

Freeport Park District
Softball League
Rules and Regulations

Last revised: February 2016

The Athletic Supervisor may make adjustments to these rules at anytime to better league play.

The Freeport Park District has developed the following set of rules and regulations to govern softball leagues organized or controlled by the park district.

These rules have been developed as a guide to enjoyable participation. The purpose of each rule is very important. It is essential that all players follow these rules. The Athletic Supervisor has the power to change the rules at anytime he/she deems necessary.

The Athletic Supervisor has the final decision making power in all matters pertaining to the league. All meetings of team captains and team managers will be called by the Athletic Supervisor. Any special meetings desired by teams should be requested through their team representative who will then contact the Athletic Supervisor.

Objective

This league will strive to provide a wholesome and fun recreational pastime to all those interested in athletic programs conducted by the Freeport Park District, abiding to the principles of good sportsmanship, honesty, and fair play regardless of active or inactive participation. Thank you for being a part of our league and we hope your experience will be enjoyable.

Player conduct and Zero Tolerance Policy

(This will be not taken lightly this summer. If needed, police will be called and arrests will be made)

Each captain will be held accountable for the conduct of his/her team members, fans and making sure members play in accordance with all rules and in a sportsmanlike manner. Players are expected to treat opposing players, officials and Park District personnel with respect. An official may eject a player from a game or match for unsportsmanlike conduct. An ejected player must leave the park/building before play will continue. Any ejected player will automatically be suspended from that team=s next scheduled game as well as any park district activities that occur between the two games (including games in other leagues). Any player ejected from 2 games during the season (regardless of division), will be suspended for at least the remainder of the season. Further action may be taken by the Recreation Supervisor, depending on the severity of the incident. There will be Zero Tolerance for unsportsmanlike behavior, including, but not limited to trash talking, taunting, inappropriate language, fighting, threats towards game officials or other players, alcohol, illegal drugs and also tobacco use on the diamonds or the dugouts or any field of play during the games or any behavior that precludes to the safe enjoyment of the game. Alcohol is not permitted! If more than one person on a team is carrying on, the team will forfeit that game. Anyone exhibiting any such behaviors listed above may be immediately ejected from the premises and may be permanently barred from play or attendance. Ejected players/teams will not be refunded their forfeit or league fee. The Recreation Supervisor will make a decision regarding any additional discipline for any of these circumstances.

Team Captain Responsibilities

We will not be USSSA Sanctioned for ANY Leagues this summer, however we will use their rulebook for any situations not included in this set of rules, if you have questions regarding any rules, please contact the Athletic Supervisor.

- 1.) Any disputes or calls made at games or any problems what so ever by team players must be directed to the team captain or representative. The team captain may call the park district to discuss issues, but calls from players relating to softball will not be discussed over the phone. Any player throwing any object at or near an umpire or striking an umpire in any manner will be suspended for at least the remainder of the season. **See Zero Tolerance Policy above.**
- 2.) **If at any point during the season a player would be suspended from the league for any amount of games, the Captain of that team will receive a one game suspension. This in hopes will help team captains keep control of their players. (If the captain of the team is not present at the time of the game, the UMPIRE, will appoint a team captain for that team) It is the Captains responsibility to keep his or hers players from arguing any calls made by the umpires and to keep them from using foul language. THIS WILL BE ENFORCED!!**
- 3.) The team captain, or designated representative, will be the sole liaison between that team and the park district. Only the designated representative should communicate concerns with the park district due to the number of players that participate in the league. To avoid confusion, players should speak with their team representative on all inquiries and not contact the park district directly. **THERE SHOULD ONLY BE ONE CAPTAIN/COACH LISTED ON THE ROSTER SHEET.** You must put a night and DAYTIME phone number on the roster! It is also required that you put at least one persons e-mail address on the roster sheet, this is the quickest and easiest way to get a hold of teams following a rain out or schedule change!
- 4.) The team captain is responsible to attend season meetings as scheduled or appoint a representative to attend if unable to do so himself/herself. The team captain is expected to inform and discuss the rules with team members prior to the season.
- 5.) Captains must inform players of the game schedule, make-up dates, etc. and pass along other information from the park district. In the event of inclement weather, please call 815-235-6114, ext. 7 after 4 pm. Schedules, Rules, Standings, Brackets, etc... will be listed on the Freeport Park District Website: www.freeportparkdistrict.org or www.quickscores.com/freeport for easy access to any changes or updates made by the Athletic Supervisor
- 6.) Before participating, each player must fill out the roster form completely, sign the waiver, and pay any fees that are due. If this is not completed the player is ineligible and teams will receive a loss for any game in which ineligible players participate. Team captains are responsible for the age requirement of the league and roster additions. The team captain must submit the required information for each member of his/her team on the roster. Captains must check with team members, before signing, to see if they have already signed to play on another team in the league. If they have already signed, they are not allowed to sign up on another team. Players who have not appeared on a line-up card for a particular team may switch teams. Any person playing for more than one team will be considered an ineligible player and whichever team he/she wrongfully plays for will receive a loss for each game he/she appears on the line-up card. The player may also face other penalties up to a suspension for the remainder of the year.
- 7.) The captain must hand in league, team roster, and waiver form to the park district by the designated due date.
- 8.) The team captain should keep in close touch with the park district staff for pertinent information, and also notify the park district immediately if they are going to default a contest. Cut-off time is 12pm the day before

