

## **AMERICAN LEAGUE RULES 11/8/2024**

**A.** The American League will be governed by SSUSA rules except as modified. (If needed, use the USA Softball rules for clarification of SSUSA rules only) Each manager must sign a copy acknowledging receipt of the American League rules.

### **B. Organization**

American League teams will be composed of 10 players, including a player/manager from the Sun City West Softball Club who have a rating of 1, 2, or 3. Any league member, in good standing, may request to participate and remain active with the league as a non-playing manager.

### **C. Managers**

1. The American League Committee will maintain a list of current and prospective managers. The list of prospective managers will be a first-in-first-assigned procedure. If the next perspective manager is not able to fill an open position, he will be skipped, but will not be removed from the list.
2. Before each session, the list will be reviewed to determine the current manager's intent to return, and perspective manager's intent to remain on the list.
3. Should the league drop a team, a request will be made for a manager to volunteer to sit out for a session. If there are no volunteers or resignations, the last manager added will be asked to sit out a session.
4. A manager who has volunteered or been asked to sit out a session will have the option to be added to the top of the list to manage the next available team.
5. The American League Committee will maintain the list of managers from previous sessions. It is the goal of the Committee to rotate managers, as much as possible, with managers limited to three (3) consecutive sessions (Fall/Spring). After stepping aside for one session, a league member may return to the list to manage again.

### **D. Uniforms**

The clubs furnish pants, shorts, belts, jerseys, and caps/women's visors. Articles of uniforms are for league or club play only and are not to be used for non-league/club activities. Alterations are not permitted except for temporary "tucks" for fit. Any permanent alterations will result in a charge to the player. Caps/women's visors, pants, and shorts will be replaced on an exchange basis only, if worn out or damaged by play.

All articles of uniform are the property of the club. Any player who resigns his membership must return jersey's, pants, and shorts.

In support of our sponsors a full league-issued uniform consisting of cap/women's visor/league available safari hat, pants/shorts, and team jersey must be worn so the sponsor's name is clearly visible, and shirttails DO NOT have to be tucked in. With the exception of the umpires, all players, coaches, and managers must wear their league issued uniforms. This includes base coaches not currently playing. In case of cold or inclement weather, additional clothing will be allowed, however, team jerseys will be required to be worn over any additional clothing. Dark blue long pants are required and braces may be worn as necessary.

Players will not be allowed to play unless dressed in their properly worn, league issued uniforms. However, players will be given one warning by the umpire to immediately fix the problem or be removed. The team will be charged with an out each time the player would have come to bat. Players must notify the umpire of any medical exceptions. The respective Board will be notified of repeated offenses and be dealt with accordingly.

This rule is for the benefit of the sponsors, for proper newspaper/team pictures and for the professionalism of the Sun City West Senior Softball League.

## **E. Game Rules**

### **1. General**

Game time is 60 minutes. If the clock reached zero before the 7th inning, that inning will be completed and the next inning will be the open inning, The umpires are responsible for ensuring the game starts on time and that both teams are notified when the time expires, and that the next regular inning will allow unlimited runs.

To help confirm proper lineups and substitutes, lineups are to be exchanged by opposing managers prior to the first pitch.

The first game will start no later than its prescribed time from the schedule, unless otherwise indicated. At the designated time, the scorekeeper will start the clock whether teams are ready or not.

Teams are limited to four (4) runs per inning except for the last inning in which each team can score an unlimited number of runs.

Batters will start their at bat with a count of 1 ball and 1 strike (1-1) and have one to waste.

### **2. Flip-Flop rule**

Games will be 7 innings, or the time limit, whichever comes first. If the visiting team is ahead by Seven (7) or more runs, the unlimited inning will be reversed where the home team bats first and then the visiting team bats if needed.

### **3. Tie Games**

If time is left on the clock at the end of the 6th inning, one extra inning will be played. Each team can only score a maximum of 4 runs in that extra inning. That extra inning will start with one out and a runner on second. That runner will be the last batter of the previous inning.

