

Vancouver Metro Senior Softball Association

Adopted League Rules for 2018

Version 5/12/18

These rules of play allow for adaptations of rules as necessary for non-championship recreational play. The basic intent of these adaptations is to facilitate even competition within the league and to avoid injuries (*as amended by the VMSSA Board on January 11, 2018*).

1. Balls and Bats

- a. VMSSA shall conform to Senior Softball USA rules.

2. Determination for Play

- a. At game time, and at any time during the course of a game, the home plate umpire shall be the sole judge of the fitness of the field for play.
- b. Hot Weather Procedures - All games are cancelled if the forecasted temperature is 96 degrees Fahrenheit or higher at game time per the Accu-Weather App using Vancouver, WA 98684 as the location (****new rule established 1/11/18****).

3. Designation of Home Team

- a. The home team shall be the team listed first on the schedule. If no schedule is available, the home team shall be determined by a coin toss.
- b. Home team is assigned the first base dugout (****new rule est. 1/11/18****).

4. Game and Run Limitations

- a. During league play, a five run limit per inning will be in effect for all innings with the exception of the last inning, which is unlimited.
- b. Should approaching darkness limit the number of innings which can be played, the home plate umpire will designate which will be the last inning.
- c. A game shall be ended after five or more innings have been played if one team is ahead by 15 or more runs.

5. Number of Players

- a. Each team may play from 9 to 11 players in the field.
- b. All roster members present and able to play shall be included in the batting order and shall play a minimum of three innings in the field in a non-shortened game.
- c. If a team cannot field at least 9 players for the scheduled game, the team shall forfeit the games. However, a practice game can be played at the discretion of the team managers.
- d. Player Pick-Up Rule. The intent of the player pick-up rule is to prevent forfeitures. However, a game will be considered forfeited if a team has fewer than seven of its own rostered players available for the game. If a team has only seven of its own rostered players available, it may pick-up four players. Pick-up players must bat last in the lineup. Pick-players cannot be rated higher than the player they are replacing. B-Rated players can replace A-rated players, but an A-Rated player cannot replace a B-Rated player (**new rule est. 1/11/18**).
- e. Teams cannot sit down rostered players in favor of non-rostered players. If a game starts with a pick-up player(s) and a rostered player arrives, the rostered player must be replace the pick-up player in a defensive position and be added to batting order as the last batter by the next inning. The pick-up player may remain in the battering order and can be rotated in or out with another pick-up player at the managers discretion (**new rule est. 1/11/18 and modification est. 4/14/18**).
- f. In the event there was only one pick-up player and a roster player arrives giving the team 12 players the pick-up player can continue play in a defensive position but for only 3 innings per game. Teams using pick-up players cannot have more the 12 players in the batting order (**new rule est. 1/11/18**).

6. Pitching

- a. Pitches must be delivered with an underhanded and continuous motion (**rule modification est. 1/11/18**). The pitcher must start the delivery from a stationary position in an area 50 to 56 feet from the home plate. At the highest point of the arc, the ball must be at least 6 feet above the ground, but not more than 12 feet above the ground. Pitches judged by the umpire to be outside of such

parameters shall be called an illegal pitch and counted as a ball even if the ball lands in the strike zone. If a batter swings at an illegal pitch, the illegal pitch call by the umpire is nullified and all play stands.

b. Pitches are strikes when:

- (1) The ball hits home plate or the strike zone mat,
- (2) The batter swings and misses,
- (3) The ball is hit foul,
- (4) The ball hits the batter in the strike zone, and
- (5) A batter with two strikes hits a ball into foul territory.

c. Pitchers are always required to wear a protective facemask when pitching. Pitchers may elect to wear additional safety equipment such as helmet, shin guards, and chest protector but they are not a requirement (**rule modification est. 1/11/18**).

d. A pitching screen is available for the protection of the pitchers. The screen is to be placed 47 feet from the front edge of home plate parallel with the pitching rubber. The screen may be moved to the left or right based on the pitcher's preference but cannot be moved into a position exposing more than half of the pitching rubber (**rule modification est. 1/11/18**).

e. The pitcher must move to a position behind the pitching screen after the ball is pitched and cannot move into a defensive position until the ball is hit. If the pitcher does not step behind the pitching screen after a pitch has been delivered, they will receive two warnings and on the third occasion, will be removed as the pitcher but may continue to play at a different position. Once the pitching screen is set at the beginning of an inning, it may not be moved unless there is a pitching change (**new rule est. 1/11/18**).

f. If only one team is using a pitching screen, they are responsible for moving the screen on and off the field when not being used (**new rule est. 1/11/18**).

g. A batted ball that hits any portion of screen shall be considered a dead ball. A ball hitting the pitching screen thrown from any defensive position will be considered a live ball and runners may advance at their own risk.

h. One intentional walk per game allowed per team.

