

# **Grand Softball Club Rules of Play**

Approved ( March 15, 2024 )

The Grand Softball Club is dedicated to the promotion of Senior Slow Pitch Softball for exercise and recreation in an athletic environment designed to promote fellowship, sportsmanship and friendly competition. Members of the Club, by virtue of membership, agree to abide by the current Club Rules, Senior Softball-USA Rules, Rules of Play and any League Specific Rules of Play designated for that session

The Club uses the Senior Softball-USA Rules (SS-USA), as they apply to senior slow pitch softball for all our Leagues, unless amended by Club Rules of Play or League Specific Rules of Play

## **LENGTH OF GAMES**

A. Games are scheduled for 7 innings. This Club uses a 60 minute clock on days where 5 or more games are scheduled. The clock is started with the first pitch of the first inning of the game.

B. A flip-flop will be used in the final inning where the Visitors team is ahead by 10 or more runs and may occur at the ½ inning.

C. “Mercy Rule Win finish”, is a game where one team is ahead by 12 or more runs at the end of the 5 or 6th inning, 4 ½ or 5 ½ innings if the Home team is ahead.

D. There will be no tiebreakers. Games that are tied at the end of the last inning will end as a tie.

E. A game delay due to frost or other field conditions will be at the discretion of the Director of Field Operations or their designee. If a delay is 30 minutes or more, it is recommended that all games that day are limited to 6 innings for that league

## **COURTESY RUNNERS**

A. In Senior Slow-Pitch Softball, courtesy runners may be used at the request of a player, at any base. Managers or other players should never instruct a player to get a courtesy runner.

Managers and players that violate this rule may be subject to unsportsmanlike penalties under the Club Code Of Conduct. Players may act as a courtesy runner only once per inning and three times per game

## **PLAYER SUBSTITUTIONS**

A. A game may begin or finish with one less player than the number of players that constitute a team in that League. (SS-USA rule) However, if there is an available player in the stands that meets the Leagues sub rating/grouping criteria, who is available to play and agrees to play, they shall be asked to play.

B. Substitute players will be chosen first from the sub list or bye-team and then from any active roster. Active roster players will only be used if there are no appropriate subs available on the sub list or bye team. In Leagues that use a sub czar, subs are assigned by the sub czar.

C. League Commissioners will develop the criteria for grouping of substitute players. Some leagues will find it necessary to use strictly ratings while others will need to establish groups within a range of ratings to suit the needs of their specific league. Regardless of the system used, if there is no sub of an equal rating or group available, a manager (with the opposing managers agreement) has the option to use a player with a higher rating as a catcher or pitcher who will not bat. If there is no agreement the team will play short and that player will not be an out in the lineup.

D. If a player who is expected to play fails to arrive at the field by game start and it does not put the roster below 'one less the official lineup', the team may play without that player. However, if there is a player at the field available and willing to play that player shall be asked. If the player arrives before the end of the first inning, the player shall play.

E. A maximum of five (5) substitutes can be used by a single team in one game. If more than 5 substitutions are required to start a game, the game will be forfeited and will be played as a scrimmage/practice game.

F. If both the roster player and the substitute player arrive for the game, the roster player will not be permitted to play

## **UMPIRES**

A. Two umpires are to be assigned per game. If a player is unable to fulfill their duty, it is the player's responsibility to follow the League rule on finding a replacement. failure to do so will subject the player to discipline as outlined in Chapter 13 of the Charter Club Policies and Procedures (CCP&Ps), Club Rules.

B. Only umpires may call out rulings; out, safe, foul ball, infield fly, time out, etc. Umpires have the authority to conduct the game according to the SS-USA Rules, Club Rules of Play and League Specific Rules of Play. Umpires may ask to be replaced during a game. Umpires have the authority to warn or eject members as necessary. Ejections will be documented by the League Commissioner

## **CANCELLATIONS**

A. Commissioners may decide to cancel play due to weather conditions, field conditions, or other reasons. Replay of canceled games will be at the discretion of the League Commissioner

## **RUNNING BASES**

A. There will be no sliding permitted going into a base. A runner who slides will be called out. Diving back or sliding back to a base a runner had last occupied or last run through is permissible.

B. In the interest of player safety, a base runner on either first or third base may step off the base a few steps in foul territory to avoid being injured by a "pull hitter's" batted ball. To advance

after a ball is batted, the base runner must return to the base vacated before continuing to the next base. If a ball is caught by a first or third baseman before the runner returns to the base, the runner is deemed to be in a "safe zone" and is not out if tagged returning to the base.

