

THE VILLAGES DIVISION ONE RECREATIONAL PROGRAM
SOFTBALL RULES
(March 4, 2018)

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A. INTRODUCTION

The Villages Division One Recreational Softball Program is designed to offer recreational play for residents of The Villages, FL. League play is governed by The Villages Recreation Department, Senior Softball USA and the Division One Board of Directors (The Board of Directors shall consist of an odd number of individuals approved by The Villages Recreation Department). All qualified participants in the program are required to abide by the rules of The Villages Division One Softball Program as well as the rules governing Senior Softball USA. The Board of Directors of The Villages Division One Softball Program reserves the right to add or subtract to and from the Senior Softball USA Rulebook in adapting to specific Villages Division One Softball Program circumstances. The Mission Statement of The Villages Division One Softball Program is "TO PROVIDE EXERCISE, FELLOWSHIP AND BALANCED AND FRIENDLY COMPETITION IN A POSITIVE AND RESPECTFUL MANNER FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS AND VOLUNTEERS".

Any disagreements between players and volunteers (including but not limited to umpires, scorekeepers, managers and assistants) should be expressed with respect

and consideration towards all parties. Violation of this directive will result in disqualification as stated in section G of this document.

Senior Softball USA Rules may be accessed by the following link:

www.seniorsoftball.com

B. QUALIFICATIONS

1. All players in The Villages Division One Softball Program must be residents of The Villages, FL and possess a valid Villages ID card and must be at least 50 years of age during a draft season.

2. All players must attend and complete three (3) official evaluation sessions to become eligible to participate in The Villages Softball Programs. Following the evaluation period, each player that is assigned to The Villages Division One Softball Program, may be placed in a draft at the start of a specific season provided that the potential player has signed The Villages participation application and submitted said application to a member of the Board of Directors prior to the draft or to The Villages Recreation Department.

C. EQUIPMENT

1. No Metal or football spikes will be permitted.
2. Bats must have USSSA, ASA OR SENIOR SOFTBALL insignias embossed on them.

D. LINE-UP SHEETS

1. Any player placed on a game line-up sheet that has not arrived by the first pitch of a game will be permitted to play if and when they arrive. However, prior to their arrival, an out will be recorded on each scheduled plate appearance of that player. Line-up sheets should be presented to the scorer's box in sufficient time prior to the start of a game with two protected players designated on the line-up sheet.

2. No game will be played with less than nine (9) players. Exception: Games can be played with 9 players when an injury occurs during the game. An exception will not be made due to an ejection of a player.

3. Line-up sheets shall designate the position of the player on defense and the batting order of players with any substitute players batting at the end of a lineup.

E. COURTESY RUNNERS

1. Any player on a line-up sheet can be used as a courtesy runner.. A player may run a maximum of two times during a game including extra innings (running two times in one inning will be allowed). **A courtesy runner may enter a game at any time.**
2. If a potential courtesy runner (sub runner) goes onto the field and touches the base he is potentially replacing, he must inherit that base as a runner and he cannot be replaced by another runner unless injured.
3. Any courtesy (sub) runner who is on base when his spot in the batting line-up is due will be ruled out. If he is the third out of the inning, the same courtesy runner will bat first the following inning.
4. During the International tiebreaker (see Softball USA Rules), courtesy runners CANNOT be used at second base until that runner advances one base.

F. IN-GAME RULES

All games will be governed by Senior Softball Rules as well as ASA (American Softball Association) and ISA (International Softball Association) rules. If there are conflicting rules between these organizations, the board of directors of The Villages Division One Program shall be the deciding party to any rules conflicts.

