

# Union County Senior Softball League Rules

Revised 04/15/2016

*"Let's play ball and have some fun"*

**\* New rules and changes in red \***

## 1. GENERAL RULES

1.1. ASA rules will be used unless superseded by UCSSL rules.

### 1.2. NEW TEAMS:

A team interested in joining the League must submit a non-refundable check equal to the sponsor's fee to the UCSSL. The check will be applied toward sponsor or player fees should the team enter the League. A 50's team will enter the League as an 'A' team unless the League grants a waiver.

## 2. THE PLAYING FIELD

### 2.1. COMMITMENT LINE:

A three (3) foot line shall be marked perpendicular to the foul line and placed halfway (32' 6") between third base and home plate mat.

### 2.2. SCORING PLATE:

A 2nd home plate will be used as a scoring plate. It will be placed in foul territory, 8' from the back tip of home plate (on the 3rd base side) on an extended line from first base. A runner attempting to score **MUST** touch the 2nd home plate.

### 2.3. STRIKE ZONE MAT:

The rectangular mat will be 19" wide and 36" long. It will be placed with the painted home plate of the mat directly over the permanent home plate. Putouts at home plate can be made by touching any part of the mat.

2.4. **BASES:** Bases will be sixty five (65') feet apart.

### 2.5. DOUBLE FIRST BASE:

A double bag shall be used at first base. The base is 15" by 30". Half the base is white (over fair territory) and half is orange or green (over foul territory). If two individual bases are used, the 2nd base will be in foul territory 1' from the regular base. The 1' separation is a safety issue.

### 2.6 BATTER'S BOX:

[If not already drawn] Before play begins the umpire will draw two batters boxes 3'x7' at the positions laid out in the ASA rulebook.

These lines will be redrawn if they become indistinguishable during the game. Any batter completely stepping outside these lines *and making contact with a pitched ball* shall be called out.

## 3. EQUIPMENT

### 3.1. BALL:

The official game ball is a 'RESTRICTED FLIGHT' as provided by the League, Before each season, the managers will approve the ball to be used. Each manager will supply a game ball.

### 3.2. CLEATS / SPIKES:

Metal cleats are NOT permitted. A player found wearing metal cleats will be ejected from the game. If on base, a dead ball out will be called and all runners must return to the base occupied before the play began.

### 3.3. SHIRTS:

ALL players must wear the league approved team game shirt. A previous year's game shirt may be worn if it is identical in color to this year's shirt. A player may NOT alter his shirt by cutting sleeves, etc. No two players may have the same shirt number.

### 3.4. BATS:

3.4.1 We will abide by the ASA NON-APPROVED BAT LIST. Wooden bats may be used.

Penalty – A player using an *illegal* bat shall be ejected from the game and an out recorded. The bat will also be removed from the game. If the bat is discovered after a play has been completed, before the first pitch to the next batter, all runners must return to the base(s) they occupied before the play. A substitute player, if available can replace the ejected player. If not replaced, a slot out will occur each time the ejected player is due at bat.

If discovered after the first pitch to the next batter the player will be declared out and ejected from the game but all previous play will stand.

~~3.4.2 All (ASA approved) bats, provided by individual players, may be used by any player on either team during each UCSSL game. All bats must be placed against the backstop (or other common area) prior to the game and returned there after every at bat throughout the game, for the common use of all players. The penalty is the same as 3.4.1 [REMOVED]~~

**3.4.2** All bats must be ASA approved and must be tested for safety in compliance with ASA compression standards. Bats will be tested by league officers and those that pass will have a tamper-evident UCSSL sticker affixed to signify compliance with safety standards. Any player using a non-certified bat will be declared out.

**3.4.3** Players of league age 70 or older may use "senior bats" in all league games

**3.5** Pitchers are strongly encouraged to wear a protective mask in all league games

## 4. PLAYERS, COACHES & SUBSTITUTES

### 4.1. MEMBERSHIP:

4.1.1. All members must complete and return the registration form along with the yearly fee for the upcoming season

4.1.2. Members must submit a proof of age document with photo I.D.

4.1.3. All players will be members of the New Jersey Senior Softball Association (NJSSA)

### 4.2. TEAMS:

Each team roster will consist of a minimum of 13 players and a maximum of **22** players. Emergency roster changes can only be made by the League if a roster is reduced to fewer than thirteen players. A Union County resident age 80 or above, while paying his yearly fee, does not count against the roster size.

