

BURLINGTON REGIONAL RECPLEX SLOW PITCH SOFTBALL LEAGUE RULES 2024

RecPlex slow pitch leagues – Men’s, Co-ed, and Church Leagues will use the USA 2024 Official Rules with exceptions noted below. In Church League, teams of mixed gender are welcome, but play will generally follow men’s rules.

The Field

Out of Play: Where a fence along the sides of the field come to an end, the out-of-play line shall extend in line with that fence straight to the outfield fence. Whether a ball and or player enters dead ball territory, this is decided solely by the umpire’s judgment. Appropriate base(s) will be awarded.

Equipment

Bats: All bats must be unaltered and have on them an ASA 2000, 2004 or 2013 certification stamp. Lists of specifications and banned bats will be posted and available in the RecPlex office. To speed the start of time-limited games, discovery of an altered/illegal bat will normally be by appeal by the offended team. Umpires will inspect bats prior to the tournament when directed by an umpire-in-chief.

Balls: All balls in play must be USA approved for 2024. **For all leagues, balls will be a 12” .52 cor/300 compression for all batters.** For Co-ed and Church league, game balls will be provided by the RecPlex. If a game ball goes out of play and not immediately returned, the team at bat should furnish a replacement ball.

Spikes: All players must wear shoes, but **NO** metal spikes, hard plastic spikes similar to metal sole and heel plates are allowed anywhere on the field. [**Men’s play only:** Metal Spikes are permitted and must comply with USA Softball Rules.

Players & Substitutes

Age: Players must be at least 18 years of age. [**Church only:** Players must be 14 years of age or have completed 8th grade.]

Rosters: Rosters must be submitted online on the RecPlex website or paper roster turned in to the RecPlex office www.teamsideline.com/burlington before their first game.

- **Players can be added to their roster at any time before the roster deadline. The roster deadline is after games on May 8**
- **Players may play on another team during regular season as a pick up player only; therefore they will be considered one of the teams pick up players.**

- **During the regular season you can pick up 2 players from another roster. In co-ed you can pick up one male and one female player.**
- **In Tournament play only rostered players will be eligible to play. NO PICK UP PLAYERS FOR TOURNAMENT PLAY.**

**Umpires will not be responsible for illegal player determination. A captain wishing to protest an illegal player or substitute should notify the plate umpire, who will then note the inning, situation, and name of the protested player on the back of the game card. In tournament play the umpire should inform the league coordinator (Kirk) immediately at the time of the protest, before play resumes. The protesting captain must follow up by contacting the league coordinator.

Number of players: A team may start or continue a game with a minimum of eight players. [**Church only:** A team may start or continue with seven players.] After having started play, if a team falls below the minimum number of players for any reason, the umpire shall declare a forfeit. A team starting or playing short-handed may add rostered players to the bottom of the lineup as they arrive. **NO OUT will be taken for any vacant position unless the vacancy is due to an ejection.**

CO-ED RULE: **TEAMS MAY PLAY WITH 6 MEN/4 WOMEN OR CAN PLAY WITH 5 MEN/5 WOMEN. WHEN PLAYING WITH 6 MEN/ 4 WOMEN THE ADDITIONAL MALE HAS TO PLAY CATCHER. (TEAMS MUST STILL HAVE 2 FEMALE PLAYERS IN THE INFIELD AND TWO FEMALE PLAYERS IN THE OUTFIELD.** As in past years if having to play shorthanded a team can play with 4 women and 4 men, 5 and 4 in any gender mix or 6 women and 4 men, without taking an out. **A team can now play with 5 men/3women or 5 women/3 men but will have to take an out in the spot where the 4th player is missing. All outfielders must remain on the grass until the ball is hit and all infielders must be positioned on the skinned infield until the ball is hit.**

Disqualification / ejections: The RecPlex is a family-oriented facility, and appropriate conduct is a condition of admission. Umpires need not give a warning prior to an ejection. In addition to actions specified in the USA rulebook, the following may warrant any team member's ejection. (See **"casual profanity / unsportsmanlike conduct"** rule below):

- Flagrant violations such as fighting or other unsportsmanlike conduct
- Obscene or threatening demonstration toward an employee, official, opponent or fan
- Throwing, Kicking or violent slamming of a bat, glove, or other item in anger
- Appearing to be under the influence of any substance that puts anyone at risk
- Any other action clearly hostile or uncooperative with the facility's family atmosphere

EFFECT: Any team member ejected from a game will be suspended from participating in the team's next game. Any team member ejected twice in the same season, may be suspended from participating in multiple games, both at the discretion of RecPlex management.

NOTE: Captains coaches and players are asked to take reasonable measures to control their fans. Although umpires have no authority over persons not involved in play, they are expected to direct RecPlex management's attention to unruly or hostile spectators, who may be ejected from the facility without refund of admission fee.

Casual Profanity / Unsportsmanlike Conduct Rule: This rule gives umpires an option between simple warnings and ejection for certain actions that are out of place in a recreational, family-oriented setting.

Definitions: "Casual profanity: includes vulgar, profane or obscene language uttered by any team member, on the field or in the dugout, which may stem from frustration or anger with oneself, a teammate or a fan, but is NOT directed at an umpire or opponent. "Unsportsmanlike conduct" may constitute any of the acts for which a player might be ejected (see rule above) as well as insults, taunts and disparaging remarks.

