

2024 INTERCITY SENIOR CO-ED SOFTBALL LEAGUE RULES

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INTRODUCTION

The following rules were implemented by the Inter-City Coed Senior Softball League Committee (ICSSLC) 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 slow-pitch softball rules which govern senior softball, unless stated otherwise. The ICSSLC has applied its own adaptations, which are listed herein.

Latest Rule Changes for 2024 (shown in red)

Refer to official rule paragraphs for completeness.

1.1a League Management. League management process added to replace commissioner with five-person Board of Governors.

1.1b Gender composition of Board positions defined. [Rev. 2 change]

3.1 Team Rosters. Managers shall provide complete team rosters to the Board before the first League game. All future additions to the rosters must be submitted to the Board of Governors before the player plays in a game. If an illegal player plays in a game, that game may be forfeited following decision by the Board of Governors.

3.15a, 3.15b Postponed and Cancelled Games. All games must be accounted for with a result declared by an umpire on the field. Forfeiture issues other than on the field will be determined by the Board of Governors.

The schedule shall include blank, placeholder weeks to accommodate makeup games that will be played ASAP and before playoffs begin.

5.11 Intimidating Players. Added the following statement: The League is open to all eligible players and does not tolerate harassment or inappropriate conduct.

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1. INTER-CITY SOFTBALL LEAGUE ORGANIZATION

1.1a League Management: The ICSSLC shall appoint a **five**-member Board of Governors, which will have discretionary authority to resolve issues regarding interpretation of the rules, official protests or other game conflicts. The Board is not authorized to make changes or additions to the rules without majority vote of team managers. Service shall be for **two** years plus one-year extensions in perpetuity, unless replaced. New nominations shall be accepted at the end of each season. By majority vote, new candidates, if any, shall replace term-limited sitting members or any member who steps down. Otherwise, new candidate must wait for a seat to become open.

1.1b Three Board positions shall be reserved for male members; two positions shall be reserved for female members.

1.2 Age Requirement: All players must be 50 years of age or older.

1.3a Line-up Sheets: All players on a team shall wear shirts with numbers on the back. Prior to the start of each game, managers shall exchange line-up cards, which include, in batting order, players' names, jersey numbers, and designations for the following: men aged 70+, players needing runners and designated hitters-only.

1.3b Team managers shall supply line-up sheets in duplicate. Prior to each game, one copy will be given to the opposing team; one copy to the umpire; and the manager will keep one copy. This will be used to track player activity to ensure that players have played in at least five games to be eligible to play in the playoffs.

1.4 Umpires: Paid umpires will be used, with the cost divided equally between teams. Umpires shall solicit assent from each team manager of compliance for game balls & bats before the game starts.

1.5 Schedule: A league schedule shall be published showing week-by-week matchups, start times and field designations for the half-season or entire season. The home team shall be assigned to the third base side dugout.

1.6 Start Times: 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 before 10:30 if both managers are ready. In the case where only one game is scheduled, the start time will be 9:45 a.m. A 10-minute grace period will be allowed in the first game of the day.

1.7 Time Limit: Game duration shall be seven 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 seven innings, extra innings may be played, but only within the time limit.

1.8 Rule Changes: Rules cannot be changed at or before game time. No changes in rules can be made except by the ICSSLC.

1.9 Team Spokesperson: Only the manager of a team shall be allowed to discuss rule interpretations with the umpire.

1.10 Flip Flop: A flip-flop may only be implemented if the manager from each team agrees to it.

1.11 Warm-up Pitches: To speed up games, pitchers shall only be allowed four warm-up pitches per inning after the first inning, unless there is a change of pitchers.

1.12a Run Limits: A 4-run mercy rule for each half inning shall 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.

1.12b Unless in accordance with Par. 1.13a, games shall not end via a mercy rule. All games shall end by completing seven innings or by the time limit.

1.13 Borrowed Player: To avoid forfeits, a team with less than the minimum 9 players, or less than two women, can use a borrowed player from any team in our league, but only up to the minimum required numbers. Per managers' consent beforehand, the borrowed player can only play RF or C, and must bat at the end of the order.

1.14 Switching Teams: During the season players may not change teams other than in rare and exceptional circumstances and with consent of the Board and both team managers. Between seasons such changes require the agreement of the original team, based upon the rosters at the end of the previous season.

1.15 Play-offs: The suggested rules for play-offs shall apply to separate subgroups or the entire league per the Board's ruling. The team with best over-all record for the entire season will sit out while #2 and #3 ranked teams play in a one-off semi-championship. The winner of that game shall then play the #1 team in a one-off for the Championship Finals.

2. EQUIPMENT & FIELD MARKINGS

2.1 Impact-Protective Face Masks: Use of protective masks are mandatory for catchers. They are also mandatory for pitchers unless a pitcher's net or screen is used.

2.2 Pitcher's Box: A chalk line 6 feet wide (nominally) across the front of the pitcher's box shall mark the bottom of the zone through which hard hit balls are ruled as automatic outs when no pitching screen is used.

