

Senior Softball rules for 65+ league

Any rule not covered herein will revert to the Municipal Sports Slow Pitch Softball rules. The following rules supersede those covered by Municipal Sports Softball rules. Although the main senior rules are for the 55+ league, the adjustments here are for the 65+ league.

SECTION 1- Players must be 65 years & up (Men); 45 years & up (Women). Players may be of proper age if they turn 65 (for men) or 45 (for women) in the calendar year of the season start.

SECTION 2- SLOW PITCH: A strike is a pitched ball that lands touching any part of home plate or the extension mat, providing the pitch has an arc as high as the batter's head with a maximum of 12 feet. The home umpire will hold their arm out horizontally and call 'low pitch', or 'high pitch' as the ball reaches the halfway point to the plate if the pitched ball is too high or too low. The batter is not obligated to swing no matter where the ball hits. The pitch will automatically be called a 'ball' upon landing, unless the batter makes a decision to swing. If the batter swings, the pitched ball is considered 'in play'.

NOTE: The pitcher may pitch from the pitcher's plate (also known as the pitching rubber) or from the pitcher's box, an area the width of the pitcher's plate and up to 12 feet behind the pitcher's plate. The pitcher **must** have both feet behind the pitching rubber before pitching the ball. The pitcher also must maintain the exact position for each batter and may not move forward or back while pitching to the same batter. (See Section 16 for the pitching screen rules).

SECTION 3- GAME TIME LIMIT: No new inning can start after 1 hour and 15 minutes. MERCY RULE: If a team is behind by 15 or more runs by the end of the 5th inning (or 4 ½ innings if home team is ahead), the game will be called. (Same as Slow Pitch Softball rule). OPEN INNING is the 7th inning. (See section 7).

Playoff games will have a game time limit of one hour and 30 minutes – No new inning after one hour and 30 minutes if there is a scheduled game immediately following, otherwise a playoff game is played until one team wins.

SECTION 4- It is the responsibility of the manager to make sure that all players play a minimum of every other inning defensively. (If physically able)

SECTION 5- BATTING ORDER: All players on the legal roster present at the start of the game must be placed in the batting order (line-up). Late arriving players are to be placed at the end of the batting order. No other changes may be made in the batting order once the game has started.

NOTE: Before the game begins the managers will exchange a lineup card with the opposing manager and the umpire. Besides the batting order, the player rating and 'runner needed' designation must be included. Also a special note for any substitutions (name, rating, and who they are subbing for). All this must be established in advance of the game. (See Section 15 for substitution rules).

NOTE: No player (of any rating) can be designated strictly as a DH. Any player in the batting order must play a minimum of 3 innings in the field for a 6 inning game and 4 innings for a 7 inning game.

If a player is injured during the game, both managers must meet and decide a course of action of either taking an out for the player's next at bat, or getting an immediate sub from similar rated players watching the game. Abuse of this rule are grounds for a forfeit by the offending team.

SECTION 6- All games have a GRACE PERIOD of five minutes to field eight players. (Same as Slow Pitch Softball rule). Teams **must have** a minimum of six original drafted players or they will incur a forfeit. See also Section 15.

SECTION 7- INNING RUN LIMIT: For the first **SIX** innings of any league game, the scoring in any half inning may not exceed 4 runs. However, there is no run limit after **SIX** complete innings or **any** earlier inning that **begins** with ten (10) or less minutes remaining in the game.

SECTION 8- COURTESY RUNNERS are permitted. Each player can be a courtesy runner a **maximum once** per inning and unlimited times per game and need not be the last out. No player may run more than once an inning whether from home or from a base. This rule is not negotiable throughout the game.

The player being run for MUST initiate the request!

If the manager or any other player or base coach calls for the runner on base to get a runner, the umpire will give a team warning with the second infraction being a called 'out'.

If a courtesy runner is on base when it is his/her turn at bat a replacement courtesy runner may be used.

Note - both the original courtesy runner and replacement courtesy runner will be charged with serving as a courtesy runner for that particular inning.

SECTION 9- DESIGNATED RUNNER: If a batter is physically unable to run, a team member may be designated to run in his/her place. The batters needing a runner from the home plate area are to be established **prior** to the start of the game, or during the game for an obvious injury. The designated runner starting line will be a white line extending out 3 feet from the backstop fence directly behind home plate. The designated runner will begin running when the batter **makes contact** with the ball.

