

THE VILLAGES RECREATION SOFTBALL DIVISION V

PLAYING RULES

Effective 05/01/2021. All changes are in RED.

The Senior Softball USA Rules, as modified by Division V, will govern the rule of play. The Official SSUSA Rule Book can be viewed at www.seniorsoftball.com. In the event a rule is not specified in the Division V or Senior Softball USA Rules, the ISA (Independent Sports Authority) rule book will govern.

The Playing Rules will only be changed during a season in progress as directed by The Village Recreation Department or by the Board of Directors for Division 5 for safety reasons. Documented clarifications of items below can be issued by the Board of directors if required.

A. EQUIPMENT

- 1) Only the following are allowed: Rubber spikes or sneakers; regulation sized gloves and bats that have been approved as seen in 3) below. Mitts and gloves may be used by any player. The Board of Directors **highly recommends, stresses, and urges** pitchers to wear a face mask while pitching. Face masks are optional for all other players.
- 2) All players on a team must wear a conforming uniform shirt with the player's last name visible on the back of the shirt and a baseball cap – See Policies and Procedures “H-TEAMS #3” for more details. The only exception to this rule would be if a player requires additional protection due to a medical condition then they may wear modified headgear or a helmet. Players assigned to a team with 8 games or less in a season will not be required to have the conforming items.
- 3) The official bat will not measure more than 34 inches long and 2 ¼ inches in diameter and not weigh more than 31 ½ ounces. The BPF rating must not exceed 1.21 and have the SSUSA approval stamp. The use of electrical or other tapes is limited to one wind around the handle of the bat at the top and/or bottom of the grip.
- 4) The Safety Base at first base will be positioned so that the white portion is in fair territory and the orange or red portion is in foul territory. The defensive player making a play on the batter-runner must use the white portion of the bag and a batter-runner must use the orange/red portion of the bag. If there is no play being made on the batter-runner than he may use either side of the safety bag.
- 5) A pitching screen may be used by either team. The team utilizing the screen is responsible for the placement of the screen. A batted or thrown ball that hits the screen is a live ball. If the pitcher fields the ball off of the screen, it will be called a “dead ball” and the batter will be rewarded with a hit and base runners will be allowed to advance one (1) base.

B. PLAYERS

- 1) A team plays with twelve (12) players may have a DH (designated hitter) who is a player who volunteers to be a DH. The DH does not play defense only offense (bats). The manager may elect to have a player play a minimum of three (3) innings on defense unless the game ends early. If there are 2 or more volunteer DHs on a team the manager will select the player who bats only or who plays a minimum of three innings defensively if the game does not end early.
- 2) Players who know they will not be able to participate in a game should notify their managers as far in advance as possible.

- 3) **Players must be present at least thirty (30) minutes prior to the scheduled game time** – that is the player must have reported to their manager or the manager must see the player on the walkway from the parking lot to the scoring tower 30 minutes before the schedule game start time. Any team member arriving after thirty (30) minutes prior to game time will not play in that scheduled game. A player that has been listed on the official lineup, but is not present 30 minutes before published scheduled start of the game, will not play in that game, no substitution will be allowed and the team will be charged with an out when it is the missing player’s turn to bat.
- 4) A team must have eight (8) roster players available to start the game or the game will be forfeited. At no time will a team start a game with more than four (4) substitute players unless for medical reasons – see Policies and Procedures I-#16”. In the event of a player injury, the team will receive a replacement player who will take the injured player’s spot in the batting order. In the event there are not enough substitutes available to fill out a team to twelve players, the team will be permitted to play with eight (8), nine (9) or ten (10) players without penalties and they will receive substitute players as they become available.
- 5) Players should not start a game if they know they will not be able to complete it. Unless there has been an injury, a player suffering heat exhaustion or any medical or family emergency, a team losing a player will be charged an out when it is the missing player’s turn to bat.
- 6) Decisions regarding the batting order and defensive assignments are the exclusive responsibility of team managers except when subs have been assigned to the team (See P&P). Managers will try to honor a player’s position preference, but it may not always be possible. Each player on the lineup sheet shall play three (3) innings in the field unless the game ends early. Substitute players assigned to a team will be added at the end of line-up in the order they were selected.
- 7) Any ejection will be reviewed for possible disciplinary action by the Villages Recreation Department. The Villages Recreation Department’s disciplinary action mandates a minimum of “two full game” suspension for ejection by an umpire.
- 8) Any player engaged in hassling, verbal abuse, any threat or act of physical aggression towards a scorekeeper, umpire, manager, or another player shall be reported to the Villages Recreation Department for disciplinary action.
- 9) A member of a team who cannot play in a scheduled game may, at the discretion of the team manager, coach bases or occupy a spot on the bench. The player will not be entered into the line-up and therefore not eligible to play in the game. Managers may not ask a player to sit out if they are capable of and desiring to play.

