

# ***Slow Pitch Softball Rules***

## **League Contact Information**

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## **Cancellations**

1. In the event of a cancellation, an EMAIL will be sent via the league website to all captains and players who have user accounts that are linked to the softball session. In addition, there will be a posting, on the ANNOUNCEMENTS page of the softball session. This generally won't happen until between 4:30p and 5:00p of game day. However, if games have begun and the field conditions change, it could occur later in the day.
2. WNY has strange weather patterns. If it is raining where you work or live, please do not assume that it is raining at the field.

## **Governing Body**

1. With the exception of the league rules listed in this document, all Game On! softball leagues will follow USA Softball rules and regulations.
2. Where appropriate, league rules are listed under headings similar to those in the USA SOFTBALL rule book.
3. All rules apply to men's, women's and coed divisions of play, unless specifically designated with **MEN'S**, **WOMEN'S** or **COED** tags.
4. **Highlighted rules denote substantial changes or clarifications from last year.**

## **Playing Field**

Distances will be as follows:

1. Bases: 70 feet (some fields may not be designed for this distance, in which case 65 feet will be used)
2. Pitching: 50 ft **(Many fields in the City of Buffalo have the pitching rub at 45-46 feet. We recommend having the umpire pace out 50 feet, drawing a line in the dirt, and pitching from there. This will give you a little more reaction time for any balls hit up the middle)**

## **Equipment**

1. Footwear: Metal cleats or spikes are not allowed. If there is any exposed metal on your footwear (this includes metal tipped rubber spikes), the official has the authority to ask the player to change footwear or remove them from the game.
2. Bats: Only USA SOFTBALL approved bats will be allowed. To be approved, the bat must meet all the USA SOFTBALL specifications and requirements of USA SOFTBALL Rule 3, Section 1 and:
  - a Must bear either the ASA 2000 certification mark, the ASA 2004 certification mark, or the ASA 2013 certification mark **AND** must not be listed on the USA SOFTBALL Non Approved Bat List **AND**
    - i) Must be included on a list of approved bat models published by USA SOFTBALL **OR**
    - ii) Must, in the sole opinion and discretion of the umpire, have been manufactured prior to 2000 and, if tested, would comply with the USA SOFTBALL bat performance standards. This includes Wooden Bats.
  - b The USA SOFTBALL updates this list throughout the year. It will be the team manager's and player's responsibility to know which bats are legal and which are not.
  - c The following link will take you to the USA SOFTBALL Certified Equipment page: <http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Softball/Play-ASA/Certified-ASA-Equipment.aspx>. From here, you can select the manufacturer of your bats to see if your bat is allowed.
3. Balls: Only 12" optic yellow softballs bearing the ASA approved certification mark of .52 COR and 300 lbs Compression shall be used.

## **Players and Substitutes**

1. Eligibility
  - a You must be 18 years old to participate.
  - b Each player is required create a Game On! user account and accept the electronic waiver. A player is considered ineligible and may not participate until these tasks are completed. A team may be penalized with a forfeit loss for any game in which they use ineligible players.
2. Rosters
  - a The roster must have a minimum of 10 players.
    - i) If a team does not have the minimum number of players, the league reserves the right to add free agents to their roster.
  - b The roster size is unlimited. While we recommend team sizes of 12-14 to maximize playing time, some corporate teams like to have a lot of employees on their teams.
  - c New players may NOT be added to your roster throughout the regular season. Once registration is closed, rosters are final
  - d Once a player is on the roster, they may not be removed and must occupy a spot on your roster for the remainder of the season.
  - e A player may not be listed on the roster of more than one team for any given division.
    - i) A player may be listed on multiple rosters as long as those teams are in different divisions. However, it is not the league's responsibility to guarantee the schedule allows the player to play on all teams for which he/she holds a roster spot.
  - f Rosters will be frozen at the end of the registration period.

