



League Handbook 2019

2019 Executive Committee

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NEW FOR 2019

- The pitcher ***must be in contact with or behind the pitching rubber on release of the ball. Penalty: Called Strike, Any Hit is Annulled.***
- ***Home Run limit has been removed***

- ***Baserunners must now run to the base, not past or beside, and no overruns except at first base. Every play on a runner at any base is still a "force play", and there is no need for the defender to "tag" the runner if the defender has the ball clearly in possession and is touching some portion of the base or plate. Base runners may be tagged between bases. There is no tagging at home, past the commitment line. A run counts If a runner crosses the plate before another runner, who is not forced to run, is put out for the third out***

- ***No outfielder or outfield rover may make an out at first base.
If a batted ball reaches an OF player, he/she cannot put out the batter by throwing to first base.
Note (1): this applies, regardless of where the ball is when the outfielder reaches it.
Note (2): a baserunner from first base may still be thrown out by any defender on a tag-up play.***

- ***Reminder: Courtesy Runner Limit: No limit on the number of times a runner can be used. A player can only serve as such a substitute runner once per game. It is up to the base runner to request a runner.***

Responsibility of Players

Each player shall:

1. Do his/her best to support the League's objectives and principles of fair-play;
2. Commit to participate in two thirds of regular season and all playoff games* and as many of the League's social activities as possible;
3. Inform your Captain, as far in advance as possible, if unable to play a game(s). In the event of a lengthy (3 weeks or more) absence, inform the Captain so that the League may contact a spare player; NB. The missing player must return after 8 weeks or forfeit the season. Upon return, the spare will be placed back on the spare list.
4. During games, wear the jersey provided by the team sponsor;
5. Provide his/her own softball glove and athletic shoes (no metal cleats), and any "protective" equipment including helmet, he/she deems necessary. Bats are provided, but a player may use his/her own bat, provided it is an officially approved softball bat and is properly identified;
6. Accept the decisions of the team Captain on all matters relating to team play including assignments of playing position and equitable sitting-out of innings;
7. When requested, assist the team Captain, both before and after games;
8. Recognize and appreciate good performances and effort by your team-mates as well as opponents;

*N.B. All players must be able to run the bases and throw the ball, catch and hit the ball. All players must "commit" to play two-thirds of the regular season games and all playoff games when registering. Otherwise, he/she may be assigned to a spares list. Failure to

honour the commitment could result in being declared ineligible to play the following season.

10. a) Refrain from any form of personal abuse, i.e. Harassing, heckling, insulting, jeering, or intimidation, be it verbal, physical, or emotional, towards team-mates, opponents, or officials, (i.e. Umpires and Scorekeepers);
 - b) Refrain from the use of any form of profane, vulgar, obscene, or abusive language or gestures, whether it is directed at an official, opponent, or team-mate;
 - c) Expect and demand proper behaviour from your team-mates. If you allow a team-mate to cheat, to play dangerously, to intimidate or threaten, to argue and scream at officials, team-mates or other players, you are condoning that behaviour;
 - d) Refrain from objectionable conduct such as throwing bats, gloves, or any other piece of equipment;
11. Recognize the important contribution of our League's volunteer Umpires and Score-keepers, and accept their game decisions in an even-handed manner;
12. **IMMEDIATELY REPORT ANY INJURY, NO MATTER HOW MINOR IT SEEMS AT THE TIME, TO YOUR TEAM CAPTAIN AND, WITHIN 24 HOURS, TO THE PRESIDENT OR HIS/HER DESIGNATE. FAILURE TO DO SO MAY NEGATE ANY CLAIM UNDER THE POLICY COVERING LEAGUE MEMBERS.**
13. Recognize the more complete features of the Code of Conduct found in the Official Handbook of Slo-Pitch Ontario with which the League is registered.

