

2020 TREASURE COAST SENIOR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION RULES & REGULATIONS

The following rules apply specifically to the Treasure Coast Senior Softball Association (TCSSA) and supersede any applicable American Softball Association (ASA) or Senior Softball USA (SSUSA) men's slow pitch softball rules. The TCSSA is for senior softball players within the Treasure Coast area. All players must be 60 years of age or older by December 31st of the playing year. It shall be governed by the Association's Board of Directors and committee members adhering to the TCSSA By-Laws and incorporation papers filed with the State of Florida.

1. GAMES:

Regular season games are generally played January, February, March on Mondays & Thursdays. Pickup games are played throughout the spring, summer, and fall. All games are played on the three fields at Langford Park near Jensen Beach. During the regular season, there will be (2) six inning games played on Mondays and Thursdays. There will be a maximum 10 minute break between games, and managers may elect to start the second game immediately after the first game.

2. STARTING TIMES:

All games will begin promptly at 9:30 AM. Forfeit time will be 9:45 AM. Any team with less the nine (9) players on the field by 9:45 AM will forfeit the game(s) for that playing day. A team with nine (9) or more players may not forfeit a game. Teams may mutually agree to play the game by adding players, etc, although the official game is over after the forfeiture.

3. PLAYER RULES:

The number of teams and the number of players on each team will be determine by the Board of Directors after the registration deadline. Players will have been selected to teams through a draft process by Team Managers each November/December. All players must undergo a rating process prior to the draft to be eligible for play. The rating process will be managed and coordinated by TCSSA Board Members. All players must submit an application, be evaluated, drafted or placed in a "player pool." No players will be added to teams after the draft is held, no exceptions. Managers may play up to thirteen (13) defensive players. All players present must play a minimum of three (3) innings in each game unless they request to play less (subject to manager approval). All players shall take their turn at bat, but are required to play in the field as described above. Prior to the game each manager will notify the opposing manager of his alternate players if he has more than thirteen (13) players present and available to play. If each player present that does not play in at least three innings in a given game and/or is not allowed to take his turn batting, the team violating this rule will forfeit the game. If a player refuses to bat during a game, he is declared "out" when it is that player's turn to bat.

4. FIELD SAFETY:

Player safety is a primary objective of the TCSSA. To insure a safe playing environment the following guidelines will be in place during the regular season, and for all playoff games:

a. The only offensive players allowed on the field during play will be the at plate batter, the on-deck batter, the player "in the hole", base runners, the first and third base coaches, and umpires (if provided by team batting). ALL other players must remain in their respective dugout or outside of the gated field of play.

b. All equipment (bat bags, gloves, etc) must remain in the dugout or outside of the gated field of play. There will be designated BAT areas within the field of play along the fence on the first base and third base sides of the field. ALL BATS must remain in the designated areas, inside the dugout, or outside the gated field of play. Only team managers and/or TCSSA board members will be allowed on the field of play in the event of a dispute discussion with umpires, or a “time out” discussion with their player(s). Umpires will monitor these guidelines, but team managers are responsible for adherence by their respective teams. If a player declares he is physically unfit to play, he will not be required to play and will not be allowed to return to the game.

5. PINCH RUNNERS:

Every batter, who can also play in the field, is required to reach first base on their own. From there a batter with an obvious disability may be allowed a pinch runner from first (1st) base only. All pinch runner requests will be determined, and agreed upon by both managers prior to the beginning of a game, or during the game in the case of an injury. The pinch runner must be the player making the last out regardless of circumstance. (If the last out player also needs a runner it will be the out prior to that.) If the disabled runner advances past first base to another base, no pinch runner will be allowed. A player injured during the course of the game will be allowed a pinch runner designated as described above and agreed upon by both team managers. Being a “slow“ or “tired” runner will not be a sanctioned reason to use a pinch runner. Pinch runners will be unlimited in advancing bases. On the short field, a hit over the first fence is a ground rule double and all base runners will be allowed to advance two(2) bases. EXCEPTION: Any player age 85 or older may request a pinch runner which will require TCSSA Board and team managers approval. The runner must be the player making the last out (same as above) on his team. If requested, the runner will be allowed to start "in the hole" at the designated area (marked on the right-side fence). The runner will then be subject to all above restrictions. ALL PINCH RUNNER SITUATIONS ARE SUBJECT TO TCSSA BOARD REVIEW AND APPROVAL.

