

GAME RULES

(Revised April, 2018--see red text)

A. Amateur Softball Association of America (ASA)

ASA Senior Slow Pitch Softball rules shall apply except as modified herein.

B. Participation Requirements

1) Age. Males must be at least 60 years old (females must be at least 50) during the calendar year of participation (e.g., if a male's 60th birthday falls on or before Dec. 31, he is considered to have met the minimum age requirement for that entire calendar year).

2) Residency. *Players must legally reside in the state of Maryland. Each team is allowed to have a maximum (not cumulative) of 2 players from adjoining states/jurisdictions (District of Columbia, Virginia, Delaware, Pennsylvania, West Virginia). Exceptions are granted for : a) former Maryland residents who have played in the League the year prior to leaving the state and who are considered as being "grandfathered" to continue play in the League; and b) those by exception after a majority vote of team managers.*

3) Franchise Fee. On entering the League, a new team shall be assessed a franchise fee, the same as for other teams in the league.

C. Field Layout

1) Distances. Pitching rubber to home plate: 50 feet. Between bases: 65 feet.

2) Pitching Mat. The pitching or strike mat shall be 17 inches wide by 24 inches long, with a "V" cut in one width to fit snugly against the back of home plate

3) Double Bag at First Base. A double bag (or mat equal to base size) shall be used at first base, with the extra portion of the bag (or mat) positioned in foul territory abutting the base, thereby allowing the batter-runner to avoid contact with the first baseman on a play made at first base (see Rule H-4).

4) Extra Home Plate. An extra home plate for scoring purposes shall be placed on the rearward extension of the first-base foul line at a distance of 8 feet from the rearmost corner of the regular home plate (see Rule H-6).

5) Commit Line. A line 3 feet long shall be marked perpendicular to the foul line halfway between third base and home plate (see Rule H-5 and Rule H-6).

D. Games

1) Starting Time. Games shall start at 10 a.m., with a grace period of 15 minutes. The second game of a doubleheader shall start 15 minutes after the end of the first game.

2) Innings. Single games shall consist of 9 innings or until completed in the event of a tie after 9 innings. Doubleheader games shall consist of 7 innings each (or 9 innings if both managers agree) or until completed in the event of a tie after 7 (or 9) innings.

3) Rain-Outs. The home-team manager shall be responsible for notifying a) the manager of the visiting team as soon as possible, *but no later than 7:30 a.m. on game day*, that a game has been rained out and b) the Commissioner of the rain-out and makeup dates.

4) Makeup Games. In the event of a rain-out, the game shall be rescheduled no later than Thursday of the following week, unless the managers of the affected teams mutually agree on another date. In the event of successive rain-outs, the games are rescheduled on subsequent Thursdays in the same order that the rain-outs occurred. *Failure of a team to show up for a makeup game shall constitute a forfeit.*

E. Teams

1) Players. Eleven (11) players shall constitute a full team. A team must be able to field a minimum of 9 players to start, play, and finish a game. A team may increase up to 11 players on defense after the game starts. When up to 11 players are on defense, at least the same number of players must be in the lineup. Players arriving after the start of a game may be added to the end of the batting order without substitution for a starting player.

2) Designated Hitters (DH). A team may use an unlimited number of players in the lineup, placing any 11 on defense.

3) Injured Players. There shall be no automatic out when an injured player cannot return to the lineup and no substitute player is available. However, if the injured player recovers, he may only re-enter the game in his original spot in the lineup.

4) Players Leaving Early. If a player needs to leave the game early, there shall be no automatic out when his batting position comes up, as long as the manager notifies the other manager before the game starts. This notification can be waived in the event of a personal or work emergency.

F. Pitching

1) Pitcher's Box. The pitcher may take any position from the front edge of the rubber to six feet behind the rubber and within the two-foot width of the rubber, with both feet firmly on the ground. At the time the ball is delivered at least one foot must be within the boxed area.

2) Legal Pitch. A ball delivered with a perceptible arc that reaches a height of at least 6 feet from the ground, while not exceeding a maximum height of 12 feet from the ground. A legal pitch striking any portion of home plate (including the black borders) or the pitching mat is a strike.

G. Batting

1) Bunting. No bunting or chopping is allowed. Any attempt to bunt or chop shall be an out and runners hold their bases.

