

SAN DIEGO SENIOR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION LEAGUE RULES FOR DANA LEAGUE SOFTBALL

(Revised February 2024)

1. GOVERNING RULES

1.1 Except as stated in these Dana League Rules, play is governed by the current official rules of Senior Softball USA (SSUSA), including the Code of Ethics. **Neither the Umpire nor Managers may agree to deviate from the rules before or during a regulation game.**

2. GENERAL

2.1 A regulation game consists of any number of innings completed during the time allotted for the game.

a. The time allotted is 70 minutes from the scheduled game start time, plus an open inning. The president or designee may in his discretion adjust the actual start time. After 70 minutes, the umpire will announce that the teams will complete the inning then being played and one additional inning. For the late game only, the two managers for that game may agree, before the game starts, if they both want to play exactly eight innings, or nine innings, or time limit. Without agreement, it will be a normal time limit game. When either team is ahead by ten or more runs going into the final inning, the team that is behind shall bat twice in a row in the final two innings. A maximum of nine innings will be played unless teams are tied in a playoff game after nine innings.

b. No tiebreakers are allowed for regular season games.

2.2 Teams will play two innings before alternating offense and defense. This will continue until the sixth inning is completed. From the seventh inning on, teams will alternate offense and defense after each inning.

2.3 No player on a team may sit out (i.e. not play defense) more than two innings of the first six innings nor more than four innings total per game. Every player on a team must take a regular turn at bat for the entire game. Failure to follow this requirement may result in a game forfeit. If a player leaves the game due to injury or emergency and is not replaced, an out shall NOT be recorded when his turn to bat comes up. If a player leaves the game for a reason other than injury or emergency and is not replaced, an out shall be recorded the first and only time his turn to bat comes up. A player who is ejected shall not be replaced, and an out will be recorded each time they would have batted.

2.4 For all playoff games, the team with the best regular season record has the choice of playing as the visiting or home team.

2.5 A “senior” bat may be used by those players that will reach the age of 70 in the current calendar year or are older. Those players younger than 70 will be allowed to use any appropriate bat that has one of the national organizations’ emblems on it.

If a player younger than 70 uses a “senior” bat and the defensive team protests the bat used before the next batter in the order receives a pitch, the batter will be called out on a dead ball and any runners will return to their original base. The player will not be ejected from the game.

All female members of the league will be allowed to use a senior bat regardless of their age.

2.6 The Rules Commissioner, League President or their designee will be the final arbiter of all disputes for which no rule is written. If none of these are present, the final arbiter will be the game umpire.

3. DRAFTS

3.1 Pregame Draft. If a team has fewer than the number of defensive players allowed per rule 4.1, it will draft players to reach that number of players, under the following procedures.

a. The draft will be held ten minutes before the scheduled game time.

b1. All current league members are eligible. Roster players electing not to play in their scheduled game are ineligible to enter the game after the draft has commenced. Non-roster players may have priority or super priority status as authorized by the league. Each manager shall have the names and draft rounds of the players to be replaced entered on the draft list. All players wishing to enter the draft will have their names put on the draft list including their current draft round. Players who were not drafted in the preseason draft will be assigned a draft level by the league president or designee.

b2. The team with the poorest record will choose the first player from the pool or may defer and allow the other team to choose first. If the two teams are tied, cards will be drawn to determine who drafts (or defers) first. The other team will choose the next player. The draft will continue in this manner until all substitute players are chosen.

b3. If a team is replacing more than one player, higher draft round players will be replaced before lower round players.

b4. The manager whose turn it is to choose will make his selection from the designated pool of potential draftees whose draft round is no more than one higher or one lower from the draft round of the player being replaced. There will be no lower draft round limit when replacing roster players originally drafted in rounds seven or lower. The selection will be by card draw if more than one potential draftee is in this designated pool unless the manager decides to choose a priority player from the designated pool. If no draftees meet this criterion, the high/low differential will be successively increased by one until suitable draftee(s) are available. Special Case: When both teams are replacing players with same draft round AND

there are only two eligible players in the draft, the manager whose turn it is to choose may elect to choose either one of the two eligible draftees.

b5. Priority players who meet the high/low differential cannot be deferred when to do so would keep them completely out of the draft and when possible, they must be drafted in keeping with the intent of rule b4.

b6. For the 8:30am game only, rules b2, b4 and b5 do not apply. Instead, managers are encouraged to contact eligible draftees and replace their missing roster players with draftees whose draft rounds are equal to or lower than the missing roster players. At or before 8:20am, each manager will announce which of his players are being replaced and which eligible players are taking their place. Priority status will not apply for the 8:30am game.

