

## Local Rules

The North County Softball Recreational League plays under the rules established by the ASA (Amateur Softball Association of America) with the following exceptions:

### NORTH COUNTY SENIOR LEAGUE SOFTBALL RULES - RECREATIONAL DIVISION (Latest Revision April 5, 2022)

Introduction. The North County Senior League, Recreation Division rules are based on Amateur Softball Association (ASA) rules except for the following rules that have been adopted by our league. The League's commissioners, managers and Rules Committee shall periodically review these rules to ensure fair play and the safety of our players. Changes/additions may be presented to the Commissioners for the Rules Committee review. None of the ASA or local rules can be waived except as noted below.

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#### Rule 1 - Definitions

**RUNNER LINES: SCORING LINES; RUN THROUGH LINES AND COMMITMENT LINE** (going home): proper use of these lines includes not only crossing over the lines but also touching beyond the line during game play. No negative ruling on a batter/runner can be made once the batter/runner touches the "other side" of the line in advance of the play being made on them.

**STRIKE MAT AND STRIKE ZONE:** The rectangular strike mat measures 36 inches by 24 inches and is placed over home plate by aligning the front edge of home plate with the short edge of the mat. Any legally pitched ball that strikes any part of the strike mat shall be ruled a strike.

#### Rule 2 - The Playing Field

2.1 Playing Fields. The league uses playing fields with 60 feet between bases and 50 feet from home plate to the pitcher's rubber. Because the league uses community parks, other characteristics of the playing fields vary including distance to the outfield fence, distance to the backstop and size of the skinned infield.

2.2 A scoring line shall be used [in lieu of a second home plate]. This rule supersedes ASA Rule 2, Section 2 only as it relates to a previous use of a second home plate. A scoring line shall be laid, using chalk or tape. This line shall commence [on the third base side of home plate as a visual

continuation of the first base line] beginning eight feet from the front of the forward left corner of the actual home plate and extends outward to the nearest barrier. The runner must make contact with the scoring line or, cross it and have at least one foot on the ground before the fielder home catches the ball [while touching the strike mat] to be ruled safe. Since the goal of this line is to create a safe scoring environment, runners should be reminded to use the scoring line properly.

2.2a A runner running between the home plate mat and the beginning of the scoring line is considered the same as running to and touching the home plate mat. The runner is out, this is automatic (not subject to an appeal). Added Effective July 6, 2021.

2.3 Commitment (No Return) Line. The commitment line is 20 feet from home toward third base and perpendicular to the third base line. Runners from third base may not reverse direction after crossing the commitment line.

2.4 Alternate First Base. The alternate first base is offset three feet into foul territory from first base. The alternate first base must be used upon any infield hit (regardless if there is a play made at first or not). A runner touching the wrong base will be called out. This is automatic (not subject to an appeal). Use of the alternate first base is not required if the ball is hit to the outfield, regardless of whether or not the ball first touches the infield or an infielder.

2.4a Reserved for future use

2.4b No part of this rule is applicable if the batted ball reaches the outfield/green since the batter/runner cannot be thrown out at first base. Added Effective July 6, 2021.

2.5 Run-Through Line - Each run-through line shall be five feet in length, beginning three feet from second and third base, on both sides of these bases. The lines at second base should be parallel to the first base line and aligned with the approaching edge of second base. The same for the front of third base, parallel to the third base line. The two lines on either side of the base designate a lane in which the runner may run through maintaining speed while avoiding contact with any fielder (retain, no change). If a runner runs through the space between the base and the beginning of the run through line, the runner is considered off the base and can be called out if the fielder tags the runner or the base prior to the runner returning to the base.

2.6 Field Preparation. The home team is responsible for preparation of the playing field in accordance with Rules 2.1 through 2.5.

2.6a The home team shall always use the third base dugout.

2.7 Pitching Screen Use:

1. The screen should be placed in front of the rubber/painted pitching line so that at least 50% of the "rubber" is protected by the screen. The screen must be placed opposite laterally to the pitcher's throwing hand.
2. The screen shall be placed at a distance of six feet from the front of the "rubber" or painted pitching line towards home plate.
3. If the batted ball strikes the screen, the batted ball shall be declared a dead ball and play/pitching should continue with the pitch count just prior to contact with the screen. Additionally, there shall be no penalty for repeated contact with the screen during a single at bat. Each event therein shall result in a "dead ball" call.