- g We recognize, sometimes you may need to use a substitute player if people from your team roster cannot make the game. In these situations, we encourage you to
  - i) borrow players from other teams, in the league, under the Short-Handed Rule.
  - ii) use the Guest Pass program, where a person, usually one not already on a team in your league, may register to play a single game as a sub. More details for this can be found on our website on the FAQ page and in the Guest Pass program page.
    - (1) If a team is using a Guest Pass player or players, we encourage them to alert their opponent, before the game, as a courtesy. This will help minimize confusion or unnecessary roster checks during or after the game.
    - (2) An individual person may use a Guest Pass in no more than 5 games for a single team in a season.
    - (3) If a Guest Pass player plays 5 games for a single team, that player may be added to the official team roster, **by paying a guest pass registration differential fee of \$10, and** as long as doing so does not violate any other roster requirements and/or rules and/or greatly upset the balance of competition in the division. **This additional fee will mean the players has paid at least as much as everyone else in the league in order to play.** This player will be eligible for the playoffs, but will not receive a league shirt.
    - (4) Guest Pass players may NOT be used for playoff games
- h New or substitute players may not be added for playoff games, **unless they qualify per the Guest Pass rules, above.**

### 3. Players

- a Ten (10) players constitute a regulation team.
  - i) Four (4) outfielders (LF, LC, RC, RF)
  - ii) Four (4) infielders (1B, 2B, SS, 3B)
  - iii) One (1) pitcher
  - iv) One (1) catcher
- b **COED** At least four (4) of the ten (10) players must be female.
- c **COED** Defensive Team Positioning
  - i) No more than 6 males can be on the defensive team at all times.
  - ii) You must have at least one (1) female in the outfield, at least one (1) female in the infield, and one (1) female at either pitcher or catcher (but not both).
  - iii) The fourth female may occupy a position in either the infield or outfield, but not at pitcher or catcher
  - iv) If playing 5 female players in the field, then positioning will be 2 females in the outfield, 2 females in the infield, 1 female at pitcher or catcher, but not both. **Similar to USA Softball tournament rules.**
  - v) If playing with 6 or more female players in the field, females may occupy both pitcher and catcher positions; **or any 6 positions they desire, as long as the initial 4 position requirements have been filled.**
  - vi) **If playing with 3 female players, they must occupy the positions as shown above in line ii)**

#### 4. Short Handed Rules

- a All teams must start and finish with at least 9 players. Should a team have less than 9 players eligible, at any time, the game will be declared a forfeit. We do not allow play with only 8 because we have found this tends to lead to a lopsided game and not fun for either team
  - i) When playing with only 9 players,
    - (1) Teams do NOT have to take an out for the missing 10<sup>th</sup> player, as long as they play with 9 the entire game
    - (2) If the 10<sup>th</sup> player is running late and the team plans to play that person upon arrival, as the 10<sup>th</sup> player, then they must enter that person in the lineup at the start of the game and take an out for them until they arrive.
- b Any player not available to bat when due up will receive an automatic out.
- c If a team loses players during the game (injury, work, family, etc), they may continue to play as long as they have 9 or more players remaining. **NOTE:** If a player leaves the game, and a replacement is used, the replacement may be of any gender, AS LONG AS this does not put more than 6 male players in the field AND you do not end up with more than 2 male players batting in a row. If a replacement is not available at the time the player leaves the game, then the team forfeits their ability to provide a replacement at any time later in the game. At this point, however, the player may be removed from the batting order without penalty, AS LONG AS this does not put more than 2 male players batting in a row. If it does, then the team takes an out in that vacated spot which would be between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> male batter in row.
- d Borrowing Players – No one likes a forfeit. If a team is short-handed and risks forfeiting, they may borrow up to 2 REGISTERED players from other team(s) in the division and/or league.
  - i) To be eligible, the borrowed player(s) must be listed on the roster of another team in the division and/or league and have accepted the league waiver.
    - (1) Teams using ineligible players may receive a forfeit as this goes against league rules.
  - ii) Teams may only borrow players for a regular season game
  - iii) Teams may NOT borrow players for a playoff game
  - iv) A team may only borrow 1 or 2 players to achieve a count of 9 or 10 eligible players.
  - v) A team may NOT borrow players to have EPs (see below) or substitute players for a game.

