



SOFTBALL LEAGUE RULEBOOK

OFFICE LOCATION

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LEAGUE OFFICE STAFF

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*For current field conditions and field availability, all managers are to call the
WEATHER LINE (669-275-4938) throughout the day as to the status of the games
that evening*

~~~ Updated for Fall 2024 ~~~



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## **I. LEAGUE FORMAT**

1. The League Office shall determine all policies and sanctions to ensure fair play and a competitive balance.
2. The League Office may find it necessary and reserves the right to add or clarify the league rules before or during the season. All managers will be notified of any changes.
3. The League Office shall determine the number, variety and type of leagues. Teams may request league preference, night and field when they register; however, the League Office shall determine placement of a team.
4. Each division will run with a minimum of four (4) teams and a maximum of six (6) teams.
5. Divisions may be combined at the discretion of the League Office.
6. Teams who can only play certain nights must be ready to adjust to the caliber of the league to which they are assigned.

## **II. TEAM & PLAYER ELIGIBILITY**

1. Players must be 18 years of age or older and not enrolled in high school.
2. Teams may carry a maximum of 20 players on its roster including the manager, providing he/she is a player manager. Players must carry a valid picture ID to all league games.
3. Teams must submit a completed Official Roster form with correct name (printed & signed), address, zip code and telephone number by their team's 1<sup>st</sup> game. This form must be on file at the park with the scorekeeper. It is the manager's responsibility to keep all managers' information current.
4. Player's additions or deletions must be made prior to the ½ way point of the season (game #5 of a 10-game season). Rosters are then frozen, and manager should receive a copy from the scorekeeper. All transactions must be made at the park with the scorekeeper or at the League Office. Confirm all transactions with League Office. Any new player must sign the roster to be eligible to play. Non-resident fees will apply.
5. Managers who lose players under extenuating circumstances (i.e. injury, moving out of the area, work shift changes) may petition the League Office to replace any player after the ½ way point. If the relocated or injured player decides to return, the replacement player must be dropped from the roster and will no longer be eligible to play. Players who are going on vacation for an extended period will not be considered for replacement.
6. Players may play on another team from a different night or division. A player is not allowed to play on another team within the same division.
7. A player on one team must be released by their manager prior to playing on another team within the same division. Once the player is released, he/she can join the roster of another team after sitting out one league game. Players cannot trade



teams during playoff games.

8. An Ineligible Player is any player not on the roster or playing under an assumed name. Protest must be made prior to the completion of the game. Scorekeeper will confirm player eligibility using the score sheets and lineup cards as reference. If the player does not meet minimum requirements the offending team will forfeit the game.

### III. **RULES**

Unless otherwise stated, the current year Official USA Softball Association Rules (<https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Softball>) shall govern all games with following exceptions and modifications.

1. No batting or infield practice is allowed prior to games.
2. Home team will occupy the 3<sup>rd</sup> base dugout.
3. Dogs are not allowed inside the dugouts, inside the bullpens or on the field of play anywhere. All dogs must remain on leash and in the spectator areas at all times.
4. Team members only are allowed in the dugouts. No youth below the age of 18 years old are allowed in the dugouts. The batter, on deck batter and base coaches may be on the field when batting. All other team members must be in the dugout.
5. All loose bats, balls, equipment & apparel must be removed from the playing field during the game.
6. A team may use ten (10) field players and a Designated Hitter (DH) in the lineup or ten (10) field players and two (2) Designated Hitters (cannot be two of the same gender) in ALL GENDER leagues only, but no fewer than eight (8) players.
7. If a team begins a game with less than ten (10) players and additional players arrive late, they must bat at the bottom of the batting order. No DH will be allowed in the game after the start of the game.
8. A minimum of eight (8) players is required for the duration of the game.
9. Pitches will be delivered with a perceptible arc and reach a height of at least six (6) feet from the ground, while not exceeding a maximum height of twelve (12) feet from the ground. Maximum of three (3) warm up pitches allowed in between innings
10. Regardless of use of the home plate extension, any legally pitched ball that hits the plate will be called a ball.
11. Each batter starts with a 1-1 count. When the count is 3-2, the next fouled ball results in the third strike and the batter is out.
12. An intentional walk is permissible and occurs during a dead ball. A pitch is not required and the intentional walk starts by the defensive team notifying the plate umpire of their intent. The umpire should call time out and award the batter first base without liability to be put out. A possible appeal on a previous play is nullified. When two successive batters are walked intentionally, the second walk may not be administered until the first batter reaches first base.