(NEW STARTING IN 2024)-->If the designated runner crosses the starting line just before the batter makes contact with the ball or there is a swing and miss, or partial swing, and the runner crosses the line, there will be a 'no call' unless the umpire feels there was an egregious false start from the batted running line.

It will be up to the discretion of the umpire to make the call. If the umpire feels the runner left much too early, an 'out' will be called. Both the batter and the runner will return to the dugout with an out called. The runner may not run again for that particular inning. To make clear, "much too early" would be more than one step over the line BEFORE the ball reaches the plate.

The designated runner from the home base area counts as a COURTESY RUNNER and follows the same rules (Section 8, above). **If a batter using a designated runner from the home base area runs 15' or more towards first base (crosses line) the batter will be declared out and all baserunners must return to the base they occupied at the time of the pitch.**

SECTION 10– Baserunner and running the bases: All plays on extra base attempts are force plays once a player advances more than halfway to the next base or home plate. He/she may not return to the previous base (Exception – players may return to original base if a fly ball is caught). The baserunner will be called out if the ball is caught by the defensive player on the base (a forced out). Players that round a base with the perceived intention of moving in the direction of the next base may be forced out from the base they just touched. This can also occur if the runner is 'faking' or 'pretending' to advance after crossing the base. A runner who “runs through” (past a base) need not return to the base to continue on to the next base/home plate. Runners may also “run though” a base when returning to that base. **'Running wide' when returning to a base is highly encouraged.** Any interference that the umpire deems unnecessary will be followed up with a called out on the runner. 'Return lines' can be found extending from each base.

PLEASE NOTE FROM PREVIOUS PARAGRAPH: The runner will be HIGHLY encouraged to run out of the basepath and/or miss touching the base in order to avoid a collision. This must be an area wide left or wide right the baseline (and base). It will be the umpire's judgement if the runner running to a base or coming back to a base exceeds a reason path (way out of the baseline) to avoid a tag or interferes with the throw. Managers, coaches, and umpires should remind runners to preferably run to the opposite side of an incoming throw. This is a safety feature for both the runner and the defensive player waiting on the throw or running to the base to receive a throw. The umpires are also encouraged to address this to ALL players in their respective dugouts in advance of the game. If in the umpire's judgment contact is made due to running too close to the base or a runner purposely runs on the side the throw is coming from they may 1.) Call an automatic out or 2.) Eject the runner from the game.

Baserunners are allowed to stand on the orange base after they reach first base. This is done to avoid being hit by a batted ball. A baserunner may not lead off any base at the time a pitcher releases the ball. They may step off the base **after** the ball crosses the 'plane' at the front of the home base.

A catcher making an out at home may step on the plate or the template to create the force out.

BASERUNNERS MUST AVOID ANY CONTACT WITH DEFENSIVE PLAYERS. BASERUNNERS NEED NOT TOUCH THE BASE BUT THEY MUST CROSS THE **1st BASE LINE extension**, 2ND BASE LINE extension, and 3RD BASE LINE extension (SIMILAR TO HOME PLATE SCORING LINE). To be considered safe the lead foot must touch the ground once past the 'base line' before the throw arrives to the base.

BASERUNNERS MUST RUN TO EITHER THE LEFT OR RIGHT SIDE OF SECOND BASE AND THE LEFT OR RIGHT SIDE OF THIRD BASE IN ORDER TO AVOID CONTACT WITH A DEFENSIVE PLAYER if there is a play to the particular base they are trying to reach.

As mentioned above and repeated here: THE PREFERENCE IS TO RUN TO THE **OPPOSITE** SIDE THE THROW IS COMING FROM. THIS IS A SAFETY FEATURE TO PROTECT BOTH THE RUNNER AND THE DEFENSIVE PLAYER. BASERUNNERS THAT CAUSE CONTACT TO OCCUR WITH A DEFENSIVE PLAYER WILL BE CALLED OUT AT THE DISCRETION OF THE UMPIRE, AND UMPIRES ARE ENCOURAGED TO MAKE A CALL THAT ERRORS ON THE SIDE OF SAFETY FOR THE FIELDER. AT MINIMUM A WARNING SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE BASERUNNER.

SECTION 11– SLIDING is not allowed. A baserunner who slides will be called “out.”

SECTION 12 – BATTERS start with a one ball and one strike count.

