

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) An approved Face Mask and Chest Protector are mandatory for all pitchers in the Island and Marco Divisions. If a pitch is thrown by a pitcher without a Face Mask and Chest Protector, the player will be ejected from the game.

An approved Face Mask and Chest Protector are mandatory for all pitchers in the Island and Marco Divisions. If a pitch is thrown during an official at bat by a Pitcher without a Face Mask or Chest Protector the player will be ejected from the game and his times at bat following the ejection will be scored as outs. Following our established ejection rules, the player will be suspended for the next scheduled game

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 feet 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.

Local Rule: *The pitcher's pivot foot shall remain in contact with the pitcher's plate until the pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand.* This rule replaces USA Softball Rule 6C Section 3E which no longer is in effect for Marco Island Senior Softball.

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. 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.

In the Gulf Coast Division, a manager may choose to employ a fifth outfielder. Outfielders may not play in the infield. The infield is defined by the cut out dirt portion of Field A.

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. Substitute players must come from other teams in the same division.

If a team is down to 11 or fewer players, the team may replace the highest ranked missing player minus one round. If the highest ranked missing player is from round 9 or below, the team is entitled to a sub from round 9 or below.

Highest Missing Player

1. 2 or below
2. 3 or below
3. 4 or below
4. 5 or below
5. 6 or below
6. 7 or below
7. 8 or below
8. 9 or below
9. 9 or below
10. 9 or below
11. 9 or below
12. 9 or below

Any use of a sub ranked higher than allowed would be a mandatory forfeit which can be called out at any time.

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 five innings in the field, or a total of 15 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 four innings in the field, or a total of 12 outs. All players, in all Divisions, bat in order the entire game.

A player leaving the game due to injury or personal reasons does not subject his team to an out each subsequent time at bat.

No player may be replaced if an injury occurs. The team would 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.

A player who is ejected from a game will automatically be 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 remains, the teams tied will be declared co-champions.

Ties for the Tournament will be determined as follows:

- 1.) Head-to-head competition
- 2.) Margin of victory between the tied teams
- 3.) Coin flip

Section 6. Time Limits and Field Conditions

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.