



# Softball Rules



Updated April 17, 2024

## 1. Pre-Game – Equipment, Game Time, Defaults & Foul Weather

**Spirit of the League:** The primary focus of TimeOutSSC is FUN! This league is a positive and encouraging environment that is welcoming to players of all backgrounds and playing abilities, with the goal of getting moving, meeting new people, and having fun while doing it! We look forward to an awesome season of welcoming and inclusive play.

Play that is competitive, overly aggressive, rough and/or unsportsmanlike such as pushing, shoving, elbowing, shouldering, tripping, hacking, slashing, sliding, tackling, ball blasting, chirping, name calling, threats and intimidation, is prohibited and will not be tolerated by TimeOut. TIMEOUTSSC IS FIRST-AND-FOREMOST-FOR-FUN. ANY ROUGH OR PHYSICAL PLAY WILL RESULT IN IMMEDIATE EXPULSION FROM THE GAME, THE LEAGUE, THE CLUB AND/OR ALL OF THE ABOVE. All players should go out of their way to avoid contact with other players and/or eliminate actions or behaviours that could jeopardize player safety. If accidental contact occurs it is expected that players will apologize for that contact, ensure everyone is all right and stop the game to seek appropriate help as required. This rule supersedes all others!

**Equipment/Set-Up:** *TimeOutSSC will provide bases and softballs for each game.* Teams are to provide their own softball gloves, catcher masks and bats.

**Mixed Gender Requirements:** TimeOut is committed to providing inclusive access to for-fun sport for players of all gender identities.

In this mixed gender league, teams on the field consist of (9) players including one (1) rover and a minimum of three (3) players of the non-majority gender (for example, a team with 5 men must have 3 players of another gender on the field). A team can play with a minimum of 7 people, as long as there is a minimum of 2 players non-majority gender players on the field. A team can also play with 8 people if they only have two of a non-majority gender player, BUT a team of 9 or more players that only has two non-majority gender players (for example, a team with 6 men, 1 woman and 1 non-binary) can only have 8 players on defense and will be playing short 1 person on defense.

### Batting Order

1. The batting order of a team can have a maximum of two players of the same gender in a row.
2. The batting order must stay consistent from inning to inning.
3. All players must bat before someone can bat for a second time, but players of the non-majority gender may bat more often to maintain Point 1, and may not bat behind the same player every time. (see Example 3)
4. Any players arriving after their team has batted in the first inning will be inserted into the bottom of the batting order, while still maintaining Point 1
5. The first player to bat in an inning is the person following the player who recorded the last at bat from the previous inning.

Example 1 (Majority Male)	Example 2 (Majority Female)	Example 3 (only 2 non-majority gender)
1. Male 1	1. Female 1	1. Male 1
2. Male 2	2. Female 2	2. Male 2
3. Female 1	3. Male 1	3. Female 1
4. Male 3	4. Female 3	4. Male 3
5. Male 4	5. Female 4	5. Male 4
6. Non-Binary 1	6. Male 2	6. Female 2
7. Male 5	7. Female 5	7. Male 5
8. Male 6	8. Female 6	8. Male 6
9. Female 2	9. Male 3	9. Female 1
		10. Male 1
		11. Male 2
		12. Female 2

### Game Time/Default:

- Please arrive 15 minutes early so that you can start your games on time. Games are 7 innings in length with a time limit of 1.5 hours. A default will occur if any team cannot field a squad by 10 minutes after the official start time.
- If the team that was first to bat is losing after the top of the 7th inning, they have the choice to call the game or let the other team bat.
- Games that are forced to be cut short due to time or dangerous playing conditions (ie. weather) will end with the final score being the score at the end of the previous completed inning.
- No new inning can start with 5 minutes left before the formal end time.
- During playoffs, if the game is tied after the completion of 7 innings, or the expired time, teams will utilize the following format. The team that is up to bat will start the inning by placing their 'last out' from the previous inning on 2nd base, with 2 outs. Once 3 outs have been reached, the other team will then place their 'last out' from the previous inning on 2nd base (also with 2 outs) and proceed to bat until 3 outs is reached. Teams will take turns doing this until the score is settled upon the completion of a full inning.

