

Trilogy Community Softball League Local Rules

Revised October 5, 2023

Section 1 – Team Structure and Player Usage

- 1) **Play in the Field:** The standard lineup for TCSL games includes 11 players in the field. When this standard lineup is utilized, there must be a *maximum* of 5 infielders in front of the outfield cones (third baseman, shortstop, rover, second baseman, and first baseman). This means that there will be at least 4 outfielders behind the cones, though additional infielders can be positioned behind the cones if desired. Our league allows teams to play with 9 or 10 players, if necessary (see Rule 4c in this Section), so when there are only 9 or 10 players in the lineup, at least 3 outfielders must be behind the cones.
 - a) Outfielders (minimum of 3, as noted above) must stay behind the 160-foot markers until the ball is hit.
 - b) “No shift rule” – defensive players must be positioned with 2 outfielders on each side of second base, and infielders must have at least 2 players positioned on each side of second base. The rover may be positioned wherever desired, including in the outfield.
 - c) Runners to first base cannot be thrown out by any player positioned behind the cones, or by an outfielder relaying the ball to an infielder.
 - d) A fielder playing *in front of the cones* may throw out a runner at first base if the ball has touched the infield dirt, even if the ball is fielded on the grass.
- 2) **Defensive Playing Time:** It is the intent of the Trilogy Community Softball League to have all players play an equal number of innings in the field, where possible.
 - a) A team’s pitcher may pitch the entire game without sitting out.
 - b) In the event a team fields more than 11 players for a game, no player shall sit out a second inning until every other non-pitcher has sat out one inning. An exception will be allowed in situations where there is a special player safety concern. Such situations need to be communicated to both the umpires and the opposing manager prior to game play.
 - c) Borrowed players must be included in the players sitting defensively for an inning unless the borrowed player is pitching.
- 3) **Courtesy Runners:** Player safety is our primary concern. Courtesy runners are allowed from home plate or on the bases in accordance with the following:
 - a) Prior to the start of the game, each manager/designee shall notify the other manager/designee and the umpires of any player requiring a pinch runner from either home or the bases. No other players shall utilize a pinch runner during the game unless an injury occurs that prohibits the player from running. Under no circumstances shall a pinch runner be used for purely tactical purposes. It is at the sole discretion of the umpires to allow a pinch runner for any player not identified prior to the start of the game.
 - b) Courtesy runner selection - Each available pinch runner on a team may run TWICE in a game, and the points at which each runner is used is up to his/her manager’s discretion. The two-time limit applies to runners from home AND runners starting on a base - TWO TOTAL. If a manager reaches the point where all of his/her available pinch runners have been used twice, he/she needs to notify both the home plate umpire and the opposing manager, and then he/she may use his/her runners one more time each - for a total of THREE in the game. This would repeat if more runners are needed after three times, four times, etc.
 - c) A batter/runner who wishes to utilize a courtesy runner shall make the request to an umpire, who will call time and announce the request -the manager shall not initiate the request.

- d) A courtesy runner must report to, and be acknowledged by, the umpire before play resumes. A courtesy runner is in the game when he/she touches the base. If a courtesy runner is determined to be illegal, he/she will be called out and no other courtesy runner is allowed.
 - e) When using a courtesy runner from home plate, if the batter runs more than 20 feet down the first base line, he/she (and his/her courtesy runner) shall be called out. ***The play is ruled dead at that point, and all runners return to their original bases.***
 - f) A player may pinch run only once per inning. The same pinch runner may run again only for the same player in an open inning. A player found pinch-running more than once in a non-open inning shall be called out and removed from the base. An illegal courtesy runner on base is committing a continuing violation and may be called out upon appeal at any time while on base or, if he/she scores, prior to the first pitch to the next batter. ***It will be up to the manager of the opposing team to keep track of the other team's courtesy runners.***
 - g) There cannot be a courtesy runner for a courtesy runner, with the only exception being in the case of an injury. When an injury occurs, the injured player may leave/re-enter without penalty to his team.
 - h) A courtesy runner on base when he/she is due to bat shall be removed from the base, called out, and will take his/her turn at bat. Another courtesy runner cannot be substituted at the base vacated. A courtesy runner retired for the third out will be the first batter of the team's next half-inning at bat.
- 4) **Borrowing Players From Another Team (Substitutes):** It is expected that managers will need to supplement their game rosters due to injury, illnesses, traveling, etc.
- a) Borrowed players must be of an equal or lower rating category (A1, A2, B+, B, C+, C1/C2) than the player being replaced.
 - b) Each team's game roster, including borrowed players, must be within the rating-level quotas (A1, A2, B+, B, C+, C1/C2) established at that season's player draft.
 - c) A team must have **at least 9** players in the field to start an official game. Managers may decide to play with fewer than the stated requirement, but the team below the minimum will be dealt a forfeit. If both teams are below the minimum, it will be considered a "double forfeit" and each team will accrue a loss in the league standings.
 - d) If a manager expects 11 or more players from his own roster to play a game, a borrowed player shall only be added if the missing player is rated as an "A1 or A2" or the team is in need of a pitcher.
 - e) In seasons where an odd number of teams are being fielded, a manager should strive to contact players on the "Bye" team first to fill openings. If Bye team players don't show interest or time constraint issues are present, the manager should then contact any other available players, including any players that are classified as "sub-only" (not present on any team's regular roster). If no Bye team exists in a given season, the manager is free to contact all available players at any point.
 - f) Managers should attempt to limit borrowed players to playing just two (2) games per day (the player's own game and one game borrowed, or two games borrowed if the player's team has a bye). However, if there is a player shortage due to scheduling factors, a player may play (3) games in one day.
 - g) Managers are limited to using the same borrowed player no more than two times in a season, including the end of season tournament, unless all players at the needed level have been used twice. In this case a borrowed player may be used a third time.
 - h) If an unexpected emergency arises for a particular game, causing a potential violation of the rules in this section, the manager will consult with the opposing manager to reach an agreeable solution.
 - i) If a unique circumstance arises that will impact multiple games (e.g., extended player absence or the demands of a difficult position to fill), the manager should consult the Board regarding a solution.
 - j) Violations of the spirit of this section may lead to a forfeit. Only the league Commissioner, in conjunction with a second Board member, can declare the forfeit; a protest can be initiated by the umpires or the opposing manager.
 - k) When a player is injured during a game and must be removed from the game, play shall continue with the next player in the batting order without recording an out. A player from another team of equivalent or lower rating may be substituted if available at the time.

