

ATLANTA BAR ASSOCIATION NON-COMPETITIVE SOFTBALL LEAGUE

2004 SEASON RULES Revised 1/15/04

In the Non-Competitive Softball League, there are very few rules. Not that this reflects poorly on our profession, but the following are a few rules to get us through the games with as little disagreement and altercations as possible. Teams are free to waive the rules, and are strongly encouraged to do so.

RULES OF PLAY:

Have fun. This is the non-competitive league; you are out there to do anything other than exhibit your lawyerly talents (or vices). During the regular season win-loss records are kept at each team's discretion.

All teams will receive a "complete and official" schedule of all games to be played by all teams.

All teams are encouraged to discuss these rules with the players. Please have a copy of these rules with you at all games.

Teams may play no more than ten people on the field. When a team has eight (8) or nine (9) players, it is within the discretion of the other team as to whether they will "lend" players for the short-handed team. Teams with an abundance of players are strongly encouraged to do so. Spouses and significant others are also welcome to play. The key is to FIELD A TEAM!

Unless there is a shortage of players on another team, please try to restrict your roster to players on your own team (i.e. players should not play on several different teams in the league unless there is a shortage).

If there is a firm you are interested in playing and they are not on your "official schedule" or if you wish to play extra games, please contact the Commissioner for available time and fields.

EQUIPMENT:

1. Each team is responsible for bringing its own equipment (which includes bases). The balls must be "co-ed restricted flight" where are easily purchased at sporting goods stores. This is important for safety. Each team should have a regular supply of balls during the season.
2. No metal cleats or spikes are allowed. Not only can these types of cleats be dangerous (and very painful when someone's foot is stepped on) but they ruin the bases that are used.

3. Please try and refrain from using "professional" bats or "ringers" unless you are willing to share with the opposing team. This is a non-competitive league and we try to keep it on an even level for all teams.

STARTING OF THE GAME:

1. All games will be played at the scheduled start time or within the grace period.
2. Official start times are determined by the Commissioner. All teams are given a ten minute grace period from the start of game time to field their team. Please be lenient on 6:00 games at Chastain (some teams are further away and at times traffic may be bad and the games may need to be pushed back an extra few minutes).
3. Please be careful if copying a schedule to distribute to your players. Check the game times to make sure they are in order with the "official schedule" before handing the schedule out to your players. If there is a mix up in the time of play and the game is not played, the team showing up at the correct game time (according to the "official schedule") will be considered the winners by forfeit.
4. The time limit for a game is an hour and ten minutes. Play as many innings as you can within that time, you may continue the game into the next time slot if teams do not show for the next game. If a game starts at 6:00, an inning should not be started after 7:10, and the game should stop at 7:15 p.m. to be fair to the next games' players.
5. Before starting a game teams should draw a line beginning at the center of the back of home plate and extending toward the backstop approximately five feet. A runner advancing toward home plate is safe when he or she crosses the line before a fielder controlling the ball touches the plate. A runner who touches the plate is out. A fielder who blocks the line scores the run automatically.
6. Teams should place two bags at first base. One bag should be placed in the normal position along the base line and one bag should be placed at the same distance from the plate approximately a foot outside the base line. This is to prevent collisions at first base.
7. Coaches shall determine what constitutes "in play" and "out of play" at each field before the start of each game.

PLAYING TIME:

1. Unless there is an injury, anyone who bats must at some point play in the field and vice-versa.
2. If you are short a player and a "volunteer" from the stands (one who is improperly dressed for the game) offers to catch, that person should be allowed to do so without penalty. (This shows Firm support). If the team is short a female and the Volunteer happens to be female, the volunteer will not count as the second female unless she decides to bat and play the field. Therefore, the two female rule/penalty still applies (see Batting Rule 1).
3. There can be only two "cross-over" players from the competitive league playing on any one team.

