

Sun City Peachtree Softball Club



2024 Local Rules for League Play

Adopted March 7, 2024 – Spring Season

The Club Rules contained herein supplement and supersede the rules contained in the most recent edition of the **Senior Softball-USA (SSUSA) Rule Book**. Each individual league within the SCP Softball Club may in turn supplement or supersede Club Rules and certain SSUSA Rules for its own benefit prior to each season by written request to the Board of Directors at its last meeting prior to the start of the season.

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SECTION 1 • CLUB RULES

1.1. UNIFORMS

All players on a team shall properly wear the league-provided jersey. In addition, athletic pants, athletic shorts, sweatpants or skorts in a black color are preferred, but a player may substitute a gray color due to temperature or supply issues.

1.2. PITCHING SCREEN

In the interest of safety, a pitching screen is **mandatory** for all pitchers. Pitchers are strongly urged to move and remain completely behind the screen after the pitch is released.

- A. The pitching screen must be placed entirely within the designated space that is marked directly in front of the pitching area. The midpoint of the screen can be moved no further left or right than the outer edge of the pitching box. This will maximize the safety of the pitcher and keep the screen from being used for unfair defensive purposes.
- B. If a standard rectangular screen is being used, the ball must be pitched from the side corresponding to the pitcher's throwing arm (facing home plate).
- C. If an L-shaped screen is being used, the cut-out portion of the screen will align with the pitcher's throwing arm (facing home plate), and the pitch will be delivered over the low portion of the screen and through the cut-out portion.
- D. Any pitch delivered with the screen not in a legal position will be declared a "ball". If a pitcher refuses to place the screen in the correct position, the home plate umpire will notify the player's manager and remove the pitcher from the pitching position.
- E. After a legal delivery, a pitched ball that contacts any part of the pitching screen prior to reaching the batter will be considered a dead-ball illegal pitch and a "ball" shall be called on the batter.
- F. Any batted ball that strikes any part of the pitching screen prior to coming in contact with a defensive player shall be ruled a dead-ball no-pitch.
- G. Any thrown ball that comes in contact with the screen is a live ball and runners may advance at their own risk.
- H. The screen shall not be moved or tipped over to facilitate defensive plays, including throws. If the screen is intentionally moved by the defense while the ball is in play and, in the umpire's judgment interfered with the play, the umpire shall award such bases to runners as would have been reached had the screen not been moved.

1.3. BATS

The Club will furnish a wide variety of bats for member use. Members may also use personal bats.

- A. Safety is the highest priority for the Club, and ALL bats must meet the following four criteria before being eligible for use in any Club-sponsored activities:
 - 1. **CERTIFICATION:** Bats must display a certification stamp for either the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) or USA Softball (USA).
 - 2. **COMPRESSION:** all bats will conform to the USA/ASA barrel compression standards for slow-pitch softball bats, which is a minimum of 1450 psi using a certified bat compression test (BCT). Alternatively, if the bat is of a non-linear construction and appears on the

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current USA Softball Certified Softball Bat exception list, that compression cutoff reading will determine if the bat is eligible for use.

3. SPECIFICATIONS: no bat may exceed 34 inches in length nor 30 ounces in weight.

4. INTEGRITY: bats will be free from unusual markings, cracks, or any other defects that might impact performance.

The Club will inspect and test all newly acquired bats (Club and personal) and will mark all bats in such a manner to allow for umpires to readily identify approved bats. The club will provide the testing equipment and sufficient opportunities for members to have the inspection and compression test performed on personal bats prior to the beginning of club activities each year. In the absence of a defined periodic testing schedule, the Club reserves the right to implement a program to randomly test member bats. If a bat is deemed illegal for Club use, the member may provide a written appeal to the board providing documentation and proof of why the bat would still meet the safety standards set forth by USA/ASA.

B. The head umpire or league coordinator has the prerogative to question the performance of any bat. If during game play, the bat will be immediately removed from play and given to a Board member for testing. The bat will be tested in a timely manner and a report of the results provided to the member. If the bat is found to not meet the minimum requirements of the Club, the member will be told the bat can no longer be used in Club-sponsored events. Any previous markings identifying the bat as approved will be removed.

C. Other than grip tape, it is illegal to modify a bat once it leaves the manufacturer. Regardless of whether the modifications are made by retailers, distributors, third parties, or by the owner, altered bats are ILLEGAL for use in Club-sponsored practices, scrimmage games, league play, or tournaments. Modifications such as "shaving", "corking", additional "end-loading", etc. are a potential danger.

