



LEAGUE RULES, effective Spring 2010, amended 02/12/10

## **DEFINITIONS**

- **EDDIE (e)** (coed only): A female player (fe) over the age of 18. A male player (me) over the age of 52. A male player is considered of eddie status at the beginning of the year if he should turn 52 at any point during the calendar year.
- **DESIGNATED EDDIE (de)** (coed only): Any male eddie who can no longer play a position other than catcher can apply to the league for the status of designated eddie. A (de) can be used as a replacement for the mandatory 3rd female in the field at the catcher position only. This (de) status is applicable in any coed leagues in which the (de) plays. A (de) can never take the place of a female eddie in the batting line-up. Designated eddie status is reversible after 1 calendar year (3 full softball seasons).
- **CORE**: Any male player between the ages of 18 and 52.
- **ALL-STAR (\*)** (coed only): Any player who has achieved the ranking of an upper echelon player.
- **NON-ROSTER (sub)**: Any individual who has not paid a league fee. A non-roster player is also considered such if he/she is a paid/registered member of another team.
- **BYLAWS**: League rules shall be reinforced by league bylaws. League bylaws are a collection of league rule amendments and clarifications. League bylaws can be found on the league message board in the forum entitled Important Announcements.

## **GAMES**

- **SHORT-HANDED TEAMS**: Teams may not take the field with less than 8 players. A batting out must be taken for the missing 9<sup>th</sup> batter in the line-up. In this case, and for regular season games only, the opposing team is requested to supply a catcher to return the pitched ball to the pitcher. A 10-minute grace period will be observed if both teams have fewer than 8 players present (including subs). If one team has 8 or more and the other has fewer than 8, the short-handed team will become visitor, absent players will be dropped to the bottom of the line-up, and play will begin on time.
- **TIME LIMIT**: No new inning shall begin within ten minutes of the start time of the next scheduled game or once the 75-minute time limit has been reached. In the case of gray area or extenuating circumstances, the decision to stop or continue a game will be left to the umpire's unbiased discretion.
- **TIE GAMES** can occur if the time limit has been reached and the score is tied. Extra innings can occur if time permits. The tiebreaker rule will be used for all games except the championship finals where extra innings will be played in their entirety. Starting with the top of the eighth and every inning thereafter, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player who is scheduled to bat last in that ½ inning being place on 2B.
- **1-1 COUNT**: Every batter in every league shall begin their at-bat with a 1 ball and 1 strike count.
- **RUN RULE**: All games shall terminate after 4 innings if a team is leading by 20 runs or more, 5 innings by 15 runs or more. All games with the exception of the 2/3 Finals shall be subject to the 75-minute time rule.
- **DOUBLE BAG (1B)**: A batter/runner is required to use the outer bag at first base (foul territory) any time there is a play at first base. Failure to do so may result in the runner being called out, providing the play is appealed to the umpire before the next pitch is thrown.
- **BASE STEALING** is prohibited. Base runners cannot leave the base until the batter makes contact with the ball - fair or foul. If the base runner attempts to gain an advantage by leaving the base before batter contact, or on a check swing or miss, that runner will be called out. When multiple base runners leave early, only the lead runner leaving early shall be called out.
- **SLIDE OR SURRENDER: PLAY AT THE PLATE** - Umpires will call base runners out if they fail to slide or surrender when there is a play at the plate. 'Play at the plate' shall refer to any instance where a fielder is 'about to receive the ball' in the 'general vicinity' of home plate. 'About to receive the ball' shall refer to any instance where the ball arrives immediately before, at the same time, or immediately after the base runner reaches home plate. 'General vicinity' shall mean within a few feet of the plate. 'Surrender' shall be described as slowing down to the point where the runner can 'hold the plate' without contacting the fielder. 'Holding the plate' shall mean being able to keep at least one foot on the plate without any overrun. If, during a 'play at the plate' the runner fails to slide or 'hold the plate' when not sliding, the runner will be immediately called out regardless of whether contact was, or was not, made with the fielder. 'Play at the plate', 'about to receive the ball', and 'general vicinity' shall remain judgment decisions by the umpire. Every effort will be made to ensure all umpires call the play in accordance with the guidelines as set forth above and on as consistent a basis as possible. Judgment calls are not grounds for protest. Incessant arguing of judgment calls shall remain grounds for ejection. **PLAY AT 2<sup>ND</sup> OR 3<sup>RD</sup> BASE** - Because base runners naturally slow down (surrender) when running to 2nd or 3rd base so as to not overrun the bag, being called out for failure to slide will be based on the current ASA 'if contact is made' guidelines. However, any base runner that fails to slide or get out of the way on a double play will be immediately called out and the double play automatically awarded.
- **BLOCKING**: The intentional blocking of any base or plate is prohibited - with or without the ball. The catcher or fielder covering a play at the base/plate shall allow the runner room to slide. Unintentional obstruction should pass without penalty.
- **FAKE TAGS** are prohibited. A fielder attempting to decoy a base runner by employing a false motion shall be dealt with at the discretion of the umpire, which may result in an ejection from the game.
- **PITCHERS** must make contact with the pitching rubber upon release of the ball for every pitch. Failure to do so will result in an automatic called ball. Any pitch (umpire's judgment) thrown outside the 6'-14' requirement will be called an illegal pitch. Pitchers may have 5 warm-up pitches prior to the start of the game. A relief pitcher may have the same at his/her point of entry into the game. There shall be no warm-up pitches between innings.
- **BATTER'S BOX APPEAL**: The pitcher may make a batter's box appeal to the umpire who will then make a quick assessment of the batter's position in the batter's box. If the umpire feels the batter is legally positioned, the appeal will be denied. If the umpire deems the batter might be outside the box by more than a few inches (both feet must be within the confines of the box), the umpire will take a bat, use it as a yard stick, measure the width and/or depth of the box, draw a line in the dirt with the bat and direct the batter's position accordingly.