### **4. Canceled or Delayed Games**

Games shall only be canceled by: Field manager, American League Committee member, or a club board member in that order. When any game is canceled due to inclement weather, succeeding games on the field will be canceled. The person canceling the games must contact all the managers of subsequent games at the field to notify them of the cancellation so they can call their players. When part of the day's schedule is completed and the weather closes the field, completed games will count for the record. A game must be 5 complete innings to be considered complete unless the home team is ahead at the end of 4 ½ innings.

### **5. Mercy Rule**

If a team is ahead by 10 runs after 6 innings the game will be over. 5 1/2 innings if the home team is ahead.

## **F. Playing Rules**

### **1. Team Organization**

To start a game, each team will consist of 10 players. A game may begin or finish with one less than required to start. To begin the game, the vacant position must be listed last in the batting order. An out will be recorded when the vacant position in the batting order is scheduled to bat. Should a substitute be used, managers may select a player from the same rating or a lower rating. (See 3.G) Managers are encouraged to use the sub list if possible before contacting players from other teams.

When an injured player must leave the game and team strength falls below ten, an eligible sub may be selected of equal or lower rating from the stands. That player then bats in the same position in the lineup as the injured player. EXCEPTION: If a player must leave a game due to an emergency, a sub of the same rating may be used to replace that player. If no sub is available, close the lineup and there will not be an out assessed when that player is to come to bat.

### **2. Substitutes**

When the need for a substitute is known before game time, managers may select a player from the same rating or a lower rating. Managers are encouraged to use the sub list if possible before contacting players from other teams.

### **3. Preferred Sub List**

- A. When an opening exists, players on the preferred sub list with the same rating can be placed on a team. Priority is given in the order that the players are placed on the list. New players who wish to join a session after the draft date are eligible to be placed on the preferred sub list immediately after they have completed their time with the Green Team. Three (3) rated players who wish to join a session after the draft date and have participated in any previous league sessions are not eligible for the preferred sub list until AFTER the first half of the current session's games have been played. However, these players are eligible to be placed in the regular sub pool at any time. Players who are in the draft and do not get picked have the choice of going to the Central League or going onto a sub list in the American League.
- B. Penalty for illegal substitution - After the game has started when the illegal player is detected they are to be removed from the game and the offending team plays the remainder of the game short. No substitutes will be allowed and that position in the batting order will be an out each time they come to bat. Any protest must be made during the game and must only be protested by a participating manager.
- C. Roster players may substitute only once per week, a pitcher on a roster may substitute twice per week as long as they pitch. A player on any kind of sublist may play three (3) games per week but a pitcher may pitch four (4) games per week, but only twice (2) per day. They can only sub once for the same team each week. The first violation will result in that player being unable to sub for two weeks. Further violations will result in that player not being able to sub for the remainder of session.
- D. A player may only substitute for the same team a maximum of four (4) times in one session.
- E. A member of the American League committee will monitor the substitutions.
- F. Substitutes may bat anywhere in the lineup.
- G. When a player fills in on an emergency basis for another player and does not play a complete game, he will not be charged with a time substituting. This applies when substituting for a player that is late, gets injured, or has to leave for personal reasons. Managers may pick a player with the same rating or lower from available players not playing at that time. However, by playing a complete game, that player has fulfilled his/her substituting obligation and will be charged with a time substituting.

### **4. Courtesy Runners**

- A. You may only run once per inning as a courtesy runner.
- B. Players will be allowed to run for themselves if they want to do so. Managers can't insert a courtesy runner in the line up without the player requesting one.
- C. A courtesy runner whose turn at bat comes while they are on base will be out. They will be removed from the base and come to bat. A second courtesy runner cannot be substituted at this time.
- D. A courtesy runner may not run for an existing courtesy runner except for an incurred injury.
- E. If a player has a courtesy runner, he can't be a courtesy runner in the same inning. F. Courtesy runner can only enter the game before first pitch to a batter.

## **5. Balls & Strikes**

A legal pitch with an arc of 6' to 12' that touches the plate/mat is a strike. Runners may advance at their own risk when a foul is caught.

## **6. Double Bag at 1st**

When a play is being made on the batter/runner they must touch some portion of the double bag extending into foul territory. He will be called out if he fails to do so. There is no appeal by the defensive team. The batter/runner simultaneously touching both portions of the double bag is permitted. The defending player has only the white base.

