

## **Local Softball Rules: Revision 251024**

Spring Hill Senior Softball Invitation League (SSIL)  
Softball League Rules & Procedures

The following SSIL Rules remain in effect until properly changed, amended, altered, and/or revised in accordance with the SSIL By-Laws. All previous editions are voided and are to be considered obsolete.

SSIL will be governed by a Board of Directors, herein referred to as "Board". The Board is elected by the SSIL players prior to the start of the season. At least one Board member will be at each official game and will be the on-sight authority for all rule or procedural issues. The Board is comprised of a President, 2 Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, and a Secretary. In the case that there is no Board member present, the two participating Coaches will discuss the issue for a final ruling.

It is the responsibility of all SSIL Players to follow, adhere to, comply with, and support the rules. Players and/or Individuals violating the provisions of these rules may be subject to corrective action by the Board.

### **I. GENERAL RULES & PROCEDURES:**

A. National Softball Association ("NSA") rules will be the primary authority unless pre-empted by a local rule stated herein. The main purpose of the "Rules" is to ensure competitive, healthy, and consistent play for all players involved.

B. Players must be at least 47 years of age prior to the start of the season to be eligible to play.

C. Once the Umpire declares "Play Ball", only those who have signed the SSIL Application Waiver are allowed in a dugout or on the playing field.

D. Season's schedule format:

1. Canceled Games: Time and schedule permitting, canceled games will be made-up with the following consideration: The Board will attempt to balance the actual number of games played by each team in each half. If the game needs to be played to determine official rankings.
2. Playoffs: End of the season ties in records will be decided by head-to-head competition; if there is still a tie, the Board will determine whether a one game playoff will be used to determine the winning team for playoff seeding.
3. Game times: Regular games shall be played on Tuesday and Thursday. First game will start at 9:30 AM and second game at 11:00 AM (check SSIL website for any changes or updates.)
4. Sponsor Uniform Shirts and Shorts:
  - a. Players must wear their team issued shirt when playing in an official game.
  - b. There will be no altering of the issued uniform shirt.
  - c. If a player does not have his uniform shirt, the on-site Board representative will determine if the reason is acceptable to allow him to play.
  - d. It is recommended that league issued shorts be worn but is not required.
5. Home Teams Field Responsibilities:
  - a. Home team dugout is on first base line.
  - b. Home team will provide the Umpire with a game ball and a good backup ball.
  - c. After each game, the home team manager will collect the balls used during the game.

- d. Home team for game 1 will lay out the bases, line the field, set up the pitching screen, the defibrillator and scorer's table/box to prepare for play.
- e. Home team for game 2 will put all equipment in the shed in an organized manner, make sure the shed is locked and store the defibrillator in its locked box.

6. Team Rosters:

- a. Each team will have the same number of players, if possible, on their roster (Additional players may be added if approved by the Board).
- b. If it is deemed that teams are not competitively balanced, the Board may reassign players, as needed, to rectify the situation. Trades (extenuating circumstances) will only be approved by the Board.

7. Manager's Responsibility:

- a. Required to have enough players to field a team (pick up substitute players as needed).
- b. The Manager will be the only player to discuss issues directly with the umpire.
- c. Is responsible for all actions of their players and must manage players actions. Take immediate corrective measures to eliminate issues with a player on their team.
- d. Any player in violation of league rules may be ejected and may not continue to participate in the game. The Manager is responsible for removing his offending player from the game. Should the subject player be scheduled to come to bat, thereafter, the result is an out for his spot in the batting order for the remainder of the game.
- e. Drinking alcoholic beverages is not allowed in the dugout, near the dugout entrance, on the field or outside the fence.
- f. Smoking is no longer permitted anywhere in the park.
- g. There is no managerial, player, director or others' discretion to change the written NSA and local rules for any reason for any SSIL game. Negotiations, alterations, compromises, or amendments regarding any aspect of the NSA or local rules are prohibited for any game played in the SSIL. All SSIL games must be played with strict adherence to NSA and local rules without exception. All managers, umpires, officers, directors and members-at-large are sworn to learn, know, retain, uphold, and enforce all NSA and superseding local rules.