- **COURTESY RUNNERS** may be used providing an actual injury to a player has occurred during or prior to a game. Any batter/runner using a courtesy runner will be expected to stop at 1B on any batted ball other than an over-the fence home run, ground-rule double, or out of play situation where extra bases are awarded by the umpire. Should said batter/runner make any effort toward 2nd base, that player will immediately forfeit their right to use a courtesy runner for the remainder of the game and their next game. The next game penalty will not carry from season to season. Any player forfeiting their right to use a courtesy runner a 2nd time in any one season (all leagues) will lose their right to use a courtesy runner for the balance of the season (all leagues). Managers must specify on their line-up card before the start of the game which player(s) will need courtesy runners. If a courtesy runner is used, then one must be used for that player for the remainder of the game. Players 60 years of age or beyond need not be courtesy runners if that is their choice; however, this must also be declared on the line-up card before the start of the game. The courtesy runner will be the last player to make an out, regardless of their status, whether as a result of an at-bat or on the base paths. Teams shall be limited to 2 courtesy runners (2 players for the entire game). If an injury to a player occurs during a game and a courtesy runner is needed over the limit of 2, a manager may petition the umpire for exception to the limit. Any player using a courtesy runner may not play a position in the field other than 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, pitcher, or catcher.
- **OFFICIAL GAMES** become such once 4 innings are completed, 3½ if home team is winning.
- **COIN FLIPS** will determine home/visiting team. Any Softball America league official may conduct the coin flip. The coin flip winner will have the choice to be home or visiting team. If the 2 teams face one another more than once, home team for each game will be noted on the scheduled.
- **RESCHEDULING OF GAMES:** The first week of rainouts will be rescheduled for the first (league day) following the regular season. Additional rainout weeks will be rescheduled for the second Saturday (if available) following the date of the actual rainout. A rainout on the final week of the regular season will be rescheduled for the very next available Saturday. The first playoff or 2/3 rain out will be rescheduled for the next (league day). Additional playoff or 2/3 rainouts will be rescheduled for the very next available Saturday following the date of the actual rainout. Softball America will make every effort to schedule games on the days/nights and at the times teams sign up for; however, we reserve the right to schedule games to the contrary when presented with extenuating circumstances. This may or may not include Fridays and Mondays of holiday weekends.
- **FORFEITS:** A team that forfeits a regularly scheduled game will be required to remit a \$25.00 cash forfeit fee to the scorekeeper before they can take the field in their next game. This forfeit fee will be held in escrow and given to the team on the receiving end of the forfeit. A 2nd forfeit in any 1 season will cost the team \$50.00. Additional forfeits will be dealt with at the discretion of the league.
- **GROUND RULES** at all ball fields will conform to ASA official ground rules with the following exceptions; Quarry: any ball hitting off the angled side fence remains in play unless the ball rolls beyond an imaginary line from the end of the angled fence to the start of the 6' fence. Cedar Hill and Luken's Park: Fair balls that reach the outfield brush or tree line shall remain in play.

