

Rule 1 - Governing Rules

This league is governed by USA Softball Rules with the exception of the local rules stated herein.

Rule 2 - Field and Ground Rules

- 2.1 The distance between bases will be 70 feet.
- 2.2 The distance between the back tip of the home plate drawn on the strike zone board and the front edge of the pitcher's rubber will be 50 feet.
- 2.3 A 7-foot safety pitcher's screen will be placed 15 feet from the front edge of the pitcher's rubber (35 feet from the back tip of the home plate drawn on the strike zone board) and directly in line between the rubber and the strike zone board.
- 2.4 Commitment lines will be drawn halfway between the strike zone board and first base, first base and second base, second base and third base, and third base and the strike zone board.
- 2.5 An alternate scoring plate will be placed in foul territory on the third base side, 6 feet from the back tip of the home plate drawn on the strike zone board and in a direct line with the first base foul line
- 2.6 Out of play areas include the dugout (inside the entrance lines on either end) and any area beyond a direct line over or behind fences.
- 2.7 If an overthrow hits the first or third base fence and stays in the playing area, the ball remains in play and all runners advance at their own risk
- 2.8 A thrown ball by the defensive team which hits the pitcher's screen remains in play.
- 2.9 Managers should discuss any ground rules with the umpires before the start of play, if necessary.
- 2.10 Normally, the home team uses the first base side of the field. **However**, the managers may agree to do otherwise.

Rule 3 – Games and Time Limit

“Last Inning” is defined to be an inning when each team can score an unlimited number of runs.

- 3.1 All games will be 9 innings in duration and played at such locations, day, and times as the Softball Commission shall specify.
- 3.2 Five innings must be completed for the game to be official (4 1/2 if the home team is ahead).
- 3.3 The games should begin on time with no grace period except for an unusual set of circumstances (weather severe traffic jam, etc.) that both managers agree should allow delay.
- 3.4 No team may score more than 5 runs in an inning unless the inning is designated as the “last inning”.
- 3.5 **No new inning can begin after 1 hour 50 minutes has passed since the beginning of the game. If this time limit is approaching, the umpire has the discretion to identify the next inning as the “last inning”.**
- 3.6 **After 2 hours has passed since the beginning of the game, the current inning will be completed and the game will end.**
- 3.7 If a game is tied at the end of 9 or more innings but prior to the expiration of the 1 hour 50 minutes time limit, an additional inning will be allowed using the 5 runs per inning limit.
- 3.8 A game can end in a tie.

Rule 4 - Balls and Equipment

- 4.1 Only balls issued by the league may be used. All balls must be .44 COR, .375 Compression synthetic Optic Yellow.
- 4.2 One brand new ball will be provided by the home team at each game and one quality backup ball by the visiting team.
- 4.3 No metal spikes are allowed.
- 4.4 Any type of glove may be used at any position.
- 4.5 All legal bats (not altered or banned by USA Senior Softball) are authorized for use.
- 4.6 It is expected that all players furnish their own bat and glove.
- 4.7 Personal bats and gloves should only be borrowed with owner's consent.

Rule 5 – Physical Capability of Ball Player

In the interest of safety and physical well-being of the players of the Babes of 1916 softball league, if, in the judgment of the Softball Commission, a player would be in peril of serious injury because of physical limitations to react to a batted or thrown ball or to avoid a collision with another player, the Softball Commission reserves the right

- a) to not allow such player to participate (except as a manager-only or coach-only) or
- b) to limit such player to specified defensive positions or
- c) to classify such player as a Designated Hitter.

A **“Designated Hitter”** is defined to be a player who is not permitted to play in the field but does count in the 13 players required to avoid unfilled spots in the batting order. A Designated Hitter can use a courtesy runner from the plate or once on base and **can serve as a courtesy runner**.

- 5.1 At least 2 weeks prior to the draft, the Softball Commission shall notify each such players of its decision.
- 5.2 Prior to the draft, all such players shall have the right to a written appeal of such decision to the Softball Commission. If still dissatisfied, such players shall have the right to a written appeal to the Board of Directors for final resolution.
- 5.3 All such players, who are allowed to participate, will be included in the draft.
- 5.4 During the draft, only one Designated Hitter can be chosen by a team. The final rounds of the draft will be adjusted to fulfill this requirement.