13. All players must wear tennis shoes or rubber molded cleats. Metal cleats will not be allowed. Per SAN CRA Player's Code of Conduct, player(s) will be immediately ejected from the game and serve at least one game suspension.



14. Each team must supply its own bat. Follow the link for approved and illegal bats [USA Softball Certified Equipment/Bats](#)
15. Bats must meet USA Softball regulations and bear the appropriate certification mark. Bats may be checked by officials at any time. Team managers may request bat checks of the opposing team as they seem fit.
16. If an illegal bat is found immediately after a play, the bat will be removed, the batter is out and ejected from the game. If an illegal bat is found before the game, in-between innings or after the game the bat will be removed. In either case, the following will apply.
  - a. 1<sup>st</sup> incident: Batter and/or owner of the bat will be written up and ejected from the game with one (1) suspension
  - b. 2<sup>nd</sup> incident: Batter and/or owner of the bat will be suspended for the remainder of the season
  - c. 3<sup>rd</sup> and final incident: Batter and/or owner of the bat will be banned from the league.
17. Incidents will not reset in a new season and will stay with player(s)/teams for the duration of time they are with the league.
18. Players may ask umpires to evaluate the bat prior to a game. There will no penalty in this case if a bat is deemed illegal if it is not used.
19. Batting helmets and catcher's masks are not required but are encouraged.
20. Any team that hits a Home Run over the fence cannot hit another Home Run until the other team hits one of their own. A Home Run hit prior to the equalizer will be an out.
21. No bunting allowed.
22. A runner must attempt to slide or veer to either side and must make all attempt to avoid contact with field player. No aggressive sliding. No player shall intentionally run over an opposing player. Penalty for such an infraction will be automatic ejection from the game and suspension.
23. No stealing bases or leading off. One (1) foot must remain on the bag until the pitched ball reaches home plate.

## COURTESY RUNNERS

24. One courtesy runner may be used per inning for any player, other than the pitcher. **Any eligible player that may participate on offense or defense and are on the official line-up including available substitutes may be used as a courtesy runner.** The batter must reach base before a courtesy runner is able to be used. The courtesy runner must be used before the next at bat commences. Anything after that time is considered a substitution, which removes the original player from the game and can only be done if the team reports a substitute prior to the game being started. **A player may be a courtesy runner only once an inning for any player other than the pitcher, any other players can run for the pitcher anytime the pitcher is on base.** The other exception being an injury that removes





a player for the rest of the game.

#### HITS BACK TO THE PITCHER

25. In the instance that a batter hits the ball back at the pitcher it will be an automatic out if it meets any of the following criteria and will be considered an immediate dead ball play:
- The ball makes contact with the pitcher (whether or not the pitcher attempts to field/catch the ball)
  - The ball is hit back at the pitching rubber in line drive or hard ground ball fashion
  - At the discretion of the head umpire: Warnings and ejections may be issued

*Uncatchable balls over the pitcher's head will not be enforced, but a warning may still be issued*

#### IV. SPECIFIC "All Genders" Rules

1. Teams may play a mixture of any gender player as they so choose. Teams may NOT be all male players.
2. A player arriving late to a game may be inserted at the bottom of the order even if you have batted around one or more times. You are allowed to place that player in the field, if your team is not batting. Make the umpire and opposing team aware of these additions.
3. Any walk to a male batter will result in a two-base award and the next female batter must hit (not an option), except when there are two outs, the female has the option to take first base or bat. All existing base runners will advance only when forced.
4. Any walk to a male batter will result in a one-base award if a male is next in the batting order
5. Homeruns: Equalizer Rule. When one team hits a homerun, they cannot hit another one until the other team does. If the team is down in homeruns hit, they are allowed to go up one. Ex: The opposing team has hit 1 homerun. My team is allowed to tie the homerun count and hit another one to make it 2:1.
6. Batting Out of Order – If the error is discovered while the incorrect batter is hitting, then the correct batter will assume the ball/strike count of the incorrect batter. If the incorrect batter reaches base safely and the error is discovered, the correct batter will be called out. All runners will return to their original base and the incorrect batter will return to the bench. The opposing team must make the umpire aware of "batting out of order" before a pitch is thrown to the next batter. If not, then the incorrect batter will stay on base.
7. Players may move freely from one field position to another, but the batting order must stay the same. Teams must report ALL SUBSTITUTIONS AND PLAYERS REENTERING the game to the umpire & opposing team.



8. Any player may withdraw and re-enter the game one time, provided the player occupies the same batting position whenever he/she is in the line-up.
