

# **San Mateo Regional League Adult Softball Rules of Play**

(Rev 3/2024)

## **RULES OF PLAY**

Adult teams playing competitive softball will use the rules as adopted by this year's Amateur Softball Association with certain exceptions (City Rules). All rules shall be enforced if such rules do not violate the policies and regulations of the City's Parks and Recreation Department.

SANCRA (Sports Association of Northern California Recreation Agencies): The governing body shall be known as SANCRA, which includes the league director of every city within the Peninsula Division, the Umpire Director, and an ASA representative. The League Director has the final authority to expedite any problems that may arise without calling a special meeting of the Board.

## **UMPIRES**

It shall be the duty of the umpire to administer decision of the game in accordance with ASA rules of play and those adopted herein by the San Mateo Department of Parks and Recreation.

All league games are under the direction of the umpires, and only team managers may discuss decisions with umpires during the game. Violators may be removed from the game by the umpire.

The umpires are the representatives of the league or association by which they have been assigned to a particular game, and as such are authorized and required to enforce each section of these rules. They shall have the authority to order players, coaches, captains, or managers to keep within the rules of ASA and/or the City of San Mateo. Furthermore, the umpires have the authority to order any penalties as herein prescribed. If one of the assigned umpires fail to appear for any regular league game, the one remaining assigned umpire shall handle the game from behind the plate. The assigned umpire shall have complete jurisdiction and control of the ball game.

## **EQUIPMENT**

Personal equipment must be furnished by the teams or participants. All playing equipment must meet the approval of the umpire before use. The penalty for using illegal equipment ranges from the removal of such equipment from the game to the ejection of the player(s) using such equipment.

Metal spikes are not allowed. Hard plastic spikes resembling metal spikes will not be allowed.

The following bats will not be allowed in the San Mateo league play: ANYTHING THAT DOES NOT MEET ASA'S STANDARDS (ASA bat standards can be found on [www.quickscores.com/sanmateo](http://www.quickscores.com/sanmateo)). Umpires may remove a bat from play if they feel it has been altered or deem it a "hot bat." This decision cannot be protested.

Catcher's protective equipment (especially a face mask) is highly recommended, but not mandatory.

Pitcher's mask is also highly recommended, but not mandatory.

Matching team jerseys are not mandatory.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

All players must sign an official San Mateo Roster Form to be eligible to play.

Players must be 18 years or older and cannot be a current member of a high school baseball or softball team.

Any player registering or playing under an assumed name will jeopardize his team and shall be suspended.

A player must play in a minimum of 3 regular season games to be eligible for the play-offs unless an exception is granted by the League Director.

Teams using ineligible players will be subject to disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the League Director.

## **PLAYER CODE OF CONDUCT**

All players ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct shall be suspended for a minimum of one league game. The League Director has full discretion over the disciplinary action in regard to any player who is behaving in a manner determined by opponents, umpires, fans, or city employees to be "unsportsmanlike."

## **ROSTERS & LINE-UPS**

Line ups must have first AND last names and must be given to the scorekeeper at least 5 minutes prior to your game time.

Rosters must have the Zip codes, and signatures of all players for them to be eligible to play.

All roster changes must be completed and submitted on the designated "Add/Drop Form." No roster changes will be accepted after the third week of league play unless approval from the League Director.

Teams are encouraged to maximize the player roster so replacements may be made for any injured or ailing players.

Home teams will be the first team listed on the schedule.

## **BATTING ORDER-REGULAR & CONTINUING (ALL LEAGUES)**

DEFINITION: (1) Regular Batting Order: the team uses no more than 10 spots in its batting order. (2) Continuous Batting Order: The team uses more than 10 spots in its batting order. All players need not be included in the continuous batting order; substitutes can still be used.

SUBSTITUTIONS: If a team needs to begin a game with 8 or 9 players, a late-arriving player must immediately be added to the bottom of the batting order and may immediately occupy a vacant defensive position. (Coed teams must follow special coed rules regarding the positioning of substitution). Teams that begin a game short-handed may not use continuous batting.

Teams using continuous batting can have a late-arriving player added to the bottom of the continuous order ONLY if the team has not yet batted through the entire line-up.

Teams using Regular or Continuous batting order can use substitute players in accordance with standard ASA substitution rules (starting players can be removed, and re-enter ONLY ONCE into their original spot in the batting order). Once a substitute player has been taken out of batting order, he may not re-enter, even in the case of injury.