C-GAMES

- 1) Both teams must be ready to play when the umpire signals to "play ball". The umpire may then start a ten count to call balls or strikes if one team is not prepared to begin or continue.
- 2) The BOD may alter playing rules due to field conditions such as a 1 & 1 count and time limit so that all games can be played within a reasonable time. These changes will apply for all games that day.

3) Game Limitations

- a. Games will be limited to nine (9) innings. Should the game have a tie score after completing nine (9) innings, the game will be scored a tie.
- b. If in the view of the BOD, and/or, The Villages Recreation Department, that it is necessary to enforce a game time limit, each team will be notified before the start of their game that a time limit is being used.

- c. Teams are limited to five (5) runs per inning, except a team that is behind by more than five (5) runs may score enough runs to catch up. The only exception to the five (5) run rule is an over the fence home run which scores the fifth (5) run will be scored as the sixth (6) run of the inning.
- d. In the seventh (7) and subsequent innings, scoring is limited to catch up plus five (5) runs.
- e. Tie Breaker Rule-When the score is tied after seven (7) innings, teams will start the 8th and 9th inning with a runner on second base. The base runner is the last player to bat from the previous inning who did not require a courtesy runner.
- f. **Mercy Rule.** If a team is leading by 12 or more runs after the 5th inning (4 and a half innings if the home team is ahead) the game will be considered complete. If the visiting team is ahead by 12 or more runs after the 5th inning, the home team must bat in the bottom of the inning.

2) **Cancellations**

- a. Prior to commencement of play for the day The Villages Recreation Department will determine if games are to be canceled due to weather or field conditions that would impact the safety and well-being of participants. One game cancellation does not necessarily mean that all games are cancelled. For example, if one field is unplayable, the other fields may play as scheduled, or if the temperature limits are unacceptable at game time, the later games may be played should the temperature limits become acceptable.
- b. Games may be cancelled by the Villages Recreation Department when the temperature is above ninety-five (95) degrees, or the heat index exceeds one-hundred-three (103) degrees or the temperature is below thirty-five (35) degrees wind chill factor.
- c. Should the Villages Recreation Department Representative advise the Board Member assigned to games that day that the heat index or wind chill level described above has been reached and they recommend the game be stopped, the Board member will call a halt to play. Games being played in the fourth (4th) inning or more will complete that inning and the game will end at the point and scored as a completed game. If a game is being played with three (3) or less innings being played, the game will end at that point.
- d. The umpire(s) are empowered to stop or delay a Game at any time because of rain, fog, lightning in the area, darkness or any other cause which puts the umpires, players or the spectators in peril. The umpires may stop a game for a 5 minute heat break when they determine it is necessary.
- e. If possible, games being played in the fifth inning(Fall & Winter - 4th inning for the Summer) or more will complete that inning except if the home team is leading, only the top half will be completed. Games not meeting the requirement will end and statics will be maintained.

3) **Emergency Wind or Sun Affects**

- a. In case the sun or wind is affecting the accuracy of the pitchers, the umpire may lower the height of a legal pitch.