D. Any intentional attempt to use an illegally altered bat or one that has not been approved by the Club will result in an immediate forfeit by the player's team if used during game play. The member will be immediately suspended for the remainder of the current season. Any subsequent attempt to use an illegal or non-approved bat will result in a 5-year (10-season) suspension from the Club.

1.4. GAME PARTICIPATION

A. A player may not sit out of a game defensively for more than the number of innings as prescribed by each league.

B. A player included on the game-day lineup provided to the scorekeeper and/or opposing manager, arriving after play has begun, will be allowed to enter the game, provided the player arrives before his team's fourth inning at bat. The late arriving player shall bat in their position in the lineup. The missing player will be charged with an out for each at-bat prior to their arrival.

C. Only players listed on the game-day lineup provided to the scorekeeper and/or opposing manager will be eligible to play.

D. If a manager procures a substitute for any roster player and the roster player arrives at the game, the roster player may NOT enter the game.

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1.5. SUBSTITUTE PLAYERS

- A. All substitutes must be active members of the SCP Softball Association, registered for the current season, and either on an active team roster or a qualified member of an established substitute pool.
- B. A team is permitted to choose substitutes from the other teams or the substitute pool within the same league for players that are missing, at the manager's discretion. League rules specify at what point a manager may obtain a substitute and how many substitutes they may use for a game.
- C. If a manager fails to field a "complete team" according to league rules, all unused lineup spots will have an automatic out recorded each at bat. Managers may employ the missing slot(s) at any point in the original lineup at their discretion.
- D. Managers may select a substitute player from the same substitution group for which the missing player is slotted. If no player from that group is available, the manager may select from any group lower than the group of the player to be replaced. In no case shall a substitute player be chosen from a higher group than the player to be replaced.
- E. A team manager may not use the same substitute player more than the number of times specified in the league rules. If a post-season tournament is held, this count resets to zero and a team may not use the same substitute more than one time during the tournament.
- F. The manager must notify the league coordinator and the opposing manager 24 hours prior to game time for any possible substitutions. The notification will include both the player(s) being replaced and the player(s) that will replace them. The league coordinator will confirm that all substitute players are valid.
 - 1. Once the 24-hour advance notice has been given to the league coordinator of the intent to use a substitute player, that substitute will be provided with the opportunity to play.
 - 2. If an emergency of any sort occurs that would preclude the substitute from playing, the League Coordinator may authorize the original player or another substitute to be placed in the lineup.
- G. All substitute players must sit the same number of innings defensively as the maximum innings sat by any roster player for that team.
- H. All substitute players will bat last in the rotation. If there is more than one substitute, the manager may decide the order, but all substitutes must be placed at the end of the rotation.
- I. Substitute players must wear a uniform shirt of the team being played for or his/her own team shirt.

1.6. COURTESY/PINCH RUNNERS

- A. If extra innings are required, then the pinch runners will be allowed to run ONCE again until the conclusion of the game.
- B. If a pinch runner is on base when his/her time comes up to bat, the pinch runner player will be declared out at bat and will remain on base.

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- C. If all available pinch runners have run once and there is still a need for a pinch runner, the manager may elect to take an out for the player needing a runner after he/she has batted or leave the player on base.
- D. Managers will alert the scorekeeper, umpire, and opposing team manager when a courtesy/pinch runner is inserted into a game. Managers will be responsible for keeping up with those who they have used as pinch runners, as well as those used by the opposing team. The scorekeeper cannot be asked.
- E. If a pinch runner inserted into a game has already run the maximum allowable times for that league, then the player the pinch runner was designated to replace will be declared out. This is an appeal play by the opposing manager. The home plate umpire will consult with the scorekeeper to make a ruling.

1.7. GAME PLAY

- A. For a game to be official, each team must have at least nine (9) players, including substitutes. Fewer than nine (9) players will result in a forfeit for that team. If neither team can field at least nine (9) players, it will result in a double forfeit with each team being given a loss for that game.
- B. A maximum of eleven (11) players may play defense, including one (1) pitcher, one (1) catcher, no more than four (4) infielders, and no more than five (5) outfielders.
- C. On offense each available team player listed on the roster must bat in rotation.
- D. Bat boys or bat girls will not be allowed due to safety concerns.
- E. The Infield Fly Rule will not be in effect. Intentional dropping of a fly ball will be at the discretion of the umpires.
- F. All league games will be played with a time limit of 65 minutes, plus the open (unlimited run) inning.
- G. Scorekeepers will notify the home plate umpire immediately upon noticing that the wrong player is at bat. If this notification is made at any time during the at-bat, the correct player will assume the at-bat and any existing count. There is no penalty. If the incorrect batter is discovered after the at-bat has been completed, SSUSA rules will take effect.

