

## Softball Rulebook Table of Contents

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## **I. DIVISION SOFTBALL RULES AND REGULATIONS**

The Amateur Softball Association Rules shall govern play except for differences noted in this packet.

- A. BALLS:** The City of Clermont will furnish game balls that will be approved by the game umpires prior to each league game. A.S.A. approved 12 inch .52 core balls with a 300 max compression will be the official game allowed balls for all leagues.
- B. BATS:** The City of Clermont has chosen to implement the ASA and ISA Bat regulations for our league play at this time based on safety and risk management. This means all ASA and ISA approved bats will be allowed. Senior players aged 60 years and older may use senior softball bats. This list will be posted at the field and is available to all coaches during each season. Updates will be distributed as the list changes. Teams are instructed to have all bats ready for inspection by umpires prior to each game if requested. Any bat that is not disclosed at the beginning of the game to the umpire and/or league official is not an eligible bat for that game. Do not hide bats in bat bags or put bats away, they must be declared at the beginning of the game and stay in play throughout the game. Wooden bats will not be allowed.

Altered bats are bats, which have 1. Had the surface of the barrel or the taper changed in any way such as by sandpapering or applying a solvent to the surface such as fingernail polish remover or by any other means, 2. Had the plug removed/replaced or changed in any way 3. Had the knob removed/replaced or changed in any way, or 4. Had anything removed or added to the inside or outside of the bat other than tape at the handle or knob. Cracked, worn (paint/lettering wear is not a problem so long as the bat can be identified and has the appropriate BPF marking, but any wearing of the bat material or identifying paint or BPF wear will be cause for removal) or damaged bats are not altered bats, but will also be removed from play. Such cracked, worn or damaged bats will not result in a player suspension, unless the player returns the offending bat into league play after it has been removed or the bat is also altered.

- C. CANCELLATION FEE:** There will be NO refunds upon withdraw from a league once the season officially starts (week all league play begins.)
- D. CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM (TEAMS):** Players can NOT play on 2 teams in the same league. The ASA player rating system is in place to create a fair and level playing field for all of our teams. The guidelines for classification area as follows:

**Men's D Slow Pitch** - Three (3) C classified players may play and no players from Class A, Class B or restricted players list may play.

**Coed Slow Pitch** - No Open classified female players and no male classified players from Class A, Class B or the ASA restricted players list.

### **E. EJECTIONS:**

(1) Either umpire or the City Staff may eject a player from the field for using indecent language, unsportsmanlike conduct or a serious violation of the rules. In case of ejection, the umpire shall notify the manager or coach that the ejected player must leave the facility within one minute or the game will be forfeited. The manager shall be the spokesperson for their respective team.

**An ejection letter detailing the penalty will be e-mailed to the manager. For faster notification, managers are encouraged to call the Parks and Recreation office at 352-394-3500 regarding the penalty and then notify the player of the penalty after the ejection. The City of Clermont will NOT notify the player.**

- (2) Players are automatically suspended or reprimanded from the date of ejection.
- (3) Suspensions can only be appealed in writing before the teams next scheduled game. Appeals are to be sent to the Recreation Department.
- (4) **ALL PENALTIES ARE MINIMUM AND IF DEEMED NECESSARY, GREATER PENALTIES MAY BE IMPOSED.**
- (5) If while on probation, a player commits an infraction of the rules, he/she will be placed on suspension for the appropriate time period determined by the City of Clermont.

**a. Major Offense**

1. Physically attacking an official in any manner.  
Penalty: Minimum 2 years suspension & 2 years probation depending on severity of attack.
2. Deliberate act that causes bodily harm to another player or property (i.e. Starting a fight or physically attacking an individual).  
Penalty: Minimum 1 year suspension & 1 year probation.
3. Threatening an official or park employee with physical harm.  
Penalty: Minimum 1 year suspension & 1 year probation.

**b. Minor Offense**

1. Act of Fraud (ex. Playing a player under an assumed name).  
Penalty: Minimum 1 year suspension & 1 year probation for both illegal player and manager.
2. Any player or manager guilty of using profane language or throwing equipment.  
Penalty: Minimum 1 game suspension, or more depending on severity of infraction.
3. Any unsportsmanlike conduct such as failure of a manager or player to control emotions.  
Penalty: Minimum 1 game suspension, or more depending on severity of infraction.
4. Multiple Minor Offenses within a season or short time frame between seasons will be punished using the Major Offense penalties.

