

# **North County Senior Softball-Competitive Division *Supplemental Rules*** (Final Rules as revised on 9-25-22)

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 001: Manager Responsibilities.** Each team is assigned a Manager for each season of play. Selection is on a volunteer basis. Managerial responsibilities include:

1. Participating with other Managers in the fair selection of each team prior to the start of the next season.
  - a. The selection process begins with skill-balanced placement of players on teams by random and sequential assignment to rosters based on player ratings. A subset of essential positions and Tuesday/Thursday players are randomly assigned separately. The highest rated players are assigned first.
  - b. After enough players are distributed to comprise a full team, Managers are assigned teams by drawing a team number (in the blind) out of a receptacle.
  - c. Optional: The selection process ends with lower rated players drafted on a rotating basis by each Manager. Each Manager determines their own competitive needs and drafts (or decides not to draft) accordingly. If possible, the draft pool shall include enough players that each Manager shall have the opportunity to draft at least 2 players but not more than 3 players.
  - a. Players not selected by the above optional process will be placed in an undrafted pool of inactive players for one season, which the Commissioner may tap during the season for individual games or for roster additions.
  
2. Participate with other Managers in evaluating teams for parity after completion of the first round of games. If necessary, players will be redistributed in a way most likely to achieve team balance within the league. Managers will use the following procedures in making re-balancing decisions:
  - a. New players and inactive players who ask for team placement should be identified to all Managers before meeting to make rebalancing decisions.
  - b. Managers should review each roster, including their own team roster, to identify possible players that may be moved for placement with needy teams.
  - c. Managers should identify players on their teams who have only minimally attended the first round of games and who, therefore, may be more easily moved to achieve parity.
  - d. Managers should focus on what is best for league parity rather than their own competitive team interests.
  - e. New and otherwise unassigned players indicating intent to play during the season shall be offered first to the team most in need and with the overall purpose of enhancing team and league parity.
  - f. New players shall be added to the league after game evaluation or tryout and approval of at least two Managers/Assistant Managers/Directors.
  
3. Notify players prior to the first game, and ensure they have the season schedule and are available to play for the season. If unavailable, notify the league Commissioner.
4. Notify players of schedule changes or cancellations due to rain, holiday or tournaments. If players have questions about whether play will occur, they should contact their Manager.

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5. When home team, place the field equipment on the field 45 minutes prior to game time. The equipment includes bases, home plate mat, score Board, pitching screen, marking the **10-** foot line behind the pitching rubber and place the score line mat in position. Ensure all equipment is returned to the field's storage container and locked in following the conclusion of play.
6. Keep an accurate score book according to League Scorekeeping Guidelines and report the score to the league secretary following the conclusion of play. The score book is provided by NCSS-CD.
7. All players shall be assigned to bat in the lineup for the entire game. Managers should assign defensive positions in such a way that all players participate at least to some minimal degree in the defensive game. The Manager has complete discretion in this matter based upon his assessment of the player's relative skill and ability to play a particular defensive position, the Manager's desire to enhance the team's competitive level of play, and such other factors as the Manager determines appropriate in a particular game or circumstance. Since this is a competitive league, there is no guarantee of any specific minimum number of innings that must be offered to any player.
8. Assign a batting order and ensure on-deck players are prepared to bat to avoid delay.
9. Manage the game in such a way as to avoid game delay.
10. Resolve any rule dispute directly with the other Manager. Only the Manager can dispute a rule interpretation. All other players must bring the dispute to the attention of their Manager, who will then elect, in his sole discretion, whether to press the matter, or proceed with normal play. The Commissioner will make the final decision regarding any disputes between Managers.
11. Ensure players conform to player conduct requirements. Games must be played with respect for all players, the umpires and the sport.
12. In cases where player misconduct cannot quickly be subdued and controlled, the Manager has the authority to eject the player from the game in the interest of good sportsmanship and the integrity of the game. Any consideration of suspension or banishment for more than one game must be brought to the league Commissioner for consideration and decision. A player can be suspended or banished forever only upon the majority vote of the league Board.
13. Strive to know the SSUSA and NCSS-CD supplemental softball rules in order to properly manage a game.
14. Provide one new game ball (ROCK) and one good used ball for each game, such balls to be provided to the Manager by the NCSS-CD Commissioner.
15. Deliver the batting practice balls to each game.
16. Bring a first aid kit to each game, including ice packs. The first aid kits are provided by NCSS-CD.
17. The Managers, Commissioner and League Secretary (all if not also a Manager) comprise the league Board and are responsible for league rules. The duties of League Commissioner and League Secretary shall be defined in their Job Descriptions. The persons serve on a voluntary basis without term limits. If a league player should desire to hold one of the positions above, he may voluntarily submit his name to the Commissioner. The league Board will determine by majority vote whether a league officer or Manager change is in the best interest of the league. No Board member shall have more than one vote.

