

Stone Creek Softball Club

Softball League Rules

Approved by Club Membership and effective January 1, 2024

The purpose of the softball league is to promote fun, fellowship, and good sportsmanship through softball play.

1. A Commissioner for the Stone Creek Community Softball League (CSL) will be voted by the Stone Creek Softball Club (SCSC):
 - a. Commissioner or selected representative will be present for all community games.
 - b. Commissioner will be responsible for running the league.
 - c. Commissioner may not be a team manager.
 - d. See other duties as defined in the SCSC Charter.
2. The Official Rules shall be the current year's Senior Softball USA Rulebook, other than what is designated below.
3. The Commissioner will select managers that are in good standing with the SCSC. The team rosters and four players on each team designated as "A" players will be agreed upon by the managers collectively (including each manager as a player if applicable). All players not designated as A players will be B players. . Managers will draw numbers to identify which team they will manage and play. Rosters and designated A players will be adjusted to compensate for any manager changes before the rosters are finalized. The Commissioner will decide the final rosters if the managers cannot agree collectively.
4. Team Roster Changes after the season begins:
 - a. The Commissioner and managers will make roster changes and additions, in midseason, in an effort to make the teams more evenly balanced. That said, the Commissioner has the final decision on all player transactions.
 - b. Once the CSL rosters are published and a new resident (player) wants to play in the league, the Commissioner and managers will meet to assign the new resident to a team. All reasonable efforts will be made to insure balanced competition. New residents may be utilized as pick-up players for games for up to four weeks.
5. If injury or illness occurs during a game, a substitute player will be selected by the two team managers from available league members. If no one is available, the team missing a player will use a player from the other team when in the field. This player will be selected by their manager and may be a different player each inning. The chosen player(s) will still bat for their team. In the case of disagreements, the Commissioner will decide who plays.
6. The maximum number of defensive players shall be eleven.

7. The maximum number of offensive players shall be unlimited. For a legitimate reason, a player may leave the game and that player's spot in the lineup shall be skipped without penalty. If this occurs, the player shall not be permitted to return to the game.
8. Managers are required to play all players available in at least 4 defensive innings per complete game. All roster players shall bat throughout the complete game. Players who become injured or ill are exempt from this rule. If a player arrives after the cards have been pulled, he shall be added to the end of the existing lineup. No player added at the start of the game shall be dropped.
9. Each team shall have at least six players from their roster (and at least 9 in total) to have an official game. If six rosters are not available, the game will be a forfeit. Once a forfeit is declared, an exhibition game may be played.
10. All games will start on time. Players shall arrive no later than 15 minutes before their game time. Line picks will be done 10 minutes before game time.
11. Selection Rules if a team needs extra players:
 - a. Players will be selected in the following order:
 - 1) Bye players
 - 2) Non-roster players
 - 3) Other players
 - b. Players may only be a substitute in one game per day unless there is a need to fill rosters due to a lack of available substitute players. A bye or non-roster player already picked for a game does not have preference for another game that day.
 - c. If a team does not have 11 players to begin game:
 - 1) The Commissioner will pass out playing cards to available players who wish to play in the order prescribed in Rule 11a. Cards are drawn until enough players are selected to fill the rosters. "A" players can substitute for A players. "B" players can substitute for B or A players. The manager whose team needs the least amount of players will pick first from the card selected players. If both teams need the same amount of players, the team with the worst record picks first. If the records are equal, the visiting team will pick first. The next player will be picked by the other team manager. The managers will continue to alternate picks until the team needing the greater amount of players will get those not previously selected.
 - 2) If a team is missing an A player or players, they can pick up an A player or players even if they have 11 players on hand. The A player or players must sit out at least one inning.
 - d. Selected players will be placed in the fielding lineup per the manager's discretion. Selected players will be placed in the batting order after the regular team players per the manager's discretion.
 - e. Any player who is selected as a substitute player must play the complete game, unless injured or there is an emergency, or the player shall face a two-week suspension as a substitute.

