

# Co-Ed Summer Softball

## Summer 2023

### Official Rules

Have fun! Don't be a poor sport. Remember, this is just a game.

#### Team Composition and Lineups

- The lineup for each time must be provided to the scorekeeper at least 5 minutes before the scheduled start of the game.
- Teams may have either 10 or 11 players in their lineup.
  - Only 10 players at most will be allowed to play on the field.
- All teams are required to start a game with a minimum of 3 women in the lineup without penalty.
- A female batter must bat within the first 3 positions of the batting order, followed by 2 men between women until all women have batted.
  - The lineup will be verified by the scorekeeper before the game can begin.
  - 2 or more women cannot bat consecutively in the lineup.
- For any team that has 4 women, in only one spot in the lineup can there just one man following a woman.
- Starting the game with only 9 players.
  - A team may start play with 9 players.
  - At least 3 women must still be in the lineup. If not, the team must forfeit their game.
  - If a 10<sup>th</sup> player arrives after the start of the game, they must enter the batting order at the 10<sup>th</sup> batting position.
  - If there is no player in the 10<sup>th</sup> batting position when their scheduled time to bat comes up, an automatic will be recorded.
- Starting the game with 10 players.
  - A team consisting of 10 players is considered a valid full lineup.
    - No player will be added to make the 11<sup>th</sup> player in the lineup once all 10 players have batted.
- You do not have to play the field to bat, but you must bat if you play the field.

#### Scoring and Length of Games

- A game will consist of 7 innings, or 6½ innings if the home team has scored more runs than the visiting team after 6 ½ innings have been played.
- No new inning shall begin after 55 minutes have been played unless the score is tied. The scorekeeper will keep time.
- There will be no more than 10 runs scored by any team in their at-bat in their half-inning of play. Once the 10<sup>th</sup> run is scored, no more players may bat. If any baserunners cross home plate after the 10<sup>th</sup> run is scored, those runs shall not be counted.
  - The exception to this rule is that it will not apply in any tournament game.
- A Mercy Rule will be enforced for any the following conditions:

- If either team is ahead by at least 20 runs at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inning.
- If either team is ahead by at least 15 runs at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> inning.
- If either team is ahead by at least 10 runs at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> inning.
  - The exception to this rule is that it will not apply in any tournament game.
- If a game must be called or stopped for any reason, it will be continued at a decided upon time at the same position in the game as it was when it was stopped, unless the game can be ruled an official game.
- An official game is declared, provided 5 full innings have been played, or if the home team has scored a greater number of runs in 4 or more innings than the visiting team has scored in 5 innings.
  - Once a game has been ruled an official game, no protests or disputes will be allowed.

## **Batting Position**

- Men must bat opposite handed. The only exception is for men 60 and older, who have the option of batting either opposite handed or not.
- If an opposing team suspects that any male batter is hitting with their dominant hand, they are allowed to switch that batter one time in the game. Once switched, the batter must continue batting in the newly switched position.

## **Foul Balls**

- If a batter has 2 strikes in their at-bat, they are allowed 1 foul ball with no penalty. If a second foul ball is hit in the same at-bat, the batter will be called out.

## **Base on Balls (Walks)**

- There will be no intentional walks.
- If a woman batter is walked, she will be awarded 1<sup>st</sup> base.
- If a man batter is walked
  - He will be awarded 1<sup>st</sup> base if the next batter is a man.
  - He will be awarded 2<sup>nd</sup> base if the next batter is a woman. The woman batter will have the option of being awarded 1<sup>st</sup> base or taking her turn at bat.

## **Sliding**

- Feet first slides for men are illegal and the runner will be called out.

