

Citrus Park 50+ Softball League

Men's Playing Rules

Amended November 16, 2023

The Men's League will play by the rules in the Official USA Softball Rule Book with the following exceptions, modifications, or additions. Some of the rules listed here are identical to the USA Softball rules and are printed here for emphasis.

General

1. The field layout will conform with USA Softball guidance with the following exceptions:
 - a) A batting Home Plate with total dimension of 2'X3' will be used with a forward, five sided traditional baseball home plate section of 2'X2'X3', painted white, with the remaining surface painted blue. (Note: a legal pitch landing on any area of the total dimension will be considered a "strike".)
 - b) A commitment line between third base and the running home plate will be 25' from the back of the third base bag along the baseline to the running home plate and will extend perpendicular to the running baseline stopping at the traditional baseline from third base to the batting home plate. (Note: see Base Running section for further guidance on commitment line rules.)
2. If there is a tie for the League championship between two teams, the two teams will engage in a tie—breaking game for the title. If more than two teams are tied, all tie-breaking games will be played the day following the last day of the regular schedule. The Executive will provide the format for all tie-breaking games.
3. All games will be 7 innings in length. However, the mercy rule (General Rule 5) and the tie-game rule (General Rule 4) will always be in effect.
4. If the score is tied in regular League games after seven innings of play, only one more inning will be played. If the game is still tied after that inning, it will go on the record as a tie game. During the playoffs, the eighth inning format will continue until a winner emerges.
 - a) Each half of the tie-breaking inning will start with the team's last completed batter being placed on second base (e.g., if the number 5 batter is the lead-off batter, the number 4 batter in the batting order will be placed on second base). The runner who starts on second can have a substitute runner after he safely reaches third.
 - b) If the team's designated non-runner was the last batter in the seventh inning, his substitute runner from the seventh inning will report to second base to start the extra inning. This will not count as an additional running event for that substitute runner. If the original substitute runner is injured and removed from the game, a new substitute runner can be utilized. It would count as an additional running event for the new substitute runner in this case. The substitute runners cannot be replaced upon reaching third base.
5. The twelve(12) run mercy rule will be in effect any time after the 5th inning provided the team that is behind in runs has batted at least the same number of times as their opponents.
6. Players arriving late for the game and have been substituted for by Player Substitution, may not enter the game.
7. The team manager will give the top copy (white) of his team's lineup (batting order) to the Official Scorer and the 2nd copy (yellow) to the opposing manager 45 minutes prior to the start of the game. This is good management, courteous, and necessary for the scorekeeper.
8. No metal or sharp spikes are allowed on players' shoes.

9. All players shall wear sponsor's shirts (suggest tucked in) and hats
10. Do not conduct pre—game warm—ups on the skinned part of the playing field.
11. Players are expected to be at practice during the league designated practice time.
Attendance at other practice times is up to the manager. Managers should reserve times for special practices by signing on bulletin the board at the Park.
12. Watches and bracelets (except medical tags) will not be worn by players during any part of the game.
13. The League ball will be approved by the Men's Board.
14. Each team is limited to scoring a maximum of five runs in each of the first five innings of a game. Once the fifth run is scored, that inning is considered over. Scoring is unlimited in subsequent innings.
15. Profanity, Abusive Behavior and/or Unsportsmanlike Conduct
 - a) Any person using disparaging or taunting remarks toward a player at any time during a game shall receive a single warning by an umpire. Umpires are to be attentive toward comments voiced by both players and spectators. If subsequent infractions of this rule occur after a person(s) has received their single warning, such person(s) shall leave the field area and be out of sight and sound of the umpires.
If necessary, play shall be suspended until this removal is accomplished.
 - b) Any player cursing or using threatening or profane language at any time during a game *will be issued a warning first or* ejected immediately from the game by an umpire and will be suspended for the next game as well. Should the ejected player continue any remarks and unsportsmanlike conduct after being ejected, the ejection will then include the field area out of sight and out of sound from the umpire. If necessary, play shall be suspended until this removal is accomplished.
 - c) Disruptive/abusive contact and or fighting WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. Should such occur, the umpire shall eject the offending player(s) from the game and field area immediately. The umpire *will submit* a written summary of the incident to the Board President within twenty-four (24) hours. The Board President shall then convene a Men's Executive hearing within seventy-two (72) hours. All persons involved will be *notified* in writing of the time and place of such a meeting and invited to attend and be heard. A decision will be rendered at that time. The Men's Executive shall have the authority to suspend the player(s) from future games up to and including the remaining season and playoffs.
Note: Any vulgar or abusive language or conduct in the field area shall be dealt with according to subparagraph c) above. Any person(s) witnessing such incident can supply a written summary to the Men's League President. The incident shall be reviewed as prescribed above.
 - d) Each manager will be held responsible for the conduct of his team. Managers should assist the umpires in diffusing any disruptive behavior of their team members.
16. Switching Playing Positions
 - a) Once the defensive team takes the field for their half inning and after the first pitch of that half inning, the players are not allowed to switch positions with other players for that inning. The rover can play anywhere and is still considered the rover. No defensive infielder can play deeper than the rover.
EXCEPTIONS:
 - i. the pitcher may be replaced but must take the position of his replacement and may not return to pitch until subsequent innings.
 - ii. a substitute pitcher of a