#### **MISCELLANEOUS**

- **LEAGUE RULES** are intended to be clear and concise; however, if a rule becomes subject to interpretation, the decision by league officials as to the spirit with which the rule was designed shall be adhered to. General league rules will conform to ASA official rules unless otherwise posted herein.
- **AWARDS:** To qualify for offensive statistical awards, core/all-stars must have a minimum of 18 at-bats; eddies 15 at-bats.
- **LEAGUE FEES** are non-refundable and non-transferable after game 2 of any season. League fees must be remitted before a player can take the field in Week 1. Any player who plays a game without having remitted a league fee will put his/her team's game in jeopardy of forfeit. Any member that plays for a team in an official game using a league fee credit will be obligated to that team for the remainder of the season. Failure to do so will result in forfeiture of the league fee credit.
- **ALCOHOL:** Consumption of while playing or on the player's bench is strictly prohibited. Umpires will warn, then eject.
- **SCOREKEEPERS:** The scorekeeper shall inform team managers of any roster infractions; however, the scorekeeper shall not be held responsible if any infractions are unintentionally overlooked. Ultimately, the responsibility lies with the team manager. Scorekeepers shall have the right to assist the umpire in calls regarding the timing of runs-scored and courtesy runner infractions.

#### **EQUIPMENT**

- The use of any bat other than a straight single material/single wall is strictly prohibited by other than male/female eddies.
- Male players over 51 but under 65 (eddie) shall be restricted to the use of a limited number of non-composite multi-wall bats as certified by the ASA and Softball America.
- A female player of any age (eddie) and any male player 65 years or older (eddie) shall be restricted to any bat listed as certified by the ASA. Any bat not legal for use by male eddies but legal for use by female and 65+ males shall be deemed a HOT BAT. Hot bats must display a piece of 4" wide silver tape placed just above the bat grip whenever a qualified player using said bat steps into the batter's box. It is the responsibility of the bat user to make sure this condition is met. Failure to comply will place the batter in jeopardy of being called out. This call will be made by the umpire and can be initiated by anyone at any point from when the batter steps into the batters box up until a pitch to the following batter is made. Should any unqualified player (core, all-star, or male eddie under 65) step into the batter's box with a bat as described above, that player will be immediately ejected from the game and suspended for the following game. Questionable bats should be removed from the game without penalty when in the hands of a qualified batter in the batter's box.
- **DENTED BATS:** Excessively dented bats shall be removed from the game without penalty.
- **ILLEGAL BATS:** Any non-conforming bat as outlined by Softball America bat restriction policies shall be removed from the game without penalty. If the batter reaches base, the batter shall called out if the illegal bat use is discovered before the next pitch is thrown. Any and all base runners shall return.
- **ALTERED BATS:** A batter shall be called out when entering the batter's box with or is discovered using an altered, doctored, or loaded bat. Additionally, the batter shall be disqualified from the game and suspended from any further play in all of Softball America for the balance of the season plus 2 additional seasons thereafter. Any and all league fees will be forfeited.
- **METAL CLEATS** may be worn on defense and in the outfield only. Any player found using metal cleats on offense will be called out; if on defense in the infield, removed from the game for the remainder of the ½ inning.

#### **ROSTERS / LINE-UPS / SUBS**

- **LINE-UPS (ALL):** Managers for each team must present their line-ups to the scorekeeper at least 5 minutes prior to the start of their game and must specify which players will need courtesy runners (cr). Grace periods, line-up changes, or any unwritten courtesies will be ignored if line-ups are not submitted in this timely manner. All roster players are eligible to bat; however, not more than 10 players may play the field at one time.

