

# REC SPORTS SOFTBALL LEAGUE RULES

Revised 6/20

## **DRINKING POLICY**

***Coaches must cover this drinking policy with every player. This will be strictly enforced. There will not be any warnings.***

1. Any player or spectator that is drinking will be written up and immediately evicted from the premises. If the person does not leave immediately the sheriff will be called. The person will not be allowed back in the sports complex until the fine set forth in iii has been paid.”
2. The player or spectator will still be responsible for any fines assessed by the Michigan Liquor Control Commission or the Sheriff’s Department. The maximum fine from the LCC would be \$300. This payment would be made to the Michigan Liquor Control Commission or the Sheriff’s Department.
3. Three strikes you’re out policy
  - a. Strike 1: The player or spectator is immediately ejected. There will also be a \$50 fine. The player is not eligible to play until the fine is paid.
  - b. Strike 2: The player or spectator is immediately ejected. There will also be a \$100 fine. The player is not eligible to play until the fine is paid.
  - c. Strike 3: The player or spectator is immediately ejected. The player will be suspended for the remainder of the season.

**Rec Sports will not receive one cent of this money. The money will be donated to Mothers Against Drunk Drivers.**

We need your help. There is not another sports complex in the area that has a security guard. **We need the 700 to 1000 people that come to the sports complex each night to help with security.** Umpires will go over this with each team at home plate before each game the first two weeks of the season. If your team is starting later, then please ask umpires to cover this with your team before your first game.

## **PLAYER ELIGIBILITY:**

1. **Number of Hitters** - Teams have the option of going with any number of hitters they choose. If teams choose to go with more than ten hitters, they can freely substitute those players in the field. If an injury, player ejection, sickness, work schedule or other reason results in a player having to leave the game, the player is skipped over in the lineup without an out occurring. If a team member plays defense, that player must be added to the batting line-up. If a team is short players, they may have a spectator play catcher without batting. The opposing team can determine if the catcher must be a “dead catcher.” See Rule 14 on courtesy runners.
2. **Number of Players** - Seven players are required for participation. If there are less than ten players, teams continue to bat through their line ups without an out occurring. When other players arrive, they are added at the end of the lineup without an out occurring.
3. **The Re-Entry Rule**, or extra hitter rule - Could apply if a team chooses not to bat every player.
4. **Age Limit** - There is no age limit. However, players under the age of 18 must have a parent or authorized adult sign the waiver of liability/roster sheet. Players under the age of 18 must have a helmet with a facemask to be inside the fenced in area. This is an NSA rule.
5. **Uniforms** are not required, however, every person that occupies the bench area and/or playing field must wear a shirt and shoes.
6. **Rosters** - A maximum of 20 players will be allowed on the regular season roster. Teams may make unlimited roster changes until July 15 in the summer and October 1 in the fall. Teams may make additional roster changes after this time; however, these additions will not be eligible for the playoffs.

The signed Waiver of Liability/Roster is the official roster. Players who do not sign the waiver of liability/roster sheets are not eligible to participate. Protests are allowed beginning the third week a team plays.

