

# BMAC 2026 Softball League Rules

All leagues will be using the USSSA rules as the basis for play, with the following league amendments and inclusions.

**FIELD SETUP:**            Pitching Distance: 53’                    Base Distance: 70’

**EQUIPMENT:**

**BALLS:** Each team will receive one dozen balls at the beginning of the season. Game balls will be the responsibility of each team playing. All leagues are “Hit (and get) Your Own Ball”. **THE BALL MUST HAVE THE BMAC LOGO ON THE BALL TO BE LEGAL.** It is the pitcher’s responsibility to verify the core of the ball. If the pitcher pitches the ball, it is considered legal for that pitch. The play / ball cannot be protested or appealed after the fact.

**BATS:** During all Bridgeton Department softball leagues any bat that has a **United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA) new 2023 bat stamp** will be permitted. The grace period for all old 2012 USSSA stamped bats has expired and all old USSSA stamped bats will not be able to be used. See other exceptions below.



**Cracks:** If a bat has a crack that is going around or beginning to circle the bat, it will be considered illegal.

In addition, the following bat restrictions will be followed:

Divisions 1, 2, 3                    Any bat with a USSSA 2023 Approved Bat Stamp, with no adjustments unless noted above

Divisions 4                    Any bat that meets the Division 1, 2, 3 rules **AND** must be made **entirely of either metal (and have a USSSA 2023 Approved Bat Stamp) or wood. NO COMPOSITE BATS ARE PERMITTED IN DIVISION 4.**

The first offense of using an illegal bat will result in an “out” being called and all runners returned to base occupied prior to pitch. Second offense will result in the batters being ejected.

The third offense by the same team in one game will result in a forfeit. Players are responsible for knowing if the bat they use is considered legal.

**Bat Warmers** – Any artificial or intentional method of controlling the temperature of a bat is now illegal. That includes placing a bat in a sleeve designed to keep a bat warm or cool. It also includes intentionally placing a bat next to a heater. Bats may be placed in a protective sleeve that does not include means of warming or cooling the bat. Result = batter is out. In addition, the **bat is considered altered and will be removed from the game.**

<b><u>HOME RUN RULES:</u></b>	Division 1	=	Five (5) Home Runs per game
	Division 2	=	Three (3) Home Runs per Game
	Division 3	=	One (1) Home Run per Game
	Division 4	=	No Home Runs (over the fence)

**Each additional Home Run that is hit above the limit noted above will be considered an OUT.**  
*Home Runs cannot be taken away and turned into an HRO.*

ALL OVER THE FENCE HOME RUNS WILL FOLLOW A HIT & SIT PROCEDURE. No runners will have to touch a base. The runs will automatically be awarded to the team. NO appeals for a missed base can be made.

***NOTE: A Home Run is considered any fair ball that clears the fence untouched. If the fielder touches ball prior to the ball clearing the fence, it is considered a 4-base error and not a Home Run, and will also be Hit & Sit.***

**TIME / RUN LIMIT:** All games(With the exception of the Tuesday Women's D4 league) will be played with the following time guidelines, regardless of whether it is the first or second game of the double-header, and regardless of how long it took to play the first game:

**Each field will have a timer, after 50 minutes from the first pitch of each game - the inning that is currently being played will be completed, plus one additional inning, unless the game is ended due to the run rule. If the additional inning is played (and all subsequent innings that are needed, will use the 2-2 count rule).**

***Time/Run limit Exceptions***

**During playoffs, after 50 minutes from the first pitch of the game, the inning that is currently played will be completed. After this inning, all batters will start at a 2-2 count for the rest of the game. There is no time limit on playoffs and the game will finish in it's entirety. (Championship games are exempt from the 2-2 count after 50 minutes)**

**The Tuesday Women's D4 doubleheader league will be played with a 50 minute time limit. After 50 minutes have been elapsed, the inning currently being played will be**

**completed but no additional innings will be played unless there is a tie. If extra innings are needed to determine a winner then the last out from the previous inning will start on 2<sup>nd</sup> and all batters will start with a 2-2 count.**

If a team is ahead by ten (10) or more runs after five (5) innings, or ahead by at least fifteen (15) after four (4) innings, or at least twenty (20) runs after three (3) innings, the team ahead will be declared the winner.

