

**Cary Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department**  
**2026 Spring 65+ 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.*

- 1) Age requirements: League age is determined by age of participant as of December 31, 2026. For example, if a player turns 65 years old on December 30, 2026, they may play in the 65 and Over league.
- 2) 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.
- 3) 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.
- 4) CPRCR will provide balls for all games. Teams are required to use the balls that are provided. Teams/Players will provide their own bats.
- 5) Players must be in matching uniforms with screen printed numbers on the back of the shirt. Numbers cannot be duplicated.
- 6) 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.
- 7) If a player does not start the game due to an injury, they may not enter the game at a later time.
- 8) When a suspended game is resumed on a different date, teams will use the same batting order that was being used when the game was originally started. An out will not be charged for the batting positions for players not present when the game is resumed. Players present when the game is resumed that were not originally present will 1.) bat in positions occupied by players not present when game is resumed, and 2.) be added to the bottom of the batting order.
- 9) Players must play at least two innings on defense. Exceptions can be made for medical reasons.
- 10) Courtesy runners may be used for any base runner. The courtesy runner should be inserted before the next pitch is thrown. Any player (including borrowed/substitute players) may be used as a courtesy runner. A player can only be used as a courtesy runner once per game.
- 11) Second base "Safe" Line: A safe line shall be placed on both sides of second base beginning 3 feet from the side of the base and extending another 3 feet from the base. The line is drawn from the front edge of the base. The second base safe line will be perpendicular to the baseline between first and second base. When there is a play at second base, the runner must run across the safe line on either side of the base. A base runner must touch second base before attempting to advance to third base. When a runner is attempting to advance to second base it will be treated as a force out, the fielder does not need to tag the runner. If the runner stops before the base, it becomes a tag play because the runner created a rundown. A base runner shall be called out if they interfere with a defensive player who is on the base while attempting to make a putout. If there is no play at second base, the fielder must allow the runner to have clear access to the base.
- 12) Plays at Third Base: The "safe" line at third base is eliminated. A runner can overrun third base on any play at the base but must touch the base on the way by, and/or to safely advance home. Whether a play at third is a force or a tag play is based on regular softball rules, plays at third are not automatically force plays.

- 13) Scoring plate (second home plate) will be used for the base runners. Double first base will also be used.
- 14) The commitment line will be used between third base and scoring plate. Once the runner passes the commitment line, they may not return to third base. Violation will result in an automatic out with a delayed dead ball.
- 15) The base runner that has passed the commitment line and not reached the scoring plate shall be declared out if 1) the defensive player in possession of the ball touches home plate before the runner contacts the scoring plate; or 2) the runner touches the original home plate.
- 16) A runner that has passed the commitment line but has not reached the scoring plate shall not be declared out if tagged by a defensive player.
- 17) Sliding is not permitted at any time. Penalty is automatic out.
- 18) Run and tie breaker rules
  - Run Rules: If after at least 4-1/2 innings of play the home team is ahead by 10 or more runs, or if the visiting team is ahead by 10 or more runs after 5 complete innings, the game shall be declared a completed regulation game.  
There will also be a fifteen-run rule after 3 1/2 or 4 innings of play.
  - Tie Breaker Rule - If a game is tied at the end of seven innings or at the end of a game called due to the time limit the following procedure will be used for the first two extra innings. If the game is still tied after two extra innings the game will end as a "tie". (Exception: tournament games)
    - During each half inning of the extra innings the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with a baserunner at second base (runner must advance one base before courtesy runner may be used). The baserunner on second base will be the last batter from the previous inning.
    - Clarification: The second extra inning will not be played if the tie is broken at the conclusion of the first extra inning.
- 19) 3/8" black rubber mat will be used. 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.
- 20) Batters will start with a 1-1 count. (Batter will be allowed one foul ball on the 3<sup>rd</sup> strike. A 2<sup>nd</sup> foul ball on the third strike will constitute an out being called.)
- 21) Time limit/length of game/run rule: Teams may only score 5 runs per inning until 50 minutes have been played. When 50 minutes have been played, that inning will be completed with both visitor and home teams allowed to score a maximum of 5 runs in that inning. The following inning will be the last inning, and teams can score an unlimited number of runs. CLARIFICATION: If six innings are completed before 50 minutes have been played, the seventh inning will be the final inning with unlimited runs.
- 22) There is no home run limit. Batters and base runners do not run bases on over the fence home runs
- 23) Players in the league will be allowed to use their own bats in addition to the league approved bats. Any 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 will apply to anyone who is found using an altered ASA and/or USA softball bat

24) Teams may use 11 players on defense.