the game that you will be defaulting. A default counts as a loss, two defaults will be recorded as a forfeit.

Rosters

1.) Rosters will not be accepted by the park district until at least ten (10) players are listed, all required information is written clearly, and all fees are turned in to the office.

2.) There is a maximum of fifteen (15) players on each team roster for men's and women's. Co-rec will be allowed eighteen (18) players on there roster. There are no exceptions to this rule.

3.) The rosters will not freeze this year! (During the regular season).

4.) Any person added to the roster must be added to roster waiver form. A player can play for only one (1) team in each of the leagues in one day. No call-in roster changes will be accepted. Captains must give a player full release to switch teams in the middle of the season. Players that are dropped from a team must have an OK by the captain of that team and write an official letter stating why the player is being dropped. After that player is dropped they may be picked up by another team with the OK of the Athletic Supervisor. The Athletic Supervisor has the power to veto any pick ups if he feels that it will harm the league in anyway. There will be no dropping and adding players after tournament begins. Meaning when your team is eliminated you cannot switch to a winning team.

5.) The only situation which a player can switch teams is listed above. Any person that shows up on any roster card at any time during the season, whether it is one game or more, CANNOT switch teams with out the consent of the Athletic Supervisor. The only time this will be allowed is if the team disintegrates and is forfeiting the rest of their games for the season. You must put first and last names on the roster cards, no nicknames.

Rules and Regulations

GAME TIMES WILL BE AS FOLLOWS: 6:30 7:30, and 8:30 PM (If we have too many rain dates, games will be switched back to the normal 6, 7, 8, 9 pm game times. That means, your schedules will also change.

1.) Use of an ineligible player will result in a loss for the team, which he/she has played for illegally. Ineligible players include any one of the following:

A.) ANY PERSON NOT LISTED ON A ROSTER

B.) ANY PERSON NOT SIGNING THE TEAM WAIVER

C.) ANY PERSON NOT PAYING ADDITIONAL PLAYER FEE WHEN NECESSARY

D.) ANY PERSON GIVING FALSE INFORMATION ON A ROSTER

(ie. False address to avoid non-resident fee)

E.) ANY PERSON PLAYING FOR MORE THAN ONE TEAM IN A LEAGUE

F.) ANY PERSON THAT WAS EJECTED FROM A GAME AND HAS NOT SAT OUT THE MANDATORY GAME(S)

G.) ANY PERSON NOT 16 OR (please read the IHSA rule below)

If a student is not on his school baseball or softball team, they could participate in your softball league without threat of losing their eligibility.

During the school season for a given sport, in a school which maintains a school team in that sport, a student shall not participate on any non-school team, nor as an individual unattached in non-school competition, in that given sport or in any competition that involves the skill of the sport in question. Violation shall cause ineligibility for a period not to exceed 365 days. An exception may be made by the Executive Director under the guidelines adopted by the Board of Directors for competitions sponsored and conducted directly by the National Governing Body for the sport.

2.) Each team must have a minimum of (8) players present at game time to begin otherwise a forfeit will result. Teams must finish with at least the same number of players they began with, therefore an ejection of a player causes a forfeiture of the game if no substitutes are available. (Exception: If an injury results or if a player must leave for an emergency or work, there will not be a forfeit.) A team that begins with 9 players may add a tenth however, an extra hitter may not be added once the line-up card has been turned in.

3.) There is a “one time only” when a pinch-runner is allowed. The pinch-runner will then be the batter that has made the last out. The pinch-runner will only be allowed once and must be for an injury that occurred on that exact play. Otherwise, one will not be allowed. If the player returns to play the field, he/she cannot receive another pinch runner for that injury. The umpire may refuse to allow a pinch runner if the umpire does not deem such a runner necessary. If it occurs during co-rec play, the pinch-runner will be of the same sex as the one injured. If the player cannot continue play, a legal substitution must be made. If a player has written a formal request to be pinch ran for at all times during a game, the Athletic Supervisor must approve that and let all Umpires and teams know of this before the game begins.