Rule 6 – Selection of Teams

- 6.1 The Softball Commission will conduct a player draft with the managers representing their team in the selection process.
- 6.2 Cut-off date for members in good standing to be placed in the draft is March 15th. **Players who feel their commitment would not be sufficient to be included in the draft are welcome to sign up for the non-roster substitute list.**
- 6.3 To be eligible for the draft a player must have submitted each of the following by March 15th.
 - a) Returning Player Registration Form or New Player Registration Form
 - b) Waiver and Release Form
 - c) Medical Information Form
- 6.4 On the Returning Player Registration Form, returning players may choose up to 2 managers for whom they do not wish to play.

Rule 7 – Player Appearance and Conduct

- 7.1 All players will be furnished with a schedule and are expected to attend in uniform-
- 7.2 Players must wear the regulation shirts, hats and socks and will be permitted to wear pants or shorts of a different style as long as they match the royal blue color of the regulation pants and shirts. Only the official cap or CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) cap can be worn during a game.
- 7.3 A player must be dressed in complete Babes’ uniform on the field. This includes: cap, shirt, pants/shorts and socks. Umpires and managers should enforce this rule.
 - First infraction = warning
 - Second infraction = sit out one game with no substitute allowed.
 - Third infraction = sit out 2 games and no substitute allowed.
- 7.4 If a player is unable to play a scheduled game, the player’s manager must be notified as soon as possible.
- 7.5 If a player is absent without notifying the manager or is consistently tardy, the manager has the prerogative to suspend the player for one game. The suspended player can only be replaced by a player from an equal or lower draft round.
- 7.6 Alcohol consumption and smoking in Solon Community Park are not permitted by Solon Community Park regulations.
- 7.7 Managers should monitor and control their own players.
- 7.8 Harassment of any player, umpire, or fan and profanity/abusive language will not be tolerated. The umpires have the authority to eject any player they determine to be guilty of the above or other violations outside the proper conduct rules. Incidents of harassment will be reported in writing to the Softball Commission by the umpire within 24 hours.
- 7.9 Ejection from the game of a player, manager, or coach will result in suspension for the rest of that contest plus the next scheduled game.
- 7.10 The Softball Commission will be available to any player, manager, coach, or umpire to hear complaints about any behavior or rule violations. The Softball Commission’s decision will be final.

Rule 8 – Players

“Roster player” is defined to be a player drafted by a team.

Participants who are listed as “coach-only” or “manager-only” are not considered roster players.

“Emergency” is defined to be a doctor’s appointment, illness, **Babes’ sanctioned event**, or an issue related to home, family, or work.

- 8.1 Each team is expected to have a minimum of 13 players (Designated Hitter included) at the field at the scheduled starting time of the game.
- 8.2 If a team has less than 10 players (Designated Hitter included) present, the game will be declared a forfeit. If neither team has the minimum number present, a double forfeit will be declared. In the event of a forfeit, the teams involved are encouraged to split up the available players and play an exhibition game.
- 8.3 A team is required to have at least a 13-player (Designated Hitter included) batting order. If a team plays with less than 13 players (Designated Hitter included), an out will be recorded each time an unfilled spot in the batting order would have batted. (The position of each unfilled spot in the batting order is at the discretion of the manager.)
- 8.4 If a player leaves a game early because of injury or emergency, an out will NOT be assessed when the player is scheduled to bat. If the player’s team is in the field when the injury or emergency arises, the positioning of the remaining players may be shuffled to account for the player’s absence.
- 8.5 If a player leaves a game early for any reason other than injury or emergency, an out will be assessed when the player is scheduled to bat.

Rule 9 – Substitute Players

A “substitute” for an absent roster player is defined to be a roster player for a different team or a player on the non-roster substitute list who replaces the absent roster player.