**c. Conduct**

Managers and players are subject to League Rules from their arrival time to their departure time. This includes the field, stands and parking lot.

**F. LINEUPS**

**Teams in all classifications will have a choice of batting a traditional lineup or a “bat-the-bench” lineup. Choice must be declared prior to the game and reflected properly on the lineup card submitted to the scorekeeper. Teams will not be allowed to change options during the course of a game.**

**Traditional Lineup:** The regulation number for slow pitch is 10, with the option to use 11 players. In all men’s/women’s divisions a team may begin with 9 players. If a 10<sup>th</sup> player arrives, he/she shall enter the lineup in the vacant 10<sup>th</sup> position. **ELEVEN PLAYER LINE UP (EXTRA HITTER):** Teams will be permitted to insert 11 of their players if using the traditional lineup. The 11<sup>th</sup> player MUST be physically present. This is an optional rule. If a team wishes to do this, it must be done from the start of the game. Once the game starts, teams CANNOT go from a 10 player lineup to the 11 player lineup. Once the lineup has been recorded in the scorebook, it WILL NOT be changed. The penalty for turning in a player’s name that is not present will be an out each time that player is to bat. If you start the game with 11 players in the lineup and you have to finish with 10, the penalty will be an out each time that missing player is to bat. If a team uses the 11 player batting lineup, any 10 of the starting 11 may play defense at any time. Any starter may be withdrawn and reentered ONCE, provided that player occupies the same batting position.

**“Bat-The-Bench” Lineup:** In this lineup, all players present are placed in the lineup with a maximum of 20 players for Men’s D & C Leagues, Coed League is 14 Maximum. Any 10 of those players can play defense at any time. Since all players bat, no substitutions can be made to the lineup. When a player is dropped from the batting lineup each time that space comes to bat, an

out will be accessed to the team. Once dropped from the lineup a player cannot return. If an injured player wishes to stay in the game, but skip an at bat, an out will be called. If the number of players drops below the regulation number (9), then a forfeit will be declared.

**Senior Player Rule:** The senior rule may be used to allow 1 player over the age of 60 to play offense or defense. This must be declared when the lineup is submitted. When a senior player plays offense only, the team will follow the extra hitter rules as written in the lineups. The senior player will bat as an extra hitter in the "Traditional Lineup" or a bench player in the "Bat-The-Bench Lineup". The senior player will not be required to play defense. When the senior player plays defense only, they will be listed as a FLEX player and not counted as a batter on the lineup. The FLEX player CANNOT play offense at any time in the game. If this player cannot continue on defense an extra hitter must be used as a substitute if the team is using the "Traditional Lineup". In Coed games, teams will be allowed 2 senior rule players, 1 male and 1 female.

If at 5 minutes before game time, a team cannot field a full team, a lineup of present players in consecutive order must be turned in. Late arrivals will be added to the end of the lineup up to the 10<sup>th</sup> spot. Any players that arrive after that 10<sup>th</sup> spot is filled can enter the game as a substitute.

## **G. ELIGIBILITY (PLAYER) - ROSTER & INDIVIDUAL SHEETS**

In order to be eligible each player must be written on the ASA team roster with his/her signature on the sheet. Rosters must be filled out with player names and player information and turned in prior to the first game of the season. Each player must sign the waiver prior to his/her first game played in the season. This could be the first, second or any game going through the last game of the season. See playoff section for eligibility. Age minimum is 18 years old.

## **H. FORFEIT:**

- (1) A team must have a minimum of 9 eligible players on the field or in the dugout to start and continue a game. **EXCEPTION:** A team may play with 8 due to an injury once the game starts. Teams are allowed ONE (1) GUEST PLAYER per game. You have two options. Option #1 - You may pick up a player from another team **EXCEPT THE TEAM YOU ARE PLAYING**, that player is picked up to only avoid a forfeit, (9<sup>th</sup> player). That player will be required to bat last in the lineup and play catcher for the duration of the game. If a legal roster player shows up after the start of the game the roster player must be substituted in for the guest player. Option #2 - Guest player can come from outside the league teams and be used as a ninth player to avoid a forfeit. No guest players may be used during the playoffs. All guest players must complete an individual waiver for the City. The result of an illegal player will be a team forfeit.