Free Substitution Rule: Teams using Continuous batting order can use any 10 players including in the batting order to play the field. Coed teams must adhere to the special Coed rule.

All substitutions which change the batting order must be reported to the scorekeeper and home plate umpire. Changes in the field positions do not need to be reported.

If a player needs to leave the game before its conclusion (i.e. ejection, personal reasons), and an eligible substitute is not available, then the team shall receive an automatic out whenever the player's turn comes up in the batting order (if a player needs to leave the game because of an injury, they shall be called out the first time they are due to bat if a substitute is not available and the line-up shall be closed after that. Exception: see special Coed rule.

## **INJURY RULES**

For an injury resulting in a player being unable to continue playing: (1) Injured player and/or player's teammate must assist scorekeeper in completing an injury report. (2) Injured player shall be replaced by a player who has not yet entered the game. If a substitute is unavailable, then an out shall be called the first time the player is due to bat. After the out is called, the line up shall be closed, and no additional outs shall be called when the injured player was due to bat. **Exception for co-ed:** If a female becomes injured during the game and the team with the injured female only has 2 remaining females, they may continue to play as long as they only field 9 players (including the 2 remaining female players). The team with the injured female must take an out every time the female was due to bat in this scenario.

## **EJECTED OR SUSPENDED PLAYER, COACH, OR MANAGER**

Any player who has been ejected from a ball game shall not be permitted to coach or manage from the coach's box, dugout, or bleachers. Ejected players must leave the field and park immediately.

Any player, coach, or manager who is ejected from a ball game for a flagrant violation, as described in the Player's Code of Conduct, is subject to disciplinary action by the Softball League Board of Player Representatives and/or League Director.

Players ejected from a ball game for unsportsmanlike conduct will be ineligible to play in the next scheduled game and a rain out does not count (a player may be suspended for more than 1 game if the League Director decides harsher discipline is warranted). This includes play-off and championship games.

The League Director has the right to handle all disciplinary actions as he or she deems appropriate.

## **GAME TIMES/TIME LIMITS**

Game times for all leagues shall be the times listed on the league schedule with the following exceptions: (a) If the game is delayed because of field preparation, then the time limit will begin when the game starts (b) If the game is delayed because the prior game ran late, the time limit will begin when the game starts.

The time limit for games is 1 hour and 5 minutes. No new inning shall begin after the time limit has been reached (Exception: tie games in which the international tie breaker is used). ONLY 1 EXTRA INNING MAY BE PLAYED IF THE TIME LIMIT HAS RUN OUT. Extra innings will continue until a winner is determined in the play-offs and the championship game.

Unless otherwise specified, the assigned umpire shall act as the official timekeeper.

## **MERCY RULE**

At the end of 5 innings, if a team is leading the other team by 12 or more runs, the game will be halted and the team that is leading shall be declared the winner. If the visiting team is leading, the home team shall bat in the bottom of the 5<sup>th</sup>. If the home team is ahead the game shall be halted after the 4<sup>th</sup> inning. After 4 innings, a 20-run mercy rule shall be implemented.

- **20 after 4 innings**
- **12 after 5 innings**

## **FORFEITS**

A team must always have at least 8 roster players on the field, from start to finish. If for any reason a team drops to 7 players, the team will forfeit the game. Teams must always have a catcher and pitcher. Forfeits are the first tie breaker used in the standings.

GAME TIME IS FORFEIT TIME! Any team that does not have enough players at game time will be assessed a loss by forfeit. Exception: the first scheduled game of the evening has a grace period of 10 minutes if 1 (or both) teams do not have sufficient players to start the game legally. Once the umpire announces game time, teams with insufficient number of players are allowed up to 10 minutes to get up to 8 players. The team(s) that needs any of the 10-minute grace period to avoid forfeiting the game shall forfeit their 1<sup>st</sup> at bats. For example, if the Home Team arrives after game time, then visitors will bat in the first inning. After 3 outs, the visitors will clear the bases. The home team will automatically be given 3 outs in the bottom of the inning. The visitors will then immediately bat in the top half of the second inning. If the visiting team arrives after game time, then they will be given 3 outs for the top of the first inning, and the game will begin at the bottom of the first, with the home team batting. Any team forfeiting 2 or more games in a season will not be allowed to play in the playoffs (the league director has the final say if such a situation arises).

