

2023

**Treasure Coast Senior Softball Association  
RULES & REGULATIONS**

*The following Addendum rules apply specifically to the Treasure Coast Senior Softball Association (TCSSA) and are intended as a supplement to the basic rules for the **American Softball Association (ASA)** men's slow pitch softball which continue to apply.*

**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 the Association By-Laws and Association Incorporation papers filed with the State of Florida.

**GAMES:** Regular Season games are played January, February, March on Monday and 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 regular season, there will be (2) six inning games played each day alternating home team assignments.

**STARTING TIMES:** All games will begin at 9:15 AM during the season and 9 a.m. all other days. Season forfeit time will be 9:30 AM. Any team with less than nine (9) players on the field by 9:30 AM will forfeit the game(s) for that playing day. A team with less than nine 9 players will forfeit a game. Teams may mutually agree to play the game by adding players, etc. although the official game is over after the forfeiture.

**PLAYER LINEUP RULES:** All players present must play defense three innings each game unless the game is abbreviated or the player in question requests less playing time. Any player declining to play the required mandatory innings must make his request to the Team Manager. If a player requests not to play in the field, he can be a hitter only. With the exception of the pitchers who can choose not to hit, all players must be listed in a batting order on the manager's lineup card prior to the game and be scheduled to hit. The manager will update any changes during the games. A player having to leave the game for any personal reason will be removed from the lineup with no penalty to that team; he must inform his manager who must in-turn inform the other team's manager. Once a player has left, he may not play for the remainder of the day. A player arriving late to the playing field and being inserted into a game will be placed at the end of the batting order.

**FieldSafety:** Safety is the primary concern of the TC Senior Softball Association. To insure a safe playing environment the following guidelines will be in place during the regular season, playoff games and the Allstar games.

- The only offensive players allowed on the field during play will be the at-plate-batter, the on-deck-batter, the batter in-the-hole, the first and third base coach, and the umpires if provided by batting team. All other offensive players must remain in either the dugout or outside the gated field of play.
- All equipment (bats, bags, gloves, ect.) must remain outside the gated field of play. Only bats in elevated racks may be on the field in the designated "bat area" along the fence on the first and third base sides of the field, otherwise bats must be outside the field of play.

**PINCH RUNNERS:** Every player is required to reach base on their own\*. From there a player with a disability, hurt or injured will be allowed a pinch runner. Being a "slow" runner will not be an approved reason to use a pinch runner. A player may declare himself injured prior to the start of the game or during the game. Only players who have declared themselves injured can have a pinch runner. Any player on the offensive roster can be a pinch runner. A player can only pinch run once per inning, A pinch runner can substitute for an injured player at any base. A pinch runner is not restricted (he can score from any base). If a pinch runner is on base during his scheduled turn of at-bat, he will be called out and his position on the bases will be vacated.

\***EXCEPTION:** Any player that becomes the age 85 during the playing year (or is older) may request a pinch runner at home plate while batting. The runner must be designated prior to the start of the game and indicated on the manager's lineup card.. The pinch runner will be allowed to start "in the hole" in the designated area behind the catcher at home plate.

**PHYSICAL CONTACT:** Any physical contact between fielders and runners is to be avoided at all times. Basic rules regarding contact follow:

If it is obvious that a play is being made on a runner approaching 1st, 2nd, or 3rd base, the base belongs to the fielder and the runner must run wide of the base on the opposite side of the incoming throw (or to the safety base at 1st).

If the runner touches the actual base when the throw is coming to that base, or the runner obstructs the flight path of the ball to the fielder, he is out for interference. If it is obvious that a play is not being made on a runner approaching or returning to a 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 returning directly to the base or running wide of the base as described. Once the runner touches the actual base, he must maintain contact with that base or advance to the next base or be subject to a putout.

Once a runner touches a real base he is fair game to be out if he leaves that base and

attempts to run. The fielder only has to be in possession of the ball while on the base to retire the runner who is off the base. A runner must touch the actual 2nd or 3rd base before advancing to the next base. The runner may advance to 2nd from 1st after touching either the safety base or the actual base. A runner approaching home plate must step on the secondary (safety) plate that is wide of home plate. If the runner steps on home plate or the extended part of home plate, he will be automatically out. If a runner reaches the 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 possession of the ball and his foot touching the rubber plate or extended part of the rubber plate to make the out prior to the runner touching the safety plate. The catcher is not allowed to tag out the runner coming Home.

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. A player returning to the base when a play is evident has the option of either returning directly to the base or returning wide of the base to avoid a possible collision at the base.

**NOTE:** There may be situations that occur when a runner and a fielder share the base but every effort must be made by both players to avoid a collision. In these cases common sense will prevail and the umpire will have final judgement on the ruling.

**PITCHED & BATTED BALLS :** All batters will start with a 1 ball & 1 strike count. Pitchers will pitch from behind a safety screen. Pitches must go over the screen, not around it and be no more than 12 ft in arc. Pitches that go around it, or are over the 12ft arc will be called illegal and called a ball if not struck by the batter. A strike is when any part of the ball touches the home plate or the extended part of home plate before striking the ground. Any foul tip regardless of the height that is caught before hitting the ground is an out. A foul ball on the 3rd strike will result in a courtesy strike being given. A batted ball that hits the screen will be called a strike except during the “courtesy” where it is declared a “no pitch” (a player will not be called out by hitting the pitching screen when he has two strikes). A pitched ball hitting the screen is a ball. A thrown ball hitting the screen is in play. If a batted ball reaches the outfield grass untouched by an infielder, the batter-runner can not be thrown out at first base but any other runner advancing to any other base can be thrown out at that base.