c. If a regular team player arrives after the draft is announced, and has been replaced by a drafted player, they must wait until two complete innings have been played AND the drafted player they are replacing has batted at least once before they can enter the game. They will then replace the player who was drafted to replace them and bat in the same place as the drafted player they replaced. Any player who leaves a game does not lose draft priority or eligibility (it is as if they were never drafted). If the regular player arrives after two innings have been played and the drafted player they are replacing has batted at least once, they may enter the game immediately.

d. Drafted players must bat at the bottom of the order.

e. All players are eligible to play a total of two games each game day, unless there are not enough eligible players for the third and subsequent games.

f. If one or both managers make an error in how many players they need to draft, and the error is discovered within five minutes of the draft, a re-draft will occur using only those players in the previous draft, unless more draftees are needed. If the mistake is made after five minutes from draft time has elapsed, the following rules shall apply:

f1. If both managers made errors, the official responsible for the draft will use his best judgement to rectify the situation. Otherwise,

f2. If a manager did not draft enough players, a mini-draft will be held using the remaining draft pool of players who were in the draft pool for that game.

f3. If a manager drafted too many players, the opposing manager will select which drafted player(s) (if more than one was drafted) will leave the game. If the team in error drafted only one player, the opposing manager may replace one of his drafted players with the player from the other team who has been removed.

3.2 Playoff Draft. The purpose of a playoff draft is to replace missing players in such a way as to maintain, but not improve, approximate team strength. A playoff team will replace all missing roster players under the following procedures.

- a. Managers are encouraged to determine before game day which players will be missing and who will replace them. It is unethical for a manager to ask one of his players to miss a playoff game, and if discovered, such action is grounds for forfeit.
- b. Each manager will announce which of his players are being replaced and which eligible players are taking their place. Roster players originally drafted in rounds one, two, and three cannot be replaced by players drafted prior to the player being replaced. No replacement player can have a draft round above the highest draft round of the missing players. Additionally, the sum of the draft round(s) of the replacement player(s) will not be lower than the sum of the draft round(s) of the absent, roster player(s). If roster players in the last two rounds are not replaced, an out shall be recorded each time they are scheduled to bat.
- c. Players who were not drafted in the preseason draft will be assigned a draft level by the league president or designee.
- d. Drafted players must bat at the bottom of the order. If a regular team player arrives after the draft is announced, and has been replaced by a drafted player, they must wait until two complete innings have been played AND the drafted player they are replacing has batted at least once before they can enter the game. They will then replace the player who was drafted to replace them and bat in the same place as the drafted player they replaced.
- e. A player who is drafted is not automatically a member of the drafting team for other playoff games. However, they are not precluded from playing for the drafting team in other games. There will be a new draft before each playoff game.

3.3 Mini-Draft. Any player who leaves a game for any reason, other than ejection, may be replaced by a mini-draft, per the Draft Rules established above.

- a. The manager of the team losing the player has the option to request a mini-draft or continue playing with his remaining players.
- b. When a mini-draft is requested during a regular season game, it will be conducted under Rule 3.1b4 (Pregame Draft). When a mini-draft is requested during a playoff game, it will be conducted under Rule 3.2 (Playoff Draft). Whether a regular season or playoff game, the substitute player will bat in the same spot in the order as the player who left the game (instead of batting at the bottom of the order as do other draftees in the pregame and playoff drafts).

4. TEAM ORGANIZATION

4.1 Prior to each season's draft, the managers shall vote on whether to play with 10 or 11 players on defense. In case of a tie, teams shall play with 10 on defense.

4.2 A team that is unable to field a minimum of six team members by the actual game time

shall forfeit the game. Only regular team members who are present at the field and ready and able to play will be counted. Exception. If a team has only nine or fewer roster players, a minimum of five team members is required. In this case, a team may not draft more than four non-roster players.

a. If a regular team member must leave the game after it has started for any reason other than ejection, and the number of regular team members drops below the minimum required, it is not declared a forfeit.

b. If a regular team member is ejected and the number of regular team players drops below the minimum required, a forfeit will be declared.

c. If one team forfeits, the score will be recorded as 9-0 in favor of the non-forfeiting team. If both teams forfeit, both teams will receive a loss and the score will be recorded as 0-0.

4.3 The defensive team must play at least four of its players behind the cones or a line established by the league. If a team has fewer than 10 players on defense, this number is reduced from four to three. If a designated outfielder crosses the cones or line before a pitched ball reaches home plate, any out recorded on the last play will be nullified and each base runner will be advanced one base.

