

2023 Senior Softball Rules

Our purpose is to enjoy competitive games under safe conditions. We follow most standard 16" slow pitch rules, with a few modifications intended to avoid or minimize injuries and to discourage disputes. In general, ASA rules apply with the following exceptions:

EQUIPMENT

1. Shoes with metal cleats will not be permitted.
2. No gloves of any kind are permitted for fielding. Batting gloves may be worn for batting only. **The only exception would be for a medical condition.**
3. Open bat rule, all bats are legal.
4. Baseline distances are to be 55 feet from base to base. Pitching distance is 38 feet.

PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES

1. Eleven (11) players will play on defense with free defensive substitutions at any time. There is no requirement for all players to play any minimum number of innings in the field.
2. **Batting rule:** In the interest of fairness, teams having more players present than the opposing team will have the **option** to either bat everyone or to bat the same number as the other team. Regular softball rules apply to batters who are substituted for in the batting order. Each player is allowed 1 re-entry into their same spot in the batting order after being substituted for.
3. If any team does not have 9 players at the scheduled start time determined by the schedule, this team becomes the visiting team and begins batting. After they make 3 outs and are to take the field, if they still do not have at least 9 players, this constitutes a forfeit. If a player cannot continue to play due to injury during the game, the game can continue with less than 9 players. IF managers agree, there may be borrowing of players from the other teams. 50+ teams may also use players from the 60+ league if they know they are going to be short.

THE GAME

1. Managers have the opportunity to meet with the umpire five (5) minutes before game time to review our rules. Teams must be ready to play at game time.
2. For the first 6 innings, the inning is over when five (5) runs have been scored regardless of how many outs there are. For the 7th inning and beyond, there is no run limit. This also applies to playoff games.
3. There is a 1 hour time limit for regular season games. A new inning will not begin after the 1 hour mark. Try to keep the game moving briskly. Between innings, warm-up throws must stop when a batter is ready. Seven (7) innings will be played to constitute a complete game. **A slaughter rule will apply if a team leads by 12 runs after 5 completed innings or 10 runs after 6 completed innings.**

4. The game will continue if there is a tie after seven (7) completed innings, until there is a winner or the time limit has been reached.
5. There is no time limit for playoff games.
6. **Any forfeit will be scored 7-0.**
7. In case of rain, it is constituted to be a complete game if 4 batted innings have been completed by the trailing team. If a game is discontinued before 4 innings have been completed by the trailing team, the game will be replayed as a “new start” regardless of the score at the time the game was halted. If the lightning detector siren is heard, **everyone must leave the fields and go to their cars until the all-clear is given.**

PITCHING REGULATIONS

1. **To deter quick pitches, the pitcher must start every pitch with both feet on the rubber, presenting the ball with both hands. Pitchers may take 1 step (not a jump)** behind the back edge of the rubber in any direction. The first step must remain planted. When stepping forward the pitcher must keep one foot on the rubber until the pitch is delivered. The other foot can go off the rubber in any direction.
2. A legal pitch must be within a six (6) foot minimum and twelve (12) foot maximum arc. Umpires should alert batters as soon as possible if a pitch is deemed illegal.
3. Any type of illegal pitch, including hesitations or stepping off the rubber, is a live ball which the batter can choose to swing at.
4. A strike pad will be used behind home plate, **positioned about 4 inches behind the plate**. Legal pitches striking any portion of the pad or the space between the plate and the pad will be called strikes as long as the ball clears home plate. **A ball hitting the plate will be a ball.** The strike pad can be the same width as home plate or as much as four (4) inches wider (2 inches on each side) than home plate.
5. Spinning the ball and knuckling the ball are permitted, **hesitations are not.**
6. Doctoring the ball in any way including intentionally putting dirt on it will be an illegal pitch and the pitcher will be warned. Further doctoring will mean ejection from the game.
7. To save time, intentional walks are allowed without having to throw any pitches.

BATTING REGULATIONS

1. Each batter will start with a 1 ball and 1 strike count.
2. There are no restrictions on the size of the batters box. However, the batter should be called out if he steps on home plate while swinging.
3. A full swing is required. Bunting / chopping is not permitted.
4. Runners may advance on a caught foul ball even if it is the 3rd strike.
5. The batter is out on any ball “popped up” above the batter’s head and caught by the catcher. Runners may advance at their own risk on any foul fly that is caught with less than 2 strikes.
6. The batter cannot be thrown out at 1st base after a successful hit into the outfield. **(Only Over 60 & 65 Leagues)**