- 4.2.1. OVER 50: A team may have a maximum of **8** out of county (OOC) players
- 4.2.2. OVER 60: A team may have a maximum of 10 OOC players.
- 4.2.3. OVER 70: Any player, 70 or older, playing at least the most recent 5 consecutive years in the UCSSL will be considered a Union County resident, regardless of his current residence.

**4.3. GRANDFATHERED PLAYERS:**

- 4.3.1. If a player, living in Union County, while playing in the UCSSL moves out of the county while continuing to play in the league the player will be considered "GRANDFATHERED".
- 4.3.2. If for any reason a player misses a season (not on a team roster), he will no longer be grandfathered, and will be treated as an OOC player if he reapplies to play in the League. An exception may be made by the league officers if the reason for missing is medically based.
- 4.3.3. The league commissioner will maintain the list of "grandfathered" players.

**4.4. REGISTRATION:**

The League entry fee and team roster (preliminary) must be submitted before the scheduling meeting that is held in mid-April. Final rosters are due by May 15th of each year. No changes can be made after that date unless deemed necessary by league officials.

**4.5. ELIGIBILITY:**

- 4.5.1. All players must be 50 or 60 (depending on the division) or older during the current calendar year.
- 4.5.2. Players must have played in a minimum of 6 games in order to be eligible for the playoffs.
- 4.5.3. If due to medical reasons a player does NOT play 6 games, the League can allow him an exemption to play. The League MUST be notified of the player's medical condition.
- 4.5.4. If a player is challenged on his games played, his manager must show proof of "games played".

**4.6. LIABILITY:** All players and managers must sign a statement of discharge of liability before entering into any league activity.

**4.7. PLAYING TIME:- BOTH DIVISIONS:**

- 4.7.1. Except for the manager, each player present at the start of the game must be in the batting order for a minimum of three (3) innings. The manager will inform the other manager whether he will be playing. He shall also announce which other, if any, players will not be playing that game.
- 4.7.2. Players DO NOT have to play a defensive position.
- 4.7.3. Any player entering the game after the 3rd inning must replace a starting player and be announced to the umpire and opposing manager before entering the game.
- 4.7.4. All substitute players must enter the game before the first pitch of the 5<sup>th</sup> inning

**4.8. INJURED PLAYER:** A substitute can replace an injured player. If there are no substitute players available for an OBVIOUSLY injured player, NO slot out will occur when the player is due to bat. His spot will be skipped. A

player leaving for any other reason, and NOT replaced, a slot out will be recorded when the removed player is due to hit.

If a player is injured during an at bat, he is replaced by a player who has not yet played in the game or who played the first half of the game and has been removed from the game, if such a player is available. If no such replacement is available, the next batter in the order replaces him at bat with no slot out recorded. The replacement batter in either circumstance will assume the ball-strike count of the injured player.

#### **4.9. LATE PLAYERS:**

If a team starts the game with fewer than the standard number of players, (10 in the 50's, 11 in the 60's), late arriving players are added to the bottom of the lineup until the full lineup is reached. Additional late arriving players can be added to the bottom of the lineup until the leadoff batters of both teams have come to bat for the 2nd time.

#### **4.1 PLAYER TRANSFER FROM TEAM TO TEAM:**

4.10.1 Players may not change teams during the season

4.10.2 A player wishing to transfer to another team must give written notice to his manager, as well as the League Commissioner. The notice must be given during the "open period" – from opening day of the current season until January 31<sup>st</sup>. If notice is given during the season the player will continue to be a member of his current team for the remainder of the season. He will then become a free agent on February 1<sup>st</sup>. A player giving notice after January 31<sup>st</sup> will not be permitted to change teams for the upcoming season. Such a player will become a free agent on February 1<sup>st</sup> of the year following the upcoming season. He may remain a member of his current team or sit out the season.

## **5. THE GAME**

#### **5.1. FORFEITS:**

Game time 6:15, Forfeit time 6:30. Game will start at 6:15 if both teams have the minimum number of players to start the game.

50+ Division only, Games scheduled for any of the lighted Linden fields (Tremley, Memorial 2, Memorial 3) will begin at 6:30pm, with a 6:40 forfeit time.

#### **5.2. MINIMUM PLAYERS:**

- 5.2.1. 50'S: 8 Players to start the game. 9th spot in the batting order is a slot out.
- 5.2.2. 60's: 9 players to start the game. 10th spot in the batting order is a slot out.
- 5.2.3. In both of the above, the opposing team will supply a person to stand behind the plate and return the ball to the pitcher. He will NOT make any plays.