Forfeit time for the first game of the night is five minutes after its scheduled start. The clock will begin immediately at the game's scheduled start time. The forfeit time for all other games is the same as its scheduled start time. **The field coordinator will have the official game clock and determine forfeit times.** The second and third games may start before scheduled game times if agreed to by both managers and umpires.

If both managers agree, the game may start up to 5 minutes after its scheduled start to allow a team to avoid a forfeit. In this case there shall be a 5 minute run off of the clock. If the player(s) has not arrived within the allotted 5 minutes, a forfeit will be declared.

- (2) In case a game is forfeited, the teams may play a practice game by picking up extra players. Practice games **MUST** end 5 minutes before the next scheduled game. Umpires will not officiate these games. If a team forfeits 2 or more games during the current season, the team may not participate in the playoffs, may be dropped from the league and may not be allowed to participate in future city leagues. Please add enough players to your rosters to avoid forfeits.

## **I. GAME (REGULATION)**

**THE RECREATION REPRESENTATIVE IS THE OFFICIAL SCORER .**

**THE OFFICIAL WILL MONITOR AND APPLY ALL SOFTBALL RULES FOR BOTH TEAMS.**

- (1) In all leagues, games are scheduled for 7 innings unless stopped by run rule, time limit, weather, or extended by extra innings.
- (2) The **RUN AHEAD MARGIN** for all leagues is as follows:  
**15 (FIFTEEN)** = After 4<sup>th</sup> inning, HOME TEAM will bat if needed.
- (3) If at the end of regulation play (1 hour or 7 innings) a game is tied, the "One Pitch" rule will be in effect until a winner is determined (no courtesy foul). Extra inning starts with last batted out as a runner on second. Each pitch is either a strike (out), ball (walk) or a hit ball by batter.
- (4) It is the responsibility of the manager and his/her team to maintain a team equal to the caliber of the league in which they are participating and to field a full team with sufficient substitutes available to insure a team against the necessity of having to finish a game with less than 10 players or forfeiting.
- (5) There will be no warm up pitches between innings or infield warm up after the First inning.
- (6) The 3 ball, 2 strike count will be used in all leagues. Each batter in all leagues will start with a 1 ball and 1 strike count. The second foul ball after two strikes is an out.
- (7) The ball shall be delivered with perceptible arc and reach a height of at least 6 feet from the ground, while not exceeding a maximum height of 10 feet from the ground.
- (8) **Pitcher Safety Zone Rule:** The "Pitcher Safety Zone" will extend 2 feet out from the sides of the pitching rubber, 8 feet in front and behind the pitching rubber, and 10 feet above the ground. Any ball hit thru this area will be called dead and the batter will be out. No runners will advance.
- (9) **For safety reasons There will be NO batting practice or pepper allowed prior to your game.**

**J. HOME RUN RULE:** Limits and penalties for excess are listed below.

Class "C", Class "D", Coed = 3 (Three) plus "one-up". Excess home runs being ruled a dead ball out. If both teams have reached the limit of home runs, either team is allowed to hit an additional home run, to go one home run ahead of the opposing team. This can continue throughout the game.

\*\*Note: An inside the park home run or a fair fly ball touched by a defensive player which then goes over the fence in fair territory are excluded from this rule.

\*\*Batters and/or runners DO NOT have to touch a base ("hit and sit").

#### **K. COURTESY RUNNERS**

In the spirit of sportsmanship, one courtesy runner per inning, per player, per team is allowed. Courtesy runners may only be granted if the batter-runner is on base. The last batter to record an out (of the same gender in coed) of the batting team shall be the courtesy runner. If the same batter, that needs a courtesy runner, comes up a second time in an inning, he/she may use the previous courtesy runner unless that runner is on base then it would proceed to the last out again.

#### **L. INELIGIBLE PLAYER**

- (1) Positive ID may be requested of every player at every game.
- (2) Upon discovery that an ineligible player was used, all games that the player participated in will be forfeited. Managers will be held responsible for playing only players who have been certified as eligible. The scorekeeper is instructed NOT to enter any ineligible player at any time for any reason. If an ineligible player is inadvertently allowed to play, the manager is still responsible for the consequences.
- (3) Playing a player under an assumed name shall carry a 1 year suspension and 1 year probation for both the illegal player and manager!!

**M. INSURANCE:** The manager shall advise each player upon signing a ROSTER/RELEASE OF LIABILITY SHEET that accident insurance is NOT provided and that the player participates in the league at his/her own risk. EACH PLAYER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS/HER OWN

INSURANCE. Team insurance is available for purchase through Central Florida A.S.A.