4. Once the ball is hit, if the ball hits the screen during active play, the ball remains in play and the game continues.
5. Can a player lower the pitching screen to the ground once the ball has been put into play? This is absolutely NOT permitted.

### Rule 3 - Equipment

3.1 Bats. All bats shall bear an ASA certification (example as shown below, prior year certification logos may appear differently) and must not be listed on an ASA Non-Approved Bat List with Certification Marks. Effective with 2020 model bats and in conjunction with the ASA/USA merger, 2020 bats must have the USA certification. ASA bats continue to be acceptable. Male players who are in the year of their 75th birthday and all women may use any bat which does not exceed a diameter of 2 ¼ inches and does not exceed 34 inches in length. If ASA certification is not clearly visible on a bat and, therefore, its certification cannot be verified, the bat in question cannot be used. If after at least one pitch is thrown or the batter reaches a base and it is discovered that an ineligible bat was used during this at bat, the batter/runner will be called out if appealed. If the next batter receives at least one pitch, the previous batter who used an ineligible bat can no longer be called out.



3.2 Balls. The league softball is a 12-inch, optic yellow ball with a Coefficient of Restitution (COR) of 0.44 and a compression rating of 375 pounds per square inch. The home team shall provide a new league softball at the start of each game and a back-up, good condition league softball.

3.3 Shoes. Metal cleats are not allowed. Players wearing metal cleats shall be ejected and an out recorded each time the player would have come to bat.

3.4 Uniforms. Uniforms are encouraged but not required. Players are encouraged to wear the league standard cap or visor.

### Rule 4 - Players, Coaches, Substitutes

4.1 Prior to the Game. Managers or their identified, designated alternate(s) will exchange batter lineups, identify players leaving early, and agree on any player loans per Rule 4, Paragraph 4.5, below. Batter line-up cards shall list players by last names.

4.2 Minimum Playing Time. A player shall play at least four innings of a nine-inning game or three innings of a seven or eight inning game and bat throughout the game.

In the event the manager of a team discovers [after the game ends] that a player or players of an opposing team did not play a fielding position for the required 4 innings or did not bat throughout the game in accordance with any other rule described herein, the team in violation of this rule [above] shall forfeit the game if the team in violation would have otherwise have won the game.

4.2.1 All players shall play both offense and defense. No player can opt to play either in the field OR batting but not the other. No manager can agree to this situation.

4.3 Minimum Numbers of Players. A minimum of eight (8) rostered players are required for a regulation game. Less than eight (8) players shall result in a forfeit. If both teams have less than 8 players, the game will be postponed. Commissioners will determine if a make-up game is necessary.

4.4 Maximum Number of Players. A team shall consist of twelve defensive players.

4.5 Loaning of Game Day Players. Teams shall strive to play with the same number of players. A team with more players may offer to loan player(s) to bat and field for the receiving team. The receiving team may refuse to accept the player(s). When a team lends a player for defensive purposes only (e.g., last batter), the player must play catcher unless both managers agree to waive this requirement and allow the first loaned player to play elsewhere. If two players are loaned for defensive purposes, then the managers shall agree before the game how they will be positioned on defense. In no case shall more than two players be loaned.

4.7 Players Leaving Early. The manager must notify the opposing team prior to the beginning of the game if a player needs to leave the game prior to completion. Otherwise, an out will be recorded each time the absent player's position comes to bat.

Added for clarification purposes (added 9-7-2021):

1. Once the official lineup is handed to the opposing manager, players cannot be added. (Late arriving players not in the lineup cannot play.)
2. If a player in the lineup is not available for his or her turn at bat, the manager can either:
  - a. Scratch the player from the lineup with no out recorded OR
  - b. Keep the player in the lineup, his or her turn is skipped and an out is recorded. For each subsequent at bat, the manager can choose to scratch the player from the lineup or again record an out.

4.8 Departure for Illness, Injury or Emergency. If a player becomes ill, injured or bleeding during the game, or receives an emergency phone call, he may leave without penalty. If he recovers or stops bleeding, he may return to the game. Opposing managers must be notified of the exit or reentry. No out shall be recorded if the removed player's time to bat comes up while he is not in the game.