The game clock will start running once the grace period begins.

If both teams need to utilize the grace period to field a team, then the game shall begin in the top of the second inning once both teams have enough players to legally field a team.

Any team that forfeits more than 2 games in one season may be expelled from the City of San Mateo Regional Softball League. All individual participants of the expelled team may be ineligible to participate on any team in the City of San Mateo league for the following year.

A game may also be forfeited if in the judgment of the umpire one or both teams makes a travesty of the game, or creates unsafe conditions for players, officials, or spectators. All forfeiture penalties are subject to the discretion of the League Director.

## **POSTPONED GAMES**

The Department of Parks and Recreation shall have complete jurisdiction regarding the rescheduling of any games due to scheduling conflicts, safety precautions, or as the department deem the action necessary.

## **WARM-UP PITCHES AND OUTFIELD WARM UP**

Each team will be allowed ball warm-up for the pitcher and field prior to the start of their first inning. Each inning thereafter, teams will be allowed one warm up pitch. NO infield or outfield warm-up will be permitted after the first inning.

## **PITCHING/BATTER RULES AND REGULATIONS**

The height limit on pitches is 4 to 12 feet (excessive speed should be called if the pitch is determined too fast by the umpire).

Balls and Strikes: 3 Balls= a walk, and 2 Strikes = a strike out

Strike zone: Mat and home plate is a strike if it does not hit the mat or home plate it's a ball.

Foul Ball Rule: Once a batter has one strike (either a called strike; foul ball; or a swing and a miss) they will be able to hit one more foul ball without penalty. The second foul ball hit after a one strike count will cause that player to be called out.

## **TEAM STANDING/PLAYOFFS**

Tie breaker criteria are listed on [www.quickscores.com/sanmateo](http://www.quickscores.com/sanmateo). Forfeits are the first tie breaker, followed by head-to-head record, followed by head-to-head run differential, etc. Your league ties breakers will be listed under the standings.

## **PROTESTS**

Highly technical protests, and those which could have little or no effect on subsequent play or the final result of the game, shall not be considered.

Protests involving the misinterpretation of a playing rule, failure of an umpire to apply the correct rule in each situation, or failure to impose the correct penalty for a given violation shall be considered, provided the following protest procedure is followed.

1. The manager of a team must notify the home plate umpire that the game is being played under protest prior to the next pitch. No protests will be discussed, accepted, or decided on the field. The manager must then notify the scorekeeper and the opposing manager of the protest. File your protest and continue playing the game!
2. Within 24 hours, the manager must file a written protest (email preferred) with the League Director, outlining the entire situation. A protest must be submitted with a \$20 protest fee (fully refundable if the protest is upheld).

The protest of an ineligible player on a team must be made no later than when the player in question comes to bat for the first time in a game. Protest procedure must still be followed. A protest of eligibility, if allowed, would affect all games in which the ineligible person played.

## **PLAYOFFS & CHAMPIONSHIP**

All regular season rules apply to play off games with the exception that extra inning will continue until a winner is determined. The championship game will have a 1 hour and 15 minutes time limit and a 20-run rule after 4 innings. There will be no 12-run rule in the championship game. The home team in the play offs and championship will always be the higher seed.

## **GENERAL RULES**

Do not print out a schedule as they are subject to change. If you do not check your emails daily, please make sure that you have a co-manager added to your quickscores email list who does frequently check their email. Email is a primary form of communication San Mateo Athletics uses when communicating to out managers.

Only managers, rostered players, and scorekeepers are allowed in the dugout area. All family members, friends, children, and animals must remain in the stands.

Sliding/Collisions: Sliding at any base is allowed (exception: Coed leagues where sliding is illegal at home plate across the commit line). At all times, both offensive and defensive players should avoid unnecessary contact. If, in the umpire's judgment, the offensive player deliberately causes contact, he/she shall be called out. If the defensive player deliberately obstructs the runner, said runner shall be awarded the base he/she was attempting to reach. Any unnecessary roughness by any player shall cause that player to be ejected from the game. Although the preceding rules **DO NOT REQUIRE PLAYERS TO SLIDE**, they do require players to avoid unnecessary contact.

Courtesy runners are only allowed before the next batter has been pitched to. A courtesy runner is on base, and they are due to bat the umpire shall call an out and the courtesy runner shall remain on base.