9. Team will place ten (10) defensive players on the field. All genders may play ANYWHERE in the field.
10. The alignment of the fielders can be at any defensive position. The pitcher and catcher positions do not have to alternate between genders or need a minimum of any gender for infielders or outfielders.

## V. GAMES

1. Ten (10) regular season games will be played in the spring and summer seasons, fall season will be five (5) regular season games. In all divisions, the 1<sup>st</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> place teams will make the playoffs and vie for the championship.
2. Game time will be designated on the schedule. The scorekeeper or umpire will keep the Official Clock for all games.
3. A game may start early if both managers agree to this. Once agreed to, no protest will be accepted on the start time.
4. The manager shall give the scorekeeper the team line up at least ten (10) minutes before the scheduled starting time and cooperate with game officials.
5. Games shall be played to either seven (7) innings or full allotment of time. Games, including playoffs will be limited to 60 minutes for slow pitch. There is no time limit for the championship game. Tie games will remain a tie at the end an inning when the time has expired except for playoffs and championships.
6. No new inning will begin after the time limit has expired. Any inning beginning before time expires shall be completed unless the home team is ahead. An inning cannot start until all players have made it to their **defensive** positions.
7. Game Run Rule - A team will be declared the winner and game terminated if they are ahead in the following situation. This applies to regular season, playoff and championship games.
  - 20 runs or more after three (3) innings.
  - 15 runs or more after four (4) innings.
  - 12 runs or more after five (5) innings.
8. **Inning Run Rule (REC DIVISION ONLY) - A half inning will be declared over when a team scores 7 runs past their opponent's score in one half inning. Beginning in the 4<sup>th</sup> inning, the run rule does not apply and teams may score as many runs as possible.**
9. Games stopped before 5 innings by weather, electrical light failure, injury or any other cause will be completed from the point of stoppage. Games stopped after 5 innings will be considered complete.
10. Bye weeks and double headers may be added into the schedule depending on the number of teams in a division.



## VI. PLAY-OFF & CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES

1. The top 4 teams advance to the post season.
  - Game 1 - 3<sup>rd</sup> place vs 2<sup>nd</sup> place/home team (60-minute time limit & run rules apply)
  - Game 2 - 4<sup>th</sup> place vs 1<sup>st</sup> place/home team (60-minute time limit & run rules apply)
  - Championship – winners of Game 1 & 2, higher seed is the home team (no time limit, run rule apply)
2. TIEBREAKER SYSTEM
  - Two Teams
    1. Head-to-head record in games between the two teams.
    2. Points differential scored in games between the two teams.
    3. Best won-lost record in games played against the other playoff teams.
    4. Points differential scored in games played against the other playoff teams.
    5. Coin toss.
  - Three or More Teams
    1. Head-to-head record (best won-lost-tied percentage) in games among the teams.
    2. Points differential scored in games among the two teams.
    3. Coin toss.
3. All players participating in the post season must be on the roster at the beginning of the season or added properly with the League Office and must have played in 1/3 of its team's games (official at bat) and will be required to have a valid pictured ID in his/her possession or risk forfeiting the game. Forfeited games do not count as a game played.

## VII. FORFEITS

1. **Forfeit Time:** If a team does not have at least 8 roster players on the field at the scheduled game time, the game clock will start. After 10 minutes if the team is still short players, the other team will have 2 options:
  - a) take a forfeit win
  - b) wait an additional 10 minutes

**Note:** Option b applies to first scheduled game of the night **ONLY**. For the following games there will be a 10-minute grace period **ONLY**.  
If enough players arrive the game will be played with remaining game time.
2. If your team will be forfeiting, please contact opposing team manager and the league office at least three (3) hours before game time.
3. Opponent of the forfeiting team will get the win with a score of 7-0 (one run per each inning). In the event the event of a double forfeit, both teams will receive a loss and a 0-0 score.
4. There will be no postponement or rescheduling of for forfeited games.
5. Teams with ineligible players in a playoff game will automatically forfeit





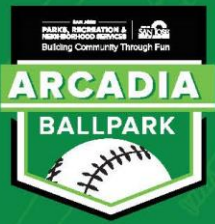
## VIII. PROTESTS

**Protests based on the umpire's judgment will not be considered.** Only those protests based on a league rule interpretation, ground rule or player eligibility will be considered.