**In the event of cancellation due to rain or other reasons, the losing team must have batted four (4) or more times to be considered a complete game, otherwise the game will be cancelled and rescheduled. The rescheduled game will be completely restarted from the top of the 1<sup>st</sup> inning at 0-0.**

NO game will end in a tie. A standard game is seven innings, unless shortened due to time limit, run rule, or field conditions. If extra innings are needed to determine a winner, each batter will come to the plate with a two ball, two-strike count with no courtesy foul. The inning will also start with a runner on 2<sup>nd</sup> base. The runner will be the last out of the previous inning. Teams may use one courtesy runner per inning and this may be used for the runner starting on 2<sup>nd</sup> base. This format will continue until a winner is decided. Extra Innings will be defined as any and all innings played beyond the seventh inning, or any and all innings played after the game timer has expired while the game is tied.

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS/FORFEIT:** All teams must have at least nine players present to play. If a team is unable to field at least nine players at the designated game time, that team will automatically assume the rule of "visitor". If their ninth player has not arrived by the time the 1st half inning of play is completed or all present players have batted, the game will be forfeited. If neither team has nine players, a double forfeit will result.

If a change in Home teams is made during the first game of a double-header, the teams will not switch Home and Visitor for the second game. (Same team will be Visitor for both games)

If the first game is forfeited in a double-header league, the team that has the insufficient number of players will have 15 minutes to get nine players on the field. If they cannot, the second game will be forfeited as well.

**BATTING ORDER:** All players present for a game are to be placed in the official batting order. Late arriving players must be added to the bottom of the batting order, and cannot take the place of an injured or ejected player in the lineup. Free defensive substitution is permitted. If a player leaves the game due to ejection, an "out" will be called every time their name comes up in the lineup. If a player decides he is not going to bat during the first time through the lineup, this player cannot be added to the lineup at any point during that game.

No automatic out will be called if a player has to leave early or player leaves due to obvious injury.

**NOTE: If a player begins but does not complete the first game of a double header, for any reason, he/she is ineligible for the second game of a double header.**

**BATTING COUNT:** The batter will start at the plate with a one ball, one strike count, with no courtesy foul. Any foul ball after a batter has two strikes will result in a strike out. If a foul ball on the third strike is caught, the base runners may advance at their own risk. **During extra innings, each batter will come to the plate with a two ball, two-strike count with no courtesy foul.**

**CLEATS/ SPIKES/SHOES:** No metal spikes shall be worn. Players must have athletic style shoes to play.

NOTE (on the first offense by a team in a given game): If the player is on offense with metal spikes on, he/she will be called "out" whether at bat or on base. On the SECOND offense by a team in a given game the player will be ejected.

**PITCHING:** A legally pitched ball must, in the judgment of the umpire, reach a minimum arc of six (6) feet and shall not exceed a maximum height of ten (10) feet from the ground. Any ball that, in the umpire's judgment does not meet these requirements will be a delayed dead ball. A batter may choose to swing at the ball and in doing so negates the dead ball. In which all results of the play are valid. If the batter chooses not to swing, the pitch will be called a "ball". No fake pitches are allowed whether while on the pitching rubber or not. Pitcher must come to a complete stop prior to pitching the ball.

**BASE RUNNING:** Runners may leave the base as soon as the ball crosses the front plane of the plate, touches the ground, or when the ball is contacted with the bat, which ever comes first.

It is the runner's responsibility to avoid contact with the defensive player at all bases. If, in the opinion of the umpire, any contact outside of incidental, the runner will be called out and may be ejected from the game.

**COURTESY RUNNER:** Teams may use one (1) courtesy runner per inning. The courtesy runner shall be any runner in the batting order.

NOTE: For all divisions - if at any time the courtesy runner's batting position is due up when he/she is on base, an OUT will be recorded, and that batters position will be skipped in the lineup.

**SAFETY 1ST BASE :** All BMAC leagues will use a safety 1st base. The safety base shall be 15 inches by 30 inches and not more than 3 inches high. The safety base should be positioned such that the white portion is located where first base would normally be (in fair territory) and the colored portion (red or orange) should be in foul territory. Any batted ball hitting the white portion should be fair and any ball hitting the red or orange portion should be foul. On the initial throw to first base from the infield or outfield, the batter-runner MUST TOUCH the red or orange portion of the base but not the white. If legally appealed by the defense during a live ball situation, the runner will be called out. The defensive player MUST always touch the white portion. This rule is in effect only on the initial play at first base. This does not include:

1. Returning to the base after over running,
2. Running on a base hit to the outfield (runner may touch the red or white part) or
3. Re-tag to advance on a fly ball.
4. On any attempt to force the batter runner out at first base on the initial throw that pulls the defense off of first base into foul ground, the defense and the batter may use either the white or colored portion of the base.

