

# Houston Architectural and Engineering

## Softball League Rules (Fall 2011)

### Regular Season Rules

1. All games are seven innings or 55 minutes; Umpires must keep all games on time in fairness to teams playing later hours and due to facility permit restrictions. There are no tie games. Games will move to basic tie breaking rules after time limit has expired.
2. The minimum age to play in our league per Sportsplex rules will be 18 years of age.
3. Games start on time!!! Teams must be prepared to play. Forfeit rule: 10 minutes after game time. In the event that you are short players during the regular season, you will need to notify your opponent. You may add up to 2 players from the stands or from another team. Any additional players will need the other coach's approval, before the start of the game. You may not pick up any players during tournament play.
4. An umpire will determine all balls and strikes. All judgment calls are final. Any excessive disagreements will result in an ejection from the game and/or league if deemed necessary by HSP staff.
5. A legal pitch must have an arc of 6'-12'. Any pitch that is not deemed legal will be an automatic ball.
6. You may NOT have an all women battery (catcher/pitcher), but you may have an all male battery. This is the only restriction on where male or female players may be play in the field.
7. Inning run limit rule: There will be a 6 run limit per inning, except for 5<sup>th</sup> or if the time is less than 10 minutes when the visiting team comes up to bat, whichever comes first. Both teams may score as many runs as they can in these innings.
8. The run rule will be in effect: 15 runs after 4 innings or 10 runs after 5 innings. If the run rule comes into play, scoring stops and the higher scoring team is the victor.
9. Teams may bat more than ten (10) players (See Rule #16); however, these teams must continue to bat with the same male, female rotation. The lineup must be organized in an order that does NOT allow four (4) or more male batters to hit consecutively. Every male/female must bat behind the same male/female throughout the game. There will not be separate male and female rotations (batting line-up).
10. The homerun rule is "2 and 1-up." This means that each team is allowed 2 homeruns, but after that can only be 1 homeruns "up" on the other team. Any additional homerun above this will be considered a dead ball out.
  - Example: Team A hits 2 homeruns in the 1<sup>st</sup> inning, then they cannot hit any more until Team B hits at least 2. Team B would be allowed to hit 3 homeruns in the 2<sup>nd</sup> inning, 2 to tie, and 1 to go "1-up" on Team A. If they hit 2 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> inning, Team A would then be allowed to hit a 3<sup>rd</sup> homerun to again be "1-up" on Team B.
11. All outfielders must remain behind the chalked and/or coned "outfield line" when a female is up to bat. If the "line" is not clearly marked it is up to the umpire's discretion if an outfielder is too close to the infield.
  - There cannot be more than 6 players on the infield at any one time. Once contact has been made, the outfielders may cross the line. If an outfielder crosses the line before contact has been made, the female will be awarded first base.
12. All batters will start with a one ball, one strike count.
13. If a base on balls is awarded to a male batter (intentional or not) and the next batter is a female, then the male batter will be awarded second base. If there are less than two outs, the female batter must bat. If there are two outs, the female batter has the option to walk or bat.
14. A batter with two strikes is allowed one foul ball; two fouls with two strikes, the batter is out.
15. Teams may play with nine (9) or ten (10) players. Nine (9) players are the minimum required to begin a game. If a team begins with nine (9) players, then a minimum of two (2) must be female. Teams will take an out (ghost out) every time the third female's batting spot comes up on the line-up. With ten (10) players, a minimum of three (3) must be female. Coaches are required to inform the opposing team and umpire of the position of the "ghost out".