2019 Rules of Play – Ottawa 60+ Slo-Pitch League

(Changes to the Rules for the 2019 Season are shown in *bold italics*)

PLAYING FIELD

The playing field is the same as in regular softball, except that:

- 1) FIRST BASE is a double base (14”X30”) with one half white, in fair territory, and the other half orange, in foul territory. A batted ball, hitting or crossing only the orange portion is a foul ball.
- 2) A COMMITMENT LINE – is drawn 6 feet into foul territory, perpendicular to the third base line, and 20 feet from home plate.
- 3) A SAFE LINE – is drawn from the leading edge of home plate, 6 feet into foul territory and perpendicular to the 3rd base line.

EQUIPMENT

- 1) To avoid injury, shoes with metal cleats must not be worn.
- 2) Face masks are provided, and the League **STRONGLY RECOMMENDS** that they be worn by the catcher during play.
- 3) Gloves are the responsibility of the player and must be worn by all players in the field, including pitchers.
- 4) Batting helmets will be available. Their use, while **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**, is not mandatory.

Regulation bats and balls are provided by the League. Players may, however, use their own bats provided they are approved by Slo-Pitch Ontario. Players with their own bats may choose to share their bats with others, or to restrict their use by others.

GAME

1.
 - a) A game is normally 7 innings. If the score is tied at the end of 7 innings the game is over and is recorded as a tie.
 - b) Prior to the start of all games, sit-out lists and batting orders will be made available to umpires and scorekeepers. If during a game, sit-out lists or batting orders must be changed, the Umpires, both Captains and both Scorekeepers must be notified at the time of the change. For all games, no player shall sit out twice before any player has sat out once.
 - c) If a playoff game is tied after 7 innings, additional innings will be played, as required to produce a winner. For all playoff games, Captains shall prepare a batting order and sit-out list for 9 innings.
2. The Umpire may suspend play for up to 20 minutes because of rain or other conditions that make play dangerous. If an electrical storm appears imminent, play shall be called IMMEDIATELY, and players should leave the playing area AT ONCE.
3. If play cannot resume following a “rain delay”, 4 COMPLETE INNINGS will constitute a game, subject to these criteria:
 - a) For an inning to be COMPLETE, the home team must have been retired (i.e. 3 outs or application of the “Mercy Rule” – see Rule 5);
 - b) if one game has completed at least 4 innings, as defined in 3a), ALL OTHER GAMES will be deemed COMPLETE, with the scores being those at the end of the last COMPLETE INNING (as defined in 3a);
 - c) IF NO GAME HAS COMPLETED 4 INNINGS when play is called, ALL GAMES are considered as CANCELLED for that day.
4. In the event that the above do not cover a given situation, the Chief Umpire and/or President shall determine whether games on all diamonds are suspended or cancelled.

5. Mercy Rule

- a) No more than 5 runs may be scored in one half-inning by the team at bat.
- b) In the 7th inning there is no limit to the number of runs that may be scored by either team.

PLAYERS

1. All (male and female) players must be, or become 60 years of age during the calendar year. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Executive Committee.
2. A team may field a maximum of 11 players at any time (5 outfielders, 5 infielders, and a catcher), but all players present shall be included in the batting order and bat in turn throughout the game. A player must play a defensive position (pitcher is not a defensive position) in order to be included in the batting order.
3. A minimum of 7 players is required to start a game; a team with fewer than 7 players will lose the game by default.
4. When a team has only 7 players their opponent may supply a player if they have sufficient players, and agree to release one.
5. The team Captain shall ensure that all team members available to play have equal playing time* in the field, and shall submit to the Scorekeeper and opposing Captain before the game, a line-up that indicates the inning(s) during which each player “sits out” (i.e. not be in the field). Barring injury, this schedule of “sit outs” shall not change during the game.