## Rule 5 - The Game

5.1 Field Condition. League-wide cancellations for games can only be authorized by Commissioners. Game time cancellations will be determined by the home team manager. After the first pitch, the home team manager will be responsible for terminating the game due to weather, field conditions, severe injury, or other emergency condition.

5.2 Legal Game. A regulation game consists of nine (9) complete innings unless the managers determine to play only seven (7) innings before the game. If for any reason, one team refuses to start

or finish a game, the game will be forfeited to the opposing team. All games shall be declared over and complete at the end of regulation play as defined above, regardless if the game ends in a tie score. (Added effective 8-24-2021).

5.2.1 Terminated Game. If a game is called with fewer than five (5) innings, the game will be rescheduled and played from the point of suspension at the Commissioners' discretion. They will determine if a game needs to be replayed.

5.3.1 5-Run Limit Rule. A team may score up to five runs each inning. If a team is behind more than five (5) runs, they may exceed 5 runs until the score is tied. There is no limit to the number of runs a team may score in the final inning.

5.3.2 Flip Rule. Following the next to last at bat of the game (8th for 9 inning game/6th for 7 inning game), should a team trail by 10+ runs, the flip rule goes into effect. The team behind by 10+ runs will take their final at bat, immediately following that inning. Should the team that was behind, tie or go ahead, the other team will then take their final at bats.

5.4 Force Outs. All plays at any base are "force outs". Players may be tagged out except at home plate.

5.5 Fielders. Outfielders shall not position themselves or cross to the infield until the ball is hit by the batter. At no time prior to a ball being hit shall more than five players, excluding the pitcher and catcher, be positioned on the infield. Upon the ball being hit, an outfielder may advance onto the infield to attempt to make a play. All players must be in fair territory for play to commence, except for the catcher. Similar to the infield, the number of outfield players shall be limited to five.

Should a violation of this rule be observed by the offense team before a ball is pitched, the Offense team manager should call time and the umpire should reposition the defense player(s) to conform with this rule.

Should a violation of this rule be observed against the defense team following a batted ball being put into play, the batter is called SAFE at the base to which he/she is attempting to reach, with an appeal to the umpire (to verify that the umpire observed the rule violation). This action would be taken regardless of whether or not that out-of-position player(s) was(were) involved in said play. If this violation takes place and a play is made to a baserunner (rather than a batter), the runner attempting reach a base is awarded that base if an appeal is made to the umpire and the violation was observed.

5.6 No tag at home. Base runners may be tagged out by a defensive player between third and home before crossing the commitment line. Once a base runner has crossed the commitment line, the runner cannot be tagged out. The runner is out if a defensive player has the ball and contacts the strike mat before the runner crosses the home plate run-through (scoring) line. A runner's foot must touch the ground on or beyond the scoring line for the run to score. Breaking the vertical plane of the tape/chalk at the same time the ball arrives at the fielder will not result in a "safe" call.

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5.7b Outfield Defensive Encroachment Line (cones)

Seven orange cones shall be positioned in the outfield 130 feet from home plate in positions up the first and third baselines as well as two placements evenly placed in between these cones on the baselines.

Outfielders shall not position themselves or cross to the outfield encroachment line until the ball is hit by the batter.

Should a violation of this rule be observed by the offense team before a ball is pitched, the Offense team manager should call time and the umpire should reposition the defense player(s) to conform with this rule.

Should a violation of this rule be observed against the defense team following a batted ball being put into play, the batter is called SAFE at the base to which he/she is attempting to reach, with an appeal to the umpire (to verify that the umpire observed the rule violation). This action would be taken regardless of whether or not that out-of-position player(s) was(were) involved in said play. If this violation takes place and a play is made to a baserunner (rather than a batter), the runner attempting reach a base is awarded that base if an appeal is made to the umpire and the violation was observed.

5.8 Infield Fly Rule. The infield fly rule is not in effect in this league.

5.9 Sliding. Sliding is prohibited. A base runner that slides shall be called out. Sliding AND/OR diving into or back to a base is prohibited and shall be an automatic out.

Note: A player who [in the judgement of the umpire] inadvertently falls or is tripped to the ground may get back to the base in any manner and is not considered to have violated the sliding definition or game rules.

5.10 Calling time out: Time out can only be granted by the umpire when (1) the ball is in the possession of the pitcher (NCSS Local Rules) AND (2) progress of play/action has been completed (ASA rule 10.5.E and 10.5.H).