BASE RUNNING

1. Each batter must reach first base by his own accord. No courtesy runner is allowed from Home to first base.
2. A courtesy runner can be used after the batter has reached first base. The courtesy runner is to be the last batted out.
 - a. **Anyone can be a courtesy runner, however each courtesy runner can only run 1x per inning (Over 60/65)**
3. The same courtesy runner cannot be used more than once in the same inning.
4. To minimize injuries, sliding is not permitted, and will be called an automatic out; this includes diving back to a base. It will be the umpire's discretion to determine if the base runner is diving back to a base.
5. **Runners should step on each base if there is no fielder in the way.** A base runner is permitted to over-run **each** base and can advance to the succeeding base without going back to touch the original destination base. The runner is at risk of being put out if a "BREAK" is made for the succeeding base after a base has been over-run. The base being headed to, in either direction, is still under the force out rule. This makes rundowns unnecessary.
6. The base runner must avoid contact by running to the non-fielder side of the base if a force play is in effect. Runners who deliberately try to break up a double play by interference will be called out. **If a fielder is in the way**, the runner is not required to touch any base, just run an arm's length to the side of it.
7. For plays at first base the runner should not use the white (fielder's) base, use the orange runner's base, but if there is risk of contact he may still run an arm's length to the non-fielder side of the base to avoid contact. **The 1st baseman should avoid throws that pull him into the base path.** The umpire will use his best judgment in these situations. For incidental contact, the umpire will determine if any interference took place. **Runners must avoid contact or risk being warned / ejected. These situations cause injury and conflict. Safety and camaraderie are the goals of this league.**
8. A commitment line located halfway between third base and home plate will be used. Once a runner's foot touches the ground on or past this line, the runner may not re-cross it in the direction of third base.
9. Other baselines: Runners will be allowed to retreat to the previous base on a play at 2nd or 3rd base. If a runner is more than halfway to 2nd or 3rd, they will be allowed to retreat back to the previous base and it will be a force out at that base. **Runners will not be allowed further advancement in case of an overthrow. We are not going to create run down situations and chaos on the fields. Keep it simple.**
10. To score a run the base runner must have a foot down on the runner's "home plate" before a defensive player in possession of the ball touches his foot on the batter's home plate. In the interest of safety, if the runner's home plate is wet and slippery, it is acceptable for the runner to step right next to the edge of the plate instead of directly on top of it. **If the runner touches or crosses over any portion of the batter's home plate it is an automatic out. No tags at home plate.**

11. No lead offs or stealing bases. Runners must stay on the base until the ball is pitched. Leaving the base too soon risks being called out. Runners must return to that base when the ball is not batted, or risk being picked off. Catchers can attempt to pick off runners, but pickoff overthrows are dead balls and no runners may advance.

Tie Breakers

1. **Tie Breakers will only be calculated into the final standings.**
2. If there is a tie between two teams, the following procedure will be used:
 - a. Head to head result between the teams
 - b. Run Differential in Head to Head to head games
 - c. Run Differential for throughout the season
 - d. Total runs allowed
 - e. Total runs scored
 - f. Coin flip
3. If there is a tie between three or more teams, the following procedure will be used:
 - a. Head to Head record between teams tied in standings (teams must have played an equal amount of games vs each other)
 - b. Run Differential in Head to Head games between teams tied in standings
 - c. Run Differential for throughout the season
 - d. Total Runs allowed
 - e. Total runs scored
4. Any Team with a forfeit automatically loses all tiebreakers.

CONDUCT

1. This league is for fun, exercise and fellowship. **Managers are responsible for keeping their team under control.** Only the team managers may discuss calls with the umpires. Managers should bring any concerns to the Athletics Supervisor.
2. Abusive language or taunting will be cause for ejection.
3. Those who start a fight will be ejected for one or more games and may result in expulsion from the league. This includes encounters in the parking lot. **There is no room for this behavior in this league.**
4. **Any player that is ejected will also be suspended for the next game. It will be an automatic out in the lineup when his turn comes unless there is a substitute.**
5. **Suspended players are not allowed to play in any game during the week(s) in which they are suspended.**
6. Teams will automatically forfeit any game in which they have a suspended player in the lineup.
7. Tags are allowed on all baselines except at home plate, where the fielder must instead step on the batter's plate, not the runner's plate. No fake tags. This will be treated as fielder interference and an extra base will be awarded.

8. The umpire's call will stand on all calls with the following exception. If an umpire makes a call that is contradictory to any of these rules. The proper procedure to correct an improper call is to call timeout and call both managers to discuss the instance with the umpire and a copy of these rules. If both managers can show the umpire the rule that should apply, the call should be changed. If either manager disagrees with proper rules interpretation, the umpire's call will stand. This should be done in an amicable way. With this procedure there should be no need for formal protests.

ROSTERS

1. Eligibility – For the 50+ league, players must have reached their 50th birthday on or before December 31 of the same year as the current season, 60th birthday for the 60+ league, 65th birthday for the 65+ league.
 2. Players cannot be added to a team roster after June 30th.
 3. Rosters and waiver forms must be turned in to the Athletics Supervisor or the park district front desk prior to the first game. It is recommended that teams have at least 14 players on the roster to reduce the chance of forfeits. No more than 20 players maximum on a roster to ensure everyone gets enough playing time.
 4. Payment of league fees must be made to the Elk Grove Park District prior to the start of the first game. For the current season, all players must have a photocopy of their driver's license on file.
 5. It is recommended that each manager keeps medical records and emergency contact information for each player at the field in case of emergencies. This information has allowed quicker actions by paramedics and has saved lives.
 6. All players must be on a roster.
 7. No Ringers - Players who participate in the playoffs must have already participated in at least half of the regular season games.
- (updated 4/27/23)