- a. **Playoff Player Eligibility Protests** - The opposing team will get two player protests before the first pitch at no charge. Any additional player protests or if a protest is registered during the game, then the opposing team will pay \$25 per player. Rosters will be available for protests.
  - b. **Playoff Rosters:** Opponents rosters will be available 15 minutes prior to game time until game time during playoffs. In order to participate in the playoffs each of the following four requirements must be met:
    - i. Players must sign the waiver of liability/roster.
    - ii. Players can only play on one team in the same division unless approval is given by the league director. Players must play on their primary team (The one they play the highest % of games for).
    - iii. Playoff rosters are limited to 16 players. Each team must submit a list of players (The list doesn't need to be signatures) eligible for playoff participation by July 15 in the summer session and October 1 for the August session. If teams do not turn in the list then, playoff rosters will be limited to the first 16 names on the signed waiver/roster.
    - iv. In order to participate in the playoffs, a player must play at least 6 games with the team in the summer session and four games with the team in the fall session. Coaches must be able to prove participation through scorebooks. If there is a question concerning a player participating in the required number of games, the game will continue with one umpire while the other umpire and both scorekeepers resolve the issue. If a team uses a player that is not on their roster in a playoff game, it will result in a forfeit. **The appeal must take place prior to the conclusion of the third inning.** If there is an appeal, the awards will not be passed out until the player's eligibility is verified. The only exception to this rule is if it can be proven the player has participated in at least 75% of a team's games, then a lead umpire, can rule that the player is eligible. If a team appeals an illegal player, then they must follow the appeal process described above. *Rosters may be checked in playoff and championship games.*
  - c. **Non-Playoff Games:** Will be handled through the umpire at the point of discovery. If the protested player is immediately removed at the point of discovery, then the game will continue on with no protest allowed. However, if the protested player continues to play, then the umpire shall verify this player's name through driver's license or other proper identification. The protest must be turned in along with a \$25 per player protest fee at the point of occurrence. If the protest is lost, this fee will not be returned. However, if the protest is won, the \$25 will be returned and the protesting team will be awarded a victory and the team using the illegal player will be given a loss. The game will continue until finished or until the time limit is reached. If a player participates without signing the roster sheet, they will lose a \$25 per player fee and they may be dismissed from the league.
7. **High School Softball Players** - Are not eligible until the conclusion of their high school season. This is a Michigan High School Athletic Association rule.
  8. **Players** - May participate as many nights as they want and can play on two different teams the same night, however, they cannot play on two separate teams within the same division for the playoffs unless approved by the opposing manager, a lead umpire, or Rec Sports.

9. **Exposed Jewelry** - Chains, earrings, watches, etc. are not recommended. If players choose to wear jewelry, it is at their own risk. If there are concerns, players may be required to remove or tape jewelry.

### **THE GAME:**

10. **Game Time** – Is forfeit time. Game time is either the scheduled time or 5 minutes after the conclusion of preceding game. Umpires cannot force teams to take the field until 5 minutes before game time and cannot start the game until game time. It is the umpire's discretion concerning forfeiture and cannot be appealed. If a team is short players and the game begins under forfeit conditions, the home plate umpire should advise both managers.
11. **Softballs** - NSA requires that softballs are 52 cor 275 compression or less. NSA, USSSA, and ASA all have this requirement. We are using a 525 compression which is the hardest softball allowed. Compression is what matters the most. Many cities are going to a softball that is 40 cor 375 compression.
12. **Bat Ruling** – Bats must have the 2012 NSA stamp to be used. These bats work best with the new softballs.
13. **Equalizer Home Run Rule** – Teams will be ranked as an E (Elite), 1 or a 2. The rankings will be on the website schedule right after the team name. These rankings can change during the season based on performance. If the seeds match,
- When an Elite plays an Elite the home run rule will be 3 home runs with the 1 up rule.
  - When a 1 plays a 1 the home run rule will be 3 home runs with the 1 up rule.
  - When a 2 plays a 2, the home run rule will be one with the one up.

If the seeds are the same and both teams hit their limit, the one up rule will go into effect. If a team has hit their 3 home runs and the other team hasn't hit their limit, each home run will result in an out. After teams have hit their limit, teams cannot go one up on the opposing team in the bottom of the last inning of play. If a team violates the home run rule, that home run will count as an out.

**If a lower seed plays a higher seed, the home run rule will be two with one up. The lower seeded team can choose to receive three runs to start the game. If a 2 plays an Elite team, the 2 can choose up to 6 runs. Umpires can choose not to allow the three runs or the 6 runs.**

For home runs over the fence, runners and the batter can go directly to the bench rather than running the bases. Carrying the bat to 1<sup>st</sup> base on an over-the-fence home run will not result in an out.