**Foul Weather:** In the event of severe weather (thunder and lightning storms) games should immediately be stopped and players should take cover away from open spaces. Wait 15 minutes; if the severe weather passes, continue play. If it does not and the game was in the first half and did not complete 4 full innings, the scores will not count and the game may be rescheduled to a make-up date. If it was in the 2nd half (at least 4 full innings played), the score at the time of stoppage will be recorded as the final.

**Alcohol/Drugs:** ALCOHOL AND DRUGS ARE NOT PERMITTED DURING LEAGUE PLAY! ANY OFFENDERS WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE THE LEAGUE WITHOUT REFUND. No exceptions.

**Discrepancies:** All games are self-refereed. Any disputes will be discussed amongst the two team captains. Please play honestly.

## 2. In Game – General Rules, Scoring, Pitching, Batting, Hits, Runners

### General Rules:

1. A coin toss or paper/rock/scissors should determine the home team (except during playoffs, when the higher ranked team will have a choice to bat 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>)
2. Each inning is played with 3 outs or when a team scores a maximum of eight (8) runs. EXCEPTION: A team has no run limit in the final inning of the game.
3. Mercy rule: If a team is up by 15 runs or more after the 5th inning of play, the losing team has the option of calling the game or choosing to continue.
4. Foul ball calls (balls that are hit outside of the base lines) should be made by the catcher. We expect all teams to place extra players on the offensive team at 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> to act as “base-coaches”. Controversial “out” or “safe” calls at each of the bases should be made by these base-coaches. If base-coaches are not being used, all controversial calls should be made by the pitcher. Please do your best to ensure that the game is being called in a fair manner.
5. No metal cleats are allowed.

### Fielding:

1. The rover may play anywhere on the field with the exception of the catcher's position and within the baselines before the ball is hit.
2. Players in the field are not allowed to stand inside the baselines before a player attempts to hit a ball. ie. Shortstop can't come up and stand beside pitcher before batter has swung at ball. Players are only allowed to come within the baselines after the batter has made contact with the ball.
3. There is no “infield-fly” rule in effect. However, it is poor sportsmanship to purposely drop a ball to try and get a double play.
4. There will be “safety bases” at 1<sup>st</sup> and home, giving the first baseperson and catcher a separate base to touch than the runner. At 1st base there will be an additional bag for the runner to step on, and Home Plate will have a marked line that the baserunner must cross to score. For the other bases, fielders should be touching 1 side of the base allowing a

baserunner to touch the base without interference. A runner cannot be tagged while running to first base, rather the first base player must tag the base.

5. If a ball is overthrown at 1st or 3rd base and goes 'out of play' - which is over the fence, into the dugout, beyond the extended backstop etc., then the base runners can advance 1 'free' base. If the ball stays in play (hits fence, etc) then the ball is live, and the runners can advance at their own risk.
6. A "force out" will always be in effect between 3rd base and home plate once the baserunner has crossed over the "commit line", meaning that a team can touch home plate with the ball rather than tag the runner to achieve an out.

#### Pitching/Batting:

1. The team at bat provides their own pitcher. The pitcher can pitch from wherever they choose. If a hit ball touches the pitcher, the ball is declared dead and the pitch is redone – base runners return to their previous bases and the pitch count is restored. (Pitchers should do their best to avoid making contact with a hit ball).
2. Every batter can receive a maximum of three (3) pitches. All foul balls, wild pitches, strikes and balls count as one of the three pitches. The only exception is a ball that hits the pitcher, which is considered a dead ball and does not count as one of the pitches.
3. There is no bunting or faking to bunt. However, a ball that is hit with a full swing, but does not go past the pitcher IS a live, playable ball.
4. A 'foul ball' pop-up behind home plate can only be caught for an out, if it goes higher than 3 metres (10 feet). A ball not exceeding this height is considered a 'strike'.

