

Cary Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department 2026 Spring 50+ Senior Softball League Rules

USA Softball Rules and CPRCR adult slow pitch softball league rules will be in effect unless indicated below. These rules may be revised or amended as needed throughout the season.

League and Game Administration:

- 1) Age requirements: League age is determined by age of participant as of December 31, 2026. For example, if a player turns 50 years old on December 30, 2026, they may play in the 50 and Over league.
- 2) All women that register for the Senior Softball league will be placed in the 60 and Over or 65 and Over league.
- 3) One umpire and an official scorekeeper (when available) will be provided for all games. In the event that a scorekeeper is not present, the home team will keep the official score.
- 4) Quadruplicated lineup card must be used, and the lineup must be submitted to the umpire at the pre-game conference at home plate. The umpire will give a copy of the official lineup to the official scorer.
- 5) CPRCR will provide balls for all games. Teams are required to use the balls that are provided. Teams/Players will provide their own bats.
- 6) Players must be in matching uniforms with screen printed numbers on the back of the shirt. Numbers cannot be duplicated.
- 7) 60 minutes will be put on the clock to start the game. Teams may score a maximum of 5 runs per inning until 60 minutes have elapsed. When 60 minutes have elapsed, the inning in progress will be completed with both visiting and home teams allowed to score a maximum of 5 runs in that inning. The following inning will be the last inning, during which teams may score an unlimited number of runs. If six innings are completed before 60 minutes have elapsed, the seventh inning will be the final inning with unlimited runs.
- 8) The game shall be declared a completed regulation game if:
 - The home team is ahead by 10 or more runs after at least 4-1/2 innings of play or is ahead by 15 or more runs after 3-1/2 innings; or
 - The visiting team is ahead by 10 or more runs after at least 5 complete innings or is ahead by 15 or more runs after 4 innings.
- 9) If a game is tied after 60 minutes plus the unlimited-runs inning, or after 7 innings completed within 60 minutes, a maximum of two extra innings will be played. If the game is still tied after two extra innings the game will end as a tie. (Exception: tournament games.) During extra innings each offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with a baserunner at second base. The baserunner on second base will be the last batter from the previous inning. This runner must advance one base before being replaced by a courtesy runner.
- 10) Tournament Championship Game(s) – Time limit will not be in effect for championship games. Teams may only score 5 runs per inning during the first 6 innings of the championship games. Seven innings must be played in the championship game(s) unless ended due to the 10 or 15 run rule or forfeiture.

Playing Field Layout:

- 1) Strike mat will be used, which for batting purposes makes home plate effectively a 17" x 32.5" rectangle.
- 2) Scoring plate (second home plate) will be used. Line from third base to scoring plate and "commitment line" 20 feet from scoring plate will be drawn. (USA Softball Rule 2 "The Playing Field", Section 3 "Layout", Subsection G)
- 3) Double first base will be used. (USA Softball Rule 2 "The Playing Field", Section 3 "Layout", Subsection H)
- 4) Safety lines will be drawn at second base. Lines shall be three feet long, to the left and right of the base perpendicular to the baseline between first base and second base, adjacent to the front edge of the base.
- 5) Pitching screen may be used at the option of the defensive team. If used, it will be placed 6 feet in front of the front plane of the pitching rubber, aligned with any portion of the rubber. The screen may not be placed outside the width of the rubber.

Lineup and Batting Order:

- 1) All players present for the game will bat in the batting order. Players arriving late for the game must be added at the bottom of the batting order when they arrive.
- 2) A player who does not start the game due to an injury may not enter the game at a later time.
- 3) When a suspended game is resumed at a later date, teams will use the same batting orders that were being used when the game was started. An out will not be charged for the batting positions of players not present when the game is resumed. Players present when the game is resumed that were not originally present will bat in positions occupied by players not present when game is resumed or will be added to the bottom of the batting order.
- 4) Players should play at least two innings on defense. This is recommended but not required.

Batting:

- 1) Batters will start with a one ball, one strike (1-1) count.
- 2) Any legally pitched ball not swung at that lands on any part of the extended plate (actual plate plus strike mat) will be ruled a strike. (Per USA Softball rules, a pitch is legal if it is "delivered with perceptible arc and reaches a height of at least 6 feet from the ground, while not exceeding a maximum height of 12 feet from the ground.")
- 3) Batter is allowed one foul ball after the second strike. A second foul ball after the second strike will result in an out.
- 4) There is no home run limit. Batters and base runners do not run bases on over-the-fence home runs.