- **LINE-UPS (COED):** Managers must specify on their line-up card which players are male eddies (me) and which players are female eddies (fe). All coed teams must adhere to the 4-4-3 rule. The 4-4-3 rule states 4 eddies must be in the batting line-up and 4 eddies must be in the field at all times. **BATTING:** At least 3 of the 4 batting eddies must be female. Failure to comply will result in a batting out for each infraction (maximum of 2). A team cannot pinch-hit for an eddie if doing so will put the line-up in default of eddie requirements. **FIELDING:** At least 3 of the 4 fielding eddies must be female. If a coed team fails to meet eddie fielding requirements, no eddie will be permitted to play the position of catcher (except in the case of a designated eddie) and the team may play with not more than 9 fielders. A batting out should not be invoked for being in default of eddie fielding requirements unless the fielding default could have been avoided as outlined in our league **ROSTER DEFAULT** rule. A coed team cannot take the field with less than 2 females.

**NON-ROSTER PLAYERS (SUBS):** A men's league team may sub with up to 4 non-roster players; however, not more than 1 of the subs may be listed in the previous year's men's league Player of the Year (POTY) top ten. Additionally, the team can play with not more than 9 and a sub-use batting out shall be imposed if, and only if, no other batting out is imposed. Coed teams may sub with up to 4 non-roster players; however, all-stars cannot be used as subs and not more than 2 subs may be non-eddies. Coed teams may add to a total of more than 9 in the line-up to meet eddie requirements, but may field not more than 9. A coed sub-use batting out shall be imposed for the use of non-eddie subs if, and only if, no other batting out is imposed. The coed sub-use rule shall not apply to the use of eddie subs unless the eddie sub is added for reasons other than to meet eddie requirements. A coed sub shall not play the field in place of an available roster player unless that sub is needed to meet eddie fielding requirements. The following is applicable in both men's and coed leagues. In the event roster players become available, non-roster players (subs) must immediately surrender their positions. If more than 1 sub is being used, a late-arriving roster player must immediately take the place of the uppermost sub in the batting line-up. If all subs become replaced by roster players, any sub-use batting out may be removed from the line-up. All non-roster players must bat at the bottom of the batting order. Any sub in the line-up not present when their time at bat arises must be removed from the game and a batting out is to be taken in that spot. Under no circumstances can a manager add a sub to the line-up once the game begins.

- **SUB ELIGIBILITY:** A non-roster player who is not a registered member of Softball America may sub up to 2 games per team in a season and not more than 5 games per season. A team using the same non-roster player beyond the maximum may be required to forfeit the game(s) where the ineligible player continued to appear on the roster. A non-roster player who is a member of Softball America may play unlimited games as a sub in any league in which he/she is a member.

- **ALL-STAR/EDDIE RULE (COED):** A coed team batting line-up containing more than 4 all-stars shall abide by the all-star/eddie rule and must at all times maintain a batting line-up that contains at least an equal number of eddies. A team with a batting line-up containing 4 or less all-stars will abide by regular coed rules. If, at any time during the regular season, by any member of SBA, a team using 5 or more all-stars is found to be in default of the all-star/eddie rule, that team will forfeit all games in which the infraction occurred. All-stars are determined by the league and shall be adjusted yearly. A coed team cannot use a non-roster eddie sub to satisfy all-star/eddie requirements.

- **LATE ARRIVING ROSTER PLAYERS:** Before the start of the game, a manager may place an absent player anywhere in the line-up. If the player's batting slot comes up and he/she has not arrived, the manager can: 1) take a batting out and leave the player in the line-up in anticipation of that player arriving, 2) drop the player to the bottom of the line-up, 3) remove the player (at any time) from the batting order and take no batting out as long as all other roster requirements have been met. Late-arriving roster players may be added to the bottom of the batting order providing the batting line-up has not turned over.

- **FROZEN ROSTERS:** After week 2 of any season, or the team's 2nd game of any season (whichever comes first), all rosters shall be frozen with respect to league fee transfers. A new player can be added to a roster at any time during the regular season providing a league fee for that new player is remitted.

### **SPECIAL CONDITIONS**

- **A 2ND FOUL BALL** with 2 strikes is an out for all eddies. A foul ball with 2 strikes is an out for all core/all-star players.

