



SUNCOAST SOFTBALL LEAGUE RULES OF PLAY

Updated
July 12, 2015
Version 005

Suncoast Softball League, Inc.

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1) LINEUPS

All games will be played with a maximum of twelve players in the lineup. This will consist of ten players on the field and the eleventh and twelfth players as extra hitters. Games may be started with nine or ten players. If a game begins with nine players and a tenth player shows up, then that player may immediately enter the lineup to make ten. However, if a team starts with ten players and then an eleventh shows up, the eleventh player may be used only as a substitute for the original ten players. If a team is requesting a change to their schedule day and/or time of play, changes must be approved by the opposing team and submitted to the League's Commissioner at least 7 days prior to the date of the requested schedule change. The Executive Council will let both coaches know if the schedule change is approved or denied.

2) TIME, TIE, CHAMPION AND RUN RULE

- a) **Time:** All games are scheduled for seven innings with no new innings starting after 55 minutes.
- b) **Tie:** In the event a game ends in a tie (due to time limit or the completion of seven (7) innings), the game continues using the Tampa Bay Tie Breaker Rule (i.e., the last batted out from previous inning becomes the runner on second base and the inning starts with NO outs). The game shall continue normally until there is a winner. The Tampa Bay Tiebreaker Rule will be used as many times as needed until the game is won.
- c) **Champion:** The Champion in each division will be the team with the best record against other division opponents, unless a division has an end-of-season tournament with rules that determine division champions. In the event of a tie, the following tiebreaker procedures shall be used:
 - The first tiebreaker is the head-to-head record of the tied teams from the same division (team with the best record wins).
 - The second tiebreaker is the runs-scored differential of the tied teams (team with the higher amount of runs scored wins). Example: Team A and Team B are tied and have played each other twice. In their games vs. each other, the highest differential of the total runs scored minus their total runs allowed wins the tie.
 - The third tiebreaker will be a scheduled play-off game at the end of the season.
- d) **Run Rules:** The SSL will use the following run rules to end game:
 - 20 runs after 3 innings
 - 15 runs after 4 innings
 - 10 runs after 5 innings and beyond.

3) COURTESY RUNNERS

One courtesy runner per team per inning is allowed. The courtesy runner will be the last out. If the game is in the first inning and the team requesting a courtesy runner does not have an out in the inning, the courtesy runner will be the last batter in the lineup. If one comes off the bench to pinch run, as opposed to being a courtesy runner, one is considered a substitute and subject to the rules regarding substitution. If the wrong person is sent to courtesy run, i.e., anyone other than the last out or his substitute, the umpire will instruct the right person to take the base (no other penalty).

4) PITCHING

A pitcher's pivot foot must be on the pitcher's rubber at the time of release to the batter.

5) NON-CONTACT RULE

No player is ever forced to slide. This is a decision that should be made personally, after reviewing your sliding skills with your coach. However, a player must either slide to try to avoid hitting the player who already has the ball and is making a legal tag or otherwise give up as an out. You cannot run over a player who has the ball. This could result in the automatic ejection of the committing player. This rule also applies to breaking up a double play. If a runner stays in the baseline and is hit with the ball or prevents the fielder from making a throw to complete the double play by staying in the baseline, then the committing base runner and the batter/runner shall be called out. This rule applies to double play attempts at any base. This is an umpire judgment call and conforms to ASA rules. It is simply pointed out here for clarification.

- *Teams should teach all players, especially catchers and first base position players where to properly stand when making plays. In the case of first base, a player (pitcher covering the base or first baseman) should never cross the path of a runner while trying to make a play. This is very dangerous and can result in injury. In addition, catchers should not stand on or behind the plate when waiting for a throw to arrive throw in anticipation of a tag play. Catchers should stand in front of the plate, and then attempt a tag once they have the ball. Standing on the plate, where the runner has a right to run, can result in needless collisions and injuries.*

6) FAKE TAGS

Fake tags are illegal. You may hurt someone seriously by doing this. Committing player is subject to ejection.

7) EQUIPMENT

All legal ASA bats can be used. Metal cleats or metal screws in cleats are illegal. Rubber type cleats are permitted but optional.

