

City of Fort Collins Adult Softball Rules

Anything not covered in this rules document will default to the USSSA Softball Rule Book & By Laws.
Updated January 2024. Rules changes will appear in *highlighted italics font*.

League Classifications and Information

1. The following will be used for all Men's, Women's, and Mixed leagues:
 - a. 2+HR: In this league, the difference between team home run totals may not be more than two. The total number of homeruns in a game are unlimited provided that the teams are always within two home runs of each other.
 - i. In the event a team has hit two more homeruns than their opponent, all subsequent homeruns will be result in an out until the difference between team totals drops below two.
 - b. 1HR: In this league, each team may hit one total home run. Once a team has exhausted their homerun, each additional homerun results in an out.
 - c. Leisure: This league is designed for teams that are playing strictly for fun.
 - i. Each home run hit will end the inning.
 - ii. Each team may only score up to seven runs in their offensive half of each inning.
 - iii. This league will use a low flight ball
 - iv. The score for each game will be kept while the game is occurring, but results and standings will not be recorded on TeamSideline.com/FortCollins.
 1. There will be no league champion or playoffs tournament for this league.
 - d. Leisure Over 40: this league will play with "Leisure League" rules; the only additional restriction is everyone on a team roster must be 40 years old or older.
2. In the event that registration numbers for a night are low, leagues may have to be combined. If leagues are combined the rules from the higher league will be used.
3. League Play Begins / Conflicting Dates
 - a. League play for the spring season will begin in March.
 - b. League play for the summer season will begin in May.
 - c. League play for the fall season will begin in September.
 - i. Several leagues will be affected by holidays and other field conflicts. Look over your schedule carefully for field changes or non-scheduled dates.

Park Rules

1. Alcohol – **No alcoholic beverages are allowed in City Parks.** No player, manager, coach, or team representative is allowed to drink alcoholic beverages before or during a game. The City of Fort Collins has an "**Open Container**" law that states: "**It is unlawful to have open containers of alcoholic beverages in any city park or ball field.**" The Fort Collins Police Department is enforcing the open container ordinance. In cooperation, the City Sports Division will suspend participants from league play in the following manner:
 - a. First Offense – Two league game suspension and a letter sent to the manager/coach informing the team of the offense and suspension.
 - b. Second Offense – League suspension for one full year from the date of the offense and a one game suspension for the entire team. A letter to the team sponsor informing them of the violation and suspension.
2. Glass Bottles – According to Ordinance #62, no person shall bring any glass containers or have possession of the same while in the City's Parks. This is for your own safety and the safety of others.

3. **Dogs** – Ballfields are no place for dogs. Players and spectators are requested to refrain from bringing their dogs to the ballfields. No dogs shall be left unattended or without a leash. Dogs must not be tied and left unattended.
4. **Soft Toss** – There is no hitting into any fences or backstops allowed. This causes severe damage to fences and will not be tolerated. Violators will be charged for damages.
5. **Portable Speaker** – *Portable speakers are allowed. Music cannot contain explicit lyrics. Music volume is at the discretion of the umpire and field supervisor. Failure to follow this rule could result in a team out(s) and up to a forfeited game.*

