

LEAGUE RULES

Competitive and Intermediate Divisions

Season Details

The league consists of single, regular-season games, **with a 7-inning or 1-hour time limit**, whichever comes first (there are two extra innings during playoffs with international rules, and for the Finals, international rules will apply in the 2nd extra inning) and two post-season games. The top 4 teams will make the playoffs.

It's a slow, modified pitch game. No fastpitch or high arc is allowed. The umpire will notify a pitcher to slow down if necessary. The umpire will call out flat pitches. If the batter swings, there will be no penalty.

This is a CO-ED league, meaning each team must have at least 3 women players on the field. **The maximum number of men on the field (defense) is 7**, and the minimum number of women on the field (if available) is 3. You can always use women in place of men and an unlimited number of women as Extra Hitters (EH).

Game starting time & grace period

Teams will have no more than a 10-minute grace period to have the minimum number of players to start a game, which is 6 men and 2 women. At that point, the umpire will start the game, and the teams will play with whatever players are available. Umpires will let the teams know how much time is left to finish the games.

Pre-game

Both managers should ALWAYS discuss rules BEFORE the game. 99% of the calls made by the umpires are JUDGMENT calls-**there is no arguing an umpire's judgment calls.**

Sometimes, because of field conditions (and only field conditions), the umpire may need to tweak a rule that is permitted as long as both managers are notified and agree to it.

Managers will exchange lineup cards and provide one to the umpire. Each card should contain the full names of each player, including bench players.

Scorebooks

- Each team MUST keep a scorebook for their team and should keep a scorebook for the opposing team. You can not argue lineup mistakes if you don't keep track of other teams' scorebooks or have their lineup card. So, it's crucial to keep track.
- Managers, your role is pivotal. It is imperative that you announce all lineup changes BEFORE they happen, recording them in your scorebook and communicating them to the umpire and opposing manager. This ensures a smooth and fair game.
- After each game, both managers must give the umpire a copy of their scorebook. The umpire will take a picture and send it to the league for the record.

Rosters & lineups

Rosters

Rosters will consist of 30 players max.

- **Season Rosters are due by the end of the 4th week;** a 2-game deduction for each player on the team is made for each week after the 4th week that the roster is not sent in. NO EXCEPTIONS.
- **If a player is on more than one roster,** they must email the league to let us know which team they will play for during the season no later than the end of week 4. They will not be eligible for the playoffs if a decision is not made in a timely manner, NO EXCEPTIONS.
- **You cannot switch teams after the end of week 4.**

Playoff Eligibility—All Players must play at least 3 regular-season games to qualify for the playoffs. A position player must have 2 plate appearances to count as an official game played. Pitchers who are not hitting must pitch 3 innings to count as a game; the Umpire must sign the scorebook to confirm they did so.

Lineups If a team starts with 9 players, a 10th player may be added into the batting lineup in the 10th batting slot, but only if the team has yet to reach that slot in the order. Teams can continue to add players to the bottom of the order. **Note:** The three men batting in a row rule is still in effect (see **Women in the batting order**).

If a team plays with 7, 8, or 9 players with 3 women on the field, there will be no automatic out. Automatic outs will be enforced when less than 3 women are on the field.

If a team loses a player during the game and no one is available to replace them in the batting order, that slot becomes an automatic out. If the player is lost due to injury, it will be up to the opposing manager's discretion whether the "automatic out" rule goes into effect. An opposing manager may, out of generosity, allow this particular rule to be voided, depending on the situation, but she/he has no obligation to do so.

Women in the batting order Women must bat after the 3rd consecutive male batter.

For example, if a woman player is batting **1st** in the lineup, the 5th batter must be a woman, and the 9th batter must be a woman. **You cannot bat four men in a row.** If you bat 13 or more, the same rules apply.

Substitutions & re-entry All substitutions must be announced to the umpire and opposing manager as they occur, not after the fact. **All players have one re-entry**, and they **MUST bat in their original spot in the batting order**—the same goes for substitutes.

Borrowed players Borrowed players can only be **used during the Regular Season, not for Playoffs**. For Playoffs if needed to field 9, you must ask the league will provide the borrow players and there is no say on preference. We cannot use this as an advantage for any team missing a player.