PITCHING:

1. Slow pitch softball requires a six (6) to twelve (12) foot arc (i.e. the ball must reach at least six but no more than twelve feet above the ground on its way to the plate.) If an opposing team's pitcher is woefully inadequate, the opposing team may request, at any time, that balls and strikes be called. Please keep in mind that the purpose of the league is to allow players the opportunity to hit the ball and to have fun. Every team should put a good athlete on the mound to make sure everybody has a chance to hit.
2. The strike zone is the space directly above home plate which is neither higher than the batter's highest shoulder nor lower than the batter's front knee. Any pitch through any part of this zone is an out. All pitches may not be exact. However, please try to be reasonable in calling balls in view of time limitations and good sportsmanship. Only swinging strikes count toward a strike out.

BATTING:

1. Every player bats, whether in the field previously or not. The first ten players in the batting order will consist of the first ten players who take the field. A team must have two women in the first ten places in the batting order at all times. For each inning a team cannot or does not include two women, one out for each woman not fielded will be given to the team for a maximum of two outs per inning.
2. Batting orders should include all players that will play at any time during the game. Some team managers have requested more freedom with batting orders because of the number of people they have participating. Since this is a non-competitive league, we encourage everyone to bat in a single batting order.
3. The integrity of the batting order should be maintained throughout the game. No pinch hitting, advancing batters, or dropping or adding of players during the game so as to affect the batting order is allowed.
4. A batting order must be established at the beginning of the game. No person may substitute in the batting order until they have played the previous half inning in the field. Only females may be substituted for another female's spot in the batting order. Substitution does not disqualify a player from the rest of the game.
5. If players show up after the game has started, they shall bat at the end of the batting order. If a person does not feel well, they should be dropped from play, including batting. If they resume play, they should be placed in the same spot in the batting order they were in at the beginning of the game.
6. The outfield tree line/fence line at some of the fields may be a little closer to the plate than usual. Teams may agree prior to games at these fields that a fly ball into the trees is a double, or that a fly ball into the trees is a double unless it flies out at a predetermined height. Please try to be reasonable. When playing on a short distance field, you are encouraged to modify the rules. Suggestion, after three over the fence home runs have been hit, all over the fence home runs thereafter, are to be considered doubles.
7. Calling balls and strikes are optional. Bunting or chopping at the ball while at bat is an out. Please do not quibble about un-athletic swings.
8. The batting team will call its own balls and strikes. There will be four balls and three strikes. A foul ball on the third strike is not a strike out.

9. If teams are calling balls and strikes, an intentional walk or four pitches without a strike is a ground rule double. The next batter has the option of either taking first base or batting.
10. In contrast to batting, there is free substitution during field play and teams are encouraged to spread the field time evenly among the players.

RUNNERS:

1. Generally, there is no pinch running except where there is a physical reason and the opposing team agrees to the runner. Teams are encouraged to agree.
2. Runners cannot advance on foul balls, including those that are caught for an out.
3. On an overthrow, the runner may advance as many bases as he can as long as the ball remains "in play". However, if the ball goes "out of play" any runner is entitled to advance one base from where they were when the ball went "out of play".
4. No base runner may lead-off. A runner may not leave a base until the batter has made contact with the ball or the ball has completely crossed the plate.
5. No player may steal a base.
6. The player playing first base should not touch the outside bag at first base and the runner should not touch the inside bag.
7. A runner is forced out at first if a fielder controlling the ball touches the inside bag before the runner touches the outside bag. If the runner touches the inside bag, he or she is out. If any fielder touches the outside bag after the ball is put in play, the runner is automatically safe at first. This will allow players to avoid messy entanglements at first base.
8. All plays at home will be a force out. A runner is committed toward home when that player crosses the midway point between third base and home. Once a runner is committed and a fielder controls that ball and touches home plate before the runner crosses the line, the runner is out. Again, do everything possible to avoid collisions at the plate.

ENDING OF THE GAME:

The next game's teams have a right to demand the field at their regularly scheduled starting time if, and only if, both teams are present and ready to play. If you are playing on a lighted field, before demanding the field, please be considerate of the teams playing if the game is tied. No one likes to end in a tie ball game. If the field is being demanded, the final score is determined by the score at the end of the last completed inning, unless the team batting second is batting and ahead when time runs out.

