

St. Lucie County Senior Softball League (SLCSSL) Rules for the 2026 Season

Revised and Approved by the SLCSSL Board (12-12-25)

The Mission of the St Lucie County Senior Softball Association (SLC SSA) is to provide recreational opportunities for softball enthusiasts ages 60 and over in an environment and healthy atmosphere based on the principles of fun, camaraderie, mutual respect, safety, inclusion, and friendly competitive rivalry.

The following rules apply to the **St. Lucie County Senior Softball League (SLCSSL)**. The league will adhere to all ASA rules not explicitly addressed in this document. The Board has the authority and responsibility to resolve issues and circumstances not covered by the current by-laws, and rules & regulations.

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A. FIELD LAYOUT

1. Bases will be 70 feet apart (unless the field does not allow adjustment).
 2. The pitching mound-rubber is 50 feet from the center of home plate.
 3. The pitcher's safety net will be placed 15 ft from the mound and provided by the home team.
 4. The runner's safety home plate is 8 feet from the back tip and side of home plate.
 5. The point of no return line between home and third is 20 feet from home.
 6. The home plate dimensions are 19"x 34".
 7. A safety base will be placed adjacent to 1st base for runners to avoid collisions. If the runner touches either base, they can advance on an overthrow or a double, etc. Runners are required to touch the outside safety base if there is a play at first base. If there is a play at first base and the runner touches the wrong base, the runner will be called out. Runners on 1st or 3rd may request to step off the base in foul territory to avoid being hit by a pulled batted ball. The runner must retouch the base before advancing or be called out.
 8. Runners must touch 2nd and 3rd base and maintain the base until contact. No overrunning. Sliding or diving into 1st base (exception: allowed if returning to the base) or at the home safety plate is not permitted. A runner may slide or dive into 2nd/3rd base or when returning to 1st/2nd/3rd base. A runner must make every effort to avoid colliding with opposing players while running or returning to a base. No aggressive or reckless sliding/diving will be tolerated. If, in the umpire's judgment, the runner fails to avoid or aggressively causes a collision with a defensive player, the ball will be declared dead, and the runner will be called out, ejected, and suspended for the next game. If, in the umpire's judgment, the runner's collision with the defensive player involved in the play negates a double play, the umpire may award a second out. This is an umpire's judgment call, not subject to protest or appeal.
- THIS RULE INTENDS TO PREVENT INJURIES. Players and managers should carefully consider allowing sliding or diving.**
9. Runners advancing in a tag-up from a fly ball must be tagged to be called out at either 2nd or 3rd base (Same as baseball rules). Runners advancing from 3rd base to home must touch the adjacent home safety base or cross the designated safety line. If the runner touches the home plate, he will be declared out. No tag-outs or sliding allowed at home. All outs at home are a force play with the defensive player's foot on the 19"x34" plate.
 10. Runners on base must maintain a foot on the base until the pitched ball is hit or touches the ground or plate. (ASA rule #8 –section 8 paragraph U). See the exception in rule 11.
 11. Any base runner hit by a batted ball is called out, a dead ball is declared, and the batter is awarded 1st base. If a runner is standing on a base when struck by a batted ball, the batter is awarded first base, and the ball is considered "in play," and the game is not stopped.
 12. Base runners caught in a rundown may go back and forth as often as needed unless they cross the

20-foot commitment line between 3rd and home. A runner can only be tagged before crossing the commitment line. If tagged after crossing the commitment line, he will be called safe.

13. Pinch Runners: *A manager may request a pinch runner for any player at any time during a game. The request must be made once the affected player reaches base and before a pitch is thrown to the next batter. A pinch runner can only be placed on 1st base (see EXCEPTION below). A manager or the pinch runner must notify the umpire (by number, i.e., " 2 running for 21") before taking the base. Any rostered player on the lineup card, designated as either a starter or a substitute, **can pinch run up to three times in a game, but only one time in any inning.***

*Extra innings will allow a reset of the three times for pinch runners. A pinch runner is not restricted to advancing any bases once placed on 1st base. If a pinch runner comes up to bat while on base, he will be declared out but allowed to bat unless it's the 3rd out. **Any pinch runner placed on base and determined to be ineligible will be declared out.** The umpire (s) will monitor and track pinch runners.*

***EXCEPTION:** In the event of an on-field injury to a base runner, as determined by both managers and the umpire, a pinch runner can be requested and placed on the affected base (1st,2nd,3rd). The injured player must leave the field and will not be permitted to return to the game.*

14. If a ball is thrown out of play (into a dugout or beyond the out-of-bound lines or through an open entry gate), a base runner advances to the base he is going to plus one more.

If the overthrown ball contacts equipment in the sidelines area, then the ball is dead, and the player only advances to the base they are going to, but no further. All bats and gloves not in use must be kept off the field of play. Bats may be hung in racks attached to the out-of-bound fence, but must be elevated and off the ground. "Out-of-bounds" areas and specific ground rules vary by field and will be clarified by managers and umpires before each game begins.

