

2021 & 2022

TREASURE COAST SENIOR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

RULES AND 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 Stat off Florida.

1. **GAMES:** Regular season games are played January, February, March on Mondays and Thursdays. Pickup games are played throughout the spring, summer, and fall. All games are played on the three fields and Langford Park near Jensen Beach. During the regular season, there will be (2) six inning games played. 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 PM will forfeit the games(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 determined by the Board of Directors after the registration deadline. Players will be placed on teams through 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 a completed registration form, be evaluated, drafted or placed in a "player pool". No players will be placed on a team that does not submit a completed registration form by the November 1, 2021 deadline. Mailed registration forms that are postmarked no later than November 1st will be considered as meeting the deadline. Players not drafted will be placed in a "player pool". Applications postmarked after November 1 may be considered for

“player pool”. 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 both manager’s approval). All players shall take their turn at bat, but are required to play in the field as described above. Prior to the game the managers will exchange lineups listing his alternate players and injured players that require a designated runner. The designated runner will run for that injured player only for the complete game.

4. FIELD SAFETY: Player safety is a primary objective of the TCSSA. To insure a safe playing environment the the following guidelines will be in place during the regular season, and for all playoff games:
 - a. The only offensive player allowed on the field during play will be the at-the-plate-batter, the on-deck batter, the batter “in the hole”, the first and third base coaches, and umpires (if provided by team batting). ALL other players must remain in their respective outside of the gated field of play.
 - b. All equipment (bat, bags, gloves, etc) must remain outside of the gated field of play. Only bats in the elevated bat racks may be on the field, this is the designated BAT areas within the field of play along the fence on the first base and third base side of the field. ALL BATS must remain in the designated areas or outside the gated field of play.
5. PINCH RUNNERS: Only injured players will have pinch-runners. Players who are just slow must run for themselves. Players that are not injured shall not be granted a runner. If in the course of a game a player becomes injured, both managers will agree on the designated pinch-runner for that player for the remainder of the game. If a pinch-runner is occupying a base and it is his turn to bat, that player will be declared out as a pinch-runner and will then take his turn batting unless that declared out ends the inning. A pinch-runner is allowed only to advance two (2) bases. On the short field, a hit over the first fence is a ground rule double and all base runners will 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 85 or older player will be assigned the same pinch-runner for the entire game. If requested, the runner will be allowed to start “in the hole” at the designated area (marked on the right side fence). That pinch-runner will then be subject to all above restrictions.

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's 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 to the opposite side of incoming throw. Orange safety bases are there as a reminder. If there is a play at that base and the runner runs to the wrong side he will be called out.
- b. Any runner touching home plate and not the the safety base will be called out.
- c. If it's obvious no play is being made on a runner approaching or returning to a base, the fielder must give way or "Obstruction" could be called. The runner has the option of returning wide to avoid a possible collision.
- d. A runner returning to a base when a play is evident has the option of returning wide to avoid a possible collision at the base.
- e. Inadvertent contact between fielder and a correctly approaching runner due to a poorly thrown ball, ball is "live" and runner is not out.
- f. If a runner reaches the designated commitment line (20 ft. From home plate), he must continue to the home plate safety base and cannot return to 3rd base. On plays at home plate the fielder must have his foot on the home plate to make the out.
- g. 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 judgment will be final.
- h. There may be situations that occur when a runner and a fielder share the field base and an errant throw pulls the fielder very wide of the field base towards the runner. Every effort must be made by both players to avoid a collision. In these cases, common sense will prevail and the umpire will have the final judgment on the ruling.

7. PITCHED, BATTED AND THROWN BALLS

- a. Pitchers will pitch from behind a safety screen, and maintain contact with the correct mount rubber. Pitches must go over the screen, not around it, and have no more than a 12 ft arc.
 - b. All batters will start with a one (1) ball and a one (1) strike count. Pitches that hit the screen or go around it will be called a “ball”. Umpires will call high pitches (over the 12 ft) “illegal” and are considered a “ball”, but batters are allowed to hit the pitch regardless.
 - c. A thrown ball hitting the screen or an umpire is in-play. If a batter hits a ball and reaches the outfield (grassed area), goes through the infield without being touched by a fielder, or is picked up by a fielder standing the grassed area, that batter cannot 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 and will be automatically safe until reaching first.
8. 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. 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.
9. UMPIRES: Each team will be responsible for designating umpires for each game unless there is (are) a qualified volunteer(s) present. Prior to the game, both managers shall agree on all of the players and volunteers that will be either the home plate or the field umpires. 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 manager. 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 the pitcher checking with fielders to confirm his position is 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 third 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. All disagreements shall be resolved by managers and umpires in a reasonable time, if not, play stands and the game continues. No player is allowed to participate in these discussions. It is the team managers responsibility to enforce all of the rules. In the event of a perceived misinterpretation of a rule by an umpire, umpires may ask for clarification of a rule by a board member if one is with talking distance. 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 protests, based on a judgement call, will be accepted or reviewed by the board.

10. **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.

11. **INFIELD FLY:** There will be no infield fly rule.

12. **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. A ball going thru players gate is a dead ball, no extra case is awarded.

13. **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.

14. TAG PLAYS: The 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.

15. 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 too 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 (20 feet from home plate).

16. FIVE RUN LIMIT AND MERCY RULE: There will be a maximum of five (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 of 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.

17. ABBREVIATED/SHORTENED GAMES: A game shall be considered a complete game if at the end of four and a half (4-1/2) innings: unsafe weather or field conditions exist and the home team is ahead.

18. 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.

19. APPEALS: Only team managers may initiate and request an appeal to an umpire on a questionable call, or on a field rules violation (i.e. base running violations, etc.)

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

21. 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 TCSAA RULES & REGULATIONS. THESE RULES MAY NOT BE DEVIATED FROM. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE SUBMITTED TO THE TCSSA BOARD FOR CONSIDERATION.

The TCSSA Rules and Regulations were updated and approved by the TCSSA Board of Directors on October 14, 2021.