

## INTRODUCTION

### INTERCITY SENIOR CO-ED SOFTBALL LEAGUE RULES

June, 2019

The following rules were implemented by the Intercity Softball Committee with the intention of protecting the participants, promoting fair play and equitable competition, and preserving the recreational spirit of the league.

This set of regulations will not restate general baseball/softball rules, which govern adult softball. Furthermore, this set of regulations will not restate general slo-pitch softball rules which govern senior softball, unless stated otherwise. The Intercity Softball Committee has applied its own adaptations, which are listed here.

## CHANGES

### RULES CHANGED OR EMPHASIZED FOR 2019

**The game start time rule (1.2)** has been modified: Games will begin at 9:00 A.M. A second game on the same field will begin at the completion of the first one, or if before 10:30 when both managers are ready. In the case where only one game is scheduled, the start time will be 9:45 A.M.

**The mercy rule (1.7)** has been modified: A 4 run mercy rule for each half inning will apply, ending the half inning when that number of runs is scored. This will not apply in the final inning where there is no limit, except in the case of a team that is ahead by 15 or more, in which case the 4 run limit will apply to that team.

Additionally, a flip-flop may only be implemented if the manager from each team agrees to it.

**The bats rule (1.12)** has been modified: Bats used by men must be entirely of single wall aluminum alloy, no separate handle and barrel. No composite bats are allowed.

Umpires will inspect bats before the start of each game to determine if they are within the standard of the league. Bats must be kept openly near the on deck area, not in the dugout or in a bat bag.

Use of an illegal bat will result in the batter being ejected and all base runners returning to their previous base. A second violation in a game will result in forfeiting the game. Managers must take responsibility for assuring their team's compliance with the rule, and are subject to being suspended for a game if there are multiple violations in a season.

**The following section of the bats rule (1.12) has been modified, effective June 11, 2019:** {The use of non-standard bats by male players of any age is prohibited}

These bat restrictions do not apply to women players of any age, ~~or men 70 years of age or older (including men turning 70 later in the same year)~~, who are allowed to use any bat intended by the manufacturer for softball. Bats to be used only by women ~~or men 70 and over~~ will be clearly marked, such as with pink or red paint or a ribbon.

~~Men who are over 70 will be noted as such on the roster and lineup card.~~

**The protective mask rule (1.17)** has been modified: Catchers are strongly urged to wear masks, in part due to the strong throws made to home.

Pitchers are also strongly encouraged to wear a protective mask, due to potential line drives hit up the middle.

Pitchers and catchers who choose not to wear a protective mask must sign a waiver of liability prior to the start of the season. Team managers will present the waiver(s) to the umpire prior to the start of each game in which said player(s) will play, and the umpire will date and initial the page to confirm the player's choice to play without a protective mask.

**The rule for determining the playoffs and championship (1.19, formerly 1.20)** is changed.

Playoffs and Championship:

There will be 2 groups of 5 teams in the regular season, with 2 halves in the season. The playoffs will be split into 3 divisions.

The teams finishing 1st through 4th place in Group A will play in the Division 1 playoffs, while the 5th place team will play in the Division 2 playoffs, along with

the 1st and 2nd place teams from Group B. The teams finishing 3rd through 5th place in Group B will play in the Division 3 playoffs.

Semifinals:

Division 1 - 1st place plays 4th place; 2nd place plays 3rd place. Winners play for the championship.

Division 2 - the top seeded team has a bye, while the other 2 teams play in the semifinal game. The winner plays in the championship game against the top seed.

Division 3 - the top seeded team has a bye, while the other 2 teams play in the semifinal game. The winner plays in the championship game against the top seed.

**The roster rule (3.2)** has been modified: Teams will provide rosters to the league commissioner before the first league game. Men and women players can be added at any time, up until the final five games of the regular season.

Also, players may not be added for the playoffs or championship games.

Furthermore, players must have played in at least five games during the regular season to be eligible to play in the playoffs or a championship game.

A roster may have an unlimited number of players. Once on a roster, players may not switch to another team in the league (see rule 1.15).