**Section 002: Player Responsibilities.** The following player conduct rules are provided to ensure the highest level of respect for each player, Manager, umpire and the game of softball. The league prospers

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when new players seek to join NCSS-CD based upon its competitiveness, goals for team balance and parity, and its reputation for good sportsmanship, fair play, and no arguing during games. All competitive players above 50 years of age are invited to apply. An atmosphere of fairness, respect for each other and collegiality are the foundation to a quality league. NCSS-CD is not comprised of tournament teams, rather players of varying talents and with a wide age distribution. As such, patience and understanding are required of all players. Member players must observe good sportsmanship and the following personal conduct rules:

- 1) Pay appropriate league fees when requested.
- 2) When you commit to play for a team, use best efforts to make all games. It is understood that vacations, medical emergencies, work and family commitments etc. will sometimes interfere with a player's ability to attend each scheduled game. Notify your Manager by email, text or phone call as soon as you learn of a game conflict, or of your request to play in games for which you are not scheduled so he can adjust his lineup before arriving at the game.
- 3) Arrive at each game at a minimum of 30 minutes prior to game time to allow for the Managers and player representative to ascertain team strength and create or modify a player schedule. This will allow for pregame batting practice and avoid game start delays.
- 4) Provide your own bat and glove during play. Use of other player equipment diminishes the life of that equipment for that player. Use of another player's equipment is permitted but discouraged.
- 5) Never shove, threaten, hit or verbally abuse another player, Manager or umpire. Such action will result in ejection, suspension or banishment.
- 6) Do not argue calls with the umpire, players or Managers. If you disagree with a call, make it known to your Manager only. In your Manager's sole discretion, he may choose to address the matter with the umpire or reject pressing the matter in the interest of avoiding unnecessary game delay. Respect the final decision.
- 7) Cooperate with the requests from your Manager. If you object to an action or activity, first address it with your Manager. If unsatisfied, you may address the matter with the league Commissioner.
- 8) Wear the assigned jerseys and hat for each game. Contrasting jerseys assist in player identification when executing a play and avoid confusion. It also adds a level of credibility to the quality of the NCSS-CD league.
- 9) When the home team, assist in the placement of the field equipment on the field. Following the game's conclusion, assist in the return of the field equipment to storage.
- 10) Rough tactics during play is prohibited. Player safety supersedes all other goals of the game.
- 11) Throwing of a bat out of frustration is prohibited.
- 12) Participate in pregame batting practice and participate in manning the ball-bucket and field batted balls.

**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.

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**Section 004: Player Trading.** At any time during a season, Managers may agree to trade players. Notification of the trade is required to be made to the league Commissioner for approval so that accurate and balanced player rosters can be maintained. Following the Commissioner's approval of the trade, it is the Manager's responsibility to notify the affected players regarding the trade.

## **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 when rounding a base may 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. Batted balls that strike the pitching screen are strikes and dead balls. If the pitching screen is hit on the third strike, the batter is allowed the one-time courtesy foul ("waste foul").
- 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. A forfeiture is recorded with a final score of 9-0.
- 2) Should the team begin a game with eight original players, and thereafter fall below eight players, the game will still be counted.

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**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.

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**Section 011: Substitute Players.** The Game Goal is to field 11 players on defense each inning. If each team has 11 or more players, each team must play 11 defensive players.

**A Team-in-Need** is defined as a Team that has at least 8 of their own Roster defensive players playing a game but fewer than 11 and needs additional defensive players.

**A Substitute Player** is a player on another team's Roster that is provided to a Team in Need for a particular game only. All Substitute Players assigned to a Team in Need will bat last for that team.

**A non-rostered player** cannot play on any team unless approved by the Commissioner for a particular game. An assigned non-rostered player must be introduced to the opposing manager prior to commencement of the game.

**A "Borrowed Catcher"** is a player that catches for the other team but for all other purposes including batting continues to play for their own team.

### **Substitute Players and Borrowed Catchers shall be assigned to a team in need as follows:**

Step 1 - Managers of a Team-in-Need shall first ask their one-day-only players to play a 2<sup>nd</sup> day due to the team need.