5. BATTING

5.1 Every batter begins an at-bat with a one-ball and one-strike count.

5.2 If a batter has a two-strike count and hits a foul ball, they are out.

5.3 If a batted ball hits the pitcher's screen before being touched by a defensive player, the ball is treated as a foul ball. If the batter with two strikes hits the pitcher's screen, they will be allowed one more opportunity to put a ball in play. If they again hit the pitcher's screen, they will be called out.

5.4 If a defensive player touches a batted ball and the ball then hits the screen, or if a ball is thrown and hits the screen, it is a live ball. If said ball becomes lodged in the screen, it is a dead ball and the umpire will place the runners where they should be according to his judgement.

5.5 A team may hit up to and including two more over-the-fence home runs than the opposing team. Inside-the-park homeruns do not count as home runs for purposes of this rule. Each over-the-fence home run over the limit is treated as a single, except that runners already on base may not advance unless forced. When an over-the-fence home run is struck and counts as a home run and not a single, the batter and all runners on base at the time of the home run may immediately return to the dugout.

5.6 There is a penalty for balls (fair or foul) hit over the homeowner's fences or any extension of those fences (buildings on fence line). Should a batted ball come to rest on the homeowner's

side of the fences, the batter will be called "out," and not a home run, and will be removed from the game and is ineligible to play in any other games that same day. They cannot be replaced unless the team has fewer than the number of defensive players allowed. In that case a mini draft will be held per Rule 3.3 with the exception that they will not be replaced by anyone drafted higher than they were drafted, unless no other lower drafted players are available and then they shall be replaced by a player who was selected closest to the player being replaced.

5.7 Each manager may designate up to two of his players per game, including draftees, for whom intentional walks may result in the award of additional bases beyond first base, i.e. the player is an IBB (Intentional Bases on Balls). For the purpose of this rule, an intentional walk has occurred if the designated player legally walks to first base before receiving a 2nd strike (after starting with a one ball one strike count.) Any designated batter receiving a 2nd intentional walk in a game will be awarded 2nd base. A 3rd intentional walk to said batter and batter will be awarded 3rd base. All additional intentional walks to said batter and batter will be awarded home plate. All runners move up only when forced. This rule is limited to players originally taken in draft rounds one through four. If a designated IBB player leaves the game for any reason, no other player, including a replacement player, may assume the departing player's IBB status.

6. BASERUNNING

6.1 A runner may be forced out at any base without a tag. When a play is made on a runner advancing to any base beyond first base and before the commit line between 3rd base and home plate, they may change direction only once. If they change direction a 2nd time they will immediately be called out by the umpire without requiring a tag or force out.

6.2 If there is a play on a batter-runner going to a base, the batter-runner must have one foot down on or down past the extended line. They are out if they fail to have one foot down on or past the extended line at any base, unless in the umpire's judgment the batter-runner was attempting to avoid a collision. This is not an appeal play.

a. In the event that a batted ball reaches the outfield grass beyond the dirt infield, the batter/runner is considered safe at first base. The ball is live and all other runners advance if forced or at their own risk if not forced.

b. When a batter who is awarded first base as a result of a walk or a batted ball reaching the grass is going to be replaced by a courtesy runner, the courtesy runner may take the base and the batter may return to the dugout without having to touch first base. All runners on base must advance at least one based if forced due to the walk.

c. If no play is being made at first base, the batter/runner may run to the regular first base, ensuring contact is made with the base prior to advancing to second base.

d. If an extended line is used at third base, the runner may be on or behind extended line after legally reaching third base. The runner may also use that line to tag up on fly balls rather than returning to the base. The runner at first base may start behind the foul line but must touch first base on his way to second base. The runner at second base may start off the base with both feet on or behind the line. If they are hit with a batted ball with one or both feet on or behind the line, they will be treated the same as if they had one or both feet on the base. If they choose to tag up on a fly ball they do not need to return to the base but must have at least one foot on or behind the line. The runner may not use a running start while the ball is pitched to gain an additional advantage over what they would have had if they had started from the base.

6.3 Collisions between base runners and defensive players shall be avoided. It is the runner's responsibility to avoid a collision. A base runner colliding or making contact (other than incidental) with a defensive player will be called out and the ball will be declared dead. A runner must run wide enough of any base, whether advancing to or returning to said base, to avoid contact with a defensive player making a play including a ball being thrown to the defensive player. The umpire will use his best judgment to determine if the runner would have been safe or out in the instance where a runner stops or alters their path to avoid a collision. If a runner runs to the side of the any base from which the throw is coming and interferes with a play being made, the runner will be called out and ball will be declared dead. If a runner runs directly to any base where a play is in process, the runner will be called out and ball will be declared dead unless the runner was clearly safe and no contact with the defensive player was made. However, if the batter-runner runs to or touches first base when a play at first is being made, they will be called out even if they were deemed to have reached the base before the throw was made or attempted. Minor, incidental contact, such as when a throw pulls the defensive player into the path of the runner AND the runner takes action to avoid or minimize the contact, will not result in an out.