- 9.1 A list of all roster players and non-roster players expressing a desire to play as a substitute **only** will be supplied to each manager.
- 9.2 **The round assigned to roster players is the initial round chosen in the draft prior to any trades or roster adjustments. Non-roster substitute only players will be assigned to a draft round where the Softball Commission estimates that the player would have been selected.**
- 9.3 A team may replace any missing roster player, except a Designated Hitter, with a substitute.
- 9.4 A substitute cannot be reserved more than two weeks prior to the game. **This will be strictly enforced.**
- 9.5 **When a substitute is needed for an absent player, the substitute must be chosen based on the following table.**

Draft Round of Absent Player	Draft or Assigned Round of Substitute
1 st	Any Round
2 nd	2 nd or later
3 rd	3 rd or later
4 th	3 rd or later
5 th	4 th or later
6 th	5 th or later
7 th	6 th or later
8 th	7 th or later
9 th	8 th or later
10 th	9 th or later
11 th or later	10 th or later

- 9.6 In order to increase participation, a substitute player is limited to a maximum of 10 games as a substitute for the entire season. **Both managers** from each game are responsible for notifying the Softball Commission Chairman of all substitutes used.
- 9.7 Before the game begins, each manager will present a lineup to the umpire and the opposing manager. All substitutes must bat at the end of the batting order and the player being replaced by each substitute must be identified. Any issues with the substitutes should be addressed to the umpire then. The umpire will enforce the established rules.
- 9.8 Once the game begins, no additional substitutes can be added.
- 9.9 If a roster player, for whom a substitute was obtained, arrives before the start of the fifth inning, the roster player’s substitute shall play the first 4 innings. After 4 innings, the late arriving roster player **may** replace his (or her) substitute in the batting order **at the manager’s discretion**.
- 9.10 If a roster player, for whom no substitute was obtained, arrives during the game, that player enters the game in the top half of the inning following his arrival. The late arriving player must bat after the last batter who batted in the previous inning but not before the first scheduled batter in the inning. (Every player playing for the late arriving player’s team must bat before the late arriving player bats.) All unfilled spots, if any, in the batting order remain unfilled.

Rule 10 – Positioning of Players

The maximum number of players in the field defensively is 13: pitcher, catcher, 4 infielders (first baseman, second baseman, third baseman, shortstop), 1 rover, 6 outfielders (short left fielder, short right fielder, left fielder, left center fielder, right center fielder, right fielder).

- 10.1. All outfielders must play on the **outfield** grass.
 - a) The short left fielder must be positioned to the left of second base. The short right fielder must be positioned to the right of second base.
 - b) The left fielder and left center fielder must be positioned to the left of second base at least 10 feet deeper than the short left fielder (or from the edge of the outfield grass if the short left fielder is missing).
 - c) The right center fielder and right fielder must be positioned to the right of second base at least 10 feet deeper than the short right fielder (or from the edge of the outfield grass if the short right fielder is missing).
- 10.2 All infielders must be positioned behind the baselines on the infield dirt. No infielder may move inside the baselines or onto the outfield grass until the ball reaches the batter.
 - a) The third baseman and shortstop must be positioned to the left of second base.
 - b) The second baseman and first baseman must be positioned to the right of second base.
- 10.3 The rover can be positioned anywhere behind the baselines.
 - a) **If positioned on the infield dirt, the rover is considered a 5th infielder.**
 - b) **If positioned on the outfield grass, the rover is considered a 7th outfielder.**
- 10.4 Players must play their designated position for an entire inning unless the pitcher is replaced. **The replacement pitcher must finish the inning.**
- 10.5 All players, except a Designated Hitter, must play a minimum of 4 innings in the field unless:
 - a) the player is injured or has an emergency, or
 - b) the game is shortened by weather conditions, the time limit, or the mercy rule.
- 10.6 If a team is playing with 12 players in the field, only one short outfielder is permitted. The short outfielder may be positioned on either side of second base for each batter.
- 10.7 If a team is playing with 11 players in the field, no short outfielders are permitted.
- 10.8 If a team is playing with 10 players in the field, no short outfielders are permitted and the batting team will provide a catcher who will be expected to make all plays at the strike zone board. (Integrity is requested. The fielding team may ask the umpire to designate an appropriate catcher if not satisfied with the choice.)

