

# Saturday Softball League – Unique Rules

Edited June 16, 2023 – most recent changes in [BLUE](#)

1. **GENDER INCLUSIVITY & MINIMUM AGE:** Maximum 6 male identifying players on the field. All players must be at least 21 years old by opening day. Players may play any position in the field they want.
  - a. In the event a team has just 9 players, they can and should still play without penalty, so long as there are no more than 6 male players on the field.
  
2. **GAME LENGTH & TIME:** 7-inning games with a 2-hour time limit during regular season play. Games should begin at their scheduled time, *though a 10-minute grace period is permitted for late players to arrive*. After the grace period, teams unable to meet fielding requirements must forfeit. **NO SUBS ALLOWED.** \* see exception, Rule 11.
  - a. ~~Time begins (and should be noted by umpires and scorekeepers) when coaches and/or managers from each team shake hands at home plate.~~ [Time is kept by a digital timer placed near the scoreboard. Set to 90 minutes at the start of the game, then add up to 30 minutes for the duration of the game \(see 2b\).](#)
  
  - b. ~~No new innings may begin after 1:45 (one hour, forty-five minutes) of game play during the regular season.~~ [At 1:30 of game time, umps and/or team managers call a timeout and collectively announce when the final inning will be, based on the following logic: If it is currently the "top" of an inning with the visitor at-bat, that inning shall be the final inning \(even if said team has already been hitting that inning\). If it is the "bottom" with the home team at-bat, finish that inning and play one more. Note "game time," taking into account whether any part of the 10-minute grace period has applied.](#) Games are played out to completion regardless of time during playoffs and the championship.
  
  - c. [Unlimited runs in the final inning \(also see Rule 4\). The home team \(second at-bat\) need not hit if they are still ahead at the bottom of the final inning. The game ends on the \*go-ahead run scoring play\*. All runs on the play where the winning run scores will count.](#)

3. **RAINOUTS & INCOMPLETE GAMES:** Games are considered rainouts if fewer than 4 innings have been completed at the time the game is called for weather.
  - a. If a game is stopped short *at any point* due to a time constraint (*or after 4 innings due to weather*) the official score is the run count at the bottom of the most recently *completed* inning. **CLARIFICATION:** “time constraint” = 2 hours have elapsed.
  - b. Rainouts that cannot be rescheduled will be scored as ties, 7-7.
4. **MERCY RULE:** Applied at 7 runs per half inning. All runs on the play where the 7th run scores will count. **CLARIFICATION:** No mercy rule in the final inning.
5. **THE PLAYING FIELD:** Base paths are 65’ with a safety bag at first base. The backstop fence line extended determines if a foul ball pop-up is in or out of play.
6. **PROPER EQUIPMENT:** No special jersey requirements. Players may opt to wear safety equipment (helmets, masks) as they see fit.
  - a. **BALLS:** 12” softballs are used for all players. Each game begins with 2 new game balls.
  - b. **BATS:** ASA or USA Softball approved bats only. All bats must show ASA or USA Softball stamps. *NO WOOD BATS.*
  - c. **SHOES:** All players must wear closed-toe shoes. *NO METAL SPIKES.*
7. **BATTING LINEUP & SCORING:** The batting order must include all eligible players (minimum 9 players), must be set at the beginning of the game, and cannot be altered during game play unless there is an injury as described in Rule 11.
  - a. All players must bat at their assigned place in the order for the duration of the game, and all players must play at least one inning in the field.
  - b. Any players showing up after the batting order has cycled through once are ineligible to play that game.

- c. Scoring runners must mark their own run on the backstop chalkboard. Umpires and scorekeepers should verify runs at the close of each half inning, deferring to the chalkboard in the case of any discrepancy.
8. **UMPIRES:** In the absence of volunteer umpires, base coaches act as umpires.
- a. First base coach is primarily responsible for calls at first and home bases, as well as right and center field; third base coach is primarily responsible for calls at second and third bases, as well as left and center field.
  - b. *WHEN VOLUNTEER UMPIRES ARE PRESENT, BASE COACHES ARE PROHIBITED FROM MAKING CALLS.*
9. **FIVE-SWING RULE:** No balls and strikes. Each batter has 5 swings to hit a fair ball. If they cannot, they are out, even if the 5<sup>th</sup> swing results in a foul ball.
10. **VETO RULE:** As a counter to the five-swing rule, a team may “veto” a pitcher from the opposing team once per game. The vetoed pitcher may not return to the mound for the duration of the game but may still play at another position in the field. Vetoes may be cast without explanation, so long as the team casting the veto has:
- a. Cycled through their entire batting order at least once
- AND**
- b. Completed at least 2 innings at-bat
11. **INJURIES, COURTESY RUNNERS, CIRCUMSTANTIAL SUBS:** Once per game, per team, an injured base runner who utilized a courtesy runner may return to the game.
- a. If a player is injured while baserunning and chooses to leave the field, the last player ‘out’ (regardless of gender) replaces the runner on base.
  - b. Once per game, per team, one player who utilized a courtesy runner may return to the game. That player should resume their original place in the batting lineup. If the injured player chooses not to return, the batting order shifts upward without penalty.
  - c. In the event an injury during a game leaves a team with fewer than 9 players, a willing sub (regardless of gender) from within the league may be

acquired *for that game only*. The sub should take the last spot in the batting lineup. Rule 1 still applies.

12. **SAFETY AT HOME PLATE:** Force-outs apply at home plate, with a commitment line and finish line chalked perpendicular to the third base line.
  - a. **COMMITMENT LINE:** The commitment line lies equidistant between third base and home plate. Once a runner passes this line, the force-out at home is in effect.
  - b. **FINISH LINE:** The finish line extends from the back corner of the right-hand batters box. A runner's foot **must land on the ground, on or past the finish line** to score, but if they touch home plate or anywhere in the box, they are out. *No warnings or exceptions.*
13. **GROUND RULE DOUBLES:** No ground rule doubles at Pier Park and Kenton 3. If the ball is hit in fair territory, it is in play until the ball is returned to the pitcher.
14. **FOUL TIPS:** A foul tip is a batted ball which goes sharply and directly from the bat and is legally caught. In our league, foul tips that are higher than the batter's head result in an out. Foul tips lower than the batter's head count as a swing.
15. **INFIELD FLIES:** An infield fly is any fair ball hit in the *vicinity* of the infield which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort (not swinging bunts or line drives).

When an infield fly occurs, the batter is out, and the umpire(s) must clearly call "infield fly, the batter is out!". Runners may still risk advancing.

*Infield flies are only in effect when BOTH conditions are met at the time of the pitch:*

- a. There is a force out at third base (i.e., runners on first and second; or, runners on first, second and third)

**AND**

- b. There are fewer than 2 outs

The Saturday Softball League is committed to upholding our reputation as "the fun league." We respect all identities and backgrounds and strive to maintain an inclusive space for all. Our mission is to bring people together in a safe and fun environment to enjoy all the camaraderie, friendship, and friendly competition that come with playing community sports. Harassment, bigotry, and hostile behavior are not welcome and will not be tolerated.