



SPS - Sacramento Pride Softball League Rules of Play

The SPS League shall play softball according to the current and approved USA Softball Slow Pitch Rules. The following variations apply and supersede the USA Softball rules.

I. Equipment

- A. CATCHER'S MASK/FACE GUARD: Each team, at their discretion, is encouraged to use a catcher /pitcher's mask or face guard.
- B. A Strike Zone will be used for all divisions. The strike mat will not be used.
- C. UNIFORMS: Each player should have a shirt of like color with a number shown on the back of player's shirt.
- D. GAME BALLS: SPS will provide the game balls. 1 new and 1 used, will be used for each league game. Regulation Softballs approved by NAGAAA, 12" .52COR/300 Comp
- E. All Bats are subject to the current USA Softball Approved Bats list and shall also be subject to any other bat test used by a facility that hosts an SPS-sanctioned game. ASA/USA stamps.
- F. BATS: The USA Softball Non-Approved Bat List will be enforced. All bats used must be legal for USA Softball play. Use of a non-approved (or altered) bat will result in the batter being called out and ejected. SSUSA bats (Senior Softball USA) are not approved for play in USA Softball. The ASA/USA Stamp is the only stamp.
- G. FIRST AID: Each team must provide their own first aid supplies.

II. Eligibility

- A. AGE LIMIT: All players on the official roster must be 18 years of age or older at the start of League play.
- B. FEES: All team registration member fees, and any other outstanding fees, including forfeit fees must be paid by the registration deadline.
- C. FORMS: Each season all members must sign the Member Contract and Complex Waiver form prior to playing in the League.
- D. POST-SEASON ELIGIBILITY: For postseason play, a player must have been present at and listed on the lineup card of at least 50% of the team's games. Players who meet this criterion will receive credit towards the post-season regardless of whether they enter the game. It is up to the manager to see that these records are accurately kept.
- E. PLAYING AN INELIGIBLE PLAYER: If a team plays an ineligible player, the team will forfeit all games played in by that ineligible player. A team can protest a player's eligibility. The protester must register an official protest to the umpire in the game in which you suspect an ineligible player is playing. For more information on protest procedures, refer to section XVI Protests of this document.

III. Rosters

- A. MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PLAYERS: A team roster will consist of no more than 20 players regardless of whether they actively play softball. Any additional players added to your roster will be approved at the discretion of the board.
- B. Add/Drop: Members can be added to or dropped from a team roster after the registration deadline and up to the Sunday prior to the 3rd week of league play.
- C. FALSIFYING INFORMATION: Any member falsifying information on official SPS forms will be subject to action by the Board.

IV. Line-Ups

- A. NUMBER OF STARTING PLAYERS: A team may start with as few as nine or as many as twelve, without penalty.
- B. EXTRA PLAYER (EP): If a team chooses to have 11 or 12 players in its lineup, the team can designate one or two players as an EP.

NOTE: Extra Players must be noted as EP on line-up card prior to the start of the game. The offensive position in the lineup of extra players cannot change but defensive positions can.

- C. A team that does not have enough players to field a team but has at least 8 players from their season roster present at the field, will be allowed to pick up 2 additional players from another team, as long as the added player is rostered in the same or lower division. This is for regular season games only. During playoff games, teams must use ONLY players on their season roster.

NOTE: Teams with less than 8 players from their season roster at the start of regulation play or by the end of the grace period, if used, will forfeit the game.

NOTE: No player rostered in a higher division may play as a substitute in a lower division game regardless of that players rating.

- D. Once a game has started, players cannot be added to the starting lineup. The only exception is the Shorthanded Rule. If a player arrives after the start of the game, they can be added to the lineup card as a substitute only.
- E. SHORTHANDED RULE: A team may start with nine players without penalty. If a team starts with 9 players, the coach/manager must add the 10th player upon arrival. If a player is lost due to injury and or ejection, and no substitute is available, the team may continue to play with nine players but must take an out when the vacancy comes to bat. If the team falls below nine eligible players, the team shall forfeit the remainder of the game.
- F. OFFICIAL LINEUP: All players eligible and present to participate in a game should be listed on the lineup card for purposes of post-season eligibility. (See section II(D) for post-season eligibility criteria) A player is considered legally part of the game if they are present at the playing site before the end of a game and their name is then added on the lineup card.

G. LINEUP CARD PROCEDURES:

1. A complete lineup card will have the Team name, Date, each player's last name, first name, and jersey #; including substitutes.
2. List all starting players in the order in which they will bat.
3. List all substitute players who are eligible and present for that game.
4. ADA players must be identified at the start of the game with an asterisk by their name.
5. Present the card to the umpire who will check and collect it during the pre-game meeting.
6. Eligible players who arrive late and who have not been listed on the lineup should be added as substitutes.
7. The original cardstock copy of the lineup (the umpire's copy) will go in the field envelopes as an official SPS scorecard record of the game

V. Time Limit

- A. No new inning can begin after 50 minutes of play.

VI. Legal Pitch Delivery

- A. The ball must be delivered with a perceptible arc and reach a height of at least 6 feet from the ground, while not exceeding a maximum height of 12 feet from the ground.

VII. Starting Count

- A. The batter shall assume a one-ball and one-strike count upon entering the batter's box. There shall be allowed 1 courtesy foul in all divisions.

