

**The Villages Ladies Recreational Softball League Rules
(Reviewed/Corrected October 10, 2014)**

ORGANIZED RECREATIONAL SOFTBALL. Recreation Department and Softball Recreation Committee (SRC) will govern. Senior Softball - USA Rule Book will be used for reference. All players must be a Resident of The Villages or meet The Villages Renter requirements. No dogs or children are allowed in the dugouts during the games per The Villages regulations.

1. **Equipment:** An 11" softball, rubber cleats or sneakers (NO metal cleats, Keds or hard shoes), softball bat and glove.

2. **Bat:** The Miken II bat is only allowed to be used by Senior Softball Players (defined as women who are at least 40 years old). Those Recreational players younger than 40 years of age must use another bat that does not have the SSA restrictions on it. They may use any ASA-approved bat or the single wall bats used by the Neighborhood League which are stored in the supply shed at the fields.

3. **Game Info:** A game consists of 7 innings with no time limit. If the game is tied after 7 innings, the game will go to the Tie Breaker Rule and the offensive batter who was last up in the previous inning starts at 2nd base. (See exception under 6N - Tie Breaker Rule below)

4. Players will arrive 30 minutes prior to their scheduled game time. Team line-ups will be turned in to the scoring booth 15 minutes prior to the start of game. Players are responsible for showing up. If they know they can't participate, they must call their manager and make her aware of this as soon as possible.

Once the line-up has been submitted to the scorekeepers, no changes to said line-up will be allowed. **EXCEPTION 1** - If a player from a team is injured and has to leave the game she may be replaced by the next substitute from the sub pool. If no substitute is available from the pool but an extra player is in the park, that player may fill in. **EXCEPTION 2** - If a player on the line up fails to appear as expected, the manager **MUST** choose to draw for a substitute or begin the game and wait for the player on the line up to arrive. Roster players arriving after the subs have been chosen will not be eligible to play that game if a substitute has started. If no substitute has started and the late player was included in the line-up she may join the game if she has not missed more than 2 times at bat and there are not already 11 players fielded. The times at bat the player misses will be considered as outs.

If a team does not have a minimum of 6 roster players present 5 minutes after the scheduled start time, that team will forfeit the game. The team forfeiting may then pick up any number of subs and play the game for fun.

5. Managers are not required to work the booth. However, managers are responsible for implementing a schedule with their team to insure that the booth is covered when their team is assigned booth duty.

6. Teams and Rules:

A) All players must complete a sign-up form and be evaluated by the Villages Recreation Softball Evaluation Committee. Teams are determined by an open draft done by the managers in the presence of the Women's Recreation Board Members with the goal of being able to achieve teams of equal playing strength. A minimum of 9 players are required to field a team. The maximum number of Defensive players is 11.

Extra players will rotate among other players with no player sitting out more than one consecutive inning. All players must be on the batting roster and bat in turn even if they are not playing a Defensive position that inning. The use of a DH is not allowed. Teams using a DH will forfeit that game.

If a team is batting more than 11 players and a player is unable to continue due to injury, no out will be recorded for that player in any subsequent at bats. As long as the team continues to field at least 11 players, no substitute will be added.

B) A player will be called out for stealing or leading off the base. The pitched ball must be hit or pass the batter before the runner can come off the bag. The player will be called out for leaving too soon ("leading" off the base). This is not an appeal play. Every base is a "force-out". A tag on a runner can be made when she is advancing to the next base - with the exception of home plate. The runner going to home may not be tagged after said runner crosses the "commitment line".

C) The batter/runner going to first must cross the orange bag or she is out. The exception is if there is no play on the batter/runner or the ball is overthrown, in which case she can use either bag to advance to second base. **If the batter/runner interferes with a throw because she is not running in the designated runner's lane going to first base, she is out. If she interferes with a possible double-play, both she, and the other runner involved will be called out. See "Interference" under Rule 6 H.**

D) The offensive player must touch the "Runner's Home Plate". If the wrong plate is touched, she will be called out. The defensive player must touch the "Main Home Plate" at the batter's box. Once the runner crosses the "Commitment Line" on her way to home plate, she is committed to going home and she may not return to third base. **A runner who has crossed the commitment line may not be tagged.**

E) **A runner must make every effort to avoid colliding with opposing players while running the bases. A runner may slide or dive into 2nd or 3rd base or when returning to any base. If, in the umpire's judgment, a runner misses a base to avoid a collision with a defensive player, the runner will not be called out. (If base access is blocked by defensive player, runner may put foot beside the base and be called safe if, in the umpire's judgment, she would have been safe under ordinary circumstances.)**