1.8. SUSPENDED GAMES

- A. Any game that is suspended prior to reaching the status of an official game, will NOT be resumed from that point, but will be rescheduled as a make-up game and replayed from the beginning.

1.9. FLIP-FLOP RULE

- A. If, after the completion of the inning prior to the open (last) inning, the home team is losing by the number of runs specified for that league (or more), the home team shall remain at bat in the top of the final inning. The visiting team will then bat in the bottom of the final inning if the home team has tied the game or gone ahead. If the game is tied at the conclusion of the final inning, the visiting team will return to batting first in the extra innings.
- B. If, during the top half of the open (last) inning, the visiting team takes a lead of 12 or more runs, an immediate Flip-Flop will take place. The number of outs, positions of baserunners, etc. will be recorded, the visiting team will take the field, and the home team will bat. In the event the

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home team overcomes the deficit during their at-bat, the visiting team will return to bat and complete their inning.

1.10. PITCHING

A pitcher may employ up to two steps during the delivery, but at least one foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's box until the pitched ball leaves the hand. PENALTY: the pitch will be immediately declared an illegal pitch.

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SECTION 2 • GROUND RULES

2.1. LODGED BALL

A ball is considered lodged if, in the judgment of the umpire, the natural trajectory of the flight of the ball is interrupted long enough to affect further play. A batted fair ball or a thrown ball that sticks in or goes under a fence, tarp, banner, pitching screen, or any game equipment located on the playing field, should be considered a lodged ball. The following process should be followed to resolve a lodged ball situation:

- A. The defensive player(s) attempting to field or retrieve the ball will immediately raise one or two arms to indicate the ball is in a lodged situation, and their ability to cleanly field the ball has been disrupted.
- B. The player should leave the ball as is, and not attempt to retrieve it, loosen it, field it, etc. Failure to leave the ball where stopped will NULLIFY the lodged ball situation, and play will continue with no opportunity to appeal.
- C. Play will CONTINUE until the umpire confirms that the ball, in their judgment, is in fact lodged, or has been lodged for a period of time significant enough to affect the outcome of the play, at which point TIME will be called.
- D. For a batted ball, if the umpire confirms the lodged ball situation, the hit will be considered a ground-rule double, and the batter will be awarded two bases, with all base runners advancing accordingly.
- E. For a thrown ball, if the umpire confirms the lodged ball situation, the baserunners will be awarded the base they were approaching plus one additional base.

2.2. DEAD-BALL AREA

The area immediately around the storage shed along the first-base fence will be marked and designated as a dead-ball area. Any ball entering this area, either batted or thrown, will be considered a dead-ball situation and play immediately stopped. All runners will be awarded the base they are approaching plus one additional base.

2.3 LIVE BALL

A thrown ball will remain a live ball if it hits a defensive player, a base, an offensive player (who is not intentionally trying to get hit), or game equipment (discarded bat, discarded pitcher's mask, on-deck bats, bat rack, pitching screen) providing the ball remains within the limits of the playing field.

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SECTION 3 • LADIES LEAGUE RULES