Step 2 - Managers of a Team-in-Need shall then use available players from the Sub List who are not playing at the same time as the Team in Need.

Step 3 - Managers of a Team-in-Need shall then use available excess players scheduled to play at the same time on a Team with more than 11 players but playing on a different field – Managers may not give their player with the highest batting average or the lowest batting average to a Team in Need.

Step 4 - As a last resort, Managers of a Team-in-Need may use their Opponent's Players. Managers of Opponent Team A may give their player with the lowest batting average or any other player to Team B, the Team-in-Need.

Team A shall first provide an opposing Team B with an excess defensive player or players they have over 11 to help the opposing Team B field 11 defensive players.

If Team B still does not have 11 defensive players, Team A and Team B shall field defensive teams as follows:

#### **1. When Team A has 11 defensive players left to play:**

- a) If an Opposing Team B has 10 defensive players, then Team A catches for Team B. and the two teams play 11-11.
- b) If an Opposing Team B has 9 defensive players, then Team A gives Team B any player they decide to give as a sub including their player with the lowest batting average, both Teams borrow a catcher, and the two teams play 11-11.
- c) If an Opposing Team B has 8 defensive players, then Team A gives Team B any player they decide to give as a sub including their player with the lowest batting average, both Teams borrow a catcher, and Team A plays 11 and Team B plays 10. (Team A with 11 defensive players attending a game never has to give up playing 11 defensive players.)

#### **2. When Team A has 10 defensive players**

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- a) Team A never gives up one of their own players if they only have 10 defensive players.
- b) If an Opposing Team B also has 10 defensive players, Teams A and B catch for each other and the two teams play 11-11.
- c) If an Opposing Team B has 9 defensive players, Team B borrows a catcher, Team A cannot borrow a catcher, and the two teams play 10-10.
- d) If an Opposing Team B has 8 defensive players, Team B borrows a catcher, Team A cannot borrow a catcher, and the two teams play 10-9. (Team A with 10 defensive players attending a game never has to give up playing 10 defensive players.)

### 3. When Team A has 9 defensive players

- a) If an Opposing Team B also has 9 defensive players, each team borrows a catcher, and the two teams play 10-10.
- b) If an Opposing Team B has 8 defensive players, Team B borrows a catcher, Team A cannot borrow a catcher, and the two teams play 9-9.

**Section 012: 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 013: 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 that has previously been intentionally walked.

**Section 014: Timed Games.** To avoid undue game delay, pregame warm-ups should be limited to the first inning if the game is a timed game with another game following.

If a game has a time limit, the umpire will announce “we’ll complete this inning and one more” if the time limit expires during the play of an inning. If the time limit is called between innings, only the open inning will be played. An inning is not underway until the first pitch of the inning is pitched.

**Section 015: 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 **down** past the home plate scoring line (or mat that designates the scoring line) 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 016: 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

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advantage to a team. Should such an action occur, the omitted batter is recorded as an out.

**Section 017: 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 018: Tuesday and Thursday Players.** Some players sign-up to play only one game a week. Notwithstanding, those players are team members and are permitted 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.

**Section 019: Time out.** A time out occurs when the umpire’s states “time out,” which should be done when the ball is secured by an infielder and in the discretion of the umpire, all play has ceased.

**Section 020: 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 021: Partial Participation.** Due to a valid and temporary medical purpose, any player may participate on a partial basis. A player may field or bat only. This rule cannot be used to gain tactical advantage. Managers should agree to any such player limitations prior to the game. If they cannot agree, the Commissioner will decide.

**Section 022: 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 023: 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 024: 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 025: League Fees.** All New Players will receive a home and away jersey and new hat. Players may purchase additional jerseys and hats at any time.

New Players will pay a one-time only Initiation Fee of \$100, which covers the cost of jerseys and hats and other shared capital costs of the league.

New Players and all continuing Players will pay an annual Operating Cost Fee of \$150 per year to

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contribute to the operating costs of the league. This \$150 fee shall cover playing in the league anytime during the June 1–May 30 year.

In lieu of paying the Operating Cost Fee of \$150, any Player may instead volunteer for one-day assignments during the League’s Annual Tournament held during the June 1-May 30 year. If a new player joins the league after the Tournament and is unable to volunteer, he is excused from paying the Operating Cost Fee for that year. All players are strongly encouraged to volunteer for the success of the Tournament rather than to pay the \$150 operating cost.