



SOFTBALL LEAGUE RULES

Last Updated 1/1/2026

RULE #1 - HAVE FUN!

The first and foremost goal of playing is to HAVE FUN! SportsLink staff are there to provide you with a fair, safe, and fun environment. Enjoy yourself, make new friends, relieve some stress and get a little exercise.

The rules are a basic guide to play and may not address every situation in a game. For further explanation or interpretations, refer to the USA Softball rules, talk to the coordinator of the league or email SportsLink at office@sportslinkus.com.

All players must have an active SportsLink Passport to play. Teams may use up to five guest passes during the season for substitutions and must register those players with the coordinator before play of the game

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EQUIPMENT

1. Molded cleats or tennis shoes are the only allowable footwear. NO METAL CLEATS ARE ALLOWED. Shoes must be worn at all times.
2. Captains are responsible for making sure that their teammates are properly equipped. If their team is found playing with illegal equipment, the captain will be held responsible.
3. Legal softball bats must conform to USA/ASA guidelines. The official bat shall be smooth. It shall be free of DENTS, burrs and VISIBLE CRACKS, and shall not have exposed rivets, pins, rough or sharp edges. All bats must have a USA or ASA sticker. **Senior bats**, even with the appropriate sticker, are **not** permitted. If your bat does not conform to the specifications above, it will not be allowed for play. Wooden bats are not allowed.
 - a. All USA/ASA bats weighing 25oz and up are legal for play in all SportsLink softball leagues.
 - b. *The umpire has the right to take any bat out of play he/she feels is unsafe. If a defensive player is hit by a line-drive, or a home run of questionable distance is hit, SportsLink encourages the umpire to take that bat out of play.*
4. It is the responsibility of each team to provide the scorebooks and softballs each game. **The ball is a 12-inch .52 COR, 300 COMP ball.** Color does not matter. Each ball MUST have size, core, composition and USA/ASA logo stamped on it. Each team must present their game ball to the umpire prior to the start and during the game any time a new ball is thrown in. A team found using illegal or altered balls will be given a forfeit and may face additional penalties.
5. If a player takes his/her stance in the batter's box with illegal equipment, they will immediately be called out. If they enter the batter's box or field of play a second time with illegal equipment, they will be ejected from the game and not allowed a substitute. – ***Players found using illegal bats and/or balls will be immediately ejected from the game/night and the team must play a player down. This will also result in a week suspension for the ejection.***
6. Jersey color assignments in the event of a "same color" conflict, the home team will wear a "light" color and the visitors will wear a "dark" color. Teams should bring two jerseys to each game to avoid a conflict. We encourage softball teams to wear matching colors, but do not require it. If shirt colors become an issue on the field, please bring to the attention of the umpire or coordinator.
7. Players can use a 1st baseman's glove at any position.

PITCHING SCREEN RULES!

The following rules apply to all of our softball leagues.

At the beginning of your game in the captain's meeting both teams will be asked if they want to use a pitching screen for pitcher safety.

If both teams want to use a screen, we will leave one on the pitching mound for the entire game.

If only one team wants to use the screen, they will be responsible for bringing it out when they are playing the field.

SportsLink will have screens available at the fields for teams to use. The rules regarding the pitching screen are as follows:

1. The screen should be positioned no less than 3 feet and no more than 5 feet forward of the front edge of the pitching rubber
2. Any batted ball that contacts the pitching screen is considered a foul ball.
3. Any thrown ball that contacts the pitching screen will remain live.
4. The fielding team is permitted to move the pitching screen after the ball is batted, including laying it down.

GAME DURATION

1. An official game is 7 innings or when time is called (as defined below). Games will start & end on the UMPIRE'S watch. No new inning will start after 55 minutes (or the completion of 7 innings). Once an inning begins, it will be finished regardless of time. Games will start and end on the UMPIRE'S watch. Any inning starting between 50 and 55 of game time will be declared the last inning, meaning that if the home team is leading after the top of the inning, the game will be over.
2. Run Ahead Rule: If a team is leading by 20 or more runs after the 3rd inning, 15 after the 4th inning, or 10 after the 5th inning, the game will be called.
3. In the event of a tie score at the end of seven (7) innings or at the end of the last completed inning during a regular season game the result shall be a tie.
4. If a game is called early for a disciplinary reason, the score will stand if the home team has completed their at bat. If not, the score reverts back to the final score of the previous inning. SportsLink has the ability to forfeit a game due to the severity of the reason the game was called.