- l) Any player in the starting lineup for a game must be able to bat and field (courtesy runners are permitted as noted in paragraph 6 above). No player may be a “designated hitter” or “designated fielder”.
- 5) **Umpires/Scorekeepers:** Managers will assign umpires and score keepers as indicated in the schedule.

Section 2 – Game Play

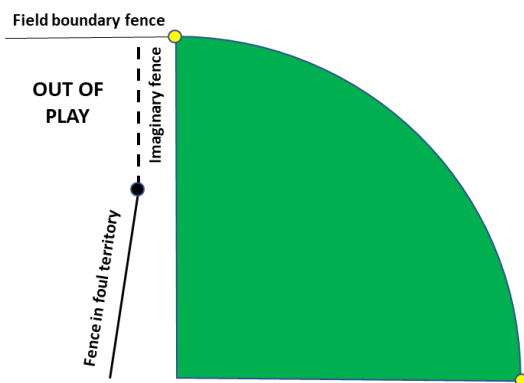
- 1) **Starting Count:** Batters will start with a 1 ball, 1 strike count. A batter with 2 strikes will be allowed one “waste foul”; another foul after that will be considered strike 3.
- 2) **Timely Play:** Managers and players of both teams must make every effort to use time wisely to move the game along. Umpires should keep the play moving avoiding time wasted between innings and during the game, including warm-ups. Infield practice is allowed during the first inning only. If this proves to be a problem, we will consider altered strike/ball counts and other options to speed up play. The time clock will be set to reflect 55 minutes to determine the start of the last inning. If the timer alarms during the game, the current inning plus one more inning will be played and the game considered complete after this.
- 3) **Walks:** When a batter is walked without incurring any pitched strikes, he/she shall have the option to (1) take first base or (2) remain batting under a new count after having a runner awarded first base. If he/she is walked additional time(s) during the same at-bat, he/she will have the same options.
- 4) **Pitch Height:** Each pitch to the batter must be no less than 6 feet high and no more than 12 feet high. The umpire will call the pitch illegal if it does not meet this requirement as soon as possible, and the pitch will be a ball. If the batter swings at the pitch after it is called illegal, this takes priority and the play continues as if the illegal pitch had not been called.
- 5) **Runs Maximum:** A maximum of 4 runs scored per inning per team is allowed, except for the last inning played, where the number of runs scored shall be unlimited.
- 6) **Interference:** Interference by a runner with a fielder making a play on a batted or thrown ball, or on an attempt to execute a double-play, will result in the interfering player being called out. If the interference occurs during an attempted double-play, the umpire has the discretion to call the runner at first out as well. Additionally, fielders that are not making a play may not interfere with base runners; umpires have the discretion to award a runner an extra base if he/she determines that this has occurred.
- 7) **Sliding:** Sliding into any base is not allowed; a base runner doing so will be called out. However, runners may dive or slide back into a base they have overrun.
- 8) **Infield Fly Rule:** With less than two outs and runners on first and second or with the bases loaded, if a fly ball is hit in fair territory to the infield (including to the pitcher or catcher), the home plate umpire is to call the batter out if, in his/her opinion, the ball should be readily caught by a player with ordinary effort. Runners may advance at their own risk - they are not forced and the ball is still in play. If the ball ultimately lands in foul territory, or rolls foul before being touched by a defensive player, the infield fly call is reversed and the hitter resumes his/her at-bat. If the umpire does NOT invoke the rule, upon appeal (see Rule 10 in this Section) it can be called after-the-fact if the umpires determine that this would be the correct call. In this case, an out is recorded and the runners are returned to the bases they occupied prior to the play.
- 9) **Intentionally Dropped Fly Ball:** If an infielder intentionally drops, or lets drop, a fair fly ball, including a line drive, that can be caught with ordinary effort with any “forced” runners on base and less than two outs, only one recorded out may be made on the play. Any other runners tagged/thrown out on a play like this are

returned to the base they occupied before the play. This is an umpire's judgment call, subject to appeal (see Rule 10 in this Section).