Exception: On any force out attempt from the foul side of first base, the defense and the batter-runner may use either the white or contrasting color portion of the base. On an errant throw pulling the defense off the white portion of the base into foul ground, the defense and the batter-runner can use either the white or contrasting color portion. When the defensive player uses the foul portion of the double bag, the batter-runner can run in fair territory when the throw is coming from the foul side of the base, and if hit by the thrown ball, it is not interference. If intentional interference is ruled, the runner is out.

## **7. Sliding or Diving**

A base runner may slide into 2nd or 3rd base. A base runner may dive back into 1st, 2nd or 3rd base. A base runner may not slide into 1st base or the commitment line. Any base runner using a hard slide to "take out" a defensive player will be called out and ejected from the game. Any player ejected from a game will also be suspended from the next game.

## **8. Avoid Unnecessary Contact**

In the interest of safety, runners coming into second base or third base for a force out, where there is a potential double play possibility, must avoid unnecessary contact with the defensive player who is about to catch and then possibly throw the ball. They must do this at the time they see they are going to be out if the ball is handled cleanly. That runner is required to veer off AT THE LAST SECOND either to the inside or the outside to avoid contact and thus prevent themselves from being called for interference and more importantly not causing an injury. If the defensive player drops the ball and the runner was RELATIVELY CLOSE to the base when they veered off, that runner will be called safe at that base even if the defensive player picks up the ball and tags the runner out.

On the other hand, a defensive player who has not received the ball yet may not block a runner from getting to a base. This is obstruction and the umpire will declare the baserunner is safe. If this obstruction occurs between first and second, for instance, that runner will get second base.

## **9. Verbal Interference**

Players are asked to refrain from making impromptu calls that should be left to the umpire (i.e., Infield fly, fair or foul balls, illegal pitches.) Such conduct may be considered a verbal distraction and subject to interference.

## **10. Commitment Line/Scoring Line**

If the runner has passed the commitment line and continues to run on the original foul line, and interferes with the fielder taking a throw at, and in contact with the plate, then: A dead ball out shall be declared and the runner is out with no advancement for the other runners.

In the senior slow pitch game, a scoring line is placed eight feet from home plate and base runners should be using a direct line from third base to the scoring line. If interference occurs on a thrown ball, the runner is ruled out and the ball is dead so no other runners can advance. Defensive players can only touch home plate and runners can only touch the scoring line.

A commitment line thirty feet from the scoring line or scoring plate will be used. Once a runner's foot touches the ground on or past this line, the runner is committed to advancing to the scoring line or scoring plate. EFFECT: Tag of a runner by a defensive player will not be allowed once BOTH of the runner's feet have crossed the commitment line. If a defender tags a runner after this happens, the runner will be called safe.

Runners must cross the scoring line with their foot down on the ground on or beyond the line. If the runner falls and any part of their body is on the ground, on or past the scoring line, they have crossed the line. Sliding or diving into first base or the scoring line is permitted only to avoid a collision with a defensive player. This is an umpire's judgment call and is not subject to protest or appeal.

## **11. Step Off Rule**

A runner on first or third base may, for their own safety and after notifying the umpire, step off of the bag. The runner must step off of the base in a straight line toward and up to the fence. The runner cannot interfere with any hit or thrown ball if they do it is considered a dead ball and they are out. The runner must retouch the base before they can advance. Their step off position is considered an extension of the base and therefore they can't be put out on any caught ball.

## **12. Pitcher's box**

A pitcher's box consisting of the area from the front of the pitcher's plate, extending back 10 feet and 24" wide will be used. The pitcher must release the ball after coming to a complete stop with one foot or both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate or within the pitcher's box. One foot must remain in contact with the plate/box when the pitch is released with an underhand motion. A step simultaneous with the release of the ball may be taken in any direction with the free foot. The pitcher must be facing the batter when delivering the pitch.

If the sun presents a problem to the batter in the early morning, they may request that the pitcher moves to one side or the other of the pitching box to allow them to see the pitch.

