

**BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS
ADULT SLOW PITCH SOFTBALL LEAGUE RULES**

Updated April 1, 2026

League follows USA Softball Rules unless otherwise noted in these rules



BALTIMORE CITY
RECREATION & PARKS

1. THE PLAYING FIELD

A. BASES

- Umpire shall place bases 70' apart prior to game.

B. PITCHING DISTANCE

- 50' from home plate.

C. FENCES

- Leagues with fenced fields or natural barriers shall have an **over-the-fence** home run limit of two (2) per team per game.

2. EQUIPMENT

A. BASES

- Home team of each game is responsible for providing bases including a double first base with safety bag.
- Bases shall be made of canvas or other suitable material. No flat bases.

B. BATS

- Bats must have a manufacturer's stamp on the bat noting that it has passed ASA standards AND must not be listed on the USA Softball Non-Approved Bat List. The only exception to this is if an umpire judges that a bat was manufactured prior to 2000 and would comply with the USA Softball Bat Performance Standard if tested.
- Any batter using an illegal bat shall be called out.
- Any batter using an **altered bat** (changed physical structure of a legal bat) shall be ejected.

C. GAME BALLS

- Each team is responsible for providing a game ball at the beginning of each game.
- The team that loses the ball shall furnish a new ball as needed.
- Game balls must be 12", yellow, with a **.52 COR/300 compression**, as provided by the league.
- Coed teams **may** substitute an 11" ball of the same specifications when a female is batting. A base coach of the hitting team shall have an 11" ball ready to throw in to avoid delay.

D. SHOES

- Athletic footwear is required.

- No metal spikes allowed. Any player found wearing metal spikes shall be ejected and subject to suspension.

E. STRIKE MAT

- Umpires may use a strike mat at their discretion.

3. ROSTERS

- All players must be at least 18 years of age.
- Rosters are unlimited.
- Rosters must be completed online by the team manager on their Team Sideline account prior to the first game.
- All players must submit the electronic waiver prior to playing.
- Players may not be added to a roster after a team's 5th week of games played.
- Players may not play for more than one team in the same league.
- Any team using a player not listed on their roster is subject to forfeiting any game which that player played.

4. GENERAL RULES

A. NUMBER OF PLAYERS TO START

- Teams must have eight (8) players (at least two of which must be women for coed) to start.
- Teams may loan players to an opponent or allow players from other teams to substitute; however, it must be determined prior to the start of the game whether the game will be counted as a forfeit or an official game.

B. FORFEITS

- League director must be notified of any forfeits at least **24 hours** prior to the scheduled game or forfeiting team will be responsible for the umpire fee for both teams.
- Forfeiting team must pay the umpire fee for both teams in cash to the umpire prior to their next scheduled game.
- Teams forfeiting two dates of games are subject to removal from the league.
- Forfeits are recorded as a score of 7-0.

C. UMPIRE AND ASSIGNOR FEES

- Each team is responsible for paying the umpire cash on the field prior to each game.
- After the first pitch of a game is thrown, the umpire must be paid for that game if canceled.
- If the second game of a doubleheader has not begun play, any money given to the umpire for the second game shall be returned if canceled (non-forfeit).
- Umpires will have to be paid for make-up games.

D. HOME TEAM

- Regular season – home team is the first team listed on the schedule.
- Playoff bracket – home team is the higher seed from regular season standings.
- Championship round – team in the winner's bracket is home team for the first game regardless of seed. Home team for the tiebreaker game is the team in the loser's bracket entering the championship round.

E. START TIMES

- Start time is scheduled game time for the first game of the day. Umpire determines necessary adjustments for subsequent games when last inning is not completed within scheduled hour.
- All first games of the day shall have a 15-minute grace period; however, those games must still be completed within their originally scheduled hour.
- Scheduled start time is forfeit time for subsequent games.
- The second game of a doubleheader has a forfeit time of 15 minutes after the forfeit time of the first game.

F. TIME LIMITS

- There is a one-hour time limit per game. Regular season games may end in a tie.
- If the time limit is reached during the middle of an inning, the inning will be completed.
- Regulation game is seven (7) innings. A minimum of four (4) innings (three and a half if home team leads) must be played to count as a completed game.

G. PLAYOFF TIME LIMITS

- One-hour time limit applies.
- Playoff games cannot end in a tie, even if one hour has elapsed.

H. PLAYOFF TIEBREAKER RULE

- After one hour or the beginning of the eighth inning, and each half-inning thereafter, the last batter of the previous inning shall start the next inning or eighth inning on second base.

