

# **68+ Softball League Procedures, Policies & Rules** **Effective January 1, 2021**

## **SECTION I – LEAGUE POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### **League Board**

The 68+ League Board will consist of 3 members only. The board will be responsible for all final decisions on any policy, procedures or rules affecting the 68+ League or players. The board will confer with managers on any proposed changes and under normal circumstances will accept the desires of the majority of the managers in reaching their final decision on an issue.

Board members will serve a term limit of 3 years on the 68+ Board. However, if at any time a board member feels he cannot continue serving effectively, he may be replaced by election of all players of the 68+ League. Additionally, if in the opinion of 75% of the managers of the 68+ League, a Board member is not serving effectively, the managers may call for a vote of confidence via a vote of all players of the 68+ League. Either of these votes will be taken in November of the respective year.

### **Substitution Procedures**

A 68 League Sub List is comprised of players who wish to sub only during the respective season. Each player will be evaluated as A, B or C level players by the board members. During the season, a few of these players will request that they be designated as a replacement player to be placed on a team roster if an opening occurs at their level.

Sub needs are filled level for level. Consideration will be made for filling the needed position, but will not be a priority. Priority will always be given to the Sub List on a rotating basis so as to ensure they will continue to sign up as subs. Every effort will be made to ensure there is a level for level substitute

The weekly procedure for obtaining and selecting subs is as follows:

- No later than Saturday, team managers will email Lindell of their sub needs (level/position)
- By Sunday, Lindell will confirm availability and assign subs from the sub list
- No later than Tuesday, team managers should inform Lindell of any last minute sub needs. Lindell will make every effort to assign the sub need from the sub list
- If no sub list player is available, Lindell will contact the duty team manager to fill the sub need from his team
- If there is a game time sub need for the 9:00 game, a sub will be assigned from the duty team tower player (managers should assign 2 players for scoring duties for the 9:00 game only). If a game time sub is needed for a 10:30 or 12:00 game, the sub need will be assigned from the duty team roster commensurate with the level of the missing player.

### **Placement of Substitute Players in the Lineup:**

Teams will follow the prescribed procedures for requesting substitute players. There will be no change in the policies for assigning substitutes. However, if a substitute is confirmed and assigned to a team prior to game day, the manager has the option to place the substitute anywhere in the lineup he feels will be most beneficial. This rule overrides the current rule that requires managers to place substitutes at the end of the lineup. However, if a substitute is acquired on game day, regardless of reason, that substitute player must be placed at the end of the lineup.

### **SPECIAL POLICY:**

A manager will only request a sub if he has less than 11 players available to play the game. The exception to this policy is that if their missing player is an A player, they may receive an A sub player to fill their team to 12 players. Basically, a team has the right to have 3 A players on their team for all games. If the missing player is NOT an A player, the team will play with the remaining 11 roster players.

### **Replacement Players**

When a team needs a Replacement player to replace a player or players that due to illness or injury are unable to participate for the balance of the season the following is the procedure to obtain Replacement Players.

- A) If the player to be replaced is a C player, the manager should review the Substitute Player List, reviewing players who have the letter R alongside their name. The R coding indicates players that are willing to become active roster players. The manager may then select the C replacement player of their choice and inform Lindell Grigg.
- B) If the player is an A or B player, Lindell will have the A and B replacement in a random order. Managers should inform Lindell of their requirement for a replacement. Lindell will confirm the A or B replacement player is available and inform the manager of the player's name,

After the changes are confirmed with everyone, Lindell will take the necessary steps to update the team's roster.

Players that are lost to season ending injuries must be replaced no later than one week after it is determined that they are unable to play.

In fairness to all team players, Replacement Players are only allowed to be added on an equal player rating basis i.e.: A for A, B for B, and C for C.

Teams losing an A or B player have the option to play with 11 players if no equal Replacement Player is available. While under this scenario a team cannot improve their position. A manager has the option of choosing a lower rated Replacement player to fill their roster.

Lastly if a player who was removed from a team's roster due to illness or injury is now capable of returning to play he will only be allowed to participate as a Substitute player for the balance of the season in which he was originally removed.

## **Player Refusing to Play**

Any player that refuses to play on a team or leaves a game for reasons other than injury or an acceptable (determination of the board) personal issue, will be removed from that team's roster and will not be allowed to enter the draft for the following season. Following that season, continued play in the 68+ League will be at the discretion of the managers and board of the 68+ League.