Teams intending to use borrowed players must follow a specific approval process. This involves getting approval from the league, the borrowed player's manager, and the opposing manager. The opposing manager can agree to which borrowed player can play and where their position must be in the game, if chosen by the opponent.

- The players you borrow cannot replace players from your team. Borrowed players can
- **only be used if a team has eight (8) players or less** and needs to field ten players. If the team's players show up during the game, they must replace the borrowed players at the end of the half-inning being played. If the team can only field nine players or less, they will only have an automatic out if they are missing women. (7 men 2 women = 1 automatic out, or 7 men 1 woman = 2 automatic outs). **No women will result in a forfeit.**
- **If and when roster players arrive, they must replace borrowed players.** Men for men and women for women. Unless the borrowing team has four or more women, a roster man can replace the 4th(or 5th) woman.

Post-game

After the game is completed, each manager must clean the bench and leave the dugout immediately so the next team can set up for their game. Any fines received by the parks department will be the team's responsibility if they do not follow the park's department rules.

Equipment

Jerseys/Shirts

Teams must have jerseys/shirts by 3rd week of league play.

Note: Provided Pawsome T-shirts are acceptable replacements. **Anything else is considered illegal, and the batter will start with a 1 ball, 2 strike (1-2) count.**

If a team plays two games in one week, the shirt rule does not apply to the second game.

Community bat rule

All Association bats are approved for play (ASA, USSSA, ISA, NSA and WBSC)

 All bats are made available to all players in the game. If you do not want other players using your bat, leave it home.

- Throwing the bat on your follow-through is an automatic out-dead ball. If it happens a second time, the player will not be allowed to hit for the rest of that game.
- If you intentionally slam the bat on the ground, throw the bat after your follow-through swing, toss it back to the on-deck batter or gate, or use it in a way not intended to be used, which is to swing and make contact with the ball, and it breaks, you are responsible financially to the bat's owner.
- Illegally rolled or shaved bats will not be allowed; there are **NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- If caught with a shaved bat (as determined by the umpire), **you will be ejected and suspended for the next game.**
- The umpire should check all bats before the game. If an illegal bat is used in a game before or after it's used, a player, manager, or umpire should take it out of play immediately.
 - If a batter gets a hit with it-he/she is out. Any batter in the batter's box with an illegal bat can be called out by the umpire or on appeal to the umpire by the opposing manager.

Cleats

Turf, rubber, or plastic molded cleats are approved. **Metal spikes are not allowed.**

Catcher's mask

Masks **MUST** be worn by all catchers. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

Ground rules

▶ This section of the rules is intended to prevent injuries to players. The umpire will decide whether these rules have been followed on any specific play and rule accordingly.

Before each game, the umpire will discuss the fence, tree, and out-of-play rules.

Batted balls

Batted balls that hit a fielder which ends up going out of bounds (outside of fielded play), the batter and runners get the base they were going to from when the ball went out of bounds-plus one base.

Trees

Batted balls that hit any parts of a tree (branch/twig/leaf) and is caught is an out.

Overthrows

Thrown balls that go beyond that line or over the fences—the batter and/or runners get the base they were going to when the ball was thrown, plus one base. The bases rewarded are based on where the base the runner was going to when the fielder released the ball.

Bases

There will be two bases at first base. The outside bag is the runner's base, and the batter must run to that bag. The inside bag is the fielder's base, and the fielder must tag that bag to record an out. **If the fielder touches the runner's bag, it is not considered an out.**

If the batter runs to the inside bag, the umpire will call them out even if he beats the throw. A runner who gets on base safely and turns towards second base must use the inside base, and a runner diving back to first base must also use the inside base. The outside bag is considered "safe" for a runner only when running down the line towards first base from the batter's box, not once they have passed first base.