5. The Coordinator or Umpire has sole authority for calling a game at any time due to inclement weather, darkness or other conditions felt justifiable. The score will revert back to the score of the last full inning.
6. A game will be considered complete after 4 innings of play, or 3 1/2 if the home team is ahead. Games that are not considered regulation will be made up in their entirety.
7. CLARIFICATION OF GAME DURATION – 6:29 – Captain's Meeting (this should take 1-2 mins max); 6:30 – umpire starts game clock (set for 55 mins) and play begins. *If a team doesn't have the minimum 8 players (correct ratio for coed leagues), the 10 minute grace period starts at this time. If the 10 minutes expires and the team still doesn't have enough people, that team forfeits.* 7:26 – no new inning shall start at this time. The game clock should read 0 at this time. Teams need to be ready to play at the scheduled game time. The intention is to have the captain's meeting 1 minute before the scheduled game time, if the prior game allows.

HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

Game Set Up

1. The [DASH](#) website will determine Home and Away teams, distributed evenly throughout the season.
2. Teams must be prepared to begin play promptly at the scheduled game time by checking in with the coordinator prior to game time. Teams are required to write down their lineup and exchange with the opposing team. Any lineup changes must be communicated to the umpire.
3. Games will start and end on time. There will be a maximum 10-minute warm-up/grace period. This 10 minute period is part of the one-hour game length. Once each team has enough players to field a team, the umpire will begin play. Teams not ready to play within the 10-minute grace period will forfeit the game. If a forfeit occurs, teams will be allowed to use the field until their game time is finished.
4. A team shall consist of ten (10) players. Teams may begin play with a minimum of (8) eight players (at least two females in coed). If a team starts with 8, then loses players to injury, they can continue play. (If a team starts with 8 and loses a player to ejection, they must forfeit.) The defensive positions of pitcher and catcher must be filled. Whether playing full or short-handed, there is no requirement as to where guys/girls must play in the field

A. A full coed team is made up of 6 males and 4 females.

B. Coed teams can play with 2 females.

Both females must bat twice in the line-up.

C. Coed teams can play with 3 females.

1 female must bat twice in the line-up, chosen by their own team.

D. Coed teams cannot have more than 6 male players in the field at any time.

There is no limit on the number of female players.

E. When a team has to bat one or both female batters twice:

1. If the female batting twice is on base and her turn comes up to bat, she is entitled to one courtesy runner (the last female out). If the courtesy runner's turn comes up to bat, she must vacate the base, take an out and take her turn at bat.

2. One female can bat twice before another female bats once.

F. When a team is playing with 5 guys and 3 girls, they do NOT have to hit a female twice.

They simply bat their 8 batters, still making sure to not bat more than 2 guys in a row.

5. Teams can bat as many players as they want, but must maintain the following ratios of guys/girls in the lineup for coed play. If you have 6 guys, you need 4 girls, 7 guys/5 girls, 8/6, 9/6, 10/7, 11/7, 12/8. In order to bat more than 6 guys, there must always be at least 4 different women (of which some must bat twice). Guys can never bat twice and girls not more than twice in one completion of the lineup.
6. Coed teams cannot bat more than 2 males in a row. Men can only bat once per top-bottom of the lineup. All players must bat in the same designated order as the initial lineup. When the lineup turns over from bottom to top, there cannot be more than 2 males in a row also.
7. If a team plays with 8 or 9 players, the missing spot in the lineup will NOT be called an out.
8. A team is allowed to add more than 10 players to the roster as long as the lineup has not already been batted through. Putting a person on the roster until they show up to the field after the lead off batter has batted twice is illegal.
9. When a team is caught batting with an illegal line-up or an umpire was not informed of a substitution, then it is considered an out for the team and the line-up must be corrected.