Softball Rules

1. **Game Time:** Game time begins with the coin toss and will determine home team.
 - a. At game time, if a team has not turned in a complete and correct line-up, the opposing team will be given the option of “Home or Visiting Team” (No coin toss and game time is started)!
 - b. If neither team has turned in a complete and correct line-up, a coin toss will determine the home team and time will begin.
2. **Line-ups:** Teams must have at least eight players to start; there is no roster maximum.
 - a. **Line-ups** – 2 copies of the lineup must be created by each team. One will be given to the scorekeeper and one to the umpires at the plate meeting.
3. **Number of Batters:** In all leagues, teams can bat as many players as they want (in mixed leagues gender batting order rules still apply)
 - a. **Note:** A legal substitute is not a courtesy runner and is anyone who signed the team roster and is not currently in the batting order. One courtesy runner per inning per gender ident is allowed.
 - i. A substitute runner is not the same as a courtesy runner.
4. **Rosters:** The keeping of the players’ roster for each team, transferring of players, and addition of new players shall be the responsibility of, and subject to approval of, the Field Supervisor.
 - a. All team rosters are unlimited. Players may be added anytime during the season. Player additions must be made at the fields by contacting the Field Supervisor. Each player added must sign the roster before they will be allowed to participate.
5. Rosters will be *frozen* at the end of the regular season. Provided there is a season ending tournament.
 - a. All players must be at least 16 years of age (cannot play until the day they turn 16). Players 16 and 17 years of age are allowed to play in the adult leagues. There is a separate section on the roster for 16 and 17 year old players to sign along with their parent or legal guardian. In addition, there is a separate consent form that must be signed by the 16 or 17 year old player and the parent or legal guardian in the presence of the Field Supervisor, who will witness the signing. **NO EXCEPTIONS! If a player(s) is found to be under the age of 16, all games that player(s) participated in will be forfeited.**
 - b. Players may play on multiple City League slow pitch teams as long as they are not in the same league on the same night. Players playing on multiple teams must play in the same division or one division up **or** down on different nights.
 - i. Any player found playing on two City League slow pitch teams on the same night in the same league will be suspended for a minimum of two (2) games.
 - ii. Players dropping from one team after playing one or more games must wait two (2) games before playing on another team in the same league. Notification must be made in writing to the league coordinator so a filing date can be made.
 - iii. If a player gets caught playing on another team in the same league on the same night and/or adding to a roster after the deadline will **automatically become ineligible for tournament play.**

- c. **Players must have a photo I.D. available for identification at all games.** Any team found guilty of playing a person under an assumed name will be charged with a forfeit. That player and coach may also be ineligible to participate in the league for the remainder of the season.
 - d. **Roster checks:** Random roster checks will be made by Field Supervisors and Sports staff without notice. Any participant found playing that is not on the roster will be immediately suspended.
 - e. The league coordinator will make the final decision regarding player eligibility.
6. **Manager Responsibilities:**
- a. Inform all team members of the information contained in this manual or any printed material provided by the League Coordinator.
 - b. Inform all team members of game times, dates and locations.
 - c. Insure and monitor that all team members are recorded on official roster, including changes and additions throughout the season.
 - d. Make sure all participants are at least sixteen (16) years of age.
 - e. Inform Recreation Department, in a timely manner, of any difficulties that may occur.
 - f. Be responsible for the actions of your team.
 - g. Notify the Sports Office of any changes in the team manager or team manager's contact information.
 - h. Be aware of all information posted at the ballfields including rain-out schedules, tournament information, and league standings.
 - i. Adhere to all league rules as stated.
 - j. See that the line-up is turned in to the scorekeeper ten (10) minutes before game time, with last names, first initials, and numbers.
7. **Uniforms**
- a. Like-colored shirts are required.
 - b. **Footwear:** Shoes must be worn at all times (no bare feet).
 - i. **Softball shoes for slow pitch:** Any plastic spike or molded sole will be acceptable. No metal is to show on the bottom of the shoe.
 - ii. Tennis shoes of any type are legal.
 - iii. Sandals, western cowboy boots, work boots, or similar footwear is not allowed.
 - c. **Miscellaneous:**
 - i. **Equipment** - Bats, gloves, uniforms, etc., must be furnished by the team.
 - ii. **Jewelry** - Jewelry that would be hazardous as decided by the umpire or field supervisor will need to be removed, covered or taped.
 - iii. **Hats** - Are optional and may be worn forward or backwards.
8. **Late Arrivals:** You may add additional players, upon their arrival, into the game at the bottom of the line-up.
9. **Time Limit:**
- a. 55-minute time limit, 7 innings or run rule. If an inning is in progress when the time limit is reached, the inning and game shall be finished according to the official rules.
 - i. Run Rule: 10 runs ahead after 5 innings, 15 runs ahead after 4, or 20 runs ahead after 3 innings.
 - b. **International Tie-Breaker Rule:** If the game is tied after the completion of seven innings or game time has expired and the score is tied, extra innings will be played with the "International Tie-Breaker Rule" used.
 - i. *During the regular season, there will only be 1 additional inning. If the game is still tied, the game is over and will be recorded as a tie.*
 - ii. *During the playoffs a winner must be decided and extra innings will continue until that has happened.*

- iii. The last legal batter from the preceding inning shall be placed on second base to begin the next inning and each succeeding inning until the tie is broken.

10. **Dugouts:**

- a. Children under the age of 16 and animals of any kind are not permitted in the dugouts.
- b. Keep all players and equipment in the dugouts.