If a batter with a high rating (**rated 8 or 9**) is walked on **three** consecutive balls with no strikes **thrown**, or intentionally walked, the following penalty is in effect for **subsequent** at bats:

Said batter who is walked on **three** consecutive balls with no strikes **thrown** during any following time at bat shall be awarded **second** base. Base runners advance only if forced to vacate their bases.

SECTION 13– Teams are allowed to play with **12 defensive players** with five or six of those players **being** in the outfield. At no time may a defensive team have more than one rover. All outfielders must play at least **110 feet from home plate**. UMPIRE JUDGMENT (if cones are not placed). The **ROVER** may play any position on the field in advance of a pitch, as long as it is **no closer to home plate than the base paths between 1st and 2nd and 2nd and 3rd**. In the spirit of fair play in the 65+ league, no fielders are allowed to play within 7' of the pitcher to aid in fielding. Teams with less than 12 defensive players are only required to have four outfielders. Less than 11 defensive players that number is reduced to three outfielders. A rover will still be allowed if less than the ideal of 12 players.

INFORMING THE OPPOSING MANAGER, a player who is limited physically may be allowed to sit out more than one inning in a row. However, said player must always have a position in the batting lineup.

SECTION 14– SCORING LINE RULE: The home base scoring line will be extended starting 3 feet from the backstop to a length of 6-7' with a white chalk line “running though” home plate.

This is for the runner from third base to cross (foot touching the ground) before the catcher touches the regular plate or extension with possession of the ball (forced play). Runners must cross **staying** within the scoring line. Sliding into the scoring line is not allowed and the runner is called out.

Also, if the runner goes directly and touches the home base **or** the space between the home base and the scoring line, he/she is out. Again, runners must touch the ground on or pass the scoring line before the catcher catches the ball while in contact with home plate and/or the extension. As previously mentioned in Section 10, the foot touching the ground past the line also applies to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd base running lines.

SECTION 15– FORFEITS, SUBSTITUTING PLAYERS, AND MISSING PLAYERS:

(a) If a team has less than SIX original drafted players or less, forfeit. Even if they present 11-12 players to play.

(b) This season, ANY substitutions must be the same rating or lower. No long will substituting with a rating higher be allow, even with approval from the opposing manager. This rule will be strictly enforced during the playoffs also. No exceptions.

(c) A “low-rated player” is a player with a designation of 'LR'.

A 'LR' player has a rating of 3 or 2 and can be intersubstituted. There are more than enough 'LR' players for the Tuesday league and 'LR' players who are only from the Thursday league will NOT be allowed to play on Tuesday. Thursday ratings are not effective for Tuesday with either regular players or substitutes.

A Minimum of two 'LR' players per game or an out is taken at the end of the batting order, two outs at the end of the batting order if a team has no 'LR' players.

The league rules for fielding a team and having enough LR players is as follows:

If a team has **10 to 14** players in the batting lineup, then *two LR player is sufficient. --> The ideal lineup!*

If a team has **10 to 14** players batting and only *one LR player* then an out is taken at the end of the batting order.

If a team has **10 to 14** players batting and *no LR* then two team outs are take at the end of the batting order.

Less than 10 players in the field and batting, the team must still have two LR to avoid taking an out.

If the required 'LR' players are not present at the start of the game, one or two LR players can be added during the game to avoid taking the required outs. They would bat at the end of the batting lineup. Team outs taken due to lack of the proper number of 'LR' players happens only at the end of the batting lineup. This process will be continuous each time the end of the lineup is 'turned' to bat. (Refer to 'an out taken if an injury to a player occurs' in the regular softball city rules).

Teams are highly encouraged to field LR players drawing from other teams with different game times or BYES.

(d) If an out is not taken in the appropriate inning(s) any runs scored in that inning will not count. A protest does not have to be lodged for the runs to be removed. The manager of the team at bat is responsible for calling time when they reach the end of the batting order and informing the umpire that they have to take an out.

(e) MID-SEASON ADDITIONS - Players who wish to enter the season after the first game must inform the sports office and pay a league fee. They will be put on a 'waiting list' at the Sports Office and may enter the league if there is an injury to an equally rated player. A member of the rating committee will assign a rating. This season there will be a mid-season manager's meeting and waiting list players may be added directly at that time. The drafting of these players will begin with the lowest point team in the standings and worked up from there.

