

Mesquite Senior Softball Rules

Revised September 2025

Base running interference/avoiding contact

It is the base runner's responsibility to avoid contact with a defensive player. If a base runner makes contact with a defensive player during the execution of a play, the remedy is at the sole discretion of the umpire. This rule does not apply if the runner slides/dives and makes every effort to avoid contact. Examples: If contact prevents a ball from being caught or thrown, the umpire may rule the runner who made contact is out. If in his judgment a throw would likely have resulted in a second out, that runner may also be called out. If a defensive player elects not to throw the ball and in the judgment of the umpire a) the ball was not thrown to avoid hitting the runner who didn't attempt to avoid contact and b) the throw would likely have resulted in an out, the umpire may rule both runners out.

Note: This rule is all about safety. It is not intended to be used by the defense as an excuse for not making a play. Nor is it intended to be used by the offense to feign adherence. Several attempts have been made to define this rule more precisely but there are too many variables to do so. The umpire must believe interference/contact was avoidable and significant to rule anything other than the outcome of the play. Similarly, defensive players not involved in the play must make every effort to avoid obstructing base runners. SSUSA obstruction rules will apply and will be enforced by the umpire as appropriate.

Batter may continue at-bat in lieu of a walk

Every batter has the option to continue his at-bat in lieu of accepting a base on balls. This is at the batter's sole discretion. The number of strikes continues as is and the batter will be out if three strikes are called, including a foul ball on the third strike.

Behavior

All players, managers/captains, umpires and spectators will refrain from berating others, arguing umpires' calls, using abusive language, throwing bats or behaving in any way that is detrimental to the game. The umpire may eject from the game anyone he deems to have "crossed the line." The board retains the right to issue supplemental discipline including warning, suspension or expulsion.

Coed line

All outfielders must remain behind the coed line for all batters until the pitched ball crosses the plate. Anywhere behind the line is acceptable. For example, one outfielder may play up to the line while others play deeper.

Courtesy runners

Courtesy runners may be used for any base runner at any time provided the base runner requests it. This is irrespective of which base the replaced runner occupies or how many pitches have occurred since he reached that base. However, an individual may courtesy run only once per inning. In accordance with SSUSA rules, if a courtesy runner or a courtesy runner for batter comes to bat while on base for another player that person will be declared out however, the runner will not lose their at bat.

Courtesy runner for batter

A courtesy runner may be used for a batter who is injured and is unable to run. The courtesy runner must start from a designated place by the backstop (TBD). This courtesy is for injured players only, not just slow runners. The courtesy runner must be of comparable speed to the injured batter under normal conditions and cannot be a runner if they have already pinch ran for a base runner that inning or have had a pinch runner for themselves.

Disputed calls

Players other than the team captain (or designated captain in the captain's absence) will not dispute an umpire's call. This includes balls/strikes, safe/out, fair/foul, judgment, rule interpretation or anything else. The captain may ask the player for his interpretation of the disagreement for the sole purpose of accurately presenting his position. The captain may then present the position to the umpire and ask for his interpretation. This communication will remain civil at all times. All parties will remain respectful at all times.

Drafting

A player draft will be conducted prior to each season. The draft method and number of teams will be determined prior to the drafts. Coaches may trade players of the same ranking subject to final approval of the Commissioner and the Board.

Fifth Infielder

Unless approved by the Board, the standard defense will be eleven (11) players and the alignment will be four (4) infielders, five (5) outfielders, one (1) pitcher and one (1) catcher. In the event the Board determines the need to play with twelve (12) defenders, the additional defender will be an infielder—designated as the 5th infielder (not a rover). The 5th infielder must abide by the same positioning rules as the other infielders. For a predetermined hitter for which the 5th infielder is not eligible to play defense, any infielder may, at their discretion, either sit out the play or take a position in the outfield, for which they must comply with outfield positioning rules.

Fifth run

Scoring the fifth run in an inning does NOT AUTOMATICALLY end the inning if the third out can be recorded with a force out. Non-scoring runners must advance to the next base to eliminate the force.

Foul tip out

A foul ball caught by the catcher is an out regardless of the height of the batted ball.

Games end in a tie

Games that are tied after both teams have completed their open inning will end as a tie.

Hit & sit

A batter who hits a home run and any runners on base at that time need not run the bases.

Infield dirt

All infielders must remain on the infield dirt even with or behind the baseline for all batters until the pitched ball crosses the plate. The only exception to this is infielders may play on the turf for players designated as A (rank 28-30) players. They may not, however act as outfield rovers.

Infield fly rule

An infield fly is a fair fly ball (not including a line drive) that can be caught by any fielder anywhere on the field with ordinary effort when first and second bases or first, second and third bases are occupied with less than two outs.

Note 1 (from SSUSA): When it becomes apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire shall immediately declare, “infield fly – batter is out” to aid the runners. If the ball is near the foul lines, the umpire shall declare, “infield fly – if fair.” If the hit ball becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any other foul ball. Failure of the umpire to call “infield fly” does not negate the infield fly. If the error is discovered prior to the next pitch, the infield fly rule may still be called.

Note 2: Mesquite Senior Softball exceptions: a) the plate umpire will declare, “Infield fly rule is in effect,” when a batter comes to the plate and infield fly conditions exist, b) when “infield fly” is called by the plate umpire, the batted ball is dead and runners must return to the bases they occupied at the start of the play.

Innings/reset

Teams will bat two innings at a time to reduce the time spent changing sides. The two innings are treated as separate innings. Therefore, after three outs or five runs, the bases will be cleared, the umpire will declare, “Reset” and the team at bat will continue to bat until three more outs are made or five more runs have scored. The teams will then trade sides. Games shall be seven (7) innings.