15. Defensive players can be moved to different field positions without consulting the other manager. **The other manager must be notified if a player is replaced in the batting order.**

16. Fielders must not obstruct a runner or block a base, but the fielder is entitled to the base if he is accepting a throw or making a tag.

Runners must leave the base path after being out to avoid obstructing a fielder's throw. **If a runner obstructs a fielder's throw to a base, the additional runner will be called out.**

If a fielder obstructs a runner, the runner is awarded the next base. **A fake tag is considered an obstruction,** and the runner(s) will be awarded the next base.

17. Batters are permitted to use any softball bat. No restrictions. All balls will be the "Short Porch Mortar" ball; no other brands are allowed for backup. Players hitting a home run, and any on base runners will have the option to "run" the bases or immediately return to the dugout.

18. Batters will use the 4-balls and 3-strikes count to determine whether a batter is issued a walk or commits a strikeout (swinging strike, called strike, or **hitting a foul ball or the pitcher screen for the third strike**).

19. A player who cannot bat can play in the field and must have a designated hitter.

20. The infield fly rule will be in effect.

21. Any player who leaves the game and is not replaced by another available player or batter will be declared an out when their turn at bat comes up. All available players must be listed on the lineup card as either a starter or a substitute. **INJURIES:** In the event of an injury and the player is removed from the game, cannot bat, and is not replaced by an available substitute, the player will be called “out” the first time he is due to bat. After that, the line-up will compress, and there will be no more outs in that spot. The injured player will not be eligible to re-enter the game.

22. Any player entering the game either defensively or as a designated hitter must be listed on the lineup card as either a starter or a substitute. All available players are to be listed on the lineup card. (They are not required to enter the game if listed.)

B. PITCHERS

1. Pitchers must have at least one foot on the pitching rubber before a pitch is delivered. The pitcher must not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter. The delivery must be a continuous motion with no stop or reversal in the pitching motion. A violation will be called a “dead ball,” a “ball,” or an illegal pitch, and a warning will be issued by the umpire. Repeated violations will result in the pitcher being ruled illegally and removed from the pitching position. Batters may hit an “illegal” pitch, but not a pitch that hits the safety screen.

2. **Pitchers will pitch over the safety net throughout the game.**

- A pitched ball must go over the pitcher's safety net.
- A pitched ball will have a maximum height of 12 feet and a minimum height of 6 feet and touch the 19”x34” plate to be called a strike.
- Any ball hitting the plate will be called a strike.
- An umpire can rule a pitch a ball if it is too high, too flat, strikes the safety net, or dirt first.
- The pitcher is required to remain behind the safety net until the ball is hit after the pitch is thrown
- Umpires will issue a warning to the pitcher for not being behind the safety net, and repeated violations will result in the pitcher being removed from the position and another pitcher being brought in.
- The safety net will be placed 15 feet in front of the pitching rubber.

3. A batted ball hitting the pitcher's safety net is a strike. If the batter hits the screen for the 3rd strike the batter is declared out.

4. The batter gets a ball if the pitcher hits the pitcher's safety net with the ball during delivery.

5. A ball thrown by a defensive player that hits the pitcher's safety net is a live ball and in play.

6. Any foul tip in the air caught by any player is an out. There is no height limit or restriction on the foul tip.

C. INTENTIONAL WALKS

An intentional walk can only be initiated by a team manager. **All intentional walks will result in the batter being awarded two bases, and all base runners will advance two additional bases.** Umpires have the discretion and authority to warn and declare a pitcher intentionally throwing pitches to place a batter on base and award the batter the allowed two bases.

EXCEPTION: During the last two innings or any extra innings, and the tying/winning run is on base, a batter(s) may be intentionally walked and placed on first base. The intent is to set up a force play to get out.

D. PLAYOFFS (currently based on 6-team league)

Playoff seating is based on the final standings of league play, which includes six teams, and the playoffs are single elimination.

All games will have the last inning, and all extra innings as “open innings,” i.e., there is no mercy rule.

- The “Kansas City” rule will be in play for all extra innings (i.e., the batter making the last out in the prior inning will start the inning at second base).
- Any player on the final team roster submitted by Dec 15th will be eligible to participate in any playoff game, regardless of the number of games played, if any, during the season.

ROUND 1:

- The first-place team finishing in the final standings of league play will be the home team and play the 6th place team in the final standings of league play.
- The team finishing 2nd in the final standings of league play will be the home team and play the 5th place team in the final standings of league play.
- The team finishing 3rd in the final standings of league play will be the home team and play the 4th place team in the final standings of league play.

ROUND 2:

- The highest-seeded winning team from round 1 will have a bye in round 2.
- The other two winning teams from Round 1 will play each other at the higher seed’s home field.

CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND:

- The Championship game will be played between the bye team and the winner of round 2 at a neutral location (TBD). The Championship game will have at least two (2) umpires.

