

# HALF CENTURY PLUS SOFTBALL LEAGUE INC. PLAYING RULES

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## Table of Contents

1) DUES.....	2
2) NEW PLAYERS .....	2
3) DRAFT/MANAGERS/PLAYERS.....	2
4) TEAM ROSTER.....	5
5) TRADES AND TRANSFERS .....	5
6) SUSPENSION/EXPULSION/VIOLATION.....	5
7) INJURED PLAYERS .....	5
8) PLAYERS MISSING FOUR OR MORE CONSECUTIVE GAMES.....	6
9) PLAYER RESIGNATION .....	6
10) SCHEDULES.....	6
11) TEAM UNIFORMS .....	7
12) WARM UPS .....	7
13) LINE-UP SHEETS.....	7
14) SCORE BOOKS.....	7
16) OFFICIAL GAME .....	8
17) FORFEITS.....	9
18) DISPUTED CALLS .....	9
19) PROTEST .....	10
20) CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHIES.....	10
21) COURTESY BASE RUNNERS.....	10
22) RABBITT RULE.....	10
23) PLAYER POOLS/TEMPORARY PLAYERS.....	11
SUMMARY OF CHANGES (Highlighted in text):.....	13

## Half Century Plus Softball Inc. Playing Rules

**THE LEAGUE:** The league will play under the official rules of USA Softball (formerly ASA). The Board of directors have the sole discretion to set all rules and regulations as they pertain to the league. These changes will be done in a board meeting after a quorum is available and discussion is finished and vote approves the change.

**Managers and umpires do not have the option to mutually agree to change written league rules.**

### 1) **DUES:**

- a) League dues are to be paid by all members before the start of their third game. The Board may opt to waive the player fee for any player deemed financially unable to pay that season's fees.
- b) If a player leaves a team as a result of injury or for an emergent personal reason, e.g., family circumstances or responsibilities, before ten of the scheduled games, they may be entitled to a pro-rated refund or league credit. If a member of the league is suspended or has been ejected from the league, that member will not be eligible for a refund. There will be no refund or credit after one-half of the season has passed. Team and Preferred Pool Players joining the league after the second half of the season begins will be charged league dues on a prorated basis.
- c) Any player 80 years or older, will be exempt from paying dues.

2) **NEW PLAYERS:** New players may be requested to verify their age with their first application. All new players should be assessed by at least one board member to be eligible for the draft. Players must attain the age of 50 years within the year they will play in order to be eligible for membership in the league.

### 3) **DRAFT/MANAGERS/PLAYERS:**

- a) The Draft: A drafting of eligible players will be conducted before the start of each season.
  - i. Each team will have a manager who will participate at the draft to select members of their team. Non-playing members of the league are eligible to be selected by the Board to manage a team. The non-playing manager will remain as a non-playing member throughout the season. The membership dues for a non-playing manager will be assessed at \$20.00 less than the fee paid by playing members.
  - ii. Each manager will select a card from a regular playing deck to determine the order in which they will participate in the draft, the lowest denomination card picked will pick first in round one, second lowest picks second, etc. continuing in a with a "simple snake" order (i.e. low to high card selecting in odd rounds followed by high to low card selecting in even rounds) until the draft is completed.
  - iii. Managers may trade their draft picks at the evening of the draft without Board approval.