*may vary based on number of players available and the injury status of players injured during the game.
6. Each team shall be permitted to use unlimited substitute runners in a

game with the following conditions:

- a) The substitute runner can only replace a player who has reached first base, i.e. not from home plate.
 - b) This has to be done on a voluntary basis by the player/runner; team captains cannot tell a player that he has to accept a substitute runner.
 - c) Scorekeepers and Umpires will need to be advised of any substitute runner by the captains.
 - d) The substitute runner can be any player on the team, but any player can only be used as a substitute once per game
 - e) If a courtesy runner is due up to bat, a second courtesy runner may be used, if one is available. Otherwise, a player is ruled out, and the next batter in the lineup comes to bat.
 - f) If a player is taken off the bases during an inning for a courtesy runner, he/she must wait for the next batter to reach base or be put out before being allowed to re-enter the game as a pitcher.
7. A spare player list will be maintained by the Vice President, Operations. Team Captains are permitted to use spare players when players are missing from their roster, subject to the following criteria:
- a) Requests for spare players must be made to the Vice President, Operations, or his/her designate.
 - b) Spares will be assigned sequentially from the list based on the priority of prospective new players irrespective of the relative abilities of the player being spared for and the spare. No player shall be utilized a second time until all others on the list have been given the opportunity to play as a spare.
Exception: For a player absent for 3 weeks or more (See Section V 1.3), a replacement will be chosen from the spare list to best match the ability of the absent player for the duration of the absence.
 - c) A spare will be assigned once a team has only 11 players available.
Exception: To provide additional opportunity for female players, if a team will have fewer than the minimum number of female players assigned to each team, the Captain shall notify the Vice President, Operations, who will assign a female spare. For example, if each team has at least two female players, a spare should be assigned to a

team that will only have one female available.

- d) A maximum of two spares can be used per team, per game, for regular season and playoff games.

PLAYING RULES

1. PITCHING

- a) The team at bat provides its own pitcher, who shall be replaced when on deck. A team may use any number of pitchers during a game.
- b) The pitcher shall deliver a maximum of 4 pitches to a batter.
- c) The pitcher *must be in contact with or behind the pitching rubber on release of the ball.* **Penalty: Called Strike, Any Hit is Annulled.**
- d) If a batted ball accidentally hits the pitcher it will be declared no pitch. If, however, in the Umpire's opinion, the pitcher made no attempt to avoid the ball, the pitcher is charged with interference, the batter will be called out, and no base runner can advance.
- e) Following a play on a hit ball or on a base runner, the ball shall be returned to the pitcher (or to the pitching circle) by a defensive player located in the infield: the ball is now dead, and no runners may advance. However the pitcher is not obligated to catch the ball or make an effort to catch the ball, if it is thrown towards him/her by a defensive player located in the outfield; the ball is still in play. Runners may advance on the bases until the ball is returned to the pitcher (or pitcher's circle) by a defensive player located in the infield.

2. BATTING

- a) Batters will receive a maximum of 4 pitches regardless of the number of strikes.
- b) Batters will be called OUT if they hit a FOUL BALL after the third pitch.
- c) A batter is called OUT on ANY caught FOUL BALL (Foul TIP).
- d) A batter may not bunt. **Penalty: batter is OUT.**

- e) After receiving the first pitch, the batter may not change to hit from the other side of the plate.
- f) Captains shall ensure that both the batter and the on-deck hitter are in position as required by the Umpire.

3. BASE RUNNING

- a) Runners from home to first base must run to the ORANGE portion of first base. First base defenders must use the WHITE portion. Once the runner has reached first base safely only the white portion shall be used. **Penalty:** a runner from home who touches the white portion of the base is OUT if the defensive player with the ball in hand touches the runner or the white portion of the base. A runner from home is SAFE if a defensive player touches only the orange section of the base.
(Note: when a ball is hit deep to the outfield, and there is no possibility of a close play at first base, the runner may touch the white portion of the base, on the way to 2nd base.)
- b) Base runners must not slide into a base. **Penalty: runner is OUT.**
- c) A base runner may not leave a base (i.e. lead-off) before a pitched ball crosses the plate or it is hit. **Penalty: runner is OUT.**
- d) There is NO base stealing.
- e) Every play on a runner at any base is a “force play”, and there is no need for the defender to “tag” the runner if the defender has the ball clearly in possession and is touching some portion of the base or plate. Base runners may, however, be tagged between bases. There is no tagging at home, past the commitment line. *A run counts If a runner crosses the plate before another runner, who is not forced to run, is put out for the third out*

New players especially should note the following detail.