1. When a matter of protests arises during the game the protesting manager shall immediately notify the scorekeeper, umpire & opposing manager. This must be done after the final out is made and before the next half inning begins with the scorekeeper noting the protest on the scoresheet. Protest must be made in the form of a formal written statement containing date, time, field, the rule & section of the rule under which the protest is made, and all other essential facts involved in the matter. Submit your protest via email to the League Office no more than 24 hours after the protested game. In the case of a Friday night league all protests must be filed by 5:00 pm the following Monday.
2. The League Office will make all decision after hearing and receiving all facts and information. If deemed necessary, a protest board may be assembled to settle a protest.
3. When a matter of player eligibility arises during the game the protesting manager must immediately notify the umpire, scorekeeper, & opposing manager. The player's information will then be recorded, and his identity be verified with a photo ID. Scorekeeper will confirm player eligibility using the score sheets and lineup cards as reference. If the player does not meet minimum requirements the offending team will forfeit the game.

## IX. INJURED OR EJECTED PLAYERS

1. If a player is ejected by the umpire he/she must immediately gather all their belongings and leave the park premises. Failure to do so will carry a maximum penalty of one-year suspension. Any ejection will also result in an automatic one (1) game suspension. Any suspended players are not allowed on the park premises.
2. A player/team that is suspended by one agency will automatically be suspended from other agencies in the area. See complete list of city agencies under the SANCRA Code of Conduct.
3. A team must have at least eight players to play. If a team only has eight players and a player is ejected or injured and must leave, the team must forfeit.
4. If you start the game with an extra hitter and a person is ejected from the game or injured and must leave, you will be able to continue that game if you have at least eight players to complete the game. A substitute (someone who is not already in the lineup), make take the place in the lineup. If a substitute is not available, the next time the ejected or injured player is in the lineup, it will count as an out. After the first instance, the ejected or injured player is eliminated from the batting order and will not count as an out for the remainder of the game.



## X. SANCRA CODE OF CONDUCT

1. The League Office shall have the power and full discretion of imposing penalties on all violations of the SANCRA Code of Conduct. In any violation not included in said Code, the penalty shall be at the discretion of the League Office.
2. This is a recreation league which emphasizes fun and sportsmanship. Foul language, display of temper or other unsportsmanlike conduct voiced at an official, scorekeeper, player or spectator will result in an ejection from the game.
3. Any individual or team who is placed on probation or suspension for violation of items in this Code of Conduct is automatically on probation or suspension for ALL ACTIVITIES sponsored by member cities/organizations during the effected period.
3. Any participant having been once penalized by enforcement of the "Code of Conduct" and reported again for violating the "Code of Conduct" will be subject to additional penalties open to the determination of the SANCRA Board.
5. No alcohol or smoking is allowed in the dugouts or field. Players under the influence of alcohol must leave the facility immediately or the team will forfeit the game.
6. Team managers are responsible for actions of their team and spectators and for familiarizing their players and spectators with the following Sports Association of Northern California Recreation Agencies (SANCRA) Code of Conduct.



## SANCRA CODE OF CONDUCT

1. **NO PARTICIPANT OR SPECTATOR SHALL** be guilty of a physical attack, lay a hand upon, push, shove, strike or kick an official, participant, coach, agency representative, manager or another spectator. Officials are required to immediately suspend participant from further play and report participant to League Director. The participant shall remain suspended until their case is considered by the League Director.

**MINIMUM PENALTY:** Suspension from one (1) league game and placed on probation for the remainder of season.

**MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Lifetime suspension and/or felonious assault charges filed. (CAPenal Code Sec. 243.8)

2. **NO PARTICIPANT SHALL** be guilty of leaving their offensive, defensive position or respective dugout areas to further incite any verbal or physical confrontation between players on the field or court.

**MINIMUM PENALTY:** Immediate ejection with possible further sanctions dispensed by league office. **NOTE:** In the event said player(s) cannot be identified, the first, second, third, etc. player(s) in the line-up are subject to being removed from the game.

**MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Forfeiture and/or double forfeiture of game and player suspensions as determined by league office up to life and/or felonious assault charges filed.

3. **NO PARTICIPANT OR SPECTATOR SHALL** be guilty of damaging or defacing agency, school district or sanctioned facilities. Officials or agency representative are required to immediately suspend individual and report incident to League Director.

**MINIMUM PENALTY:** Suspension from further play until financial responsibility is met by individual and/or team AND probation for remainder of the season.

**MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Lifetime suspension.

4. **NO PARTICIPANT SHALL** be guilty of an abusive verbal attack, including "trash talking" or taunting any participant, official, agency representative or spectator. Officials are required to immediately suspend the participant from further play. The infraction will be reported to the League Director. **This violation additionally includes "after the incident" communication or correspondence in follow up discussions.**

**MINIMUM PENALTY:** One (1) game suspension.

**MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Four (4) game suspension and/or one year from time of incident.

5. **NO PARTICIPANT SHALL** use deliberately rough tactics during a game against the body and person of an opposing participant. Officials are required to immediately suspend participant from further play and report incident to League Director.

**MINIMUM PENALTY:** Removal from the game.

**MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Suspended for one year from time of incident.



6. **NO PARTICIPANT SHALL** refuse to abide by an official's decision or be guilty of verbal or forceful demonstrations of dissent to an official's decision. The degree of infraction shall, in the official's judgment, draw:  
**MINIMUM PENALTY:** Removal from the game.  
**MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Suspended for one year from time of incident.
  
7. **NO PARTICIPANT SHALL** be guilty of intentionally throwing a bat or item of playing equipment. Officials are required to immediately suspend the participant from further play and report such player to the League Director.  
**MINIMUM PENALTY:** One (1) game suspension.  
**MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Suspended for one year from time of incident.
  
8. **NO PARTICIPANT SHALL** appear in, on or around a facility at any time under the influence or in possession of a controlled substance or in an intoxicated condition. Officials are required to suspend participant from further play and report such player to the League Director.  
**MINIMUM PENALTY:** Suspension from two (2) league games and placed on probation for the remainder of season.  
**MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Suspended for one year from time of incident.
  
9. **NO TEAM OR TEAMS SHALL** engage in physical aggression upon each other, officials, agency representatives, field supervisors or spectators. Officials shall immediately suspend play and report, in writing, the incident to the League Director. Decision by League Director shall involve:  
**MINIMUM PENALTY:** Forfeiture of game by one or both teams involved with suspension of one additional game and probation of one year from time of incident.  
**MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Dropping of one or both teams from SANCRA member leagues for life.
  
10. **NO MANAGER, PARTICIPANT, CAPTAIN, OR TEAM REPRESENTATIVE SHALL** at any time be guilty of utilizing a non-roster or ineligible participant; or falsify the identification or age of any participant or person on an official league or tournament sports roster. Such falsification, intentional or otherwise, and with or without that participant or person's knowledge, shall be just cause for disciplinary action. The infraction will be reported to the League Director.  
**MINIMUM PENALTY:** One-year probation from time of incident.  
**MAXIMUM PENALTY:** One-year suspension from time of incident.
  
11. **NO MANAGER, TEAM REPRESENTATIVE OR PARTICIPANT SHALL** at any time use illegal equipment (i.e., altered, ASA banned or illegal bat; metal cleats; exposed, dangerous jewelry).  
**MINIMUM PENALTY:** Immediate ejection from the game AND one (1) game suspension.  
**MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Lifetime suspension.





**12. NO MANAGER, TEAM REPRESENTATIVE OR PARTICIPANT SHALL** at any time commit a fraudulent act (including gambling upon any play or outcome of any game) concerning any organized SANCRA event, function or sports tournament. Such act shall be cause for disciplinary action.

**MINIMUM PENALTY:** Probation for the remainder of the season.

**MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Suspended for one year from time of incident.

**13. EACH TEAM MEMBER IS RESPONSIBLE** to ensure that payments made to SANCRA, ASA or member cities (i.e., entry fees, tournament fees, facility costs, etc.) are valid and any costs incurred due to insufficient funds are the entire team's responsibility.

**MINIMUM PENALTY:** Suspension of further play until financial responsibility is met.

**MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Lifetime suspension.

**SANCRA CODE OF CONDUCT IS ENFORCED AND HONORED BY ALL SANCRA AGENCIES, LEAGUES AND TOURNAMENTS. PARTICIPANTS ATTEMPTING TO PLAY IN SANCRA-SANCTIONED EVENTS AFTER BEING SUSPENDED WILL BE SUBJECT TO FURTHER DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS.**

**SANCRA MEMBER CITIES/ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDE:**

City of Campbell

Capitola/Soquel

City of Cupertino

City of Gilroy

City of Hollister

City of Los Altos

LGS Recreation

City of Milpitas

City of Mountain View

North Monterey County

City of Pacific Grove

City of Palo Alto

City of San Jose

I.O.O.F. San Lorenzo Valley

City of Santa Clara

City of Santa Cruz

City of Scotts Valley

City of Sunnyvale

Team Sports Now

Vintage Softball Santa Clara

City of Watsonville