#### 5. Extra Player Rule

- a The Extra Player (EP) rule is in effect. Remember, this is an **extra** player, **not** a designated hitter or player. All 10 defensive players (and the EPs if used) must bat.
- b If you choose to use the EP, it must be made known to the opposing team and umpire and also noted on your line-up card prior to the start of the game. You cannot decide to use the EP after the game has begun. If the EP is up to bat and not present (i.e. running late), but appears on the line-up card, you will take an out for the EP when he/she is up to bat.
- c A manager can bat up to the entire roster of players if they so choose. Regardless of how many players are batting, you may not have more than 2 men bat in a row. If you will end up with more than 2 men batting in a row, you will have to either:
  - i) Take an out between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> male batters anytime this occurs in your batting order

ii) Have the extra male players sit for part of the game and substitute in for another male player part-way through the game.

#### 6. Re-Entry Rule

Any player may withdraw and re-enter **once**, provided the player occupies the same batting position whenever he/she is in the line-up. **NOTE: This really only applies if you have too many male players that would put you with more than 2 male batters in a row. Otherwise, you would follow the EP rule where everyone bats and players can rotate in the field as they wish, maintaining not more than 6 male fielders.**

#### 7. Blood Rule

Any player, coach or umpire who is bleeding or who has blood on his/her uniform or body will be prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment can be administered. If medical care or treatment is administered within a reasonable length of time, the individual will not be required to leave the game. The length of time that is considered reasonable is left to the umpire's judgment.

### **Uniforms**

1. In order to minimize confusion on the field, each team captain is asked to select a uniform color at the time of registration.
  - a Colors are awarded on a first come, first serve basis of fully registered and paid teams
  - b Captains are asked, at the time of registration, for a 2<sup>nd</sup> choice in case their primary choice has been taken.
2. The league will supply uniforms to each member on the team roster.
  - a You are welcome to customize the shirt. However, you must not modify the league logo on the front or any sponsor logo on the back. We also ask that you be tasteful and respectful in your customization.
  - b Those who miss the Regular Registration, and register under the Late Registration period may end up with a league-supplied shirt not of the same color as the rest of their team, or may not end up with a shirt at all, depending on when they register and when the shirt order was placed.
3. Each rostered player is encouraged to wear the league-supplied shirt for their team. This is how the staff and/or referees will be able to quickly tell if you are a registered participant without wasting 15 minutes of playing time doing roster checks for each game.
4. Guest Pass or borrowed players must supply their own shirt of the same (or very similar) color as the team for which they are substituting.

### **The Game**

1. The scheduled game time is the start time. The umpire's watch is the official game time. Please plan on getting to the fields prior to the scheduled start time. All team warm-ups and ground rules with the umpire should be conducted prior to the start time.
2. No new inning shall begin after 65 minutes from the start of the game.
3. There will be no grace period. The game clock starts ticking down at the scheduled start time. If Team A is not ready to start the game, Team B has every right to accept a forfeit win. If Team B wants to allow Team A time to get their team ready, this will result in a shortened game. If this is the case, please do not complain about not having enough time to finish the game.

#### 4. Shortened Games

- a Games suspended due to rain, natural causes or other reasons, prior to completion of 5 innings, may be rescheduled (if possible) at some time during or at the end of the season. The league will make every attempt to reschedule these games. However, they may end up on different days and times than normally played. Due to unexpected weather situations, there is a possibility these games are not rescheduled.
- b Shortened games will resume at the exact point where they were stopped.
- c If 5 innings have been completed, the game will be marked as an official completed game.
- d If a shortened game ends after the 6<sup>th</sup> inning, but prior to an inning being completed (for example, the ump calls due to darkness in the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup>), the score will resort to what it was at the end of the last completed inning (with previous example, the score after the 7<sup>th</sup> inning was over).
- e As much notice as possible will be provided for rainout make-ups. Double-headers and games on weekends or different nights from normal play may likely be necessary to complete postponed or shortened games.