Leading off a base There is no leading. Runners must wait for the ball to be hit before leaving the base. **The umpire will call them out if anyone is caught leading. Only on a swing and miss will we make an exception and not call the runner out for leaving the base.**

Base running

- **A runner must slide or give themselves up when a fielder is attempting to field a throw or has the ball and will make a tag play.** "Barreling in," "running over," or any other intentional physical contact by the runner will immediately result in ejection from the game and possible suspension from league play.
- Similarly, **a fielder cannot block a base when he does not have the ball, or he has no chance of making a play.** In addition, a fielder may not "phantom tag," as this can cause a runner to be injured.
- **Double plays.** A runner must either give themselves up and get out of the way to allow the fielder to throw or slide into the base. **You will be called out if you run standing up on a close double play.**

Defending home plate

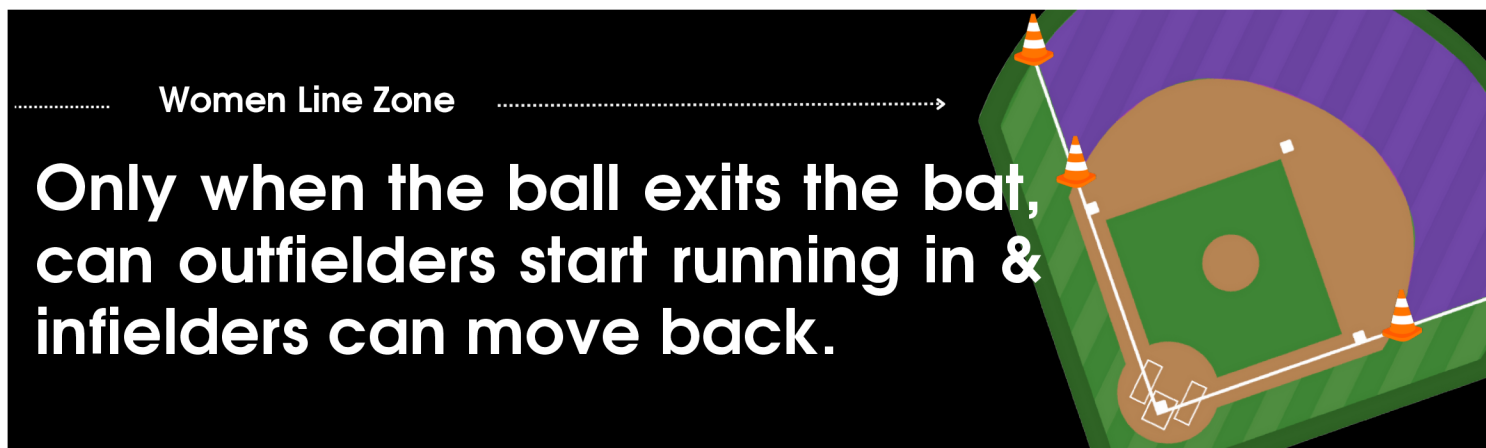


Any plays coming to the plate, the catcher cannot be directly behind or on home plate.

To avoid collisions:

- Catchers must be in front and the right half of home plate (**see image above**)
- Catchers can not have a foot on home plate except on force plays, which they are only allowed one foot on the plate on their half of the plate (no two feet blocking the entire plate)
- If the pitcher is making the tag at home, the same rules applies to them, and the catcher must be on either backstop side but not directly behind home plate.
- Runners will have the left half of home plate
- Runners must slide or give themselves up on close plays. They will be called out if the runner doesn't slide on close plays.

Women specific rules



Women Line: The outfielders must be behind the second cones in the outfield, which are 80 feet beyond the first, second, and third base. **Only when the ball exits the bat can**

outfielders start running in & infielders can move back. The area between the bases and the Women Line is designated as the **Woman Line Zone**. The zone distance is 80ft from the bases.

 It's important to note that infielders cannot play on the grass or beyond the marked area **(if on a baseball field for BOTH genders.)** This rule is essential for maintaining the game's structure and ensuring fair play.

 **Don't be that guy who tries to time it; the result will be a hit.**

- You **cannot** play 5 infielders and/or rover versus women batters.
- There must be at least 3 women on the field. In the event that you only have 2, you can only play with 9 fielders.
- When a man is batting in front of a woman in the batting order, and he is walked on three straight balls, he will be awarded second base, and the woman player has to hit.
- Men can substitute bat/run/field for men by hitting, fielding, or running unless more than three women are playing, in which case women can replace a man.
However, women can only be substituted by another woman.