Base running:

- 1) Sliding is not permitted at any time. Penalty is automatic out.
- 2) A base runner is permitted to overrun second base (physical base or safety line) and third base without being subject to being tagged out if he returns immediately to the base. Rulings are the same as at first base in official baseball/softball rules:
 - A runner who overruns a base or safety line may advance to the next base at his own risk without having to retouch the overrun base.
 - A runner who overruns a base and, in the umpire's judgment, makes an attempt to advance to the next base is subject to being tagged out.
- 3) Regarding home plate, USA Softball Rule 8 "Batter-Runner and Runner", Section 9 "Adult Slow Pitch," Subsection B.2 "Senior Slow Pitch"/"Seniors Slow Pitch Baserunning" is in effect. It reads as follows:
 - A. Defensive players can touch only the original home plate and runners can touch only the second home plate.
 - B. Runners must touch the second home plate located adjacent to the righthanded batter's box in order to be safe at home.
 - C. Runners tagged by a defensive player instead of touching the original home plate will not be out.
 - D. Should a defensive player touch the second home plate and still touch the original home plate before the runner reaches the second home plate, the runner is out.
 - E. If the runner touches the original home plate, the runner is out and the ball remains live.
 - F. Once a runner passes the commitment line, 20 foot marking from a second home plate, the runner cannot return to third base.

Effect:

 1. *The ball remains live.*
 2. *If the runner returns, the runner is out.*
 - G. If the runner has passed the commitment line, 20 foot marking, and continues running on the original foul line, and interferes with the fielder taking a throw at or in contact with the original home plate:

Effect:

 1. *The ball is dead.*
 2. *The runner is out.*
 3. *Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.*
- 4) The second base "safety lines" are intended to avoid collisions on force plays and double play attempts at second base. **The safety lines are in effect only for force plays.**
 - For the defense, second base is the physical base.
 - On a potential force play at second base, the runner approaching from first base may touch either safety line rather than the physical base.
 - A runner shall be called out if they interfere with a defensive player who has established position on the base while attempting to make a putout or throw.
 - If there is no play at second base, the fielder must allow the runner to have clear access to the physical base.

- If a play at second base is not a force play, only the physical base is used. The base runner must touch (and may overrun) the physical base, and as per official baseball/softball rules the runner may be put out only by tag.
- 5) USA Softball Rules Section 9 'Adult Slow Pitch,' Subsection B1 'Seniors Slow Pitch Courtesy Runner,' is in effect. Previous Town of Cary rules permitting unrestricted courtesy runners have been rescinded.

Pitchers and Protective Pitching Screen:

Use of the screen is exclusively for the purpose of protecting the pitcher from batted balls and injury. Teams are not to use the screen in a way that provides the defense an unfair advantage, for example by positioning either the screen or the pitcher in locations that unduly reduce the available infield area into which the offensive team is batting.

If the protective pitching screen is used, the following rules apply:

- Pitchers may use the screen for protection from batted balls and injury. If the screen is used, the following rules apply:
 - 1) Physical placement of the screen is covered in the "Playing Field Layout" section above.
 - 2) The pitcher may not be the first defensive player to touch a batted ball. Ruling is dead ball, batter to first base, all baserunners advance one base. Exception: if the umpire calls "infield fly," the pitcher may field the batted ball.
 - 3) Batted Balls – When a batted ball contacts the protective screen, an immediate dead ball will be called, and the batter will bat again. The pitch will not count as a ball or strike. Baserunners will return to the base previously occupied.
 - 4) Thrown balls – Any thrown ball that contacts the screen will remain in play until the play is finished and the umpire calls time out, in the same manner as a thrown ball that strikes the fence or an umpire.

If the defensive team chooses not to use the protective pitching screen, pitchers are highly recommended to use other protective equipment that includes:

- Facemask, shin guards, and/or chest protector.

Bats:

Players in the league will be allowed to use their personal bats in addition to the league approved bats. A personal bat must be an official, unaltered ASA or USA softball bat. In 2020, ASA Softball changed its name to USA Softball making two different bat stamps but there was no change in the bat standards. Umpires will verify all bats prior to the start of each game and any bat without an ASA or USA stamp will immediately be removed from the dugout. If a player comes to bat with a non-approved bat or executes an at bat with a non-approved bat, the following penalties will be enforced:

- Player's at-bat becomes an out.
- Player is immediately removed from the field of play and the game.
- If the bat is found at the end of a play, all runners return to their original positions on the bases and any runs scored do not count.
- Player's position in the batting order is an automatic out for the remainder of the game.
- Player is suspended for two games and the team may not use a substitute/borrowed player in those games in place of the suspended player.
- If a player incurs a second offense of using a non-approved bat, that player will be suspended for the remainder of the season.

The above penalties also apply to anyone who is found using an altered ASA and/or USA softball bat.

Have a safe and fun season!