F) Courtesy Runner

A batter/runner must make it to first base on her own before implementing a courtesy runner. A batter/runner may also ask for a courtesy runner if she makes it to second base on her initial hit. A player who needs a courtesy runner may use one only for injury. If a player needs a courtesy runner, this must be indicated on the scoring sheet before the game. Exceptions: A runner may have a runner from home if **she is injured during the game**, or if she is playing under the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act.) If injured

during the game, she can utilize a Courtesy Runner from home for the rest of the game. At her next bat, said batter must either declare the need for a Courtesy Runner, or she must run for herself. If the batter chooses to run for herself, she may not have a courtesy runner the rest of the game. The umpires are not responsible for keeping track of courtesy runners. That responsibility will rest with the managers, or may be called from the booth. If a batter needs a Courtesy Runner from home plate, said Courtesy Runner can only go to first base. **The runner may turn either way at first base without being called out, but may not advance to second base.** Courtesy runners are not allowed to advance beyond first on overthrows or errors. *If said **batter** who needs a Courtesy Runner from home plate runs and touches first base, she will be out.* The batter and her courtesy runner are considered a unit. If a pitch is thrown to the batter and her courtesy runner is not toeing the line, the batter is out.

The Courtesy Runner can be anyone on the line up, but this Courtesy Runner can only run ONCE per inning. **Once a Courtesy Runner takes her place at the Runner's Line or touches a base, she is officially in the game. She may not be replaced except for an injury. If a courtesy runner is on base when it is her turn to bat, she will be called out and will then come in and take her turn at bat. The out will be recorded to the batter who originally needed the Courtesy Runner.**

If a player is injured during a game after the start of the season, or the injury is such that the injury will be healed during the season in progress, the player may have a courtesy runner from home plate. The courtesy runner starting from home plate may not cross the starting line until the ball either hits the ground, the plate or the bat. **The Runner's Line shall be drawn in the dirt as an extension of the painted portion of the concrete below the fence located on the first base side of home plate.**

G. Obstruction - Is the act of: a. A DEFENSIVE player or TEAM MEMBER who hinders or prevents a batter from striking at or hitting a pitched ball.
b. A FIELDER who is not in possession of the ball, in the act of fielding a batted ball, nor about to receive a thrown ball, who impedes the progress of the runner or batter-runner who is legally running the bases.

H. Interference - Is the act of an OFFENSIVE player or TEAM MEMBER that impedes or confuses a defensive player from attempting a play. A base runner must avoid a fielder making a play. Interference calls create a delayed dead ball situation. **The interfering player is out and runners advance at their own risk.** Ex. A player or coach yelling "Time out" and causing play to cease has interfered with play.

Injured player - If a player is injured during play, either umpire may call time and allow first aid treatment. Whether to stop play immediately is up to the judgment of the umpire. If runners are on base when time out is called, those runners should be awarded the base or bases that the Umpire judges they would have reached if time out had not been called.

I) Run-downs:

There will be NO run-downs.

J) Five Run Rule: The team that is tied or leading in any inning can only score 5 runs per inning. The exception is in the 7th (or any subsequent) inning(s) where a team may score as many runs as possible.

K) Catch-up Rule:

A team that is behind by more than 5 runs in any inning may score as many runs as it takes to tie the score in that inning - but no more than it takes to tie the score.

L) Mercy Rule:

Division 1 - If a team is leading by 12 or more runs after the completion of 5 innings (4½ innings if home team is leading) the game is considered complete.

M) Tie Breaker Rule:

When the teams are tied and going into extra innings, each team starts each inning with a runner on second base. That base runner is the player who was AT BAT when the last out was made in the previous inning and no substitute or courtesy runner may replace her until she has reached third base. **Exception:** If the last batter out has a medical/physical condition or injury which prevented her from running any bases during the game (i.e. she had a runner from home), she may have a courtesy runner starting at second base. Said "replacement" Courtesy Runner MUST be the PREVIOUS batter in the line-up.

N) Pitching, Strike Zone and Hitting:

- 1) The mat at home plate is the strike zone.
- 2) **The pitcher MUST HAVE ONE FOOT IN THE PITCHER'S BOX.** Can't be to the Side.
- 3) Pitch must come in slow with an arc between 6 and 12 feet.
- 4) Illegal Pitch: A batter may choose to swing at an illegal pitch (a pitch below 6 ft. or higher than 12 ft.) and will be either a strike or a hit. If she chooses not to swing, it is a ball.
- 5) Intentional walks do not have to be pitched to. Once informed of the intentional walk, the batter may go directly to 1st base.
- 6) A foul ball on the 3rd strike is an out.
- 7) Bunting or chopping on the ball is an automatic out.

O) Substitutes:

A sub-pool lottery exists for teams whose Roster falls below 11. If the number of players falls below 11 for either team prior to the start of the game, the manager(s) is provided with a player from the sub-pool lottery - or from the spectators as a last resort. The substitute(s) will be placed last in the batting order. A manager will not request more subs than are needed to make an 11-player team.

