



**City of Waco Parks and Recreation Department
2026 Official Softball Rules Governing Play**

The league administration will be the City of Waco Parks and Recreation Department, Athletic Office, referred to herein as “League Administrator”. Any questions, concerns or changes will be handled through the City of Waco Athletic Office located at 3113 Clay Avenue or by calling 254-750-5875.

City of Waco and TAAF rules will govern all league play.

A. Eligibility of Player and Teams

1. The requirements for Waco City League Softball players will be:
 - a) A player must be registered at the City of Waco Parks and Recreation Department (herein after referred to as the Recreation Department) Athletic office before 4:00 PM on the day of his or her participation.
 - b) All players participating in softball under the supervision of the City of Waco Parks & Recreation Department must be eligible under the rules as set forth by the Texas Amateur Athletic Federation (T.A.A.F) **Local league rules will prevail.**
 - c) Any player found attempting to play on any team while on suspension will result in a forfeit for that team and the suspended player will face further suspension to be determined by the League Administrator.
 - d) This is an Adult League, and the age is 18 and over. The responsibility for the eligibility of players will rest with the manager of the teams.

Responsibility for the conduct of the players and their fans will also rest with the team manager. Flagrant violators, including managers may be subject to a minimum 1-year suspension as determined by the League Administrator.

2. An individual will be allowed to participate in **only one** classification of open play (Class A, B, C, D, E) and may also play in Church, Industrial or Co-Ed leagues during any session sponsored by the Recreation Department. **CLASS C & D PLAYERS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO PLAY ON CO-REC OR MEN’S “E” TEAMS.**
3. A player may play on only one team in each category of league play (Open, Church, Industrial, Co-Ed). Male roster shall include only male players and female rosters shall include only female players.

4. A player must wait seven (7) days after appearing on one team's roster before being eligible to play for another team in the same classification. There will be a \$10.00 charge for anyone changing from one team to another. If the same player wants to change a second time, the player must wait fourteen (14) days and pay a \$20.00 fee before participating with the new team. There will be a \$5.00 fee to add other players to a roster after the second game. Player additions and roster changes must be made at the Athletic Office located at 3113 Clay Avenue.
5. The League Administrator must be notified of all released players, or they will be counted as a member of the team of which they were last registered. If a player signs more than one roster, that player is illegal on both rosters until he is officially removed from the original roster.
6. Any player, to be eligible to play for a church team, must be a regular attending member of said church.
7. **Any player, in order to be eligible for a company team must be employed by said company. Teams registering to play in the company league must have their rosters signed by their company's Human Resources Department representative.**
8. Teams may carry up to twenty (20) players including a playing manager on the roster.
9. A) Use of an ineligible player, if protested by offended team, will result in a forfeit if the player is found to be ineligible. **Player eligibility must be done before the start of the second inning.**

B) Any player playing under an assumed name will subject the player and manager to an automatic (1)-year suspension.
10. No more than two (2) new players may be added to the roster of any team until after the fourth league game played. The League Administrator must approve exceptions to this rule.
11. Players must carry a photo ID at all times. Refusal to show ID when requested by an official or staff will result in possible suspension from the league and facility to be determined by the League Administrator.
12. Protests that will be considered are those involving the following:
 - a) Misinterpretation of a playing rule.
 - b) Failure of an umpire to apply the correct rule.
 - c) Failure of an umpire to impose the correct penalty for a violation.

Notification of the intent to protest must be made immediately before the next legal or illegal pitch during the game, except on player eligibility protests.

The manager of the protesting team must immediately notify the umpire that the game is being played under protest. The plate umpire will notify the opposing manager and will log the situation to indicate the number of outs, location of base runners and any other information regarding the protest. The game will be continued, and the protest will be ruled on later by the League Administrator.

Protests on player eligibility or rules must be filed in writing at the Athletic Office. The time limit is twenty– four (24) hours, however weekends and holidays will not count in the time limit. A \$25.00 administrative fee must accompany each protest. The fee will be returned if the protest is approved by the League Administrator.

- 13. Concussions - A player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems), shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play that day until cleared in writing by an appropriate health care professional.**

B. Rain out and /or suspension of play

1. In the event of rain or light failure, four and one-half innings will constitute a game providing the home team is ahead. If a game is suspended and has not reached this point, the game will be replayed entirely.
2. Rainouts will be rescheduled at the earliest available date and may be scheduled on a different night the team usually plays on. In case of rain, please call the rain out number (254)750-5845 after 4:00p.m. or visit www.teamsideline.com/waco for field conditions.
3. **Coaches/Managers are responsible for checking the website or contacting the Athletics Office for rainout and rescheduling information. Players need to check with their coach, call the rainout number or visit the website for rainout and scheduling information. Teams will not be called.**