higher rating than the pitcher he is replacing must pitch and cannot be replaced except because of an injury.

- b) On the initial throw of the ball to home plate, if a defensive infielder displaces the catcher for a force out at home plate, the runner will be called safe and the run will count.
17. Time out is granted at the discretion of the Umpire and called by the Umpire. Any player may request time out of an umpire once play has stopped or during a dead ball. Players that repeatedly yell "Time" before the course of a play ending may be called for unsportsmanlike conduct.
 18. The appeal of a play to the umpire(s) may only be made by the On-Field spokesman.

Batting

1. Any pitched ball that hits any part of home plate will be called a strike. All pitches within the minimum 6 foot arc and maximum 12 foot arc range and hitting the plate will be called strikes.
2. A batter is out on the first foul ball that he hits after two strikes.
3. A batter must not use an illegal bat. Examples of such bats are little league bats, baseball bats, homemade bats, multi—walled bats, wood, double wall, steel and altered bats. Legal aluminum bats will be only bats with a rating not to exceed 1.20 BPF, single wall construction. No multi—layer or bats with more than one layer fused together will be allowed. All bats must be registered and marked by the League before they can be used in League games. Bats must be placed in the bat rack pre-game asap, for Umpire inspection. If the batter uses an illegal bat, the batter will be called out and runners, if any, will not be permitted to advance. The umpires will remove any questionable bats until the Board approves them. (The Board has the right to refuse any bat at any time.)
4. A batted ball landing on a foul line is fair. 1st and 3rd base is in fair territory.
5. The on-deck batter should be "on—deck" and ready to bat. In the interests of safety, the on—deck batter should make sure that all bats are in the rack.
6. A ball hitting the outfield net in on Diamond #2 and returning to the playing field, is in play. A ball stuck in the net will be ruled a ground—rule double.
7. There will be a 150 foot arc, measured from home plate, drawn between the foul lines behind which four outfielders must remain until the batter contacts the ball. A rover may play anywhere. If an outfielder crosses this line before the batter makes contact with the ball (fair ball only) and the defense makes an out, a delayed dead ball is called, the batter is awarded first base and all other runners advance one base. If there is no put out, the play continues with all runners advancing at their own risk.

Base Running

1. The League recognizes and accepts the fact that there are players who, because of some physical impairment, cannot and should not run for themselves. Any player who has a physical impairment and is unable to run from home to first base in the required six seconds or less, and therefore requires a substitute runner to run from home plate, must declare this before the teams are selected at the beginning of the season. Ideally, this is done at the time of registration; otherwise it must be declared to the VP Player Placement.

2. As provided in the Constitution, players who have declared themselves to be a non-runner and who joined the League before January 1, 2008, will be placed on teams on a seniority basis. If the number of teams is greater than the number of eligible non-runners, additional non-runners may be designated from the remaining pool of declared non-runners, also on a seniority basis, until all teams have a non-runner. If there are still teams without a non-runner, the manager shall designate before the start of the season. Should there be no eligible (pre-2008) declared non-runners, there shall be no non-runners for that season.
3. A player who has been declared a non-runner in any game cannot run at any time. Should he run beyond the first base commitment line, he will be called out and a dead ball ruled. A player substituting for a non-runner will be declared a non-runner for the rest of the game. If any player who is not a non-runner finds during the game that he cannot run to first, he must leave the game and get a substitute.
4. Any runner running from third to home who touches or crosses the commitment line, must continue home.
 Note: If a runner re-crosses the commitment line he will be declared out and the ball remains alive.
5. A substitute runner is considered in the game when he touches the base or the rope.
6. Runners must touch the SECOND STATIONARY HOME PLATE located between the right-handed-hitters' batters' box and the backstop screen and the same distance from third base as the regular plate (USA Softball Rules describe the exact location of this second home plate), in order to score safely at home. The defensive player must touch any part of home plate while in possession of the ball before the runner touches the second stationary plate to record the out. Runners tagged by the defensive player between the commitment line and the secondary, or running home plate, will NOT be called out. If the runner touches the original home plate or runs through the batters' box he will be out and the ball will remain alive.
7. During a play at second or third base the runner has the responsibility to avoid upright contact that displaces the fielder. In the event of potential contact, the runner has two options; veer off to avoid contact or slide directly into the base. If, in the process of veering away to avoid contact, in the umpire's judgement, the runner would have been safe, the umpire may award the runner the base. Examples of this are: fielder drops the ball, fielder misses stepping on the bag (in the case of a force out), or the fielder obviously would not have made it to the base/tag in time. Note: This award is a live ball situation, the runner has the opportunity to return to the base and still must touch the base in order to continue. This rule in no way empowers the fielder to block the runner's access to the base, its intent is to mitigate collisions at second or third base. It also does not apply to runners returning to a base.