E. TEAM ROSTERS

1. Each team roster may consist of 25 players, including players on an injured reserve (IR) list.
2. A player on a roster must be at least 60 years old during that year of league play. (For example, a player must turn 60 years old in the current season to be eligible to compete in the league season.) Managers are responsible for verifying the age eligibility of employees. Any violations will result in game forfeits the ineligible player has played in. **Female players are exempt from the age requirement** and are subject to the same rules of play as male players.
3. Managers are responsible for the conduct of their team’s players. If control is not maintained, the umpire can declare a forfeit.
4. Once an application/contract is signed, the player is committed to that team, and the team is committed to the player until the end of the season. All players become free agents at the conclusion of each season. Team rosters will be turned in to the Secretary by December 15th. After December 15th, no changes will be allowed to a roster, except for player trades or the dropping of a player from a team. The

trade deadline is February 1st, and any trade is subject to the agreement of both managers and the traded players. Trades and any players being dropped from a team will also be subject to Board approval. After December 31st, no roster changes will be allowed except for player trades or players dropped from a team. The trade deadline is February 1st, and any trade is subject to the agreement of both managers and the traded players. Trades and players being dropped from a team will also be subject to Board approval.

F. UMPIRES

1. One paid umpire will be used for each game where possible. If an umpire is unavailable, the two managers will agree on how to umpire the game. The designated umpire (either the paid umpire or the substitute umpire) has the final say on all calls. Paid umpires may elect to have a field umpire if approved by both managers. Any substitute umpire will be paid the same as a regular umpire. Any substitute umpire will be paid the same as a regular umpire.
2. The paid umpire has the right to eject a player who acts unsportsmanlike. If no paid umpire is used, upon consensus of the two managers, a player who acts unsportsmanlike may be ejected from the game. If a player is ejected, he is not permitted to play in the next game and must leave the field and/or dugout immediately. For a second offense, the player will miss the next two games. For a third offense, the offending player is suspended for the remainder of the season and may face possible permanent expulsion, as determined by a vote of the Board. In the event of a tie, the Commissioner shall cast the tie-breaking vote.
3. Umpires may call a non-pitched “ball or strike” for extreme team/player delays. They may also deny a pinch runner until the next batter if there is an extreme delay in placing the pinch runner on first base.
4. Umpire and opposing managers may agree to adjust an existing rule based on circumstances.

G. LEAGUE PLAY

1. The game’s starting time is 9:30 AM unless both managers agree to start earlier or later.
2. Each game will be a 9-inning contest, with the 9th inning being “open.” Innings one through eight will have a “five-run per inning maximum” limit. Make-up games (will be two seven-inning games) for rainouts will be played the next time the two teams face each other. In the first game, the hosting team will be the “home” team for the 7-inning game. The visiting team will be designated as the “home” team in the second game. In each of these games, the 7th inning and any extra innings will be an “open” inning and an unlimited number of runs may be scored. For extra innings, we will use the “Kansas City” rule. In these contests, completing five innings constitutes a “complete” game.
3. Mercy Rule: If a team is ahead by 15 runs after seven complete innings (5 complete innings if a seven-inning game), the game will be declared over. If the home team is down by 21 or more runs in the bottom of the 7th (or 5th) inning, they will be allowed to score more than the 5-run limit to continue play until the next inning. The inning will end after three outs or the team reaches the number of runs required to continue playing. Managers may agree to complete the 9-inning game regardless of the mercy rule, but the “mercied” team will be credited with a loss.
4. **A manager may play up to 12 players on the field**, and every player on the field (including the pitcher) must bat or have a designated batter. Managers may elect to bat up to 18 total batters. Managers are not required to play the entire team roster in a game. Every player in the line-up must either bat for himself or

have a designated hitter.

5. **Defensive players** who have been substituted for may re-enter the game at any position but must bat in their original spot in the batting order. A manager controls the placement of his players on defense. Once a batting order (lineup and substitute list) is submitted, there can be no increase in the number of batters.

6. **Managers can start a game with a minimum of 9 players.** If they have less than 9 players and are unable to field a team, and notify the opposing manager, the game may be made up at the next scheduled game, if both managers agree. If not, then the forfeit rule will be in effect and the loss counted for the player short team. Forfeited games will be considered a 7-0 score.

H. PRE-GAME MANAGER AND UMPIRE MEETING

At the pregame meeting, the managers shall exchange lineup sheets containing the batting order and all available substitutes. **The jersey numbers for all players must be listed.** The home field manager will review any special ground rules in effect for the game and answer any questions the umpire or opposing manager may have regarding the ground rules.

I. EQUIPMENT

The league is responsible for delivering new balls to each manager at the beginning of the season. The approved 2026 league balls will be the "Short Porch Mortar" ball. Each home team is responsible for providing two new balls per game and one used ball for use. The used balls require umpire approval. The league is responsible for providing a pitcher's screen, both home plates, and the safety base for 1st base.