C. Regulations for Conduct of the Game

1. Any arguing on the judgment of balls and strikes will constitute a team warning. Any repeat offense by any team member will result in ejection of that team member. The severity of the incident will determine the length of suspension after ejection.
2. Three (3) forfeits will result in removal of a team from league play after review by the league administrator. The players from said team would be eligible to play for another team one (1) week from the time of removal. If a team notifies the Athletic Office no later than 1:00p.m. prior to the game they plan to forfeit, this forfeit will not count as one of the three necessary for the removal from league plays.
3. All offensive players must remain inside the dugout during the entire game. The only players allowed on the field are the batter, player in the on-deck circle and the base coach. Any team violating this rule may be given a warning. Any repeat offense may cause prompt ejection from the game of all players violating the rule.

4. The umpire is the official scorekeeper.
5. No more “Extra Foul” with 2 strikes. If the batter has one strike, the next batted ball must be in play, or he/she is out.
6. Teams are allowed ONE courtesy runner per gender per inning. The courtesy runner can be any player (starter or substitute). If the courtesy runner is still on base with his/her turn at bat they will be out. Men will only run for men and women will only run for women.
7. Whenever the catcher or any fielder clearly has the ball and is waiting to tag the runner, the runner must slide or attempt to avoid contact. Players cannot leap over the tag. If, in the umpire’s judgment, the runner deliberately and forcefully runs into the defensive player, the runner is declared out and shall be ejected from the game. The ball is declared dead, and all other runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the collision. The catcher or any fielder may not block the pathway of the runner unless he has possession of the ball or is in the act of fielding a batted ball.
8. If the pitcher does not release the ball after five seconds the ball is dead and a ball is awarded to the batter.
9. **The home run rules for all leagues will be as follows:**

<u>Men’s Open</u>		Four Home Runs per game D
	League	Five Home Runs per game
	E League	One Home Run per game then inning ending out
<u>Women’s Open</u>		Three Home Runs
<u>Men’s Corporate</u>		Four Home Runs
<u>Co-Ed League (Competitive)</u>		Five Home Runs per game <u>Co-</u>
<u>Ed Church</u>		Zero Home Runs
<u>Co-Rec League (Recreational)</u>		One Home Run per gender
<u>Men’s Church</u>		Three Home Runs

All base runners are required to touch the next base and return to the dugout after a homerun.

All home runs in excess of the limit will be counted as outs. All home runs are inning ending outs. No offensive ejection. In Co-Recreational Leagues the following rule shall apply. If a home run is hit, the player is out each subsequent time that position in the lineup is due to bat, the batter shall automatically be declared out. The player shall remain in the game for defensive play only. This applies to any substitute in that batting position.

10. There will be a fifty-minute time limit on all games.
11. **Game time is forfeit time.**
12. **The Flip/Flop Rule - All programs: In the inning when the run rule for that particular program is exceeded and the home team is losing, the home team will remain at bat and become the visiting team. If the team (new visiting team) does not score enough**

runs to reduce the run difference below the run rule, the game is over. If they reduce the run difference to below the run rule, then the new home team will bat. If they subsequently score enough runs to exceed the run rule, the game will be over; if they do not, the game will continue in under that format. If the situation reverses, the team would flip/flop again.

Run Rule and when to Flip/Flop: All Programs

<u>Run Rule</u>	<u>Flip/Flop</u>
20 after 2	After 1 st
15 after 3	After 2 nd
12 after 4	After 3 rd
10 after 5	After 4 th

13. If a game is tied when time expires, a new inning will start immediately with each batter receiving one pitch. All other regulation game rules will apply.

14. All players must wear athletic shoes. No open toed shoes or sandals will be allowed on the playing field. Steel cleats will not be allowed during league play. Anyone found wearing steel cleats will be ejected from the game.

15. Shirts must have at least a 6” number (0-99) on the back. No players on the same team may wear identical numbers (01 and 1 are examples of identical numbers). Numbers higher than 99, decimals and fractions will be considered illegal numbers. **Players without numbers on their shirts will not be permitted to play!!! Numbers may not be taped but can be drawn in with a permanent marker.**

16. A coin flip will be done before each game to determine home and visitors. A completed line-up card must be turned in with complete first and last name and player numbers. Please have your lineup ready to give to the umpire before the flip.