#### **5.3. LENGTH OF GAME:**

- 5.3.1. Length of the game is 7 innings or until a winner is determined.
- 5.3.2. An official game is 5 innings or 4 1/2 innings or if the home team is ahead.
- 5.3.3. An incomplete game will be replayed from the start.

#### **5.4. MERCY RULE:**

- 5.4.1. A 15 run mercy rule will be in effect after 4 1/2 innings; 5 if the home team is losing.
- 5.4.2. The mercy rule will not be in effect during playoff game, however, a team losing by the usual mercy rule may request taking a loss rather than playing a full 7 innings.

**5.5 TIES:**

Tie games after 8 innings will continue using the International Tie Breaker Rule until one team is ahead after a completed inning. All extra innings are open innings.

**5.5. INTERNATIONAL TIE BREAKER:**

- 5.5.1. It is used to start each half inning in extra-inning games beginning in the **ninth** (9th) inning.
- 5.5.2. The last batter in the previous inning is placed on 2nd base. He cannot get a courtesy runner until he reaches 3rd base.
- 5.5.3. The game proceeds as normal.

**5.6. END OF SEASON TIE BREAKERS:**

- Head to head record.
- Division record
- Run differential, head to head.
- Least runs allowed, head to head.
- Run differential, all games.
- Run differential, within the Division
- A playoff game. A coin flip determines the home team.

**5.7. RAINOUTS:** Rainouts will be scheduled as soon as possible. If warranted, make-up games and non-critical games may be eliminated from the schedule.

**5.8. SCORING & PUBLICITY:**

- 5.8.1. The Home Team's score book is the official book.
- 5.8.2. Both managers must report the game scores to the Publicity Chairman within 24 hours, advising him of game highlights and their team's won/lost record.

**5.9. PLAYOFFS:**

- 5.9.1. Highest seeded team will have the home field advantage.
- 5.9.2. The highest seeded team will always play the lowest seeded team in a playoff round.
- 5.9.3. In a three (3) game series, the highest seeded team is the home team for game 1 and the "if necessary" game.
- 5.9.4. (50s division) All playoff games will be held at the following fields:
  - A Division – Memorial Field # 2 (Linden)
  - B Division – Memorial Field # 3 (Linden)
  - C Division – Tremley Field

**5.10. HOME TEAM:**

- 5.10.1. Occupies the 1st base dugout/bench
- 5.10.2. Brings the following equipment:
  - Bases.
  - 2nd home plate.
  - Strike mat.
- 5.10.3. Pays the Umpire.
- 5.10.4. Keeps the Official Score Book.

**6. PITCHING**

**6.1. ARC PITCH:** The height of a legal pitch is between 6' and 12' from the ground.

**6.2. CALLED STRIKE:** A legal pitch striking ANY portion of the mat.

**6.3. PITCHER'S BOX:** The pitcher's box is a 2' by 6' rectangle starting from the pitching rubber (50') and extending back 6'. The pitcher can pitch from anywhere within this box as long as his pivot foot is within or touching the boundary line of the box.

The pitcher CANNOT walk up and pitch, he MUST come to a COMPLETE stop and present the ball before pitching. ALL other ASA pitching rules must be observed.

## 7. BATTING

### 7.1. THIRD STRIKE FOUL

- 7.1.1. Dead ball out, whether caught or not.
- 7.1.2. Runners CANNOT advance.

### 7.2. FOUL TIP:

A foul tip is a batted ball that goes directly into the catcher's glove.

- 7.2.1. With less than two strikes a batter is not out.
- 7.2.2. If the batter has two strikes a foul tip is considered a third strike foul and the batter is out.

*Note: A batted ball which does not go directly into the catcher's glove is considered a FOUL BALL and, if caught, is an out. There is no longer a height restriction on a foul ball.*

**7.3. MAXIMUM RUNS PER INNING:** A team may score 6 runs per half inning. However, a trailing team can 'catch up' and score an additional 6 runs. This is called 'catch up + 6'. The last and subsequent innings are open innings, with teams allowed to score an unlimited number of runs.

## 8. BASE RUNNING

**8.1.** 50's & 60's All runners must reach 1st base on his own.

**8.2** [60's only] A player who is in possession of a valid ADA card will be protected from being thrown out at first base by an outfielder.

A batted ball must reach the outfield grass and pass an infielder, other than the pitcher, to be considered a hit. The ball is live and putouts and force outs of other runners are permitted.

The middle fielder (11<sup>th</sup> player) IS NOT considered an outfielder in this case regardless of his position on the field.

