

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 March 6, 2018)

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

COURTESY RUNNER FROM HOME: A player that runs from home for a batter. Special rules apply to a Courtesy Runner from Home as specified herein.

RUNNER LINES: SCORING LINES; RUNNER FROM HOME 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.

SLIDING: The action of a base runner who drops his body to the ground and slides along the ground to reach a base or avoid a tag.

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.

2.3 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.

2.5 Courtesy Runner from Home Line. The courtesy runner from home line is six feet from the third base line (66 feet from first base) and parallel to the third base line. Additionally, the courtesy runner from home line begins eight feet from home plate (68 feet from third base) and extends to the backstop.

2.6 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.

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

2.8 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 as shown below and must not be listed on an ASA Non-Approved Bat List with Certification Marks. 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 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 batters on the lineup card who need courtesy runners from home, 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.

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.

Rule 4.4a Temporary Rule In support of fielding up to 14 players: Teams play with same number of defensive players on the field beyond the usual 12. Maximum number of defensive players is 14. If both teams have 14 players all 14 players play defensively. If less than 14 players on one team: Defensive players may be requested to be "borrowed" by the lesser fielding team. No more than two players may be borrowed. If the lesser fielding team refuses to play the players offered by the other team, then both teams must play the same number of defensive players; 12 on 12, 13 on 13. If the other team refuses to lend players to the lesser fielding team then both teams must play the same number of defensive players; 12 on 12, 13 on 13.

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 should 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.

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.

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 or extra innings.

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 shall more than five players, excluding the pitcher and catcher, be positioned on the infield. 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; except as defined in [Temporary Rule 4.4a].

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.

5.7 Infield Defensive Encroachment Line (DEL). An imaginary line (DEL) shall be established commencing from the inside corner of first base and ending at the inside corner of third base. No infielder shall position themselves in front of this line until a batter hits the ball. Exception: following his/her delivery, a pitcher may cross this line as part of the pitcher's delivery follow through.

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.

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 courtesy runner from home running to first base shall be required to use the alternate first base. A runner touching the wrong base will be called out. This is automatic (not subject to an 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. 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 Only the Manager can “approve” courtesy runners after the runner on base asks for one. If a player doesn’t ask for a runner and it is apparent to the manager that the player having reached a base is injured, the manager can ask if he/she is OK or he/she needs a runner due to an apparent injury otherwise the player on base must be the one to ask for a runner.

8.3.1 Number of Courtesy Runners from Home. Managers shall identify no more than two batters who need a courtesy runner from home. 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.

Effective July 6, 2017 (Summer/Fall Season):

- a. Runners from home shall be rated with a “running” rating of no higher than 3
- b. Batter’s line-up given to the opposing team before each game shall contain the names of the batters needing a runner from home and the runner assigned to that batter.
- c. Note: the “3 rating” only applies to runners from home and not substitute runners already on a base.

8.3.2 Courtesy Runner from Home Line. Courtesy Runners from Home must remain behind the line until the batter makes contact with the pitched ball. If the batter hits the ball and the courtesy runner from home has already crossed the line, the batter is out. If the batter swings and does not make contact and the courtesy runner from home crosses the line and touches the ground beyond the tape/line, there is no penalty. If the batter takes a legal pitch (does not swing) and the courtesy runner from home crosses the line and touches the ground beyond the tape/line with at least one foot before the ball lands on the ground or the ball makes contact with the bat, the pitch is called a strike whether or not it hits the strike mat. For clarity, if the runner from home crosses the line and makes contact with the ground after the ball lands on the ground (not on the mat), the ball becomes dead and no strike can be called.

8.3.3 Courtesy Runner from Home to First Base Only. A courtesy runner from home shall not advance past first base. If a courtesy runner from home rounds first toward second base, the runner is at risk of being put out. If a courtesy runner from home touches second base or touches on or beyond either of the second base run-through lines, he will be called out. It is not a requirement for an umpire to observe this violation. If there are two outs, and the courtesy runner from home is out due to the enforcement of this rule, no runs will score. If there are less than two outs, normal rules apply.

Rule 8 Batter-Runner and Runner

8.3.3a

Exception to a courtesy runner prohibited from advancing beyond first base: If a piece of equipment or object is thrown at the ball and contact with the ball was made, the runner from home is awarded three bases as defined by ASA Rule 8.5.F thus third base will be awarded. Any other runners ahead of the runner from home will advance as if they are forced. (Extension of ASA Rule 8.5.F)

8.3.4 Courtesy Runners. An individual may only be a courtesy runner or courtesy runner from home once per inning. If a team bats around, a courtesy runner from home 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.

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, in an effort to avoid a collision with a fielder 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. 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 ball going into a soccer goal or making contact with the goal frame adjacent to a foul line, in foul territory is an automatic 2 bases from home and a ball going into a soccer goal between the lines (in fair territory or on the warning track) is "in play". Runners in front of the hitter will only score if forced.

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 and make calls relative to Courtesy Runner from Home (Rule 8.3.2); the third base coach shall make calls at second and third base. 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.

10.2 Close Calls and Rule Interpretations. When an umpire makes a close call or a rule interpretation, the umpire may request assistance from another 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.

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.

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.

Rules Supplement

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

13.2 Use of Bye Team 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.

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.

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.

Rule 13.3

13.3a Once a loaned player is assigned and on game day appears at the game, should the specific 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. Win/loss records of the requesting teams and positions played shall be considered. See the table below:

# of Players	May Borrow	Total Players
7	0	Forfeit
8	2	10
9	2	11
10	1	11
11	0	11
11	0	11 or more