

# **North County Senior Softball-Competitive Division**

## ***Supplemental Rules***

**(Final Rules as revised on 12-31-25)**

The North County Senior Softball-Competitive Division (NCSS-CD) league operates in observance of the SSUSA rules governing senior softball. Contained herein are exceptions or restatements of the common rules that reflect customary play observances within NCSS-CD.

**Section 003: Bats.** All senior softball bats stamped with SSUSA approval or otherwise approved under SSUSA rules are authorized for use. Wood bats are not authorized. Altered bats, including rolled bats, are prohibited by SSUSA rules for the safety of all and to ensure standards of fair play. Therefore, any player who uses an altered or unauthorized bat during any practice or game will be suspended from participation in any NCSS-CD event for one year and including the next scheduled league tournament. Any player who refuses to surrender a questioned bat for review or for testing will be suspended for two years. Any Manager or Umpire may question and review a bat for compliance with this rule.

### **Section 005: Bases.**

- 1) Bases are set at 70 feet.
- 2) Orange base:
  - a) Runners must run to the orange base at first base unless the ball is hit to the outfield and there is no play at first. In such an instance, the first baseman must yield the base path to the runner, or obstruction will result in the awarding of the next base.
  - b) When making a defensive play at first base, only the white bag is in play. If the first baseman only touches the orange base when attempting a force out, the runner will be safe.
- 3) On rainy days, in the interest of safety, and upon concurrence of both Managers, an exception to runners touching each base can be implemented. In such cases, the runner running past a base need only touch the ground near the base.
- 4) When a home run is hit and the ball leaves the field, the runners are not required to advance to the next base but can return to their dugout. The batter who hit the home run is allowed to "hit and sit," and is not required to touch first base.
- 5) For safety, any runner on first or third base may step off of the base and out of play until the batter strikes the ball. When the ball is in play, the runner must return to touch the base before proceeding to the next base.
- 6) The commit line is marked 30 feet from home plate.

### **Section 006: Pitching screen.**

- 1) The pitching screen is placed 5 feet in front of the pitching rubber.
- 2) The pitching screen may be placed partially to the side of the rubber, but no more than half the rubber can be exposed to the batter.
- 3) Batters start with a 1-1 count and are allowed 3 balls and 2 strikes, plus a one-time courtesy foul ("waste foul") instead of strike 3. A batted ball that strikes the pitching screen is ruled a foul ball and dead ball.
- 4) For purposes of defensive play, the pitching screen is in play.
- 5) When releasing the ball, the pitcher's pivot foot must remain simultaneously in contact with the pitcher's box which extends from the pitching rubber to 10 feet behind the pitching rubber.
- 6) Pitch height min/max limit is 6-12 feet. Deviations will be called illegal by the umpire only.

- 7) Any pitch either over the screen, or to the side, while the pitcher is within the pitcher's box, may be called illegal for excessive speed. Such call is within the sole discretion of the home plate umpire.

## **Section 007: Game Forfeiture.**

- 1) At the "beginning" of the game, a team must field a minimum of eight originally assigned players or the game will result in forfeiture. Thereafter, substitutes will be added, and the game will be played as a pickup game.
- 2) Should the team begin a game with eight original players, and thereafter fall below eight players, the game will still be counted.
- 3) Pick-up games are scheduled at the discretion of the league Board. Pick-up games may be announced when games are in conflict with regional softball tournaments resulting in loss of league players. A pick-up game will also follow in a game that has already been forfeited. If both teams head-to-head have fewer than eight players, then both teams forfeit.

## **Section 008: Substitute Runners.** In consideration of the wide age disparity within NCSS-CD the following substitute runner rules are observed:

- 1) Any player can run for another player for any reason, medical or tactical.
- 2) The same player can only substitute run once in an inning.
- 3) If a player desires to run for himself, he is allowed to do so. Managers cannot appoint a substitute runner over the objection of the player who reached base safely.
- 4) If a player has a pinch runner in an inning, that same player cannot thereafter pinch run for another person.
- 5) If a player's turn to bat comes up while he is a substitute player, the player is not out, and can be replaced with another substitute runner in order to take his place at bat.