C. A double base consisting of a white portion and an orange portion is used at first base for added safety in avoiding collisions between the fielder and runner at first base. SSUSA Rules apply to use of the double base at first base.

## **HOME PLATE**

A. When a runner is advancing from the commitment line towards the Scoring Line and the runner's whole foot crosses over the runners diagonal line that runs from the commitment/3rd base foul line to the Scoring Line, the runner is out. A runner's foot must touch the Scoring Line or the ground beyond it in order to score. The defender's foot must be in contact with the Home plate/strike pad and catch the ball for a ruling of OUT

## **INJURED PLAYERS**

A. If a player is injured during a game and must come out of the game due to the injury, that player is NOT an automatic out in the batting lineup.

B. A substitute player shall be obtained from the stands with respect to the League's rating/grouping criteria.

## **GROUND RULES**

A. All at bats begin with a one ball, one strike count. Batters will be awarded one courtesy foul ball once they have 2 strikes. If a pitching screen is used, a batted ball that hits the screen is ruled a dead ball strike. However, the batter may not strike out by hitting the screen. If a batted ball hits the screen on the third strike it is considered a dead ball (no pitch). Pitched balls that hit the screen on delivery to the plate are called balls. Refer to Rule Equipment Part C. for rules regarding the use of the pitching screen.

B. The club does not use the infield fly rule.

C. A fair ball, which has been legally hit by a batter and comes to rest under an outfield vinyl panel, is "in play". If a ball comes to rest under field equipment, it is a dead ball and ruled a ground rule double.

D. A home run is any ball that is hit over the wall in fair territory or hits a foul pole above the wall. A ball that strikes the outfield wall including the top of a column in fair territory, or the block wall supporting the "Field of Dreams" sign and bounces back onto the field is a ball "in play". A ball that strikes the scoreboard or any other object on the fly, which is over the wall and in fair territory onto the field, is a home run, even if it bounces back into the field of play. When a home run is hit, the runners do not need to advance to the next base, but may proceed to their dugout

E. Each team may hit a maximum of 3 homeruns per game. Any additional homeruns will be a walk.

F. Pitchers not using the pitching screen may throw from anywhere within the six-foot box behind the pitching rubber. Pitchers using the pitching screen must pitch from the forward pitching rubber.

G. Use of a roster/lineup card for League games is optional,

H. A foul tip, caught by the catcher, at any point in the pitch count is an out.

I. If at the end of a session two or more teams have the same record, those teams will be assigned/awarded co-champions for the League(s).

J. In Leagues that have teams made up of all skill level players, pitchers shall use a safety pitching screen . See rule, Equipment, Part C, for rules regarding use of the safety pitching screen.

## **EQUIPMENT**

A. The 52/300 softball will be used for league play unless otherwise approved by the Board.

B. Only ASA/USA certified and authorized bats are allowed for league play. Any exemption to this rule must be approved by the Board. It is the players responsibility to ensure any bat used in club play complies with this rule. Senior bats are not allowed.

C. The Club provides a Protective Screen for use by the pitcher. The screen is optional for the Red, White and Blue Leagues. The use of the screen is mandatory in Leagues where team rosters include players of all skill level. The following rules apply when the screen is used:

1. Pitchers that opt to not use the screen **MUST WEAR A MASK THAT COVERS THE TEMPLES** in addition to a chest (heart) protector. You may have the mask attached to a helmet for extra protection. Pitchers that use the screen may choose the safety equipment they wear.

2. When the screen is used it shall be centered between the permanent field markers in front of the pitching rubber nearest home plate and parallel to the pitching rubber. Pitchers using the screen shall pitch from the forward pitching rubber and pitches shall go over the screen.

Pitching around the screen or from other than the forward pitching rubber will result in a warning. Additional violations will result in the batter being awarded a single.

3. After the ball is hit, the pitcher may field any ball hit to them that does not strike the screen first. However, the pitcher must stay behind the screen until the ball is hit. The batter is awarded a single if the pitcher violates this rule.

4. A batted ball that hits the screen is ruled a dead ball strike. However, the batter may not strike out by hitting the screen. If a batted ball hits the screen on the third strike it is considered a dead ball (no pitch). If the ball touches a defender before it hits the screen it is a live ball.

5. Thrown balls that hit the screen are in play and play shall continue until the umpire declares the play over.

6. If your team starts an inning using the screen it must finish the inning using the screen. That does not mean you have to use the screen every inning.

D. The use of optional player protective equipment, such as shin guards, chest protectors, helmets, face masks, mouth guards, safety eyewear, cups, pitcher's protective screen, etc. is strongly recommended by the Club