1. Cancellations: Games can be cancelled by The Villages Recreation Department, game umpires or by mutual agreement of game Managers if conditions are deemed unplayable. Games may be cancelled for extreme heat or cold weather temperatures by The Villages Recreation Department.
2. Extra Innings: When games are tied at the end of seven innings of play, the international tie breaker rule will be implemented. If a game is tied after nine (9) innings, the game will end in a tie.
3. Third Strike: Any ball hit foul after two strikes will be declared an out. NOTE: The ball will stay in play if such ball is caught in the air in foul territory and the ball (play) is considered "live".
4. Five Run Rule: During innings 1 through 6, the maximum number of runs that can be scored by either team shall be five (5) runs. However, if a team is losing by more than (5) five runs, it may score five or half the difference (rounded up to the nearest run if the difference is 11 runs or more). Example: If a team is down 13 runs, a team may

catch up by scoring 7 runs. In the 7th inning and any subsequent extra inning, either team may score runs without limit. At any time, an extra run can be added to the catch up rule with a home run being recorded with the maximum run on base. Example: A team down by 14 runs with the 7th run on second base can score an 8th run if the batter hits an “over the fence” home run.

5. Mercy Rule: 15 run rule will be in effect after trailing team bats five (5) times. Game is ended.

6. Umpires: Only team Managers or their designee may discuss an umpire’s decision with the umpires. The Manager may designate one person as a designee and must inform the umpires prior to the start of a game.

7. Protests: Protests may be made by a team Manager or designee and will be decided on the field at the time of the protest. A decision on a protest shall be decided by umpires of the game at hand and/or board members present at the facility of play.

8. Base Running:

a. There will be two bases, one orange and one white, at first base. The batter/runner must touch the orange base ONLY on any play made at first base. If ANY portion of the white base is touched, the runner will be deemed “out” and the ball will remain live. No appeal will be allowed.

Exception to above-When an errant throw pulls the first baseman (or any player catching the ball at first base) into foul territory, the batter/runner may touch either base while the first baseman (or any player catching the ball at first base) can only touch the white base.

b. There will be two bases at the home plate area, a “scoring” base located eight (8) feet to the left of home plate and the regular home plate that includes the mat that overlays the plate and batters box. Runners can only touch the scoring base to score a run. Runners touching or passing over or by the “green” batting area/home plate will be declared “out”.

c. There shall be a “commitment” line, located twenty feet from home plate on the third base line. A runner on or rounding third base may not return to third base after passing the “commitment” line.

d. Runners will be retired at the home plate area when the defensive player in possession of the ball is in contact with the “home plate area”. Touching the “home plate area” is defined as the touching of any part of the strike mat by the defensive player in possession/control of the ball. Runners may not be tagged out after they pass the “commitment” line.

e. Runners may place themselves in foul territory at 3rd and 1st base to avoid being struck by balls hit in their direction to avoid injury. These runners MUST re-touch

their respective base before advancing. Failure to do so will result in an out but the ball shall remain in play.

9. Protected Batter (PB):

- a. Each team is allowed to “protect” two players on their lineup sheet.
- b. “Protected” players must be designated on the lineup sheet prior to the start of a game and changes not allowed as the game progresses.
- c. All “protected” players may be walked one time during a game without penalty to the defensive team.
- d. Upon receiving a second walk, the protected batter must proceed to second base. NOTE: Bases must be touched in order.
- e. The second walk penalty shall not be in effect if a strike is thrown to the “protected” batter during the second or subsequent plate appearance if the “protected” batter walked in a preceding plate appearance.
- f. The “protected” batter receiving a second walk shall be credited with a double in the scorebook and all results of such action (RBIs) will count.
- g. The “protected” batter rule will be in effect the entire game.

10. Batter’s Box- A batter will be allowed to step out of the batters box a maximum of six (6) inches forward as determined by the plate umpire. A player stepping out of the batters box in any other direction or more than 6 inches forward shall be deemed out and any runners on base must return to their prospective bases.