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16. Your batting order is encouraged to consist of all your players playing in that game (i.e.: if you play 15 players, your batting order will be 1-15 organized in a way that complies with the male/female order defined in Rule #9). You may substitute players in the field from your batting line-up, but you are required to keep the other coach informed with each change. You are not allowed to replace a player in the batting line-up once the game has started unless of an injury. If you want to replace a player in the batting line-up other than injury, the player taken out cannot return to the field or batting line-up. You must keep the other coach and umpire informed of this. Basically, your batting line-up is very important. You can do whatever you want as fielders, but you cannot change or modify your batting line-up unless with the items noted above.
17. Each team should be predominantly comprised of employees and spouses of an Architecture or Engineering Firm. We would like to keep each team as least 70-80% company employees or their spouses. Think of it like a company picnic....*“Who would your company pay for and be invited to come to the employee picnic?”* Relatives are borderline, but accepted in a way that does not get carried away. Teams will probably not challenge but they will say something if the league gets too out of hand. This rule was put into place to stop teams from picking up non-industry “ringer” players there at the Sportsplex that just want to show off and possibly cause injuries.
- This rule is based on trust and honesty. I know that it can be hard to fill a team up with employees and when deadlines come up it is not fair to penalize those players that do not have a deadline. Remember that companies are welcomed to team up. Having 20-30% non-employees or spouses playing is ok, but if you cannot fill a team up regularly with 70-80% employees or others within the industry, then you probably should not of had a team to begin with. If you have a total of 10 players, this means that at least 7 of them should be employees, and/or their spouses, of an Architecture or Engineering Firm.
18. No leadoffs or stealing, runners can leave the base once the ball crosses the plane of the plate or is hit by the batter. If a runner leaves early, the ball is dead and the runner is declared out. If this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> out of the inning the batter will be first up in the next inning.
19. Base runner to defensive player contact will be closely watched by the ump. Any excessive contact or collision will result in an “out” and/or ejection. This includes contact with the catcher. Sliding is allowed. Any sliding into a base to break up a double play, or any intentional (in the eyes of the umpire) interference with the defensive player, the runner and the batter will be called out.
20. Safety Base is Required. The safety-base shall be 15 x 30 inches and not more than 3 inches high. The safety-base should be positioned so that the white portion is where first base would normally be (In fair territory) and the colored (red or orange) should be in foul territory. Any batted ball hitting the white portion should be fair and any ball hitting the red or orange part should be foul. On the initial throw to first base from the infield or outfield, the batter-runner MUST touch the red or orange portion of the base. If legally appealed by the defense during a live ball situation, the runner will be called out.
21. The defensive player MUST always touch the white portion. This rule is in effect only on the initial play at first base, which does not include:
- Returning to the base after over running.
  - Running on a base hit to the outfield (runner may touch the red or white part).
  - Re-tag to advance on a fly ball.
- EFFECT: If the base runner uses the orange portion at any time after the first attempt at first base and is not in contact with the white portion, then he is considered off the base.
22. NO METAL SPIKES ARE ALLOWED.
23. Any equipment in question should be brought to the attention of the umpire. The umpire or HSP staff will make all final decisions with regard to equipment discrepancies.
24. Official Softball bats only (USSSA):
- Not to exceed 1.2 BPF
  - Bats not allowed are Miken Ultra I/II.
  - For an approved bat list go to <http://www.usssa.com/usssa/usssa-general/LegalBats.asp>

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25. A foul ball above the batter's head may be caught for an out.
26. You are allowed one courtesy runner per inning, per sex.
27. All thrown balls are deemed out of play when:
  - The ball is thrown over the fence
  - The ball is thrown beyond the fence
  - The ball is thrown beyond the imaginary line extending from the end of the backstop (if there is no fence). This imaginary line applies to overthrows and caught fly foul balls.
28. If the ball is overthrown and hits the fence behind the 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base lines, this is NOT considered out of play and the runner may advance, BUT at his/her own risk.
29. On overthrows out of play, the runner is granted the base he/she is going to (at the point of the throw) plus one more. Note: in cases where a base runner runs past first base, he/she must make a clearly aggressive turn towards second base to be granted 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in overthrow situations.
30. On an infield fly (any fly ball within the infield with significant arc and deemed an "easy catch") with less than 2 outs and runners on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> or 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, the batter is automatically out and runners can advance, BUT at their own risk.
31. You can not switch positions at anytime during an inning unless:
  - Injury
  - Changing of a Pitcher
  - If you are adding players from a 9 and under lineup to 10 players.
32. No switching/rotating positions during an inning. All player positions must remain the same during the entire inning. You may switch/substitute player positions as many times as you want between innings per Rule 15. If you switch a player in the field with one of your players on the bench that is not in the batting line-up then that bench player must be inserted in the batting lineup where the player taken out is. The player taken out may not come back into the game after this.
  - "Switching" is not the same as "Shifting". A shift, for example, is when a left-handed batter comes up to bat, the infield, and sometimes the outfield gets "shifted" or slid around to the right side of the field. This however leaves gaps in the infield and outfield. "Switcing" is when you swap your left and right fielder when a left-handed batter comes up to bat to improve your defense on that side of the field, and is not allowed. A rover is considered a shift and not a switch only if the rover goes back to the position he/she came from.
33. Playoff rosters must be complete by the third week of regular play.
34. All participants must present ID's during the playoff tournament in the event of a roster check. All roster check requests must be made before the end of the first inning.
35. **\*\*FLIP/FLOP RULE:** If beginning an inning in which the Home Team is losing by a margin that constitutes a Run Rule for that inning, then the Home Team will "flip/flop" and become the Visiting Team, and the original Visiting Team will become the Home Team. If the new Visiting Team does not score enough runs to reduce the run difference below the run rule, then the game is over. If they reduce the run difference to below the run Rule, then the new Home Team will bat. If the new Home Team subsequently scores enough runs to exceed the Run Rule, the game will be over. If they do not, then the game will continue under that format. If the situation reverses, the teams would flip/flop again. Example: The Visiting Team is ahead 21-10 after 4 complete innings. The Home Team would then flip/flop and become the Visiting Team, clear the bases, and start the 5<sup>th</sup> inning. If they do not score at least 2 runs, then the game is over. If they score 2 or more runs, then they will remain the Visiting Team until the completion of the game or until the situation is reversed.
36. Have fun!

