

CENTRAL OHIO SENIOR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

LEAGUES (65's, 70's and 75's)

2023 PLAYING RULES

7-14-2023

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~~6-22~~-2023
7-14

The 2023 Official Guide and Rule Book of the Softball Players Association (SPA) including SPA Policies and Procedures, will be followed except for the following exceptions, modifications or clarifications. Unless otherwise indicated by the colors **Red (65's)** or **Blue (75's)**, the below rules apply to **ALL** leagues.

RULE 1 - DEFINITIONS:

- **PLAYER ELIGIBILITY:** To be eligible to play in the League a player must reach their birthday before the end of the calendar year. **(64 for the 65's League, 69 for the 70's League and 74 for the 75's League)**. Each player must pay the player registration fee, complete and sign the registration form and, if requested verify their information via a valid driver's license.
- **PLAYER INJURED DURING A SEASON:** If a player is injured, or physically unable to play during a playing season and is unable to return until the start of the next season, it is up to the discretion of the Team Manager to:
 - 1) Accept the player back onto the team roster, or;
 - 2) Place the returning injured player into the current season player draft.

Does not apply to 65's who draft new teams each year
- **PLAYER LEAVES TEAM:** If a roster player voluntarily leaves a team, during or after the end of a season of play, that player can only return to their originally drafted team or the departed player may re-enter the League's player draft after sitting out for a period of one-year.

Does not apply to 65's who draft new teams each year.
- **PLAYER TRADES:** Currently there are no provisions for Player Trades.

RULE 2 - THE PLAYING FIELD:

- **INFIELD FLY RULE:** The infield fly rule **will** be used for the **65** and 70's leagues. **75's will NOT USE the infield fly rule.**
- **GROUND RULES:** Team managers, and/or paid umpires, will establish any special ground rules as necessary before beginning a game.

RULE 3 - EQUIPMENT:

- **BATS:** Only SPA marked "Official Softball" with a Bat Performance Factor (BPF) of 1.21 or less may be used.

- **BALLS:** All balls shall be 12" SPA and 70's approved, marked "Official Softball", with a COR of .44 and a 375 Compression. Home teams will furnish all balls; having at least two balls available for play. A new ball shall be used for play whenever possible.
- **PITCHER SAFETY EQUIPMENT:** The Leagues recommend that pitchers wear a mask, heart protector and shin guards. Pitchers who choose not to wear, or use the recommended safety equipment, shall assume all risk and injury from batted balls.
- **USE OF ILLEGAL BAT:** Batter is suspended for 10 games. If the Batter does not own the bat, then the owner shall also be suspended for 10 games. If no one claims ownership, the Manager shall be suspended for 10 games. A second offense will result in a 20-game suspension, or at the discretion of the Division Commissioners, a lifetime player suspension for jeopardizing defensive player safety. **75's - Player using an illegal bat in a game shall be called out and the bat removed from the game.**

RULE 4 – PLAYERS & SUBSTITUTIONS:

- **PLAYER PARTICIPATION:** To encourage and promote Central Ohio Senior Softball, each player at the game, unless previously injured or ill, **shall be** placed in a continuous batting order. It shall be at the discretion of the manager as to when, where and how many innings a player plays in the field. *See Rule 5 for restrictions on pick-up players.*
- **PLAYER INJURY:** Any player leaving a game and unable to continue due to a Manager declared injury or illness, and who is scheduled to bat, **shall not** be recorded as an out for his time at bat. The removed player may not re-enter the game.
- **MISCONDUCT:** In keeping with SPA Rules, all Managers, Coaches, players, Umpires and Spectators are expected to act in a manner where sportsmanship is always practiced. Umpire judgment calls are not contestable; rules interpretations are contestable only by the team Manager. The following SPA rules, as modified herein, are hereby adopted by all leagues.
 - The display of abusive behavior in *any form* during the playing of a league event:
 - Using words or actions that will incite demonstrations.
 - Using any form of intimidation tactics (profanity, baiting, ridicule, etc.) in the taunting of any Umpire, or team and its members.
 - The use of any behavior that is not conducive to fair play. Fighting and/or leaving the bench area when a fight has broken out.
 - **Violations of Rule 4 are punishable** at the discretion of the League Commissioner, who may impose appropriate disciplinary corrective actions. And with an affirmative majority vote by the Board and League Team Managers, up to a lifetime suspension may be imposed in accordance with the Senior Players Association Official Rule Book; Acts of Disbarment or Suspension.