#### 5. Forfeited Games

- a Everyone looks forward to playing ball when they get to the field. Especially after a long day at work. No one looks forward to a forfeit. This is why we take forfeits very seriously.
- b In the event of a forfeit, the teams at the field are **NOT** to pay the umpire. The umpire will report the forfeit to the league, and the league will pay the umpire fee using the refundable forfeit fee of the forfeiting team.
- c The team that forfeited will have 3 days to reimburse the league the entire forfeit fee of \$50 (subject to change). This amount will be used in case the team forfeits a second game. If the team does not forfeit a second game, the money will be returned at the end of the season
- d If the fee is not received within 3 days of the forfeited game, that team will not be allowed to play their next scheduled game. This will, also, be considered a forfeit.
- e If a team forfeits 2 games, for any reason, that team will be ineligible for playoffs, may be removed from the league and may not be allowed back for future seasons.

#### 6. Home Run Rule

This rule will be in effect for diamonds with fences.

- a A limit of over-the-fence home runs will be used in all **MEN'S** and **COED** slow pitch divisions. The following limitations (different than USA SOFTBALL) are per team per game:
  - i) Three (3) Men's
  - ii) Two (2) Coed
- b For any in excess, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and no runners can advance. For further detail, refer to USA SOFTBALL Rule 5, Section 8A.
- c Some fields may have different HR Rules based on various fence distances. When this occurs, the league will post this information in the Ground Rules document, available from the league profile page on the website.

7. Run Ahead Rule
  - a A run ahead rule will be enforced.
  - b **In the interest of allowing maximum playing time for teams, we will only be following the 10 runs after 5 complete innings portion of this rule.**
  - c This rule is in effect for both regular season and all playoff games except for Division Championship or League Championship games.
8. Dugout and Fan Conduct

Teams are responsible for informing their players, coaches, score keepers, friends, and associates that they are an extension of your team. Actions and/or words that are disruptive, even from those not participating, may result in action by the umpire. This could be ejection of a player, forfeit for a team, and/or the police being called.

### **Pitching**

1. The pitch must be delivered on the first forward motion of an underhand delivery motion
2. The pitcher must maintain contact with the pitching rubber until the ball is released
3. The pitch must have a peak arc between 6 ft and 12 ft from the ground.

### **Batting**

1. **COED** Batting Order
  - a You must alternate sexes in your batting order so that you NEVER have more than 2 men batting a row.
  - b This includes carry over from the bottom to the top of the order.
  - c This also applies when using the EP rule.
2. Any player not available to bat when due up will receive an automatic out.
3. If there is not an eligible player available to replace an injured, ejected or otherwise removed player, any time the batting order moves to the vacated spot an out is recorded. This rule applies with any number of players in the line-up.
4. The batter will start with a clean count (0-0) in the Spring session. For the Summer session, due to diminishing daylight toward the end, the batter will start with a count of (1-1).
5. A batter is out if after the 2<sup>nd</sup> strike is called; he/she fouls the ball two times.
  - a **NOTE:** A watched strike or a swing and miss will still count as a 3<sup>rd</sup> strike after 2 called strikes.
6. **Strike Zone**
  - a We follow the USA Softball strike zone rule. Men's and Coed slow pitch strike zone is defined as: the space over any part of home plate, when a batter assumes a natural, upright, batting stance adjacent to home plate, between the batter's back shoulder and front knee.
  - b We do not use mats behind the plate, and we do not count the plate as a strike.
  - c We do not use those things because we feel they force players to swing at pitches that are not in their natural swing pattern. Using the strike zone rule, as written and intended allows each batter to have a unique strike zone to their person.

