

Fall Softball Rules

Updated 9/20/22

FORFEITS

- 1. Please be on time!** - Your team, and your opponent, depend on you to field a full team and have a competitive game. Games will start at 6:30, 7:45, and 9:00. After the game, please be courteous and efficient when leaving your bench for the next team.
- 2. Forfeit penalty** - If your team forfeits a game, the team will be subject to a \$50 penalty fee via the team captain, 100% of which must be donated to a nonprofit charity of your choosing. The team captain is then responsible for sending receipt of the donation to the League Manager.
- 3. Forfeit expulsion** - Any team that fails to pay this penalty will not be eligible to return the following season. Any team with 2 forfeits will not be eligible to return the following season.
- 4. Forfeit scoring** - If a game is forfeited, a final score will be needed, as the number of runs allowed could factor into a playoff tiebreaker. At the time of the forfeit, we will temporarily enter the game as a W-L for each team with no score. Then at the end of all regular season games, the winning team's average number of runs scored will be applied to their score. The losing team's score will be half of the winning team's score.

GAME TIMING

- 1. No ump** - If an umpire doesn't show up, please contact the League Manager immediately. Until a solution is reached, the last batter to come up in each half inning will serve as umpire when that player's team is up at bat.
- 2. Game length** - All games will be 7 innings. Since regular season games will not go to extra innings, it is possible to end in a tie.
- 3. Incomplete regular season game** - Games will be called in the event of rain, snow, or other "acts of God." This is the umpire's call to make. Essentially, the losing team needs to have 5 innings of at-bats for the game to be considered official. For example, if the visiting team is losing, the game can be official after completing the top of the 5th inning.

If the game is not official, then we will reschedule for another day and start at the point where the game stopped. The game will go to 7 innings. Potential "blowouts" might be considered final by the League Manager, even if fewer than 5 innings were played.
- 4. Playoff suspended play** - If a playoff game is tied and can no longer continue (according to the judgment of the umpire), the game will be suspended from that exact point in the inning, and will continue from that point at a later date.

SCHEDULE

- 1. Regular season games** - The regular season will consist of 6 regular season games; each team will play every team in their league once, and they will also play one team in their league twice.

ROSTERS

- 1. Roster size** - Teams are allowed a maximum of 25 players on their roster.
- 2. Registration** - Teams will need to register their full roster no later than the start of their 2nd game. Teams can remove players from their roster and add new players if needed before the start of their 2nd game.
- 3. Alternate players** - If teams have players who can't commit to all of the games, we encourage captains to register these players as "alternates" and charge them less than their full-time players. This is also a fair way to determine who gets the most playing time in playoffs games. Better attendance in the regular season can be rewarded with more playing time in big games.

4. Regular season rosters - If a team needs to use a non-registered player to avoid a forfeit:

- A maximum of 2 non-registered players will be allowed per regular season game.
- The team captain will email the League Manager prior to the game with an explanation of why a non-registered player is needed and request for clearance.
- In order for the non-registered player to play in the game, the League Manager needs to approve the request. If approved, the League Manager will notify the opposing team's captain prior to the start of the game, the non-registered player(s) will be required to sign the league waiver before playing, and the team will be required to pay a penalty fee of \$10 per non-registered player per game. 100% of this fee will be donated to North Brooklyn Mutual Aid.

- Teams will be given a forfeit loss if it is determined that a non-registered player participated without clearance.
- If this occurs more than twice during the season, teams will not be eligible to return the following season.

5. Playoff rosters - No non-registered players will be allowed to participate in playoffs. To ensure that teams are not adding new players for big games, playoff team captains will register rosters again at the end of the regular season. This roster will be cross-referenced with the Week 1 roster, and any mid-season additions are subject to approval.

PLAYOFFS

1. Qualifying – The 4 teams with the highest records in the regular season will qualify for a single-elimination playoff tournament. The 2 semi-final games will consist of the #4 seed @ the #1 seed and the #3 seed @ the #2 seed. The winners of these 2 games will play each other in the championship game.

2. Seeding - Regular season winning percentage [PCT] will determine playoff seeding. Winning PCT is the number of wins divided by the total number of games played. Ties count as 1/2 of a win.