14. **Count** - Batters will start with a 1-1 count with no courtesy foul.
15. **Intentional Walk** – Pitchers do not have to pitch to the hitter.
16. **Courtesy Runners/Runners Out of the Box** - Teams will be allowed one courtesy runner in addition to any runners out of the box each inning. Teams can choose anyone they want to be the courtesy runner. Teams must not choose a courtesy runner who will be coming up in the lineup. If the same injured runner gets on twice in the same inning, a courtesy runner will be allowed both times. Courtesy runners should inform umps before games. Co-ed courtesy runners must be of the same sex. Runners out of the box will have to start behind the indicated line. If a team uses a "runner(s) out of the box," it will not count as their one courtesy runner for that inning. "Runners out of the box" can only be used for the pitcher, catcher, first baseman, or designated hitters and should be designated prior to the start of the game if at all possible. It is the umpires discretion to allow a runner out of the box for any other position player. A batter can have a runner out of the box by describing his reason along with plate umpire approval. If a team member plays defense, they must be entered into the lineup to bat.

17. **Home Team** - The home team will be designated as the second team on the schedule or the highest seeding in the playoffs.
18. **Official Scorekeeper** – The home team is the official scorekeeper. If the home team doesn't properly keep a detailed official scorebook, the umpires will resolve the matter. Teams have one inning to correct a disputed, inaccurate score that is given by the umpire.
19. **Metal spikes are not allowed.** If a player wears metal spikes while batting or running the bases, the player is automatically out. The offending player must change into appropriate shoes immediately or risk ejection.
20. **Infield Practice and Batting Practice** on the infield will not be allowed on freshly prepared diamonds.
21. **Retrieving Game Balls** - Each team is responsible for retrieving game balls on their side of the fence. This includes home run balls. Failure to do so will result in umpires placing a "very" used ball into play. If teams do not help in retrieving balls, it will result in the base umpire retrieving balls leaving only one umpire to make all calls.
22. We will be allowing the same bats that NSA allows. The NSA website is [www.playnsa.com](http://www.playnsa.com) There is a link from our website to this website. Click on Approved Equipment on the left-hand column. It is about two-thirds of the way down the page. Any exceptions to NSA bat standards will be distributed in writing.
23. **Mandatory Appeal** - Managers get one mandatory appeal per game in addition to any voluntary appeals that umpires grant. To ask for an appeal, go to the umpire who made the call and ask if they will check with the other umpire. If the umpire refuses, then the team may exercise their mandatory appeal.
24. **Umpire Fees** - In order to keep games moving in a prompt fashion the following fee schedule will be in effect: \$21 prior to the game, \$22 during the game, \$23 after the game and \$25 at a later date. If an umpire is late (one pitch has been thrown) for the first game, he will collect his full game fee. From that fee, he will return \$1 to each team and pay \$1 to his partner for each inning he is late. If an umpire arrives after 4 innings of play, he will not collect any fee. This does not apply to later games where umpires are moving to balance out solo games.
25. **Double First Base** - The double base is a safety mechanism designed to reduce player interference and obstruction at first base. If a thrown ball is in the air and on its way to the first baseman that is in contact with the white bag at first in an attempt to retire the batter-runner, the batter-runner must completely touch the orange bag. (cannot touch any part of the white bag) We will start the season with warnings. On May 15<sup>th</sup> for the summer and Labor Day for the fall, runners will be out for touching the white bag if the first basemen are in contact with the white bag and about to receive a thrown ball.

#### **LENGTH OF GAME:**

26. **Mercy Rule** - If a team is trailing by 20 runs after three innings, 15 runs after four innings, or 10 runs after five innings, the team that is behind will be able to bat for the full 50 minutes. This will remain the same in playoff and championship games.
27. **Extra Innings** - Will begin with the previous batters on 2<sup>nd</sup> base. The courtesy runner rule will apply and can be used for the runner that starts a second base. The inning will begin with one out.
28. **Complete Game** - Four and one half innings will constitute a full game if the home team is ahead. If the home team is not ahead, games must go at least five innings. Completion of 55 minutes of play and finishing a complete inning will also constitute a full game. If there is a mercy rule, the losing team will get a chance to bat 7 innings, 55 minutes, or 5 minutes before the next scheduled game, whichever comes first. Half innings do not need to be completed when this occurs. Umpires must provide this option to the losing team. The winning team must provide this option to the losing team. If they do not, then it could result in a forfeit win for the team that is behind. The only exceptions to

this rule are if the winning team is scheduled to play three games in the same evening or if there are adverse weather conditions. The losing team does not have to continue to play.