2.3a Pitching Screen: A pitching net or screen may be used by either or both teams. Dimensions of the screen shall be 3 to 4 feet in width and 6-1/2 to 7 feet in height.

2.3b Any pitcher using a screen shall be exempt from wearing an impact-protective face mask.

2.3c Placement of the screen shall be positioned directly in front of the pitcher's rubber and offset left or right to allow the pitcher to pitch around one side or the other. The screen must always remain within the chalk lines of the pitcher's box. Either way, the only protected region is the area behind the screen.

2.4 First Base: First base will be a double size base, with the white half to be used by the fielder in the normal position, and the orange half extending into foul territory, to be used by base runners going from home to first. If a double base is unavailable, it will be supplemented or replaced by a 3-foot line extending from first base into foul territory.

2.5 Home Plate: 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.

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

2.7a Bats: Bats used by men between 50 and 69 must be entirely of single wall aluminum alloy (one piece) with no separate handle and barrel. No composite bats are allowed for men in this age group.

2.7b Bats used by men aged 70-plus may be composite or any other construction designated for softball by bat manufacturers. However, these bats must be marked or tagged with a vivid identifier the same as women's composite bats (ref. 2.7e).

2.7c Bats must be displayed openly along the fence near the on-deck area throughout the game, not in the dugout. However, bats may be kept in a bat warmer in this open area but must be removed for umpire/managers inspection.

2.7d Use of an illegal bat will result in the batter being ejected and all base runners returning to their previous bases. 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.

2.7e Women's Bats: These bat restrictions do not apply to women players, who are allowed to use any bat intended by the manufacturer for softball. Composite bats used by women or 70-plus men shall be clearly marked with bright pink or bright red tape or ribbon 1-2 inches in width (nominally). No other bats shall have these markings.

2.8 Game Balls: The home team shall provide a game ball, and the visiting team, a backup ball to the umpire. Acceptable game balls shall be the Worth Super Gold Dot Classic or any softball listed below that meets specifications of 325 pounds or less, a CR of 0.40, and is optic green or optic yellow in color.

	Brand	Mfr. Model #	Association	Dia. (in.)	Compression (lbs)	CR
1	Worth Super Gold Dot Classic	UC12CYXTG		12	325	0.40
2	Worth Pro-TAC Classic M12"	UC12SY	USSSA	12	325	0.40
3	Dudley SY Classic M	4U-541Y	USSSA	12	325	0.40
4	Demarini Razzo Classic M	WTDRZMS12UB	USSSA	12	325	0.40
5	Baden "Fire" Classic M	None Listed	USSSA	12	325	0.40

Cores must be "poly" or synthetic (hard plastic polymers), not cork (mush balls).

CR: coefficient of restitution (bounce or rebound ability)

2.9 No-Return Line: A 6-foot no return line shall extend from the third base line into foul territory at the halfway point (32.5 feet) from home plate, and similar halfway lines will be drawn between 1st and 2nd, and 2nd and 3rd.

2.10 Scoring Line: A scoring line shall extend 6 feet, starting from the outside rear corner of the right-handed batter's box and extending into foul territory, running parallel to the first base line.

2.11 Co-ed Line: Small red cones or other markings shall be placed on the left and right field lines to identify the co-ed line. They shall be placed 130 feet from home plate, which is twice the distance from home plate to 1st base or 3rd base.

3. TEAM DEFINITIONS

3.1a Team Rosters: Managers are required to submit complete team rosters to the Board of Governors before the first league game, which shall include verified ages of their players based on ID checks. Men and women players can be added at any time, up until the final five games of the regular season. **All in-season additions to rosters must be submitted to the Board before said players play in a game. If an illegal player plays in a game, that game may be forfeited following a decision by the Board.** Players may not be added for the playoffs or championship game.

3.1b A roster may have an unlimited number of players.

3.2 Minimum #Games: 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.

3.3 Designated Hitters: At the beginning of each game, team managers shall be allowed to select up to two designated hitters, age 65-plus, who will not be required to play defense. This will generally be players whose defensive skill have declined due to age. This rule does not apply to players who are injured and should not be playing at all. (Paragraph 3.5 shall still apply on defense.)

3.4 Minimum Line-up: A team must have a minimum of 9 players, including two women.

3.5 Defensive Numbers: Defensively, a team shall consist of 9 to 11 players, of which at least three must be women. In a case where a team has only two women players available for a game, that team shall use 10 in the field, rather than 11, including the two women.

3.6 Practice Games: For games where one team has less than the minimum of two women, or less than the minimum of 9 players, the game shall 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 (ref. 1.13).

3.7 Female Batters: Women players must appear in the batting order as follows – at least one within the first four batters, 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 manager. The same batting order must be followed throughout the game.

3.8 Infielders: No more than four players, other than the pitcher and catcher, can be positioned in the infield area. The remaining players must be positioned in the outfield area.