Batting

1. A player will begin each turn at bat with one (1) ball and one (1) strike. Foul balls count as strikes, including the third strike. **(There is NO courtesy foul).**
2. No bunting or chopping the ball is allowed. Penalty: Automatic out. Runners may not advance.
3. Teams are limited to scoring a maximum of ten (10) runs per inning. Unlimited runs may be scored in the final inning.
4. In Coed Softball Leagues, AFTER 2 OUTS – If a male is walked and a female follows him in the batting order, the male is given 2nd base and the female has the choice to take a walk or bat. If a male is walked and a female follows him with 0-1 outs, the male batter gets 2nd base and the female must bat. Players already on base will advance only if forced by those choosing to walk.
5. All players in the field must be listed in the batting order. There are no designated fielders allowed.
6. See “Game Set Up” above, for line up restrictions/ratios.
7. All teams must exchange batting line ups before the start of each game.
8. **Home Run Rule:** The amount of home runs allowed varies by league. After the limit has been reached, each home run will result in an out, runners cannot advance and the run will not count. Players can choose whether to run out their home run or not. Before each game, each team will be able to bid on the number of home runs they'd like in their game. The lowest bid will be used. The default # is the lowest # allowed in your division. Based on the division your team is in, home run bid rules will be as followed:
 - A. Competitive or “A” Leagues will be allowed to bid between 5-7 home runs per game over the fence (see #9).
 - B. Intermediate or “B” Leagues will be allowed to bid between 3-6 home runs per game over the fence (see #9).
 - C. Rec or “C” Leagues will be allowed to bid between 1-3 home runs per game over the fence.
 - D. All “D” leagues have a 0 home run rule.

Base-Running

1. If an overthrow goes out of play or is interfered with by a spectator, coach, opposing team player or equipment, the base runners are awarded the base they were heading toward at the time the ball went out of play or was interfered with, plus one additional base. (Two bases from the last occupied base).
2. When a ball goes out of play, that runner may advance one base from the base they were running to.
3. Malicious contact by a base runner with a fielder will result in an out and an automatic ejection. The base-runner must make an attempt to avoid contact with the defender. The defender cannot obstruct the base-runner by standing in the base-path or in front of the base/plate without the ball. A fake-tag is considered both an obstruction and a safety issue. Players committing such an act will be warned and/or ejected.
4. Interference may be called on a runner who approaches a base with hands raised in an attempt to disrupt the flight of the ball. The batter may be ruled out at the umpire's discretion.
5. Courtesy runners may only be used for injured players or those with hindering conditions. Captains must identify those players to the umpire in the pre-game conference. Players injured during the game will be allowed a courtesy runner. It is the umpire's discretion of whether a player is deserving of a pinch runner. The umpire's decision shall be final. One courtesy runner for a male, one courtesy runner for a female per inning.
6. A pinch runner is always the last batted out.
7. If it is the first inning and there are no outs, the pinch runner could be any batter in the line-up. If that pinch runner comes up to hit while on base, they are out.
8. Stealing bases is prohibited
9. Sliding into all bases is allowed.

Pitching Regulations

1. The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate until the pitched ball leaves the hand. The pitcher may take only one step before releasing the ball.
2. The ball must be delivered with an arc and reach a minimum height of at least six (6) feet from the ground, while not exceeding a maximum height of ten (10) feet.
3. Any ball landing on any part of the MAT will be a STRIKE! Pitch must adhere to pitch height regulations.

4. There will be a strike mat behind home plate. If the ball hits ANY part of the strike mat, it is a strike. If it misses the strike mat, it is a ball.
5. A pitch only hitting home plate is a ball.

Pitching With Screens

1. **If a team decides to use a pitching screen, it will be used to protect the pitcher.**
2. **The pitcher must stay behind the screen until the ball is put in play by the batter.**
3. **If the pitcher moves out from behind the screen before the ball is put into play by the batter, the umpire will stop the play and the batter will automatically be awarded 1st base.**

Defensive Players

1. All outfielders must remain in the grass. No 5 man defense allowed. There cannot be more than 6 players in the infield before the batter contacts the ball.