4) **Pre-Game Warm Up**

- a. The home team will take infield practice first. The home team pitcher will be granted five (5) warm-up pitches. After which the umpire will call for a batter and the game will begin. When the visiting team takes the field for the first time they will be permitted infield practice and the visiting pitcher will be granted five (5) warm-up pitches. Further infield or pitching practice is prohibited unless there is a pitching change and the new pitcher will be granted five (5) warm-up pitches.

D. PITCHING REGULATIONS

1) Strike Zone Mat

a. Division 5 will utilize a strike zone mat that is 34.5” deep and 19” wide. Any pitched ball landing on or touching any portion of the strike zone mat will be called a strike. A defensive player making a play at the plate is permitted to touch any portion of the strike zone mat.

2) Pitching Zone

a. A 24” by 6” pitching rubber will be placed 50’ from and directly in front of home plate. The pitching zone is the width of the pitching rubber and up to ten (10) feet behind the pitching rubber. The pivot foot of the pitcher must be in contact with the pitching rubber or within the pitching area when the ball is released.

E) THE PITCH / PITCHER

- 1) A legal pitch must be thrown within an arch ranging from six (6) feet to twelve (12) feet above the playing surface. A pitch outside the legal arch, in the judgment of the umpire, shall be called illegal and declared to be a “ball”. Should a batter swing at a pitch called illegal the ball is in play.
- 2) The pitcher must come to a full and complete stop with the body facing the batter and the ball in front of the body. This position must be maintained for at least one (1) second before delivering the pitch.
- 3) The pitcher must deliver the ball toward home plate in a continuous motion, underhanded, with the first forward swing of the pitching arm. The pitcher must not use a delivery with which a stop or reversal of the pitching motion is used. Should this type of motion occur, in the judgment of the umpire, the pitch will be declared illegal, and a ball will be called.
- 4) When the pitcher bats and gets on base and wears safety equipment it is encouraged that the pitcher receive a courtesy runner so the game is not delayed at the end of the inning by having to put on the safety equipment.

F) THE BATTER

- a) Division 5 utilizes a 4’ by 7’ batter’s box as noted by two parallel white lines on either side of the strike mat. The batter will position himself with both feet on or within those parallel lines.
- b) Should the batter hit a pitched ball and either foot is entirely off the green mat and in the dirt, the ball will be declared a dead ball and the batter will be called out.
- c) Should a batter swing at a pitched ball and any portion of one or both feet contact the strike mat, the batter will be called out and the ball is a dead ball.
- d) Any batter approaching the batter’s box with an illegal bat, as defined above, will be called out and ejected from the game. His team will not be permitted a substitute and an out will be recorded each time the ejected batter was to appear at the plate.
- e) Should a batter foul off a third strike pitch, the batter will be called out and the ball is dead.
- f) A batter wishing to change sides of the strike mat must do so prior to the pitcher starting the pitching motion. If the batter steps in front of the catcher to change sides and the pitcher has started their motion, the batter will be called out and the ball is a dead ball.

- g) A batted ball contacting the batter in fair territory will result in the batter being called out and the ball is a dead ball.
- h) If the umpire determines that a batter intentionally bunts, chops the ball to the ground, or hits a fair ball but fails to take a full swing he will call the batter out and the ball will be declared a dead ball. A full swing will be defined as the bat going beyond the front edge of the home plate.
- i) If in the opinion of the umpire the batter is not ready and causing a delay of the game they begin a ten count and start calling strikes.