Rule 11 – Courtesy Runner

Prior to the start of a game, each manager will identify on the lineup card all players who will use a courtesy runner from the plate or after reaching base and, additionally, **designate the player's courtesy runner**. Any issues with the courtesy runners should be addressed to the umpire then.

- 11.1 Unless there is an obvious injury, a player cannot have a courtesy runner if not declared before the game.
- 11.2 A player can only be the courtesy runner for one player.
- 11.3 A player using a courtesy runner cannot be the courtesy runner for another player.
- 11.4 When injuries or emergencies have not shortened a team's original batting order, if a player is on base when expected:
 - a) to be at bat, the player is out as a batter.
 - b) to serve as a courtesy runner, the player is out as a runner.
- 11.5 To designate courtesy runners, a manager should reference the *Guidelines for Designating Courtesy Runners Chart (see next page)* **to ensure that a player will never be on base when expected to be at bat or on base when expected to serve as a courtesy runner.**
- 11.6 When an injury or emergency has shortened a team's original batting order, in the rare event that a player is on base as a courtesy runner when expected to be at bat or on base when expected to serve as a courtesy runner, **any available player not using a courtesy runner may replace the player on base.**
- 11.7 The courtesy runner for a batter will stand at the designated location. The courtesy runner is not allowed to run until the ball is hit. The penalty for leaving early is the batter will be declared out, but the ball will remain live. **However**, the batter will **NOT** be called out, **as at any other base**, if the courtesy runner merely releases the rope or takes a step once the ball has passed the batter.
- 11.8 If a batter using a courtesy runner from the plate crosses the commitment line on the first base foul line, the batter is automatically out, the ball is dead, and any base runners return to their original base.
- 11.9 A courtesy runner for the batter can advance to any base and will be treated the same as any regular runner.
- 11.10 A batter using a courtesy runner should make every effort to avoid interfering with any defensive play at or around the strike zone board area. Potential interference is at the discretion of the umpire.
- 11.11 A walked batter using a courtesy runner does not need to go to first base.

Guidelines for Designating Courtesy Runners

BOP of Players Who Can Run for Player A					
BOP of Player A	Batting Order Length				
	13	14	15	16	17
1	7,8	7,8,9	7,8,9,10	7,8,9,10,11	7,8,9,10,11,12
2	8,9	8,9,10	8,9,10,11	8,9,10,11,12	8,9,10,11,12,13
3	9,10	9,10,11	9,10,11,12	9,10,11,12,13	9,10,11,12,13,14
4	10,11	10,11,12	10,11,12,13	10,11,12,13,14	10,11,12,13,14,15
5	11,12	11,12,13	11,12,13,14	11,12,13,14,15	11,12,13,14,15,16
6	12,13	12,13,14	12,13,14,15	12,13,14,15,16	12,13,14,15,16,17
7	13,1	13,14,1	13,14,15,1	13,14,15,16,1	13,14,15,16,17,1
8	1,2	14,1,2	14,15,1,2	14,15,16,1,2	14,15,16,17,1,2
9	2,3	1,2,3	15,1,2,3	15,16,1,2,3	15,16,17,1,2,3
10	3,4	2,3,4	1,2,3,4	16,1,2,3,4	16,17,1,2,3,4
11	4,5	3,4,5	2,3,4,5	1,2,3,4,5	17,1,2,3,4,5
12	5,6	4,5,6	3,4,5,6	2,3,4,5,6	1,2,3,4,5,6
13	6,7	5,6,7	4,5,6,7	3,4,5,6,7	2,3,4,5,6,7
14		6,7,8	5,6,7,8	4,5,6,7,8	3,4,5,6,7,8
15			6,7,8,9	5,6,7,8,9	4,5,6,7,8,9
16				6,7,8,9,10	5,6,7,8,9,10
17					6,7,8,9,10,11