2) Fouls. The *first* foul after two strikes shall be a strikeout. A foul tip that goes from the bat to the catcher's mitt shall be called a foul ball. For the batter to be called out on a foul tip, the ball must have gone higher than the batter's head.

3) Bats. **A bat whose barrel is composite, multi-walled, or titanium shall not be used. This includes, but is not limited to, bats on the "Bats NOT Allowed" portion of the Bats Allowable vs Not Allowable in BBSSL Softball list that appears on the League website (http://media.hometeamonline.com/photos/softball/BBSSL/Bat_List_Beltway_League_3_19_17.pdf); On the website's home page, click on "Allowable/Non-Allowable Bats" to see this list.**

4) Use of Illegal Bats. Any bat that has no markings or indistinguishable markings will not be permitted. If a player attempting to use an illegal bat is detected before he steps into the batter's box and the bat is removed, there is no penalty. However, if the batter steps into the batter's box with an illegal bat, it will constitute an attempt whether he swings the bat or not and the batter will be called out and disqualified from the game. A second violation during the season will result in that player being prohibited from league play for one year.

H. Baserunning

1) Shoes. No metal cleats or spikes are allowed.

2) Leaving Base. A runner must hold the base until the batter hits the ball. A runner is not out for stepping off the base after the batter swings and misses or the pitched ball passes home plate.

3) Sliding and Diving

Runners advancing to second, third base **or the scoring plate** and runners returning to any base may legally slide or dive. Advancing runners sliding or diving into first base shall be called out.

4) Avoiding Collisions. Any runner who *deliberately attempts* to run into the fielder who is covering a base or home plate or attempting to field a ball shall automatically be declared out.

At first base: The batter-runner must run to the portion of the double bag or mat located in foul territory whenever a play is made at first base (such as a throw from the infield or outfield). If the batter-runner touches any part of the white bag located in fair territory, he shall be declared out and all other baserunners restricted to advance one base. Having safely touched the portion of the bag or mat in foul territory, the batter-runner need not return and tag the base to advance in the event of an overthrow, etc. The defensive player at first base must touch the double bag in fair territory to record an out. However, to avoid a collision in the event of an errant throw to first base, either player, in the judgment of the umpire, may touch either bag.

5) Commit Line. If a runner advancing toward home plate touches the commit line or the ground beyond it, he *cannot return to third base*. A runner who retouches or recrosses the commit line shall be called out automatically.

6) Scoring. The play at home is always a force play regardless of the number of runners on base. To score, a runner must touch the extra home plate before a defender touches the regular home plate while in possession of the ball. The Catcher can use either the home plate or the extension mat to make a force out at home plate, similar to the one when using the one piece mat. *Under no circumstance shall any defender with the ball tag or attempt to tag the runner who has touched or crossed the commit line* (violation shall result in the runner being declared safe). A runner who touches or jumps over any portion of the regular home plate or pitching mat shall be declared out. In the event of an errant throw, the runner attempting to score must avoid collision with the defender attempting to field the ball.

I. Courtesy Runners

1) For a Baserunner. A courtesy runner is permitted for any player on base. The player for whom a courtesy runner is used is permitted to stay in the game. More than one courtesy runner may be used in an inning; however, no player can be used as a courtesy runner more than once per inning (if a courtesy runner is used more than once in an inning, he shall be declared out automatically upon touching the base). A courtesy runner may not be replaced by another courtesy runner except for injury causing the permanent removal from the game of the original courtesy runner. If a courtesy runner is scheduled to be the next batter, the umpire shall remove the runner from the base, declare an out, and allow the courtesy runner to bat (if the out is the third out, the former courtesy runner shall be the first batter in the next inning).

2) For a Batter. A team may have four courtesy runners from home plate while using 12 batters or less and one courtesy runner from home plate for each batter from 13 on. These batters *must be identified to the opposing team prior to the start of the game*. A spot shall be marked a distance of 10 feet directly behind home plate, measured on a line from the "V" point of home plate, from which the courtesy runner shall run and may not leave *until the ball is hit by the batter* (however, the courtesy runner is not out for leaving the spot if the batter swings and misses). If the batter and the courtesy runner both run

down the line after the ball is hit, the batter will not be declared out if, in the umpire's discretion, he did not affect the subsequent play (i.e., "no harm, no foul").