G) RUNNING BASES

1. General Rules for Running Bases

- a) A runner may leave his base only when a pitched ball is batted, the batter swings or the ball crosses home plate. A runner leaving the base too soon may be called out by either umpire and the ball will be declared a dead ball. This also applies to a runner leaving the base too soon on a caught fly ball. This is not an appeal play.
- b) There are no rundowns. If the defense makes a play on a runner who is off the base, the runner **MUST** return to the base previously occupied. The runner has only one (1) attempt to return to that base and he must touch the base safely. Once the runner has touched the previously occupied base he may occupy the base or he may advance to the next base subject to being put out. Failure by the runner to return to the previously occupied base will result in the runner being called out.
- c) Runners who have rounded a base and paused in the base path, and no play is being made on them, may proceed to the next base without having to return to the previously occupied base.
- d) Runners must touch all bases in their proper order. When a base runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out, he may hold the base until he has legally touched the next base in order or is forced to vacate the base for a succeeding runner. **EFFECT:** Base runner will be called out even if he remains in contact with the base and yet fails to vacate the base for a succeeding runner.
- e) It is the responsibility of all base runners to avoid contact with a defensive player. The umpire may call a runner safe if he determines the runner was put out trying to avoid a collision with the defensive player making a play. The umpire may call a base runner out if he determines the base runner interferes with a defensive player making a play.
- f) Both teams are responsible for keeping the dugout gates closed during play. If the team at bat leaves its dugout gate open and a live ball enters the dugout, there will be no runner advancement awarded. If the defensive team leaves its gate open and a live ball enters the dugout area, it will be declared a dead ball and runners may advance to the bases they were attempting plus one more base.

2. Double Bag/Safety Base

- a) The safety double bag shall be used at first base. The white portion of the bag shall be located in fair territory and the colored portion (orange/red) shall be located in foul territory. If there is a play on a batter-runner going to first base, the batter-runner **MUST** touch the orange/red portion of the bag in foul territory. He is at risk of being called out if he fails to do so, except to avoid a collision in the judgment of the umpire. This is not an appeal play. The defensive player has only the white bag in fair territory to make the putout; his touch of only the orange/red bag in foul territory will not result in an out.

- b)** This rule is in effect only on the initial play at first base. This does not include; returning to base after over running, or running on a ball hit to the outfield, or re-tag to advance on a caught fly ball when either bag may be used by the runner and fielder.
- c)** Any batted ball hitting the white portion is fair and any ball hitting the orange/red portion is a foul ball.

3. Courtesy Runners

- a)** Players who need a courtesy runner must be identified when the line-up is submitted and designated with an "R". Players requiring a courtesy runner must inform the plate umpire of this need. The player requiring a courtesy runner may proceed to any base they can safely reach and then must get their courtesy runner. They may turn left after reaching first base without penalty. The courtesy runner for the player designated needing one must be on base before the first pitch to the next batter. A player who requested a courtesy runner must continue to use a courtesy runner for the rest of the game.
- b)** The first base coach will be the runner for the batter requiring a courtesy runner. The batter then becomes the first base coach until replaced by another player who can become a courtesy runner. Running across the field to become a first base coach is discouraged since it can delay the game and a ten count and called strike may occur.
- c)** A batter requiring a courtesy runner must reach first base safely unless the batter is walked.
- d)** A courtesy runner on base when it is his time to bat shall take his turn at bat and be replaced on the base by another courtesy runner without penalty - no out will be recorded.
- e)** A courtesy runner is in the game when they touch the base last occupied by the batter requiring a courtesy runner. This exchange will occur when the umpire calls "time-out" immediately following the batters at bat. Once a courtesy runner steps on base they are the official runner.
- f)** A player can only be a courtesy runner only once per inning. If a player has been a courtesy runner more than once in the inning an out will be recorded when the infraction is identified and the ball will be declared dead with runners returning to their original bases.

4. Sliding

- a)** Sliding or diving into any base or the scoring plate are not permitted and such players will be called out. The exception to this rule is players may slide or dive when returning to any base.

5. Overrunning Bases Is Prohibited

- a)** A batter may overrun first base at any time and can advance without returning to first base, but is in jeopardy of being put out, either by being tagged or by a defensive player touching second base while in possession of the ball. A runner who over runs 2nd or 3rd base may be put out either by being tagged or by the defensive player touching the base prior to the runner touching the base. The same is true of a player attempting to return to a base after a fly ball or attempting to advance to the next base.
- b)** In the event of collision avoidance at either 2nd base or 3rd base, the runner may not overrun the base but must stop adjacent to the base when trying to avoid a collision. When

the play is completed the umpire will render a decision as to whether the runner was safe or out.