(f) QUITTING A TEAM – If a player decides to no longer play for a team, then this player is considered to be quitting. The player can NOT substitute for another player from another team once they quit. A forfeit will be invoked toward the team that uses this player as a substitute. If the player informs the sports office they are quitting, then the team they were once on may be allowed to add a player of similar rating from the waiting list. If the sports office is not informed, then the team will be allowed to substitute another player of a similar rating for the duration of the season.

SECTION 16 – “PSS Rule” (Pitcher Safety Screen)

The use of the “PSS” is voluntary and optional. However, pitcher utilization is strongly recommended by the Municipal Sports Office. (Any rule not covered here differs to the Municipal Softball League rules).

The PSS is a piece of safety equipment approved by Municipal Sports and permitted on the field solely for the pitcher’s safety and protection, and is not intended nor approved for, or to be used to supplement a team’s defense. The PSS rule was adopted with the specific intent that the pitcher release the ball with his/her body behind the PSS, not in front of the PSS. Therefore, the acceptable position of the PSS is that it must cover no less than 50% of the pitcher’s plate (rubber), whether it is even or behind the pitcher’s plate or a maximum of 4’ in front of the pitching rubber. A left handed pitcher must have the screen of his/her right side and a right handed pitcher must have the screen on his/her left side. If the pitcher is not using the PSS appropriately, or staying behind the PSS at the time of the release of the pitch for his/her own protection, then it will be the umpire’s responsibility to assure the PSS is being used appropriately, or have it removed from the playing field immediately.

During a game it is permissible for one team to use a PSS while their opponent elects not to use it.

If a team elects to use a PSS it must be in place before the first pitch of that half of the inning and must continue to be utilized until completion of that half inning. A team may elect to use or not use a PSS at the start of each inning. If a replacement pitcher enters the game he/she may elect to use or remove the PSS prior to his/her first pitch and must finish that half of the inning accordingly. When a PSS is not in play it must be removed completely off the playing field.

Any batted ball that makes contact with a PSS any time prior to being touched by a defensive player will be an automatic dead ball. The batter will not be penalized in any way.

Any thrown or touched ball by a defensive player that makes contact with a PSS will be a live ball.

A PSS may be constructed of plastic, metal, pvc, etc. It must be free of any sharp or dangerous projections. The umpire may remove a PSS from the game at anytime he/she feels player safety may be in jeopardy.

Maximum width: 6 feet

Maximum height: 8 feet

A. The screen will directly face home plate within four feet in front of the pitching plate (measured to the end of the screen legs). If a pitcher chooses to use the full depth of the 12 foot pitcher’s box then the screen must be positioned in the 1’-4’ limits of where he/she chooses to pitch.

B. Pitchers using the screen must move entirely behind the screen upon release of each pitch and before the ball reaches home plate. The league encourages pitchers (of all ratings) to wear head masks or pitching face shields when pitching (See G. below)

- C. A pitcher using a screen may **not** make a defensive play on any batted ball hit IN FRONT of the screen. Penalty for doing so will be a dead ball base hit and all runners will advance one base if forced to do so.

D. A **thrown** ball that hits the screen is a live ball. A thrown ball that becomes lodged in the screen will be declared a dead ball, with runners returning to the last base touched. (Batter-runner is awarded a minimum of first base).

F. Pitcher’s glove hand must be between screen and non-glove hand.

G. **ALL** pitchers (whether they are using a safety net or not) who are rated '6' and below **MUST** wear a mask when pitching. No exceptions. This is an important safety measure and must be enforced by the umpire.

SECTION 17 – INFIELD FLY RULE

A. In this league (65+) only, the infield fly rule will not be in effect. Due to the possible hearing impairment of many of the players and a lack of full understanding of the ruling itself. It will be the umpire's judgment if a fielding player intentionally drops a catchable pop up to create a double play. The batter will be called out and the runners will be allowed to safely return to their previous base.

SECTION 18 – Players from the two teams that advance to the championship game are not allowed to play in the All-Star game. (if there is one scheduled).

SECTION 19 – TIEBREAKERS for PLAYOFFS

1. First tiebreaker is head to head record.
2. Second tiebreaker is record within the league.
3. Third tiebreaker is record against common opponents.
4. Fourth tiebreaker is a coin flip if breaking the tie only affects playoff seeding. If breaking the tie results in one or more teams being eliminated from the playoffs a one-game playoff will be held.