3.9a Outfielders: Unless the batter is female, infielders may be positioned in the outfield area and still execute plays to first base from that position.

3.9b When a woman is batting, only one outfielder, who must be female – and no infielders - can be positioned inside the co-ed line. After the ball is hit, all players are allowed to move anywhere on the field.

3.10 Minimum Defensive Innings: Except for designated hitters, all players in the line-up 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.

3.11 Late Arrivals: Players arriving late for a game may, at the option of the team's manager, be added to the lineup, but must be placed at the end of the batting order, and their names must be in the batting order at the start of the game.

3.12 Injuries: 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.

3.13 Forfeits: When games 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 InterCity Softball League program. It is mandatory that all games be accounted for with a result declared. If a team is unable to play at the scheduled starting time, that team will be assessed a forfeit. If a game is cancelled due to weather or illness, that game must be replayed or a tie declared.

3.14a Postponed and Canceled Games: If both teams have less than two women and the borrowed player option is not used, the game shall either be replayed or a tie declared. The game shall still be played as a practice game, but the result will not be counted in the league standings.

3.14b All games must be accounted for with a result declared by an umpire on the field. Forfeiture issues other than on the field will be determined by the Board of Governors. Games that are postponed, rained out or canceled may be rescheduled by the Board. Blank, placeholder weeks shall be planned into the schedule to accommodate the completion of rescheduled games ASAP and before playoffs, if applicable.

4. BATTING

4.1 Pitcher Location: The pitcher is allowed to pitch from up to 4 feet behind the pitching rubber.

4.2 Strikes: A strike is a pitch which, in the judgment of the umpire, travels at an elevation of 6 to 12 feet above the ground, and lands on home plate or the home plate extension; or a pitch is swung at and missed, or it is ruled a foul ball.

4.3 Gotta-Be: After there are two strikes on a batter, one additional foul ball is allowed; a second foul ball is a third strike.

4.4 Intentional Walk: An intentional walk can be awarded to a batter at any time, by being announced by the pitcher.

4.5 Two-Base Walks: 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 female.

4.6 Bunts: Bunting is not allowed. (This does not apply to swinging bunts.)

4.7a Hits Up the Middle: When there is no pitcher's net or screen, 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.

4.7b When the pitcher moves outside of this box to field a hit ball, he or she is treated as a regular infielder.

4.7c If the net is used, any part of the pitcher's body outside of the screen is treated as a regular infielder (even within the chalk lines).

4.7d Hit Ball-Net Impacts: When a hit ball impacts any part of the screen or its structure, an automatic out shall be called. Swinging bunts or soft hits that are fielded before they hit the screen shall be played as a live ball. (Regular bunts are not allowed.)

4.8 Thrown Ball-Net Impacts: When a thrown ball impacts any part of the screen structure, it shall be considered a live ball. The screen is considered part of the field.

5. BASE RUNNERS

5.1 Runner Responsibility: 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.

5.2 Home Plate Outs: Catchers making a put-out at home may step on any part of the plate or mat.

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

5.4 Overrunning 1st Base: 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.

5.5 Base Path Immunity: 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. [See 3.9a for infielders stationed in the outfield.]

5.6 Overrunning 2nd & 3rd: 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.

5.7 Returning to Bases: Runners returning to a base, after starting toward the next base, can run past the base just as they may when approaching the base from the preceding one.

5.8 Retouching Bases: 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 re-touch) the base before continuing to the next base. This does not apply at 1st base.

5.9 First & Third Bases Safety Step-offs: Runners at first base and third base may step off the base towards foul territory to avoid line drive balls to these corners. Once the ball is in play, the runner must retouch the base before attempting to advance.

5.10a Runner Interference: To avoid interfering with a throw, base runners running past a base must run to the side opposite from the direction from which a thrown ball is coming, with the exception of when the runner is clearly making an attempt to avoid a fielder who has moved to that side.

5.10b When there is no play at a base, fielders must allow runners access to continue, otherwise it is interference.

5.10c Base runners who collide with a fielder can 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.

5.11 Intimidating Players: **The League is open to all eligible players and shall not tolerate harassment or inappropriate conduct.** Vocal intimidation by base runners is not allowed, subject to being called out.

5.12 Stealing Bases: Stealing bases is not allowed.

5.13 Sliding: Sliding is not allowed.

5.14 Tagging: 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, making that runner automatically safe.

5.15a Pinch Runners: 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 who 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.

5.15b Any qualified player can only be a pinch runner once per inning.

5.15c Each team is allowed two pinch runners per inning, but this number of runners per inning can be extended by mutual agreement between managers during pre-game consultation with the umpire.

5.16a Commitment Lines: A commitment line will exist halfway 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 5.16.

5.16b If a runner rounds a base and makes an attempt to advance to the next base but does not cross the commitment line, he/she must return to the previous base ahead of the defense's play to that base.

5.16c Exception: A runner may pass a commitment line and return to the previous base if a fly ball is caught by an outfielder.

5.16d Play-on: 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.