RULE 5 - THE GAME:

- **PARTICIPATION:** A team must be present at the field on the scheduled game date with a minimum of eight (8) team roster players to be considered as having "participated". Non-Participating teams (less than 8 Players) will be charged with a forfeit loss by a score of 7-0. Normal defensive teams are allowed twelve (12) players.
- **PLAYER UNIFORMS:** Each player must wear a team uniform shirt, or if filling in as a substitute, encouraged to wear a shirt of similar color.
- **PICK-UP PLAYERS:** A team with less than 10 eligible roster players on scheduled game dates, may pick-up a maximum of two (2) age qualified players. If a league has an uneven number of teams, players from the bye team should be considered for substitutions and must be approved by the League Commissioner or his designee".
- **REPLACEMENT OF INJURED PLAYERS DURING THE SEASON:**
Due to shortage of players, there will be **no sub list**. A team with 10 eligible roster players may pick-up one (1) player. Teams with 8 or 9 eligible rostered players may pick-up two (2) players.
Managers are responsible to secure necessary substitutes who must be approved the the League Commissioner or his designee.

Does not apply to 65's: Coaches have agreed that they will try to pick up players of similar skill to those that they are missing (A for an A, etc.) based on coaches' knowledge of sub skills.

- **ELEVEN PLAYER RULE:** A team with 11 players or less may play without a 12th player with no penalty. A team with 11 Players may use a Catcher from the opposing team, but must take an Out when the 12th position comes to bat. **A team with 12 roster players available may NOT use Pick-up players. Pick-up players must either Catch or play Right Field and bat last in the line-up. Penalty for violation of this rule is forfeit of the game in which the the player was improperly used.** Pick-up players are not permitted in the League Tournament games.

75's - a. With 11 players, agreement with the opposing Manager to borrow a catcher. He only catches and does not bat. No out is charged since the borrowed catcher does not bat.

b. 10 Players - The opposing manager may offer two two defensive players; catcher who will not bat and a right fielder (a B or C player) who will bat last for the team to which he is loaned.

c. 9 players - The discretion of the two Managers come into play. No A players will be offered.

- **RUNS:** A team can score only 5 runs in an inning. The "last inning" is an Open Inning with unlimited scoring. The "last inning" is the 7th of a 7 inning game, or as determined by the two Game Managers.
- **NO CATCHUP RULE.** However, if a team is ahead by 15 runs after 5 innings or 12 runs after 6 innings the game is considered complete.
- **FLIP/FLOP RULE:** The flip-flop rule will be invoked in any game when there is a 10-run differential in favor of the **visiting team** at the start of the open inning. What this means is that if the **home team** is *behind* by 10 or more runs going into the top of the 7th (or final inning), they will continue to bat for 3 more outs. The **visiting team** will remain on the field. After 3 outs are recorded in the bottom of the 6th, or 5 runs score, any base runners will be removed and the inning continues for 3 more outs. In the event the team who is behind catches up or goes ahead, the **visiting** team will then take their turn at bat.
75's will NOT use the flip/flop rule.
- **GAME TIME:** The established game time for the Over 70 League is 10:30-12:00 noon. In Hilliard, there is no "hard" end time requiring the game to end at noon. This will allow completion of most tied games. However, should a game extend past 12:30, and following the home team's turn at bat, the game will be declared a tie and count in the standings. **The 75's League will begin their games at 9:00 AM. No new inning shall start after 10:15 under normal circumstances to allow the 70's league to begin on time. 65's will begin their double headers at 10:00 AM.**
- **COMPLETE or SUSPENDED GAME:** Any game is considered a complete game after the losing team has batted 5 times. The League will endeavor to reschedule all games suspended before 4 innings are completed. Suspended games not rescheduled will be considered a non-played game.
- **TIE GAMES:** To break a tie each team starts the extra inning with a runner at 2nd base. The runner shall be the last batter from the previous inning that completed his turn at bat. No courtesy runner can replace the original 2nd base runner until he reaches 3rd base.