- f) i) *A base runner risks being tagged out if they overrun, or run beside 2nd or 3rd base.*

Note 2: A defender may not block the path of a base runner. See Rule 4 c) Obstruction.

- g) A base runner may not cross the COMMITMENT LINE (see page 8) and return to 3rd base. **Penalty: runner is OUT.**
- h) A base runner going from 3rd base to home may not touch the Regular Home Plate and must cross the SAFE LINE. For a run to score, the base runner must have one foot clearly across the SAFE LINE and on the ground, or on the SAFE LINE, before the catcher (or any other defender in possession of the ball) touches home plate. A defender may ONLY prevent the base runner from scoring by touching home plate while in possession of the ball.
- i) Base runners may advance at their own risk when a ball is overthrown in bounds. An overthrow into a dugout or out of bounds advances a base runner the base the runner is going to, plus 1 (next base) without risk of being put out.
- j) After a fly ball is caught, a runner may “tag up” and attempt to advance to the next base, but at his/her own risk.
- k) To avoid rundowns and collisions between 1st and 2nd or 2nd and 3rd, a runner may not change direction more than once, but may run again after tagging up at the previous base. If a defensive player catches a thrown ball and touches the base towards which the runner is proceeding, the runner is out. This rule does not apply on a fly ball.
- l) A ball hit fair but coming to rest outside a line drawn between the dugout and the corner of the outfield fence will be declared a ground-rule double and runners will advance two bases.

4. FIELDERS

- a) All infielders must remain on the outfield side of an imaginary line running between 1st and 2nd and 2nd and 3rd bases, until the batter hits the ball. **Penalty: batter granted 1st base.**

All outfielders, including outfield rovers, must stand no closer than half way between the outfield fence and the infield boundary until a ball is hit.

- b) The “infield fly rule” does not apply. A defender, however, may not deliberately (Umpire’s discretion) drop such a fly ball to achieve a double play.
- c) No defending fielder may interfere with a base runner’s attempt to advance to the next base. **Penalty: “Obstruction” shall be called, and the umpire will award the placement he felt the runner would have made had there been no obstruction.**
- d) No outfielder may make a force out at first base (including 3 regular outfielders and 2 outfield rovers). *An outfielder may throw to first base to putout a runner who did not tag up.*

5. UMPIRES

- a) Umpires shall decide fair/foul balls, count pitches/strikes, base-runner safe/out, and any application of the rules described herein.
- b) During the game, only the Captain or Assistant Captain may discuss the rules or their interpretation with the Umpire. Any player, including the Captain or Assistant Captain, who persists in arguing with the Umpire, may, following a warning from the Umpire, be ejected from the game.
- c) The use of foul language by a player on the field will not be tolerated. A player guilty of such behaviour receives a warning of ejection from the game. A 2nd infraction by the same player results in immediate & a report by the Umpire & the Umpire-in-Chief, to the League President who, in consultation with the Executive, may suspend the player from further League play.

- d) Only an Umpire may call “TIME OUT”.
- e) An Umpire shall not call “TIME OUT” until a play on a batted ball is completed. **Exception:** If, in the Umpire’s opinion, a player has been injured, TIME OUT will be called immediately.
- f) Captains may request from the Umpire a TIME OUT to make changes (e.g. changing pitchers, shifting outfielders, etc.). Under normal conditions, the Umpire should grant such requests. 1st and 3rd base coaches may also request TIME OUT to speak to base runners.

6. COACHES

- a) The Captain of the batting team should assign both 1st and 3rd base coaches to assist his/her players in running the bases. Coaches must remain in their coaching boxes and not interfere either verbally or physically with play.
- b) 3rd base coaches should remind runners at 3rd not to touch home plate, but to run across the SAFE Line.
- c) The game should not be delayed because a team’s base coaches are not in position.

STANDINGS TIE BREAKING RULES

- i) Head to head.
- ii) Most wins.
- iii) Best total run differential in games between tied teams.
- iv) Fewest total runs against.
- v) Most total runs for.
- vi) Coin toss.

Note: These rules in this document are based on the Ontario Slo-Pitch Association Rules, but modified to suit the physical limitations of players who are 60+ years of age.