**N. PROTESTS:** A written protest must be turned in to the recreation office by close of next business day. **NOTICE OF INTENT TO PROTEST MUST BE MADE TO THE UMPIRE & SCOREKEEPER AT THE TIME THE PLAY OCCURS BEFORE THE NEXT PITCH (LEGAL or ILLEGAL) IS THROWN.** The umpire is instructed to change the decision if the opposing manager concedes the point and not permit the protest. If the protest is made, the umpire shall notify both managers that the game is being played under protest. Judgment calls CAN NOT be protested. Forms will be available at the field.

**O. RAIN-OUT PROCEDURE & SUSPENDED GAMES**

- (1) Field officials will make the final decision about canceling games. To check on the status of games call (352) 398-4001 (ext.#2) or search "Clermont" on www.RainoutLine.com.
- (2) Teams playing the second and third games are instructed to report to the game site unless otherwise notified.
- (3) Games that are rained out will be played the week following the end of the regular season schedule on the night the team normally plays. **HOWEVER, THE CITY RESERVES THE RIGHT TO RESCHEDULE A RAIN OUT GAME ANYTIME DEEMED NECESSARY.** When possible, managers will be notified of rainouts.
- (4) In the event of a weather or lightning delay, the delay shall not last longer than one hour. If the delay lasts longer than one hour, the game will be called complete if enough innings have been played. If not, the game will be suspended.
- (5) All suspended games will be resumed at the point in which they were stopped. That moment in time will be recorded in the scorebook and the game will resume as if it never stopped. Only players on the roster at the time of suspension will be allowed to participate in the resumption of the suspended game.
- (6) A game can be considered complete at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> inning, or 3 ½ if the home team is ahead in runs.
- (7) If necessary the City has the right to shorten the season due to weather conditions.

**P. ROSTER (TEAM)**

- (1) A maximum of 20 players may be on a team roster at any given time.
- (2) The last day to add a player in the Spring & Fall seasons is at the end of the **Fifth (5) SCHEDULED week**. The Polar season deadline for adding players is at the end of the **Fourth (4) SCHEDULED week**.

**Q. SHOES:** Metal spikes, shoes with detachable cleats, or hard plastic similar to metal sole and heel, will NOT be allowed in any division or level of play.

**R. TIE BREAKER PROCEDURES:** In all leagues, the head-to-head record will be used as the tie breaker system. (Head-to-Head: Only the "runs for" between the two teams that are tied. **NOT ALL THE RUNS FOR THE WHOLE SEASON.**) If there is a tie between two or more teams the head-to-head rule will be in effect. The team with the most runs scored in the head-to-head matchup will be declared the winner. If there is a forfeit between one of those teams, that team will automatically be removed of their position for the chance to win 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> place. If there is a tie between two teams or more but those teams have not played each other during the regular season the total of runs scored during the entire season will be used as the tie breaker.

**S. TIME LIMIT RULE:** In the case of a tie game, extra innings will be played to complete the game that night. In the first extra time inning there are no outs and one runner on second with 1 pitch per batter. If still tied, the second inning extra will have two outs and one runner on second using 1 pitch per batter (no courtesy foul). Otherwise, no new inning will start after **1 HOUR** of playing

time (scorekeeper's watch). Any inning started before the time limit expires will be completed properly (depending on whether the home or visiting team is ahead) regardless of time.

**T. TRANSFER (PLAYER):** A player transferring from one team to another must secure a release from his/her manager. If a manager refuses to release a player, the player may appeal in writing to the Recreation Department. **ONE (1) TRANSFER IS ALLOWED PER PLAYER PER SEASON.**

**U. PLAYOFF:**

There will one playoff for each division to determine its Champion. It will consist of the top 6 teams. In the case that teams have the same record a tie breaker system will determine post season seeding. Players playing in the playoffs cannot be guest players and must have played in at least three (3) regular season games or they will be ineligible. The Championship game will have a 75 minute time limit and all run rules will apply.

**(Playoff dates are subject to change depending on season weather conditions and rain outs.)**

## **II. UNIFORMS**

It is suggested that all teams have similar color matching shirts with numbers on them. A number of contrasting colors at least 6 inches should be worn on the back of all uniforms in an upright manner. No player on the same team should wear identical numbers (3 and 03 are examples of identical numbers). Uniforms should not have numbers over 2 digits. It is suggested that teams would be in uniform by the beginning of the 4th week of scheduled play.