Substitutions

1. Substitutions may be made at any time, but the umpire must be notified.
2. If a “starter” leaves the game in favor of a substitute, that player may re-enter the game once, but only in the same batting position.
3. If a “substitute” leaves the game, that player may not re-enter the game.
4. A starter and their designated substitute shall never be in the game at the same time.
5. When a team starts with less than 10 players, any player running late must be added to the end of the batting order before the game starts. If those players are not present when it is their turn at bat, you have the option of removing the player for the remainder of the game or leaving them in the line-up and taking an out for each at bat until they arrive. If no players are added to the lineup then no outs will be assessed. **The only way to add a player after the line-up has been batted through it is to “sub” someone in for them unless they have been added to the line-up prior to the umpire beginning the game.**

6. A team may add as many players as they would like after 10 as long as the batting order has not been batted through with the **approval of the opposing team**. A team can replace subs with their roster players once they arrive.
7. Teams batting more than 10 players can substitute freely in the field, but must maintain the original batting order.
8. There is no cap on the amount of players batting as long as girl to guy ratios remain accurate.

Definitions

1. **Infield Fly Rule:** Any fair fly ball, not including a line drive, which can easily be fielded or caught by an infielder when 1st and 2nd, or 1st, 2nd and 3rd bases are occupied, with less than two outs. The infield fly rule may extend into the grass of the outfield. The batter is out and runners may advance at their own discretion, with liability of being put out.
2. **Foul Tip:** A batted ball that goes sharply and directly from the bat to the catcher's hands/glove/mitt. The result is a called strike and a dead ball. If there is any upward arc of the ball and it is caught, the batter is out.
3. **Obstruction:** When a fielder obstructs the base runner from making a base unless the fielder is trying to field a batted ball or has the ball in possession and is ready to tag the base runner. The ball is a delayed dead ball and all runners shall be awarded the bases they would have reached if the obstruction had not occurred. It's the umpire's discretion on what they see to make this call. There could be intentional or incidental contact with the fielder and base runner.
4. Additional rules and policies may be added or amended by SportsLink before or during the season. In the event they are, they will be communicated to players.

Miscellaneous

1. Excessive delays by the offense and the umpire will begin calling strikes on the batter. Excessive delays on the defense and the umpire will begin calling balls on the batter.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

1. Any individual who by his/her misconduct (profanity, gestures, physical or verbal abuse toward officials, players, etc.) causes himself/herself to be removed from a

contest is automatically ineligible to participate for the remainder of that contest, any other games that day and one full week of games. That person may also be disqualified for future contests.

2. Any arguing on the judgment of balls and strikes will constitute a team warning. Any repeat offenses shall result in the ejection of that team member. Judgment calls made by the umpire shall NOT be contested. A formal protest of any rules interpretation must be filed at the next dead ball, before the subsequent ball is put in play. After the protest is filed, the game will continue as scheduled. Any protest of rule interpretation filed after the game will not be valid. SportsLink will review any valid protest and make a ruling before the next week's game. Ineligible players on rosters can be protested at any time.
3. There will be a 4×6 zone on the pitcher's mound where if the ball is hit through that zone with **excessive speed**, the batter will be called out and the play is ruled dead. This rule will **not** be in effect if the league has a pitching screen.
4. When a team is caught batting with an illegal line-up or an umpire was not informed of a substitution, then it is considered an out for the team and the line-up must be corrected.

PLAYOFFS

1. For Championship Games only: we will play a minimum of 6 innings. If the game has completed 6 innings and the hour mark, the game will be over. If the 7th inning has started before the 55 minute mark has come, it will be counted. (No ties in a Champ game)
2. If teams are tied at the end of the 7 innings, starting in the 8th inning, we will go to the Universal Rule. The batting team will place the last batter on 2nd base to begin the inning. The runner has to reach 3rd base before they can get a courtesy runner. This will continue for each team at the beginning of each inning until a team wins.

SPECIALIZED RULES

Home run rule for leagues with only 1 division offered:

- Men's leagues can bid between 3-5 home runs per game over the fence.
- Coed leagues can between 1-3 home runs per game over the fence.

1. When an A team plays a B team, home runs are to be bid on by both teams, anywhere from 3-6 Home Runs are allowed. B teams get the final say on the

amount of Home Runs determined. This must be done before the start of the game.

2. Guys may not use a women's fastpitch bat or any bat under 26 ounces even if it is ASA approved. Only ladies may use the ASA approved women's fastpitch bat.
3. In order for a player to be eligible for play-offs they must either have been in the line-up at the beginning of the game or subbed into the line-up and taken an at-bat in one of the regular season games.

Note: SportsLink may restrict certain higher-level players from playing in a "C" division league for the safety of all players.