3. Seeding tiebreakers - If teams have a tied winning PCT, their head-to-head record determines their seeding.

Tiebreaker #1 - Head-to-head record

If teams have a tied winning PCT, their head-to-head record determines their seeding.

Tiebreaker #2 - Runs allowed

Lowest runs allowed [PSA] from all regular-season games (not from just the games played between the tied teams) determines the seeding if:

- The head-to-head record still ends in a tie, or
- 3 or more tied teams did not play each other an equal amount of times.

Tiebreaker #3 - Coin toss

If PSA still does not break the tie, then seeding will be determined by a coin toss.

UNIFORMS

1. Team colors - To improve player safety, all teams are encouraged to wear team colors during game play. There is no penalty for failing to wear team colors. Your team's lack of identity and chemistry will serve as a sufficient penalty.

EQUIPMENT

1. Cleats - Metal cleats are not allowed.

2. Gloves and bats - Players must supply their own gloves and bats.

3. Balls - The home team captain is responsible for bringing a new ball to each game. We use 12" Clincher balls. They can be purchased at any Modell's, Paragon Sports near Union Square, or a few blocks from our fields at BQ Sports.

4. Bases and storage - It will be the home team's responsibility to pick up and drop off the bases. We have 2 sets of bases that are labeled and stored in a locked gate behind the Turkey's Nest.

BATTING

1. Mercy rule - A mercy rule will go into effect if the score differential reaches 20 runs after the 5th inning. The official game will be over. Free play may continue afterwards.

2. Gender ratio - No more than 3 people of the same gender may bat in a row.

3. Everyone bats - Everyone on the team will bat in a consistent order through the entire game, regardless if they are playing the field in that specific inning.

4. Pinch hitters - No pinch hitters are allowed. If someone is injured or has to leave the game, they will be skipped over in the batting order.

5. Starting count - Batters start with a 1-1 count.

6. Foul-outs - Batter will be ruled out on the 2nd ball hit foul with 2 strikes.

7. Bunting - Bunting and/or chopping at the ball is not permitted.

8. Intentional walking - Intentional walking is highly discouraged in the spirit of the league. However...

- If a male batter before a female batter walks on 4 straight balls on the first 4 pitches, the male batter automatically goes to second base, and the female following has the option to take first base or hit.
- If the female batter does not opt to take the walk, the runners do not advance.

9. Leaving the game - Note: Our rules differ from standard USA Softball and other McCarren leagues, since all registered players must be in the batting order regardless if they are playing the field. Therefore...

- If a player voluntarily leaves or is ejected before the game is over, the team must take an out when that player would have come up in the lineup. (Team captains are expected to comply with this rule under the honor system.)
- If a player leaves the game because of an in-game injury:
 1. Skip over the player in the lineup.
 2. If a team is unable to enforce the gender ratio because of an in-game injury, the team can move up a player of the gender needed (most likely female) in the lineup to accommodate the ratio.

PITCHING

1. Pitch height - A legal pitch is an underhand lob with an arc of at least 4 feet and no more than 8 feet.

2. Strike zone - Strikes are pitched balls that land in a box defined by the umpire behind home plate. This box is approximately 18" from the corners of the plate, and exactly as wide as the plate.

3. Trick Pitches - Pitchers may throw knuckle balls, spinning balls, or backhanded pitches. However, it is illegal to throw a ball that contains any foreign substances.

FIELDING

1. Dead balls - Dead ball territory is determined by the umpire and is communicated to both captains upon reviewing the ground rules prior to the game.

2. Catching foul balls - Any foul ball that is caught in the air outside of the field of play, but not within the fenced area of each dugout as defined in the ground rules, will result in an out.

3. Courtesy line - Outfielders are not permitted to stand in front of the grass/dirt line before the ball is hit. If someone is in violation of this rule, it is up to the umpire's discretion to allow the batter to take first base regardless of the outcome of their at-bat.

4. Interference - If a batted ball comes within contact of an object, pedestrian, or player on the opposing field, the ball will be played as is. If a batted ball is impeded upon (picked up, thrown, kicked) by a pedestrian or player on the opposite field, the play will stop, and the runners will advance at the judgment of the umpire.