Remediation: If the runner to the base does not veer off or slide, and contact that displaces the fielder occurs, the runner will be called out. If the fielder was in the process of turning a double play the runner at the previous base will also be called out. If, in the umpire's judgement, the contact is egregious or intentional, the runner may be ejected from the game.

8. Substitute Runners:
 - a. All players except non-runners must run the bases after they hit the ball and may receive a substitute runner after play is stopped. Players are encouraged to run for themselves to avoid delays in the game.

- b. Any player may be a substitute runner for any other player. Exception: a runner who is replaced with a substitute runner may not be used as a substitute runner for the remainder of that inning.
- c. A player may be a substitute runner only twice per game and only once per inning. If an infraction of this rule is brought to the attention of the umpires by the opponents before a pitch is thrown to the next batter, the original runner will be called out and the sub runner will vacate the base.
- d. A substitute runner may not have a substitute runner, unless injured and leaving the game. If an infraction of this rule is brought to the attention of the umpires by the opponents before a pitch is thrown to the next batter, the original runner will be called out and the substitute runner will vacate the base..
- e. If a player is on base as a substitute runner when his turn at bat comes, he will be called out as a runner and will take his turn at bat.
- f. A substitute runner for the batter must hold the starting rope which is 3' long and attached to the backstop fence 70' from first base. If the batter swings and hits the ball and the substitute runner had dropped the starting rope before the ball was hit, the batter will be called out and runners, if any, will not advance. If the batter swings and misses the ball (or does not swing at a pitch) and the substitute runner had dropped the starting rope, the batter will be called out. Similarly, if a base runner leaves a base on a batter's swing and miss in anticipation of a hit, he will be called out. When multiple runners jump off base in anticipation of a hit, only the lead runner who jumps off will be called out. The umpires should consult with the official scorer for the game if there is any question about the eligibility of a player to be a substitute runner.
- g. Managers should have their substitute runners ready well in advance with this new rule so that there are no delays in the game.

9. 1st Base White/Alternate Base:

- a. Whenever a play is being made on the BATTER—RUNNER at first base, the defensive player must use the white bag and the BATTER— RUNNER must use the alternate base. On extra base hits or hits to the outfield, when there is no play being made at first, the RUNNER-BATTER may touch either the white bag or alternate base.
- b. The BATTER-RUNNER must use the alternate base on his first attempt at first base if a play is being made at first. However, should he reach and go beyond first, he may advance to second base without returning to the white bag. He must, however get back to the base line as soon as possible.

Pitching Screen

The pitching screen is available for the safety of those pitchers who elect to use it. Those pitchers who elect not to use the screen **must** use personal protective equipment with a minimum of face mask and shin guards. Additional protective equipment such as a cup and chest protector is recommended. Pitchers who use the screen may also use protective equipment.

Screen Placement:

The screen legs must be placed touching any part of the forward or side lined portion of the chalked pitchers box and between one and four feet forward the pitching rubber. The chalked box itself is no wider than the rubber pitchers mound and no further forward the rubber than six ft.

Pitching Screen Rules:

1. All batted balls hitting the pitching screen are “Dead Balls” and considered “no pitch”.
2. The pitcher must go behind the screen after each pitch. The umpire will award the batter first base if the pitcher makes contact with the ball before getting completely behind the screen.
3. If, in the judgement of the umpire, the pitcher is not, in good faith, attempting to get behind the screen the umpire may require the pitcher to use mask and shin guards and remove the screen.
4. All pitchers must have minimum safety equipment (mask and shin guards), available if required.
5. A thrown ball that hits the screen is a live ball.