25) Teams may "borrow" a maximum of 3 players during the regular season and a maximum of 3 "C+ or C" players during the tournament/playoffs. When a team is borrowing players, the total number of players may not exceed 11. Additional stipulations are listed below.

- Teams must have 7 players present (excluding "borrowed" players) to avoid forfeit.
- A 10 minute grace period is in effect for the first game of the night only. Teams must have 7 players (excluding "borrowed" players) present by the end of the grace period to avoid forfeit.
- A team may borrow an "A" player if they are missing an "A" player.
- A team may borrow a "B" player if they are missing a "B" player or an "A" player.
- A team may borrow a "C+" player if they are missing "C+" player and only borrow a "C" player if missing a "C" player.
  - A team may borrow a "C" player if a "C+" player is not available.
- If a team needs more than one "borrowed" player, the 2nd and 3rd "borrowed" players must be "C+ or C" players.
- If starting with 8 or 9 players, an out is not called for the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> positions in the batting order.
- The 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> players may be added at any time.
- A team that wins the game by forfeit may use the field. If a practice game is played, the umpires will not umpire the game.
- "Borrowed" players must bat in the last position(s) of the batting order.
- "Borrowed" players may play any position on the field.
- "Borrowed" players must come from one of the teams not involved in the game.
- Uniform rules will not be enforced for the "borrowed" players.

### Points of Emphasis

Courtesy Runners – The courtesy runner should replace the runner before the pitch is thrown to the next batter. However, any base runner can have a courtesy runner at any time (with dead ball / timeout between pitches) except during tie breaker the runner that starts the inning on 2<sup>nd</sup> base must advance one base before a courtesy runner may be used. This rule supersedes the USA/ASA Softball Rule on courtesy runners.

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Borrowed players - The intent of this rule is to avoid forfeits and for teams not to be at a major disadvantage by having less than 10 players on defense. The rules about batting were adopted for the following reasons.

- 1) The “borrowed player” would probably like to bat in addition to playing the field. Therefore, they must bat.
- 2) The rule is not intended to encourage teams to “borrow” players in order to strengthen their lineup. Therefore, by requiring the “borrowed player(s) to bat last in the order, teams will be less likely to try and abuse this rule.

Protective Pitching Screen is allowed.

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 screen is used, the following rules apply:

- The screen will be placed 6 feet in front of the front plane of the pitching rubber.
- If the pitcher is right-handed, the right edge of the screen will be aligned with the left edge of the pitching rubber. If the pitcher is left-handed, the left edge of the screen will be aligned with the right edge of the rubber.
- The pitcher must be in contact with the pitching rubber when the pitch is released, with both feet within the width of the rubber. A right-handed pitcher may not, for example, place his left foot on the far-right edge of the rubber and pitch with the rest of his body entirely to the right of the rubber.
- The pitcher’s entire body must be behind the plane of the screen after the pitch is released and until it reaches the plate.
- If the screen or the pitcher is in illegal position, the umpire will declare the pitch illegal. If the batter does not swing, it will be declared a ball. If the batter swings, play continues as if “illegal pitch” had not been called.
- The protective screen necessarily takes away a portion of the hitting area available to the batter. The pitcher may not, before the pitch reaches the plate, leave the rubber and further enlarge the “unavailable” area by repositioning himself laterally (to the right of the rubber if right-handed, to the left if left-handed). If he does so and fields a batted ball, the umpire will call “dead ball” and award the batter and all baserunners one base.
- Once the pitch reaches the plate, the pitcher is free to move as he wishes and may field any batted ball without restriction, including being the first defensive player to touch it. (If the ball is hit dangerously hard directly toward the pitcher, he is expected to move behind the screen for protection.)

- Batted balls -- When a batted ball contacts the protective screen, an immediate foul ball will be called and the pitch will count as a strike.
- Thrown balls-- Any thrown ball that makes contact with the screen will remain in play until the play is finished and the umpire calls time out. Note: a thrown ball hitting the screen remains in play just like a ball that is thrown to either first base or third base and hits the fence. The ball remains in play until the fielder recovers the ball and the play ends and the umpire calls time out.

### 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 the game ends due to the 15-run rule or forfeiture.

*Have a safe and fun season!*