BOP = Batting Order Position

Rule 12 – Pitching

- 12.1 To deliver a legal pitch the pitcher is required:
- to release the pitch with an underhand (not quarter arm) motion from a position directly behind and in line with the pitcher's screen
 - to release the pitch from a position on the rubber or up to 3 feet in front of the rubber
 - to deliver the pitch directly over the pitcher's screen such that the maximum height of the pitch is between 7 feet and 12 feet above the ground.
- 12.2 The pitcher's mechanics and delivery must comply with all pitching rules provided by USA Softball (no quick pitches, stopping of delivery, etc.). **The pitcher must present the ball to the batter before pitching.**
- 12.3 All pitches shall be released at moderate speed. The speed is left up to the umpire's judgment. The umpire shall warn a pitcher who delivers a pitch with excessive speed. **If the pitcher repeats such an act after being warned, the offending pitcher shall be removed from the pitcher's position for the remainder of the game.**
- 12.4 Before a pitch reaches the hitting area, if, in the umpire's judgment,
- the maximum height of the pitch is not between 7 feet and 12 feet above the ground or
 - the ball does not pass over the pitcher's screen or
 - the pitch is delivered with excessive speed;
- the umpire shall call "illegal" and count the pitch as a ball unless the batter swings at the pitch.
- 12.5 Any pitched ball that touches the pitcher's screen or hits the ground in front of the strike zone board is an immediate dead ball and counted as a ball.

Rule 13 – Balls and Strikes

- 13.1 All batters begin their turn at bat with a 1-1 count.
- 13.2** A legally pitched ball **striking any portion** of the strike zone board **except the front edge** is a strike.
- 13.3 After the count reaches two strikes, the batter is out if the batter:
- hits two foul balls or
 - fails to swing at a strike or
 - swings and misses.

Rule 14 – Batted Ball

- 14.1 A foul tip is treated the same as a foul pop up. If the catcher catches the ball, the batter is out regardless of the height of the tipped ball.
- 14.2 Any batted ball that hits the pitcher's screen will be an immediate dead ball. The first time is considered a no-pitch. The second time (and any thereafter) is a foul ball and will be treated the same as any other foul ball in the count.
- 14.3 The "Green Grass" Rule
 - a) A batter/runner (or courtesy runner) cannot be thrown out at first base by an outfielder.
 - b) If a batted ball touches the outfield grass area, the batter/runner (or courtesy runner) cannot be thrown out at first base by an infielder as well, even if the ball was touched before it entered the outfield grass area.
 - c) At the start of the pitch, the rover is considered an infielder if positioned on the infield dirt and an outfielder if positioned on the outfield grass.
 - d) The batted ball is alive and all other runners can be thrown out.
 - e) If the batter/runner attempts to advance beyond first base, the batter/runner is at risk to be put out.
- 14.4 The "Infield Fly" Rule is not in effect. **However**, there will be no double plays allowed on popups on which two runners are forced out.

Rule 15 – Base Running

- 15.1 No sliding into a base is permitted. If a player slides, the player is automatically out. Diving back into a base is not considered sliding.
- 15.2 Tagging a runner is allowed except at the alternate scoring plate.
- 15.3 If a runner crosses any commitment line and returns across that commitment line, the runner is automatically out, and the ball remains in play.

Exception: When a fly ball is caught, a runner is not out for crossing a commitment line before attempting to return to the previous base.
- 15.4 If a runner leaves a base before the ball is hit, the runner is out, the play is dead immediately, and no ensuing action will matter. **However**, if the runner merely steps off the base when the batter swings, the runner will NOT be called out.
- 15.5 All calls will be made at the umpire's discretion.
- 15.6 At first base assuming there is a double first base:
 - a) If a play is being made at first base, the batter/runner going to first base must tag the orange (outside) base to be safe at first.