Intentional drop

If a fielder intentionally drops, or lets drop, a fair fly ball, including a line drive, that can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort with first base only, or first

base and any other base(s), with less than two outs, only one recorded out may be made on the play and the ball is dead. This is an umpire’s judgment call.

Note: this is copied verbatim from the SSUSA 2019-20 rulebook.

Intentional walk

There will be no intentional walks.

Outfielder can’t throw runner out at 1st

An outfielder cannot directly throw out a batter-runner at first base. The outfielder may, however throw to an infielder (not the first baseman) who may relay the throw to first base. For purposes of this rule, an outfielder is

defined as any fielder who began the play behind the coed line. An infielder positioned on the turf at the beginning of the play is still considered an infielder.

Overthrow – Out of Play

1. When the first throw is made by an infielder, two bases shall be awarded. The award shall be governed by the position of each runner at the time the pitch was made; however, if all runners, including the batter-runner, have advanced at least one base when the infielder makes the wild throw, on the first play after a pitch, the award shall be governed by the position of the runners when the wild throw was made.
1. When a throw is made by an outfielder or is the result of any succeeding play or attempted play, the two base award shall be governed by the position of each runner and the last base he has touched at the time the throw was made. If two runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner.

Note 1: this is copied verbatim from the SSUSA 2019-20 rule 8.4(10) E.

Note 2: it's included here without Mesquite Senior Softball exceptions because there is often controversy about this rule.

Pitcher's mask

Pitchers are not required to wear a mask or other protective gear.

Pitching net

The pitch must be made over the net, not from the side of the net.

A ball batted into the pitching net shall be considered a strike except that a batter cannot strikeout on a batted ball into the pitching net. **Example:** a batter with no strikes or one strike that hits the pitching net shall receive a strike however a batter with two strikes cannot strikeout on a batted ball into the pitching net.

A pitched ball into the pitching net shall be considered a ball except that a batter cannot walk on a pitched ball into the net. **Example:** a batter with a zero, one, or two ball count will receive a ball should the pitcher hit the pitching net in the process of pitching however a batter with a three-ball count cannot walk on a pitched ball into the pitching net.

A ball in play thrown into the net remains a live ball.

Placement of the pitching net

The pitcher's box consisting of the area from the front of the pitcher's plate, 50' (15.24m) from home plate, and extending back 10' (3.05m) perpendicular to the pitcher's plate shall be used. The pitcher's plate shall be of rubber or wood, 24" (60.96cm) long and 6" (15.24) wide. The net should be 5' in front of the pitching rubber.

Player absences

Players will notify their captain of an absence as soon as the player knows of the impending absence. Except for a sudden illness or emergency, the notice should be at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled game.

Player arrives late/leaves early

If a player in the batting order arrives late:

- If his/her turn has not come up, he/she may bat in the scheduled turn
- If his/her turn has passed, he/she may, at the captain's discretion
 - Bat in the last spot in the order, including after any replacement players or
 - Bat in the scheduled spot the next time through the order

If a player in the batting order must be removed for any reason:

- The leaving player's spot in the batting order will be eliminated
- There will be NO out recorded when it is reached
- Any replacement player must bat last in the order
 - If the leaving player is the first scheduled batter after he/she leaves, the spot will be skipped and the replacement player will bat for the first time the next time through the order

Players stay in dugout

Players not on deck, coaching bases or otherwise needed on the field will remain in the dugout to the extent possible and reasonable. Any physical, verbal or distracting behavior, including just a physical presence that interferes with a ball in play or creates a defensive player's confusion will be treated the same as base runner interference and the batter or runner may be called out.

Runner placed at 1st

A runner may **NOT** be placed at first base for the purpose of setting up a double play or a force out.

Running across infield before time is called

Players will refrain from crossing onto the field of play until the play is completed and time is called. This includes courtesy runners, players retrieving the batter's bat or any other encroachment.

Small ball

The pitcher will use the smaller ball when the batter is a female. Male players ranked 8 or lower (ONLY) may request to use the smaller ball. It shall be the responsibility of the ranked 8 or lower player to request the ball when they come to bat. Failure to do so shall not change the outcome in any way.

Substitutions

When team coaches replace rostered players, the following rules shall apply:

- The rostered player may be replaced with any available player with the same rating or below. However, that players rated 28 and 30 shall be considered interchangeable and players rated 8 and 10 shall be considered interchangeable.
- No substitution is allowed if you have at least eleven (11) regular players available.
- If you have ten (10) or fewer regular players and no low rated (rank 8 or 10) player, at least one (1) substitute must be a low rated (rank 8 or 10) player. You may then replace any other missing regular player(s) in accordance with the above-mentioned rules.
- Non-rostered subs will be rated just like all other players. Non-rostered subs may bat in any position in the batting order. Rostered players recruited from another team to fill vacancies must bat at the bottom of the order. All rostered players will bat before recruited players from another team.
- All substitutions must be mutually agreed upon by the opposing coaches prior to the start of the game. Team captains will make a reasonable effort to obtain substitute players prior to the game, but it is recognized that recruiting substitute players just prior to game time is a commonly accepted practice.

Time limits

The official time limit for games is 90 minutes. If it appears playing the seventh inning will significantly exceed this limit, the umpire may declare an earlier inning to be the open inning.

Note: since this is a recreational league with no consequences should a game exceed the time limit, it is expected the time limit restriction will rarely need to be enforced.

Windy days

On days in which heavy winds are present, and upon agreement of both team Managers, the calling of balls/walks may be waived. However, the calling of strikes will continue.