

SUMMARY OF RULES FOR VOLUSIA COUNTY SENIOR SOFTBALL (VCSS)

Updated 12/11/2022

These are not a substitute for the league official rules but an enlightenment for players to help in playing the game.

General:

Have fun in a good sportsmanship manner.

VCSS is an affiliated association of the Independent Softball Association, (ISA), and we follow most rules with a few modifications.

An official registration form and Release of Liability must be completed in full by every member of this organization without exception.

All league players will pay a fee for each season of play. This fee will be payable to the team manager no later than the second game of the season.

The game ball must be rated “synthetic” max 300 lbs. .52 cor as per Dudley 4A-069Y or equivalent.

At the end of the season, all teams tied with the same won/loss record will use following criteria to break the ties:

- a. Head-to-head play
- b. Total runs differential between the teams in their games.
- c. Won Lost record in their division.
- d. Least runs allowed in their division.

In post season games, the team with the best won/lost record will be the home team.

Players:

Players must be 50 years of age in the current calendar year to be eligible to play in the league. An exception will also allow a player to be eligible if he is 49 years of age in the current calendar year and if he is rated to be 4 or less and approved by a majority of the managers.

The managers and board members rate existing players at the end of each season. Players are evaluated on running, fielding, and hitting ability. Players are rated on a scale of 1 through 5 with 5 being the better rating. New players are rated by available managers and board members before and during each season. (Minimum of 3 managers and board members must evaluate new players and agree on the rating. New players may get rerated during the season in case their tryout rating was not accurate. A trade may occur if the team they currently are on is “stacked” with high rated players.)

Every manager has a goal to try to play each player as much as he can and at positions that are satisfying to the player. Unfortunately, there are some conflicts to this goal that seem to be irreconcilable and sometimes results in a player quitting a team. The league president and other managers from time to time will try to facilitate ways to reconcile these conflicting differences, such as player trades. However, in the event that reconciliation is not possible and for any other reason the player still decides on the path of quitting his team rather than finishing the season, the player will face a penalty of not being included in the next draft. If there is a second occurrence the player will be removed from the Player List. In that same vein, if a manager is determined by the League President and Vice President to be part of the cause of the personnel problem, corrective action may be applied to the manager as determined by the President and Vice President.

When a team begins a game without all of its rostered players and a rostered player shows up, he must play in place of a pick-up player at the conclusion of that half inning.

The Manager picking up players has to tell the opposing Manager whom (by rating) he has picked up for whom (by rating). At that time, the opposing Manager has the right to challenge the skill levels of players being replaced but must do so before the game starts. **Once the game begins, no challenge can be made.**

Game Play:

A modified format of strikes and balls with 1 courtesy foul will be used. Each batter will start with 1 ball and 1 strike. After 2 strikes, one foul will be allowed with the next foul causing an out. (1-1 count allows 2 foul balls before the 3rd the batter is out)

Each team may only get a maximum of FIVE runs per inning.

Each team may get unlimited runs in the designated last inning.

There will be a mercy rule of 15 runs after 5 innings; except in the championship game.

Before the game the Umpire will meet with the opposing Managers and discuss: Picked up players, injured players, and special ground rules. Players will be allowed to be utilized in back-to-back games. If a team is missing players, they pick up the equal number of players of the same rating. If the same rated player is not available, you can pick up a lower rated player or discuss with opposing manager options. If a team is missing players, and there are not enough players available, the opposing team will supply a catcher, until a qualified player is available (the missing player is counted as an out in the batting order until the qualified pickup player is inserted). **A team must have 7 of its rostered players to start a game or the game will be forfeited.** If a player leaves or is injured during the game and cannot continue, the team with 6 rostered players does not forfeit but can continue to play with the opposing team supplying a catcher or a replacement player is inserted.

During Playoffs and Tournament games, the usual pick-up rules apply except that a picked-up player may play with a team as many games as needed.

Also, during the Playoff and Tournament games, for the final games each of the four final teams must field a full roster in accordance with their roster drafted ratings, except a pickup 5 must be replaced by a 4 and a pickup 4 must be replaced by a 3.

Except for playoff and tournament final games, all pick up players must bat last in the batting order and be on existing league rosters. All pickup players can play any position. If an injury occurs and the player is removed from the game, the position and batting order will not be an out. Only when an injury causes the team to fall below 10 available players, an equivalent rated replacement player may be recruited and added directly into the line up and batting order.

A player who hits a home run over the fence can opt NOT to advance to first base and instead return to the dugout. Players who are on base DO NOT have to touch the next base; they can instead return to the dugout.

All disputes, which result in protest, must be settled at that point in the game by the highest-ranking available officer and chief umpire. The game must be stopped at the point of protest and protest resolved. Any protest filed after the game has continued is invalid. If the highest-ranking officer and chief umpire are involved in the dispute, they must recue themselves from the decision and the matter would be handled by the next ranking officer and/or another umpire or manager. All protests must be made and settled before the next pitch. Protests can only be made by the Manager.

Inclement weather may force a game to be called early by the Umpire. If 4 or more innings have been played, the team ahead will be declared the winner (or 3½ or more innings if the home team is ahead). Any game called before the play of 4 innings shall be declared “suspended” and shall be resumed at the exact point of play when the game was stopped.

When games are tied after 7 innings, each half inning shall start with the last batter from the previous inning on 2nd base until such time as the game is completed. A courtesy runner is allowed, if agreed by both managers.

Runners:

Runners must use the outside home plate or scoring line. Any runner crossing into the batter’s box or sliding into home plate regardless of the plate action, will be called out.

Once runners have **touched the ground on or past** the commitment line, he cannot return to third base but must continue to home plate.

The runner and batter will be out if the runner interferes with the fielder who is attempting to catch a thrown ball or throw a ball in an attempt to complete the play. Example: The runner is advancing toward second and the play will be close, the runner must slide or not interfere with the defensive player at second making the play to first. If the runner deliberately touches or hinders the defensive player at second, he and the batter are out. **This is in the judgment of the Umpire. (ISA Rule 7, section 2F)**

The two first base bags will be considered to be one continuous base, except when there is a ground ball force out play at first where the fielder must use the inside bag and the runner must use the outside bag to avoid collision. It is permissible for the runner to safely stand on the outside bag during play.

Each team may use unlimited courtesy runners in each inning. The Manager, **before** the first pitch to the next batter, may change a courtesy runner. Any courtesy runner who is on base when it's his turn to bat will be declared out on base and bat in his regular position in the batting order. The out is declared for the player for whom he was the courtesy runner. A courtesy runner can only be utilized once per inning.

Pitching:

Every pitcher must wear a face mask and shin guards.

Pitching Arc of 4 feet to 10 feet shall be used. A pitching mat will be used with the entire mat being the strike zone and home plate.

The Umpire is to call an illegal pitch as soon as he detects such by saying "Illegal" to the batter.

A pitching box of six feet from the pitching mound toward second base shall be used. A pitcher must begin his presentation (wind up) with a foot anywhere inside or touching the box. No pitching mat shall be used.