#### Rule 6 - Pitching Regulations (Slow Pitch)

6.1 Legal Delivery. The pitched ball must be delivered with a perceptible arc and reach a height of at least six feet from the ground, while not exceeding a maximum height of twelve feet from the ground. The home plate umpire must loudly call a pitch "high" or "low" while the pitch is in flight. A "high" or "low" pitch is a ball on the batter unless the batter swings at the pitched ball.

6.2 A pitch must be delivered from the rubber/pitching line or up to a point of six feet behind the rubber/pitching line. A pitcher cannot release the ball if both feet are ahead of the rubber or pitching line.

#### Rule 7 - Batting

7.1 No local rules.

#### Rule 8 - Batter-Runner and Runner

8.1 Running to Correct Bases.

8.1.1 Home Plate. Runners attempting to score must run through the home plate run through line (scoring line). Runners touching home plate or the strike mat while the play is alive will be called out.

8.1.2 First Base. A runner touching the wrong first base as described in rule 2.4 will be called out. This is an automatic out and not subject to appeal.

8.2 Reverse Directions. Runners going between first and second, second and third, or third and the commitment line may reverse direction only once in moving from one base to another if a play is being made on that runner. If a violation of this rule is observed by the opposing team and observed by the umpire, an OUT call will be made. A throwing action by a fielder is a play whether or not the throw is made (fake throw). If the ball is alive and becomes loose, a new play commences for the purpose of reversing direction. A runner from third base who crosses the commitment line must continue to the scoring line and may not return to third base. A violation of this rule results in a player being called out.

8.3 Any player can run for another player for any reason. The same player can only substitute run once in an inning (except as noted in rule 8.3.4 below). If a player desires to run for him/herself, he/she is allowed to do so. Managers cannot appoint a substitute runner over the objection of the player who reached base safely. If a player has a pinch runner in an inning, that same player cannot thereafter pinch run for another person (for the entire game). If a player's turn to bat comes up while he is a substitute runner, the player is not out and be replaced with another substitute runner in order to take his/her at bat.

8.3.4 Courtesy Runners. An individual may only be a courtesy runner on a base once per inning. If a courtesy runner is used more than once per inning, he/she will be called out and removed from the bases. If a team bats around, a courtesy runner on base may run again. This rule can be waived only for a valid reason(s), provided both managers agree to the waiver of this rule. Waiving of this rule does not include waiving of other "running rules." The most common reason would be a shortage of rostered players resulting in a shortage of available courtesy runners. No other local or ASA rules can be waived by any manager. It should also be noted that a courtesy runner is not considered a courtesy runner until play has resumed. (added effective August 24-2021)

8.4.1 Collisions. Runners must avoid collisions by running around a fielder who is making a play. Since the play is in front of the runner and can be seen more readily by the runner, runners must make every effort to avoid collisions. ASA rules regarding interference and obstruction are in effect.

8.4.2 Run Through Line. A base runner going from first to second or second to third may run full speed through the line. Should the runner beat the throw, he is safe and may return to the base without being tagged or forced out. The runner must return to the base and touch it prior to advancing to the next base. If a runner proceeds through the run through line heading towards the next base/home scoring line (as applicable) without touching the target base and, **in the judgement of the umpire**, displays intent to advance to the next base without having first touched the base from which he ran past, he/she can be tagged out. Baserunners who run to the base or between the base and the five-foot mark may be forced or tagged out as it is the same as over running the base. A runner shall be called safe after running through the run-through line if the runner's foot touches the tape/chalk or lands beyond it. Breaking the vertical plane of the tape/chalk at the same time as the ball arrives at the fielder will not result in a "safe" call.

8.5 A fair ball going into a soccer goal or making contact with the goal frame that is in foul territory is an automatic 2 bases from home. All runners already on base shall advance two bases. A ball going into a soccer goal between the lines (in fair territory) is "in play".

A soccer goal that overlaps both fair and foul territory should be considered as a soccer goal in foul territory.

