



OFFICIAL SOFTBALL RULES

THE #1 RULE IS TO HAVE FUN!!!

It is the player's responsibility to be familiar with the rules for this league. Please direct any questions, comments, or suggestions to the League Commissioner. Any deviation from the rules must be agreed upon by the Commissioner and are valid for the game in question only. Any rules not mentioned follow those of the ASA (www.softball.org).

Alcohol is not permitted at any field at any time that a Jersey Club Sports event is in progress.

SPORTSMANSHIP

Sportsmanship must be practiced at all times. The League Commissioner and umpires reserve the right to remove any player from the game for unsportsmanlike conduct.

GAME RULES

All field rulings are at the discretion of the umpire. In the interest of sportsmanship and time, please do not argue with a call once it has been finalized. If you know an incorrect call has been made in your favor, please be honest about the situation. There is only one umpire and he or she may not have the best vantage point to view every play.

GENERAL

TEAM ROSTER and GENDER RULE

A team may consist of any number of players on the roster as long as the following conditions are met. Every player must be a paying member of Jersey Club Sports. A team must have a minimum of 3 females on the roster at the start of the season. A team must be able to field a minimum of 8 players (including 3 females) in order to play, otherwise the game will be forfeit. For more information on exceptions and penalties to the Gender Rule, please see sections GENERAL:SUBS, DEFENSE:FIELDING POSITIONS, OFFENSE:BATting ORDER.

EQUIPMENT

Jersey Club Sports will provide balls, bases and safety bases, the strike mat, the catcher's mask, and commit line markers. Players/teams are responsible for providing their own gloves and bats. Non-mandatory equipment that players may bring to games include cleats (no metal spikes), batting gloves, batting helmets, hats, sunglasses, etc.

UNIFORM

Jersey Club Sports will provide jerseys for every player on a team's roster. All players should wear the shirt of his or her current team. Either pants or shorts may be worn.

LINE-UP CARDS

Line-up cards indicating the batting order must be provided by each team. Cards must be filled out with players' first name and last initial and be shown to the umpire at the start of the game. Everyone present on the team shall bat, and only players present at the start of play may be included in the line-up. The batting order cannot be changed once the game starts. Players arriving after the start of play may be added to the bottom of the line-up or as close to the bottom to satisfy the gender rule. Please see section OFFENSE:BATting ORDER for more information.

CAPTAINS' MEETING

Prior to the start of the game, the two team captains will meet with the umpire to review field-specific rules (foul lines, areas out of play, home run limit, etc.) and game-specific conditions (line-up cards, subs, etc.). A coin flip will determine the home team. The home team will take the field first. The official score is kept by the umpire.

Any deviations from the official JCS rules should be agreed upon by the captains and the Commissioner during this meeting.

GAME CLOCK

The umpire's clock is the game clock and the umpire will inform both teams when the game has started. To keep the game moving, there are no official warm-up pitches between innings and teams should hustle on and off the field. The exception to this is that the first inning in which a new pitcher takes the mound, he or she may throw 3 warm-up pitches.

A game that is called off by the umpire after 3 complete innings is considered a regulation game. If a game is called off before 3 innings, then every attempt will be made to make up the game. If the game is unable to be made up, then the game will be considered a tie.

After your game is completed, please clear the field and all benches ASAP. No new innings will start after 1 hour. The last inning will always be completed.

SUBS

Any deviation from the following sub rules must be agreed upon by Deb and the team captains before the game begins.

No subs will be allowed during playoffs or finals.

Only Jersey Club Sports members on your roster are allowed to play. If a team will be short-handed, team captains must e-mail the Commissioner [deb@jerseyclubsports.com] by 5 pm on the Saturday preceding the Sunday game in order to use subs. The e-mail should specify how many female and male subs will be used. Teams are allowed to provide their own subs as long as notice has been given. Failure to follow the notification procedure may result in the disqualification of subs. Please see sections DEFENSE:FIELDING POSITIONS and OFFENSE:BATTING ORDER for more information on being short players.

Current Jersey Club Sports members are permitted to sub twice per season free of charge. This means 2 games per season, not 2 games per team. After subbing 2 games, they are required to pay a \$10 sub fee per game. Subs not in the league will be charged a \$10 sub fee per game and must sign a waiver before the start of a game.

A team may play with a maximum of 3 subs. As per the Line-up rule, everyone on the team roster present shall bat; however, if the number of players on your team's line-up card exceeds that on your opponent's, then subs cannot be used except when needed to satisfy the gender rule. You may not have more than 10 players on the line-up card if you are using subs except when needed to satisfy the gender rule.

DEFENSE

EQUIPMENT

All players must have a glove/mitt on at all times when in a fielding position. If you do not have a glove on when the game is in play, then you must remove yourself from the field. You may still bat when your team is on offense. Any ball caught without a glove will be ruled no catch. Any ball caught where a player's glove comes off, but the ball remains in the glove will be ruled no catch. Catchers are required to wear the mask at all times when behind the plate. No exceptions.