Courtesy foul ball Each Batter starts with a 1-1 count and gets only one courtesy foul ball after two strikes.

Scenario 1: If the 2nd strike results from a ball going foul, they can foul a ball once more, and then on the next swing, the ball must be in fair play.

Scenario 2: If the Batter gets called looking on the second strike, they can only foul the ball once, and the next swing of the ball must be in fair play. Umpires will have backup balls to keep the game moving.

Another critical item is **interference from a source outside of our game**. Unfortunately, we play in an area with limited space; while our games are going on, other games and activities are happening on the same fields. Therefore, if the ball hits a player or person on another field, it is considered a live ball and in play.

Courtesy runners Each team may use 2 Courtesy Runners per game, 1 for Men and 1 for Women. If a position player is injured, they can get a courtesy runner. However, they must be replaced by a bench player on the field for at least 2 innings. If you have less than 10 players at the game, you must play with one less player on the field. For safety and liability reasons, please do not put your players at risk to win a game.

 Suppose you subject your player to continue playing while injured. In that case, you will be held accountable for any related medical expenses the player incurred and subject to a ban from the league.

The league will not be held liable for any physical detriment to the players due to the manager's or player's decision to continue playing while hurt.

Pitching

Pitchers must throw a lob pitch **with a slight arc**; there are no flat pitches. The ball must be pitched underhand in an arch **(no higher than 8 feet or lower than 5 feet)**. If the umpire calls the pitch flat, and the hitter makes contact, it will result from the contact with the ball and not be deemed a re-do. **At least one foot must start and finish on the rubber.**

The **strike zone** will vary with the height of the pitch as well as the height of the batter. Where the batter stands in the box does not affect the strike zone.

ASA rules define the zone as the front knee/back shoulder while the batter stands adjacent to the plate. If a batter is not standing adjacent to the plate, the umpire must make a mental adjustment by taking the batter's size and visualizing them adjacent to the plate. If any part of the ball crosses any white portion of the plate, it is a strike. A pitch can land in an area wide of the plate and still be a legitimate strike.

See Appendix for Pitching Illustration.

On-deck batter

Please have only one on-deck batter near the entrance towards home plate. Other players must be far away from the on-deck batter so as not to create confusion. The on-deck batter must be visible to the defensive team and umpire.

Attempting to deceive the defensive team of “Who’s On Deck Batter?” will be considered unsportsmanlike and negate the automatic two-base walk to the male batter following three consecutive balls. The male batter will only be able to take first base. **Note: This is a judgment call by the umpire.**

Managers need to clearly announce to the umpire and the other team who the on-deck batter is. Pitchers should stop the game and ask the umpire to ask the batting team’s manager to announce loudly to both teams on deck.

Inning Runs Cap

Each team is allowed a maximum of **6** runs for their half of the inning. **For last inning, visitor team, if down, has unlimited runs until they get ahead by 1 run (if time is still allowed.)**

Mercy Rule

The “Mercy Rule” is 15 runs after four innings or 10 runs after five innings. The home team always gets a chance to bat if the Away team goes ahead by mercy amount (innings 4, 5, 6, or 7).

The “Mercy Rule” is in effect for the entire Playoffs

Playoffs

Four teams make the playoffs (2 rounds of playoffs).

The order of finish will be determined as follows:

1. Winning Percentage or Games Behind- if teams play an uneven number of games.
2. Best record
3. Run differential between two or more teams that are tied
4. Best head-to-head record (if more than two teams are involved, combined record vs. each)
5. Best head-to-head total run differential during their match-up.

Any tie-in record will go to the next tie-breaker and so on down the list.

- If the opposing manager questions the use of non-roster players during the playos, a valid US or NYS government-issued ID must be shown.

Rain & suspended games

 **Due to rainouts or cancellations, teams may have to play make-up games to be announced. Game Day rainout decisions will be made no later than 1 hour before game time.**

- If a game is canceled before the start of the 4th inning, a rescheduled game will start as a new game.
- If a game is canceled after the completion of the 4th inning, it is considered an official game.