RULE 6 - PITCHING MODIFICATIONS: A pitch must be delivered with an arc 6-12' from the ground from a distance of no less than 50' nor more than 60' from within the width of the Pitching Rubber. If the pitch strikes any part of the Pitching Mat it is considered a Strike.

RULE 7 - BATTING:

- **PITCH COUNT:** Batter begins with a one (1) ball & one (1) strike count.

- **TWO STRIKE FOUL BALL:** First foul ball the batter is not out (one "free foul"). Note: Base runners may not advance on a third strike caught fly foul ball.
- **INTENTIONAL WALKS:** An intentional walk is defined as a player who is awarded 1st base without having received a pitch. A player can only receive **one intentional walk per game**. Further, if a player receives 3 straight balls without a strike (with the 1 & 1 count) he may accept the walk or continue to bat until a strike has been pitched. If the result of this strike is either a hit or out, that result will stand. After the strike, the batter loses the option to decline the walk and must accept the base on balls. However, should 4 additional pitches be delivered without a strike, the umpire shall declare a "game delay" and the pitcher shall be removed from his position for the remainder of the inning, at which point the batter will proceed to **2nd base**.
75's- No restrictions on intentional walks.

RULE 8 – BASERUNNING:

- **COURTESY RUNNER:** Prior to the first pitch to any batter, a "courtesy runner" may be used for a base runner at any base. Except as noted under "tie games" above (see rule 5), a courtesy runner may not be used more than once in an inning. **Upon touching the base, the courtesy runner is deemed to be a courtesy runner and may not be replaced by another courtesy runner except for injury or illness causing their permanent removal from the game.** If a courtesy runner is on base when it's that individual's turn at bat, he will be called out as a runner, and will immediately take his turn at bat. Out is charged to the original batter. If a courtesy runner is used and the runner is not eligible because he had already been used in that inning, or if illegally replacing another courtesy runner who is not injured or ill, the batter for whom the runner is substituted, will be **declared out** and the courtesy runner will be removed from the base.

See 75's below:

- A courtesy runner may be used for a base runner at any time. Any player on the team roster, whether or not they are in the lineup, may be used as a courtesy runner. The same player may serve as a courtesy runner an unlimited number of times per half inning. If a courtesy runner is on base when it is his turn to bat, he will bat with no penalty and another courtesy runner will take his place on base. Other than this exception, a courtesy runner may not be replaced by another courtesy runner except for injury or illness.**
- Any player sent in to run for an individual already on base (this means any player on first, second or third base). A courtesy runner for a batter who has just been awarded a base on balls should go directly to first base. Batter does not need to go to first.**

- **DOUBLE FIRST BASE:** When in play the batter-runner going to first base must use the first base portion extending into foul territory. The defense must use the portion in fair territory. A batter-runner may be tagged out by a defensive player prior to the batter runner reaching first base. It is an **Appeal Play** if Runner touches the wrong base. **Exception:** An errant throw causing the defense to field the ball in foul territory may use the foul portion of the bag in order to avoid contact with the runner. In this case the runner may use the fair portion of the bag without penalty of being called out.
- **BASE RUN THROUGH: No base run through**, except under the following circumstances: A runner must make every effort to avoid colliding with opposing players while running the bases or sliding into second or third base. If in the **umpire's judgment** a runner misses a base to avoid collision, the runner may **NOT** be called out if the umpire judges the runner would have otherwise been safe. More specifically, on a force play to second or third, a runner must either slide or "**peel off**" approximately 5 feet prior to and outside the base path to avoid a collision. A player who peels off will be ruled safe if the defender receiving the ball **drops the ball**. When a runner does not peel off and is thus ruled out, the defender must attempt to throw the ball to first base in order for the **batter** to be automatically called out for interference. The umpire is the sole judge of whether the attempt was adequate. **The base run through rule does not apply to the 75's League and the "Run Past Rule" continues to apply as follows: A runner who reaches a base safely and overruns it, may safely return without risk of being put out. However, if he overruns the base and then decides to advance to the next base, he must return to the base first. If he rounds the base and then decides to advance to the next base, he is out if tagged before returning to the base.**
- **SLIDING:** Base runner may slide going to any base, but not home plate, at their own risk. **75's - Should a player slide, except to return to a base, he will be declared out.**
- **PINCH RUNNER: 75's only - A pinch runner is defined as one running for an injured batter. He must start from the designated spot in the backstop and may not move until the ball is struck. The opposing Manager must be notified of any courtesy runner or pinch runner.**
 - a. **A pinch runner may be used for "so Designated Players" in need of a runner, who are less capable of safely running after batting. A pinch runner must start from behind the pole at a designated location in the backstop. A Manager must notify the opposing Manager as to which player(s) will have pinch runners. The pinch runner may remain on base or can be replaced by a courtesy runner if desired. A pinch runner may not advance beyond 1st base on a hit by the batter.**