## Half Century Plus Softball Inc. Playing Rules

- b) Managers: Managers will determine the field positions and batting order of the members of their teams. It is also the managers' responsibility for the following:
- i. To pick pool players if needed;
  - ii. To obtain all contact telephone numbers for players on their teams for purposes of emergency, e.g., if there is a change in schedule, location of a game, or a medical emergency;
  - iii. If a replacement player is needed, the Manager must present a replacement form to the Board.
  - iv. To provide the name of the designated pitcher of their team before the first game of the season, however, the designated pitcher can be changed by notifying the Board.
  - v. To designate an assistant Manager to fulfill all managerial duties for the team for games at which the manager anticipates being absent, examples: picking pool players, if needed, representing the team in any discussions with the umpires during the game, providing completed game line-up sheets;
- c) Players:
- i. Anyone joining the league who wants to be on a team, but cannot commit to both nights of team play will be included in the draft.
  - ii. Team members who do not accept their designated positions may be subject to suspension until a review is conducted by the Board;
  - iii. When asked, players will turn in their laundered game shirts at the beginning of the last game of the season. Players who do not return their shirts will be assessed \$20.00 which will be added to their dues for the following season.
  - iv. Players abandoning their team because of a conflict with the manager or other members of their team, will be subject to discipline as determined by the board. Discipline may range from letters of discipline up to suspension from the league.
- d) Team:
- i. After the start of the season, in the event a player will miss four or more consecutive games their manager may submit a completed "Request for Replacement Player Form" to bring the team roster to eleven players. The Board will confer with the managers of the teams to determine an equitable replacement, when a Replacement Form has been submitted.
  - ii. After the draft until the start of the season, the Board will attempt to equalize team roster depth by filling vacant team positions from the available pool players. The board will take into consideration the level of ability of the missing and replacement players in its selections.

## Half Century Plus Softball Inc. Playing Rules

### e) Base Runner:

- i. Veer or Slide: A runner who is advancing from first base to second base, or second base to third base, should make every effort to either slide or veer out of the way.
  - (1) If he does not veer or slide, the umpire can call both the runner and the other runner going to first base out. The umpire decision is final.
  - (2) If the ball is dropped by the defensive player in the course of the runner veering or sliding, the umpire will determine whether the runner will be called safe or out. This will be based upon the runner's position in relationship to the base.
- ii. For any ball leaving the field of play in fair territory over the fence (home run) the batter and runners (if any) are not required to run.
- iii. Courtesy Play at First: A batter who hits the ball to the outfield will not be called out by a ball thrown from the outfielder to first base. If, however, an outfielder relays the fielded ball to an infielder and a play is made at second or third base, the batter who is advancing to first base may then be called out by a throw to first base from the infielder making the play at second or third base.

### f) Equipment:

- i. Only USA/ASA unaltered (as described in USA/ASA Rule 3) Softball bats are considered legal. Any player possessing an illegal bat in the dugout or using an illegal bat or altered bat during the game in which the player is participating will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including indefinite league suspension.
  - ii. Senior bats may be used by all players. There is no need to mark senior bats with green tape.
  - iii. Any player can use any glove in any position as long as it fits within the dimensions set forth by USA/ASA Softball. The pitcher cannot use a glove the same color as the ball.
  - iv. The strike mat is treated as an extension of home plate for making plays.
- g) Co-Ed Line: An arc will be placed on the field 150 feet from home plate. The arc will extend from the left field foul line to the right field foul line. ALL outfielders will be required to remain behind this line when a male player 70 years or older or a female player is batting, until the ball is hit by the batter. If an outfielder is inside the arc line, the batting team will be given the option of taking the result of the play or replaying the pitch. If the pitch is not hit there is no penalty.
- h) Pitching Screen: The pitching screen will remain on the field throughout the game, whether pitchers use it or prefer not to use it for their safety. The following rules regarding the pitching screen apply;