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### Playoff Tournament Rules

1. The same rules used during the regular season will apply in the tournament playoffs except for the World Series Championship game.
2. Only players on your original roster submitted during the third week of play are eligible to participate in the tournament. New players picked up after the third week of play may participate during the regular season, but not in the tournament playoffs.
3. (Single Elimination Tournament: 2 weeks) At the end of the regular season teams will be ranked according to record and be divided into two division brackets to be played as single elimination brackets. If there are multiple teams with same records then the ranking will be determined by records against each other and then total runs scored during the season. Basically, teams only get one loss in order to become eliminated from the tournament.
  - The American Division will consist of the odd ranked teams.
  - The National Division will consist of the even ranked teams.
  - The Division Playoff games will follow normal regular season rules.
  - The top team from each division (Divisional Champs) will play a single World Series Championship Game. The Grand Championship game will be 7 full innings with no time limit, run rule, or mercy rule. The winner of this game will take "The Cup" to have their company name engraved on it (not provided), display it in their office until next season, and of course have bragging rights!!
4. (Double Elimination Tournament: 3 weeks) At the end of the regular season teams will be ranked according to record and be divided into two division brackets to be played as double elimination brackets. If there are multiple teams with same records then the ranking will be determined by records against each other and then total runs scored during the season. Basically, teams must lose twice in order to become eliminated from the tournament.
  - The American Division will consist of the odd ranked teams.
  - The National Division will consist of the even ranked teams.
  - The Division Playoff games will follow normal regular season rules. A Division Championship game is the game where there is a possibility of a Division Champion being decided. Meaning that if Team "A" goes into a game with 1 loss and the Team "B" have 0 losses then this game is considered a Division Championship game. If team "B" loses then the next game will also be a Divisional Championship game.
  - The top team from each division (Divisional Champs) will play a single World Series Championship Game whether or not a team is undefeated. The World Series Championship game will be 7 full innings with no time limit, run rule, or mercy rule. The winner of this game will take "The Cup" to have their company name engraved on it (not provided), display it in their office until next season, and of course have bragging rights!!
5. If during playoffs the opposing coach protests one of your players and they are not on your official roster submitted by the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of play, then your team will forfeit the game and take a loss. Every player playing in the playoffs is required to have an ID. Any player not having an ID that is being protested then the team will take a forfeit and a loss.
  - Protests on a roster will need to be brought up before the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Inning. If a late player joins the team after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Inning, the coach can only protest that player coming into the game as far as being in the roster.
  - After the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Inning, there will be no further protests for players on the roster.

### Protests

1. There are no protests on an umpire's call. They call the plays as they see them, and the call stands once it has been made, see Rule #4.
2. You may, however, protest another team's procedures (ex: batting lineup, player eligibility, etc.) Follow these steps:
  - Stop play while the infraction is being committed. Alert the umpires immediately, so that they may sort things out. If needed, have one of your players find the Arch/Engr Commissioners or HSP representative and bring them to your field so that they can help.
  - If you are not successful in stopping the game while the evidence is available, then the right to protest an infraction is lost.
  - Protests will be sorted out during game time, and lost time cannot be made up. Please be selective when filing a protest.