

2021

Windsor Essex County Senior Sports Organization Slo-Pitch League Official Rules

[as of July 12, 2021]

Rule 1: General Rules

1. The league will use, for the most part, the Softball Canada rule book. Any variations are contained in this document.
2. The Executive Committee (here-in-after called the Committee) may adopt new rules or modify existing rules as it sees fit.
3. At all times, the health and welfare of the players should be the prime consideration in adopting rules of play.

Rule 2: Rosters

1. Rosters will be established by a draft conducted by the division conveners and the managers in that division. Rosters should not exceed 14 players. Extra players will be placed on a waiting list.
2. An individual shall be eligible to play during the calendar year in which he celebrates his 55th birthday.
3. Any new player joining the league after the draft will be assigned to a team by the convener of that division.
4. At any time, for the betterment of the league, roster changes can be made by the convener (with the input of all managers in that division). If there is not total agreement amongst the managers, the Commissioner will make the final decision.
5. Only players on official league rosters may participate in league games.

Rule 3: The Game

1. All games shall be nine innings in length. In the event of a tie after nine innings, the tie-breaker rule shall be used. Starting with the top of the tenth inning, and each half-inning thereafter, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player who is scheduled to bat last in that respective half-inning being placed on second base. There are no outs. The player who is running can be substituted according to the substitution rules.
2. In extreme weather conditions, teams can agree to play only seven or eight innings, rather than nine. If they do not agree, the lesser number of innings will become the standard.
Example: If one team wants to play 7 innings and the other wants to play 9, the game will be 7 innings long. Consideration of the health and welfare of all players should be the primary concern.
3. Rained out games will not be rescheduled.
4. All innings shall consist of three outs or a maximum of five runs scored.
Exception: In the last inning (or any extra innings, in the event of a tie), there is no limit to the number of runs scored by either team.

5. There shall be a mercy rule in effect for all games, including playoffs. If one team is ahead by 15 runs or more after 7 innings, or if the home team is ahead by 15 runs or more after 6 ½ innings, the game is over and the team with the lead is the winner. A team losing by 15 runs or more in the 7th inning or later may score as many runs as necessary to eliminate the possibility of a mercy.
6. Regular Season ONLY: Flip/Flop Rule
In games where the visiting team is ahead by 7 or more runs at the end of 8 innings [in a 9-inning game] or end of 6 innings [in a 7-inning game], the home team will bat first in the “all you can get” final inning. The visiting team will bat last if the game has been tied or the home team has taken the lead.
7. The home team will use the 3rd base dugout and will provide one new ball and one good used ball for each game. The visiting team will wear grey shirts.
8. In all divisions, the bases will be seventy (70) feet apart. A double base will be used at first base. The white bag shall be inside the foul line and be used by the fielder. The orange bag shall be outside the foul line and be used by the runner. The purpose is to avoid collisions. On a play at first, the runner must step on the orange bag or be declared “out”. On a hit where there is no play at first, the runner may use either bag.
9. On the third base line, there shall be a ‘commitment line’ perpendicular to the baseline and 21 feet from the back of home plate. A base runner, having passed the commitment line, may not return to third base. If the catcher is in contact with the mat and in possession of the ball, the runner attempting to score is out. For scoring purposes, players must cross the ‘scoring line’ in accordance with the rule book. The purpose is to avoid collisions. If the runner steps on the mat, he is “out”. If an errant throw pulls the catcher away from the mat, he may tag the runner out between third and home.
10. The pitching rubber shall be 50 feet from the back point of home plate. However, for safety reasons, a pitching zone is in effect. This zone is between 50 and 60 feet from home plate and the width of the pitching rubber. A strike zone mat (2 feet by 3 feet) will be placed at the leading edge of home plate and extend backwards toward the catcher. Legal pitches striking any part of the mat will be strikes. To be legal, the height of the pitch must be between 6 feet and 12 feet above the ground.
11. For the safety of the pitcher, a pitching screen will be used in all divisions. For right-handed pitchers, the screen must be positioned to their left. For left-handed pitchers, the screen must be positioned to their right. The screen must be placed 5 feet in front of the pitching rubber to allow the pitcher to step behind the screen without taking a step back. If a batted ball hits the screen, the ball is dead and a strike is called on the batter. If a batter with two strikes hits the screen, he will be allowed ONE courtesy swing. If he hits the screen again, he will be called out. The pitcher must step behind the screen immediately after the pitch is released and remain there until the ball is contacted. If the pitcher makes no effort to get behind the screen, and makes a play, the ball is dead. The batter is awarded first base and all runners advance one base, if forced. If the pitcher continues to not use the screen, the umpire will have the pitcher removed from the pitching position for the remainder of the game. Any thrown ball that is in live play and hits the screen is considered a live ball and runners may advance at their own risk.
12. It is the responsibility of the home team manager to set up and dismantle the screen before and after each game.