- A. The distance between the bases will be sixty-five feet (65 ft).
- B. The number of innings per game will be six (6).
- C. Defensive players for a complete team will be eleven (11). If a team chooses to play with ten (10) defensive players, the missing player will be recorded as an out only her first time at bat.
- D. If, due to injury or a shortage of players in the draft, teams are required to field teams with fewer than the required number of defensive players, the league may assign players from other teams to meet the defensive requirements. Assigned players will play defense for both teams and will not bat.
- E. The number of times a player can be used as a substitute for each team during the regular season will be three (3). This applies to both roster and sub pool players. Serving in the role of assigned defensive player during a player shortage situation DOES NOT count towards this total.
- F. The I-shaped (rectangle) pitching screen will be used for all games.
- G. The minimum runs needed to invoke the Flip-Flop rule will be eight (8).
- H. The number of times a player can be used as a pinch runner during a game will be three (3).
- I. The minimum number of a team's rostered players required to avoid a game forfeit will be six (6).
- J. The maximum number of innings a player may sit defensively will be two (2).
- K. Outfielders may not cross into the infield dirt until a pitched ball is batted.
- L. Other than a caught fly ball, a batted ball fielded by an outfielder prior to it breaking the plane of the outfield grass will result in the batter being awarded first base. Regular force and tag plays remain in effect at all other bases.
- M. Other than a caught fly ball, if a batted ball crosses the plane between the infield dirt and the outfield grass (whether it is touched or untouched by a player) the batter shall be awarded 1st base. Any other base runner may advance at their own risk.
- N. A game will be considered official if four or more complete innings have been played, or if the home team has scored more runs after the completion of at least three and one-half innings.
- O. A player is required to notify their manager of changes in availability dates as soon as they are able. Should the roster player become available after a sub has been procured, it is the manager's decision whether to use the roster player or the previously procured sub. The League Coordinator must approve subs within 24 hours of game time.
- P. A non-playing assistant manager may be designated by the team manager each game to appeal or discuss issues with the umpires during the game. This designee will be conveyed to the head umpire prior to the game.

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SECTION 4 • MEN'S A-LEAGUE RULES

- A. The number of times a player can be used as a pinch runner during a game will be two (2).
- B. The number of defensive players for a complete team will be ten (10).
- C. There is no maximum number of innings a player may sit defensively. However, putting a player in the lineup exclusively for offense purposes (i.e., a “designated hitter”) may only be done with the player's willingness to do so.
- D. The minimum number of a team's rostered players required to avoid a game forfeit will be six (6).
- E. The threshold number of a team's rostered players remaining before a substitute can be obtained will be nine (9).
- F. The maximum roster size if one or more substitutes are used will be ten (10).
- G. The number of times a player can be used as a substitute for each team during the regular season will be two (2).
- H. The minimum runs needed to invoke the Flip-Flop rule is five (5).
- I. Each team manager may designate one player from the lineup per game to be the “**protected batter**”. This player must be designated at the time the manager submits his lineup to the opposing manager and scorekeeper. If that player is walked during the game, the player’s manager has the option of either:
- Sending him to 1st base (normal base on balls). The next batter comes to the plate. **OR**
 - Selecting another player from the lineup to take first base as the runner, while the batter remains at the plate, starting with a new count. The inserted runner is NOT considered a pinch runner, but an out will be charged if the runner is on based when it becomes his turn to bat.
- J. The I-shaped (rectangle) pitching screen will be used for all games.
- K. Players’ uniforms will consist of the league-provided jersey and black athletic pants, black athletic shorts or black sweatpants.

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SECTION 5 • MEN'S B-LEAGUE RULES

- A. The distance between the bases will be sixty-five feet (65 ft).
- B. Defensive players for a complete team will consist of eleven (11) players. A minimum of ten (10) players are required to begin a game, in which case the team will play with four (4) outfielders.
- C. The maximum number of innings a player may sit defensively will be two (2).
- D. The minimum number of a team's rostered players required to avoid the forfeit of a game will be seven (7).
- E. The number of times a player can be used as a substitute for each team during the regular season will be two (2).
- F. Substitutes may be obtained to complete an 11- or 12-player roster for any game.
- G. The number of times a player can be used as a pinch runner during a game will be two (2).
- H. Each at-bat will begin with a 1-1 pitch count. One courtesy foul will be allowed when the count reaches two (2) strikes. Exception: the batter will be out if the courtesy foul ball is caught in the air by any defensive player.
- I. The minimum runs needed to invoke the Flip-Flop rule will be five (5).
- J. The L-Shaped pitching screen will be used for all games.
- K. Other than a caught fly ball, if a batted ball crosses the plane between the infield dirt and the outfield grass (whether it is touched or untouched by a player) the batter shall be awarded 1st base. Any other base runner may advance at their own risk.
- L. Other than a caught fly ball, a batted ball fielded by an outfielder prior to it breaking the plane of the outfield grass will result in the batter being awarded first base. Regular force and tag plays remain in effect at all other bases.
- M. Base runners are not allowed to slide or dive into any base, even to avoid a collision. Diving a short distance back to a previously occupied base will not be considered a slide.
- N. If a team is ahead by 15 runs after four innings, or 10 runs after five or six innings, the game will be declared a complete, regulation game.