6. BASE RUNNING/PHYSICAL CONTACT:

Any physical contact between fielders and runners is to always be avoided. Basic rules regarding base running are:

a. If it is obvious that a play is being made on a runner approaching 1st, 2nd, or 3rd base, the field base belongs to the fielder and the runner must run wide of the field base on the opposite side of the incoming throw. The runner is required to run directly to the safety base (preferred) or to the outside of the safety base. The safety bases will be located at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd bases (one on either side of 2nd and 3rd base)

b. If the runner’s foot touches the correct safety base he is approaching prior to the ball being caught by the fielder touching the field base, he is safe.

c. If the runner touches the field base, runs to the wrong side safety base, or inside the safety base when the throw is coming to that base, obstructs the flight path of the ball to the fielder, or collides with the fielder he is out. If it is obvious that a play is not being made on a runner approaching or returning to a field base, the fielder must give way to the runner or obstruction will be called on the fielder. In this case, the runner has the option of touching the field base, or running wide of the base. A runner returning to a field base when a play is evident may return directly to the field base or return wide of the field base to avoid a collision with the fielder, or being hit by a thrown ball. A thrown ball hitting a correctly approaching runner will be considered a “live” ball. Once the runner reaches the field base, he must remain in contact with that base or advance to the next base.

d. A runner must touch the 2nd or 3rd field base before advancing to the next base. The runner may advance to 2nd from 1st after touching the safety base or the field base.

e. Once a runner touches a field base he is fair game to be out if he passes that base or attempts to run. The fielder only has to be in possession of the ball while on the field base to retire the runner who is off the base. The runner must touch the field base before advancing to the next base or be called out. f. A runner approaching home plate must step on the secondary (safety) base that is wide of home plate. If the runner steps on home plate, he will be automatically out. If a runner reaches the designated commitment line (20 ft from home plate) he must continue to home plate and cannot return to 3rd base. On plays at home plate the fielder must have his foot, or the ball touch the home plate to make the out (NO TAG-OUT IS ALLOWED AT HOME PLATE).

f. Sliding is prohibited under all circumstances and will result in the runner being automatically declared out. Accidental tripping or stumbling will be ruled upon by the umpire whose judgement will be final.

g. Base coaches are responsible for reminding and advising base runners of above procedures including requiring third base coach to direct approaching runner to the correct base (safety or field). NOTE: There may be situations that occur when a runner and a fielder share the field base, or an errant throw pulls the fielder very wide of the field base towards the runner, but every effort must be made by both players to avoid collision. In these cases common sense will prevail and the umpire will have final judgement on the ruling.

7. PITCHED AND BATTED BALLS:

Pitchers will pitch from behind a safety screen, and maintain contact with the correct mound rubber. Pitches must go over the screen, not around it, and have no more than 12 foot in arc. All batters will start with a 1 balls and 1 strike count. Pitches that hit the screen, go around it, or are over the 12ft arc will be called a "ball". Umpires will call high pitches (over the 12ft arc) "illegal", but batters are allowed to attempt to hit the pitch regardless. A strike is when any part of the ball touches the extended home plate before striking the ground. Any foul tip that is caught before hitting the ground is an out. Any batted ball that hits the screen will be called a strike and treated as a foul ball. There will be 1 courtesy strike on either foul balls or balls hitting the pitcher screen. A thrown ball hitting the screen or an umpire is in play. If a batter hits a ball that reaches the outfield (grassed area), goes through the infield without being touched by a fielder, or is picked up by a fielder standing in the grassed area, that batter can not be thrown out at first base. If a batted ball reaches the outfield, a runner, already occupying a base or, rounding a base, can be forced out at the base he is trying to reach, or attempting to return to a base by any fielder's throw, but the batter cannot be thrown out and will be automatically safe at first base.

8. FIELD/DUGOUT CONDUCT:

Any disagreement on the field or in the dugout, between opposing players or teammates that escalates into physical contact of any nature, or any unruly argumentative behavior will be dealt with by the Association By-Laws and managed by TCSSA Board Members. These incidents may result in a suspension or expulsion. The length of the suspension or expulsion from the league will depend on the severity of the violation. The By-Laws provide an appeals process.

9. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT:

Unsportsmanlike conduct includes profanity, throwing equipment, verbal harassment, excessive arguing or other aggressive acts. Umpires have the discretion to administer a verbal warning and confer with team managers, who have the discretion to remove a player(s) for a limited time or from the game completely. Additional punishments may be imposed at the discretion of the TCSSA Board of Directors. Smoking/vaping is not permitted at the Frances Langford Park Complex. This includes all fields, dugouts, and adjacent areas. Smoking infractions will be addressed by team managers and any TCSSA Board Member. If a player leaves the field and/or the area around the field during a game, that player will be dismissed from the team and will not be eligible to play again until the following season. That player's registration fee will not be refunded.