**The rule on pinch runners (4.9)** has been modified: Pinch runners may be used after a batter reaches base, but only for players unable to run for themselves. Teams will specify on the lineups exchanged before the game those players that are unable to run for themselves (not to exceed 5 players). This is to encourage all teams to allow more players to do base running. Any player can only be a pinch runner once per inning. Each team is allowed two pinch runners per inning, but this number of runners per inning can be extended by mutual agreement between the managers in the meeting with the umpire before the game.

## **1. LEAGUE ORGANIZATION**

1.1 All players must be 50 years of age or older.

1.2 Games will begin at 9:00 A.M. A second game on the same field will begin at the completion of the first one, or if before 10:30 when both managers are ready. In the case where only one game is scheduled, the start time will be 9:45 A.M.

1.3 Paid umpires will be used, with the cost divided equally between the two teams.

1.4 Rules cannot be changed at or before game time. No changes in rules can be made except by the Intercity Softball League Committee.

1.5 The Intercity Softball Committee will appoint a League Coordinator, who will have discretionary authority to resolve issues regarding interpretation of the rules, official protests, or other game conflicts. The Coordinator is not authorized to make changes or additions to the rules without the concurrence of the Intercity Softball League Committee, other than as may be needed for clarification.

1.6 Games will be 7 innings, however no new inning will begin more than 1 hour and 20 minutes after the start of play. If a game is tied after 7 innings, extra innings will be played, within the time limit.

1.7 A 4 run mercy rule for each half inning will apply, ending the half inning when that number of runs is scored. This will not apply in the final inning where there is no limit, except in the case of a team that is ahead by 15 or more, in which case the 4 run limit will apply to that team.

Additionally, a flip-flop may only be implemented if the manager from each team agrees to it.

1.8 No mercy rule to end the game will be used, all games will end by completing 7 innings or by the time limit.

1.9 All players on a team will wear shirts with numbers on the back. The managers will exchange lineup cards, which include players' names and numbers in batting order, prior to the start of each game.

1.10 Only the manager of a team is allowed to discuss rule interpretations with the umpire.

1.11 Players are required to wear shoes with plastic or hard rubber cleats to prevent slipping. Metal cleats are not allowed.

1.12 Bats used by men must be entirely of single wall aluminum alloy, no separate handle and barrel. No composite bats are allowed.

Umpires will inspect bats before the start of each game to determine if they are within the standard of the league. Bats must be kept openly near the on deck area, not in the dugout or in a bat bag.

Use of an illegal bat will result in the batter being ejected and all base runners returning to their previous base. A second violation in a game will result in forfeiting the game. Managers must take responsibility for assuring their team's compliance with the rule, and are subject to being suspended for a game if there are multiple violations in a season.

These bat restrictions do not apply to women players of any age, ~~or men 70~~ years of age or older (including men turning 70 later in the same year), who are allowed to use any bat intended by the manufacturer for softball. Bats to be used only by women ~~or men 70 and over~~ will be clearly marked, such as with pink or red paint or a ribbon.

~~Men who are over 70 will be noted as such on the roster and lineup card.~~

1.13 The home team will provide game balls. The official ball is the Worth Super Gold Dot Classic, or other ball that meets the league standard of low compression (325 pounds or less), CR 0.40, and optic green color.

1.14 To speed up games, after the first inning pitchers will only be allowed 4 warm-up pitches each inning, unless there is a change of pitchers, and play will start when those are completed.

1.15 Players moving between teams – During the season players may not change teams other than in rare and exceptional circumstances. Between seasons such changes require the agreement of the original team, based upon the rosters at the end of the previous season.

1.16 To avoid forfeits, a team with less than the minimum 9 players, or less than 2 women, can use a borrowed player but only up to the minimum required numbers, and a borrowed player can only play RF or C, and bat at the end of the order. If this is done the other manager must be told before the game.

1.17 Catchers are strongly urged to wear masks, in part due to the strong throws made to home.

Pitchers are also strongly encouraged to wear a protective mask, due to potential line drives hit up the middle.