11. **Warm-up:** No infield practice will be allowed. Teams should use the warm-up area located outside of the playing field. Absolutely no play on the field if any maintenance is being performed.

12. **Forfeits:** If, at the scheduled game time, one team does not have enough players (at least 8), that game will be a forfeit. If a team is short 1 player to make the minimum number of (8) that team will bat first and when they take the field on defense, the 8th player must be on the field, or it will be a forfeit. **The plate umpire's decision will be final on forfeiture of any game.**

- a. If a team has enough to start (8), but are waiting on others to arrive, the game must be started at gametime.
- b. **Exception:** The forfeit rule does not apply if the preceding game has been delayed.
 - i. If a forfeit occurs, the team(s) scheduled for that field may practice until fifteen (15) minutes before the scheduled start of the next game on that field. Under no circumstances will umpires or scorekeepers be utilized.

13. **Infield Fly Rule:** A batter who hits a fly ball in the infield is automatically out when the ball can be caught with reasonable effort, and there are runners on first and second, or first, second, and third bases with less than two outs. **Note:** The ball remains live and in play, with runners in jeopardy.

14. **Homerun Rules:**

- a. **2+HR** – Each team can hit up to two more over the fence homerun than the other. Each over-the-fence homerun after the two up rule will be an out.
- b. **1HR** – One over-the-fence homerun per game per team. Each over-the-fence homerun after the one will be an out.
- c. **Leisure** – any over the fence homerun ends the half of the inning.
- d. You hit it you get it. Clock will run and the umpires will not retrieve balls hit out of play. Players hitting over the fence homeruns will not run the bases.

15. **Ball and Strike Count:** Batters will start with a 0 and 0 count. This means three balls you walk and two strikes you are out. There will be no courtesy foul after one strike.

16. **Pitching:** The arc limit will be a minimum 6' from the ground to a maximum of 12' from the ground. The pitcher may pitch from the pitching plate or from the pitching area, an area the width of the plate and up to six (6) feet behind the pitcher's plate at the discretion of the umpire.

17. **Batting:**

- a. All bats used for Adult Softball are required to have the USSSA 1.20 BPF (Bat Performance Factor) official stamp. See example of official stamp to the right.
- b. Wood softball bats with a gripped handle are allowed and do not have to display the official stamp.
- c. Bunting is not allowed. A batter must complete the follow through portion of their swing.
- d. *Stepping out of the batter's box is a violation. The batter must take an initial position with their back foot no further forward than a line defining the front edge of home plate. The batter will then be called out if they hit the ball when the back foot is completely further forward than the line defining the front edge of home plate.*



18. **Re-entry rule:** All starting players may re-enter a game but must do so in the same spot in the batting order. There is no limit to the number of times a starting player can go out and re-enter a game. Once the starter re-enters that substitute is done for that game.
19. **Courtesy Runner:** One courtesy runner per inning per gender will be allowed. If the courtesy runner is on base and it is their turn at bat they are out as a batter. A substitute runner is not the same as a courtesy runner.
20. **Safety Bases:** Safety bases are made up of two bases, one white base in fair territory and one orange base in foul territory. Players who are going to round first must touch the white part of the base, on all other plays the player must touch the orange part of the base or be called out.
21. **Retiring from play:** If a player comes out of a game due to injury and does not bat:
 - a. If the team has ten players or less - no automatic out is taken when this player would come to bat.
 - b. If the team has eleven players or more - an automatic out will be taken when this player would come to bat unless a substitute player is inserted for the retired player.
 - i. **Exception:** player ejection – *if a lineup spot is vacated due to ejection and no substitute is available, regardless of number of batters in the order, the vacated position in the order will result in an out.*
22. **Misconducts and Ejections:**
 - a. Any gestures or phrases directed at the opposing team, umpires, staff, or fans that are considered offensive, will be dealt with immediately. Such gestures or phrases would include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Offensive comments that include race, color, religion, sex, including gender identity, sexual orientation
 - ii. Finger gestures such as flipping people off
 - iii. Tossing or throwing a ball, glove, bat or other object at a player, staff, fan or umpire.
 - b. Casual Profanity Rule: The umpire has the authority to assess ONE OUT against the offending team for the use of casual profanity which shall be defined as expletives (vulgar or profane language) not directed at umpire or opposing players, uttered by a player, manager/coach, or individual within the dugout, involved with the play of the team, frustrated with themselves, a teammate or fan. All outs will be assessed against the offending team during their turn at bat. The casual profanity penalty out will be assessed as a team out and will not affect any batter or base runner. Only ONE “Casual Profanity” out may be assessed per play with a maximum of two per team at bat. Incidents of vulgar or profane language exceeding these limits will be considered beyond casual and will subject the individuals responsible to ejection from the game for unsportsmanlike conduct.
 - c. **Fake Tag:** Any player who uses a fake tag will receive an immediate ejection from the game. A warning will not be given.
 - d. **Thrown bat rule:** A player will be ejected immediately and charged with an out if he/she flagrantly throws a bat, regardless of if it hits a person or not.
 - e. **Ejections:** Any player, coach, manager, fan, or participant ejected from a game **must leave the complex and not return that same evening.** If the person does not leave within a desired amount of time (**2 minutes**) the game will be declared a forfeit. Any participant who is ejected from a game will be suspended from the current game immediately as well as the next scheduled game.
 - i. **If you get caught violating suspension, stricter penalties will be imposed.**