8. Umpire's Responsibilities:

- a. Profanity from any player or umpire will not be tolerated in the dugout, on the field or outside the fence.
- b. Offender will receive one warning, per game, before being ejected. If the umpire is removed for his behavior, a Board member, Coach, or player may be designated to umpire the remaining game(s).
- c. The umpire will only discuss calls, rules, or violations with the Manager of the team.
- d. The umpire will not engage in arguments with players on the field or the dugout.

9. Suspensions:

- a. Any player ejected will be immediately removed from the game and must vacate the vicinity of the ball field.
- b. The ejected player's spot in the batting order will be an out for the remainder of the game.
- c. Teams with less than 11 players will not be able to pick up a replacement player and, therefore, must play "short-handed" for the completion of the game.
- d. The ejected player will be suspended for his team's next scheduled game, as a minimum, pending further action by the Board.
- e. Fighting, with contact, will result in an immediate and automatic suspension of the player(s) involved. The length of the suspension will be determined by the Board.

- f. The resulting suspensions will run through any playoffs and/or tournaments and will extend into the start of the next regular, or summer season, if necessary.
- g. It is the Board's discretion to suspend player(s) based on the seriousness of the offense.
- h. Offending player(s) may not appeal this suspension, nor be at the field while suspended.
- i. If determined by the Board, a "Last Chance Agreement (LCA)" may be issued to the player. If a player declines to sign the LCA, the player will be immediately removed as a player in the league with a lifetime ban from future participation.

#### 10. Quitting a Team:

- a. The manager shall notify the Board of any player quitting his team.
- b. A player quitting his team once the season has started, without a legitimate reason (as determined by the Board), will be suspended for one (1) year and will not be permitted to participate in the following year season.
- c. There will be no refund of dues.

11. Player Conduct: Every player completes and signs an application to participate in SSIL. Their signature indicates that they agree to conduct themselves in a sportsmanship manner, to neither taunt, degrade, use abusive language or profanity towards officials, opponents, fellow teammates, or spectators, and to abide by the rules set forth by the SSIL, and in accordance with Senior Softball USA.

## II PLAYING THE GAME:

- A. The SSIL will use a 44/375 softball approved by the Board.

- B. All unaltered bats containing an ISA or NSA or USSSA or ASA or SSUSA stamp in conjunction with a 1.21 or lower BPF marking are approved for SSIL regular season and post season play.

#### C. Strike Zone Plate

- 1. A 17" x 34" rectangular strike zone plate will be used to determine balls and strikes and is also considered the base for defensive player use only during force out plays at home.
- 2. A legally pitched ball will be called a strike if the ball touches any part of the strike zone plate before contacting the ground or any other objects or players.

#### D. Home Plates(s):

- 1. A second (safety) plate shall be placed in line with the first base line, eight feet (8) from the main home plate and the 3rd base line.
- 2. Plays at home are simple force plays. The runner must touch the second home plate before the catcher, with the ball, touches the main plate.
- 3. Catcher may use the entire main home plate for plays at home.
- 4. The "Commitment Line" shall be drawn, perpendicular to the foul line, 20' from the second home plate.
- 5. If a runner touches, or passes, the designated Commit Line, he must proceed to the second home plate.

- E. Pitcher's Mound: There will be a back line 5' directly behind the pitcher's rubber and a pitcher may pitch anywhere from the back line and the pitcher's rubber. There is no requirement to be in contact with the rubber while pitching the ball.

#### F. First Base:

1. First base consists of a white (inner) base, in play, and an orange (outer) base, placed outside the foul line.
2. If an initial play can be made at 1st base: the batter/runner must touch the orange/outer base (to be safe) and any fielder must touch the white base (for the batter/runner to be out). The batter/runner is out if he touches the white/inner base and safe if the fielder touches the orange/outer base.
3. If an initial play cannot be made at first base, the batter/runner may touch the white bag and round it to advance at his discretion.

G. Game Duration:

1. Games shall be a minimum of seven innings,
2. There is no mercy rule (the losing Coach may surrender the game at his discretion).
3. Extra Innings: If game is tied after seven innings, the last official batter of the previous inning will occupy second base.
4. The last batter must touch second base prior to time being called to request his designated courtesy runner.