**8.2.** Base runners may leave the base when a pitched ball is hit, touches the ground, or reaches home plate.

### 8.3. COURTESY RUNNERS:

- 8.3.1. Any player on the roster, and active for the game, may be a courtesy runner. He need not be in the lineup at that time
- 8.3.2. There is no limit to courtesy runners, but a runner may only run

- once per inning.
- 8.3.3. A runner who is replaced by a courtesy runner cannot be a courtesy runner in the SAME inning.
- 8.3.4. A courtesy runner must be inserted before the 1st pitch to the next batter.
- 8.3.5. A courtesy runner can be replaced by another courtesy runner before the 1st pitch is thrown.
- 8.3.6. If a pitch is thrown with an illegal courtesy runner on base, an appeal can be made and the illegal runner is out.
- 8.3.7. If a courtesy runner is on base when he is due to bat:  
The courtesy runner is out.  
The courtesy runner comes to bat.  
If the out is the 3rd out, he leads off in the next inning.

#### **8.4. SLIDING, OVER-RUNNING:**

- 8.4.1. Sliding is permitted into any base including 1st base and the 2nd home plate.
- 8.4.2. Over running 2nd and 3rd base without liability to be tagged out is NOT allowed.

#### **8.5. INTERFERENCE:**

Runner must slide or otherwise avoid interfering with a fielder attempting to throw to first base. If, in the umpire's judgment, the player did NOT attempt to avoid interfering, he may rule a double play. IMPORTANT: THIS IS A JUDGEMENT CALL. You cannot protest the umpire's call.

- \* *Note – This is a clarification of the current rule. There is a misconception that runners must veer on ANY play being made at 2<sup>nd</sup> base. There is already a rule in effect regarding collisions so this clarification eliminates the jeopardy of a runner veering away from the base only to be tagged (or called) out if the fielder drops the ball or there is no clear intention throw to first base.*

#### **8.6. COMMITMENT LINE:**

A line draw halfway between 3rd and home plate. A runner touching or crossing this line (with his foot), MUST continue toward home plate. Returning toward 3rd base is an automatic out.

#### **8.7. HOME PLATE OUT:**

A play at home plate is always a force out. The defensive player must have possession of the ball, tagging any part of the strike mat, before the runner touches the 2nd home plate. The defensive player may NOT tag the runner after the runner steps on or crosses the commitment line. A runner crossing or touching the strike zone mat shall be called out.

#### **8.8. SCORING:**

A run will score when the runner touches the 2nd home plate before the defensive player tags any part of the strike mat.

## **9. PROTESTS / UMPIRES**

### **9.1. PROTESTS:**

ASA Rule #11 will apply. The Umpire and opposing manager must be notified of your intention of protesting BEFORE the next pitch. A protest committee consisting of League Officers will determine the results of the protests. A protest MUST be filed in writing along with a \$50 check. The check will be returned if the protest is allowed.

### 9.2. DISPUTED PLAY:

ONLY managers or assistants can discuss disputed plays with the umpire.

### 9.3. LACK OF AN UMPIRE:

If the ASA Umpire is not present, the game must still be played. Managers should agree on a substitute umpire. Players, spectators or a combination of both can be used. A spectator, who can be a player from another team, should be paid the normal umpire's fee. The league coordinator should be notified so that he can follow up with the ASA Umpire Assignor.

## 10. EJECTIONS AND SUSPENSIONS

- 10.1. Any player ejected from a game, for any reason, will be reported to the League Commissioner
- 10.2. A player ejected for the second time, for any reason(s) in the same season may be suspended from the league for the remainder of the season at the discretion of the League officials.
- 10.3. There will be no reimbursement of fees to any players suspended from the league.

## 11. SPECIAL TEAM ACCOMODATIONS

- 11.1. **['50s Division]** All C division teams, when playing an A division team, will be allowed to use an additional (11<sup>th</sup>) defensive player **and will get 1 run in all but the first and 'open' inning(s)**
- 11.2. **['60s Division]** When the strongest 5 teams (Teams 14-18) play the two least strong teams (Teams 20 & 21) the following will apply:
  - A. Elimination of the "catch-up + 6" rule in innings 1-6 **for the stronger team only**
  - B. In all but the open inning(s) **the stronger team** can score a maximum of 6 runs.
  - C. The less strong team has the option at the start of the game to:
    - 1. Get 1 run in all but the first and 'open' inning(s) or
    - 2. Add a 12<sup>th</sup> defensive player.
  - D. The less strong team has the option of being the visitors in all games.