## **13. Protests/Appeals**

Only a manager may appeal a call. Judgement calls such as balls and strikes, runner out or safe, and fair or foul balls, are not grounds for appeal. Interpretation of the rules will be the only grounds for protest and will be settled on the field between the umpires and the two managers. Managers must appeal other violations such as ineligible sub or runner, runner missing a bag, interference, and batting out of order to the home plate umpire. Any situation where a rule is not covered in our American League rules, the two managers and umpires must agree to a solution.

Participating game managers are given the right to waive a rule for the good of the game for unusual circumstances or emergencies.

## **14. Ejections**

An umpire may eject a player who threatens or uses abusive language directly or indirectly toward an umpire, player, or spectator. The umpire ejecting a player must submit a written report to the American League Committee Chair within 24 hours. An ejected player must leave the field within 1 minute or the game will be forfeited. An ejected player is automatically suspended from all league activities including, but not limited to, playing in games, umpiring, scoring, announcing, spectating, special events, practice, etc. from the time of their ejection, until the conclusion of their next regularly scheduled game and will be subject to further disciplinary action. If a player attacks an

umpire, player, or spectator, the American League Committee suspends the player from all club activities as stated in ejected player pending a decision on disciplinary action. President of the Sun City West Club are to be sent copies of the action taken.

Grievance - Should a player disagree with the decision of the American League Committee they have the right to appeal to their respective Club Board President.

### **15. Warm-Up Pitches**

After the first inning, there may be 3 warm-up pitches or 1 minute, whichever comes first. Five (5) warm-up pitches will be allowed when a pitcher relieves another pitcher. In the interest of safety, pitchers will be allowed time to put on protective gear before the 1 minute countdown starts. Infield practice is allowed for all innings during the time the pitcher is warming up.

### **16. Batting Out of Order**

A batter shall be called out, on appeal, for batting out of order only after they complete their time at bat. If the error is discovered before they complete their time at bat, the correct batter will bat and assume the current count of balls & strikes. The appeal must be made before the first pitch to the next batter is made.

### **17. Home Runs**

Any ball hit over the fence will count as a home run. The batter may return directly to the dugout without touching 1st base and all other runners on base may return to the dugout without touching the next base. This is known as “ Hit &

#### Sit” Home Run One-Up Rule

- A. Teams may only hit a maximum of +1 home runs relative to their opponent’s home run total.
- B. Any batter that hits a home run for a team that is already +1 in home runs will be awarded a two base hit. All runners will advance two bases from base occupied when home run was hit.
- C. If a team is -1 in home runs relative to their opponent, that team may hit two consecutive home runs, moving them from -1, to even, to +1.

For example: Team A hits a home run in the top of the first inning. If another batter from Team A hits a home run in that inning, he or she will be awarded a two base hit. In the bottom of the first inning, Team B hits a home run, which evens each team’s home run total at 1. Team B can then hit another home run in that inning (moving to +1 over Team A) but hitting another home run (+2) would result in that batter being awarded a two base hit.

In short, any team that has more home runs than their opponents in a given game cannot be awarded a home run until the opposing team either evens the home run total or moves to +1.

Inside-the-park home runs do not count towards a team's home run total.

Balls hit in the net protecting the score board will be counted as a home run.

## **18. Bases**

Bases will be at 70' as per SSUSA rule book.

## **19. Batter Boxes**

A player with a foot completely out of the batter box when he hits the ball will be called out and the ball will be dead and runners return to the base they occupied when batter came to the plate.

## **20. Infield Fly**

A fair fly ball (not including a line drive) that can be caught by any fielder with ordinary effort when first and second bases or first, second and third bases are occupied with less than two outs. Any fielder can catch an infield fly.

NOTE: 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". The ball is live, and runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught, or re-touch and advance after a fielder touches the ball. 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.

## **21. Foul Tip**

A foul ball that goes directly from the bat to the catcher's hand(s) or glove and is legally caught by the catcher will be an out. The ball does not have to be as high or higher than the batter's head.

## **G. Players Equipment**

### **1. Pitcher Face Mask**

It is mandatory for all pitchers to wear a face mask. If the pitcher leaves the game, the sub must also wear a face mask. If a pitcher refuses to wear a face mask, the game will be forfeited. Each community will have a spare face mask for emergencies.