## **Substitutes and Injured Players**

- Substitutes must be of an equal or lesser grade than the player they are replacing.
- Any female player can substitute for a male player.
- No male player will be allowed to substitute for a female player.
- A player of the same gender must replace an injured player, and of an equal or lesser grade than the injured player.
- If an injured player cannot be replaced
  - If the team is left with only 9 players, an out will be recorded for the injured player when it is their turn at bat.
  - If the team is left with less than 9 players, the game will be called by the umpire at the time of the injury.

## **Courtesy Runners**

- Courtesy runners are allowed for an injured or hurt base runner, or any runner 60 years or older. A female courtesy runner can only run for a female runner and a male courtesy runner can only run for a male runner.
- No courtesy runner can request a courtesy runner to take their place.
- For a female courtesy runner, starting with the woman who batted before the woman requesting the courtesy runner and proceeding in reverse order through the lineup, the courtesy runner will be the first woman who is not on base.
  - If the female courtesy runner is on base when her turn comes up to bat, keep proceeding in reverse order through the lineup for the next available women courtesy runner.
- A male courtesy runner will be the man who made the previous out and is not currently occupying any base. The previous out can have been made in the current inning or the previous inning.
  - If an out has been made by a man after progressing through the lineup in reverse order, then the courtesy male runner will be the first male who is not on base while progressing through the lineup in reverse order.

## **Ejections**

- If you are ejected from a game for any reason, you must leave the playing field, but may stay and be a spectator.
- If you are ejected from 2 games in the league and/or tournament, you will not be allowed to play for any of the remaining games in the league or tournament, and there will be no refund of any of your fees.

## **Commitment Line**

- A Commitment Line shall be marked on the 3<sup>rd</sup> base line halfway between 3<sup>rd</sup> base and the 'true' home plate, perpendicular to the 3<sup>rd</sup> base line.
- Once a runner has touched or crossed the Commitment Line, they have 'committed' to trying to score and may not return to 3<sup>rd</sup> base. A force play will now be in effect at the 'true' home plate.
  - A runner will be considered to have crossed the Commitment Line once they touch the ground on or beyond the Commitment Line.
- If the runner returns to 3<sup>rd</sup> base and does not try to score after having 'committed', the runner will be called out and play will resume. This is considered a live ball out.
- A runner who has 'committed' may return to any previously touched base with no penalty after a caught fly ball or touch a base previously missed.

## **Playing Field**

### **Outfield**

- There will be an imaginary line drawn separating left field positions from right field positions, from 2<sup>nd</sup> base to the outfield fence. No more than 2 fielders will be allowed in either left field or right field position, and the imaginary line may not be crossed before the ball is in play by any outfielder.
  - If a team has only 3 outfielders, one player may occupy the centerfield position.

### **First base**

- There will be a double first base.

- Batters running to first base must touch the double first base located in foul territory, to avoid a collision or interfering with the fielder covering first base, unless the runner is attempting to reach second base.

#### **‘Safety’ Home Plate and ‘True’ Home Plate**

- There will be a ‘safety’ home plate placed approximately 5 feet in foul territory from the playing field ‘true’ home plate, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> base side of the field. The ‘safety’ home plate will be in a direct imaginary line even with the first base line.
- Any play at the ‘true’ home plate, except for an over-the-fence home run, will be considered a force out. Any player crossing the ‘true’ home plate and not the ‘safety’ home plate will be called out.
- Once a player crosses the Commitment Line between third base and home plate, they must continue through to the ‘safety’ home plate.
- If the runner touches the ‘true’ home plate, the runner will be called out.
- On a play at the ‘true’ home plate, a runner will be called out if any defensive player has possession of the ball, said defensive player is in contact with the ‘true’ home plate, and the runner has touched or crossed the Commitment Line (i.e., a force play) before the runner has crossed the ‘safety’ home plate.
- Any fielder may still tag runners out between 3<sup>rd</sup> base and either home plate.
- The runner is permitted to slide across the ‘safety’ home plate. Men must still slide headfirst.

Any rules not covered here will be covered by the 2022 USSSA Slow Pitch Rule Book and By-Laws.