10. UMPIRES:

Each team will be responsible for designating umpires for each game unless there is (are) a qualified volunteer(s) present. Both managers have to agree to allow the volunteer to act as either home plate or a field umpire. Umpires are to remain objective and ARE NOT to act as coaches advising base runners on position or rules. They may clarify a rule if ASKED by a base runner. Umpires are required to have a thorough knowledge of the game, TCSSA Rules, and adequate communication skills. Managers are responsible for selecting umpires that meet these criteria. The field umpire will be positioned near 1st base until a runner reaches that base. The umpire will then move just behind 2nd base checking with fielders to confirm that his position not obstructing any fielders view. He will be responsible for calls at 1st and 2nd base. The home plate umpire will be responsible for calls at 3rd base and home plate. Umpires have the discretion to coordinate with each other on questionable calls to assure the best call is made. There will be absolutely no arguments with umpire calls by fielders. Any and all disagreements shall be resolved by team managers and umpires. No player is allowed to participate in these discussions. It is the team manager's responsibility to enforce all of the rules. In the event of a perceived misinterpretation of a rule by an umpire, either manager may file a written protest to the TCSSA Board for review and decision. The Board's ruling will be made and communicated to the two managers involved before the next scheduled play date. No protested based on a judgement call will be accepted or reviewed by the board. All disputed judgement calls must be resolved by the two managers before play can be resumed.

11. PLAYER TRADES:

If a manager desires to trade a player, all of the team managers must be given an equal opportunity to make a bid for the player to be traded. By a simple majority vote of the managers and the Draft Director, the fairest trade will be executed. All trades will be completed before the start of the season.

12. INFIELD FLY:

There will be no infield fly rule.

13. OVERTHROWS:

A ball overthrown into a dugout is a dead ball and results in the runner being awarded the base he is approaching and the next base.

14. FALSE TAGS OR MISLEADING REMARKS:

These are not allowed and constitute an obstruction to a runner. These may be verbal or physical and can result in impeding the progress of a runner by the fielder who neither has the ball, nor is about to receive the ball. A runner does not have to stop, but merely slow down when the fake tag or misleading comments is made. If this infraction occurs the umpires has the discretion to rule an obstruction has occurred.

15. TAG PLAYS:

Tag plays should be avoided at all times. They will be permitted when a fielder can easily tag the runner rather than touching the field base without causing harm, or a tag is the only option to getting the out. **NO TAGS ARE ALLOWED AT HOME PLATE.** Player safety remains the primary objective, and both offensive and defensive players are responsible for trying to avoid collisions in all circumstances.

16. RUNDOWNS:

Rundowns are generally not permitted, but there will be times when a runner realizes that he cannot reach the next base safely after committing himself having left the previous base. Regardless of how far the runner has advanced from 1st or 2nd he may attempt to return to the previous base or continue to the next base. He can turn twice but will be automatically out on the third turn. In either case the runner is out if the fielder with the ball in his possession touches the base or tags the runner before the runner reaches the base he is headed to after he has made the 2nd turn. The runner must make a commitment to one base or the other. There is no "point of no return" between 1st and 2nd, or 2nd and 3rd as there is between home plate and 3rd base (20ft from home plate).

17. FIVE RUN LIMIT AND MERCY RULE:

There will be a maximum of 5 runs allowed by each team for the first five (5) complete innings. There is no limit on runs scored in the 6th inning of a six inning game. Should the game go into extra innings no team is limited to the number runs they may score. If the winning team is ahead by at least 10 runs, the losing team will at least have an opportunity to bat in the 5th inning before the mercy rule would go into effect. At that point if the winning team is ahead by at least 10 runs the game will be ended and the team leading by more than 10 runs will be declared the winner.

18. ABBREVIATED/SHORTENED GAMES:

A game shall be considered a complete game if at the end of four and a half (4½) innings: unsafe weather or field conditions exist and the home team is ahead.

19. TIE GAMES:

Tie score games will be played by adding innings until the tie is broken. Each extra Inning will begin with the last batter (making an out) of the prior inning starting out at 2nd base. The game will continue until the tie is broken and each team has had an equal number of at bat innings.

20. APPEALS:

ONLY team managers may initiate and request an appeal to an umpire on a questionable call, or on a field rules violation (ie. base running violations, etc). If either team disputes the umpires ruling, the two managers shall confer and agree on a final resolution of all disputed calls. If the managers are unable to resolve the conflict, the first disputed call would go in favor of the visiting team. The subsequent call that can not be resolved would go to the home team. The future unresolvable calls will be awarded in the alternating pattern. The umpires and/or team managers may consult with TCSSA Board members before making a ruling.

21. SAFETY GEAR:

Safety gear including helmets, face masks, mouth guards, shin guards, etc are allowed and encouraged. **FOOTWEAR:** Metal spikes are prohibited.

23. SPECIAL AGREEMENTS:

All decisions on games postponement or cancellation will be made by the TCSSA Board President or his designee. Any agreements between team managers that are not compliant with TCSSA Rules & Regulations are prohibited. THESE SEVEN PAGES CONSTITUTE THE TCSSA RULES & REGULATIONS AND ARE A SUPPLEMENT TO THE STANDARD ASA RULES & REGULATIONS. THESE RULES MAY NOT BE DEVIATED FROM. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE SUBMITTED TO THE THE TCSSA BOARD FOR CONSIDERATION.

The updated and approved TCSSA Rules was completed and approved by the TCSSA Board of Directors on September 24th, 2020.