8.5.1 If, in the judgement of the umpire, a player intentionally causes a ball to come in contact with any part of a soccer goal, the umpire shall award the batter/runner a base he/she feels the batter/runner would have reached had the intentional act not taken place. This rule part supersedes the ASA rule noted below. (Added effective 8-24-2021)

Restatement of ASA rule 8.5.K

Runners are entitled to advance without liability to be put out:

When, in the judgement of the umpire, a fielder intentionally carries, kicks, pushes or throws a live ball into dead ball territory.

**Effect:**

1. The ball is dead
2. Runners are awarded two bases from the last base touched at the time the fielder entered or the ball was kicked, pushed or thrown into dead ball territory.

**8.6 Batter-runner Entitled to First base:**

8.6.1 A batter/runner who hits a pitched ball to the outfield/green that is either on the fly (without being caught) or on the ground (whether touched by an infielder or not) cannot be thrown out at first base.

- In support of this new rule, runners from home will no longer be permitted.
- If a batted ball reaches the green/outfield as noted above, it is at the discretion of the batter/runner whether or not he/she wishes to complete his/her at bat by advancing to first base. **Note: this option to proceed or not proceed to first base also applies if a batter is “walked” intentionally or by receiving four balls. (Added effective 8-24-2021)**
- If a batted ball goes over the fence for a home run, it shall be scored as such. It is at the discretion of the batter/runner whether or not to run the bases.

8.6.1a Note a fly ball to the outfield/green that is touched by a fielder but dropped classifies as a ball hit to the outfield/green and thus the batter/runner cannot be thrown out at first base.

8.6.2 A batter/hitter may be thrown out if he/she attempts to advance beyond first base. Any runners on base advance at their own risk.

8.6.3 A fielder who fields a ground ball hit by the batter-runner before the ball reaches the outfield/green may throw the batter-runner out at first if his/her [the fielder] momentum carries he/she into the green after he/she field the ball.

- A batter whose batted ball reaches the outfield/green cannot be thrown out at first base.
- Runners already on base advance at their own risk.

8.6.4 An outfielder is permitted to charge towards the infield or onto the infield after a ball is batted. If the outfielder fields the ground ball on a hop before the ball touches the grass or green, the outfielder then may throw the batter/runner out at first base. This includes the fact that the outfielder may now be positioned on the infield.

Rule 9 - Protests.



9.1 Protest Procedures. A protested game must be completed. Protests must be based on a rule misinterpretation not on an umpire's judgment call. A valid protest will be made to the opposing manager at the end of the inning, or before the first pitch of the next half of the inning. The manager making the protest shall have one of his players witness the protest to the opposing manager. The protesting manager shall submit the protest to the Commissioners in writing within 24 hours along with a \$10 fee.

9.2 Incidents. The home team manager shall report, in writing, all incidents involving forfeits or other game terminations to the Commissioners on the day of the game. The Commissioners shall determine if further action is needed.

## Rule 10 - Umpires

10.1 Umpire Assignments. The first base coach shall call plays at first base. The third base coach shall make calls at second and third base. The first base umpire shall receive appeal calls (if any) for calls made by the home plate umpire for a runner trying to score at home. A member of the offensive team shall be home plate umpire and shall call balls and strikes, determine if pitches are legal, and call fair and foul balls. Managers are responsible for providing player umpires that are competent and aware of both ASA and the local rules. First base coach and third base coaches will make calls regarding a batted ball reaching the outfield as it applies to rule 8.6 (Batter-runner Entitled to first base).

10.2 Close Calls and Rule Interpretations. When an umpire makes a close call or a rule interpretation, the umpire may request assistance from other umpire(s) to make a final decision. In addition, only a manager or the designated alternate manager may appeal to the home plate umpire for a final decision.

If an Offense manager is acting as a base coach and he/she makes a call in favor of the defense team, another Offense team member may appeal that call to the home plate umpire. This would be the only exception to rule 10.2 which designates the manager as being the person to make appeals to the home plate umpire.

10.3 If there is a disagreement as to a call made at home by the home plate umpire, an appeal can be made to the first base coach. If necessary, the first base coach may confer with the home plate umpire otherwise the appeal to the first base coach is made by the first base coach (provided he/she saw the play at home). If the first base coach did not see what happened at home, the call is owned by the home plate umpire.

10.4 It is recommended that managers shall have the ability to approve/disapprove any volunteer umpires (beyond the player/umpire). In this situation, both managers would agree on the volunteer umpire. This applies to season play. Commissioners will endeavor to assign volunteer umpires for post season games.