## Half Century Plus Softball Inc. Playing Rules

- i. Screen shall be placed with edge of the screen lined up with the edge of the pitching rubber 4 feet in front of rubber on the glove side of pitcher.
  - ii. All batted balls that hit the screen shall be a strike, unless it is the third strike, when it shall be declared a dead ball. Hitting the screen a second time with a batted ball after a dead ball shall be a third strike.
  - iii. The pitcher can field any ball not hit into the screen.
  - iv. A thrown ball hitting the screen shall remain live and in play.
  - v. The pitcher must have one foot in contact with the pitching rubber before releasing the ball.
- 4) **TEAM ROSTER:** Each team roster shall consist of a minimum of eleven eligible players unless appropriate replacement players are not available to fill vacancies. If pool players are needed, there will be maximum of eleven players on defense. All players on the roster must play a minimum of three innings defensively. All team members must bat.
- 5) **TRADES AND TRANSFERS:** If a manager wishes to trade a player after the evening of the draft or a player wishes to be transferred, they must submit their request to the Board. The Board will then try to work out the trade or transfer providing the managers involved agree. If a transfer cannot be arranged, the person requesting the transfer will remain on the team.
- 6) **SUSPENSION/EXPULSION/VIOLATION:** Any unsportsmanlike behavior by a league member that threatens or intentionally harms any player, coach, umpire or employee of the City of Cape Coral is grounds for suspension and or expulsion from the league. Physical contact with an umpire is a felony and can result in arrest.
- a) An ejected player will leave the game and field. An out will be charged every time the ejected player's turn at bat comes up. If a second player from the same team is ejected in the same game, the team will forfeit the game.
  - b) Effective date of suspension is immediately upon receipt of a written or verbal notice of suspension by the League. Verbal suspensions shall be witnessed by at least two board members.
  - c) The team from which a player has been suspended will be eligible to draw a pool player or replacement player for the suspended player until the suspension expires.
  - d) Actions of any league member who violates the rules and/or the leagues Code of Ethics will be reviewed by the Board which will determine appropriate consequences, i.e., suspension and or expulsion.
- 7) **INJURED PLAYERS:** If a team player becomes injured during a game and cannot continue playing, the team Manager or designee may ask for a replacement player.

## Half Century Plus Softball Inc. Playing Rules

- a) If a replacement player is not requested, an out will be charged each time the injured player would have batted.
  - b) The opposing manager or designee may veto the initial player replacement unless there is only one eligible player available, then the opposing manager may not exercise the veto option (i.e. only one veto is allowed).
  - c) An injured player who leaves a game may not play in any subsequent game that evening.
  - d) Upon player replacement, the batting order will remain the same, eliminating the injured player with the replacement player batting in the order of the injured player for the remainder of the game.
  - e) If one player is injured in a game and no replacement is available, the team will not be charged with an out each time the injured player would have batted. If more injuries occur on the same team, an out will be charged for each additional player, at the second injured player's position in the batting order.
  - f) When or if a replacement player becomes available at any time during the game, the injured player will be replaced at a field position determined by the manager.
- 8) **PLAYERS MISSING FOUR OR MORE CONSECUTIVE GAMES:** Eligible players who can commit to being at the games both evenings may be placed on a team to replace players who will miss four or more consecutive games. The Board will approve all of these placements once the application for a replacement player has been received by the Board after conferring with all managers. The replacement player will be of equal ability but may be of lesser ability. The replaced player will not be able to return to their team until they have missed four scheduled consecutive games, at which time the replacement player will retain their original status as a pool player.
- 9) **PLAYER RESIGNATION:** If a player resigns or wishes to resign from a team, they must notify their manager immediately out of courtesy and consideration of their team members. They will not be eligible for the pool and will not be able to play for the remainder of that season.
- 10) **SCHEDULES:** A nominal season schedule shall consist of thirty games. An attempt will be made to reschedule any games not played due to weather conditions, if the schedule allows for it. If, at the end of the completed schedule, teams are tied for first place by both win percentage and run differential there will be a playoff game to determine the league champion.

## Half Century Plus Softball Inc. Playing Rules

- 11) **TEAM UNIFORMS:** All team members on the team roster must wear team uniforms consisting of matching shirts. Uniforms shall not be altered in any way. During cold weather, the team shirt may be worn under warm clothing. The umpire may check during the game to ensure that team matching shirts are being worn by all players.
- a) Based on availability of shirts, the Board has the discretion to set aside the requirement of wearing a team shirt.
  - b) If an established team member is not wearing their assigned team shirt after the second scheduled game, a warning will be issued to that player effective for the remainder of the season. Infractions following the warning will result in an out being assessed for each at-bat for which the player is not wearing the proper team shirt.
  - c) A team member who has been placed on a team indefinitely to replace a regular team member must wear a matching team shirt (or similar color if none available) by the second game in which they are assigned and play on that team.
- 12) **WARM UPS:** There will be no on field warm ups after the first inning.
- 13) **LINE-UP SHEETS:** Teams must exchange starting line-up sheets at least five minutes prior to the start of each game. Line-up sheets must include players' first and/or last names and the team's name. No names can be added to the line-up sheet after it has been submitted to the umpire and exchanged with the opposing team except in the case of a regular team member arriving late. **The name of the arriving team member will replace the name of a temporary player filling in for the late arriving regular team member. See additional guidance on late arriving players in Rule 23).**
- 14) **SCORE BOOKS:** Each team will keep an official score book for each game. The score of the home team score book for each game will be the determining official score in the event of a dispute in scores.
- 15) **FIELD/WEATHER CONDITION:** The league shall abide by the Cape Coral Department of Parks "Lightning & Rain Out Alert" guidance:

*When the system detects lightning within 10 miles of the facility, the air horns sound an uninterrupted 15-second blast and the strobe light will activate. Park patrons who hear the horn and/or see the light need to seek shelter immediately. When the system no longer detects a threat, three 5-second blasts from the horn will sound and the strobe light will stop working. This is the signal that it is safe to return outdoors.*

- a) **Prior to the start of the game the Parks Department and Board will determine if field is playable and there is no lightning delay in effect.**
- b) Once the umpire calls "play ball", he shall make all decisions on the playability and safety of the field.

**RAINOUT INFORMATION: Managers will have the responsibility to contact their teams when they are aware of a rainout or game cancellation**

## Half Century Plus Softball Inc. Playing Rules

- 16) **OFFICIAL GAME:** An official game will consist of seven innings unless it is called because of inclement weather or if the lights go out at which time an official game will be called after 4 ½ innings provided the losing team has completed 5 at-bats. Each team can only score five runs an inning except for the last inning. In the last inning, an unlimited number of runs may be scored. Should an umpire declare any time after the fourth inning that the inning being started is the last one, it will be an open scoring inning.
- a) Should an umpire determine after the start of an inning, after the fourth inning, that it is the last inning and if the home team scores the winning run, the game will terminate upon the run being scored.
- b) At Bat:
- i. Each batter will start with a one and one count (one ball and one strike).
  - ii. Walks:
    - (1) During the final declared inning, intentional walks awarding first base may be given. The pitcher or manager will notify the home plate umpire of the walk. No pitches need be given.
    - (2) During all other innings a batter has a right of refusal to walk, provided the batter has not:
      - been provided a strike hitting the plate
      - or**
      - batted the ball foul or into the pitching screenA batter exercising their right of refusal may request another at-bat opportunity, resetting their strike count to one ball and one strike. Should this second at-bat have the same result as the first at-bat (i.e. a four-ball walk without making ball contact or receiving a strike), the batter shall be awarded second base and runners moved forward as if a hit was made. In addition to the batter being awarded second base, the player batting following the player that has been walked to second base has the option to either bat normally or to be awarded a walk to first base.
- c) **Game Starting Time:** The umpire and managers of each team will log in the official starting time before the game begins. All games will have a timer set for 70 minutes. The umpire shall announce the start time.
- i. Scheduled start times are 6:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. However, if both games end, and if both managers agree, the games scheduled may begin before the scheduled start time with the consent of the umpire and a Board member.
  - ii. All games will adhere to one hour and thirty minutes after the start times. No inning will begin one hour and twenty minutes after the start of the game.
- d) **Ties:** If a game is tied after seven innings and time allows, each batter will receive one pitch.
- i. If the pitch is called a strike by the umpire, the batter will be called out.
  - ii. If the pitch is called a ball, the batter will advance to first base.



## Half Century Plus Softball Inc. Playing Rules

iii. If the batter hits the ball, it shall be played as if in a regular game.

If the score remains tied after the allotted game time, each team will be credited with a half win and a half loss.

e) All league rules not stated will be governed by the USA SOFTBALL rules.

f) Mercy Rule/Expedited Gameplay

i. Mercy Rule: Mercy rule is in effect at the conclusion of the 5<sup>th</sup> inning. If a team is up by 15 runs at the conclusion of the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> inning the game is deemed official and concluded. If time permits teams may continue to play, but with no consequence to score or standings.

ii. Expedited Gameplay: If at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> inning the "home team" (the team just finished batting) is down by at least 10 runs,

(1) the bases will be cleared and the home team will continue their final at bat rotation at the top of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning as opposed to the bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning where they would normally bat.