EFFECT: If the base runner uses the orange portion at any time after the first attempt at first base and is not in contact with

the white portion, then he is considered off the base.

## **Coed Supplemental Rules**

**REQUIRED NUMBER OF PLAYERS:** Teams play with ten players on defense (5 Men and 5 Women).

- **Both teams must have at least nine (9) players (either combination of four men and five women or five men and four women to begin and continue play).**
  - i. **If the team has only four women present, the spot in the batting order for the fifth woman will be considered an out every time this space in the order comes up. This option CANNOT be waived by the opponent or the umpire. In this scenario, two men will bat in consecutive spots in the order since an out will be recorded between them.**
- Teams may employ their players in whatever defensive positions they desire.
- All players present for the game are to be placed in the official batting order alternating by sex. Late arriving players must be added to the bottom of the batting order in proper gender rotation.

**WALKED MALE BATTER:** Any walk to a male batter will result in a two base award. With less than two outs the next female batter must bat. With two outs the next female batter, has the option to walk or bat. The male batter does not have to touch first base prior to going to second. Runners on base advance only if forced.

**COURTESY RUNNER:** Teams may use one (1) courtesy runner per gender, per inning

**SOFTBALL USED:** During all coed league games, the men will hit the 12” ball, and the women will have the option of hitting an 11” optic yellow ball. The coach of each team will be responsible for putting the correct ball into play for each batter. Both balls will be the responsibility of the hitting team to provide, and must meet the ball requirements for all BMAC leagues.

## **Adult Softball Leagues** **General Policies and Procedures**

**RESCHEDULES:** Games that were cancelled due to field conditions will be rescheduled on the same night as the original games for the first three occurrences (Two occurrences for Monday, Friday or Sunday leagues or the any fall session leagues). For each following occurrence, games may be rescheduled for a different night or cancelled with a refund of league fees, and the current standings used to determine the winner of each league.

**FORFEITS:** If a team forfeits three games, it will be dropped from the remainder of the schedule and will lose its “returning team” status for next season – with no refund of league fees for games not played. No score is awarded to forfeit games. No refund is provided for forfeit games.

**INJURY TO PITCHER:** If a pitcher is hit with a batted ball, and is unable to continue, the bat and ball that were used shall immediately be removed from the game to be tested for alterations. The umpire shall give the bat and ball to the BMAC Coordinator who will provide the owner with a receipt of what bat and ball were taken. If the bat or ball has been altered, the owner of the bat / ball will be suspended from playing at BMAC (leagues and tournaments) for a period of two years. If the owner of the bat / ball fails to comply with this rule, they will be suspended for an undetermined period of time, no less than two years – and the game will be considered a forfeit. If the bat / ball are not altered, they will each be returned to the owner with no additional action.

**RADIO IN DUGOUT:** Teams are permitted to have a radio on in their dugout, **only when they are batting.** Volume should be no louder than a moderate level (as determined by the umpire). Radio must be turned off while team with the radio is on defense (**unless permitted by an opponent when they are batting**). Any music or talk coming from the radio should not have profanity or abusive language. **First offense – radio must be turned off for the remainder of the evening.**

**LEAGUE TIE-BREAKERS:** (Fewest number of team forfeits will always be the first tie-breaker)

- Two teams:
  - Head to Head competition between the teams tied.
  - If two teams still tied, the team with the greater margin of victory head to head.
  - If still tied, this process will be repeated beginning with the team with the best record in the standings and continuing with each subsequent team until the tie is broken.
  
- Three or more teams (until only two teams tied, then follow two team process):
  - Head to Head competition between the teams tied.
  - Margin of Victory with all tied teams
  - Fewest runs allowed head to head
  - If still tied, this process will be repeated beginning with the team with the best record in the standings and continuing with each subsequent teams until only two teams remain tied

**COACHES & MANAGERS:** Each coach/manager is expected to make each of his/her players aware of the BMAC Code of Conduct. In addition, each coach/manger will always be held accountable for the players on his/her team.

**TEAM ROSTERS:** A team may carry 18 players on their official roster. All changes must be made in writing and submitted to the Bridgeton Community Center or to the Athletic Supervisor before a player may be used. Players may legally participate on only one team per division each night. Each player must be 18 years of age by the first scheduled game for each Division in order to participate.

**Rosters will be frozen (no changes may be made) before the start of your 3<sup>rd</sup> scheduled doubleheader.**

**ELIGIBILITY:** All players must be listed on your official roster on file with the Bridgeton Parks and Recreation Department to be eligible to play.