- 10) **Appeal Process:** On an umpire call or non-call during the game, and before the next pitch is made, an appeal can be initiated only by a team manager (not by a player), to the umpire who made the call. Said umpire, at his/her discretion, may ask assistance and consult with the other umpire to confirm or adjust the call. After consultation, the decision of the umpire crew will be communicated to both teams.
- 11) **Mercy Rule:** 15 run lead after 5 or more innings.
- 12) **Flip-Flop Rule:** If the visiting team has a lead of 7 runs or more going into the open/unlimited inning, the flip flop rule shall automatically be initiated, with home team batting first in the last inning.
- 13) **Tie Game:** If the score is tied after the last inning, the game will end as a tie game. In tournament play, if the score is tied after seven innings, play will continue into extra innings until the tie is broken and a winner is declared. All extra innings will be open innings.
- 14) **Rained Out Games:** Game stoppage decisions due to inclement weather conditions are to be made by any Board Member present at the game. The officer should not be a participant in the game and should consult with the umpires before making a call, but the decision of the Board Member is final. If a game is stopped, it will be considered a complete game if the trailing team has completed their at-bat in the 5th inning. If the game is stopped before this, it will be a no-contest and will not be made up. If no Board Member is present, the umpires have the authority to call the game.
- 15) **Standings and League Championship:** We will utilize a point system to determine the Fall and Spring season weekly standings and determine our eventual Champion: two points for a win, one point for a tie, no points for a loss.

Section 3 – Ground Rules and Equipment

- 1) **Special Ground Rules:** On fields where sideline fences do not extend to the outfield fences (such as Paloma Park), an imaginary line is drawn to extend the existing fence in foul territory parallel to the foul line until it intersects the field boundary fence perpendicularly. All area to the left of this line is out of play.

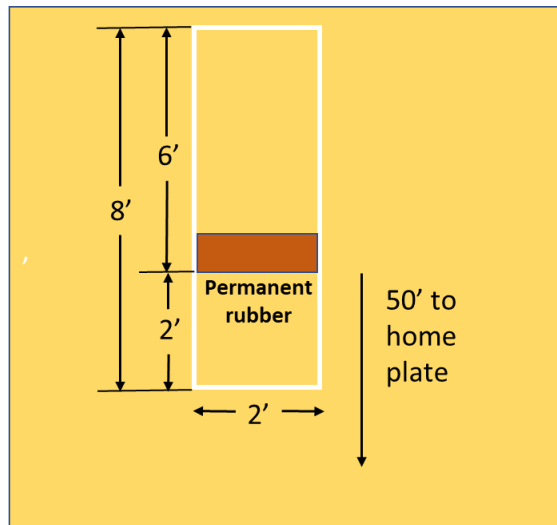


The following will apply:

- a. If a batted fair ball rolls across this line, whether touched or not, the ball will be deemed a ground rule double and all runners advance accordingly.

- b. If a batted ball is caught in-play and momentum carries the player across the imaginary line, play is still live.
- c. If a batted ball is caught across the line, it is a foul ball strike, not an out.
- d. If a thrown ball goes across the line, it becomes a dead ball, and all runners are awarded the base they were going to plus one more.

2) **Pitcher's Box** – The pitcher's box comprises a rectangular area 8 feet long and 2 feet wide, positioned as shown below:



The pitcher must take a position with at least one foot in contact with the pitcher's box prior to delivering a pitch. On days when the sun is making it difficult for the batters to see the ball, the pitcher will begin outside the box to the left or right at the request of the batter, but never closer than the front line of the box.

- 3) **Home Run Ground Rule:** A ball hit into the netting above the chain link fence in fair territory at Paloma Park is a home run, even if the ball bounces back onto the field.
- 4) **Bats:** Only ASA/USA approved bats and bats identified as 1.20 are allowed for most players. "Hot" bats (1.21 and/or USSSA) are allowed only for:
 - a. All players 70 years of age and older, except for those rated at the "A1" level.
 - b. All players rated C+, C1, or C2 and all female players, regardless of age.
- 5) **Shoes:** Metal cleats are not allowed. Recommended shoes are soft rubber/plastic cleats or turf shoes. Tennis shoes and sneakers are *not* recommended.
- 6) **Rules:** An [Official Senior Softball Rule Book](#), or copy of same, will be available at all Community League games for the use of umpires and managers only. A copy of the above "local" Rules will be issued to all managers and Board Members and will be available at games as well.