13. Batting practice will be held from 9:00 am to 9:45 am on the diamond and with the use of the pitching screen. Home managers are responsible for bringing the batting practice buckets to the diamond. In order to ensure that all players have the opportunity to have batting practice within that time period, batters will be limited to 5 swings. Teams may elect to have a short infield practice from 9:45 am to 9:55 am. The game will start at 10:00 am.
14. In all divisions, no batter/runner may be thrown out at first base by a player positioned in the outfield, i.e. a player standing on the grass.
Interpretation (for all divisions): If the ball hits the grass, no matter where the fielder is positioned, the batter cannot be thrown out at first base.
15. In any at-bat, the batter has the option of not accepting a base on balls. He may remain at bat until he receives his 3 strikes, fouls out or puts the ball in play. Once the batter decides not to accept the base on balls, he cannot change his mind.
Exception: The defensive team can insist on the player going to first base with the base on balls but only once per game.
16. Scoreboards: The manager of the home team is responsible for delivery of the scoreboard to and from the diamond, as well as setting up the scoreboard on the backstop before each game. After consultation with both managers, the umpire will enter the numbers of runs scored on the board after each half inning.

Rule 4: Batting Order

1. Managers shall prepare, before each game, a batting order consisting of at least 9 players, all of which must be present at the start of the game. To the bottom of this list, add any players as they arrive late. All players shall bat in this order, but only 11 take the field defensively at any one time. Players may leave and re-enter the game defensively at any time. However a player may not change his original batting position.

Rule 5: Equipment

1. No metal spikes will be allowed.
2. Only bats listed on the current NSA approved bat list will be eligible for a "league-approved sticker". These "league approved stickers" will be available only from the three division conveners.
3. Only bats bearing a "league approved" sticker may be used in league play. If a player uses an illegal bat, he will be ejected from the game and suspended for the next 5 games. A second offence will result in a suspension of one year.
4. It is the responsibility of the player (not the manager or the umpire) to use proper equipment. Additional: All bats must be approved, even those that were approved last season. Players should place a protective coat over the sticker (packing tape, for example) to stop the sticker from falling off.

Rule 6: Playoffs

1. To be eligible for playoffs, a player must play in 40% of the games that his team plays during the regular season. Example: if his team plays 25 games in the regular season, he must play in 10 of them. The Committee will consider long term injury or illness when enforcing this rule.
2. The home team in all Championship games will be the team with the higher standing in the round robin games.

In the event of two or more teams tied after round robin games, the deadlock shall be broken by (in order):

- a) results of game(s) between the tied teams.
- b) best +/- in games between the tied teams (a maximum 7 run difference per game)
- c) best +/- in all playoff games

No team will be eliminated from playoffs by the +/- criteria. A tie-breaker game must be played in that case.

3. All playoff games must be played to completion (if possible). If a game is halted prior to completion, for whatever reason, it will be treated as a suspended game and continued from that point at a later time.

Note: An eligible player who was not in the original lineup but is present and ready to participate in the continuation of the game shall be added to the lineup as a late arrival. See Section 4, Part 1.

4. There should not be any forfeits in the playoffs. Forfeits will only occur when and if all avenues to put a team on the field have been exhausted. In the playoffs, the borrowing of players from other teams in that division is not allowed. If they only have 10 players, they can borrow a player from the opposing team to be the catcher. This catcher will make any and all plays as a regular catcher would. Teams can play with 9 players [borrow a catcher, one fielder short]. Once the number of available players is less than 9, the game will be forfeited.
5. The Championship game in each division will be scheduled for the day of the week on which that division plays its games during the regular season. Example: The Blue Division championship will be played on a Tuesday or a Thursday. The Red and Green Division championships would be played on a Monday or Wednesday.
6. No playoff games will be scheduled after the **fourth** Thursday of September.

Rule 7: Ejections

1. If a player is ejected, for any reason, he is suspended for the balance of that game and his team's next scheduled game.

1. Bases will be run according to “regular baseball” rules. However, if there is an “obvious” anticipated force out at second or third base, runners will be allowed to “veer away” from the base to avoid a possible collision. If the ball is dropped during the play, the runner is not out, but is awarded the base.
2. If a “hot box” occurs, runners are put out by a tag, not by a force-out.
3. Sliding is not allowed in the Red Division.
4. For the most part, it is expected that players will run for themselves. Managers will make a list, before the game, of those players that need, due to injury, a courtesy runner. The manager will inform the umpire of these players during ground rules. Any player designated as needing a courtesy runner must stop at first base on a base hit. The manager will also make a list of those players that will be used as courtesy runners during the game. When a player is used as a courtesy runner, his name will be checked off on the list. No player may be used as a courtesy runner twice in a game until all players on the list have been used once. Similarly, none can be used three times until all eligible runners have been used twice. If a runner is on base when it becomes his turn at bat, there will be no “out”. Simply replace the runner with another runner.
5. In both the regular season and playoffs, if it is known in advance that a team will be short-handed (less than 11), the team can call up a player from the Blue Division to complete the lineup. Teams should only call up sufficient players to bring their numbers to 11. The called-up player(s) will bat at the bottom of the order.

