, please ensure that both the league convenors and coaches are aware prior to the start of the season.

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