I. MID-GAME POSTPONEMENT

- If a regular season or playoff game is postponed prior to a complete game being played, the result of that game shall be voided and the league will attempt to reschedule the game.

J. EJECTED PLAYERS

- Ejected players must leave the park immediately following an ejection or that player's team will be assessed a forfeit.
- Any player refusing to leave the park immediately will be subject to suspension.
- The ejected player is ineligible to play in any further games that day.
- Additional disciplinary action may follow for the offense resulting in ejection.

K. SCOREKEEPING

- Both teams are responsible for keeping score and should check the score with the umpire between each half-inning.
- The umpire shall make the final ruling on disputes. The home team's scorebook shall be the official scorebook. If the home team is not keeping score, the visiting team's scorebook shall be the official scorebook. In the event of a dispute where there is no clear evidence to resolve the discrepancy, the umpire shall go with the official scorebook.
- Teams are responsible for reporting scores after each game through their Team Sideline account.

L. STANDINGS TIEBREAKERS

- Winning Percentage
- Head-to-Head
- Head-to-Head Differential
- Total Runs Differential
- Total Runs For
- Total Runs Against

M. PROTESTS

- Only rule infractions are eligible for protest. Judgement calls are not eligible for protest.
- Protests must be announced by the team manager/captain during the game.
- The umpire will record the situation at the time of the protest and will report to the league.
- A check in the amount of \$50 made payable to "Director of Finance" must be received by the league within three days of the protested game or the protest will be voided.
- If the protesting team loses the protest, they will forfeit their protest fee. If the protesting team wins the protest, their protest fee will be returned.

5. PLAYERS

A. DEFENSE

- Maximum number of defensive players for coed and men's is ten (10). Women's league may play with up to eleven (11) fielders.
- No more than **seven (7) men** may play defense at one time in a coed league; if a team has less than the minimum of **three (3) women**, they still cannot have more than seven men in the field and must play with less than ten (10) (i.e., 7 men/2 women).
- Teams are allowed unlimited defensive substitutions.

B. BATTING ORDER

- There is no maximum number of players in the batting order.
- Teams must stay in their original batting order. If a player arrives late, he or she shall be added to the bottom of the order.

C. GENDER BATTING ROTATION (COED)

- No more than three men may bat consecutively.
- Every woman must bat before the lineup starts over.
- No man may bat twice before a woman bats once.
- If a team has less than 2 women, an out will be recorded every time the 3rd woman should bat.

D. COURTESY RUNNERS

- Any player on the roster may be used as a courtesy runner.
- Teams may use one (1) courtesy runner per inning.
- In coed courtesy runners must be of the same gender.
- A courtesy runner whose turn at bat comes while on base:
 - The player who the courtesy runner is running for will be called out.
 - The courtesy runner will be removed from the base and take their turn at bat.
 - A second courtesy runner or a substitute is not permitted at this time.
- A courtesy runner may not run for an existing courtesy runner except for an injury.

E. LINEUP RE-ENTRY/SUBSTITUTES

- Any player may be substituted for or replaced and re-entered once, provided the players occupy their same batting position in the batting order. The starting player and their substitute may not be in the lineup at the same time.
- If a player leaves the game for any reason including injury and a substitute is not available, an out will be recorded when the vacant position in the batting order is scheduled to bat.
- A player who has left the game may not return to the lineup. Exception: An injured player may return even after missing a turn at bat.

6. PLAYING RULES

A. BATTER'S COUNT

- Batters start with a 1-1 count. Foul ball with two strikes is an out; no courtesy fouls.

B. PITCHING

- The pitcher's foot must be touching the pitcher's plate upon releasing the ball.
- The pitcher's arm must be in continuous motion before releasing the ball.
- The ball shall be pitched with an arc of six (6) to ten (10) feet from the ground.

C. PITCHING SCREEN

- If either team chooses to use a pitching screen, the screen must be used by both teams throughout the game.
- Pitching screens shall be no larger than 7' x 4'.
- The screen may be placed up to six (6) feet from the pitcher's plate toward home plate.
- The screen shall be placed not more than six (6) inches outside the glove-hand side edge of the pitcher's plate and may not go past the bare-hand side edge of the plate.

- The pitcher may place the screen where desired before the first pitch of each half-inning and must leave it in position for the entire half-inning.
- A batted ball hitting any part of the screen shall be a strike. A second batted ball hitting the screen during the same at bat shall be an out.
- Any ball thrown into the screen by a defensive player shall be a live ball and runners may advance at their own risk.
- Defensive players are not allowed to move the screen to keep a thrown ball from striking it.