However, for safety reasons, the batter/runner can avoid the double first base, in the same manner as other bases, to avoid, and only to avoid, possible contact or interference with a play at first base (umpire's judgment).
 - b) If there is no play at first base, the runner can touch either base before overrunning or rounding the base.
- 15.7 At second or third base:
 - a) All plays are considered force plays once the commitment line is passed. (i.e. going to a base or returning).
 - b) If there is no play, the runner has the option of using the overrun line or touching the base.
 - c) The runner is not required to maintain contact with the base.
 - d) If the base is blocked by the fielder making it difficult or impossible for the runner to touch the base before advancing, obstruction rules will apply.
 - e) If there is a play, the runner is required to make every reasonable effort to avoid a collision and avoid interference by using the overrun line on the opposite side of the play.
 - f) If the runner clearly collides with an opponent or interferes with a play, the runner will be called out.
- 15.8 At the strike zone board and alternate scoring plate:
 - a) A runner crossing the commitment line between third base and the strike zone board must continue toward the alternate scoring plate and cannot return to third.
 - b) To score, the alternate scoring plate must be touched by the runner.
 - c) A runner touching or jumping over the strike zone board will be called out.
 - d) Only force outs by the catcher are allowed (no tags) using the strike zone board, but not at the alternate scoring plate.
 - e) Another player may cover the strike zone board only if the catcher must leave to retrieve an errant throw.
- 15.9 For a runner returning to first, second, or third base after a caught fly ball or after rounding the base without crossing the next commitment line. **The runner can be put out only if a defensive player has the ball and tags the runner or touches the base before the runner returns to the base, overruns the base, or passes the base on the left or right side to avoid a collision.**

Rule 16 – Running into Defensive Player

- 16.1 Running into a defensive player who is holding the ball or fielding the ball or any attempt to knock the ball out of the fielder's glove or hand is not allowed. The runner must make every reasonable effort to avoid contact.
- 16.2 If there is a collision, the resolution of the play is at the discretion of the umpire.
- 16.3 If the umpire determines the contact to be flagrant, the umpire can remove the runner from the game.

Rule 17 - Mercy Rules

- 17.1 A team may score no more than 5 runs per inning except the “last” inning.
- 17.2 In the “last” inning, as determined by the umpire, a team may score as many runs as they can.
- 17.3 If a team is leading by 15 or more runs after the completion of the trailing team's at-bat in the seventh or eighth inning, the game will end.
- 17.4 The managers can end the game by mutual agreement at any time after the fifth inning.

Rule 18 - Between Innings and Preparation Protocols

The goal is to resume play each inning as quickly as possible.

- 18.1 After the last out is recorded, defensive teams should quickly move to their positions for the next inning.
- 18.2 If, in the umpire's judgment, a team is delaying the game between innings, the umpire will issue a warning on the first occurrence of a delay and start calling balls on the batter if the defensive team continues to cause such delays.
- 18.3 To speed up the pace of a slow-moving game, the umpire will have the discretion to eliminate warmup balls.
- 18.4 The offensive manager should make sure that all batters and any courtesy runner for the batter, are ready to take their position at the strike zone board. If the batter is not ready to bat within 30 seconds after the pitcher is ready to deliver the pitch, a strike will be declared.

Rule 19 – Umpires

- 19.1 There shall be at least one scheduled umpire at all games whenever possible.
- 19.2 Umpires shall perform their duties in accordance with the recognized rules of softball, except where such rules have been modified by the rules contained herein.
- 19.3 **Only managers and assistant managers may discuss situations with an umpire.**
- 19.4 The umpires have complete control of the game after the game starts.
- 19.5 Umpire judgment calls (legal/illegal pitches, safe/out, fair/foul) may not be appealed.
- 19.6 Umpire decisions during the game will be final. There will be no protested games.
- 19.7 To get a call right, the umpires should get together:
 - a) to discuss any questions about application of the rules
 - b) for help on non-judgment situations (pulled foot by fielder, missed base, blocked view, etc.)
 - c) to consult a rules expert if necessary and available.

Rule 20 – Temperature Exception

When the forecasted temperature or forecasted Heat Index is 90° or more **during the time period of a pending game**, the President will:

- a) inform the managers of the teams involved that their game is postponed,
- b) place a message on the HOT LINE that the game has been postponed, and
- c) inform the umpires involved of the postponement.

**Softball Commission – Merle McQuiston, Chairman; Dan Kershner, Chris Levicky, Paul Rich, Keith Schmidt, Eric Thompson
Jerry Kowalski, President; Sonny Staubs, Umpire-and-Chief**