Pitchers and catchers who choose not to wear a protective mask must sign a waiver of liability prior to the start of the season. Team managers will present the waiver(s) to the umpire prior to the start of each game in which said player(s) will play, and the umpire will date and initial the page to confirm the player's choice to play without a protective mask.

1.18 Catchers making a putout at home may step on any part of the plate or mat.

1.19 Playoffs and Championship:

There will be 2 groups of 5 teams in the regular season, with 2 halves in the season. The playoffs will be split into 3 divisions.

The teams finishing 1st through 4th place in Group A will play in the Division 1 playoffs, while the 5th place team will play in the Division 2 playoffs, along with the 1st and 2nd place teams from Group B. The teams finishing 3rd through 5th place in Group B will play in the Division 3 playoffs.

Semifinals:

Division 1 - 1st place plays 4th place; 2nd place plays 3rd place. Winners play for the championship.

Division 2 - the top seeded team has a bye, while the other 2 teams play in the semifinal game. The winner plays in the championship game against the top seed.

Division 3 - the top seeded team has a bye, while the other 2 teams play in the semifinal game. The winner plays in the championship game against the top seed.

## **2. FIELD MARKINGS**

2.1 A strike zone mat will extend from the rear of home plate, making the total dimensions of home plate plus the mat 21 inches wide and 35 inches long.

2.2 A 6 foot no return line will extend from the third base line into foul territory, at the half way point (30 feet) from home plate, and similar half way lines will be drawn between 1st and 2nd, and 2nd and 3rd.

2.3 A scoring line will extend 6 feet, starting from the outside rear corner of the right handed batters box and extending into foul territory, running parallel to the first base line.

2.4 First base will be a double size base, with the half to be used by the fielder in the normal position, and the other half extending into foul territory, to be used by base runners going from home to first. Whether or not a double base is available, it will be supplemented or replaced by a 3 foot line extending from first base into foul territory.

2.5 A line 3 feet wide across the front of the pitcher's box will mark the bottom of the zone through which hard hit balls are automatic outs (rule 5.6). The pitcher is allowed to pitch from up to 4 feet behind the pitching rubber.

2.6 Small red cones or other markings will be placed on the left and right field lines to identify the co-ed line. They will be at 120 feet, which is twice the distance from home plate to 1st or 3rd.

## **3. TEAM DEFINITIONS**

3.1 A team must have a minimum of 9 players.

3.2 Teams will provide rosters to the league commissioner before the first league game. Men and women players can be added at any time, up until the final five games of the regular season.

Also, players may not be added for the playoffs or championship games.

Furthermore, players must have played in at least five games during the regular season to be eligible to play in the playoffs or a championship game.

A roster may have an unlimited number of players. Once on a roster, players may not switch to another team in the league (see rule 1.15).

3.3 Defensively, a team will consist of from 9 to 11 players, of which at least 3 must be women. In a case where a team has only 2 women players available for a game, that team will use 10 in the field, rather than 11, including the 2 women.

3.4 For games where one team has less than the minimum of two women, or less than the minimum of 9 players, the game will still be played as a practice game, evening up the teams as necessary, although the result will be a forfeit for the league standings. There is an option to avoid the forfeit using a borrowed player under certain conditions, see rule 1.16.

For games that are forfeited for any reason, the teams and the umpire are expected to play the game anyway, since it is still an official part of the Inter-City League program.

3.5 If both teams have less than two women and the borrowed player option is not used, the game is canceled for the purpose of the league standings. The game will still be played as a practice game, but the result will not be counted in the league standings.

3.6 Games that are canceled, or rained out, may be rescheduled at the discretion of the League Coordinator.

3.7 Women players must appear in the batting order as follows – at least one within the first four batters in the order, at least one within the second four, and the rest of the women (if there are more than two women) anywhere at the option of the team. The same batting order must be followed throughout the game.



3.8 All players in the lineup for a game must play at least two full innings in the field defensively (not a combination of partial innings). Free substitution is allowed defensively.

3.9 Players arriving late for a game can, at the option of the team's manager, be added to the lineup, but must be placed at the end of the batting order.