In case of rain or any other occurrence causing a game suspension, that game will be completed later from the same point and situation as when the suspension occurred.

All players in the game initially and who are available for completion will bat in the same order. Other players must be used to fill in batting slots where players unavailable to attend the completion date were batting. Also, on the completion date, if a team has fewer players than before, it will not be penalized unless they only have 8 players; at this point, the number 9 slot in the batting order would be an automatic out.

Example: If team A had a batting order of 12 on June 6th and got only three innings in before rain caused a suspension when the game was completed on July 15th, they only had 11 players permitted- no automatic out will be charged.

Umpires

Fees Regular season games have one umpire Extra innings pay is \$5 per half inning. Each team must pay the umpire at the field at the end of the game. **Extra innings only applies in playoffs.**

Disputes

Only Managers and Assistant Managers may discuss calls/rules with the umpire for a brief period. Teams should move forward once the umpire says it's time to stop arguing and play ball.

 **Managers**, you are responsible for your player's actions. Please set a good example.

Forfeits

The forfeiting team must pay the umpires for both teams. In other words, if your team forfeits a game, it's \$60. Any team that forfeits more than four games during the regular season will be disqualified from future league play until the following requirements are met: a \$120 fine paid to the league and \$180 paid to the league forfeit insurance.

Drugs & alcohol

Drinking alcoholic beverages and/or using drugs during games—including between games—is illegal and prohibited and violates the NYC Park Department permit rules. **If you are found to be in violation of this rule, you will be ejected and suspended for one game.** The NYC Parks Department is very strict with the rules in Central Park.

Player conduct

We want all our participants to set an excellent example for our organization and the league by promoting sportsmanship and fair play. Although competition may become intense, we expect our participants to maintain good sportsmanship throughout the game and the season.

Violations of code of conduct

Any player who commits the offense of **Abusive Behavior Level 1** **is ejected from the game and receives a 1-game suspension. 2nd offense will result in an ejection and**

suspension from the league.

- Vulgar, abusive, sexist, racist, discriminatory comments or gestures towards an opponent, umpire or spectator.
- Verbal threat of violence towards an opponent, umpire, or spectator.
- Throwing equipment in anger at the ground, bleachers, or fence.
- Excessive arguing over judgment calls.
- Intentionally tripping a player.

Any player who commits the offense of **Abusive Behavior Level 2** will receive a league suspension and may be subject to criminal prosecution.

- Attempting to punch, kick, or strike an opponent, umpire or spectator.
- Attempting to maliciously strike an opponent, umpire, or spectator with a ball, glove, or bat.
- Brandishing/Displaying any weapon (including equipment) in a menacing/threatening manner.
- Charging/Confronting another individual in a combative/threatening manner
- Sexual harassment of any players in any form.
- Spitting on an opponent, umpire, or spectator.

These rules are our own and will be used as a supplement to the official ASA rules. Each team manager should keep the rulebook with them at every game so there is no question about a call or rule. Protests will be lodged with the league's commissioner and managers in official ASA fashion, or they will be dismissed. Remember, almost all the calls by the umpire are **JUDGMENT** calls and, therefore, cannot be protested.

▶ Ejected players have 5 minutes to leave the game area, leave the permitted field immediately, and must be 300 feet or more away.