29. **Get It In Rule** - If the home team is more than two runs behind entering the last inning and there is a possibility that the entire game will not be played, then the home team will bat first in the final inning. Teams must implement this rule. Failure to do so may result in a forfeit. If an umpire is abusing this rule to get the game over with early so the umpires can take a break or go home early, document times and submit documentation to our umpire in chief on field two. If it is determined that an umpire(s) abused this rule, umpires will be suspended one night for each game where this occurred.
30. **Time Limit** – **Our goal is to play as much of every game as possible. However, we do not want teams playing the fourth or fifth game of the night to have to wait around 45 to 50 minutes before being able to start their game or only be able to play 45 minutes because the earlier games took so long.** If there are two and a half hours to play two games, then each game will be allowed an hour and 15 minutes. No inning will begin after 55 minutes of play **unless there is enough daylight to allow sufficient time for subsequent games.** If the game is within two runs or less, the time limit will be extended to 60 minutes **if there is at least one hour per game for remaining games.** In championship games, the time limit will be extended to 65 minutes if there is enough daylight. Time limits will only be used in the last game if darkness is threatening. When darkness threatens, the defensive team manager may request at any time that the game be stopped. With approval from an umpire, the game will be stopped or suspended. The League Director(s) as well as umpires have the right to shorten games if necessary due to time or darkness constraints. The time limit will be enforced from the actual start of the game. If teams do not take the field as directed, game times may begin earlier. This time will be the scheduled game time or five minutes after the conclusion of the preceding game, whichever is later. *When there are four games scheduled on a field that is not lighted, no inning will begin after 55 minutes even if the game is within two runs.*
31. **Speed Up Rule:** In order to play as much of every game as possible, the following speed up rules are in effect:
32. **Walks in coed:** If a male batter walks, the batter and runners should go directly to the appropriate base or the bench area without touching the next base.
33. If a batter takes ball four and there is a courtesy runner, the courtesy runner can go directly to first base. On bases loaded walks, the runner at 3<sup>rd</sup> can go directly to the bench area.
34. **Over the fence home run:** The batter and runners can go directly to the bench area.
35. **Tournament at the end of the season** – All teams will make the tournament at the end of the season. **Playoff Format/Number of Games** – Each team will make the playoff tournament. The tournament will be seeded according to record. This is a single elimination tournament and teams may play up to six games. Teams will be credited for two games for participating in the tournament. If a team signs up for 16 games, they will play 14 regular season games plus the single elimination tournament.

### **EJECTIONS:**

36. **Ejections** - If a player is ejected from a game they are eligible to participate in the next game unless they are notified by the umpire for blatant misconduct. The ejected player must leave the entire facilities. Failure to do so at the request of the umpire will result in a forfeit. The ejected player will be skipped in the lineup without an out occurring. Suspensions for more than one game will require director approval.
37. **Profanity** - Use of profanity may be subject to ejection with the aforementioned penalties.

## MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

38. **Crossing Home Plate:** Runners crossing home plate must touch home plate. If the runner touches the mat but there clearly would not have been a play on them if they had touched home plate, the player will be warned and the run will still score. In the interest of safety, if home plate is wet a runner may touch the mat instead of the plate if there is no play on the runner.
39. **Alcoholic Beverages** are prohibited. Consumption of alcohol at any of the tournament or league facilities will result in the person being immediately removed from the facility. The player or spectator will also be responsible for the fines outlined at the start of the rule sheets.
40. **Protests** - Questions concerning rules or rule interpretations will be handled by the umpires or the league director at the point of occurrence. If a team wants to protest, they must pay \$25.00 and they must prove that the umpire is wrong. If the umpire is wrong, the call will be overturned and the team will be returned their \$25.00. If the umpire is not proven wrong, the league will receive the protest fee.
41. **Hitting Up The Middle:** Safety is our number one priority. If a player jeopardizes the safety of the pitcher, it is the umpire's discretion to warn the batter, call the batter out, or eject the batter. Teams must use a person with extremely quick reaction time at the pitching position. The pitcher is the most vulnerable player on the field. It is the responsibility of the teams to put the player with the best reaction time and best fielding mechanics at the pitching position.
42. **Forfeits** - Teams that forfeit are responsible for umpire fees for both of the teams. If a team is unable to make a game, they must give two weeks notice in order to avoid paying umpire fees. If teams give at least one week notice, the forfeit fees will be reduced to \$15. If teams give at least 72 hours notice the forfeit fees will be \$25. Please be courteous and give us as much notice as possible so that we can do our best to schedule another game in that time slot. Umpires must work forfeits if teams want to play. Teams who forfeit, in addition to paying umpire fees for both teams must submit an additional payment for \$42 in order to remain on the schedule. This complete payment must be submitted within 72 hours of the forfeit. The additional \$42 payment will be returned if no additional forfeits have occurred.
43. **Blood Rule** - When a player is bleeding, or has an open wound, the bleeding must be stopped and the open wound covered with a bandage/dressing strong enough to withstand the riggers of competition. This treatment must be immediate and a suspension of play for a reasonable amount of time will be awarded the team. Should the treatment of this wound exceed a reasonable amount of time, the affected player must be substituted for.
44. **Use of Softballs** - The Director will supply one new and one used ball per game. The offensive team can throw a new softball with the same core and compression into the game at any time. When the ball has entered the game, it will remain play until the end of the game.
45. **League Standings** – Check our website for current standings throughout the season. The website is [www.recsportsonline.com](http://www.recsportsonline.com)
46. **Awards** - The league champion will receive a sponsor trophy and 13 shirts.
47. **Balls hit into the hockey rink during hockey or Dodgeball Programming** will be an automatic out.
48. **Third Out Appeals** – After the third out is called the ball is dead. If the third out is reversed on appeal, other runners are awarded the base they could have reached if the call had originally been ruled safe.

## PITCHING RULES

49. **Arc** - The pitched ball must have a six foot arc from the ground but can not be higher than ten feet off the ground.
50. **Illegal Pitches** - Umpires will call illegal pitches while the ball is in the air.

51. **Pitches - Pitchers** can do nothing to deceive the batter prior to, during, or after delivery. The first occurrence will result in an automatic ball and a warning issued. A second occurrence may result in the pitcher being removed from the pitching position for the remainder of the game. After presenting the ball, the pitcher has five seconds before releasing the pitch. Preliminary to pitching, the pitcher must come to a full stop for one second with the ball held in the pitching hand or both hands, in front of the body. The pitcher must have one foot in contact with the pitching rubber prior to releasing the ball.
52. **Time Out** - Time is automatically out prior to the batter stepping in for the first pitch. After the first pitch, it is the umpire's discretion if he wants to award time out. To be safe, batters should ask umpires for time out each time they step out of the box. If the batter steps out of the box after the pitcher has began his motion, the pitch will be called just as if he was in the box.
53. **Struggling Pitcher**- If a pitcher has more than three walks in an inning, then the offensive team may elect to provide a pitcher. If this occurs, there will not be any walks and the pitcher may not make any defensive plays. In subsequent innings, the defensive team may elect to provide their own pitcher; however, the offensive team may elect to provide a pitcher after the first walk in each subsequent inning.