## **Section 009: Home Runs.** Each team is afforded three "out of the park" home runs. After each team has hit three home runs, each team is permitted to go "one up." If the other team does not hit another home run, additional home runs are considered walks, and runners advance only one base when forced.

## **Section 010: Slide or Avoid.** The purpose of this rule is to ensure the safety of all players.

- 1) When attempting to advance a base during a play, runners must make every effort to avoid a collision by sliding to the bag or by yielding the base line. When sliding, the runner should make all attempts to avoid colliding with the defensive player and focus on contacting the base only. At no time is "taking out" the defensive player permitted. The runner must attain the base in a way that does not interfere with the defensive player or increase risk of injury.
- 2) The purpose of the slide or avoid rule is to ensure the safety of all players and to prohibit actions by base runners that put defensive players at risk. The avoiding-collision duty is placed on the runner because he is in a better position to see the play unfolding in front of him. Defenders are often looking to or catching the ball in play.
- 3) When yielding the base line, the runner should veer out of the base line in such a way as to permit the defensive player to make an un-interfered throw to another base.
- 4) Should the runner enter the base standing-up and collide with the fielder, or having interfered with the catch or throw by failing to properly veer out of the base path, in the sole discretion of the umpire, both the runner and the batter are out.
- 5) When a defensive player veers away from a play to avoid a collision, and he thereby loses an

out because the offensive player failed to slide or avoid, the umpire should call the missed out or outs for offensive interference with a defensive play.

- 6) Incidental and very limited touching that does not interfere in any way with the play or present any potential harm to the players is not contemplated by this rule. Holding on to the defensive player or using the defensive player to stop is not considered incidental touching. In the event that the ball, defensive player and runner get to the base simultaneously, the runner should slide to avoid running into the defensive player.
- 7) In the event of a force out play, should the runner veer to avoid collision with the defender and the defender thereafter fail to cleanly field the ball, the base may be awarded to the runner if in the sole discretion of the umpire, the base would have been safely attained but for the runner veering away.
- 8) This rule is enforced in the sole discretion of the umpire but with allowing consultation with the Managers from each team.

**Section 011: Flip-Flop.** NCSS-CD plays nine inning softball games. If after eight complete innings are played, the home team is ten or more runs down, the game will automatically flip-flop. The visiting team will remain in the field, and the home team will bat in its ninth inning. Should they fail to take the lead, the game will result in a win for the visiting team.

**Section 012: Tie Game.** In the event of a tie after nine innings, each team is awarded  $\frac{1}{2}$  point.

**Section 015: Out of Bounds.** Out of bounds lines are derived from the base fence lines. Should the fence line not go all the way to the outfield fence, and imaginary line is to be drawn. Balls hit initially fair which later roll out of bounds result in the batter and runners advancing two bases only. This rule is invoked at the time the ball is hit, not where the runners were when the ball went out of bounds. Fly balls are not in play if fielded out of bounds. Any balls caught out of bounds in the air are not outs, but foul balls.

**Section 016: Intentional Walks.** Intentional walks can only occur during the eighth or ninth inning. The same person cannot be walked more than once per game. More than one intentional walk is permitted in the eighth or ninth inning, but not to the same player previously intentionally walked.

**Section 017: Pregame Warm-up.** To avoid undue game delay, pregame warm-ups should be limited to the first inning only. As player substitutes may be necessary during the course of a game, this rule is subject to the discretion of the team Manager, in his sole discretion.

**Section 018: Scoring.** When scoring, a runner who passes through the batter's box or touches the home plate mat is ruled out. A runner must have his foot or other part of his body down on or past the home plate scoring line (or mat that designates the scoring line) in order to score safely. When making a play at home, the defensive player can only record an out by touching the home plate mat, while in possession of the ball, before the runner crosses the home plate scoring line. Tagging a player at home is not permitted--the runner will be ruled safe. Should the runner not cross the commit line, but be caught in a pickle, the defensive player at home can run the player back towards third and place a tag on him for the out.

**Section 019: Compressing a player out of the line-up.** From time to time, a team will lose a player during a game as the result of injury, or prior commitment that requires the player to leave early. In such instances, when that player's turn at bat comes up, it is not recorded as an out. Rather, the next batter in order bats as normal. In no case can a player be compressed out of a lineup to create an

advantage to a team. Should such an action occur, the omitted batter is recorded as an out. If a player is added to replace a compressed player, the added player will bat in the place of the compressed player. The added player can play any position assigned by the Manager, in his sole discretion. The added player must be similar in skill ranking (within one ranking up or down), or they cannot be added for the compressed player.

