

The 2019 Greater Madison Senior Softball League Slow-Pitch Rules

A) GENERAL

1. A.S.A. rules are to be used with exceptions and/or clarifications shown below.
2. Ground Rules -Regular ground rules apply.
3. Regulation Game -is 9 innings **for all Tiers but no new innings may start after 70 minutes unless score is tied. Any new innings after 70 minutes will require the last batter to be on second base.**
4. Legal Game -4 ½ innings if the home team is ahead; 5 innings if the visiting team is ahead.
5. 9-Inning Game -If a team is behind by 15 or more runs after 7 innings, the game ends.
6. Maximum Number of Runs Allowed Per Inning is 5 except for the last inning and any extra innings when each team can score an unlimited number of runs, but also see Catch-Up Rule 7 below.
7. Catch-Up Rule -The team that is behind may score as many runs per inning as needed to tie the score plus up to 5 more runs (tie plus 5) that inning.
8. International Rule - If the game is tied after 9 innings **or at the 70 minute time limit**, then the last eligible **batter** from the previous inning starts out at second base with no outs. (No courtesy runner can be used {except for a pre-qualified batter that needs a runner from home plate } until he has reached third base. **Game ends with a winner or maximum time limit of 15 additional minutes.**
9. Code of Ethics-
 - Accept the decision of the umpire and team manager
 - Neither taunt or degrade an opponent
 - Avoid bodily contact that may cause injury to others or yourself
 - Never direct abusive or profane language at officials or opponents
 - Show good **sportsmanship** always
10. Courtesy Runner (C.R.) - Is used for a player with a medical reason for not running. In the name of good sportsmanship it is not proper to replace a runner only because he is a slow runner.
11. Only managers may discuss disputed calls by the umpire. If a player argues with an umpire, the umpire will stop play and summon that player's manager. The umpire will tell that manager that if his player continues to argue, that player will be ejected from the game. It is the manager's responsibility to then tell that player to stop arguing. If that player continues to argue and cause problems, he may be ejected from of the game. In severe cases, the umpire has the authority to stop play, summon managers from both teams and inform them that a player has been ejected from the game. If the ejected player continues to argue and cause problems after being ejected, he will be asked to leave the park, and that player is barred from the league for the rest of the season. If the ejected player refuses to leave the park, his team loses the game on a forfeit. If a player is ejected from two games in a season, he will be barred from the league for the rest of the season.

(B) TEAMS

1. Teams must have registered at least 12 players for their roster to be considered a viable team. There is no upper limit for number of players on the roster, and they may add players at any time during the season.
2. Teams may field a maximum of 11 players on defense. Less than 8 rostered players present at game-time is a forfeit. Any player listed on the scorecard/batting lineup may be interchanged anywhere on defense at any time. If a game is forfeited, teams may pick up additional players from other teams and the game may be played by mutual agreement of both managers, with results being shown as a forfeit loss for the team with less than 8 rostered players.

(B) TEAMS (cont)

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3. If a team has at least 8 rostered players, that Manager may add up to three additional Registered players as Substitutes to enable his team to play 11 players on defense, **but observing the Guidelines & Restrictions listed for each Tier as to eligibility of each proposed Substitute for that specific team. See Section (I) for more details.** The game results will count for League standings. The Manager has no restrictions on how or where he plays the added players (Subs).
4. Everyone listed on the scorecard/batting lineup bats. An injured player may be skipped over when it is his turn to bat, & no out is given. An ejected player is skipped over when it is his turn to bat, and his team is given an out. A player already in the batting order may take ejected player's field position, but not his batting position.

(C) PLAYERS

1. To be eligible, a player must be at least 55 years old by December 31st of the current year **and has filled out a current Registration/Liability Form and paid his fees.** Using an ineligible player results in a forfeit.
2. If a player wishes to change teams, his manager must supply written release to the league office.

(D) PITCHER

1. A strike is a legal pitch that touches the mat or home plate.
2. Intentional Walk - Notify the umpire and batter goes to first immediately with no pitches thrown.
3. He must pause one second while facing the batter. A quick pitch is a ball.
4. With one foot on the rubber, he must deliver the ball on the first forward motion.
5. To be legal, the ball must have an arc between 6 and 12 feet from the ground. If there is a high wind, the managers may agree to allow a flatter pitch. A ball will be called by the umpire if the arc of the pitch falls outside the 6-12' of height guidelines. If the batter swings, then the results of his swing will override the called (illegal pitch) ball.

