

USA Softball (formerly A.S.A.) Rules govern all play except as specifically modified by these local rules

Section 1. Games

Except when extra innings are necessary to break ties, Island Division games are 9 innings, Marco Division and Gulf Coast games are 7 innings.

All Divisions will play a "5 run rule". This rule apply to innings 1-6 in seven inning games and 1-8 in nine inning games. Scoring is unlimited in play beyond those innings.

5 Run Rule – No more than 5 runs can be scored by a team in an inning. The play will end when the 5th legal run is scored. "Play" effectively ends for that half inning regardless of outs.

All Division will play with the "Mercy rule". The Mercy rule applies after 5 innings (4-1/2 if the home team is ahead) in a 7 inning game and after 7 innings (6-1/2 if the home team is ahead) in a 9 inning game. (Exception: Does not apply to the Divisional Tournament Championship games.)

Mercy rule – the game will end if a team is ahead by 15 or more runs at the completion of an inning. It is understood that the home team could meet the requirement without getting three outs while at bat, the game will end at 15 over the visitors score in that case.

Section 2. Batting, pitching, home plate

(Applicable Island and Marco divisions) The League is recommending Pitchers wear face protection during play. Anyone wishing to pitch in league play must sign a "Pitcher Protection Waiver" to the league acknowledging this recommendation. No one will be permitted to pitch in league play if they have not signed a Pitcher Protection Waive. An authorized pitcher list will be held at the Booth. Managers will be responsible to prevent/identify any infraction of this requirement. Any non-compliance should be reported to the Umpire. Upon a verification of non-compliance, the game will end and the offending team will forfeit the game. See ASA Rule 5. Section 6 C.

FYI ASA text: Rule 5. Section 6C. The score of a forfeited game shall be seven to zero in favor of the team not at fault.

(Applicable Gulf division) **Pitching Screen:** The screen will be approximately 3 ft wide and 6 feet in height.

Set up

1. Portable screen is set up, removed, and stored by the home team.
2. The screen will be set up 15 feet from the front of the pitching rubber, centered and lined up with second base and the home plate.

Pitching

1. The pitched ball must travel over the screen. The pitcher must pitch from behind the screen and must remain behind the screen until after the ball is hit.
2. A ball pitched from outside the left or right side of the screen is an illegal pitch and will be called a ball.
3. A pitched ball striking the screen is a ball.

Fielding

1. The pitcher will remain behind the screen until the ball is hit. Once the ball is hit, the pitcher may move from behind the screen to field the ball.
2. If the pitcher fails to remain behind the screen before the ball is hit, he is not eligible to field the ball. If the pitcher moves from behind the screen before the ball is hit and then touches a batted ball, the batter and any runners forced, will be safe. Staying behind the screen is the home plate umpire's call.
3. Once a ball is in play, a defensive player may not intentionally move, run into or knockdown the screen. A first occurrence will result in a warning to the team. A second occurrence will result in the forfeiture of the game by the offending team.
4. A thrown ball striking the screen is a "live" ball.

Hitting

1. Any batted ball that strikes the net, frame, or base of the screen before being touched by a fielder is a dead ball.
2. A batter who hits the screen three times in one at bat will be called "out."

If the screen, and/or a replacement, becomes unserviceable, the game is to be suspended and completed at another time.

(All divisions) The ball shall be delivered to the plate by the pitcher with a minimum of a 6-foot arc and a maximum of a 12-foot arc. (USA Softball maximum height is 10 feet.) A pitch which is called illegal, and subsequently hit, will be considered to be in play.

A batter must have both feet completely on the mat as the pitch is delivered. The batter is called out when an entire foot is touching the ground completely outside the mat area, in fair territory (to include the Home Plate Strike mat), at the time the ball makes contact with the bat. The batter is not called out if, when swinging at the pitch, entire foot is touching the ground completely outside the mat on the third base side if he is a right handed batter, or toward the first base side if he is a left handed batter, or he steps back towards the catcher.

Batters will start with a one and one count (one ball and one strike). There will be a courtesy granted on the first, foul third strike. After the courtesy foul the batter is out on the next strike or foul (strike-out dead ball).

The entire plate and mat area will be considered "home plate" for plays at home as well as for called strikes. The defensive player needs only to have their foot on the mat and possession/control of the ball for a call of out.