Applications: An umpire may assess one out per player but no more than two outs per team per half-inning, for either or both types of infractions. These are TEAM OUTS, they do not affect any player, the ball remains live until play is completed, and all action stands. Out(s) assessed against the defense will be enforced when that team comes to bat. When the ball is dead, the umpire informs both teams of the call: and the "putout" is credited to the catcher. If a participant has been ejected, a team out cannot be assessed to that player.

The Game

Home team: The home team will be designated on the schedule and will normally occupy the third-base dugout. In double-headers and tournament play, a team occupying either dugout will not be required to move to the other for a game that follows immediately on the same field.

Starting Time / game clock: At the time prescribed in the league schedule or five minutes after the previous game ends, whichever comes later.

Co-ed and Church League Time Limits – 55 minutes

Men's League Games do not have time limits

--- If time expires before the last out of an inning, that inning will be completed unless the home team is at bat and ahead in the score.

---- If less than a regulation game of 5 complete or 4 1/2 innings, we revert back to the inning of suspension.

---- If the game is a regulation game when play is suspended, it shall be declared complete: and if the home team is at bat and has taken the lead, that inning shall be considered complete.

Run ahead rule: A game shall be ended and declared complete when one team is ahead by 20 runs after 3 innings, 15 runs after 4, or 10 runs after 5, or a half-inning sooner if the home team leads.

Home run rule: Men's: 4 & (one up progressive) – **Co-ed: 3 Men's Home Runs, unlimited for Women's Home Runs** – Church: 3, for any excess the ball is dead, the batter is out and no runners may advance.

Dugout conduct: When the ball is ready for play or in play, only team members are allowed on the playing field. Ten fielders are allowed on (defense). The batter, runners, on deck batter and two coaches are allowed on (offense). All others must be in the dugout and /or behind the out-of-play fence.

Tobacco & Alcoholic beverages: **Smoking is prohibited anywhere inside the RecPlex.** Alcoholic beverages are allowed in the dugout, but not on the field of play. [**Church only:** No alcoholic beverages will be allowed in the dugout.]

Pitching

Arc: The minimum arc for a legal pitch in slow pitch is 6 feet from the ground to the top of the ball. **The maximum arc is 10 feet.**

Batting

Starting count: All batters come to the plate with a one ball, one strike count: there shall be NO "courtesy foul."

Strike zone: The RecPlex will provide a mat that fits behind home plate. **In all divisions a legally delivered pitch with proper arc that hits any part of the mat or plate will be a strike.**

Batting order – Co-ed only: The batting order must alternate genders, male-female or female-male, even if there is an odd number. The scorekeeper may ask for clarification if needed.

Touching bases / "walk-off" home runs: To speed play on any home run or four-base award, the batter and all runners are credited with a score and may return directly to their dugout: and there can be no appeal for failure either to touch bases or to touch them in order.

Stealing: The RecPlex does not allow stealing bases or advancing on a wild pitch or passed ball, in any slow pitch league play.

Base on Balls – Co-ed only: A walk to a male batter results in a two-base award. To help speed up the game the batter may go directly to 2nd base without touching 1st base, and a runner on 1st base may advance directly to 3rd base. With two outs, the following (female) batter may choose to hit or receive a base on balls.

Avoiding a Crash: To avoid crashing into a fielder who has the ball, the runner may slide, go around the fielder (but within the base path or be called out), leap over (without crashing into) the fielder, return to last base, or give him/herself up and accept the tag.

Not all contact invokes the crash rule: for example, the runner tries to evade but brushes the fielder reaching to make the tag; an errant throw draws the fielder into the runner's path; or ball, runner and fielder with the ball, the runner is out (and if flagrant, may be ejected), the ball is dead, and runners return to the last base legally touched. Also, a fielder without the ball who blocks a base, fakes a tag or impedes a runner may be called for obstruction and if the act is flagrant, risks ejection.

Courtesy runners: New rule in 2024 – The pitcher may have a courtesy runner at any time they reach base. Any player can run for the pitcher, but if they come up to bat while they are on base that runner will be called out when they go to bat.

In co-ed the runner must be the same gender as the pitcher.

Men's – One runner per inning

Co-ed – One runner each inning of each gender

Church – Two runners each inning, same gender if available, if not

last out runs. More can be used if agreed upon by the each captain.

If an injured player will need a courtesy runner to prevent further injury after the courtesy runner limit has been used, this will be allowed. The game umpire will use their judgment to invoke this rule.

Protests

Process: A coach or acting coach who desires to protest a game must inform the plate umpire prior to the games final out. When the final out is completed the game is official. At the time of the protest he/she then must file a written protest (forms are available in the sports office) along with a \$50.00 protest fee. The protest fee will be returned if the protest is upheld. A protest may involve use of illegal players. The umpire's decision is final. Judgment calls may not be protested. The umpire will inform the team sited for the infraction and the decision to allow that player to play rests with the team protested against. If the player sited plays that game and the protesting team pays the fee, that game will be played under protest.

If no fee is paid and the player plays he/she is now a legal player.

Scorekeeper: The RecPlex will provide the official scorebook. The home team shall provide the scorekeeper (not necessarily a team member), who shall keep score properly for both teams. If the score, batting order, substitutions or other entry or action is disputed, the plate umpire may briefly suspend play and mediate resolution of the issue.