(2) Should the home team score enough runs to take the lead or tie the game, the visiting team will then bat the bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning to complete the game.

(3) If the score is tied at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning, the normal procedure to break the tie will be followed if enough time remains to play out the tie in an extra inning with the visiting team batting first as in the normal game procedure. As in regular play, if the game is called for any reason after the 7<sup>th</sup> inning has begun, the score reverts to the score at the end of the last full inning played.

(4) If the home team does not score enough runs to either tie or take the lead after batting the top of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning, the game will conclude and the winning away team will be automatically awarded 3 runs to compensate the run differential category in the league standings.

17) **FORFEITS:** Unless approved by the board\*, each team shall field a minimum of seven (six for summer season games) eligible able-bodied (visually able to run, bend or walk fast, swing a bat, and catch a ball) players. This team minimum shall be present and able to play at the time the pool is called or they will forfeit the game and the opposing team awarded a win with a run differential of 7 runs. If neither team can field the required minimum number of players, it shall be a double-forfeit and both teams will be assessed a loss with no runs awarded toward run differential.

18) **DISPUTED CALLS:** Only team Managers or their designee in the Manager's absence may question a call by the Umpire. Play will stop and only the Manager or designee will discuss the dispute. The Umpire's decision will be final.

\*In the event a suitable replacement player is not available when the board is asked to appoint a player to restore a team's roster to 11 or more players.

## Half Century Plus Softball Inc. Playing Rules

- 19) **PROTEST:** The Umpire has the final determination on all judgment calls made during the game.
- a) Protests on judgment calls will not be allowed.
  - b) Protests on rules interpretation must be made verbally to the umpire at the time of the perceived infraction. The umpire will announce the protest. The protest must be made in writing to the board within 24 hours of the perceived infraction. The team may withdraw the protest prior to the end of game play.
- 20) **CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHIES:** A sponsorship trophy will be awarded to the first-place team of the season, and individual awards may be presented to the team players.
- 21) **COURTESY BASE RUNNERS:** Teams are allowed an unlimited number of courtesy runners per inning with the following guidance:
- a) A player can only be a courtesy runner once in an inning.
  - b) If a courtesy runner is on base and it is their turn to bat, they will be removed from the base and an out will be charged to the team. The courtesy runner will then bat per the line-up.
  - c) A base runner who has been a courtesy runner in an inning cannot have a courtesy runner.
- 22) **RABBIT RULE:** “Rabbit” Runners are allowed when an injury, health condition, or permanent restriction exists that may result in further injury to the batter who is otherwise physically able to play, (i.e., hit, throw, and field), but requires assistance getting from home to first base after successfully hitting a pitched ball. Managers shall agree on use of Rabbit Runners.
- a) Any member of that player's team may act as a surrogate “Rabbit” runner for the batter. The Rabbit need not be the same person for each at-bat.
  - b) If the “Rabbit” runner interferes with a play by a defensive player to first base or makes contact with first base, either in or out of fair territory, an out will be called.
  - c) The “Rabbit” runner will remain as the courtesy runner for the physically-disabled player and will continue as a base runner for that person until they are either called out on a play or they score.
  - d) “Rabbit” runners will adhere to the same restrictions as declared for Courtesy Base Runners above.
  - e) The “Rabbit” runner may only advance as far as second base following the initial hit unless the defense is “throwing the ball around.” If the ball is being thrown around, advancement to bases beyond second base is allowed but is done so at-risk of being put out by the defense or by the judgement of the umpire that the ball was not being thrown around. Being “thrown around” is a judgement call by the umpire and is not arguable.