3.10 No more than 4 players, other than the pitcher and catcher, can be positioned in the infield area. The remaining players must be positioned in the outfield area.

3.11 In the outfield only one player, who must be female, can be positioned inside the "co-ed" line when a woman is batting.

3.12 When a player leaves the game, due either to injury, ejection, or leaving early, that place in the batting order will be an out the next time it comes up, then is just skipped over after that.

#### **4. BASE RUNNERS**

4.1 Base runners are responsible for avoiding collisions with defensive players. When approaching home plate, runners must run to the scoring line and avoid home plate completely – failure to do so will result in the runner being called out.

When running to first base, runners must use the base extension or line, subject to being called out, but are allowed to run to the right of the extension if it is for the purpose of avoiding contact with the fielder.

When running to 2nd or 3rd base, runners are allowed to run past the base, and as far from the base as is necessary to avoid contact with the fielder.

Runners returning to a base, after starting toward the next base, can run by the base just as they do when coming to the base from the preceding one.

4.2 Base runners will not be called out for running to the side of and/or past, rather than to a base, as long as no attempt is made in the direction of the next base. Runners who have run past 2nd or 3rd base must return and touch (or retouch) the base before continuing to the next base. This does not apply at 1st base.

Base runners running past a base must run to the side opposite from the direction from which a thrown ball will come, to avoid interfering with the throw, with the exception of when the runner is clearly making an attempt to avoid a fielder who has moved to that side.

4.3 Base runners that collide with a fielder will be called out, at the discretion of the umpire, and in cases of severe collisions are subject to ejection from the game. If contact by a base runner interferes with a fielder's opportunity to attempt a throw to another base, the runner at that other base will also be called out.

4.4 Vocal intimidation by base runners is not allowed, subject to being called out.

4.5 A runner cannot leave the base until the ball is hit or the ball crosses the plate, subject to being called out.

4.6 Stealing bases is not allowed.

4.7 Sliding is not allowed.

4.8 No tagging or other physical contact with runners is allowed by fielders. All plays at bases and home plate are treated as force outs, so the fielder touches the base instead of tagging the runner. An attempt to tag a runner is considered interference by the fielder, so the runner is automatically safe.

4.9 Pinch runners may be used after a batter reaches base, but only for players unable to run for themselves. Teams will specify on the lineups exchanged before the game those players that are unable to run for themselves (not to exceed 5 players). This is to encourage all teams to allow more players to do base running. Any player can only be a pinch runner once per inning. Each team is allowed two pinch runners per inning, but this number of runners per inning can be extended by mutual agreement between the managers in the meeting with the umpire before the game.

4.10 A commitment line will exist half way between 1st and 2nd, between 2nd and 3rd and between 3rd and home, and once passed by a runner, the runner may not return to the preceding base, with the exception of rule 4.11.

4.11 A runner may pass a commitment line and return to the previous base if a fly ball is caught by an outfielder.

4.12 If a runner is called out for passing a commitment line and returning to the previous base, the play does not end if there are also other runners, unless that was the third out.

4.13 Batters running to first base cannot be thrown out at first by an outfielder or rover, or by a relay from an outfielder or rover through an infielder.

4.14 When there is no play at a base, fielders must allow runners access to continue, otherwise it is interference.

## **5. BATTING**

5.1 A strike is a pitch which, in the judgment of the umpire, travels at least 6 feet but no more than 12 feet above the ground, and lands on home plate or the home plate extension, or a pitch swung at and missed, or a foul ball.

5.2 After there are two strikes on a batter, one foul ball is allowed, and a second foul ball is a third strike.

5.3 An intentional walk can be awarded to a batter at any time, by being announced by the pitcher.

5.4 A male batter receiving a walk on four pitches (no strikes), or an intentional walk, will be awarded two bases, if the following batter is a woman.

5.5 Bunting is not allowed.

5.6 Balls hit in the direction of the pitcher which in the judgment of the umpire are hit hard enough, and close enough to the pitcher, to be a potential hazard are automatic outs.