4.) Game time is forfeit time, including league tournament play. In the event of a forfeit, the forfeiting team must deliver an additional \$25 forfeit fee to the Park District Office within one week, not to an umpire. If the additional forfeit fee is not paid by this time, the ensuing game will result in a forfeit. If a team has three (3) forfeits in one (1) season, that team will be eliminated from the league. If after a forfeit a team repays the fee and participates for the rest of the season the additional fee will be refunded.

6.) There will be a 1 hour time limit. Enforceable by the umpire. Meaning: it is at the umpires’ discretion to continue play or stop play. (The Flip Flop Rule may be used at the Umpires Request)

7.) The run rule is fifteen (15) after 4 innings or ten (10) after (5) innings for all divisions.

8.) Bats may be checked before the season using a compression bat tester. Slow pitch and Fast pitch softball bats may be used as long as they meet compression testing guidelines. Bats with cracks or large stress fractures are illegal and cannot be used. Any player using an altered or illegal bat will be ejected from the game and risk further disciplinary action. If an Umpire decides to take your bat for any reason and you refuse, you will be assessed a one game suspension and the bat will not be used until it is checked by the Athletic Supervisor. The use of a baseball bat during a softball game will result in an automatic out. **Please see player safety bat testing below:**

9.) Steel cleats will not be allowed; the player must change shoes or will not be allowed to play. The second time this happens, the player will be ejected from the game and risk further disciplinary action.

10.) Players must be sixteen (16) years of age or a high school graduate in order to participate in the league. Anyone playing illegally will result in a team loss for every game the illegal player participates.

11.) A runner does not have to slide on a force play at second or third base; however, he/she must not interfere in any way. Interference will result in both the forced runner and the succeeding runner being called out.

12.) There will also be a point of no return line half way between 3rd and home plate, if a runner crosses this line, they will be forced to try and score. There will be a chalked line from home plate to the back stop. Players must cross that line instead of stepping on home plate in order to score. (If you step on home plate, you will be called OUT. A play at home plate will be a force out. Where the catcher will treat home plate like a play at 1st base. A runner will be declared OUT if he/she has not passed the score line before the catcher possess the ball while touching the plate.

13.) The teams are responsible for keeping track of the runs and getting them to the umpire each half inning. The umpires will keep a running total throughout the game. (If there is a dispute and you have not been keeping score, we will have no way to tell who is correct.) The away team will be the official score keeper. Home team needs to insure the score is correct with the visiting team at all times. Disputes will be settled by the visiting teams score book.

14.) PROTEST PROCEDURE: All protests must be declared before the next pitch after the incident. The captain or manager of the protesting team shall immediately notify the plate umpire that the game is being continued under protest. The plate umpire shall in turn notify the opposing manager or captain. The plate umpire should make note of all circumstances on his/her scorecard. The protesting manager must deliver a formal written protest to the park district office, Read Park, within one business day. The written protest must be accompanied by a \$25 fee. The total fee will be returned if the protest is upheld. (USSSA Rules apply regarding when a protest may be made)

15.) There will be an “out of the park” home run limit of 5 per game. After that a home run will be declared an out. For the Co-Rec League, 1 homerun will be allowed per game for the men and unlimited for the women. In the event of a home run the bases do not need to be ran. On base runners need only to touch the base in front of them. 1st base is the only base that needs to be touched for a home run hitter. The home run hitter may be declared out if he does not touch 1st base.

16.) All league rules apply to season ending tournaments.

17.) Home vs. Away: The Home team will be the listed on the schedule. In all leagues, teams have at least half their games home vs. away +/- 1 game. (During Tournament Play, the Higher Seed will be the home team, unless higher seed is coming out of loser’s bracket.)

18.) Ties at the end of the season will be broken down as follows:

1. Head to head competition
2. Least amount of points allowed, awarding good defense. (games between tied teams only)
3. Points scored, awarding offense. (games between tied teams only)
4. Coin flip will break the tie

19.) All Leagues will use a mat behind the plate for all games pitching rules are as follows:

- All Pitches must start 3 feet above the ground
- The Arch of the pitch must reach at least 6 feet
- The Arch of the pitch may not exceed 12 feet (This is not Unlimited Arch)
- Any pitches that meet those guidelines and that hit the MAT or plate will be called a strike
- Any pitches that do not meet those guidelines, will be called a ball (umpire may declare pitch illegal while in flight batter has the option to swing)
- Pitcher must be in contact with mound when the pitch is released

Player Safety bat testing

Softball Bat Testing

Approved Bats

The Freeport Park District will adhere to the ASA and USSSA rules for approved bats. Please note: Any softball bat type or bat model that cannot be determined will be deemed illegal.

Bat Testing Procedure

- All bats must be tested prior to being used during league play.
- All bats will be tested on a yearly basis. Bats that pass the test will have a **silver sticker** placed on the bat. Bats that pass the test will be legal for the current season.
- Bats that do not pass the test will not have a sticker placed on the end of the barrel. These bats will not be allowed for league and tournament play.

