

Diocese of Cleveland Slow-Pitch Softball Rules

Current A.S.A. slow pitch rules will be enforced unless exceptions are noted:

1. GENERAL

- A. Each team must furnish a scorekeeper. Scorekeepers should check the score periodically to ensure an accurate count.
- B. A continuous batting order of all available players must be used. Injured players will be skipped with no penalty.
- C. A team is permitted 10 defensive players: 4 outfield, 4 infield, one pitcher and one catcher.
 - a. All outfield players must play on the grass, two on each side of 2nd base.
 - b. 2 infield players must play on each side of 2nd base (no shifts).
 - c. The catcher must play in dead ball territory within 15 feet of home plate.
- D. **Each team must have two rostered female players for each game.**
 - a. **If a team does not have two rostered females for a game, they may still play, but will be charged an “out” at the end of their lineup each time through.**
 - b. **two female players are required to play the field each inning.**
- E. **Each rostered player must play two defensive innings per game.**
- F. Each game will start and end with prayer. Teams will line up on their respective foul line with hats removed for prayer. Teams will shake hands after game’s closing prayer.

2. THE PLAYING FIELD

- A. Bases will be 65 feet apart.
 - a. **Bases will feature a safety base to mitigate collisions. Either base may be used by either player during a play.**
- B. Pitching distance is 50 feet.
- C. Teams will establish ground rules prior to the game regarding out of play areas, permanent obstacles in the field of play, etc.

3. EQUIPMENT

- A. Closed-toe shoes are required. Gym or running shoes are recommended. Rubber training shoes and single molded plastic/rubber soccer-type cleats are permitted. Metal cleats or spikes of any type are not allowed.
- B. For a bat to be deemed legal it must have an approval stamp from a major softball certifier (ASA, USA, USSSA, etc.). It must be free of rough or sharp edges. Baseball bats and fungo bats are illegal.

4. PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES

- A. **All players must be properly registered with the team they are playing for. Substitutes or “guest players” must receive written authorization to play from the league commissioner at least 48 hours prior to the game to play. Player eligibility will be determined solely by the league commissioner.**
 - a. **Guest players are only permitted when a team fields 12 or less rostered players for a game.**

- i. **Exception: a female guest player is permitted, no matter the number of available players, to satisfy the female player requirement in rule 1-D.**
 - b. **Guest players are limited to 2 league appearances per season.**
 - c. **Guest players are not permitted in postseason play.**
 - d. **Guest players may only appear with one team during the season.**
 - e. **Guest players may not be rostered on another team in the league.**
 - f. **Guest players must bat last in the batting order.**
 - g. **Penalty: game will be forfeited if an illegal player is found.**
- B. **A team must have 8 players present to start the game.** Teams playing shorthanded will not be assessed outs for those spots in the batting order. Players arriving late may have their name added to the bottom of the order.
 - C. **Blood Rule.** A player who is bleeding, has an open wound, or has blood on the uniform shall be considered an injured player. Such players may not return to the game until the bleeding has stopped and the wound properly covered.
 - D. **"Shorthanded Rule".** If a player must leave the game and leaves an open spot in the order, that spot will be skipped with **no penalty**.

5. THE GAME

- A. The game will consist of 6 innings. In the event of rain or darkness, 4 innings or 3 1/2 if the home team is ahead, will constitute a game. A 15-run rule will be in effect after 3 innings and a 12-run rule after 4 innings.
- B. **Teams can score a maximum of 8 runs per inning in innings 1-3. Unlimited runs in innings 4-6.**
 - 1. **This rule will be waived in the 3rd inning for teams in jeopardy of being run-ruled.**
- C. **No new inning may be started after 65 minutes have elapsed from when the game began.**
- D. Base stealing is not allowed. Runners can leave their bases when a pitched ball is hit.
- E. Bunting is not allowed and will result in a dead ball with the batter being called out.
 - 1. **A bunt is a judgement call made by the umpire.**
- F. **Each batter will start with a 1-1 count. Two consecutive foul balls after a batter has received two strikes will result in an out.**

6. PITCHING

- A. At the beginning of each half-inning the pitcher will be permitted five warmup pitches.
- B. The pitch must have a minimum arc of **the batter's height**. The maximum allowable arc is 12 ft. from the ground. **If the pitch does not meet these requirements, an illegal pitch shall be called and a ball will be called on the batter.**
- C. The pitcher must deliver the ball in a continuous, underhand motion on the first forward swing of the pitching arm past the hip.
- D. A "strike" will be called when **any part** of the ball makes contact with home plate or its extension, or if, in the judgement of the umpire, the batter made an attempt to strike the pitch. Otherwise, the pitch will be deemed a ball.
 - a. **This extension will include a 2" width extender for each side of home plate.**

7. BATTING

The batter is out when:

1. A batter appears in the batter's box with, or is discovered using an altered or illegal bat. Baseball and fungo bats are illegal.
2. A batter receives his/her third strike. This can be a called strike or from a swing. Two consecutive foul balls after having achieved a two-strike count will be deemed an out.
3. The umpire declares a fair infield fly with base runners on first and second or on first, second, and third with less than two outs. This is called the infield fly rule. The ball remains alive and runners may advance at their own risk.
4. A fielder intentionally drops a fair fly ball that can be caught by an infielder, with ordinary effort, with first and second or first, second, and third bases occupied with less than 2 outs. The ball is dead and all runners return to the base they occupied at the time the ball was pitched.
5. The batter bunts. The ball is dead and all runners return to the base they occupied when the ball was pitched.
6. When any foot touches the ground completely outside the batter's box or if any part of the foot touches the plate and the ball is hit fair or foul.

8. RUNNER AND BATTER-RUNNER

- A. When a base runner must return while the ball is in play, he/she must touch the bases in reverse order.
- B. No runner may return to touch a missed base or one he/she had left illegally after a following runner has scored. The defense must appeal for the out to be granted.
- C. When a defensive player is in possession of the ball a runner may not crash into the defender. Sliding into a base is prohibited. Penalty: runner is out.**
- D. Baserunners may not begin a new baserunning advance when:
 - a. The pitcher is in possession of the ball within the vicinity of the mound **and**
 - b. The pitcher verbally requests time
- G. Injured Runner: If an accident to a batter-runner or base runner prevents him/her from proceeding in the game, a substitute runner (the last batted out) is permitted.

9. Conflicts

- A. If a rule/bookkeeping issue is raised, a written complaint (via e-mail) must be submitted to the commissioner within 24 hours for investigation. As much detail as possible should be included in the report.
- B. This is a recreational, Catholic league. Vulgar language, arguing with umpires/league staff, taunting, and other unsportsmanlike acts committed by players or fans are strictly prohibited. Any such behavior should be immediately reported to the league commissioner. Penalties, including forfeiture, suspension, and removal from the league may be assessed for any violation of this rule.**