VIII. Tie Games

- A. Regular Season games can end in a tie if time has expired, and the inning is complete.
- B. If tied after 7 innings are played and time remains on the clock, the game is over.
- C. Playoff / Tournament games cannot end in a tie. Tiebreaker rule would be in effect, as per USA Softball Rules. The team will play another inning of the game, this time starting with a runner on second base in scoring position. The offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player who is scheduled to bat at last in that respective half inning being placed on second base. A substitute may be inserted for that runner.

IX. Courtesy Runner

- A. Any eligible player on the official line-up including available substitutes may be used as a courtesy runner.
- B. A courtesy runner may be used once per inning at any time once play has stopped and time is called.
- C. If a courtesy runner whose turn at bat comes up while on base the player whom the courtesy runner is running for will be called out. The courtesy runner will be removed from the base to take their turn at bat.
- D. A second courtesy runner or substitute is not permitted currently.
- E. USA Softball ADA rule applies – ADA courtesy runner does not count against the team's discretionary courtesy runner.

X. Home Run Rule – Home Runs Hit over the outfield Fence. Does not apply to “In the park” home runs.

- A. The following home run limits apply:
 - 1. C Division will use the equalizer rule and are allowed up to 2 Home Runs per game. Each team will be allowed a second home run, if and only if, each team has already hit 1 home run. All home runs after the second home run, or after the first home run if the second team has not hit a home run, will be an automatic out.
 - 2. Homeruns are not allowed in the D and E divisions. Any home run hit will be an inning-ending out.

XI. Run Ahead Rule

- A. The game will end if, at the end of the inning, the opposing team is ahead: 20 runs after three innings, 15 runs after four innings or 10 runs after five innings.

XII. Base-Stealing

- A. Base stealing is not allowed.

XIII. Grace Period

- A. A team that does not have at least nine players at the field at official game time may request up to a ten-minute delay of game. If the 9th player arrives before the end of the ten-minute grace period, the game must begin without further delay.
- B. After the 1st pitch of the game, a 10th person can be added but any players arriving after that can only be added as substitutes.
- C. When a game is delayed by requesting the grace period be used, the length of the game will be shortened by the number of minutes of the delay.

XIV. Forfeits

- A. If a team does not have nine players by the end of the grace period, the game will be considered a 7:0 forfeit. If both teams are short at the end of the grace period, a double forfeit is declared.
- B. After three forfeits, the team manager and/or coach shall be requested to meet with the Board. Disciplinary action, if any, is subject to the Board's discretion.

XV. Official Scorekeeper

- A. The Home team will be responsible for keeping the official score. The score will be confirmed with the opposing team at the end of every half inning.

XVI. Ejections

- A. If ejected from a game the player must immediately leave the field and dugout, and while suspended will not be allowed back in the dugout nor on the field.
- B. Any player ejected by an umpire is automatically suspended from the team's next game and may be subject to further actions by the Board upon recommendation by the UIC, after an incident investigation.
- C. The ejected player will be invited to a meeting with the Board for any further recommendations if needed. Please adhere to the SPS Code of Conduct process and procedure.

XVII. Protests

- A. An official protest involves a question about a rule interpretation, a player's rating, an illegal player, or an ineligible player. Judgment calls by the plate umpire cannot be protested. Only the team manager may notify the plate umpire of their intent to play the game under protest. An official protest must be registered with the umpire & UIC before the next pitch or before the umpires leave the field if the game has ended. The protest must be noted on the lineup card, along with the details of the protest, the inning, number of outs, ball and strike count, the position of base runners, and time if applicable. If the protest cannot be resolved immediately, the game should go on.
- B. Any player who is challenged on eligibility will be requested to show proof of ID to the umpire. The umpire will designate the player in question on the lineup card. If the player does not have an ID, they must sign the lineup card or forfeit the game. All information must match the official League roster.
- C. After properly notifying the plate umpire and UIC, all protests (including player eligibility) must then be submitted in writing accompanied by a \$20.00 protest fee and received either at the League mailbox or provided in person to the Commissioner, Vice Commissioner, or Treasurer within two business days following the protested game; otherwise, the game will stand as played. Rating protests will be heard by the rating committee.
- D. Ratings' concerns can be submitted to the Rating Committee for review outside of regular gameplay. Any change to a player's rating, whether by a rating protest or by a player being submitted to the Ratings Committee, may be appealed to the full board.
- E. The information will be assessed and ruled on by the Board, UIC or Ratings Committee who will respond within fourteen days. All protests can only be submitted once.
- F. All decisions made by the Board and UIC are final.

XIX. Member Conduct Complaints

- A. Members are expected to behave in a respectful manner toward the game, the umpire, the fans, their teammates, and their opponents. Complaints pertaining to violations of the Member Code of Conduct should be submitted in writing to the Board within 48 hours of the action.
- B. The Board will review the complaint within 72 hours of receipt. If it is believed that the Code of Conduct has been violated, the complaint will be turned over to the Team Advisory Committee for investigation and review. The TAC will decide if the Code of Conduct has been violated and if any disciplinary action is necessary.
- C. Ejections are considered violations of the Member Code of Conduct and will be submitted in writing by the umpire. (Refer to Section XV Ejections.)

XX. Supplemental Policies

- A. STANDINGS: Each division shall have recorded standings, which shall list the teams of that division in order by the number of wins. In the event multiple teams have the same record, those teams shall be listed by head-to-head competition, then run differential between those teams, and then by run differential of the entire division.