17. **BALLS:** Men’s games will be played with a 12” optic yellow softball. Women’s games will be played with an 11” optic yellow softball. **All balls must have the City of Waco or T.A.A.F stamp and the stamp must be legible. All balls must be purchased** at Riverbend Park. Any team found using an illegal ball will receive a warning on the first offense and the ball will be thrown out. If it occurs a second time, a forfeit will be awarded to the offending team. It is the pitcher’s responsibility to pitch the correct ball. **Teams may protest opponents’ ball at any time by purchasing them a brand-new ball.**

a) **Size and weight:**

- The completed 12” ball shall have a circumference of 12” +/- 1/8” and weigh 6.4 ounces +/- 0.2 oz. The seam shall have not less than 88 stitches in each cover, or 88 simulated stitches in molded cover balls. The completed 11” ball shall be 11” +/- 1/8” in circumference

and weigh 5.85 ounces +/- 0.2 ounces and shall otherwise be proportional to the 12" ball.

b) **12" Classic M Ball:**

- shall have an optic yellow cover
- shall have "USSSA CLASSIC M" in 1/8" letters and the USSSA logo with a 1-1/8" diameter;
- shall have lettering and logo in blue color and such lettering and logo shall be applied to be indelible;
- shall have a COR of 40 or less under the ASTM test used under the USSSA Softball Ball License Agreement and
- shall have a compression of not more than 325 pounds under the ASTM test used under the USSSA Softball Ball License Agreement.

c) **11" Classic W Ball:**

- shall have an optic yellow cover
- shall have "USSSA CLASSIC W" in 1/8" letters and the USSSA logo with a 7/8" diameter
- shall have lettering and logo in blue color and such lettering and logo shall be applied to be indelible
- shall have a COR of 44 or less under the ASTM test used under the USSSA Softball Ball License Agreement and
- shall have a compression of 400 pounds or less under the ASTM test used under the USSSA Softball Ball License Agreement.

18. **BATS: All bats must be approved USSSA bats and have permanent USSSA and BPF markings. Please see page 10 for thumb stamp that must be on bat. Bats will not be provided for Coed-Rec and Coed Church leagues this year.** Any player bringing an altered or illegal bat into the facility will face automatic ejection and further suspension from league play for a time to be determined by the League Administrator.

19. All bats being used for a game must be checked by the umpire before the coin flip. The bat shall not have exposed rivets, pins, rough or sharp edges, or any form of exterior fastener that would present a hazard. Bats shall be free of rattles, dents, burrs and cracks. The umpire will check the bats and put them in a designated area on the field for your team to use. Any player attempting to use a bat or bring a bat in after the coin flip will face an automatic ejection from the game. If a bat is taken back into the dugout at any time during the game, it cannot be returned to play.

20. **Bat Flip Rule:** When a player flips their bat after hitting the ball, play will continue as a delayed dead ball. Once time out has been called by the umpire, all runners will be awarded with all bases obtained. However, the batter will be declared out and ejected from the game. If the batter scored, his/her run will not count. **Bat Flip Definition:** Bat flips are the action whereas a batter flips, throws or uses excessive force with their bat after he/she hits the ball.

21. Teams playing in the Co – Rec league are not allowed to play 5 infielders. All Outfielders must stay behind the 175ft. line before the ball is hit. Penalties- If there are no runners on base the ball is dead, no pitch and a ball is awarded to the batter. If there are runners on base the ball is dead, no pitch and the lead runner is advanced one base.
22. Managers are responsible for reading all rules pertaining to the City of Waco Softball League play. **It is also the manager’s responsibility to make the players aware of the rules.**
23. All umpires are furnished by the City of Waco through individual contract.
24. **Rules on Players and Substitutes.** Teams may play with as few as eight (8) players as follows.
25. **Men’s & Women’s League**
 - a) Teams may begin with 12 players, 10 field players and two additional hitters. Teams may begin or continue play with as few as 8 players. Teams may add a ninth or tenth player anytime during the game. Any player added must be an eligible player who has not previously been in the game. An eleventh or twelfth player may not be added once the line-up has been turned in to the official. If a team starts with less than 10 players, there will be an automatic out for each player less than ten. The automatic out(s) will be taken at the end of the batting order. Players arriving late may be added to the lineup card for up to the limit of 10 players.
 - b) If a player leaves the game for any reason other than ejection during the game and the team does not have an eligible player to insert into the leaving players’ position, the team may continue to play provided the team still has at least eight (8) players eligible to play the game. The spot on the line-up that the leaving player occupied will become an automatic out for the remainder of the game if there is no eligible player to replace him.
 - c) In the event the player leaving the game without being replaced is a base runner at the time, the leaving player is declared an “out”.
 - d) In the event, the player leaving the game without be replaced is a bat, the player is declared and “out’.
 - e) Any player who has left the game without being replaced may not re-enter the game.
 - f) If a player is ejected and the team does not have a legal substitute to replace the ejected player, the game will be a forfeit.