No "walk-off" home runs. All homeruns that have been hit over the fence must be run out.

## **SPECIAL RULES**

### **Men**

A men's team is allowed a maximum of two female players on its roster. Additional female players may be allowed with the League Directors approval.

### **Women**

The 11" non-restrictive ball will be used in all women's games.

### **Coed**

To start a game, team must have 3 females.

A female must be your leadoff hitter.

Continuous batting order shall be available for use in all co-ed leagues.

Teams may ONLY bat a maximum of 12 batters (you may use the alternative batter rule)

Females may bunt. Normal adult softball foul ball rules apply to bunts that go foul.

Females may play ANYWHERE in the field as long as 3 females are playing defense at all times.

Substitutions: A male may substitute for a female and vice versa as long as 3 females always remain in the batting line-up and on defense,

The ASA two-ball system is used. The 12" softball will be pitched to males; the 11" softball pitched to females.

Intentional Walking Rule: On any base on balls (walk) to a male batter, he will touch first base, and advance to 2<sup>nd</sup> base eliminating the force, if a female is next in the batting order. The females must take her turn at bat. **EXCEPTION:** With 2 outs, after a male is walked, the following female batter has the option of wither (1) batting as usual, or (2) taking an automatic walk. Once the female has 2 feet in the batter's box she must bat.

In all coed leagues, the San Mateo League will use a "commit line" that runs perpendicular between 3<sup>rd</sup> base and home plate, and a "home plate extension line" that extends from home-plate that starts outside the batter's box and is perpendicular to the 3<sup>rd</sup> base line. If the base runner crosses the "commit line", then the base runner must try to score. If the base runner crosses the "commit line", there is an automatic force at home for that runner (i.e. that runner may re-cross the line, but the play must be completed at home plate). The base runner is not allowed to step on home plate or through the batter's box but must instead cross or step on the "home plate extension line." The player must step on or beyond the line before a defensive player is in possession of the ball while in contact with home plate. A player will not be called safe until they TOUCH (crossing the line "in the air" doesn't count) the extension line or any part of ground beyond the line.

This rule was designed to avoid collisions at home plate by eliminating the tag out rule. However, the defensive player must be touching home plate while in possession of the ball before the base runner crosses/touches the "home plate extension" line for the runner to be called out. Sliding will NOT be allowed across the "home plate extension line" unless it is done to avoid a potential injury. Tagging a runner will not be allowed between the commit line and plate line; tagging between these lines will not constitute an out.

All other ASA and Coed rules that are not superseded by the previously mentioned coed rules shall be enforced.

## **GROUND RULES**

### **Chanteloup Field**

Foul Ball Rule: Any foul ball that goes over the barrier fence along 3<sup>rd</sup> base/left field line and lands out of play will be ruled an automatic out to the batter. IT DOES NOT MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHETHER THE BALL IS HIT OVER THE BIG FENCE OR LITTLE FENCE. If the ball hits an object but lands in a playable area it will not be an out. The rule applies to fly balls only, and not to foul balls that bounce over the barrier fence.

Foul balls that land out of play along the 1<sup>st</sup> base/right field line, will be ruled a strike. This rule was created to help prevent damage to vehicles in the parking lot.

#### Fitzgerald Field

Foul Ball Rule: Any foul ball that goes over the barrier fence along the 1<sup>st</sup>/right field line and lands out of play on 5<sup>th</sup> Ave., will be ruled an automatic out to the batter. This rule applies to fly balls only and not to foul balls that bounce over the barrier fence. Any foul balls that land in the grandstands, or the bocce-ball courts, will simply be ruled foul. Any ball hit onto 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. or El Camino on the fly is an out. This rule is created to help prevent damage to vehicles driving along 5<sup>th</sup> Ave and El Camino.

#### Joinville Field

Foul Ball Rule: Any foul ball that goes over the barrier fence along the 3<sup>rd</sup> base/left field line and lands out of play/ parking lot will be ruled an automatic out to the batter. If the ball hits an object, but lands in playable area it will not be an out. This rule applies to fly balls only and not to foul balls that bounce over the barrier fence. Balls that are fouled straight back over the backstop will be simply ruled foul. Foul balls that land out of play along 1<sup>st</sup>/right field line, will also simply be ruled foul. This rule was created to help prevent damage to vehicles in the parking lot.