6. Commitment Line

a) A commitment line twenty (20) feet from the scoring plate will be used. Once a runner's foot touches the ground on or past this line he/she is committed to continue to the scoring plate. If the runner re-crosses the commitment line he/she will be declared out and the ball remains alive.

7. Retiring Runner At Home

a) Tagging the runner who has crossed the commitment line is not allowed. The runner will be called safe and the ball remains live. The runner is called out if he touches or crosses any portion of the green batter's mat and/or the strike (wooden) plate. A defensive player may only touch any portion of the strike (wooden) plate to make the play to record an out.

8. Foul Third Strike

a) Upon hitting a foul ball on a third strike, the batter is out and the ball is dead.

9. Base Runners Are Called Out

a) Ball is dead and involved runner is out:

1. When a base runner is struck by a fair batted ball on fair ground while off his base and before it touches a fielder or passes a fielder.
2. When a base runner intentionally kicks a live ball, or intentionally interferes with a ball in play.
3. When a batter-runner is hit by their own batted (fair) ball after leaving the batter's box.
4. When a base runner physically passes a preceding runner before that runner has been put out. EFFECT: the ball remains live, the base runner passing another base runner is out and other base runners are in jeopardy.

10. Advancing Runners

a) When a fielder deliberately contacts a batted or thrown ball with his cap, glove or any part of his uniform or equipment, while it is detached from its proper place on the fielder's person. The umpire will declare the ball dead and all base runners are entitled to advance:

1. On a fair batted ball - advance three (3) bases from the time of the pitch.
2. On a thrown ball - advance two (2) bases from the time of the pitch.

11. Obstruction

a) The act of obstruction occurs when:

1. A defensive player, or team member, hinders or prevents a batter from striking at or hitting a pitched ball.
2. Any action by a fielder not in possession of the ball, or not in the act of fielding a batted ball, or about to receive a thrown ball, which impedes the progress of a runner. This act may include using a fake tag to slow the progress of the runner. Defensive

players not involved in a play on the runner must yield the base path to the runner or be charged by the umpire for obstruction.

3. The obstruction does not have to be intentional and may be vocal.

4. When an umpire declares an obstruction, he will determine the course of action. This action may include advancing all runners to the base they would have attained had the obstruction not occurred.

12. Interference

a) The act of interference occurs when:

1. An act of any offensive player or team member, umpire, or spectator, that impedes, hinders, or confuses a defensive player attempting to make a play. Contact is not necessary and it may be verbal.

2. When a batter-runner intentionally interferes with a play at home in an obvious attempt to prevent an out, both the batter-runner and the base runner are to be called out.

3. When a base runner, which has been called out, must divert from the base path away from the defensive player attempting to make a throw. Should the base runner continue in the base path to prevent or hinder an attempted throw by the defensive player the base runner following the interfering runner will also be called out.

H. PROTESTS

1. There are no protests. Umpires judgment decisions may not be appealed on grounds that he was not correct. All decisions of the umpire are final on the following calls:

a) Decisions involving Balls and Strikes.

b) When a game is called for conditions stated in Section C.2.

I. APPEAL PLAYS

1. A play in which an umpire may not make a decision until requested by the manager of either team. The appeal must be made before the next legal pitch, intentional walk, illegal pitcher action, or before the defensive fields have left fair territory for a runner missing a base or a player batting out of the official line up order.. On the last play of the game, an appeal can be made until the umpires leave the field

2. When only a manager, or a manager's designated representative, asks an umpire who made a call as described below to consult with his umpire partner the umpires will review the play in question. Following the consultation, the umpire making the original call will overturn or confirm the original call for a ball was fair/foul or that a base runner was safe or out.

J. TIME OUT

The umpire will call time out when a defensive team's infielder has the ball secured in their glove and the base runner is not attempting to advance. Time out may also be called when players' safety is concerned.