26. Co-Ed League

- a) Co-ed teams may begin with 12 players, 10 fielders and 2 additional hitters (1 male and 1 female). Co-ed teams may begin or continue play with as few as 8 players, although 4 players must be male and 4 must be female. A team may add a ninth or tenth player during the game. A team may not add an eleventh or twelfth player after the lineup has been turned in to the umpire. The automatic out(s) will be taken at the end of the lineup provided the male-female batting order is maintained.
- b) If a player leaves for any reason other than ejection during a game, and the team does not have an eligible player to insert into the leaving player's position, the team may continue to play providing the team still has at least 8 players (4 male and 4 female eligible and playing). After the player has left the game without being replaced, the position in the batting order formerly occupied by the leaving player will become an automatic out each time it occurs during the remainder of the game.
- c) In the event the player leaving the game without being replaced is a base runner at the time, the leaving player is declared an "out".
- d) In the event the player leaving the game is at bat and is not replaced, the player is declared "out".
- e) Any player leaving the game without being replaced may not re-enter the game.
- f) **If a player is ejected and a team does not have a legal substitute to replace the ejected player, it will be a forfeit.**

27. League Tie Breaker

- a) If two teams are tied at the end of regular season play, the first tiebreaker will be head-to-head competition. The second tiebreaker will be the total number of runs scored between the tied games. If tied, there will be a playoff game.
- b) In case of multiple ties, order of finish will be the total number of runs scored by teams tied. If two or more teams are still tied, there will be a playoff.
- c) In case of multiple ties, in leagues where the tied teams have not played each other an equal number of times, there will be a playoff between tied teams.

Protecting the Pitcher Rule

1. **Line Drive** – A line drive is defined as any ball that either hits the pitcher; inflight through the protected zone (pitcher's box); is caught by the pitcher in a defenseless mode or glances off the pitcher's glove or clothing in a defenseless mode. Any ball that strikes the ground before reaching the white line in front of the pitcher first will not be included in this

rule interpretation. In the event the pitcher catches the ball for an out the ball remains live (Delayed dead ball).

2. **Pitching Position** – The pitching rule allows the pitcher to position him or herself anywhere within the pitching area (inside the two white lines) provided that one foot **MUST** be in contact with the pitcher's plate. If the pitcher releases the pitch with his/her body extended to the right of the defined pitching area, the pitcher must return back into the pitching area (inside the two white lines) at the time of the 'incident' for the 'middle rule' to be in effect.

Penalties – the penalty phase has been adjusted so that each team gets three opportunities for the middle rule to be enforced...

1. The first **FOR EACH TEAM** the batter is out (**NOT** an offensive ejection), and his/her team is warned.
2. The second **FOR EACH TEAM** results in the player being out and ejected from offensive play in the game.
3. The third and final **FOR EACH TEAM** results in the team forfeiting the game.
4. **Exceptions** – If a line drive is caught by the pitcher, the pitcher still has the opportunity to double off any base runner(s). The play will continue until a normal time out is called by the umpire and then the penalty will be enforced.
5. **ANY** threats made in reference to hitting up the middle will result in an automatic ejection of player.

Points of Emphasis

Verbal Abuse (cursing, name calling, threats) of umpires or staff will **NOT** be tolerated; Offenders will face ejection and an automatic one-week suspension from the date of the incident and will be reinstated only after review by the League Administrator. Unsportsmanlike conduct (mouthing, cursing, etc.) between teams will not be tolerated, at the discretion of the umpire; you will be removed from the game and are subject to suspension from league play for flagrant or continuous violations.

FIGHTING WILL NOT BE TOLERATED! Fighting is grounds for immediate removal from league play for the remainder of the season to be determined by the League Administrator. **NO REFUNDS WILL BE GIVEN!**

Loud, abusive profanity and badgering of officials **will not** be tolerated from players, coaches or spectators. Any player, coach or spectator violating this rule will be removed from the ballpark.

No alcoholic beverages allowed **IN** the dugouts or on the playing field. No smoking allowed while on the field. **Violators are subject to ejection from the game.**

IT IS ILLEGAL TO BRING ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES INTO RIVERBEND PARK
Violators will be removed from the ballpark and are subject to suspension from the park for a time to be determined by the League Administrator. REPEAT OFFENDERS ARE SUBJECT

TO A MINIMUM 1 YEAR SUSPENSION FROM RIVERBEND BALLPARK.

Please keep children out of the dugouts for their safety. Please keep an eye of your children and keep them from defacing City property (Climbing on top of building or fences, throwing rocks, etc.).

Do not park in the handicapped parking zone unless you are handicapped.

Riverbend Park Rules:

No team coolers or personal coolers

No outside alcoholic beverages

No bicycles, skateboards, rollerblades or scooters

No Pets allowed

No bat boys or girls

Eligible Bat Certification Marks:



**2014 USSSA
Certification Mark**



**2020 USSSA
Certification Mark**

Effective in 2020.

Bats must have new 2020 USSSA Certification Mark OR the previous 2014 USSSA Certification Mark on the taper of the bat.