G. EJECTIONS/**PLAYER QUITTING A TEAM**

1. The following occurrences may be grounds for ejection by an umpire during any game:

- a. Use of profanity (profane - to treat with abuse, irreverence, or contempt)
- b. Verbal or physical abuse, threats, or aggression toward any umpire, player, volunteer, spectator or board member.
- c. Smoking or drinking of alcoholic beverages on the playing field or dugout.
- d. Intentionally throwing any softball equipment or other objects in an intentional or antagonist manner.

2. A player ejected by an umpire for any of the above reasons must leave the playing field and dugout. If the ejected player continues to argue or does not leave the

playing field and dugout areas within a reasonable time (as determined by the umpire), he shall be banished from the softball facility. In addition, he will also be suspended for at least his team's next two played games. Disciplinary action may also be taken by the Board of Directors and/or The Villages Recreation Department with the aid of documentation provided by the umpire (s) and all those involved in making the ejection official.

3. When a player is ejected, the manager may not replace him with another player and an out will be recorded for every scheduled at bat by the ejected player in the game in progress.

4. The ejected player's team may use a substitute for any subsequent games that the ejected player is forced to miss.

5. If a roster player quits a team without valid reason, at the discretion of the board of directors, said player cannot participate for the balance of the season in which he quits and, in addition, the player may "sub only" in the proceeding D1 season.

6. A team manager may select the same sub no more than two times a season regardless of the player's draft number. If no other sub can be found using the established substitution rules, the manager may approach the substitution sub supervisor for an exception.

7. If a replacement player is needed on a 12 player roster, the manager has the option to obtain a qualified sub or play with an 11 man roster.

H. SUBSTITUTE PLAYERS ("sub")

Managers may substitute roster players with the intention of providing managers the opportunity to have a full playing roster for any game. Managers should make every effort to contact and retain "sub" players 24 hours in advance of a game and notify board designated substitute player directors. Exceptions will be allowed by members of the board of directors.

If a replacement player is needed on a 12 player roster, the manager has the option to bring in a sub or play with an 11 man roster.

Managers may select the same sub no more than two times a season regardless of the draft number.

1. SUBSTITUTION PROCESS:

a. Roster players are assigned a draft order number at the pre-season "draft" session (the draft).

b. Managers are encouraged to contact their roster players and pre-determine dates that a player(s) will be missing during the season to expedite replacement (substitution) of said players.

c. At the end of each week, board designated substitute player directors will provide a list of "priority" subs available to Managers and designate their rating.

2. ORDER OF OBTAINING "SUB" PLAYERS

a. A newly evaluated, activated and rated evaluation player.

b. Roster players or players off the list of "priority" subs. Subs for missing players must have an equivalent rating or lower (a "1" rating being the highest) to allow for balanced competition. Exceptions will be allowed at the discretion of the board designated substitution committee supervisor or any board member in his absence.

c. PITCHERS- An exception to the above rated rule shall be allowed for pitchers at the discretion of the board appointed substitution committee supervisor. Every effort will be made to provide a balanced and competitive game when allow substitution pitchers.

d. EVALUATION PLAYERS- Players completing evaluations and assigned to division one will be provided an "Introductory" draft number by the substitute player committee supervisor. The player and draft number will then be provided to all team managers. Evaluation players may then be selected as a "sub" per section 2.

Evaluation players shall carry evaluation status for four played games. Afterwards, if they have not been assigned permanently to a team by the substitute player supervisor, they will be given the same status as a "roster" player. After each game in which an evaluation player participates, the substitute player supervisor shall re-evaluate the player in determining if the status of said player has changed.

e. SCORING AND UMPIRING REPLACEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES- Players who are asked to sub but, who are already scheduled to score or umpire, then either the player or the requesting manager must first find a replacement before they can sub.

I. DIVISION ONE BOARD OPERATING MANUAL

1. An Operating Manual for Board Members is in the possession of current Board Members as a guide defining the roles and responsibilities for each officer and member of the board.

J. DIVISION ONE SEASONAL DRAFTS

1. The trading of draft positions prior to a draft and the trading of players following a draft will not be allowed.