(E) FIELDER

1. He has a right to a base only if making a play. **If not, he must avoid obstructing a runner.** Fake tags are considered an obstruction. Obstruction results in 'Delayed Dead Ball' signal.
2. If a fielder obstructs a runner, the umpire determines the base or bases awarded.
3. The Force-out - Can be used on a runner advancing to any base or returning to a base after a fly out.
First Base - The fielder must use the white part of the bag. But, see exception in (G) 1.
Home Plate - He must touch home plate/mat for any runner between the Commitment Line and the second home plate. He can't tag a runner trying to score once he has crossed the Commitment Line.
4. When a runner is voluntarily returning to a base after an attempt at the next base, a normal tag-out is required. The runner must achieve and hold the base before the tag to be safe. (See G.2 & 3).
5. Infield Fly Rule - When **called out loud** by the umpire (umpires judgment call), the batter is immediately out, **DELAYED DEAD BALL IS IN FORCE** (umpire raises his arm). The fielder is not required to catch the ball to ensure that the batter is out. Runners must tag up if ball is caught. However, if not caught, runners may advance without having to tag up before advancing. Whether the ball is caught or not, the ball is live after the infielder touches it or it hits the ground, and runners can advance at their own risk.
6. If a fielder **INTENTIONALLY** (umpires judgment call) drops a line drive to create a double or triple-play situation, the ball becomes dead, the batter is called out, and runners return to their original base(s).
7. A fielder may tag a runner out at any time or position except between home and the commitment line.
8. A fielder may not block or deny a runner access to a base (obstruction called) to which he is returning.

(F) BATTER

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1. Bunting, chopping down, or hitting the ball twice are outs, except if during the follow-through swing.
2. Strikeout - 2 strikes (swinging, ball hits mat or foul balls) Walk - 3 balls.
3. If batter swings at an illegal pitch (bad arc), results of his swing will override the umpire called 'Ball'.
4. **Batter is out if he runs past white line 30 ft from home plate while using C.R. from home.**

(G) RUNNER

1. If a play is made at first base, the runner must tag the extension. Exception: If the 1st baseman is in foul territory, both he and the runner may use either part of the base. If the runner has time to see the potential collision and can run wide of first base, he will not be called out for missing the bag. Runner and 1st baseman must both do whatever is necessary to avoid a collision and runner will not be penalized for missing first base if he thinks he is being played on.
2. When **advancing**, a runner may over-run second & third base. He may touch the base, or if he expects to be played on, **must run by either side of the base (GMSS version of the Utley Rule) to be in his legal base path.** If he makes any movement to advance and then decides to return to the previously acquired base, he is subject to a normal tag-out play (see E.4). He does not have to return to the bag to advance.
3. Diving head-first will only be allowed when **returning** to a base but not when initially attaining that base which must be done by running by either side of it or, if no play is imminent, to it. If runner falls down, crawling and/or lunging to the base shall be legal from either direction. Runner may also stay upright and reach with their foot for the base to which they are returning. Sliding feet first shall not be permitted. Fielder may not obstruct or block runner's path or base when he is returning to the base.
4. When advancing with no possibility of a play, the runner must tag all bases. Missing a base is an appeal play. The exception to having to touch the bases would be Rule G. 2 and the runner's home plate rule.
5. It is an automatic out if runner touches fielder's home plate while trying to score. He must touch the second (runner's) home plate to score.
6. Passing a runner is an automatic out. Only a base runner may assist another base runner.
7. A batter-runner or runner is out if hit off the base in fair territory by a playable batted fair ball that has not yet gone by a fielder (other than pitcher) or that has not been touched by a fielder. Effect: 'Dead Ball' is called and the other runners return to the bases occupied at the time of the pitch and batter is awarded first base unless he was the one who got hit by his own batted ball while not within the batter's box.
8. If runner is in contact with a base in fair territory and gets hit by a batted ball, runner is not out and ball is live and in play.
9. If a batted ball hits a base it is considered a live, fair ball, even if it subsequently settles in foul territory.
10. The runner is responsible for avoiding a collision if fielder is realistically trying to field a batted ball or catch a thrown ball. Fielder will bear shared responsibility in preventing collisions if the thrown ball is off target and he makes a sudden move to catch it which puts him into the path (see rule 2 above) of the runner's legal base path (may be called obstruction). Running into a fielder otherwise is an automatic out.
11. Leaving a base before either the batter starts his swing or the pitched ball touches home plate or the ground is an out. (umpire calls "No pitch, dead ball" and batter resumes with prior count).
12. A runner may tag and leave base as soon as a fly ball is touched, whether caught or not.
13. Interfering during a putout is an out. If a runner prevents a double play by his improper running positioning (see rule 2 above) in first attaining a base, he is out and so is the runner behind the offender. If the interference is after the putout, the runner closest to home plate may also be called out.
14. If a runner touches or crosses the Commitment Line, he must go home. Re-crossing it is an automatic out. The ball continues to be live until the umpire calls time.
15. **If using a C.R and the batter also runs, he will be called out if he crosses the white line 30 ft from home.**

(H) COURTESY RUNNER (C.R.)