## 2. Softball Bats.

The official bat made up of the knob, handle, grip, taper, barrel and end cap shall be free of burs, dents, cracks, sharp edges, rattles and show no signs of excessive wear. The official bat may be marked OFFICIAL SOFTBALL by the manufacturer and shall be no more than 34 inches long nor exceed 38 ounces in weight. The official bat shall not be more than 2.250 inches in diameter at its largest part, including any tolerance for expansion. The official bat must bear the appropriate certification mark as shown below and must not be listed on the USA Softball Non-Approved Bat List with Certification Marks.



The Miken MSF Freak 100 with an ASA stamped sticker is grand fathered in as a legal bat by the Sun Cities Senior Softball League.

## 3. Banned or Altered Bats

A bat is considered altered when the physical characteristics of a legal bat have been changed which includes removing insides and gluing end cap back on. Anything done to a bat to enhance the performance of a bat is illegal. Inserting material inside the bat, shaving the bat, applying excessive tape (more than 2 layers) to the bat grip, or painting the bat other than at the top or bottom for identification purposes are examples of altering a bat. Exceptions: Knob grip/cones, colored tape for identification purposes, address labels, or friction tape are not considered altering a bat.

Any umpire, club board member, or any member of any League Committee has the right to inspect any bat that they have "reason to believe" has been altered. If there is "probable cause" the person must surrender their bat for inspection. If the bat is suspected, then the bat may be digitally X-Rayed for any alterations.

Any player refusing to surrender their bat for inspection will be suspended from play immediately. The player will remain suspended from all play until such time that an

inspection of the bat in question has been made. If the bat has been determined to be altered the player must appear before the board of the club, they belong to for disciplinary action.

Any player found to have an illegal or altered bat is subject to suspension from our league for up to one (1) year by the SCSSL. Flagrant or more than one offense is subject to further punishment. The infraction would also be subject to being reported to all local, state, and national organizations. The player would then be subject to any ban these organizations impose.

Any player found to be using an illegal or altered bat during a game, the following rule applies: If the bat is found prior to batting the bat is removed from the game at that time. If the bat is found after the player bats, the batter is out, and all runners return to the base they were at prior to the at bat.

ONLY BATS WITH AN ASA OR USA SOFTBALL STAMP WHICH HAS BEEN APPLIED BY THE BAT MANUFACTURER AND VISIBLY APPEARING ARE AUTHORIZED FOR USE AT SUN CITY WEST SOFTBALL FIELDS.

## **H. Responsibilities of Players**

### **1. Absentees**

Managing a team is a difficult job requiring the full cooperation of all team members. If you are going to be late, or miss a game, notify your manager well ahead of time.

Players need to be ready to play 30 minutes prior to game time as games can run ahead and start early.

A player who misses six (6) games within one session will be replaced with a placement pool player of equal rating and they will be placed in the placement pool. A player who misses games due in part to grieving the loss of a family member may petition the committee for relief from this rule. Players will have to play a complete game in return to not count as a missed game. This also applies to players not present at the start of the session.

A Player sitting out a calendar year or more for any reason will be required to go through the Green Team one time to be re-rated. The new rating will determine which league they will be assigned

### **2. Scoreboard Operators**

Team managers will assign scoreboard operators. It will be the responsibility of the player assigned to arrange for their own replacement if they are unavailable.

Scoreboard operator responsibilities take precedence over any request to sub as a player on another team. Scoreboard operators must know how to use the equipment.

### **3. Field Maintenance**

The home team is responsible for preparing the field before the first game and securing the field after the last game. If you are involved arrive early. Make sure all buildings are locked before leaving.

#### **4. Resigning**

If a player quits a team, they will be out of the league in all capacities for the rest of the session. They will not be able to play, coach or umpire until the session is completed.

#### **5. Alcohol**

Alcoholic Beverages may not be consumed while playing or umpiring a game

#### **6. Artificial Turf**

Sunflower seeds, chewing tobacco and gum are not allowed on Liberty Field.

10/11/2024