J. Maximum Runs Rule

1) Runs Per Inning. On scoring 5 runs in its turn at bat in any in-ning, the offensive team shall be declared to have three outs and shall take the field. *The 5-run limit does not apply to the last inning or extra innings.*

2) Slaughter Rule. If, after 5 innings in a seven-inning game or 7 innings in a nine-inning game, a team is losing by a margin of 15 or more runs, *the losing team* may decide to quit play; the score at that time shall be the score of record. If the aborted game is the first game of a doubleheader, the teams shall proceed to play the second game as scheduled.

K. Appeals

Dead-ball appeal plays can be an oral (verbal) request.

L. Protests

A protest is a formal request to the Commissioner to review the decision of an umpire's interpretation (a protest cannot be considered based on a decision involving the accuracy of an umpire's judgment). The written protest must be submitted within 72 hours of the event and shall include a) the date and place of the game, b) the teams involved, c) the name(s) of the umpire(s), d) the rule whose interpretation is being challenged, and e) all essential facts, details, and conditions relevant to the matter being protested. When a protest is determined to be valid, the umpire's decision shall be corrected and the game shall be replayed from the point at which the incorrect decision was made.

M. Home Team Responsibility

1) Playing Field. The home team shall ensure that the playing field is properly laid out and in playable condition, and shall furnish bases, pitching mat, and umpire.

2) Softballs. The home team shall furnish two softballs for each game (one new ball and one playable ball). The approved ball has a coefficient of restitution (COR) of 0.44 and compression of 375 lb.

3) Emergency Communication. The home team shall provide emergency telephone access (e.g., a cell phone).

N. Umpiring

Each team manager is responsible for obtaining a reliable, knowledgeable, and nonplaying individual to umpire his team's home games. The order of preference for umpiring is: 1) a trained official umpire; 2) a knowledgeable individual not associated with either team; 3) a team member of either team not playing in the game at the time; and 4) (*last resort*) the catcher (to call balls and strikes), the first base coach (to call plays at first base and home plate), and the third base coach (to call plays at second base and third base), with both base coaches alert to call the infield fly rule when appropriate.

O. Rosters

1) Original Submission. Each team manager shall provide a roster of players, showing for each: first and last names, date of birth, street address, city, state, ZIP code, and telephone number (with area code). The name of the wife is optional. Each manager shall forward a copy of his team roster to the Commissioner *prior to the first scheduled game* each year.

2) Trading Rosters. Opposing team managers shall trade rosters at the first scheduled game between their teams each year. Copies of revised rosters must be sent to each team and the Commissioner.

3) Proof-of-Age Document. Team managers are responsible for obtaining and furnishing (to the Commissioner) proof-of-age documents for each player on the team roster *prior to that player's participation in a game*. A proof-of-age document must be obtained *even if the player participated on another team in the League in prior years*. Failure to produce a proper ID document for a player shall result in forfeiture of any game in which that player participated. Proof-of-age documents (which may be a clear and legible photocopy of an official birth certificate or driver's license) must be submitted with the team roster.

4) Adding Players. To add a player to the roster, the manager shall telephone the required roster information noted above and mail the proof-of-age document to the Commissioner. The added player must then sit out *two scheduled games* (from the date of the telephone call) to allow sufficient time to properly notify all teams. For a player who changes teams during the season, the waiting time is *two scheduled playing dates* for the team that is receiving the new player (from the date of the telephone call). *No player may be added or transferred to a team's roster after July 1 of the current year.*

5) Questioning Eligibility. Opposing managers may request proof of age on any player and receive same from the Commissioner within two weeks of protest.

P. Game Scores and Standings

The manager or representative of both teams shall report the score via the Internet form on the day of the game. Standings shall be compiled and presented on the league's Web page on a weekly basis.

Q. Playoffs

1) If two teams tie for first place, there shall be a one-game playoff before the previously scheduled League playoffs.

2) If more than two teams tie for first place, the tie-breaking criteria shall be (in order): head-to-head results; intra-

division wins; least amount of runs allowed in games played among the teams involved; and flip of the coin. The results will be a ranking of the teams. Teams ranked two and three shall play an additional game to determine who shall play the team ranked one to become the playoff champion.

R. Awards

Permanent team trophies or plaques shall be provided by ASA and awarded to each Division champion during the season. The League shall provide individual awards for members of the championship teams. The League shall recognize the playoff champions with a simple plaque.