

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 ASSOCIATION: The Association 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 Officers and Committee members adhering to the Association By-Laws and Association 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 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: **Six teams will consist of 15-18 players. (All eligible applicant players will be drafted and some teams may have more players than others on their roster).** All players will have been selected to teams through a draft process by Team Managers each 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 . Managers **may play** up to fourteen (14) 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 will be given 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 fourteen(14) players present and available to play.

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, base runners, the first & third base coaches, and umpires (if provided by at bat team). ALL other players must remain in their respective dugout or outside of the field of play. b. All equipment (bat bags, gloves, etc) must remain in the dugout , or outside of the 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 will be required to remain in the designated areas, inside the dugout, or outside the field of play. An overthrown ball going into the designated bat area will result in a “dead” ball and stoppage 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.

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 an approved 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" in the designated area near the catcher at home plate. 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: **1.** 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 base(one on either side of 2nd and 3rd base)** **2.** 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. **3.** 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. **4. 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. **5.** 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. **6.** 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 TAGS ARE ALLOWED AT HOME PLATE**). **7.** Sliding is not allowed under any conditions and will result in the runner being automatically out. Accidental tripping or stumbling will be ruled upon by the umpire whose judgement will be final. **8. 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.**

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 & 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 ft 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 of 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 fielders 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 expulsions that vary in length of time depending on the violation. The By-Laws provide an appeals process.

9.UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT: This includes profanity, throwing equipment, verbal harassment, or excessive arguing. Umpires have the discretion to administer verbal warnings and confer with team managers , who have the discretion to **remove players from the game completely, or for a limited time**. Additional actions may be implemented at the discretion of the TCSSA Board of Directors.

SMOKING: 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.

10. UMPIRES: Each team will be responsible for umpires for games unless there are qualified volunteers present. 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. Both managers have to agree to allow the volunteer to act as either home plate or a field umpire. 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. The umpire will then move just behind 2nd base checking with fielders to position himself in a non view obstructing position. 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. **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 will be handled only by team managers and umpires. **No players are allowed in these discussions.** It is the team manager's responsibility to enforce this rule. 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.

11. PLAYER TRADES: Trades are allowed when mutually agreed upon by both trading team managers, and the approval of the TCSSA Board of Directors. The trade deadline is January 31st. NO EXCEPTIONS.

12. ADDING PLAYERS: No players will be allowed to be added to rosters after the December draft . Teams losing players will be required to complete the season with remaining roster players and there will be no additional "pool" players available. NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE ALLOWED.

13. INFIELD FLY: Is a fair fly ball /pop up (**not including a line drive**) that may be caught by any fielder (within the infield non- grassed area) , when first and second bases or first, second and third bases are occupied with **less than two outs**. Any fielder can catch an infield fly. NOTE: When it becomes apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire shall immediately declare, **"infield fly - batter is out"**, to aid the runners. The ball **is live** and runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught, or re-tag the field base and advance after a fielder catches or touches the ball. If the hit ball becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any other foul ball. Failure of the umpire to call "infield fly," does not negate the infield fly. If the error is discovered prior to the next pitch, the infield fly rule may still be called.

14. 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.**

15. FALSE TAGS: 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, or is about to receive the ball. A runner does not have to stop and merely slowing down when the fake tag is attempted will result in an obstruction being called at the umpires discretion.

16. 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.**

17. 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).**

18. FIVE RUN LIMIT: 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 last (6th) inning **unless the leading team is ahead by 10 or more runs. (limited to 5 runs)**

19. ABBREVIATED/SHORTENED GAMES: A game shall be considered a complete game if at the end of four and a half (4½) innings. : A. Rain - play cannot continue due to weather or unsafe field conditions and the home team is ahead. B. **Mercy: there will be no mercy rule ending a game before completing 6 innings.**

20. TIE GAMES: Tie score games will be played by adding innings until the tie is broken. Innings 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.

21. 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) .

Umpires may confer with each other if they wish, and will have the final decision on any appeals. TCSSA Board members may be consulted by umpires and/or team managers only.

22. SAFETY GEAR: Safety gear including helmets, face masks, mouth guards, shin guards, etc are allowed and encouraged. **FOOTWEAR: Metal spikes are not allowed.**

23. SPECIAL AGREEMENTS: All decisions on games postponement or cancellation will be made by the TCSSA Board of Directors with input from the six team managers. Any agreements between team managers that are not compliant with TCSSA Rules & Regulations will not be allowed.

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 THE THE TCSSA BOARD FOR CONSIDERATION.

APPROVED BY THE TCSSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

February 27 , 2020