

## **BBSSL Game Rules**

### **A. USA Softball**

USA Softball 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) Teams may have one player who is 59 years old at the time he participates but would not need to turn 60 within the calendar year.

3) Residency. Players must legally reside in the state of Maryland. Each team is allowed to have a maximum (not cumulative) of 3 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.

4) Franchise Fee. On entering the League, a new team shall be assessed a franchise fee, the same as for other teams in the league. See Section T for new team entry requirements.

### **C. Field Layout**

1) Distances. Pitching rubber to home plate: 50 feet. Between bases: minimum 65 feet, maximum 70 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. A board covering the area of home plate and the pitching or strike mat is an acceptable alternative.

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). For safety purposes when there are wet field conditions, a scoring line can be used as an alternative to the extra home plate.

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. All Games scheduled in April will start at 11:00 a.m. Games for the remainder of the season start at 10 a.m., with a grace period of 15 minutes. Game times can begin earlier or later as long as both managers mutually agree to the change in time. Managers wishing to change the starting time of a game(s) must contact the opposing manager at least 24 hours in advance of the game(s).

The second game of a doubleheader shall start 10 minutes after the end of the first game.

2) Innings. Doubleheader games shall consist of 7 innings each or until completed in the event of a tie after 7 innings.

3) One and One Count. Batter will begin with a one and one count and have one courtesy foul.

4) Extra Inning Tie Breaker. If any game is tied at the end of 7 innings, the game will be played out until there is a winner. Extra innings for both teams will begin with their last batter from the previous inning at second base, and will be considered to be open innings. If the last batter from the previous inning had a courtesy runner, that courtesy runner will begin the inning at second base. The "tiebreaker" runner at second cannot be substituted for until after the first batter of the inning.

5) Rainouts. The home-team manager shall be responsible for notifying 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) posting on the league website that the game has been rained out. The commissioner will establish the makeup date when a league wide rainout has occurred and work with managers to establish the makeup date when a partial rainout has occurred.

**6) Makeup Games:** When games are rained out on a given day the two teams involved in the rainout will work together to come up with a mutually agreeable date to make up the rained-out game. It is encouraged that the date be agreed upon within two weeks of the cancellation. It will also be the responsibility of team managers to reschedule any other postponed games. Every effort should be made to have the schedule completed before the end of the regular season. *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 courtesy foul. The second 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)

### **3 A) A/B Division**

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  
NO SENIOR BATS ARE ALLOWED!

### **3 B) C and D Division**

**Bats are limited to a single wall alloy bat or composite bat marked with and ASA (USA) or USSSA stamp.** NO SENIOR BATS ARE ALLOWED!

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 called out, disqualified from the game and being suspended from the following 2 games. A third violation during the season will result in that player being prohibited from league play for one year. Umpires must sign both teams'

scorebooks to acknowledge the violation. Managers must report all bat violations to the commissioner.

## **H. Base running**

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 base runners 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.

7) Home Runs. On any fair batted ball hit over the fence for a home run or on a four base award, the batter and runners are credited with a run. The batter and any runners on base are not required to run the bases. This eliminates any possible outs called or any appeal on the batter-runner or runners for any base running infractions.

## **I. Courtesy Runners**

1) For a Base runner. 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 5 courtesy runners from home plate for 13 or more batters. These batters must be identified to the opposing team prior to the start of the game if requested by the opposing manager. 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 inning, 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, 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.

3) **Mandatory Flip Flop Rule.** If after six full innings the visiting team is ahead by 10 or more runs, the home team will bat in the top half of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning. If necessary the visiting team will bat in the bottom half of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning.

## **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 spreadsheet copy of his team roster to the Commissioner *prior to the first scheduled game* each year. Date of birth, age and residence information should not appear on the league website.

2) Trading Rosters. Opposing team managers are not required to exchange rosters. Teams can request a digital copy of any or all other teams' current rosters from 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 e-mail an updated roster and the proof-of-age document to the Commissioner. The Commissioner will review and approve the roster addition via an e-mail that copies all managers.

Upon Commissioner approval, the added player can play on the next scheduled playing date. *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 the home team shall report the score via the League website on the day of the game. Standings shall be compiled and presented on the League's website as games are played.

## **Q. Playoffs**

1) If two teams tie for first place, there shall be a one-game divisional playoff before the post-season 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 divisional champion.

3) For two teams that tie for other than first place, playoff seeding shall be determined by the following tie-breaking criteria (in order): head-to-head results; intra-division wins; least amount of runs allowed in games played between the teams involved; and flip of the coin.

4) Playoffs will be single elimination. Because the A and B Divisions have an odd number of teams, the 5<sup>th</sup> place teams will not participate in the playoffs.

## **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.

## **S. League Alignment**

1) Alignment. Season end divisional standings will determine the alignment for the following season. Teams that finish in first place in their division will move up to the next higher division. Teams that finish in last place in their division will move down to the next lower division.

2) Exceptions. Prior to the Fall Managers Meeting, teams can present a formal request to the commissioner for exceptions to the alignment for the following season. A majority manager vote will be required to approve exceptions.

3) Scheduling. After alignment is finalized at the Fall Managers Meeting, the number of games to be played by each division will be determined by a majority manager vote.

## **T. New Team Entry Requirements**

1) By the Fall Managers Meeting, new teams must provide a one year franchise non-refundable deposit and a roster with at least 15 players and copies of drivers licenses.

## **U. Pitching Screen Usage**

1) Use of the pitching screen is optional during batting practice and games. Teams choosing to use a pitching screen during the game will supply the screen and will be responsible for placing and removing the screen between innings. The opposing team is not obligated to use the pitching screen when on defense. A batted ball, untouched by a defensive player, contacting any part of the pitching screen causes the ball to immediately become dead and declared a foul ball. A live ball thrown by a fielder that strikes the pitching screen remains live and in play. **The pitcher is allowed to make a play on the batted ball.**

**2) THE PITCHER'S SCREEN MUST BE PLACED SO THAT ONE EDGE OF THE SCREEN'S BOX IS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE RUBBER (12 INCHES). THE PITCHER'S SCREEN MUST BE PLACED SO THAT IT IS NO LESS THREE FEET AND NO MORE THAN FIVE FEET IN FRONT OF THE RUBBER. THE SCREEN WILL BE LOCATED ON EITHER THE PITCHER'S THROWING HAND OR NON-THROWING HAND SIDE.**