### **WEATHER POLICY**

54. **Rain Policy** - Our maintenance crew can put the fields into shape quickly, even after a downpour. Because of this and good drainage equipment, we do not cancel many games.
55. **Rain Outs** - If at all possible, each rain out will be rescheduled on the night of league play. If this is not possible, rain outs will be made up on another night or Saturday. The games involving league contenders will have priority when rescheduling.
56. **Cancellations** - Will be made by 4:45. If it begins to rain later in the evening, please call the weather number to determine whether the games have been delayed or canceled for the remainder of the evening.
57. **Weather Number - 222-5010 or check the website at [www.recsportsonline.com](http://www.recsportsonline.com)**  
**If the Weather message doesn't cancel or delay games, then the games are on.**
58. **Tornado Warnings** - The games will be canceled. **Tornado Watches** - The games will be played unless the weather appears threatening. **Playing Conditions** - If coaches feel the conditions are unsafe, they may pull their team off the field and the game will be stopped or suspended.

### **CO-ED LEAGUE AND TOURNAMENT RULES**

1. **Positioning for women hitters:** The defensive team must have four outfielders behind the line until the time of contact for female batters. The coed line will be 85 feet. If there is a violation, the umpire will signal a delayed dead ball. At the conclusion of the play, the offensive team has the choice to take the hit at the time of the violation or to take an automatic walk.
2. **Coed Team vs. Male Team: There will be no special rules in effect if teams are ranked the same level.** Sometimes coed teams need to be moved to play against some men's teams to keep the best possible parity in the league. If a coed team is playing a men's team and the men's team is ranked higher and the coed team is playing at least four women players, then the following rules will be in effect:
  - a. Teams cannot have five infielders in addition to the pitcher and catcher for female hitters. Outfielders must stay behind the line until the point of contact for female hitters. If the coed team uses five infielders, then the men's team can also use five infielders for the duration of the game.
  - b. The men's team cannot have five infielders in addition to the pitcher and catcher for female hitters unless the coed team also uses five infielders.
  - c. The outfielders must stay behind the coed line for women hitters. See Rule 57.

- d. If a male hitter is followed by a female hitter and the male hitter walks, it is a ground rule double and all runners will advance two bases. However, the woman that follows will be required to bat. See Rule 59. Men can bat consecutively if there are more men than women in the lineup. If a female follows a male, she must be visibly present in the on deck circle in order for the male to get second base. If two males bat in a row, it will be treated as a normal walk. It will result in the batter going to first base.
3. **Positioning** – Teams cannot use five person infields for coed games. Teams have the option of positioning their five male and five female players anywhere on the playing field. Teams can play with 6 women and only 4 men. Women can bat consecutively rather than use the weave. Teams can play with 6 men and 4 women; however, the 6<sup>th</sup> man must catch and will only be allowed to return balls to the pitcher. He will not assist in making an out of any kind. He will not be allowed to catch pop ups or cover home plate. Assisting on thrown or fair batted balls will be treated as obstruction and base runners will be awarded bases when appropriate. Coed teams who are using six males (five males plus a dead catcher) defensively, must inform the home plate umpire and the opposing team. If the offensive team brings this to the attention of the home plate umpire prior to the defensive team, the preceding batter will be granted a ground rule single and all runners will advance one base.
4. **"The Weave"** as a batting rotation will be in effect. The batting order must alternate sexes. If teams have an uneven number of male and female players they can still bat everybody without an out occurring. (i.e. If there are fewer guys than girls, then the guys will follow a different girl each time they bat and consequently may bat more times than the girls.)
5. **If a male walks**, it is a ground rule double and all runners shall move up two bases. However, the woman that follows will be required to bat. This prevents walking males to get to female batters with runners on 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>.
6. **Pregnant women** are discouraged from participating and participate at their own risk.
7. **Teams can play with a minimum of seven players.** There must be at least two members of each sex. If there are only two females and both are on base, an out will occur when a female is supposed to bat.

**SENIOR RULES: These rules apply to any teams that are approved.**

8. No Mercy Rule: If a team gets behind by 10 runs, then it will bat two consecutive innings for the leading teams' s one.
9. 5 runs per half inning maximum.
10. Unlimited courtesy runners.
11. Eleven defensive players.
12. The Mulligan Rule: A player who strikes out will receive an extra strike the rest of the game.