- i. If, in the judgment of the umpire, that the pitcher is walking another batter intentionally, that batter will advance to second base. All base runners will advance accordingly to allow the batter to reach second.

7. **Batting**

- a. All roster members present and able to play at game time must be included in the batting order. Late arrivals can be added to the batting order, but must bat last.
- b. A batter is out when:
 - (1) Batter steps into the batter's box with an illegal bat. (See rule 1.a).
 - (2) Batter's entire foot is touching completely outside the batter's box when the ball is hit.
 - (3) Batter's foot touches home plate/mat when the ball is hit.
 - (4) Batter bunts or chops the ball (a chopped hit, as judged by the umpire, occurs when the batter strikes downward with a chopping motion with the bat so that the batted ball bounces high into the air).
 - (5) Batter bats out of order. However, if a batting out of order error is discovered while the incorrect batter is at bat, the correct batter may take his/her place and assume any balls and strikes. If the error is discovered after the incorrect batter has completed their turn at bat, the player who should have batted shall be called out.
 - (6) Batter hits a foul tip on the third strike caught or not. However, the batter is not out on a foul tip that is caught on the first or second strike. A foul tip is a batted ball that goes directly from the bat, not higher than the batter's head, directly to the catcher's hand or glove and is legally caught by the catcher. If that ball hits the body or the equipment, it is a foul/dead ball.
- c. If a player leaves the game due to injury or loss of physical condition, such player will not be called out for failing to bat.

8. Base Running - General

- a. Base runners must run base to base and all tag rules apply (**new rule est. 1/11/18**).
- b. Base runners cannot advance on a third strike foul tip ball.
- c. A base runner shall be called out and a dead ball declared, if they interfere with the protected fielder at any point on a base path or on a base. The protected fielder is the prime player fielding a batted ball. The runner may also be called out for intentionally interfering physically or verbally with any defensive player at the umpire's discretion (** rule modification est. 4/14/18**).
- d. A base runner shall be awarded the base to which they were advancing plus one additional base if the runner is impeded at any point by a fielder.
- e. Base runners may advance at their own risk following an infield fly that is caught, dropped or not caught.
- f. A base runner can request a substitute runner at any time after reaching first base. A player can be a substitute runner only once per inning. A substitute runner can request a substitute runner if injured while running the bases.
- g. A substitute runner on base when it is their turn to bat will be declared out. The runner will be removed from the base and a second courtesy runner cannot be substituted. The substitute runner called out on base does not lose their turn at bat.
- h. After player making a fly ball catch then going out of bounds, any/all runners will advance one base.

9. Running to First Base

- a. Sliding or diving into first base is not permitted and such players will be called out (**rule modification est. 1/11/18**).
- b. The base runner may touch the white part (left side) of first base only if they have a reasonable opportunity, as determined by the umpire, to try to advance toward second base or if they do so to avoid a collision with the first baseman (**rule modification est. 4/14/18**). In all other cases, the runner must run to and touch the orange part (right side) of first base. The runner shall be called out for failure to observe this rule.
- c. After overrunning first base, the runner may turn to his/her left or right when

returning to the base.

- d. A batter cannot be thrown out by an outfielder while running to first base after hitting the ball safely to the outfield. The rover is not considered an outfielder and may throw out the batter regardless of where the ball is hit. However, an outfielder cannot relay the ball to the rover to make the play to first. The exception to this is if the batter after attaining first base attempts to advance to second base, they can be thrown out by any defensive player even if they are trying to return to first base (**new rule est. 1/11/18**).
- e. Courtesy runners are allowed from home plate for only those players with health conditions or injuries (and not for being slow) and must be identified prior to the game start. The pinch runner will take their place behind the designated chalked line next to the backstop and must keep contact with the backstop until the ball is hit. The courtesy runner can only advance to first base regardless of where the ball is hit or if there was an error that normally would have allowed the runner to advance. The designated runner must be the last declared out (or the last batter in the lineup if this occurs in the first inning prior to an out being produced). The courtesy runner may only be used once per inning (** rule modification est. 5/12/18**).