b. A cone or marking shall be placed along the first base line 10 feet (approximately 3 steps) from the back of home plate. When the pinch runner is used, if the batter runs past the cone or marking, he will immediately be called out. With less than two outs, runners on base may continue running at their own risk. With two outs, the inning is over and no runners can score.

c. Outfielders must stay on the grass until the ball is hit. An outfielder fielding a ground ball may NOT throw to first to get a batter out, unless a pinch runner is used, but may throw to another base.

- **THIRD BASE COMMITMENT CONE:** A runner advancing from third base whose foot touches the ground on or past the commitment line, now located **30 feet from home plate**, must continue towards the runner's scoring plate and cannot re-cross the line in the direction of third base. Violation will result in the runner called out. A defensive player may retire the runner from third base only by having possession of the ball while touching the home plate mat after the runner has crossed the commitment line, but before he touches the scoring plate. A runner who has crossed the commitment line is not out if tagged by a defensive player. The runner shall be called out if the runner touches or crosses over of any portion of home plate or the strike zone mat.
- **EXTRA HOME PLATE:** An extra home place will be placed **8' from the Pitching Plate in line with the Right Field Foul Line. Runners touching regular home plate will be called out.**
- **PLAYER CONTACT/INTERFERENCE:** Runners shall be called out for contact interference with a defensive player, if the contact was deliberate or could have reasonably been avoided to minimize the contact. Runners have a greater responsibility to avoid collisions and contact. If the contact is determined to be flagrant, the offender shall be ejected from the game.
- **COACHES CONTACT:** Runners shall be called out if touched by a Base Coach during a normal game action.
- **OBSTRUCTION:** Obstruction shall be called when a defensive player makes contact with a runner, if in the judgment of the umpire the contact was deliberate or the defensive player could reasonably have been expected to minimize, or avoid contact, under the circumstance and failed to do so. **If the contact is deemed to be flagrant, the defensive offender shall be ejected from the game.**
- **FIRST AND THIRD BASE RULE:** For safety reasons, a runner on first or third base, may stand in foul territory during a pitch. The runner shall, however, return to said base prior to advancing to the next base. If the runner fails to return the base prior to advancing, the runner shall be called out.

- **BALL OUT OF PLAY:** Base runners are entitled to advance without liability to be put out when a thrown ball goes through an open gate in the fence, or a batted ball goes beyond the outfield foul line field of play. Each runner on base shall be awarded two (2) bases, the one they are going to, plus one. This is determined by the position of the runner at the time of the throw.

RULE 9 - DEAD BALL:

- **Ball is dead - Base runners may not advance.** Ball remains alive until umpire calls time out.

RULE 10 – UMPIRES:

- **HOME PLATE UMPIRE: When a paid umpire is not available for a game.** The Offensive Batting team shall provide the home plate umpire and a first base (field) umpire. The home plate umpire will call balls and strikes, safe or out plays at home plate and third base and fair or foul calls for balls hit down the foul lines.
- **FIELD UMPIRE: When a paid umpire is not available for a game.** The Field umpire shall call safe or out calls at first base and second and second base and can determine whether a batted ball is caught or trapped. The field umpire, with no runners on, should position himself in back of the defensive first baseman. When runners are on first and/or second, the field umpire should position himself right of second base. The field umpire should not interfere nor block the view of defensive players.
- **FIRST & THIRD BASE COACHES:** The offensive batting team may place coaches at first and third base to coach on-base team runners.

RULE 11 - GAME PROTESTS:

- **ALL PROTESTS will be decided by the League Commissioner and his designees.**