

# DAY PLAY SOFTBALL GAME RULES

## *Day Play Game Preparations*

08:45 A.M. Field Preparation begins.

09:00 A.M. Player sign-up and batting practice begins.

09:45 A.M. Player sign-up closes and team assignments begin.

10:00 A.M. Games begin, pending finish of batting practice and the completion of all field preparations.

## *Late Arrivals*

Only players arriving and signing in prior to 9:45 A.M. will be permitted to play with the following exceptions:

1. There is a specific need for additional players to balance out the teams.
2. Late arriving players have notified an 'on-time' player that they will arrive after the deadline and are signed in by that player.

## *Fields and Equipment*

Every able bodied player is expected to help with field prep periodically. Volunteers should arrive by 8:45 A.M. to help the field supervisor. The last team on the field is responsible for storing bases, pitching screens and all other equipment, in secure facilities provided by the club.

## **TEAM FORMATION**

### *Player Allocations*

1. When less than 27 members sign up before the 9:45 A.M. deadline, two teams shall be formed to play.
2. When 27 to 37 members sign up before the 9:45 A.M. deadline, three teams shall be formed to play on one field.
3. When 38 or more members sign up before the 9:45 A.M. deadline, four teams shall be formed to play on two fields. It will be by mutual agreement between all team managers as to which teams will play against each other and on which field they will play.
4. No games will be played until the members present have fully prepped both fields to the satisfaction of all team managers.
5. Any member designated or volunteering to allocate players and take on the responsibilities of being a team manager for that day shall have the full support of the Day Play Commissioner(s) to establish teams.
6. When teams are being developed, player selections will be made by the team managers following a flip of a coin(s), or any other mutually agreed upon method, to determine who gets first pick, second pick, third pick, or fourth pick. The specific picking order for two (2), three (3), or four (4) teams will be first to last, then last to first, then first to last, etc.

## ***Uneven Teams***

Any team that is a player short can 'borrow' a defensive player from the other team(s). When three teams are playing, the borrowed player must come from the team that is not presently batting.

## **GENERAL GROUND RULES**

### ***Player Positioning***

1. No outfielder may be positioned closer than 175 feet from home plate until the batter hits the ball.
2. Teams must have four outfielders before positioning a short-fielder (rover).
3. Infielders must remain in position (left infield and right infield respectively) until the batter hits the ball.
4. Each team is allowed no more than one short-fielder (rover) on the infield or brown portion of the infield until the batter hits the ball.

### ***70+ Exception Rule***

No outfielder or short-fielder (rover) can directly throw out any 70+ runner advancing to first base. Use of a relay throw from an outfielder or short-fielder to an infielder or from an infielder to an outfielder or short-fielder, then to first base can be used. The 70+ Exception Rule includes players celebrating their 70<sup>th</sup> birthday during the current calendar year. This rule does not apply if a substitute runner is used from home plate to 1st base.

### ***75+ Double Play Exception Rule***

No 75+ player can hit a ground ball into a traditional double play. Wherever the initial out is made, any other base runner that was forced to advance will be allowed to safely advance one base. The 75+ Exception Rule includes players celebrating their 75<sup>th</sup> birthday during the current calendar year. This rule still applies even if a substitute runner is used from home plate to 1st base.

### ***Special Infielder Placement Rule***

When a 75+ player or a woman player comes up to bat, infielders must remain on the traditionally recognized infield and cannot position themselves as an outfielder or short-fielder until the batter hits the ball.. This rule also includes players celebrating their 75<sup>th</sup> birthday during the current calendar year. This rule still applies even if a substitute runner is used from home plate to 1st base. An exception is when the batter is a tournament caliber player, the infielders have the option to play back for safety reasons.

## ***Force Plays***

All plays on runners advancing to any of the four bases shall be treated as ‘force plays’. The baseman's foot must be in contact with the base, to include the strike mat at home. The base runner's foot must either touch the base or the ground beyond the forward edge of the base prior to the baseman catching the ball to be considered safe on a force play. ‘Breaking the plane’ is a practice used in football not softball. Established softball rules apply to situations where the runner is returning to a base. Returning to a base is not a force out situation. The player must be tagged prior to reaching the base, to be out.

## ***Infield Fly***

When an ‘infield fly’ is called, the ball is dead and the batter is out and base runners cannot advance and will return to the last base occupied.

# **PLAYING FIELD GROUND RULES**

## **BATS/BALLS**

### ***Composite Bats***

Bats with ‘composite material barrels’ can only be used by players age 75 and over, including players who are celebrating their 75<sup>th</sup> birthday during the current calendar year and women players.

### ***Double/Triple Walls***

Double/Triple walls can only be used by players age 70 and over, including players who are celebrating their 70<sup>th</sup> birthday during the current calendar year and women players.

### ***Practice Swings***

Batting practice is generally limited to 8 fair ball hits. This is subject to modification based upon the number of hitters and the time available. The batting practice pitcher is expected to monitor the hit count.

### ***Other Player's Bats***

Bats may be borrowed only with permission from the owner. A red marking on a bat very specifically indicates that the owner does not want other players to use it during games or during batting practice.

### ***Balls***

Day Play uses a 12 inch ball. When a woman player is at bat, an 11 inch ball will be used.