**SPECIAL FIELD RULES:** Short field, a ball over the short fence equals two bases only for all runners. A ball over the original fence equals a home run, the batter is not required to run the bases, but any runner on base at that time must complete the base running to home.

**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.

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

**UMPIRES:** Each team will be responsible for umpires for games unless there are qualified volunteers present. 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 Addendum 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 to a position where he can see both first and second base, checking with fielders to position himself in a non-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 should make their calls **LOUD, and CLEAR**. 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 players.** Any and all disagreements will be handled only by team managers and umpires. No players are allowed in these discussions. It is the team managers responsibility to enforce this rule. (*Both managers and players will receive a warning for the first offence, a game suspension for the second offence followed by incremental increases there-after.*) In the event of a perceived misinterpretation of a rule (**not a judgement call**) by an umpire, only then can both managers over-rule an umpire and only if both managers agree a mistake has been made. If the managers disagree, a manager may declare to the umpires and the other manager that the game is being played under protest and file a written protest to the Association Board for review and decision. See ASA rule book for guidelines in filing a protest. As copy of the TC Senior Softball Association Rules and Regulation will be placed in each dugout.

**PLAYER TRADES:** Trades are allowed when mutually agreed upon by both trading team managers, and the approval of the TCSSA Board of Directors with input from the managers. (Managers on the Board of Directors must recuse themselves from the final decision) The trade deadline is January 31st.

**ADDING PLAYERS:** No players will be allowed to be added to rosters after the November draft. The Board will determine the fate of unselected players in the draft after the draft.

**NO INFIELD FLY RULE;** If in the Umpires opinion. a player purposely drops an infield fly with runners on 1st and 2nd or bases loaded, it will fall under ASA purposely dropped line drive rule and the batter is called out, ball is dead, all runners maintain their positions.

**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 out of bounds through an open gate is dead, no advancement.

**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, merely slowing down when the fake tag is attempted will result in an obstruction being called at the umpires discretion.

**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 base without causing harm but tags not allowed at home plate.

**RUNDOWNS:** Rundowns are 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. In either case the runner is out if the fielder with the ball in his possession touches the base before the approaching runner reaches. The runner must make a commitment to one base or the other. He can turn twice but will be automatically out on the third turn. There is no "point of no return" between 1st and 2nd, or 2nd and 3rd as there is (20ft) between 3<sup>rd</sup> and home plate.

**FIVE RUN LIMIT:** There will be a maximum of 5 runs allowed for the first (5) innings of six inning games. There will be a maximum of 5 runs allowed in the first (6) innings of seven inning games. There will be a maximum of 5 runs allowed in the first (7) innings of a nine inning. There is no limit to runs scored for the last inning of six or seven inning games or last two innings of (9) innings games. In extra inning runs are unlimited.

**ABBREVIATED/SHORTENED GAMES:** A game shall be considered a complete game at the end of four and a half (4½ ) innings for **SIX** inning games or at the end of five and a half (5 ½) innings for **Seven** inning games or the end of seven and a half (7½) innings for (**NINE** inning games) if the home team is ahead in the score. The Home team shall have the opportunity to complete the inning if they are behind in the score.

A. **Weather:** play cannot continue due to weather or unsafe field conditions.

B. **MERCY:** The home team is ahead by **10 runs** or more after four and a half (4½ ) innings in **SIX** of **SEVEN** inning games or **15 runs** or more after 7 and a half (7½) innings in **NINE** inning games .

C. **MERCY:** The visitor team is ahead by **10 runs** or more after five (5) innings in **SIX** or **SEVEN** inning games or **15 runs** or more after seven (7) innings in **NINE** inning games.

**TIE GAMES:** Tie score games will be played by adding innings until the tie is broken. Innings will begin with the last batter 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 innings.

**FOOTWEAR:** Metal spikes are not allowed.

**SAFETY GEAR:** Safety gear including helmets, face masks, mouth guards, shin guards, etc. are allowed and encouraged.

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

**ROSTER SIZE:** Roster size and number of teams will be determined at the end of the registration period in November by the Board. At that time the board will also determine the number of players allowed in the playing field. It is the Board's responsibility to determine if a pool should be created of undrafted players and how the pool would operate. All players will be selected to teams through a draft process by Team Managers each November. All players will be rated prior to the draft. The rating process will be managed and coordinated by TCSSA Board Members with the assistance of a Rating Committee consisting of players.

These constitute the TCSSA RULES & REGULATIONS and are a supplement to the standard ASA RULES & REGULATIONS. If the two regulations contradict, THE TCSSA RULES and REGULATIONS will prevail. Proposed changes to these rules and regulations may be submitted to the TCSSA Board of Directors for consideration.

It is the TC Senior Softball Association's responsibility to maintain and enforce these rules and regulations. If for any reason a player, a manager or a team fails to comply with these rules and regulations the Board of Directors shall act judiciously. And apply appropriate penalties.

Approved by the TC Senior Softball Association July 21, 2022