12. Courtesy Runners:

- a. As a guideline, no player shall be used as a courtesy runner more than 3 times per game, unless agreed on by the opposing manager.
- b. A player may be a courtesy runner only once per inning and will be called out after that.
- c. A manager cannot replace a runner without a request from the runner.
- d. A courtesy runner cannot replace a courtesy runner once they are on base, unless injured.
- e. A courtesy runner caught on base when it is his turn to bat will be called out as a batter and will lose his turn at bat, but stays on base.
- f. A player becomes a courtesy runner when he touches base and/or the umpire calls 'Play Ball,' or puts the ball back in play.
- g. Any players who need a courtesy runner from home-plate or from a base (after a walk or get a hit) must inform the umpire prior to entering the batter's box.
- h. All batters but two per team, must run from home-plate and only get a runner after reaching base safely. The exception to the rule is if both managers mutually agree for additional base runners from home-plate.
- i. Runners for batters from home-plate can only advance to first base and no further regardless of errors or overthrows.

13. Base Running:

- a. A runner may not slide into a base. The umpire will call the runner out if this occurs.
- b. A runner can be tagged out at 1st, 2nd, or 3rd base, but cannot be tagged out once he crosses the commitment line while running to home-plate.
- c. A 'no-contact' or 'no-crash' rule will be strictly enforced. Interference by a runner (to a defensive player) will be an automatic out and obstruction by a defensive player will result in extra bases being awarded (to the runner) by the umpire. All runners must attempt to avoid contact and must turn away from impeding a throw by a defensive player.
- d. A runner attempting to advance to the next base can reverse direction only once when a play is being made on him. If the runner passed the commitment line, located halfway from home-plate and third base, he cannot change directions.
- e. A runner attempting to score must run to the alternate home-plate and will be called out for touching the regular (batting) home-plate.
- f. A force-out at home-plate is accomplished by the defensive player stepping on any portion of the strike plate while in possession of the ball.
- g. Base runners are permitted to take only two steps off the base when a pitched ball goes past the batter, before returning to the base. Once the ball is hit, the runner advances accordingly. Courtesy runners from home cannot cross the start line until the batter has made contact with the ball or will be called out.
- h. For safety purposes, a runner may elect to step off either 1st or 3rd base into foul territory but must touch the base before advancing or will be called out.

14. Scoring Runs:

- a. A team is limited to 5 runs per inning or as many as required to tie the score.

- b. In the last inning or any extra inning, there is no limit to the number of runs that can be scored by either team.
- c. A team may score extra runs on a home-run hit over the fence.
- d. Four-Base Award Rule (see 8.4 USA rule book) known as Hit and Sit. Any fair batted ball over the fence allows the batter and any base runner(s) to return to the dugout and all runs will score.
- e. In an extra inning game, each team will start the inning with a runner at second base. The runner shall be the team's last batter in the seventh inning, or, if applicable, the individual that ran for them. If the runner comes up to bat in the inning while they are still on base, they will be declared out according to existing rules. If the game is still tied at the end of the eighth inning, it will end as a tie.

15. Playing Rules:

- a. All games will be 7 innings. For three or more games per day, the clock will be used. Time decided by the Commissioner. (See Clock Use).
- b. If after 7 innings the game is tied, another inning will be played if there is time left on the clock and the extra inning starts. If tied after the extra inning, the game will be recorded as a tie.
- c. No regular season game will be considered official unless the losing team has had at least four innings to bat (12 outs).
- d. No games will be postponed to a later date. Canceled games will not be made up, except for playoff games.
- e. Each batter will begin with one-ball and one-strike count.
- f. Pitchers must use the pitching screen. (See Screen Rules)
- g. Pitchers must be in contact with the pitching rubber when he releases the ball.
- h. Pitchers cannot intentionally walk a batter. If, in the umpire's opinion, an intentional walk has occurred, a warning will be given to the pitcher. If a second intentional walk occurs, two bases will be awarded to the batter. For every subsequent offense, additional bases will be awarded.
- i. All balls that hit the pitching screen are dead, and do not count as a ball or strike.
- j. All batters must run to the outer/red base at 1st base on infield hits, or be called out.
- k. Infielders cannot play in the dead area of the outfield prior to the ball being hit. This area is located just past the infield (dirt) and in front of the outfield encroachment line/orange cones, located in the outfield, 160 feet from home-plate.
- l. Outfielders must be behind the outfield encroachment line/orange cone, until the ball is hit. Infielders may become extra outfielders or outfielders may become extra infielders, as long as they do not begin play in the dead area prior to the ball being hit.
- m. Umpires must call high and low pitches at mid-arch and any ball called after the ball hits the strike plate will be considered as thrown (ball or strike).
- n. If a player is ejected from the game, the team may not pick-up a replacement player, and must play with one less player if they had only 11 players participating in the game. Also, when the ejected player is due to bat, an out is declared.