PITCHING and STRIKE ZONE

A single step must be taken when pitching from the pitcher's line. The arc on underhand pitches must be between six feet and twelve feet above the ground. A pitch outside of this arc will be ruled as an illegal pitch and called a ball. However, if the batter swings and misses, then it will be treated as a legal pitch and called a strike. If the batter swings and connects, then it will be treated as a legal pitch and ruled a live ball, rules permitting.

A strike mat will be used to determine the strike zone for balls and strikes. This mat is placed so that it touches the part of home plate closest to the catcher. If the softball touches any part of the strike mat or home plate on a legal pitch (6'-12' arc) it will be considered a strike. Any other pitch that hits the ground will be called a ball.

FIELDING POSITIONS

Teams may field a maximum of 10 players and a minimum of 8 players. If a team cannot field at least 8 players, then they shall forfeit the game.

No more than 7 males may be on the field at any time, and no fewer than 3 females may be on the field at any time. If a team does not have enough players, then they must play short. If a team is playing with fewer than 10 fielders, they may only have 3 outfielders. A team must always field a pitcher and a catcher.

Positions can be changed during your half inning in the field, however players on the bench may not substitute in unless the team is playing short because of late-arriving players or due to an injury. Players may move freely from one field position to another at any time. The batting order must stay the same despite any changes in field position.

OUTFIELDERS and CO-ED LINE

If the defense is fielding 10 players, 4 of those players must be outfielders. These outfielders may be positioned in two configurations: 3 deep outfielders (LF, CF, RF) and 1 short fielder, or 4 deep outfielders (LF, LCF, RCF, RF).

WILD THROWS

A ball overthrown to first or third base that results in the ball remaining in playable territory will be ruled as a live ball and play shall continue. However, if a thrown ball ends up in unplayable territory then it will be ruled as a dead ball, and all runners shall be advanced one base regardless if it is not a forced advance.

OFFENSE

EQUIPMENT

All batters should wear approved protective helmets per the CPSC guidelines. Batting gloves are allowed. All Fast Pitch, baseball, and wooden bats are prohibited. The approved bat list can be found at www.usssa.com/usssa/usssa-general/LegalBats.asp. The non-approved bat list can be found at www.asasoftball.com/about/certified_equipment.asp.

THE COUNT

Males at bat will start with a one ball/one strike count. Females at bat will start with a zero ball/zero strike count. Foul balls count as a strike regardless of the pitch count. The player is out after strike three.

BATTING ORDER and GENDER RULE

The batting order is indicated on the line-up card and cannot be changed once the game starts. The batting order must alternate male and female players with no more than three males batting between every female. All players shall bat, and there are no substitutions and no pinch hitters allowed. If a player does not bat, then he or she is ineligible to play the field.

Late players may be inserted into the game at any time; however, late arrivals are added to the bottom of the batting order or as close to the bottom to satisfy the gender rule.

If a team has males left over at the bottom of the line-up due to an excess of male players and the 3:1 rule would be broken, then females can re-hit to satisfy the gender rule. Any female may re-hit in this position except for the next one in the line-up.

If a team has fewer than 3 females present and able to play, then they will take an automatic out(s). The females present should be placed in the line-up as usual, maintaining the gender rule. Automatic outs shall replace the missing female players in the line-up. It is the batting team's responsibility to notify the umpire when an automatic out has been reached in the line-up.

If both teams are down by the same number of female players, the captains may agree to play as is with neither team taking automatic outs.

BATTING OUT OF ORDER

If this should occur, it is the responsibility of the fielding team to discover this error and notify the umpire. If discovered before the incorrect batter has taken a pitch, then the correct batter will take the plate without consequence. If discovered after the incorrect batter has taken a pitch, but before the player has gotten on base, then the correct batter will take the plate and assume the ball/strike count of the incorrect batter. If the correct batter is a male replacing a female batter and the female batter had zero balls or zero strikes, then the count must be adjusted to meet the minimum count for males at bat.

If the incorrect batter reaches base safely and then the error is discovered, the incorrect batter will be called out and all runners will return to their original base. If the error occurs, but is not discovered until after a pitch has been thrown to the next batter, then the incorrect batter is allowed to stay on base and play continues with the incorrect batter now treated as the correct batter for the remainder of the game. In this last situation, the official batting order is changed to reflect the player's new position in the line-up.

BUNTING

Intentional bunting is not allowed. Violation of this rule will result in the player being called out.

HOME RUNS and GROUND RULE DOUBLES

There is no limit on the number of home runs that can be hit by either team in a single game. However, certain fields may require a specific pre-game ruling that limits the number of home runs if the field is shorter than a normal field.