## **68+ League Managers**

Managers will be selected by the board from a list of volunteers. The following is a list of responsibilities that selected managers should comply with:

- Confirm current season players intent for following season
- Rate their current season players
- Confirm ratings of all draft list players with the board
- Assign QUALIFIED umpires for each assigned game
- Assign scorers for each game (2 scorers for first game of the day)
- Manage their teams during the season
- Request subs with sub coordinator in a timely manner, in accordance with League Substitution Procedures
- Make suggested changes and improvements to League with the board
- After draft, confirm and update any player information with the Board
- Ensure all players have signed a current Release Form
- Confirm you have an emergency contact name and phone number for each of your players

The Manager should be the team expert on 68 League rules, policies and procedures

## **Tie Breakers**

Should the season end with a tie between any teams, the following priorities of tie breakers will be used to determine final standings:

- Head to Head matchup results
- Total runs scored between the tied teams if there are multiple matchups
- Runs differential
- Total runs scored during the season

## SECTION II – LEAGUE RULES

### **The 68+ League is governed by the following priority of rules;**

- Senior Softball USA Rules (SSUSA Rules)
- Villages rules supersedes any conflicting rules above.
- Division 4 rules supersedes any conflicting rules above.
- 68+ rules supersede any conflicting rules above.

**Eligibility:** Player must be at least 68 or older within one year of the respective season starting date. Player must be a Village resident who has completed the Villages Evaluation Process. Player must be playing or drafted in Divisions 3 or 4 of Recreation or Neighborhood Leagues for the immediate season. Players cannot concurrently play in Divisions 1,2 and 5. **EXCEPTION:** Players that have participated in the 68+ League on or after January 6, 2020 and are playing in the Division 5 Recreation or Neighborhood League, will be allowed to continue playing in the 68+ League on a “grandfathered” basis. No new Division 5 players will be allowed to participate.  
Number of teams and roster sizes will be determined by number of eligible players.

### **Participation:**

Players are required to participate in a minimum of 70% of the scheduled games throughout the season. Any player that misses more than 30% of the scheduled games will immediately be removed from that teams roster and be replaced with a player of an equal skill level. If the player is removed due to significant injury or health issues and is able to recover to playing ability prior to the end of the season, that player will be allowed to substitute in subsequent games.

**NOTE:** In order to be considered to have participated in a game, a player must complete a at least 5 inning of play.

**Players:** The Manager has full discretion on how he uses his player. The Manager may move players in and out of positions and in and out of game as he feel necessary.  
But, Round Robin hitting is mandatory. All players available must be in the lineup.

**Umpires:** In order to umpire in the 68+ League, the selected player must have attended either Bill Johnson’s or the 68+ League umpire clinic prior to the start of the season. Managers are responsible to ensure the player they select to umpire any game has fulfilled this requirement.

## **Infield**

### **Practice:**

Teams may take infield practice (normal sequence) prior to each game. The visiting team will take infield first and clear the field. Home team will then take their infield practice and remain on the field to start the game. Both teams should take infield as soon as possible prior to the game and be as expeditious as possible.

First basemen may throw the ball to infielders between innings until the pitcher has completed his warm-up pitches and is ready. The first baseman must clear the warm-up ball from the field as soon as the umpire calls, "Ball In!"

## **Batters**

### **Box Rule:**

The batter's box is defined as the total platform. A batter may be called out for stepping out of the batter's box if the batter steps completely off the batting platform with either foot and hits a pitched ball (fair or foul). He may also be called out if his foot contacts the strike plate and he hits the pitched ball (fair or foul).

## **Infield**

### **Fly Rule:**

Infield Fly Rule does not apply in this league. However, an infielder may not intentionally miss/drop an infield fly ball to force a double play. If, in the opinion of the umpire, an infielder intentionally misses/drops an infield fly ball and it results in a double play, he will call the batter out and replace the runners to their original bases.

### **Run Rule:**

Teams may only score 5 runs per inning. When a team scores 5 runs their turn at bat is over regardless if they have less than three outs.

The exception being, if a Team is down by 6 or more runs, he may only score 5+1 run prior to his third out. There is no total catch up rule.

The 7<sup>th</sup> inning is an open inning for both teams. A team can score as many runs as possible before their third out.

The 5 run rule and catch up rule is in effect in all extra innings. No unlimited runs.

## **Courtesy**

### **Runner:**

A runner can be replaced at any base at any time with a courtesy runner.

Managers are not required to list runners on their lineup sheet. However, the batter has to run to 1<sup>st</sup> base. There are no rabbits from home plate. A courtesy runner can only run once per inning. A player will become a courtesy runner once he tags the base of the player he is running for. However, as per our rules, that courtesy runner may be immediately replaced if necessary. Just realize that tagging the base constitutes a run and the runner forfeits his opportunity to run again in that inning.