## **Batter-Runner and Runner**

1. **COED** Walking a Batter
  - a If a male batter is walked and is followed by a female batter; the male batter will automatically be awarded second base.
  - b The female batter is then required to bat.
  - c However, if there are two outs; the female batter then has the option to walk or bat.
  - d This rule was created, by USA Softball, to discourage walking male batters to pitch to female batters.
  - e It is possible to walk in runs.
2. A base runner may not leave the base until the pitched ball reaches home plate. If the base runner leaves the base before the pitched ball reaches home plate, the base runner will be called out.
3. Stealing  
USA SOFTBALL Rule 8, Sec. 4 Subsections F3 & F4, also known as the “stealing” rule will not be in effect for this league.
4. Courtesy Runners
  - a A team may use one courtesy runner per inning, for each inning of the game.
  - b Any eligible player on the official line-up, including available substitutes, may be used as a courtesy runner.
  - c **COED** A female must replace a female and a male must replace a male.

## **Protests**

1. You cannot protest **any** call by an umpire.
2. There are only **2** types of protests:
  - a **Illegal player** – An illegal player is a player who is registered to a team in the program, but playing on a team other than the one to which they are registered, outside of the short-handed rules. This protest must be done prior to the start of the game, prior to the player(s) in question stepping on the field (should they arrive to the game after it has started), or within a reasonable amount of time that might allow a team to recognize an illegal player. Once that reasonable time has expired and the player(s) have participated in the game, their opponent, by default acknowledges them as eligible and legal.
  - b **Ineligible player** – An ineligible player is someone who is not registered to a team in the program or does not have a valid Guest Pass for the game in which they are playing. A protest on an ineligible player may come at any time during or after a game has been played. A team can still receive a forfeit loss, from the league, for using ineligible players even if a protest is not filed.
3. If the protest is due to ineligible and/or illegal players, players from **BOTH** teams must lineup with a valid photo ID (i.e. driver’s license or other legal verification) to be verified against their team roster.
  - a The player’s photo ID must match the name of the player as shown on the roster. If they do not match, then the player cannot be verified and must sit out the game. Therefore, it is very important to for players to use their **REAL NAMES** in their user account which populates their team rosters.

- b If a player does not have photo ID, they cannot be verified and will have to sit out the game until they can be verified.
  - c The roster checks will be performed with the game clock running.
  - d If an ineligible player (a person not registered at all with the specific sports program or Guest Pass program) is found, the offending team will forfeit the game on the spot. If both teams have ineligible players, both teams will receive a forfeit.
  - e If an illegal player (person registered with the program but not appearing on this particular team roster and also violating the short-handed rules) is found, the offending team will give up a two (2) runs to their opponent, and the illegal player will not be allowed to play. If both teams have illegal players, both teams give up points.
4. If no roster violations are found on the team being challenged and/or if roster violations are found on the roster of the protesting team, then the protesting team will give up four (4) runs to their opponent for wasting everyone's time.

### **Umpires**

1. Umpire fees are payable in cash, to the umpire, prior to the start of the game.
2. Umpires or the league representative may call an end or a postponement of a game at any time due to time restrictions or weather conditions. No protests will be accepted concerning calling a game due to time limit restrictions or weather conditions.

### **Scoring**

1. Each manager is required to complete a line-up prior to each game. This line-up should be shared with the umpire and the opposing team.
2. Each team must keep a score book with the team name and first and last name of each player participating in the game.
3. Each team must be able to verify the score after each inning.
4. Any dispute of final scores will be resolved immediately with the managers of the involved teams, the umpire and a league representative (if available). All decisions on scores will be final, with no appeals accepted.
5. Intentional misrepresentation of the score will result in a forfeit.
6. Upon completion of each game, the umpire should verify the scores and sign the scorebooks.
7. The winning team must report scores.
  - a If there is a Game On! Field Manager present, you may ask them to enter the score for you.
  - b The team captain may enter the score directly into the league website, from their Team Schedule page.
  - c The team captain may text or email the score to [scores@game-on-sports.com](mailto:scores@game-on-sports.com)
8. In order to keep standings current and accurate during the season, score reporting must be done by 6pm on the Sunday following their game. Failure to provide the league with scores, by the designated time, may result in the game not counting in the standings. This really only penalizes the winning team, as the winning team receives 2 standings points and the losing time receives 0.