H. Lineup Cards:

1. Managers shall provide their game line-up card to the official scorer at least ten (10) minutes prior to game time.
2. Official scorer will then pass line-ups to opposing managers. (If requested)

I. Replacement/Substitute Players:

1. Late arriving players may enter the game immediately upon his arrival replacing the substitute and will be added to the bottom of the lineup.
2. Players must notify their manager at least one day (if possible) before any game they will miss to enable the manager to secure a replacement, if needed.
3. Managers will report substitution needs to the League Secretary. The Secretary ~~Managers~~ will contact substitute players as early as possible and if necessary, pick-up players that are currently at the field. Pool players will be picked up first if available.
4. The Board has designed player rankings (updated monthly) to ensure equal quality of players are substitutes. The following are the established rules when picking up a substitute:
  - a. Player rankings are in order from top to bottom: "A+", "A", "B+", "B", "C+", and "C".
    - 1) Teams must select substitutes of equal rating for their lowest ranked missing players first. Substitutes can play any defensive position.
    - 2) Substitutes will be added to the bottom of the batting order in all cases.
    - 3) Pool players must be selected as substitutes first. If no players are available then players from other teams may be used as substitutes.
  - b. Pool players will be picked based on their ranking and must rotate between teams if there are multiple teams needing a substitute.
  - c. All players entering the league after the registration deadline must be assigned to the pool.
  - d. When a roster player is on extended leave, a pool player may be assigned to a team on a temporary basis and must return to the pool when the roster player returns.

J. Game Time Replacement:

1. If a team loses a player during the game (injury or other justified reason) they can not pick up a replacement if they can still field 11. However, that player's turn at bat will not

count as an out.

2. If a team cannot continue to field 11; the Board will attempt to replace the lost player with a replacement of equal or lower rank.
- K. Lineups: Manager must bat all his players who are present, in uniform, for the game unless injured. Substitutes must bat at the end of the batting order after all team players.
- L. Pitching and the Pitching Screen:
1. Each batter will start with a 1 ball - 1 strike count.
  2. Pitched ball must arc between 6 feet and 10 feet.
  3. Umpire will say "BALL or ILLEGAL", loud enough for batter to hear as soon as the ball's arc peaks beyond the maximum height or below the minimum level. This will afford the batter adequate time to decide to swing or not to swing at the pitch.
  4. A Pitching Screen will be used in all games:
    - a. Once the ball has been released, the pitcher has the option to move behind the screen for safety reasons. However, the pitcher is not required to do so and may field a batted ball hit anywhere in/near his position.
    - b. A batted ball, which hits the screen directly off the bat, shall be declared a foul ball and treated as any other foul ball. A batted ball hitting the screen on a 3rd strike will result in an out.
- M. Courtesy Runners:
1. Are unlimited as of the 2023 season.
  2. May run for only one player per inning but may run for the same player multiple times in the same inning.
  3. If a player is injured while running the bases, then a manager can replace him with another courtesy runner.
  4. If the courtesy runner comes to bat while on base, the courtesy runner's spot in the batting order becomes an "out" and the next batter listed in the original batting order comes to bat. (Effectively, the original player's "courtesy runner" remains on base, without penalty.)
  5. All courtesy runners may pinch run during a dead ball starting at first base or thereafter.
- N. Five Run Rule  
:
1. A team may score a maximum of 5 runs per inning during the first 6 full innings of play. There are no catch-up innings prior to the 7<sup>th</sup> inning.
  2. The 7<sup>th</sup> inning is an open inning, and the team can score as many runs as they can (No 5-run rule in effect).
- O. On Deck Batter: Managers need to ensure that players know their position in the lineup and be ready on deck with the next batter also ready to move up. This keeps the game moving!!!
- P. Base on Balls (Walk): Any batter is allowed the option of not taking 1st base on a 4th ball and remain at the plate to hit. Additionally, he may not elect to walk once he has 2 strikes.
- Q. All batted balls that are caught in foul territory, no matter the pitch count, are considered in play and runners may advance at their own discretion.
- R. A foul tip that is caught by the catcher must clear the batter's head to be ruled out.
- S. Championship & Playoff Eligibility: All roster players at season's end are eligible for the playoffs. Players may be removed from the roster only if a pool player of near equal rating is added to their team's roster as a replacement.

- T. Batting and Slugging Title Eligibility: Only the league leader in plate appearances and any players with two-thirds or greater of that leader's plate appearance total qualify for the batting and slugging titles.