- **EDDIE WALK RULE:** Any base on balls issued to a core/all-star player batting ahead of an eddie (with 2 outs in the 5<sup>th</sup> inning and beyond), whether intentional or not, will give the eddie's manager the option of batting that eddie or awarding the eddie first base. If there is a batting out (in other than the last inning of the game) in-between the walked core player and the eddie, the out shall be recorded as such and the inning shall end. The manager's right to exercise said option is forfeited by the batting out.

- **OUTFIELD EDDIE MARKERS:** Outfielders must remain behind an imaginary line starting 30 paces from 1st and 3rd base down the foul lines then following an arc along the infield dirt line when an eddie is at bat and until contact is made with the ball. Managers may object to the umpire any time an eddie is in the batter's box. If, in the umpire's judgment, the fielder(s) are in violation of this rule, the offending fielder(s) will move behind the 30-pace mark for the eddie batter, then be required to move back to his/her/their position(s) in the field where the violation occurred for the next non-eddie batter, be it in the same or next inning. Manager objections cannot be made once the eddie batter hits a fair ball.

- **ROSTER DEFAULT:** If while a game is in progress, a team is found to be in default of any roster requirement, the defaulting team must take immediate remedial action and shall start their next inning with 1 out; recorded as a team out not affecting the batting order. A roster default can only apply when the default of the roster requirement was avoidable.

- **MEN'S LEAGUE EDDIES:** Any eddie making all-star in the men's league will be required to forfeit eddie status along with any advantages inherent in being an eddie. The player's all-star and eddie designations will cancel each other out and the player will then be designated as a core player in the coed leagues. This eddie-turned-core player will remain such for any year following being named on the men's league all-star list. If, at the completion of any year, the eddie-turned-core player either fails to make the men's all-star list or does not play in the men's league, a manager can petition the league to have the core player's eddie status reinstated. Any female player that feels compelled to play in any men's league will immediately earn the designation of men's league player and thus forfeit eddie status until the year of her 52<sup>nd</sup> birthday.

### **BATTING OUTS**

- **BATTING OUTS** may be used for eddies, but cannot be used as eddies. Any eddie advantages or special conditions are forfeited when a batting out is taken. Any batting out must be placed before any subs in the line-up. A batting out shall be taken for each player fewer than 9 and/or for each failure to meet eddie requirements. Late-arriving players may (manager's discretion) enter the game at anytime. Roster players must replace non-roster players immediately. Not more than 2 batting outs shall be taken in any one batting line-up.

- **ENDING THE GAME:** A batting out shall not be taken if it is the last out of the last inning of regulation play, top or bottom half. In that instance, the batting out shall be passed over without penalty. **EXCEPTION 1:** The batting out is a result of an ejection or a player leaving the game for any reason other than injury. **EXCEPTION 2:** The batting out comes up in extra innings.

### **EJECTIONS / PLAYER INJURY / LEAVING THE GAME**

- **EJECTIONS:** An umpire may eject a player before, during, or after a game for conduct deemed unbecoming of the league. Ejected players must leave the grounds immediately. Any individual ejected from a game shall receive an automatic and irreversible suspension for the following game. The umpire has the right to add game suspensions (not to exceed 5 games) if an ejected player refuses to cooperate. An ejected player may be substituted for with only an available roster player. If a non-roster player or coach is ejected from a game, any resulting suspension is to be served by the team manager. An individual receiving a second ejection in the same season (any league) will be suspended from all leagues for the remainder of the current season. Any and all league fees will be forfeited. If an ejection is the result of a physical altercation, not less than a 2 game suspension shall be served. A 2<sup>nd</sup> ejection of this nature during any calendar year will result in no less than a league ban of the player/players for the remainder of the current season, (all leagues), plus the following two seasons. Any and all league fees will be forfeited. Any individual ejected 3 times during the softball calendar year will receive a league ban for the remainder of the current season, (all leagues), plus the following two seasons. Any and all league fees will be forfeited.

- **CONTACT:** A player who intentionally makes contact with a player from another team and, in the umpire's judgment, uses excessive or inappropriate force, that player may, at the umpire's discretion, be called out and/or ejected from the game.

- **BRAWLS:** Any individual, be it a team member or fan of the team, who joins in any physical altercation shall be ejected from the grounds and banned from said grounds for a period of time to be determined by the league. Additionally, the game shall terminate as a single or double forfeit as determined by the umpire in charge.