D. DEFAULT UP-THE-MIDDLE RULE

- For any game without a pitching screen, a ball hit inside the designated pitcher's box, including ground balls, will be an out.
- The pitcher's box measures three (3) feet on each side of the pitcher's plate and six (6) feet in front of the pitcher's plate. The height of the box is one (1) foot above the specific pitcher's glove reach.
- The umpire has discretion on whether cones will be used to mark the pitcher's box.
- Rule does not apply to the women's league.

E. COED AUTOMATIC WALKS

- Any time a male batter walks immediately prior to a female batter, the male batter advances to second base regardless of the number of outs or runners on base.
- **Less than two outs** – the female batter after a walked male batter shall bat as scheduled.
- **Two outs** – the female batter after a walked male batter has the **option** to walk or bat as scheduled.

F. DEFENSIVE POSITIONING

- Teams may elect to move outfielders to the infield or vice-versa at the start of any half-inning, however, how positions are aligned at the start of a half-inning must be maintained through the entire half-inning (i.e., 5 infielders).
- Designated outfielders must play at least fifteen (15) yards (45 feet) past the infield base lines. If a designated outfielder starts in front of that line and makes a play on a batted ball, the batter shall have the option to take the result of the play or a one-base award.

G. FAKE TAGS

- Any player who tags a runner without being in possession of the ball is to be called for defensive obstruction, and is subject to ejection and subsequent suspension.

H. BASE RUNNING

- No intentional contact in base paths or at the bases. Players who do so are subject to ejection and additional suspension.
- Players must avoid contact when deemed necessary by the umpire or shall be called out.

I. OVERTHROWS

- Overthrows out of play results in the advancement of runners two (2) bases from the last base touched at the time the thrown ball was released. The runner's direction has no effect on the reward.

J. RUN LIMITS (REGULAR SEASON AND PLAYOFFS)

- **Coed:** nine (9) run limit per inning except in the final inning
- **Men's:** unlimited
- **Women's:** unlimited
- **Mercy Rule (all leagues):**
 - ten (10) runs after five (5) innings
 - fifteen (15) runs after four (4) innings (**Doubleheader leagues only**)
 - twenty (20) runs after three (3) innings (**Doubleheader leagues only**)

K. HOME RUN LIMITS

- Leagues with fenced fields or natural barriers shall have an over-the-fence home run limit of two (2) per team per game. Any home run exceeding the limit will result in an out.

7. GROUND RULES

A. PATTERSON PARK

- Ball hit over any portion of a fence results in a home run (2 home run limit applies).
- Ball hit into trees that goes through results in a home run (2 home run limit applies).
- Ball that hits trees and stays in play results in a ground rule double; ball cannot be caught out of trees for an out.
- Ball that rolls between openings of brick pillars or fencing is a ground rule double (including if ball hits a fielder or their glove prior).
- Ball that hits a light pole in play is a ground rule double.

B. SWANN PARK

- Ball hitting the boulder or light pole in the outfield results in a ground rule double.
- Ball hitting or going past the walkway in the air on Field #2 results in a home run.
- Ball rolling onto walkway on Field #2 results in a ground rule double.

C. CARROLL PARK #3

- Ball hit into the street in the air results in a home run (2 home run limit applies).
- Ball hit into the street on the ground results in a ground rule double.

D. CARROLL PARK #4

- Over-the-fence home run limit rule applies in right field.
- Ball hit up the hill in the outfield is all you can get.

E. DRUID HILL PARK

- Everything from foul line to foul line is all you can get.

8. MISCELLANEOUS

A. LIGHTNING POLICY

- If thunder or lightning is observed, play must be stopped immediately and shelter must be sought.
- Play will not resume until 30 minutes after the last instance of thunder/lightning has occurred.

B. GAME CANCELLATIONS

- An attempt will be made to notify teams of weather cancellations prior to their game whenever possible.
- Notifications will be sent to team managers/players via email and text once a decision can be determined.
- Cancellations may also be viewed publicly at www.bcrpsports.org.

C. MAKE-UP GAME POLICY

- An attempt will be made to reschedule games canceled due to weather or other natural occurrences.
- If a league has not played all scheduled regular season games due to cancellations and there is risk that the time frame to complete the playoff schedule may be compromised if make-up games occur, the league will forego rescheduling those games and go directly into playoffs. In this instance, if 75% of regular season games were played there will be no league credit or refund given (i.e., 6 out of 8 weeks of regular season games were played).

D. PLAYER SUSPENSIONS

- The league director shall determine the length of player suspensions.