If a player runs more than one time in any inning and the opposing manager appeals after the courtesy runner assumes the bag and prior to the first pitch to the next batter, that runner shall be called out.

If the replacement runner is on base when it's his time to bat he can be replaced with another courtesy runner who has not run that inning with no penalty.

This rule also covers extra inning games, in which a runner is placed on 2<sup>nd</sup> base. The designated runner may be replaced with a courtesy runner.

**Tag Play:** If a player beats the throw to a base but his foot subsequently comes off the base, he must be tagged by the defensive player.

**Mercy Rule:** The Team ahead by 15 runs after 5 innings of play is the winner.

### **Flip/Flop**

**Rule:** If the VISITING Team is ahead by 10 runs or more in the top of the 7<sup>th</sup> Inning the Flip Flop rule will be in effect. The Flip-Flop Rule is mandatory. The Home Team will bat first and if the Home Team catches up or passes the Visitors, the Visitors will bat.

### **Pitchers**

**Safety:** It is MANDATORY that the Pitchers wear Face Mask to Pitch. Failure to use a Face Mask is disqualification to Pitch in a game. There will be no exception made to this rule, even if the Pitcher chooses to use the Safety Screen.

### **Safety Screen Rule:**

Pitcher may elect to use a safety screen if he feels it will enhance his safety. The safety screen does not relieve the pitcher from wearing a Face Mask. A Face Mask is always required for the pitcher. When the safety screen is put into play, the following rules will apply:

- a. The Team using the screen is responsible for the placement and removal of the screen.
- b. The screen will be place one to two feet in front of the pitching box. The screen can be adjusted if the pitcher chooses to pitch deeper in the pitching box.
- c. The screen will be place at the outer edge of the rubber on the pitcher's glove side.
- d. All batted balls hitting the screen will be declared dead ball, no pitch.
- e. A thrown ball that hits the screen is a live ball and in play.
- f. If a pitcher chooses to use the screen he is responsible to ensure it is in the legal position before he deliveries a pitch, If not in legal position it will be declared a dead ball. If the pitcher refuses to place the screen in the legal position his manager will be notified and remove the pitcher from pitching position
- g. If a pitcher chooses to use the screen he must step completely behind the screen by the time each pitched ball reaches the plate. Failure to do so will result in the Umpire calling an "Illegal Pitch" Ball.
- h. **The Pitcher may make a defensive play on any battered ball.**  
But, if in the Umpires judgement the Pitcher fails to get behind the screen prior to the batter hitting the ball and he makes a defensive play on the ball it becomes a Dead Ball Single. The batter is awards 1<sup>st</sup> Base and all base runners advance one base.
- i. If a batter hits a ball declared an "Illegal Pitch" because the pitcher did not get behind the screen the results of the play stands. There is not a reward for the batter or penalty to the defensive team. It is handled as any other "Illegal Pitch" for high or low pitches.

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After the start of the game, the home plate umpire may temporarily suspend the game for such reasons of inclement weather, excessive heat, safety, or other factors. At that time, a board member should be consulted. In coordination with the board member, umpires and managers of both teams, a determination will be made as to whether it is safe to continue the game or cancel. As always, SAFETY is the overriding factor in any situation.

## **Umpire Assistance**

If the manager of a team requests that an umpire ask the other umpire for assistance on any call, the umpire **MUST** confer with the other umpire to see if there is any conflict with the call. Realize, the final decision on the call is made by the umpire that has the initial authority to make the call. So, if you're absolutely certain of your call, you have every right to stick with the initial call even if the other umpire disagrees. However, out of common courtesy and respect for the manager, it will ease the frustration on the field if you will take just a moment to confer.

By the way, you don't have to be asked to confer with the other umpire if you're not sure of a call. To me it shows a lot of class if an umpire has the integrity and pride to make sure he saw the play correctly.

**REMEMBER: THE GOAL OF THE UMPIRE IS TO MAKE EVERY CALL CORRECTLY. THERE IS NO SHAME IN CHANGING A CALL TO THE CORRECT CALL. WE DON'T MEAN TO, BUT WE ALL MISS ONE EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE. IF WE CAN MAKE A WRONG CALL RIGHT, IT MAKES THE GAME AS FAIR AS POSSIBLE! EVEN THE PROS MISS ONE, AT LEAST THEY HAVE VIDEO REPLAY!!**