- **PLAYER INJURY:** If a team has chosen to start all roster players leaving no roster subs on the bench and one of the players gets hurt to the point where he/she obviously can't continue, that player shall be passed over in the batting line-up without penalty as long as all roster requirements are met. If said player re-enters the game, he/she will be declared an illegal player. The re-entering player and the manager will be ejected. Re-entry consists of facing a pitch or being on the field when a pitch is thrown.

- **LEAVING THE GAME:** If a team has chosen to start all roster players leaving no roster subs on the bench, and one of its players leaves the game or is ejected from the game, that player shall NOT be passed over in the batting line-up. If a player in the line-up leaves the game due to an injury that is not obvious without being substituted for or notifying the umpire or scorekeeper in person, that player's absence will result in a batting out for each of the player's remaining at-bats. In either of these instances this batting out CAN end the game.

### **PROTESTS**

- **PROTOCOL:** If as manager you feel that the umpire has made an error with respect to ASA or SBA rules during your game, you have the option to protest the game. You must, at the point of infraction (before the next pitch), notify the umpire and the scorekeeper of the call in question and your intent to protest. Judgment calls are not grounds for protest. In order to lodge a protest, the protesting manager must: 1) write an explanation of the protest in the scorebook along with his/her signature, 2) have the umpire and opposing manager sign the scorebook, 3) be prepared to post a \$25.00 protest bond to have your case heard. If the protest is dismissed, the \$25.00 bond will be forfeited. If the protest is upheld, the \$25.00 bond will be returned and the game will be replayed from the point of the infraction.

- At least 80% of each team's players from the original game must be used and a manager must keep his line-up as close to the original as possible. If the replay is played with ineligible players, the offending team will forfeit the game. Protested games may have to be replayed on a day of the week other than the one it was originally played.

### **PLAYOFFS AND CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY**

- **TIEBREAKERS:** In the event of a 2-way tie in the final standings, head to head play will be the 1<sup>st</sup> tiebreaker. If head to head play is a split, seasonal runs-against will be used as the 2<sup>nd</sup> tiebreaker with head to head runs-against as the 3<sup>rd</sup> tiebreaker. In the event of a 3 or more way tie in the final standings, seasonal runs against shall be the 1st tiebreaker. If seasonal runs against are the same, head to head play is the 2nd tiebreaker. If head to head is a split, head to head seasonal runs against is be the 3rd tiebreaker. If the listed tiebreakers fail to produce clear results, a coin toss or reasonable facsimile will take place.

- **POST SEASON ELIGIBILITY:** All players must have played in at least 1/3 of the team's regular season games to qualify for the post season. Additionally, they must be paid members. Regular season refers to regularly scheduled games and not the playoffs. If a player is unable to attend a regular season game, or has fewer than needed for playoff eligibility, the team may receive a game credit for that player in any regular season game by taking a batting out for that player through the entire game. The manager must make this known to the scorekeeper before the game begins. The use of the batting out to qualify a player shall be limited to 1 time per team, per season. Teams receiving a forfeit will receive full roster game credits. Teams doing the forfeiting will receive game credits for only the players in attendance.

- **DISABLED LIST:** If a roster member becomes unable to play due to injury, that player may be placed on the disabled list and receive game credits for playoff eligibility provided the player, 1) is paid before the injury occurs, 2) the scorekeeper is notified of the intent to use the DL before the next game, 3) the player placed on the DL attends the game and makes his/her presence known to the scorekeeper.

- **HOME/VISITOR:** The higher seeds will be home team for all playoff games and the 1st and 3rd games in the 2/3 championship series.

- **SUSPENDED PLAY:** Post season games suspended for any reason shall be resumed at the point of the suspension.

- **TIME LIMIT:** If, in any playoff game, 2 teams are within 5 runs or less of each other and the time limit should come into effect, the game would then be extended by 1 inning from that point – providing teams are timely with respect to the start of the game. If one team is not timely (for any reason), that team will forfeit their option to extend the game 1 inning. A league official must make the offending team aware of this fact before the start of the game. There shall be no time limit for the 2/3 championship games only. There will be no more than a 15-minute interval between championship games regardless of the posted start times.

- **NON-ROSTER PLAYERS** are ineligible for any post-season game. Courtesy catchers are prohibited. The catcher position must be occupied.