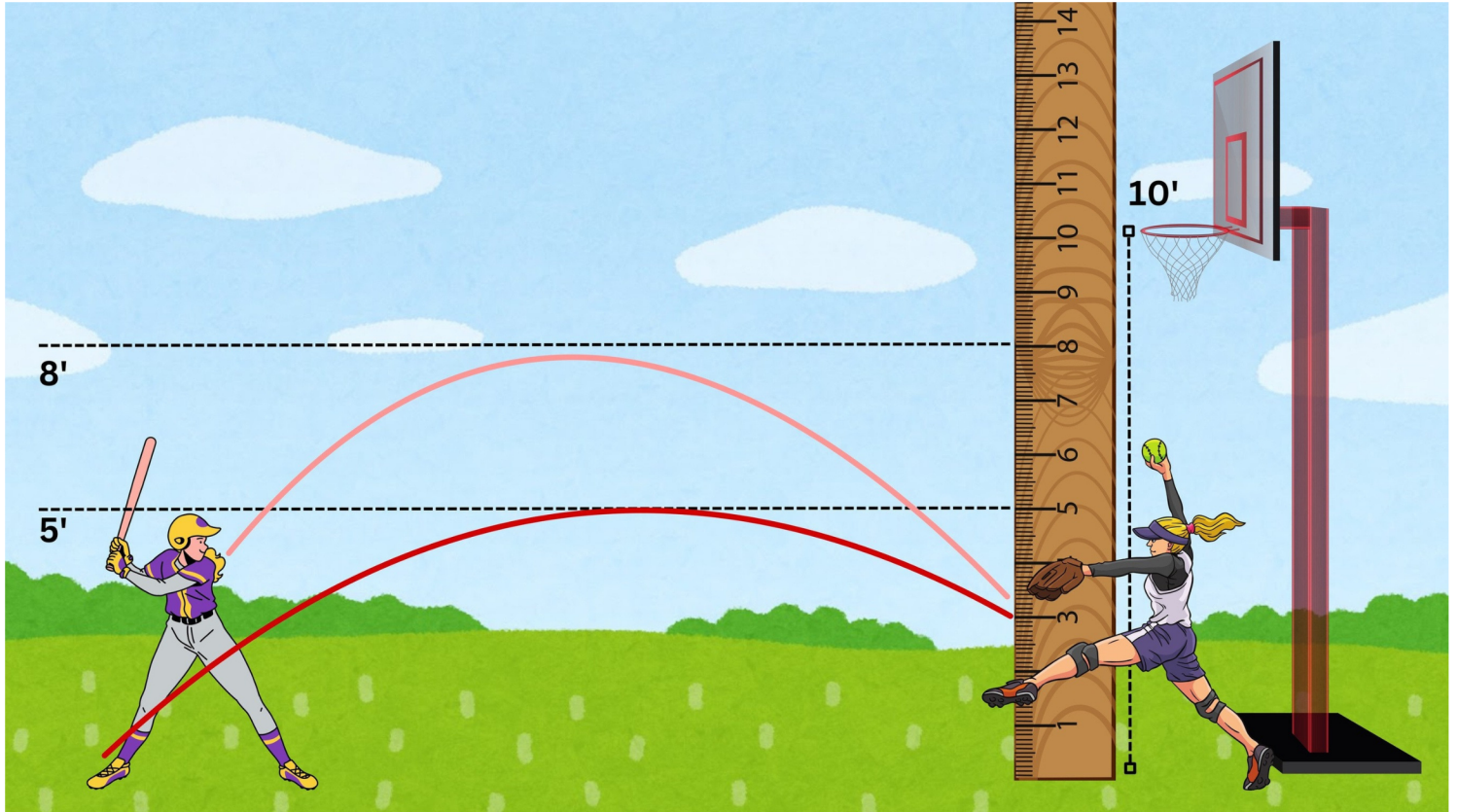
Finally, we are doing this for FUN and a GREAT CAUSE! Any antisocial behavior, such as excessive arguing, cursing, verbal threats, disrespecting players on opposing teams and/or the umpires, overly aggressive play, or physical violence of any type, is strictly prohibited and will result in suspensions and/or banishment from further league play. **Managers, you are responsible for your players' actions.**

Please keep this in perspective: This is recreational co-ed softball, not Game 7 of the World Series.

PS Softball “Official Rules” are in addition to or amendments to the ASA 2025 rulebook, which are the official basic rules of the league

Appendix

Pitching Illustration



Legal Pitch

For a pitch to be considered a strike, it must travel in an arc, reaching a minimum height of 5 feet with a maximum height of 8 feet.

Strike Zone

The ball must cross some part of the plate between the batter's front shoulder and back knee, assuming they are standing in line with the plate. Any pitch that hits any portion of the plate as it descends to the ground is a ball, even if it passes through the strike zone.