5. Tree balls - If a ball hits the tree, a branch, a twig, a leaf—whether its trajectory is or is not altered—and the ball is caught by a fielder, the batter is out. If a ball hits the tree and lands on the field, it is a live ball. A ball that hits the tree will be determined fair or foul based on its trajectory before hitting the tree:

- If the ball is hit into fair territory but then goes into foul territory after hitting the tree, the ball is considered fair.
- If the ball is hit into foul territory but then goes into fair territory after hitting the tree, the ball is considered foul.

6. Infield fly - The infield fly rule will be enforced. An infield fly is a fair fly ball in the infield (not including a line drive) that can be caught with ordinary effort, where the fielder is camped out underneath it, when first and second, or first, second, and third bases are occupied, with fewer than 2 outs. The umpire will immediately declare "Infield fly!" loudly enough for everyone to hear, for the benefit of the runners, and the batter is out. The runners may advance at their own risk. If the ball was caught and the runner(s) decide to run, they must tag up first.

CO-ED REQUIREMENTS

1. Players allowed - There should be 10 players on the field, at least 4 of whom must be female.

2. Less than 4 females - If a team is short on females, they can begin play, but they must follow the system below:

Only 3 Females

FIELDING: There must be 6 males and 3 females in the field, with a catcher of any gender.

BATTING: The team will play with a maximum of 9 males in the batting order; otherwise, it would not be possible to enforce the rule about the batting order gender ratio.

Only 2 Females

FIELDING: There must be 6 males and 2 females in the field, with a catcher borrowed from the opposing team. This catcher cannot cover plays at home.

BATTING: The team will play with a maximum of 6 males in the batting order; otherwise, it would not be possible to enforce the rule about the batting order gender ratio.

Once a third female arrives, 3 males can be added to the batting order, as a maximum of 9 males is now allowed. This 2-female system is designed to avoid delaying the start of the game and assumes that late female players are still planning on showing up. **Any fewer than 3 females by the top of the 3rd inning will result in a forfeit.** Free play may continue afterwards.

NOTE: If a team is playing with 3 females, and one gets hurt AFTER the 3rd inning and can no longer play, the game will be allowed to continue following the **Only 2 Females** structure listed above.

BASE RUNNING

1. Courtesy runners - 2 courtesy runners are allowed per game. The player(s) who need a courtesy runner can be designated before the game, or before the player's at-bat. A 3rd courtesy runner would be allowed if an in-game injury occurs.

A courtesy runner must be the last batted out regardless of gender. It cannot be just any random fast runner on your bench.

2. Stealing/Leading off - There is no stealing or leading off any base. Base runners can only leave once the batter has made contact with the pitch.

3. Sliding - Sliding is allowed at the runner's discretion. In most cases, it is safer to slide into a base than run upright and collide into the defender.

4. Aggressive base running - If a runner aggressively or purposely initiates, collides, intends to harm, slides with cleats up with intent to injure, and/or harms anyone in the base path, the runner is OUT and immediately ejected from the game.

5. Runner interfering with a play - Intentional contact by a base runner in an attempt to dislodge the ball or take a defender out of a play is prohibited. The base runner will be out.

6. Overthrows - If a ball is thrown out of play (dead ball territory as determined by the ground rules), 2 bases will be awarded from the position of the runner at the time the ball is thrown. Example: No one is on base, batter hits the ball to the shortstop, the shortstop overthrows the first baseman, and the ball goes out of play. The batter is awarded 2 bases from the time of the throw (1st base and 2nd base). The batter is now on 2nd base.

RAINOUTS

1. Rainout notifications - If the field is unplayable due to weather, we will send your captain a cancellation email no later than 90 minutes before the start of a game, and post updates on our social media.

ALCOHOL POLICY

Alcohol is prohibited on the premises of any of our fields.

REFUND POLICY

All registration fees are final. When you register, we account for your place on evenly distributed teams and lock other interested parties out.

"HORSE" RULE

It's impossible to have a predetermined rule for every possible scenario of what could occur in a game. For example, if a team is engaging in horse play centerfield, swinging a tree trunk for a bat, or playing without wearing any pants—technically we don't have a rule in place for this, but that doesn't make it OK.

So, moving forward, we need all captains to acknowledge the new "Horse" Rule. If there isn't an exact rule in place, you need to agree to what is "fair and ethical."