## Half Century Plus Softball Inc. Playing Rules

### 23) **PLAYER POOLS/TEMPORARY PLAYERS:**

Temporary players are substitute players chosen by the requesting manager from available (not playing and not participating in the player pool) spectating players that are used to fill-in for late-arriving normal team players. These players are intended to be used for a short duration until the late player arrives and are of equal or lesser skill than the player they are replacing. If the opposing manager does not approve of the selected temporary player, the remaining sections of this rule apply. Other than the selection and approval of the temporary players, all other guidance in this section (i.e. maximum number of players, the need to bat at least once before being replaced, etc.) applies to both temporary and pool players.

There are two types of players' pools depending on needs of the teams playing:

- a) Pitcher Pool Description – A pool of league identified Pitchers that have demonstrated the ability to pitch and can fill in or substitute in the absence of a team's normal designated pitcher. Designated pitchers are those players who have been designated by the manager or approved by the Board. In the event that a team only needs to only fill its pitcher position (i.e. no participation in the General Pool) a team's lineup may contain greater than eleven players following the pitcher pool selection.
- b) General Pool Description– A pool of selected individuals that are available to fill team vacancies at the time of the game. The General Pool is conducted to provide each team with up to eleven players for each game, including their pool pitcher if one was selected.
- c) Player Pool Rules:
  - i. **All temporary player and pool selections** will be overseen by the League Vice President or his designee. To support an adequate pool size and composition, team Managers are responsible for notifying the League Vice President as to whether a pool pitcher and/or other pool players will be needed. Failure to provide this information by 2:00 pm on the day of the game will result in the Managers' team losing any preference in their order for selection of pool players.
  - ii. At ten minutes before the scheduled game is to begin and if teams require pool players, player pool selections will be conducted. Due to the unique skill set of the pool replacement pitchers, necessary pitcher pool selections are conducted prior to the general pool selection. Pool selections may be held earlier provided the Managers and League Vice President are in agreement.
  - iii. A combined total of up to three **temporary and** replacement pool players (pitchers and general players) is allowed per game per team to bring a team up to a maximum of eleven players. An exception is that a team's batting lineup may contain greater than eleven players if only a pool pitcher is needed.
  - iv. To maximize pool player participation, in both pool selections, interested pool players will be chosen to participate based on the following order:
    - (1) Preferred pool players\*.
    - (2) Pool players that are on a bye for that week\*

## Half Century Plus Softball Inc. Playing Rules

- (3) All other available pool players with candidates selected using playing cards to obtain needed quantity of candidates.

\*Preferred Pool Player status is for pool players who are not members of a team but will be considered preferred. They are assured to be picked as members of the selected pool players from the player pool to the extent that pool players are needed. Preferred pool and bye player preference only applies during the players' initial pool selection each gameday.

- v. Pool players or temporary players may be picked to play for late arriving players but they must then bat one time before the late team player late can. The late team member will then enter the game at the beginning of the next inning.
- vi. A manager may elect to field a team with ten members and not obtain a pool or temporary player if they expect their eleventh team member to arrive late for the game.
- (1) If pool or temporary players are available and the manager chooses not to fill the eleventh position, the line-up sheet must list eleven members of the team, (i.e., include the late-arriving eleventh team member).
- (2) If the absent player hasn't arrived for their time at bat as scheduled on the line-up sheet, an out will be called each time they are scheduled to bat.
- vii. A manager may choose to field only ten players when not expecting further team members to arrive and may submit a line-up sheet with only ten players listed. If a team member who is not on the line-up sheet arrives after the scheduled start time that player will not be allowed to play in that game. **Managers MUST make this choice before the pool player selections.**
- viii. If and only if there are not enough players available, a team may play with a minimum of seven players.
- ix. The order of temporary player and pool selections, both pitcher and general player, will be conducted based upon the team win percentage (last place to first place) at the time of the pool. Ties between team win percentages will be broken by the drawing cards.
- x. Pool pitchers will remain as pitcher throughout the game except in the case of their injury or sickness during the game (See Rule 7 Injured Players for rule on replacement of this player).
- xi. General pool and temporary players and may play in any field position.
- xii. All pool and temporary players may courtesy run for other players but have to bat in the bottom of the batting order.
- xiii. Managers may not contact any player not on their team by person or electronically to solicit them to pool for their team.