# **On the Playing Field**

## ***Volunteer Umpire***

When a volunteer umpire is available, they will control the game from behind home plate. They will be responsible for calling balls and strikes. They will also determine if a ball hit by the batter is fair, foul, and/or is an out by being caught by a defensive player. Plays made at home plate will be determined by the plate umpire. They will also determine if the “infield fly rule” is to be applied. In the absence of a volunteer umpire, the defensive catcher will act in the same capacity, except for calls at home plate.

## ***Base Coaches***

Each batting team must provide coaches at first and third base. When a volunteer umpire is not available, the first base coach makes the calls at first base and home plate. The third base coach makes the calls at second and third base. Base coaches are the final authority for the call. If the batting team does not provide coaches, close calls that could go either way will be called as outs. When a volunteer umpire is present, the first base coach will be responsible for calls at first base only, with home plate being covered by the volunteer umpire.

## ***Running the Bases***

When advancing and running to 2nd and/or 3rd base, the base runner can run through the base, without touching the base, and then safely return to the base without fear of being tagged out. If after safely running through a base, the base runner decides to continue on to the next base he/she must retouch the base they just ran through before continuing on to the next base. Failure to retouch the base before advancing, if appealed, will be grounds for calling the base runner out. If the base runner tags a base and then continues on making a noticeable turn or movement in the direction of the next base, they are subject to being tagged out if not in contact with the base.

## ***Home Plate***

Home plate and the strike mat are to be played as one solid object. All plays at home are force out plays. (Refer to force out plays described above.) Any base runner advancing toward home plate cannot return to 3rd base once they have passed the established point-of-no-return line. If the base runner passes this line and then turns back re-crossing the line, an out will be immediately called. Any base runner that touches either home plate or the strike mat will be immediately called out. The base runner must safely touch the marked line or the ground beyond the marked line that represents an extension of the 1st base line that passes through and beyond home plate to be counted as a run in for their team. The catcher must play home plate as a force out situation. Once a base runner has crossed the point-of-no-return line, the catcher cannot tag the runner out.

## ***Substitute Runners***

Upon any batter reaching any base safely, they may then specifically request a substitute runner.

Any batter can request a substitute runner. The substitute runner will start from a position located behind an imaginary extension of the third base line.

Upon the batter's bat making contact with the ball the substitute runner can then begin their run to first base but no further until the next batter bats. The only exceptions are when the batted ball is a Ground Rule Double or the batted ball is thrown Out Of Play at 1st, the runner is then allowed to go to 2<sup>nd</sup> base; or when the batted ball goes over the outfield fence on the fly, the batter gets credit for a Home Run and the runner need not run to 1<sup>st</sup>.

An unlimited number of substitute runners are allowed during a game, however, a player may be a substitute runner only once per inning. If the team has nine (9) or less players or this rule is waived, a substitute runner can run twice in one inning.

A substitute runner cannot replace a substitute runner, except upon an injury to the initial substitute runner.

If a substitute runner is on base when their turn at bat comes up, they are 'out' and the next batter in the line-up comes up to bat. This does not apply to teams with nine (9) or less players in their batting order or this rule is waived.

At no time will a Team Manager or other player ask, force, or attempt to intimidate another player into requesting a substitute runner.

## ***Stepping Off of a Base***

With a batter in the box and ready to play, a base runner on either 1<sup>st</sup> base or 3<sup>rd</sup> base may step away from the base into the out-of-bounds area immediately adjacent to the base prior to any pitch being presented to the batter. This practice is allowed to protect the base runner from being hit by a down-the-line batted ball. Should a base runner elect to step off the base for this purpose, once the ball is hit, they must re-occupy the base safely or re-touch the base before proceeding to the next base. Failure to re-touch the base before advancing, if appealed, will be grounds for calling the base runner out.

## ***Innings to be Played***

When there are three (3) teams playing, there will be seven (7) innings of play, with the seventh inning played as an 'open inning' for scoring purposes. In the seventh inning there will be a 'flip flop' where the team that has the lead will take the field or remain in the field to defend their lead. When the defending team goes out to the field to defend their lead, the team coming off the field will bat second, behind the team remaining in the dugout area. If one of these two teams establishes the lead, that team will, upon completion of their batting, become the defending team and take the field for final defensive play.

When there are only two (2) teams playing against each other, there will be nine (9) innings of play, with the ninth inning played as an ‘open inning’ for scoring purposes. In the ninth inning, at the discretion of the team managers where the visiting team has the lead, there can be a ‘flip flop’, where the visiting team shall remain in the field to defend their lead.

(The following rule is On Hold)

In all instances, at 11:45 it will be announced that the next inning will be the ‘open inning’ once all teams have played an even number of innings.

### ***Default Rule***

The Club Board of Directors has adopted ASA/NCSSA rules of play. Day Play Softball Rules take precedence over ASA/NCSSA rules and are designed to address unique circumstances such as field conditions and player age groups and to promote a competitive and balanced playing environment.

Any questions about the applicability of the Day Play Softball Game Rules that might arise during a game will be decided by the Day Play Commissioner, or if not present any Club Board Member present, and if absent by consensus of the Team Managers.

When events not specifically covered by Day Play Softball Game Rules arise or unique circumstances make strict compliance unsafe and/or unrealistic, the overriding decision guidelines are safety and enjoyment.