**Section 020: Fair ball.** Any ball (grounder or fly) that is touched while the “ball” is in fair territory is a fair ball, even if it goes foul after being touched. For the purpose of this rule, it does not matter whether the player who touched the ball was in fair or foul territory. The orange base is “not” in fair territory. For a grounder to be fair, it must cross the white base while in fair territory.

**Section 021: Tuesday and Thursday Players.** Some players sign-up to play only one game a week. Notwithstanding, those players are team members and are encouraged to play as frequently as they desire, even if it is on a day they are not slotted to play, provided that, these players should give advance notice pursuant to Section 002(2) above to their Manager that they want to play on an unscheduled day. All players are eligible to play in the Playoffs, as long as they are on the active roster, regardless of their one-day or two-day status. Since the regular season competitive balance is based on these players playing only on their assigned day, they will be treated as subs on their unscheduled day, requiring them to bat at the bottom of the lineup and to cause the team no more than 11 total players that game. Should the player wish to have their status changed from one-day per week to two-days per week they should let the commissioner know so that the teams can be re-balanced to accommodate the request.

**Section 022: Time out.** A time out occurs when the umpire’s states “time out,” or when the ball is secured by an infielder and in the discretion of the umpire, there is no play to be made on a runner.

**Section 023: Clean hit rule.** Prior to the beginning of each game, Managers may agree that certain players may not be thrown out at first base by an outfielder. If no agreement is reached, all players can be thrown out at first base by an outfielder with the opportunity.

**Section 024: Partial Participation.** Due to a valid and temporary medical purpose, any player can participate on a partial basis. A player may field or bat only. This rule cannot be used to gain tactical advantage. Managers are encouraged to discuss any such player limitations prior to the game.

**Section 025: Official score.** As our games do not have an official scorekeeper, it is the responsibility of each Manager to keep an accurate score as the game progresses. This should be confirmed at the top and bottom of each inning. From time to time an error is made by a team's scorekeeper, failing to record a run. If the error is identified after the first pitch is made to the opposing team in their next at bat, the run may not be added to the team's score.

**Section 026: Season Champion.** The season champion is determined at the end of the regular season by the team with the highest winning percentage. Ties will be broken by which team won more games in head-to-head competition. If ties still exist, each team will be identified as a co-champion. If a team has played fewer games than others, no make-up games are authorized.

**Section 027: Appeal.** The home plate umpire will make a call unless he is not able to. In that event, and in his sole discretion, the umpire may appeal to a base coach to make the call. A player or Manager may not demand the umpire appeal the call to a base coach.

**Section 027: Substitute Players.** Substitute players may only play if they are one of at-most eleven total players playing. There are many types of substitute players:

- a) Rostered One-Day players. One-day per week players are considered substitute players on the day of the week they're not assigned, for example a Tuesday-only player when playing on Thursday games.
- b) Loaner Players. These players are rostered from another team and are loaned to the team in need from a team with excess players that game.
- c) Sub-List Players. These players are not on a current roster and may include new players trying out, players from the 65+ league, or players from previous seasons who are available.
- d) Bye-Week or Double-Header Subs. These players are rostered players from another team whose team does not have a conflicting game schedule. Managers may NOT use Impact players (players rated 20 or higher on the 25-point scale) unless either approved by the other manager OR the commissioner prior to the game. In the interest of fairness, managers are encouraged to substitute players of relatively equal or lower skill level (overall ranking) to the player(s) who aren't able to attend. For example, if five players are missing with ratings of 7, 10, 12, 14, and 16, it's not in the within the level of fairness to bring in a 19-ranked player from another team.

Each substitute player may play any position defensively. However, the manager is limited to batting all subs after their last-rostered, eligible-for-that-day-of-the-week player. Should a manager need two or more subs it is his choice where to bat all of the subs in those last spots in the batting lineup. Failure to comply with this ruling may, at the commissioner's discretion, result in a forfeiture of the game.