8) OPEN WOUNDS

Any player with an open, bleeding wound MUST leave the game immediately until the bleeding has stopped and has been properly bandaged. The game may be halted for a maximum of five minutes to allow the player to comply without penalty. After five minutes, a substitute must take the place of the injured player. If no substitute is available, the injured player will be passed over in the batting lineup with no out being recorded.

9) FORFEITS

Any team unable to field nine players at any time shall be subject to forfeit. The pick-up rule applies here, so long as a team is short during a game due to injury only. If a player is ejected which causes a team to be short, meaning there are no eligible substitutes on their roster from their team, then the game becomes an automatic forfeit. Teams that forfeit an inter-division game will lose a win for their intra-division record.

10) CONDUCT OF PLAYERS AND SPECTATORS OFF THE FIELD

All teams, players, and spectators are expected to behave with maturity and exhibit good sportsmanship. As such, game officials (e.g., umpires) have general authority to handle inappropriate conduct on and off the fields. No League member or spectator may refuse to abide by a decision of an umpire or the Umpire in Chief. Coaches and managers are expected to have full control of their players both on and off the field. No League member may use any intoxicating substances during the course of the game or when observing other games, and amplified sound and other noisemaking devices or objects are prohibited when playing or watching any game. For any of these infractions or other inappropriate conduct, game officials are authorized to eject any players or spectators from the game and report the incident to the Umpire in Chief or the Executive Council for further action. There shall be an automatic one-

game suspension for any ejected player, for the scheduled game immediately following the game in which the player was ejected, in addition to other requirements in Rules of Play 11. Any spectator ejected from a game must leave the field complex immediately.

11) JURISDICTION OF GAME OFFICIALS; EXCESSIVE OR UNNECESSARY LANGUAGE

- A. Once games begin, they are under the jurisdiction of the umpire. Umpires shall have the authority to rule on any specific point not covered in these rules. Games may be protested for rule interpretations only. Judgment calls may not be protested. Calls protested must be done at the time of the disagreement or before the end of the game.
- B. Players are asked to limit excessive or unnecessary language. If language or behaviors get out of hand, umpires or the Umpire in Chief have the option of issuing a warning to the offending players or teams. Further abuses by players or teams may warrant ejection as determined by the umpires or the Umpire in Chief. Abusive or threatening language directed specifically at another player or an umpire may result in an immediate ejection. Any player(s) or team(s) ejected from a game are not eligible to play the remainder of the game in question or any subsequent games scheduled that day, and those player(s) or team(s) must leave the softball complex immediately. Players and umpires are asked to exercise tolerance when dealing with this issue.

12) OFFICIAL SCORE / LINEUPS

If the umpires are keeping score on the field, teams should match scores after each inning with the umpire to avoid mistakes. The coach/manager of each team must provide a complete lineup sheet with first initial and last name of each player including substitutes to the umpire and opposing team coach/manager as needed throughout the season. If scorecards are used at the complex where games are being played, it must be filled out as well. The coach/manager's signature is required at game time or that team is subject to forfeit.

13) UNIFORMS

Teams should wear like-colored jerseys. Numbers must be on the back of each jersey, at least 6" high, with a maximum of two numerical digits. Jersey numbers should not be duplicated for multiple players on any team (e.g., "08" and "8" shall be considered the same number). This is an ASA rule and is usually enforced at tournaments. We will not tolerate a player's dress that exposes any portion of the buttocks, genitalia, breasts for women, underwear, or any other portion of a player's body that may be deemed offensive to other players. Please note that appropriate softball attire, following the guidelines above, is expected at all times. Examples of inappropriate attire include speedo shorts or yoga pants.

14) PICK-UP PLAYER RULE

- A. Any team present and ready to play at a scheduled game time that has only seven players present may pick-up two players in order not to forfeit that game. Any team present and ready to play at a scheduled game time, which has only eight players present, may pick-up one player in order not to forfeit that game.
- B. With respect to pick-up player eligibility, this is based on the rating of the player only, not on which team he or she plays. Therefore, a player rated at 11 or below could play on any pick-up team in any division. A player rated at 12 or higher could play in a C, B, or A game only. A player rated at 16 or higher can only play in a B or A game. Where inter-division play exists, neither team may pick-up from the higher division; both teams must pick up from the lower division or below. (Example: C plays B or A -- all pickups must be rated at 15 or less.