P) Batting Out of Order - Due to the fact that opposing managers do not have line-up cards, if the booth informs the umpire that a player is batting out of order, the umpire shall apply whatever penalty arises from the given situation. I.E., 1.) If caught before any pitches are thrown, correct batter comes in to bat; 2.) If pitches have been thrown, correct batter comes in and takes over any count, 3.) If incorrect batter hits, gets to base, and error is noticed before the first pitch to the next batter, the player who should have batted is out and the next batter in order comes up. (The player who batted out of order comes off base and comes up to bat.) 4. If the incorrect batter gets a hit, reaches base, and a pitch is thrown to the next batter, the play stands. Play continues with the batter who is up after the incorrect batter and continues in order. The player who should have been up loses her turn once a pitch is thrown to the next batter.

The sub sign-up sheet at the field will be used to pick all of the subs needed for each game.

If a substitute cannot be found and a team has less than 11 players and all of the members of the other team are present, the other team does not have to reduce the number of their defensively-fielded players to make the team equal.

EVERYONE will be in the batting line-up and allowed to bat in order.

If a player is aware she can't complete the game for any reason other than an injury or illness sustained during said game, and plays anyway, then leaves early, that team may not replace her and will continue to play short.

- a. When she comes up to bat, it will be declared an out each time she misses her turn at bat.
- b. The opposing team does not have to reduce their number of players to make the teams equal.

A manager/player may choose to sit out as long as there are 11 players on the team. If a sub is needed, the manager/player must play to fulfill the minimum number of players required before resorting to the sub pool.

Division 1 may substitute a maximum of 4 players, unless the rosters have been constructed of 10 or less players per team, in which case the maximum will be 5 players.

Substitutes must be placed at the bottom of the batting order.

When there aren't enough substitutes available:

1. If an injured player is removed from the field, she may return to the game later.
2. A replacement player for someone injured during the game will replace the player in the same position in the line-up as the player she replaced.

P) Intentional Walks:

In order to allow recreational softball to be played as such, there will only be one intentional walk imposed on any given player per game.

Q) Infield Fly Rule:

A fair fly ball (not a line drive) that can be caught by any fielder (within the infield) with ordinary effort, when first and second bases, or first, second and third bases are occupied with less than two outs. Runners may advance at their own risk. Either umpire may call an infield fly.

R) Use of protective screen. A pitcher may choose to use the protective screen when she pitches. If she starts the game with the screen, she must use it throughout the game.

- a) The screen must be in the proper position. The screen must face home plate and be within three feet of the pitching rubber.
- b) A "no pitch" is declared when the ball is pitched when the screen is not in the proper position.
- c) If a pitcher refuses to place the screen in the proper position, she will be removed from the pitching position.

- d) If a pitcher uses the screen, she must step behind the screen after every pitch. Failure to do so will result in a "ball" being called.
- e) A pitcher is ineligible to field a hard-driven ball up the middle. Penalty for doing so will be a dead ball single for the batter, and all other runners will advance one base.
- f) Any ball striking any portion of the screen will be considered a foul ball unless it is a third strike in which case it is a dead ball re-pitch.
- g) All thrown balls are in play and considered live balls.
- h) The pitcher may lower the screen for defensive plays, however, if the ball hits the screen, it is considered a live ball.

S. Uniforms - Appropriate dress attire will be a blue (visitor) or white (home) full length shirt. Players can buy official shirts if they choose, or they may purchase their own blue or white shirts. A player who does not have the correct shirt may not play the game.

T) Weather:

Softball games will be cancelled for excessive rain, wind, lightening or any other reasons(s) that could compromise the safety of the players or the condition of the softball fields. A Board Member will notify the applicable managers by phone and the MANAGERS are then responsible to contact the players on their team. Once a game has started, the Plate umpire will determine whether to call the game due to inclement weather. Players who choose to play when a game is called do so at their own risk.

U) Umpires:

An Umpire will be utilized on home plate and, if available, on the bases. *In the event of a controversial call, only the managers of the team(s) will discuss it with the umpire(s).* Players and umpires are to conduct themselves in a respectful manner and players are NOT to argue with the Umpires.

V.) Sportsmanship:

Managers and players will conduct themselves in a sportsman-like manner. Criticism, sarcasm, profanity and any unsportsman like conduct toward any player or umpire will NOT be tolerated. The umpire may eject the player from the field and the Recreation Department will determine if the player is to be suspended from further play. This includes players and fans in the stands.

Smoking will not be allowed anywhere within 15 feet of the outside fence.

Division I Website address: Check for rosters, rules, and game stats.

<http://www.allprosoftware.net/womensdiv1/>

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