## Rule 11 - Scoring

11.1 Scorebook. Home team is responsible for keeping the official score. Managers are encouraged to frequently verify the score while the game is in progress. Managers shall verify the final score before leaving the playing field.

## Rule 12 - Use of ASA Playing Rules

12.1 Local Rules Prevail. ASA rules are used except as provided for in these local rules. The local rules prevail over ASA rules in the event of conflict.

12.2 Any local rule changes approved by the managers and BOC during the season are eligible to be implemented immediately. This will be determined by a separate vote by the managers and the BOC.

## Rules Supplement

13.1 Post Season Tournaments. All teams will play only with their own rostered players.

13.2 Use of substitute Players. From time to time, the league may have an odd number of teams therefore there will be a bye team each game day. Players from the bye team are available to other teams that may be short-handed. The underlying principle is that teams using bye team players as substitutes (subs) must use players rated equal to or below the rating of the missing player(s) and defined as follows:

If a team borrows one player, the maximum rating for that player will be less than or equal to the rating of the borrowing team's highest rated missing player. If a team borrows two players, the sum of the ratings of the two borrowed players cannot be greater than the rating of the borrowing team's highest rated missing player plus 9.

Players will be allowed to serve as a substitute player if he/she has joined the league following all our requirements (submitted all required paperwork, paid their entry fees and received a rating) but not yet been assigned to a team. Alternatively, this player can be a substitute player only, for the entire season.

A maximum of two bye team players may be used as subs.

The Commissioner assigned to manage substitute/borrowed players is the single point of contact for borrowing players in the event that the commissioner so assigned is not available he/she will officially designate an alternate, for the specific period of their absence. This designation will be officially communicated to all managers via e-mail.

Process for requesting/assigning borrowed players:

Players may be requested by the borrowing manager via e-mail or phone communications with the designated commissioner no sooner than after the Thursday game in the week preceding the week for which the borrowed player(s) are requested

Requests must include:

The specific date or dates for which a borrowed player is requested.

For each game the number of borrowed players being requested.

For each game, a list of all the borrowing team's missing players and their rating(s).

For each game, the names of any preferred specific players from the bye team (subject to the ratings rules above).

Upon receipt of the borrowed player requests, the designated commissioner will contact the appropriate players from the bye team and obtain their agreement to play on the team.

If an unassigned player from a bye team or a player from a cancelled game shows up to watch a game and one of the teams is in need of the player, the “spectator” player can be recruited to play provided the manager(s) follow the current rating guidelines for substitute player assignments and both managers agree to this substitution.

For clarification purposes (added 9-7-2021):

With the understanding that “The underlying principle is that teams using bye team players as substitutes (subs) must use players rated equal to or below the rating of the missing player(s)....” the following clarifications are proposed:

1. The rating of ANY substitute player shall not exceed the rating of the highest rated missing player. This is true regardless of whether there is a second sub player named. In other words, the plus 9 rule for a second sub player still DOES NOT allow any one sub player’s rating to be higher than the highest rated missing player’s rating.
2. When a second sub player is needed and the plus 9 rule is implemented, the total of the substitute players’ ratings CANNOT exceed the total of the missing players’ ratings.

13.2a If a manager, [prior to the day of a game] expecting to be short of a full team (12 players) fails to request from the commissioner a replacement player from a by-team or rejects a player that the commissioner offers to the manager, an automatic out will be recorded following each at-bat by the last player on a roster.

13b If a team has less than 12 players for the game and either did not request the maximum allowable number of substitute players or refused a substitute player, the automatic out rule will apply even if the opposing team lends a defensive player. If a team has less than 12 players for the game and did request the maximum allowable bye team players and did not refuse any bye team players, an automatic out will not be recorded whether the opposing team lends a defensive player or not.

### Rule 13.3

13.3a Once a loaned player is assigned and on game day appears at the game, should any missing player show up at the field, the missing player [for which the loaned player was assigned] is prohibited from playing in that game.

13.3b. If a manager shows up with less than 11 players and did not request to borrow players or chose not to accept the bye team players offered, then he/she cannot ask to borrow defensive players from the opposing manager and will so inform him/her before the start of the game. See the table below:

# of Players	May Borrow	Total Players
7	0	Forfeit
8	2	10
9	2	11

10	2	12
11	1	12