## **III. PARK RULES AND REGULATIONS**

**A. ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES:** Alcoholic beverages are NOT allowed at any City facility. **THIS INCLUDES PARKING LOTS!** Absolutely NO alcoholic beverages allowed in the dugouts!

**B. PETS:** Pets are not allowed at any of our softball facilities or in the spectator areas.

**C. SMOKING:** Ballplayers, managers and umpires will NOT be allowed to smoke on the fields or in the dugouts.

## **IV. COED ONLY SPECIFIC LEAGUE RULES**

(1) Teams must have a minimum of nine [9] players to start and complete a game. Teams may have 4 females and 5 males to start a game. At no other time may there be more males than females. A team may have up to 9 females playing.

\*If you have more males than females, each time the missing female should come to bat, there will be an automatic out.\*

(2) 12 inch softballs will be used in league play.

(3) Each team has the option of batting up to 14 batters, alternating male-female.

(4) There will be 2 men and 2 women in the outfield and 2 men and 2 women in the infield. The pitcher and catcher are NOT considered as infield positions and must be male and female. This rule applies except when only 3 or 4 men are present. With 3 men present, the men must be placed as an outfielder, infielder, and either pitcher or catcher. With 4 males or females, same as above applies and the 4th male or female must play infield or outfield.

(5) Any walk to a male batter will result in a 2 base award. The next batter (a female) will bat. **EXCEPTION:** With 2 outs, the female batter has the option to walk or bat. (Women and Men start with a one and one count when they come up to bat.)

(6) 200 ft. Rule: When a female is at bat, all outfielders CANNOT move in front of the 200ft line until the ball touches the bat. The runner will automatically be awarded first base if this happens and any base runners will advance one base. This rule does not apply to a male batter.

(7) All infielders must be positioned on the clay until contact is made with the ball.

(8) Penalties for violation of rule 7 & 8: If in the umpire's judgment, a player violates these rules, the batter has the option of either taking the result of the play or being awarded first base.

(9) Plays at Home Plate: All runners must make every attempt to avoid contact with the catcher. If contact is made and in the umpires opinion it was not accidental or no attempt to avoid the contact

was made, then the runner shall be ejected from the game.  
(10) This season an extra home plate will be used for Coed games.

### **Coed Extra Home Plate Rules**

1. Defensive players can touch only the original home plate and runners can touch only the second home plate.
2. Runners must touch the second home plate located adjacent to the right-handed batters box in order to be safe at home.
3. Runners that have passed the commitment line and tagged by a defensive player will not be out.
4. Should a defensive player touch the second home plate and still touch the original home plate before the runner reaches the second home plate the runner is out.
5. If the runner touches the original home plate, the runner is out and the ball remains live.
6. Once a runner passes the commitment line, 20ft, marking from a second home plate, the runner cannot return to third base. **EFFECT:** The runner is called out if the runner returns, and the ball remains live.
7. If the runner has passed the commitment line, 20 ft marking, and continues running on the original foul line, and interferes with the fielder taking a throw at or in contact with the original home plate: **EFFECT:** A dead ball shall be declared and the runner is out.

A base runner who has passed, and tagged, third base may return to that base unless his/her foot touches the ground on or beyond the commitment line. He/she is now “committed to home” and may not re-cross the commitment line in the direction of third base. Violations will result in the base runner being called out.

In order to score, a base runner must tag the second home plate before a defensive player in possession of the ball touches home plate. To get a runner who is “committed to home” out, a defensive player must touch home plate while in possession of the ball before that runner tags the extra home plate. He or she must touch home plate; not the base runner. Contact with a base runner, which is committed to home, by any defensive player may result in an “obstruction call” by the umpire in which case the runner will be awarded home plate.

***The City of Clermont reserves the right to modify the league, any rules, schedules or team rosters as needed at any time. We also reserve the right to place all teams in leagues with appropriate skill levels. Teams will be placed up a division or down a division based upon their performance if deemed necessary for the betterment of each league.***

***Plays, Rules or Situations that occur that are not in this rulebook will be handled on a case to case basis at the field by staff members and designees. All parties will meet and decide the best way to interpret and implement during the situation. After this has occurred, a rules modification will be distributed if necessary.***