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1. A base runner or batter injured during the game or who is on the pre-game injury list may have another player run for him as a Courtesy Runner. This C.R. may be any player or runner in the batting order and of the Manager's choosing. He will be selected to run for the injured player. But note that each individual C.R. may be used only once per inning. Be aware of Courtesy Runner Rule 4 below. C.R. should be at least four batting spots from the batter if two outs and six spots if no outs.
3. He must report prior to the first pitch to the next batter.
4. If he is on base and is scheduled to bat, his team is charged with an out and he remains on the base and the next person bats. **He may not be replaced on base at that time in order to allow him to bat.**
5. As a general rule and under normal circumstances, all batters must run for themselves from home plate to first base. As a rare exception and due to significant physical disability, a courtesy runner is allowed from home per ASA rules. Any known player(s) who will always need a courtesy runner from home plate or once on base must be stated to the umpire prior to the start of the game. A player who is injured DURING the game may use a courtesy runner or he may skip his turn at bat with no penalty.
6. The runner's starting point shall three feet **or more (umpires discretion)** behind an extension of the third base line and **he may not make any move towards 1st base until the batter has clearly hit the ball.** Moving out as the batter starts to swing is a rules violation and gives the courtesy runner an unfair advantage. After one team warning per game, batter's C.R. from home plate will be called out for any more such violations. See drawing at end of rules for clarification of courtesy runner's starting spot.

(I) 'TIER' DEFINITION, GUIDELINES, & RESTRICTIONS for 2019

1. There will be four leagues (called Tiers) this year, but only three Tiers will play each day. Tiers 1, 3, & 4 will play on Wednesday and Tiers 2, 3, & 4 will play on Thursday.
2. Teams will initially be ranked by means of a Tier numbering system based on last year's record and other pertinent data. Your initially assigned Tier may change in March if warranted or after any Round (of usually three games) if it is determined that your team is over- or under-matched in it's current Tier.
3. Tiers will be made up of teams per the following basic guidelines:
 - TIER 1** - is for skilled and capable players who want to play a very high grade of softball. They are generally very good batters and excellent fielders and have decades of experience.
 - TIER 2** - are generally former Tier 1 teams or other good teams who can't quite physically play at the Tier 1 level anymore.
 - TIER 3** - is for average players who are still good ball players and like a high grade of softball, but they are generally older & may have some physical loss of capability, but do have a lot of softball experience in their background.
 - TIER 4** - is a fun league. Players in this league usually are more diminished in skills due to age related physical problems, younger players may not have had much experience, the teams lost most of their games last year during the Round Robin schedule, and exercise and fun in the sun are the main objectives of this Tier.
4. If or when teams are moved into another Tier (see 2 above), an uneven number of Tier teams **may** result. In this instance cross-tier games will be scheduled rather than incorporate byes. These games will be kept to a minimum number.
5. For 2019, team composition involving Tier 1 players will be subject to certain restrictions. The intent of this rule is to keep the teams in the lower Tiers from loading up on Tier 1 players and becoming super dominant. Many teams, based on 2018 record, will have their 2018 Tier 1 players 'Grandfathered' in as regular members of their 2019 team and therefore not be required to find several new players. Those Tier 1 players will be taken into account, however, when the Manager is looking for Substitutes.
6. Tier 2 teams may have up to six Tier 1 players as rostered or substitutes. Tier 3 teams may have up to three Tier 1 players as rostered or substitutes. Tier 4 teams may have no Tier 1 players except those that were 'Grandfathered' in from last year's losing team or by 'petition' from a Manager and acceptance by the other involved Tier 4 Managers.
7. After the first Round, if a team is moved to a lower Tier they may do so intact. They will not be required to drop any players to meet the Tier 1 player limit (as they have a losing record).

(J) EQUIPMENT & PLAYING FIELD

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1. Official Ball - The soft-core deBeer 12" Clincher.
2. Bats - Legal or Altered - Bats must be adult softball bats which are or once were legal per ASA standards. This includes old bats with no writing left but excludes all loaded bats and bats improperly manufactured where separation dangers to the fielders existed. No youth bats or baseball bats allowed.
3. Shoes - Metal cleats are not allowed.
4. Bases - 60 feet and pitching distance is 50 feet at the Verona parks.
5. Commitment Line - Between home and third base, **30' from home plate.**
6. Runner's Home Plate - 8' to the left (umpires view) of 3rd base line (in foul territory) and even with the front corner of home plate.
7. Courtesy Runner's Start Line - 3 feet **or more (umpires discretion)** behind an extension of 3rd base line. **If a batter, using a C.R. from home, runs past a line 30' from home on 1st base line, he is automatically out.**
8. In drawing below, Runner's home plate is now located even with the front of Batter's home plate and 8' from the 3rd base line. Courtesy runner from Home is located 3' (or more) behind an imaginary extension of the 3rd base line and a reasonable but safe distance from the batter and umpire.
9. Runner is automatically out if he touches Fielder's home plate or mat while trying to score.
10. Prior to game-time, managers must state which batters will need a courtesy runner from home or once they reach base.
11. Team listed 1'st is home team & sits on 3rd base side.
12. See items 6, 7, & 8 above for measurements not appearing on this drawing.