16. Only managers may appeal calls to the umpire. Any player who argues with an umpire, or who challenges ball and strike calls, shall be subject to ejection. Once a game starts, the umpires have control of the game but can be overruled by the Commissioner during the game. The Commissioner cannot change rules during the game. All rule changes must be approved by the membership.
17. All players on a team should wear the identical team shirts provided, to be worn on the outside of all clothing. The exception is if the team does not have appropriate size shirts. Then, the player should wear a shirt of the same color.
18. The Commissioner shall provide balls of excellent quality for each play date. The balls will be 0.44 core / 375 compression and color yellow.
19. Only bats on the USA/ASA approved list may be used (see <https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Softball/Certified-Equipment/Equipment-Bats> for most recent approved list). All female players and players turning 70 or older in the year can use their bats of their choice. All bats used by senior batters must be identified with yellow tape at the bottom of the grip. Proof of age for players turning 70 must be verified by the Commissioner and umpires. All rulings by the Commissioner as to what shall be considered a legal bat are final.
20. Visiting teams need to supply umpires (as needed), to the preceding or next game. Home teams need to set-up and breakdown/clean-up the field.
21. Any appeal of these rules shall be made to the Commissioner.

Clock Use

1. The Commissioner will determine the amount of minutes on the Clock. The Clock will start with the first pitch of the ball after the umpire says batter-up.
2. All innings started will be completed. If tied at the end of a regular inning and time has run out, the game will be recorded as a tie.
3. There will be 10 minutes between games. If after the first or second game and there are enough roster players at the field, and both managers and Commissioner agree, the game will start early.

Pitching Screen

1. Pitching screen must cover at least half of the pitching rubber. It can cover the rubber completely if the pitcher prefers.
2. Pitching screen can be placed no more than 4 feet in front of rubber, and must remain in front of rubber.
3. Once the screen is in place, it may not be moved in that half inning, unless a pitching change is made or the screen is knocked out of place. An incoming pitcher may adjust the screen so long as it applies to 1 and 2 above.

4. After the pitcher releases the ball, he must move behind the screen. Once the ball is hit, the pitcher is free to move from behind the screen in an attempt to field the ball.
5. If the umpires' opinion is that the pitcher does not get behind the screen after he releases the ball, he shall issue a warning to the pitcher. Every time after that in the game, if the pitcher fails to get behind the screen, the umpire will call ball, and the umpire will add a ball to the count. If the batter already has 3 balls, it will be considered a walk. If the batter makes contact with the ball, then the ball is in play and will be called accordingly.
6. Any batted ball that hits the screen will be called a Dead Ball. (No strike or ball will be added)
7. Any thrown ball that hits the screen will remain in play.

Using a Substitute Pitcher

1. This substitute pitching rule supersedes the existing pick-off the line rules.
2. Substitute pitcher will be picked first for the team in need of a pitcher that day.
3. First choice in selection will be given to a bye team pitcher that volunteers to pitch that off day.
4. If no bye team pitcher volunteers, then cards will be used to select the pitcher who will play that game. That player will be the first pick of the team in need of a pitcher.
5. If the pitcher selected is a B class player, nothing further will be needed, and the remaining players needed to fill the rosters (if any) will revert to the standard pick from the line rules.
6. If the pitcher selected is an A class player, then the opposing manager has the option to select an A player from the line. If that player increases the team roster to 12 players, then the current rules of everyone batting his turn and fielding at least four innings apply. A substitute pitcher will bat at the bottom of the order like other substitute players.
7. If an extra runner is needed for the substitute pitcher, that need will be accommodated by the opposing team manager.
8. If the Commissioner has advance notice of the need for a volunteer pitcher, he will communicate that in an email to the Club prior to game day.