Testing will take place during the summer, and fall seasons.

The following are the guidelines to get your bat tested:

- **Summer** – Testing will be available Monday, Wednesday and Friday for the first two weeks of the season. After the initial two week period, testing will be done by appointment only. Players must be present a **minimum of one hour** prior to the start of their game in order to get a bat tested.
- **Fall** – Testing will be available for the first two league nights of the season. After the initial two week period, testing will be done by appointment only. Players must be present a **minimum of one hour** prior to the start of their game in order to get a bat tested.

Bat Protest

- Teams may protest a bat at any time. The fee is \$50. If the bat fails the test, the bats sticker will be removed and not be allowed for play. Teams will lose their \$50 if the bat passes the tests.
- Players refusing to have a sticker put on their bat will be suspended for a minimum of 2 games.
- Any player that uses a bat without a sticker will be immediately ejected. The player will be declared out and the play is dead. The bat in question will be taken to be tested. If the bat doesn't pass the test, the player will be suspended a minimum of 2 additional games.
- Any player and/or owner of a bat caught using a shaved, painted or altered bat will be suspended for a minimum of 5 years. **THIS RULE WILL STRICTLY BE ENFORCED!**
- The Park District reserves the right to re-test any bat at any time.
- The Freeport Park District reserves the right to ban any bat at any time.

RULE 20. MIXED TEAM RULES

Sec. 1. Five Male and five Female Players must be in the lineup at all times (six and six if A.H. is used). Any five Male and any five Female Players must play Defense. Exception: A minimum of 9 Players can start a Game. However, there must always be five Females Players in the lineup. An out shall be declared the tenth position in the lineup when that position is scheduled to bat. A tenth Player may be added in the tenth position of the lineup at any time before the end of the Game. That added Player must be Male.

Sec. 2. The 11 Inch softball will be used when a Female is batting and a 12 Inch softball will be used when a Male is batting. It is an appeal play when the wrong ball is pitched to a Batter. If the appeal is allowed, then the Batter returns to bat with the same ball and strike count he/she had at the time of the pitch. Also, any Base Runners must return to the base occupied at the time of pitch.

Sec. 3. In the Mixed Program, Teams starting with 12 Players may drop down to 11 or 10 Players, but cannot have more Males than Females in the line-up. For example, if a Female Player is removed from the line-up, the Male Player following her in the lineup must be removed. All vacant spots in the line-up will be declared an out every time that position in the line-up is due to bat. If a Player is ejected from the game any reason, the ejected Player's team must have a substitute available to replace the ejected Player or that team will forfeit the game. If a team starts with 9 or 10 Players, they are not allowed to add the 11th or 12th Player at a later time. Any Player that leaves the game for any reason may not return to the game. **(This does not apply to normal re-entry and substitution)** Exception: A player, who has left the game under the blood rule, may return. Male and Female Players must alternate in the batting order. Note: If a team starts with 9 Players, a Female Player must occupy the first position in the batting order.

Sec. 4. When a Male Batter receives a base on balls or intentional walk, he will be awarded First and Second Base with the next Female Batter having the option to walk or bat.

NOTE: If the next Female chooses to walk, it is not considered an intentional walk for the purpose of making an appeal.

Sec. 5 Women will use an 11 inch ball, Distance Ball, Men will use a 12 inch ball, Elite Ball

Sec. 6 There will be a homerun limit of just 1 per game for all co-rec games.

Sec. 7 There will be a chalked line and players must cross that line instead of stepping on home plate. (If you step on home plate, you will be called OUT

Sec. 8 There will also be a Point of no return line half way between 3rd and Home plate, if a runner crosses this line, they will have to make an attempt to score.

RULE 21. WOMEN'S PROGRAM

Sec. 1. Teams participating in National or World Tournaments, including the World Series, must be completely uniformed within the following guidelines.

Sec. 2. In the Women's Program a minimum of 9 Players can start a Game. However an out shall be declared when the tenth position in the lineup is scheduled to bat. A tenth Player may be added to the tenth position any time before the end of a Game. Any Team that starts a Game with 10 or 11 Players may drop to the minimum of 9 Players to finish the Game. All vacant spot(s) in the lineup will be declared an out every time that lineup position is due to bat. If a Player is ejected from the Game for any reason, the ejected Player's Team must have a substitute available to replace the ejected Player or that Team will forfeit the Game. If a Team starts with 9 or 10 Players they are not allowed to add the eleventh Player at a later time. Any Player that leaves the Game for any reason may not return to the Game. **(This does not apply to normal re-entry and substitution)** Exception: A Player who has left the Game under the Blood Rule may return.