- f. **Misconduct:** We believe sponsors are important to the softball program. When deemed necessary, a letter will be sent to the team's sponsor(s) informing them of player, coach, manager or fan misconduct or poor sportsmanship. Please refer to the player code of conduct at the end of this manual. Misconduct's will be handled by the League Director and Misconduct Committee and their decision is final.

23. **Protest**

- a. Protests involving judgment will not be considered. All judgment calls and decisions by umpires will stand.
- b. Protests involving a misinterpretation or misapplication of a rule must be lodged by the team manager at the time of the incident. The manager must request the game be stopped to obtain a ruling from the field supervisor (game time shall be paused during this time).
- c. Failure to obtain an immediate ruling before the next 'live ball' action will void any future right to protest the incident.
- d. Should the manager still feel the ruling is incorrect, they must IMMEDIATELY:
 - i. Inform the Supervisor they are continuing the game under protest, AND
 - ii. Fill out and submit a Protest Form (available from the supervisor) and submit it to the Sports Office staff the following business day. The protest will be reviewed and ruled upon by the City Sports Staff within one business day.
- e. Any rule protest received after that time will not be considered.

24. **Mixed League Rule Modifications**

- a. **Spirit Of The Rule Clause:** These rules have been adapted from traditional coed modifications with the intent to be more inclusive to all gender identities. In that vein, players not using these rules in the spirit they have been written in will be given one warning and then the player will be referred to the Site Supervisor.
- b. **Number of Players:** A minimum of **8 players** must be present to start a game and those players must meet the roster requirements.
- c. **Roster Requirement:** Mixed teams cannot play with more than 5 male identified members in the field.
- d. **Line-up Cards:** The lineup cards presented to the scorekeeper and the umpires must identify which players identify as men.
- e. **The Ball:** Both 11 inch and 12 inch softballs will be used. Male identified players must hit the 12 inch softball. Those, other than male identified players, will be given the option of which ball to hit (11" or 12") while batting. Once a size has been selected and a pitch has been delivered, the batter may not change to the other size during that at bat.
- f. **Commit Line:** There will be a perpendicular line drawn two thirds of the way between 3rd base and home plate. Once a runner goes past that line they **cannot return to third base**, they are now considered a **force out** and must touch the orange safety base; the fielder must step on home plate to get the out.
- g. **NO TAG!!** If the fielder tags the runner or touches the wrong base, the runner is safe.
- h. If the base runner goes back to third base after crossing or touching the Commit Line or touches the wrong base they are out.

- i. **Batting Order:** Everyone that plays defense must bat (there is no designated hitter). There is no requirement to alternate gender identities in the batting order. The difference between the number of male identified batters and batters with other gender identities cannot exceed 1. (ex: 5 male identified and 4 others, 6:5, 7:6, 5:4, are all legal lineups, while 5:3, 6:4, 7:5 etc. would be illegal).
- j. **Walks:** When a batter is walked on 3 straight pitches without a strike being thrown in the at bat (regardless of gender identity), they will be awarded first base. The next batter in the order has the option to bat or advance to first as well. If they choose to advance, the original batter that was walked will be awarded second base.