**Regular Season:** If you feel that the opposing team is using a non-rostered player, you must lodge a protest with the umpire prior to the final out of the game. You may only question one player's eligibility per game. **That individual must present one valid photo I.D. to the umpire (failure to produce a valid photo ID will result in that player being considered illegal, and a forfeit will result).** The umpire will make note of the player's name, and the game will be completed. Protesting team must follow up with a written protest and fee as described below ("Protests"), before an official ruling will be made.

**Playoffs:** If you feel that the opposing team is using a non-rostered player, you must lodge a protest with the umpire prior to the final out of the game. **The Umpire will check both team's rosters. If a player is deemed ineligible then the game will result in an immediate forfeit for that team. If both teams have a player that is deemed ineligible then the game will immediately result in a double forfeit.**

**NOTE:** Individuals that are listed on the BMAC Free Agent list, are considered as rostered players for all teams, and therefore cannot be protested. However a Free Agent may only legally play for one team per division per night.

**PROTESTS:** You cannot protest a judgment call, only an interpretation of the rules. If you feel a protest is necessary, **you must lodge the protest immediately (prior to the next pitch of the game) with the umpire.** The game shall be stopped and the umpire will note the inning, score, and position of any runners at the time of the protest. A written letter of protest and a \$30.00 protest fee must be submitted to the Parks & Recreation Department no later than 48 hours after the disputed game. The \$30.00 protest fee will be refunded if the protest is ruled in your favor. Protests will be ruled upon within 1 week.

**EJECTIONS & SUSPENSIONS:** Ejected players must leave the field and vicinity of the field or a forfeit may occur. Umpires have the authority to eject an individual from the complex if their action so warrants. Players ejected for any reason are ineligible to play for the remainder of the night for any division (including playoffs). In addition, players may be ejected from participating prior to and following a game. **Any team that has three or more players ejected from one game will forfeit that game and will be subject to additional penalties.**

**In addition, the individuals name may be forwarded to other agencies that conduct adult softball leagues. Bridgeton Parks and Recreation reserves the right to recognize players, coaches, managers, or team suspensions of other softball leagues and associations.**

**UMPIRES & STAFF:** The umpires and staff have the authority to deny the participation any player, who in their opinion, appears to pose a threat to themselves and/or others due to intoxication or influence by a controlled substance - this shall not be considered an ejection, however the individual will not be allowed to return to play another game on the same date. Decisions of the umpire and / or the BMAC Coordinator are considered final, unless a protest is filed (and upheld) based upon a rule interpretation.

Regardless of the league you are participating in, the Bridgeton Parks and Recreation Softball Program exists for the sole purpose of promoting physical/mental fitness and enjoyment of all players and spectators. Any inappropriate behavior including unnecessary arguing, profanity, dangerous or malicious conduct toward other players, officials, or spectators will not be tolerated. **This includes before, during, and after a participant's game.** Staff has the authority to eject violators from a game and / or the complex; in addition they will be subject to additional discipline review and suspension.

**NO PERSONAL COOLERS, BEVERAGES, OR FOOD IS ALLOWED AT  
BMAC**

# **STRIKE MAT BEHIND HOME PLATE**

BMAC will use a STRIKE MAT to determine balls and strikes during the adult softball leagues.

**ANY PITCH THAT IS WITHIN THE 6' – 10' ARC, AND HITS THE MAT WILL BE CONSIDERED A STRIKE**

**Exception: a pitch that hits any part of the plate and the mat at the same time will be considered a BALL!**

The strike mat is only used for determining balls or strikes. When attempting to score, a runner must touch home plate, or in designated divisions, cross the scoring line. The mat is not considered an extension of home plate.

## **COMMITMENT & SCORING LINE**

In all Recreation Coed leagues (D4), a Commitment Line thirty-five (35) feet from the Home Plate will be used. Once a runner's foot touches the ground on or past this line, the runner is committed to advancing to the Scoring Line located perpendicular to home plate and may no longer be tagged out.

**EFFECT:** Tagging this runner by a defensive player will not be allowed. The runner will be called safe and the ball shall remain live and standard rules shall apply.

**EFFECT:** If a runner re-crosses the commitment line in an attempt to return to third base, he will be declared out and the ball remains alive.

**EFFECT:** The runner must cross the Scoring Line in order to score, prior to the defensive team touching Home Plate in possession of the ball (Same effect as a play at first base on the batter). Running toward Home Plate, or through the batter's box, is not allowed. Any runner touching Home Plate will be called out. The ball shall remain live and standard rules shall apply. **RUNNER MUST CROSS THE SCORING LINE.**