#### Base Running:

1. There is absolutely no sliding. Any base runner that slides is automatically out.
2. 1<sup>st</sup> base will have an additional bag to use as a "safety base". As such, there will be a base for the first baseperson and a separate base for the runner to step on. A runner cannot be tagged while running to first base, rather the first base player must tag the base.
3. A player can overrun 1st base without being tagged out if they continue to follow the foul line or stay to the right of it.
4. There are no leadoffs for base runners; you must be touching the base until contact with the ball is made. Please respect this rule.
5. Baserunners must stay along the base paths. They cannot move more than 3 feet away from an imaginary line or they will be deemed out.
6. Pinch runners may be used if the batter is injured on a play, or has a previous injury limiting their ability to run. The player who was the last out from the same gender group of the batter (majority or non-majority) will substitute for the runner once they've safely reach a base. In extreme circumstances, using a pinch runner from home may be possible if the batter can not run to first without risk of worsening their injury, which should be discussed by both captains and the game host prior to the start of the game.
7. Players on base are allowed to "tag-up" on a pop fly. Base runners must not leave the base until the fielder has caught the ball.
8. If a ball is overthrown at 1st or 3rd base and goes 'out of play' - which is over the fence, into the dugout, beyond the extended backstop etc., then the base runners can advance 1 'free' base. If the ball stays in play (hits fence, etc) then the ball is live, and the runners can advance at their own risk.
9. There is a "commit-line" halfway between 3rd base and home plate. Once the runner has crossed this line, they cannot return to 3rd base. If they do, it is an automatic out.
10. **Scoring a Run:** Home will also have a "safety base", in the form of a marked line that the base runner must cross to score. Home plate should only be touched by the catcher, and any base runner that steps on home plate will be receive an automatic out (without scoring a run). This rule is in place to avoid collisions.

**Ground Rules:** The Game Host and Captains should decide prior to the start of the game if they are going to play any ground rules with regards to boundaries. Ground rules would only be related to a specific location (e.g. diamonds where a big hit might end up landing into the trees or shrubs and be difficult to find) and will not apply to all locations. Please make sure that both teams are aware of these rules.

**Rough Play:** ANY ROUGH OR PHYSICAL PLAY WILL RESULT IN IMMEDIATE EXPULSION FROM FURTHER LEAGUE PLAY AND MAY RESULT IN LIFETIME LEAGUE EXPULSION. PLEASE SEE THE TIMEOUTSSC POLICY SHEET FOR OUR OFFICIAL POLICY ON THIS SUBJECT. All players should go out of their way to avoid creating an unsafe play. This rule supersedes all others.

### **3. Post-Game – Departure & Score Reporting**

**Departure:** Each week after your game, it is important to leave the diamond in a timely manner. Teams could be playing after you and will need to get their game started on time. It is also possible that the facility could be closing upon the completion of your game and all staff and members will need to depart the building at that time.

**Score Reporting:** TimeOut Game Hosts will report the scores for each game. Scores and standings can be viewed at [www.timeoutssc.ca](http://www.timeoutssc.ca)

### **4. Playoff Games**

**No Ringers:** To play on playoff nights players must have played a minimum of 2 regular season games (6-8 week season) or 3 regular season games (9-16 week season) for that team.

**Substitutes:** A player is only allowed to play for one team in each playoff round. Players cannot sub in for another team during the same round, most particularly in a championship game. Exception: a player may sub for another team in the same league during the same play-off round IF the game is not a championship game (ie, title on the line) and the team needing a sub would default the game without the substitute player (resulting in both teams being unable to play).

**Tiebreaker:** During playoffs, if the game is tied after the completion of 7 innings, or the expired time, teams will utilize the following format. The team that is up to bat will start the inning by placing their 'last out' from the previous inning on 2nd base, with 2 outs. Once 3 outs have been reached, the other team will then place their 'last out' from the previous inning on 2nd base (also with 2 outs) and proceed to bat until 3 outs is reached. Teams will take turns doing this until the score is settled upon the completion of a full inning.

**Determining Home Team:** During playoffs, the higher ranked team will have the choice to bat 1st or 2nd.