6.4 Any player deemed to have willfully or recklessly caused a collision between him and another player will be ejected from the game and suspended for one additional game. The league officers may extend the suspension if they deem an extension is warranted.

6.5 A runner is permitted to overrun any base without liability of being called out if they do not make an obvious motion to advance (in the umpire's judgment). If the runner makes an obvious motion to advance, they may be either tagged or forced out. If a runner overruns second or third base without any obvious motion to advance (in the umpire's judgment) and then decides to advance, they may proceed directly to the next base without retouching the base they overran.

6.6 A runner who passes third base and touches on or beyond the 20-foot commitment line is committed to advance to the scoring plate. Any re-crossing of the commitment line is an out.

6.7 Between the commitment line and the scoring plate, no tag plays are allowed. The defensive player must touch the strike zone mat to force out the runner, and the runner must have one foot down on or past the scoring line at home to score. The runner is out if they touch

the strike zone mat. There are no exceptions to this rule.

6.8 A runner is out if they leave a base or crosses the line at home (runner in the hole) before a legally pitched ball is hit.

6.9 Sliding or diving going forward to or back from any base is not permitted and the runner will be called out.

7. COURTESY RUNNERS

7.1 Any runner on base may be replaced by a courtesy runner before the first pitch to a new batter. The runner on base or batter at home plate is the only person to decide whether to have a courtesy runner. A manager may not instruct a runner to accept a courtesy runner.

- a. A player may be a courtesy runner only once per inning. However, in the unlimited run inning a player may be a courtesy runner each time after his team has batted completely through its order.
- b. A courtesy runner on base when it is his turn to bat or is on deck may be replaced by another courtesy runner.
- c. A courtesy runner is in the game when they touch the base or assumes the “runner-in-the-hole” position at home plate. If the courtesy runner is determined to be illegal, they will be called out when they touch the base and will not be replaced by another courtesy runner or the original runner. A courtesy runner may be replaced by another courtesy runner at any time.

7.2 At any time before or during the game, each team may designate three batters as having a courtesy runner from home plate, (i.e. a “runner in the hole.”) This courtesy runner must start with both feet on or behind the line located behind home plate. On any batted ball except for an over-the-fence home run, the courtesy runner may not advance beyond first base except in the case of a ball that goes out of bounds, and is not liable to be put out even if they do attempt to advance. If both the batter and courtesy runner make an attempt to run to first base, advance more than halfway to the base, and there was a potential of a play at first, the courtesy runner will be called out. If a courtesy runner from home plate advances beyond first base and other runners advance more than one base due to confusion caused by the courtesy runner’s actions, the umpire may call a dead ball and return all runners to the base last touched before the confusion occurred. All other courtesy runner rules above still apply.

8. PITCHING & STRIKE ZONE MAT

A pitcher's net will be used for all games. The net will be placed in front of the pitching rubber such that the legs do not touch either the pitching rubber or the rubber closer to home plate. A pitcher may

move the net one half the width of the pitching rubber either left or right. The pitcher will also locate the screen such that they pitch with their glove hand next to the screen, cannot pitch over the screen, and cannot move the screen once it has been positioned at the start of the inning.

8.1 The pitcher shall not be considered in the pitching position unless the catcher is in position to receive the pitch.

8.2 The pitcher must take a position with at least one foot in contact with the pitcher's box. At the time the ball is released, the pivot foot must still be in contact with the pitcher's box.

8.3 The pitcher must come to a full and complete stop with the ball in front of the body. The front of the body must face the batter. This position must be maintained at least one second before starting the pitch.

8.4 The pitch starts when the pitcher makes any motion that is part of his delivery after the required stop.

8.5 The height of a legal pitch must be from 6 to 12 feet above the playing surface.

8.6 A strike zone mat will be used. The mat will be a rectangular shape 17 inches by 34 inches, or other dimensions authorized by the league.

9. UMPIRES

9.1 League members who serve as umpires have the same powers and duties as professional umpires.

9.2 The consent of both managers is required for a league member to act as an umpire. Once a game begins, an umpire will not be replaced except by the agreement of both managers. In the absence of an umpire, members of the offensive team will umpire.