All bats must have either the USA Softball or ASA logo stamped on it. See Team USA website for more information on Bats <https://www.teamusa.org/usa-softball/certified-equipment>

Before Bats being placed into service for league play, all bats must be submitted to the team's manager for an endorsement that the bat meets the requirements of the league. The manager shall indicate his endorsement by affixing a colored tape band to the bat. Tape for this purpose will be supplied to the manager by the league.

Section 3. General play

All Divisions may slide to base. Overrunning will put a runner at risk for being tagged out. (Except first and home) A runner having a collision with a defensive player when not sliding will put a runner at risk for an Interference call. Umpires shall determine both offensive interference and defensive obstruction. Collisions should be avoided.

Extra Innings: Each team will begin the inning with a runner on 2nd base. This runner will be the batter last up in the previous inning. This runner will be subject to regular, pinch running substitution rules.

In all Divisions "Pinch runners" may run only once per inning. In the Island and Marco Divisions "Pinch runners" may only substitute run three times in a game. In the Gulf Coast Division there is no limit on appearances, only per inning. It is the responsibility of the umpires to keep track of the number of times a player has run. It is the manager's responsibility to identify a violation.

In the Gulf Coast Division, all base runners may advance at their own risk on an errant throw to first base a maximum of one base.

Section 4. Player rosters and substitution

All divisions an individual player may substitute a maximum of two times a week. An individual player may substitute for a specific team only one time a week.

Island and Marco divisions: substitute players must come from other teams in the same division. The pool of players eligible to serve as substitutes consists of all players drafted in draft rounds 6 through 13 in their respective Division. Managers may not substitute.

A substitute player is allowed only if a team has fewer than 12 players available from the team's regular roster. A substitute player bats in the lineup after all players on the roster have batted. A substitute player may not play defense if a player on the regular roster is available. There are no special provisions for the position of "pitcher". No individual player may substitute for the same team more than once per week.

Every healthy/available player on a team's roster must be listed in the batting order and bat every turn.

Every player on an Island Division, team's roster must play a minimum of four innings in the field, or a total of 12 outs (unless a 5 run rule is invoked and ends the inning). Every player on a Marco Division and Gulf Coast Division team's roster must play a minimum of three innings in the field, or a total of 9 outs. All players, in all Divisions, bat in order the entire game.

If a player is injured and cannot bat, that player is not called out, but cannot play for the balance of the game.

In the event a manager elected to start a game with 11 players, no player may be replaced if an injury occurs. In that instance, that team must continue a man down for the remainder of the game. Nine is the number of minimum players. With only 8 players a game ends and is forfeited.

In the event that a manager begins a game with twelve or more players and sequential injuries occur during the course of the game resulting in a reduction to ten available players, that team may add a substitute in order to bring the team up to eleven players. Both managers must make the umpires and the scoring booth aware of the change. The player being added will bat after the last batter in the batting order. A doctrine of equal or lesser ability will apply.

A player who is ejected from a game will be automatically suspended for the next game. A player who is subsequently ejected from a second game will be automatically suspended for the rest of the season. That player may appeal the suspension to the Board of Directors.

Section 5. Tie Breaker Rules

Ties for regular season Division Championships will be broken based on head-to-head competition results. If a tie still remains, the teams tied will be declared co-champions.

Section 6. Time Limits and Field Conditions

All play must be concluded by 3:30 P.M.

Gulf Coast Division: – No inning can begin after 90 minutes from the beginning of a game. If the game is not finished after 100 minutes from the beginning of the game, the score will revert to the score at the end of the previous inning.

From time to time the city changes field conditions, stands left in the extreme out field, Soccer goals chained to the fence, Goal Posts on the field. Umpires and Managers should hold a pre-game brief to agree on what will happen if these transient conditions interfere with play.

Winterberry Park has limited fencing down the third base line. The League has decided that the area behind the fence, as demarcated by a painted line or imaginary line continuing to the outfield fence is dead ball territory. When a fair batted ball travels, untouched by a defensive player, into the dead ball territory the umpire will call a "Dead Ball". Runners are awarded one base from the last base legally touched at the time the ball became dead. Similarly, a fair ball bouncing over the outfield fence or hitting a palm in fair territory and bouncing out of live territory, or lodging in a tree, bush, or fence. Call dead ball, and the one base award given. If a ball is kicked, carried, deflected, or thrown into dead ball territory by a defensive player, Rule Supplement #27 deals with that situation and is not repeated here.

