

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. Although a pitcher is not required to 'show-the-ball' before pitching, a pitcher **must** come to a full 1 second stop before their wind-up and pitch. There is **no** 'walking-up-to-pitch' allowed in any city softball league including Tuesday. Once released, it is encouraged for a pitcher to 'step-back' in anticipation of a line drive.

MASKS – Any pitcher rated **6 or below** is required to wear a mask. All pitchers are encouraged to wear masks for safety features. (See Section 17 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 INNINGS are now the 6th and 7th (same as the Thursday Senior league. (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. A playoff game is played until one team wins. If there is a conflict with a regular city league game, this game may be moved to an adjacent field or worse case senerio, rescheduled to the following week.

SECTION 4– It is the responsibility of the manager to make sure that all players play a minimum of every other inning defensively. This amounts to a minimum of 3 innings per game. NO PLAYER can just be a designated hitter. At the halfway point of a game, the opposing manager may bring this issue up to the umpire if there are signs of non-compliance. NOTE: Players injured during the game are an exception, but if they cannot play the field, they cannot bat. An out will be taken their next time to bat (this only occurs once, then the batting lineup shrinks by one player).

Please see last 'note' in Section 5.

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. An automatic out will be taken if the wrong batter receives one pitch. Any protest to a player batting out of order must be made to the umpire before the first pitch to the next batter.

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 establish in advance of the game. (See Section 15 for substitution rules).

NOTE: (As mention in the previous Section 4), No player (of any rating) can be designated stictly 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 teams 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 16.

SECTION 7– INNING RUN LIMIT: For the first **FIVE** innings of any league game, the scoring in any half inning may not exceed 4 runs. However, there is no run limit after **FIVE** 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 of once** per inning 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. If a team 'bats-around', the rule still stands that any player running for another player is limited to once per inning.

The baserunner 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 the home plate extension. 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' against the runner 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 one out called per infraction. 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 white 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 preceived intention of moving in the direction of the next base may be forced out from the base they just touched or ran wide from. 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 **only** if the runner's intention was not to advance in the first place. If there is NO play at a base, the runner **must** touch the base. A player will be out if 'said' runner does not touch the base and is then tagged/forced. An appeal to the umpire may be called if a player hops or skips over a base when there is no play and that includes 'rounding' a base to go to the next base.

'Running wide' when returning to a base is highly encouraged, especially to 1st. 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. (See next paragraph).

PLEASE NOTE FROM PREVIOUS PARAGRAPH: A runner will be HIGHLY encouraged to run out of the basepath and/or miss touching the base in order to avoid a collision or being hit by the ball on a throw. Ideally the side to RUN WIDE is opposite of the incoming throw to the base. This must be an area wide left or wide right of 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 a 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 needs to be in contact with the plate or the template (with the ball secured) to create the force out. Once a runner crosses the commit line between third and home an out **can only be recorded by a catcher with the ball stepping on the template or home plate. A catcher cannot tag a runner once they pass the third base/home plate commit line.**

To conclude running to a base, the runner's lead foot **must** be touching the ground past the white line. If a player crosses the white line, but the fielder has the ball before the runner's foot is down, the runner will be called out.

BASERUNNERS MUST AVOID ANY CONTACT WITH A DEFENSIVE PLAYER.. BASERUNNERS NEED NOT TOUCH THE BASE if there is a play to that particular base. In essence they 'run wide'.

Running to 1st base, the runner MUST CROSS THE **1st BASE LINE extension, or even go further wide for safety reasons. Runners running to home, must cross the 'scoring line'.**
A runner who touches home will be called out.

Any play to home should be a force out. If the throw is 'up-the-third-base-line' and the catcher has the throw, they may tag the runner out. Otherwise, the catcher needs to be on the plate or template.

NOTE: The scoring line will be marked 3-4 feet from the front corner of home plate and extend to within 3-4 feet of the backstop, in the same path direction of the 1st base line. (See Section 15 for more detail)

SECTION 11 – A batter playing in the senior leagues **must** use a legal bat by the City Softball standard rules. There is no exception based on age or sex. It is very important for the umpires to check the bats in advance of the game. If time does not allow for that protocol, then any player may approach an umpire during the game to verify a legal bat. Any player coming to bat with an illegal bat who then steps into the batter's box will automatically be called out once time is in. It is not necessary for a pitch to be thrown. If the same bat is brought to the plate by any player from that point on, the batter will be ejected from the game.

SECTION 12– SLIDING is not allowed. A baserunner who slides will be called “out.”

SECTION 13 – 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 14– 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.

SECTION 15– SCORING LINE RULE: The home base scoring line will be extended starting 3-4 feet from the front edge of Home plate running 6-7 feet toward the backstop in the same path as 1st base. The line will extend, but be short of the backstop by 3-4 feet. It will be marked with a white chalk and in some instances have a small 1 foot line (at the edge of the white chalk line closest to home plate) parallel to the third base line to help direct the incoming runner. 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 with their lead foot 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 16– 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) ANY substitutions during the season may be the same rating or lower. This rule is adjusted in the playoffs.

Players rated a 9, 8, or 7 who are being subbed for, the manager must go down one rating level.

Players rated 6 and below are ok 'straight across'. No exceptions.

ANY players who are re-rated during the season must adhere to that rating for any substitution purposes from that point forward. Mid-season manager meetings are encouraged to make any skill rated changes for any player.

(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 **11 to 12** players in the batting lineup, then **two LR player is sufficient. --> The ideal lineup!**

If a team has **11** players batting and only **one LR player** then an out is taken at the end of the batting order.

If a team has **11** players batting and **no LR players** then TWO outs are taken at the end of the batting order.

If a team has **10** players batting then an automatic out is taken at the end of the lineup even if enough **LRs**

If a team has only 9 players, then two outs are taken at the end even with two LRs

NOTE: 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 'time' to bat. (Only one out needs to be taken if an injury to a player prevents them from batting and that player has not been subbed by another of the same or lower rating that is observing the game. Very important for the managers to confer with the umpire on this situation).

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 or a group of no less than three managers 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 17 – “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 refers back 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 should have the screen of his/her right side and a right handed pitcher should have the screen on his/her left side.

If the pitcher is not using the PSS appropriately, or staying open to the pitching side after release then it will be the umpire's responsibility to call 'no pitch' to assure the PSS is being used appropriately, or have it removed from the playing field. At minimum a warning should be given to the pitcher (again for safety concerns). (See B. in this section)

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 PSS may not make a defensive play on any batted ball hit in front of the PSS. Penalty for doing so will be a dead ball base hit and all runners will advance one base if forced to do so. If a ball is hit in front of the PSS, the catcher, or any other infielder may make a play on the ball without penalty.

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).

D.. **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 18 – 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 19 – Players from the two teams that advance to the championship game are not allowed to play in the All-Star game. There will be one all-star game for the 65+ league. It will be played in the time slot before the championship game on the same field as the championship game. With 10 teams total in the league and two teams in the championship game, **THREE** players from each of the 8 remaining teams will be chosen by the manager...(24 players). In the week previous to the game, the managers of the teams losing in the semi-final games will be the managers and a draft will determine the teams. If there are 9 or 11 teams in the league, then managers will make the proper adjustments so that each all-star team has a minimum of 12 players and a maximum of 13.

SECTION 20 – 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.