FORFEITS:

1. A forfeiture results when a team does not have at least eight (8) players ready to play at least ten minutes after the start of game time and the other team is ready to play. The full team may allow the team that is short players more time if they so desire. This is highly encouraged (within

reason). The team that has a "full team" may decide to start the game as the "away team" to allow additional time for the remaining players on the other team to arrive. This is at the discretion of the "full team".

2. Once a forfeit is called, teams may play a practice game by "lending" players to the team that had to forfeit. This way all players that showed for the game will get some playing time. You may also use the field for a practice game if the opposing team forfeits in advance. The field has been reserved for your team, you are welcome to take advantage of the open field.
3. If it appears that you cannot field a team for a regularly scheduled game, you must inform the other team and the Commissioner as soon as possible. The Commissioner will try to arrange another team to take the place of a team that has forfeited so that the team prepared to field a team will still be able to play their game.
4. It is a good idea to get your players in the habit of committing to attend games several days in advance. Firm outings are also encouraged. Please let the Commissioner know if you are planning a firm outing and pavilions or shelters may be available.
5. If you continue to have forfeits please call the Commissioner to arrange for another firm to combine with your team or vice versa to eliminate forfeits.

RAINOUTS:

Rainouts will be rescheduled according to field reservations. If it appears that a game will be a rain-out, call the commissioner as well as the opposing team that afternoon for confirmation. You may risk forfeiting the game if you assume, without checking, that the other team will not show up due to weather conditions. Once you are at the field, you should use your best judgment as to whether the condition of the field will permit play.

POSTPONEMENTS/RESETS:

If you wish to postpone or reset a game, arrangements for the make up game should be handled by the coaches of each team and coordinated through the Commissioner. If a postponed game cannot be arranged to your satisfaction, coaches are welcome to play the game by arranging for their own field and setting the time of the game.

PLAYOFFS:

Please note that Coaches seem to refer to the rules more often in playoff games. If you have questions about any of the rules, please address these questions with the opposing coach before the start of the game. Keep in mind that this is a non-competitive league and we all need to be a little more considerate (lenient) during playoffs.

1. All playoff games are subject to time change and change of field location (i.e. If we have playing time on some of the better fields, due to make up for rainouts, then those fields will be available for playoff games). All games must be played in a timely manner before the next bracket game is scheduled. If the game is rained out or if you cannot make the scheduled game, please contact the Commissioner immediately to schedule an alternate time. All open time slots will be set on a first-come first-serve basis.

2. Game times may vary during playoffs. Please allow an additional 15 minutes for completion of the previous game before demanding the field.
3. Last inning must be called within your allotted playing time!! (1 hour and 10 minutes). Please record your start time so the team arriving behind you will have an idea of when their team will be able to take the field. If you are the arriving team (and your team and the opposing team is complete and ready to take the field) please ask what time the game started and if the last inning has been called. Please use courtesy when approaching a playing team. No one likes to be upset when trying to win a game.
4. Once you make the semi-final bracket, you have the choice of calling a seven inning game instead of a timed game (1 hour and 10 minutes) as long as both teams agree. If both teams are not in total agreement for a seven inning game then the game should be played as a timed game.
5. If a team is interested in having a licensed umpire for a playoff game, please contact the Commissioner so arrangements can be made. There will be a \$25.00 charge per game paid directly to the umpire. The umpire will need to collect the money before the beginning of the game. This fee is subject to change from year to year.
6. Results of the games must be reported to the Commissioner the next morning in order for the other teams to know who they are playing.

FIELD ETIQUETTE:

Each team is responsible for keeping the fields clean. Your cooperation will insure our continued enjoyment of the various facilities.

ABSOLUTELY NO BOTTLES!!!! Bring only aluminum or plastic beverage containers. Please pick up the trash from the field AND the dugouts after each game. Everyone likes coming to a clean field and dugout.