1. A defensive line consisting of an arc 175 feet from home plate shall be used. Any player standing on the grass at the time of the pitch must be behind this line and remain there until contact is made. If this is violated, the offence has the option of taking the result of the play or an award of one base to the batter and all runners.
2. To avoid collisions, all outs on the bases are to be “safety/no tag required” outs. In addition, however, a base runner may be tagged out between bases. To avoid injury, when a play is being made at 2nd or 3rd base, the runner will not run to the bag but instead run to the side and past the bag. These plays will use the “scoring line” concept. Runners will run to the side of the base away from a possible throw. If there is no play being made at the base, players should touch the base. Umpires will be enforcing the rules for interference (offense) and obstruction (defense). When a player runs wide of the base because of an impending play at that base, and the fielder makes an errant throw, the runner may continue to the next base without returning to touch that base.
3. Hot Box Rule: No hot boxes are allowed. A runner advancing to the next base may change his mind and make a move to return to the previous base. If he does, he must return to that previous base. There is no changing of mind a second time, creating a “hot box”. Similarly, if a runner stops momentarily then decides to continue forward (without turning back), he cannot change his mind again. He must continue forward. Should the runner stop with indecision, the fielder may throw to either base for the force out.
4. For the most part, it is expected that players will run for themselves. Managers will make a list, before the game, of those players that need, due to injury, a courtesy runner. The manager will inform the umpire of these players during ground rules. Any player designated as needing a courtesy runner must stop at first base on a base hit. The manager will also make a list of those players that will be used as courtesy runners during the game. When a player is used as a courtesy runner, his name will be checked off on the list. No player may be used as a courtesy runner twice in a game until all players on the list have been used once. Similarly, none can be used three times until all eligible runners have been used twice. If a runner is on base when it becomes his turn at bat, there will be no “out”. Simply replace the runner with another runner.
5. A list of players that are unable to run and need a courtesy runner from home plate will be established. The umpire must be advised before the start of the game. The courtesy runner shall have his left hand on the center post and cannot leave until the ball is hit. The courtesy runner cannot advance past first base on a base hit.
6. In both the regular season and playoffs, if it is known in advance that a team will be short-handed (less than 12), the team can call up a player(s) from the Green Division to complete the lineup. Teams should only call up sufficient players to bring their numbers to 12. The called-up player(s) will bat at the bottom of the order.

1. A defensive line consisting of an arc 175 feet from home plate shall be used. Any player standing on the grass at the time of the pitch must be behind this line and remain there until contact is made. If this is violated, the offense has the option of taking the result of the play or an award of one base to the batter and all runners.
2. No new inning will be started after 11:30 am unless both managers agree before the game starts to extend the game beyond the 11:30 am limit. The umpire must be notified of their decision before the game starts.
3. Sliding is not allowed. If a runner slides, he will be called out.
4. The "infield fly rule" will be used in the Green Division.
5. Teams may field 12 players defensively, with 5 of them being outfielders. If one team has only 11 players, the opposing team can supply a catcher to allow the other team to use 5 outfielders. If the team with 11 players does not want a catcher from the other team, they can play with 4 outfielders, but the opposing team can still use 5 outfielders. The purpose of the rule is to have as many players as possible on the field and fewer on the bench as substitutes.
6. To avoid collisions, all outs on the bases are to be "safety/no tag required" outs. In addition, however, a base runner may be tagged out between 1st base and 2nd base or between 2nd base and 3rd base. A runner cannot be tagged out between 3rd base and home.
7. To avoid injury, when a play is being made at 2nd or 3rd base, the runner will not run to the base but instead will run to the side and past the base. These plays will use the "scoring line" concept. Runners will run to the side of the base away from a possible throw. If there is no play being made at the base, runners must touch the base. When a runner runs wide of the base because of an impending play at that base, and the thrown ball gets by the fielder attempting to make the play, the runner may continue to the next base without returning to touch that base.
8. No "hot boxes" are allowed. A runner advancing to the next base may change his mind and make a move to return to the previous base. If he does, he must return to that previous base. There is no changing his mind a second time, creating a "hot box". Similarly, if a runner stops momentarily, then decides to continue forward (without turning back), he cannot change his mind again. He must continue forward. Should the runner stop with indecision, the fielder may throw to either base for the force out.
9. For the most part, it is expected that players will run for themselves. Managers will determine before the game those players that need a courtesy runner. The manager will inform the plate umpire of these players during ground rules. Any player designated as needing a courtesy runner must stop at first on a base hit. The number of courtesy runners in a game is unlimited, but a particular runner may be used a maximum of four times and never more than once in the same inning. If a runner is on base when it becomes his turn to bat, there will be no "out". Simply replace the runner with another runner.
10. A list of players that are unable to run and need a courtesy runner from home plate will be established. The umpire must be informed before the start of the game. The courtesy runner shall have his left hand on the center post and cannot leave until the ball is hit. The courtesy runner cannot advance past first base on a base hit.
11. In the playoffs, when one team is eliminated, the remaining teams can borrow a player from that eliminated team if they are short-handed, but that player must be of equal playing ability.