## **Team Rankings and Playoffs**

1. Team Rankings
  - a Teams are ranked by a point system. A team will receive 2 points for a win, 1 point for a tie and 0 points for a loss, and -1 point for a forfeit.
  - b In the event 2 or more teams are tied in points, the following tie-breaking criteria will be used to separate teams. If more than 2 teams are tied, the tie-breakers are applied to find a single leader amongst the tied teams. Once that leader is determined, the remaining tied teams will begin at the top of the tie-breaking criteria. This process will continue until all ties have been resolved.
    - i) Overall Greater # of Wins
    - ii) Head-to-Head Record
    - iii) Lower Total Runs Against (shown as PSA in the standings)
    - iv) Coin Toss
2. Divisional Playoffs
  - a Teams ranked in roughly the top 2/3 of their division will earn a spot in the Divisional Playoffs.
    - i) For 4, 5 or 6-team divisions: The top 4 teams will make the playoffs
    - ii) For 7 or 8-team divisions: The top 5 teams will make the playoffs
    - iii) For 9 or 10-team divisions: The top 6 teams will make the playoffs
    - iv) For any divisions with 11 or more teams: The top 8 teams will make the playoffs
  - b There is no “games played” requirement for participating in the playoffs.
  - c Only players from your roster will be allowed to participate in the playoffs.
  - d You may NOT borrow any players for playoff games.
  - e You may NOT use Guest Pass players for the playoffs.
  - f Rosters will be frozen after registration closes.

## **Other Rules**

1. **Please be sure to remove all items from the fields at the end of your game. This includes any trash (bottle, paper, wrappers, etc.). When the grounds crews have to clean up after us, it reduces the time they can be spending on upkeep of the playing surfaces.**
2. Please be sure to visit and support your sponsors. Their generous contributions to your team fee allow many of you to play. By not reciprocating this generosity, you hurt the opportunity for future teams to receive similar sponsorships.
3. Ground Rules for the various diamonds can be found in [this document](#)
4. If there is no play to be made, the defensive player cannot block a base. Warnings will be issued, followed by ejection from the game if necessary. Collisions and consequently injuries are to be avoided.
5. If there is to be a close call at a base or home plate, the runner should slide or give themselves up to avoid any contact with the base person.
6. Player Ejection

If an official ejects a player from a game, the player will not be eligible to play in the next scheduled game for which he/she is a team member.

  - a Example 1: A player is a member of multiple teams (i.e. different divisions) in the same league, Team A and Team B. Team B is playing at 10a, and the player gets ejected for

- swearing at the referee. Team B has no other games that day, but Team A has a game scheduled for 2p. The player will not be eligible to play in the 2p game.
- b Example 2: A player is a member of multiple teams in the same league, Team C and Team D. Team D has a double header at 9a and 11a. Team C has a game at 10a. The player is ejected from the 9a game, for repeated and excessive illegal contact offenses. The player will not be able to play the 10a game with Team C. However, the player will be eligible for the 11a game with Team D.
  - c **NOTE:** This does not apply to a player who is asked to sit for a brief period of time to cool off. The player must be ejected for the remainder of the game for this take effect.
7. The league has a zero tolerance policy regarding fighting. The player(s) fighting will be immediately expelled from the league and/or the team forfeits the game and/or season.
  8. The online copy of the rules is always the most current and accurate version.
  9. Game On! Sports reserves the right to alter, modify, or change these rules at any time, for any reason, and without notice.