On fields that do not have a fence, but have wooded areas or high grass beyond the outfield, any ball hit directly into these unplayable terrains is ruled a home run; whereas any ball that lands in play then bounces or rolls into these unplayable terrains is ruled as a double, with the runners advancing accordingly.

On fields for which a home run limit has been set by the umpire, any home run hit after the limit has been reached shall be ruled as a double, with the runners advancing accordingly.

FLY BALLS

An in-field fly rule is in effect if there are fewer than 2 outs with runners on first and second or the bases are loaded and there is a pop fly that the umpire judges could be caught easily by an infielder in fair territory. An in-field fly call will result in the batter being called out. Play is considered dead and runners may not advance.

If a fly ball is caught in playable territory (fair or foul), then the ball remains live and runners must tag-up or they can be thrown out.

BASE RUNNING and SAFETY BASES

There is no leading off or stealing of bases. Violation of this rule will result in the player being called out.

A tie between the throw and the runner reaching the base always results in the runner being called safe.

Base runners heading to first base should always run in foul territory (the right side of the foul line) in case the catcher needs to throw to first. Obscuring a throw to first from the catcher by running in the way of the throw is considered runner interference and the runner may be called out at the umpire's discretion. Similarly, a player who is running in fair territory to first base and is accidentally hit by a throw from the catcher will be called out due to runner interference.

Base runners heading to first base may overrun the base and still be safe as long as they veer into foul territory. If the runner veers into fair territory (as if he or she were to head toward second base), they are eligible to be tagged out.

Base runners must use the safety base at first base and at home plate. The normal base and plate are for the fielders. The safety base at first base is the non-white half of the bag that is located in foul territory. The safety base at home plate is the plate off to the right of the strike mat as you are heading toward home plate.

from third base. Any runner who tags home plate instead of the safety base will be called out unless it is an out-of-the-park home run.

Jersey Club Sports is non-contact and all players must avoid unnecessary contact at all times. Runners must give themselves up, get out of the way, or slide when a play is being made at a base. A runner who moves more than 2 steps out of the base path to avoid a tag shall be called out. Runners must avoid fielders attempting to field a hit. If a fielder is blocking the base/in the base path while waiting to receive a throw, fielder interference will be called and the runner will be safe. If the contact was considered unsportsmanlike, then that player will be ejected by the umpire.

SLIDING

Sliding is allowed, but not at all bases. Runners may slide feet first into second or third base. Runners may not slide into first base or the safety base at home plate. Runners may not engage in a head first slide when approaching any base on the field. If a runner's momentum has caused him or her to overrun a base, he or she may dive back in a head first manner to regain possession of that base. Violation of these rules will result in the player being called out.

COMMIT RULE

A commit line exists approximately halfway between third base and home plate. The boundary will be marked by a colored cone or disc on the ground. As a runner approaches home plate, if he or she crosses the commit line, then he or she cannot return to third base.

If there is a fly ball and a runner crosses the commit line before the ball is played by a fielder, he or she will be called out if the ball is caught because he or she cannot tag up at third base.

INJURED RUNNER

Injured players may receive a pinch runner once they safely reach a base. They must bat for themselves. If a male player is injured, then the last player out will become the pinch runner regardless of gender. If a female player is injured, then the last female out becomes the pinch runner.

If a player is injured and cannot bat for him or herself, then he or she is taken out of the game and play continues with that team playing short. The team must abide by the rest of the rules regarding playing short. Please see sections DEFENSE:FIELDING POSITIONS and OFFENSE:BATting ORDER for more information.

SCORING

The play at home is always a force play regardless of the position of other runners. The fielding team must tag home plate before the runner tags the safety base at home plate.

Runners must always use the safety base at home plate or they will be called out unless it is an out-of-the-park home run.

There is a seven run limit per team per inning except in the seventh inning. After the seventh run is scored during the first six innings, play will stop regardless of the number of outs and the teams will exchange positions.

There is no mercy rule.

PLAYOFFS

Playoffs will begin the week after the regular season has ended and all make up games have been played. The number of teams in each division to make the playoff will be determined by Jersey Club Sports. All previous rules are in effect during playoffs except where specifically outlined.

PLAYOFF-SPECIFIC RULES

No subs are allowed during playoff games. If a team does not have enough females to satisfy the gender rule, then they must play short and take automatic outs.

PLAYOFF TIE BREAKER

If the time limit has expired and the game is tied, a tiebreaker inning(s) will occur. The batting order will continue from the previous inning. The player to make the last out in the previous inning will be placed on second base. Batters will now have a 3 balls and 2 strikes count on them (foul is an out). The tie breaker will continue until one team wins. Home team will always have the last opportunity to win the game.

We cannot control the weather, so please make sure to call Jersey Club Sports at (973-794-3822) 1 hour prior to your schedule game time for updated status.

It will be up to the discretion of the umpire on the field whether or not to play, cancel, or postpone the start/continuation of the game.