10. Running to Second and Third Base

- a. A player may slide or dive into second or third base and when returning to any base (**new rule est. 1/11/18**).
- b. Runners shall be called out for contact with a defensive player IF, in the Umpire's judgment, the contact was deliberate, OR the runner could reasonably have been expected to minimize or avoid contact under the circumstances and failed to do so (**new rule est. 1/11/18**).
- c. It is stressed that sliding is clearly optional at the discretion of the individual player and is not to be considered a necessary or required act (**new rule est. 1/11/18**).
- d. SLIDING SHALL NOT BE DONE SO AGGRESSIVELY THAT IT ENDANGERS THE DEFENSIVE PLAYER (**new rule est. 1/11/18**).

11. Running to Home Plate

- a. A second home plate will be placed 9'-5" from the front left point of home plate as shown in the USSAA Official Senior Softball Field Dimensions Guide. This plate will be used as the scoring plate for runners advancing from third base in place of a line. Runners must touch this plate to be

- considered safe prior to a defensive player fielding the ball and touching the strike mat (**new rule est. 1/11/18**).
- b. A chalk line will be placed 30 feet from home plate and perpendicular to the foul line. A runner passing this line shall be committed to continuing toward home plate and cannot return to third base. A runner will be called out for crossing the line and then attempting to return to third base. In this case the ball remains in play.
 - c. The runner must always run to the alternate home plate. The runner shall be called out for touching the home plate mat and also touching or crossing the batter's box. The ball remains in play.
 - d. To put out the runner, a defensive player must be touching the home plate mat while in possession of the ball before the runner can touch the alternate home plate. A runner cannot be tagged out by a fielder after the runner has crossed the commitment line.
 - e. Sliding or diving into home plate when scoring is not permitted, and such players will be called out (**new rule est. 1/11/18**).

12. **Outfield Encroachment Line**

- a. A line shall be painted in an arc from foul line to foul line 140 feet from the pitching rubber (**rule modification est. 1/11/18**).
- b. Outfielders must remain behind the encroachment line until the ball is batted, as viewed by the field umpire. The rover may play on either side of the line. A batter who otherwise would have been put out shall be awarded first base for violation of this rule and a batter who hit safely shall be awarded one additional base.

13. **Infield Fly**

- a. The infield fly rule is in effect whenever there are runners on first and second base, or first, second and third base with less than two outs. If a fly ball is hit which an umpire judges can be reasonably caught by an infielder or rover positioned as an infielder, the umpire shall immediately call "infield fly, if fair, batter is out". After such fly ball is either caught, dropped or not caught, runners may advance at their own risk. If the ball goes foul, it is simply a foul ball (**rule modification est. 4/14/18**).

14. **Expediting Play**

- a. Infield warm-up is permitted during each team's turn in the field for the first inning and at the discretion of the umpire thereafter.
- b. After the first inning, pitchers are permitted only two warm-up pitches or until the batter is ready.
- c. A substitute pitcher may take up to six warm-up pitches.
- d. Teams may play two innings at a time with the mutual consent of the managers in order to conserve daylight.

15. **Blood Rule**

- a. A player, coach or umpire who is bleeding shall be prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment can be administered.

16. **Conduct**

- a. The guiding principles for VMSAA member conduct are to enjoy the game while playing safely and showing respect for the rules, umpires, teammates, opponents, spectators, property and equipment. All members are expected to adhere to the following specific provisions:
 - (1) Judgment calls by umpires should not be argued.
 - (2) In the event of a question of the interpretation of a rule by an umpire, only the manager should approach the umpire and limit his remarks to the specific rule in question.
 - (3) Any of the following actions are contrary to the spirit and intent of the rules and are grounds for ejection from the game by an umpire:
 - (a) Use of profane, abusive, or threatening language.
 - (b) Laying hands on or striking an umpire, player or spectator.
 - (c) Consuming alcohol or being intoxicated on the field.
 - (d) Reckless play or conduct resulting in body contact that exposes other to possible injury.
 - (e) Umpire shall warn one or both of the managers to have the player or players stop the unwarranted and unwanted verbal

communication. If the offending player continues to chip away verbally after being told to stop, the umpire may eject the player for the balance of the game. If the player is ejected, that player must sit out the next game.

(f) Smoking on the field or the players bench.

(g) Delaying a game with stalling tactics.

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