C plays D – all pickups must be rated at 11 or less.) The exception to this rule is when a division has less than three teams. In this case, those teams may pick up other players from their own division as well as players from lower divisions.

- C. If a roster member of the team shows up after the beginning of the game, the player or players will be immediately substituted for the pick-up player(s) at the beginning of the next half inning. After nine roster team members are fielded, normal substitution rules apply.
- D. The spirit of this rule allows a team who is present, but short one or two players, to play rather than to forfeit as well as providing competition for the opposing team. This rule is not meant as a way to stack a certain team or game. Any team found to be in violation of the spirit and intent of this rule may be brought before the Arbitration Committee for possible sanctions, including the forfeiting of the game in question.
- E. Teams are encouraged to follow-up during the week to make sure they will have enough players, or make arrangements so that necessary pick-up players are at the field and ready to play at game time. Permission from the opposing coach is not required, however, if picking up to nine players. If a coach feels his or her team is at a disadvantage due to the pick-up players on the opposing team, the game may be played under protest (if done prior to the first pitch). The Arbitration Committee would then hear the protest and make a recommendation to the Executive Council for a penalty. In addition, the spirit and intent of this rule is to encourage recreational players to get more experience, and possibly experience play at the competitive level. To provide as many opportunities as possible, players are asked to play in only one game per day as a pick-up player.
- F. A manager or coach may not play as a pick-up player during any time when his or her team is playing a game.

15) DEPLETED ROSTER RULE

A. Qualifying Seasons:

- 1. Players may be added to a team's roster or moved from roster to roster anytime up to the last pitch on the fifth week of a qualifying season. At that point rosters are considered locked in for the remainder of the season.
- 2. If a coach or manager wishes to remove a player from a team roster, he or she must notify the Assistant Commissioner for that division and the chairperson of the Sports Information Committee.
- 3. If at any time after the fifth week a team loses players and their total roster falls below thirteen (13), players may be added by using the Depleted Roster Rule.
- 4. The team manager or coach must notify the Assistant Commissioner for that division and the chairperson of the Sports Information Committee that the team has a depleted roster and the coach or manager wishes to add a player to the roster.
- 5. If a coach or manager wants to add a player after the fifth week and does not qualify for the Depleted Roster Rule, the issue must be brought before the Arbitration Committee who will make a recommendation to the Executive Council for a final decision.

B. All Other Seasons:

- 1. If a coach or manager wishes to add or remove a player from a team roster, he or she must notify the Assistant Commissioner for that division and the chairperson of the Sports Information Committee.
- 2. Players may be added to a team's roster or moved from roster to roster at any time.

16) OUT-OF-THE-PARK HOME RUN LIMITS

When inter-division games are played, the lower division team's home run rules apply. Any out-of-the-park home runs beyond what is allowed for each division will be recorded as that team's third out.

- D Division - Zero (0) out-of-the-park home runs are allowed per game.
- C Division - One (1) out-of-the-park home run is allowed per game.
- B Division - Two (2) out-of-the-park home runs are allowed per game.

17) Protesting Games

A coach or manager may play a game under protest if they feel the rules outlined in these Rules of Play have not been followed. The umpire must be notified of such protest before the last pitch of the game or before the game ends due to expiration of time. The umpire should note on the game card that the game is under protest. Any protested games will be reviewed and handled through the Executive Council.

18) RAIN OUTS

If a game is cancelled due to weather conditions, it is considered a complete game if both teams have finished the fifth inning of play or the home team is up to bat in the fifth inning and they are ahead. Any incomplete game will be replayed from the first inning and a score of 0-0.

19) NAGAAA WORLD SERIES QUALIFICATIONS - GAMES PLAYED

A player must have attended and have been able to play in 50% of their qualifying season games in order to be qualified for the NAGAAA World Series. This does not mean that they have to play but only be present and able to play. If a player is present for a game that was started but cancelled due to weather conditions, they will get credit for that game even if they cannot make it to the makeup game.

20) SUNCOAST SOFTBALL LEAGUE'S SUPPLEMENTAL INSURANCE INFORMATION

- 1. Agent:** Bollinger Insurance (Phone: 800-526-1379)
830 Morris Turnpike
Short Hills, NJ 07078
Policy #3602AH230069
- 2. Insured:** Suncoast Softball League, Inc.
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