

2023 JCNSL Men's 17 and Over Softball Rules and Regulations

General

- 1) All league participants must realize that there are inherent risks associated with participating in a sporting activity. The JCNSL is not liable in any way for such injury suffered while playing in our league. All participants must complete and sign a GPRC waiver (through the league registration process or substitution process) before playing in our league. To ensure a safe playing environment:
 - a) The league will provide each game with a catcher's mask.
 - b) The league will set up two first bases on each field
 - c) The league will set up two home plates with a commit line on each field (discussed later in this document)
- 2) Please be considerate of the fields we use.
 - a) Please pick up ALL your trash before you leave the field.
- 3) For League offenses, the penalty structure is as follows:
 - a) Warning
 - b) Ejection
 - c) Team Forfeit of game played on day of ejection
- 4) Any player starting a fight, throwing a punch, or who strikes, shoves, pushes, bumps, or otherwise physically threatens an official or player will be automatically ejected from the game by the umpire and may be ejected from further games and/or the league by the league committee/commissioner. No warnings. This decision is final. An ejected player must leave the grounds immediately and is not allowed on the grounds during league play.
 - a) An ejected player must leave the grounds immediately and is not allowed on the grounds during league play. An automatic out is recorded for that player for the remainder of the game.
 - b) A player who is ejected from the first game of the "doubleheader" must also sit out the second game
 - c) At the conclusion of the game, the Umpire will discuss the events that led to the ejection with the Commissioner. Together, the Umpire and the Commissioner will determine if follow-on penalties are required. (At times, the issue may be brought to the League Arbitration committee to be discussed.)
- 5) It should go without saying that at no time should a player argue or get into a confrontation with an umpire. All umpires have the liberty to issue warnings to players and teams and/or remove players from a game for arguing. (The league takes these issues very seriously.)
- 6) The season will begin on July 31st.
- 7) This is a friendly league. Any player who is discovered to have bullied/encouraged a teammate to not attend a game, to back out of the league, to skip an at bat by feigning an injury, etc. in order to gain an advantage, will face significant league penalties. These penalties may include a lifetime ban from the league. In addition, the player's team may face severe penalties. In short, DON'T do it.
- 8) This is a family-friendly league. Do not use "bad language" during the game.
- 9) Games will begin at 7:30 PM sharp.
 - a) Forfeit time is five (5) minutes after the scheduled starting time. Note, a team that forfeits game 1 does not automatically forfeit game 2, (assuming they have enough players when game 2 is ready to begin.)

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Ground Rules

- 1) Games will be played according to the rules and regulations followed by the Amateur Softball Association of America for slow - pitch softball to the extent they do not conflict with the JCNSL Men's Softball League rules and regulations.
- 2) Regardless of your interpretation of the rules in this document or the ASA slow pitch softball rules, all umpire decisions are final. (Even if a decision appears to conflict with your understanding of the rules.)
- 3) The umpire will explain the ground rules to each team captain and establish the layout for the playing field before the start of each game. The umpire will stop the game to ensure that there is no encroachment of these rules.
- 4) The league follows a four-pitch max format (ASA Rules apply):
 - a) Each batter starts with a 1-1 count
 - b) Maximum of 4 pitches to each batter
 - i) 3 balls = walk
 - ii) 2 strikes = strikeout (a foul ball on a two-strike count is considered a strike)
- 5) Each team captain is responsible for documenting his team's lineup before the start of each game in his league provided scorebook. (The lineup may be referenced by the umpire if there is a dispute about the batting order, pinch runners, etc.)
- 6) Bases on the field are set 60 feet apart from one another.
- 7) There will be two, 7-inning games each week (**Games must go at least 4 innings to be considered official.**)
- 8) For the first 5 innings of all regular season games, there will be a default 6 run scoring maximum, per inning. Once the sixth run in any of innings 1-5 is scored, the inning is over regardless of the runners left on base. Innings 6 and 7 will have NO RUN LIMITS!
 - a) **Note:** The inning will end on the 6th run scored. For example, if a team has already scored 5 runs in an inning and the next hitter drives in two runners, only the first runner will count towards the score.
- 9) **If a losing team is losing by 12 runs or more through 5 innings, the game will be ended, per the mercy rule. If a losing team is losing by 10 runs or more through 6 innings, the game will be ended, per the mercy rule.**
- 10) A game can end in a tie during the regular season if the score is tied at the end of 7 innings (**or by the game time limit – see below**). In the post-season, the game will extend into extra innings.
- 11) In the postseason, teams with the best regular season records will be the home teams.

Game Time Limits

- 1) During the regular season as well as the playoffs, (excluding the championship):
 - a. No new inning may begin after the 65-minute time limit has been reached. (Meaning, if a game begins at 7:30 pm, once it is 8:35 pm, the current inning may be completed and then the game is over – even if the full 7 innings have not been played.)
 - b. In the playoffs, if the score is tied at the 65-minute time limit, the game will continue until the tie is broken.
- 2) For the championship:
 - a. There will be no time limit
 - b. The 12-run mercy rule after 5 innings will be suspended.
- 3) Teams are expected to not unnecessarily “waste time” in order to maintain a lead by the time limit. It is at the umpire's discretion to penalize a team for doing so
- 4) There will be a 5-minute intermission between games where teams will need to move to their fields for the second game.
- 5) Game time starts when the home team takes the field and the pitcher throws his first warm-up pitch.

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Game Rules

- 1) THE UMPIRE'S DECISIONS ARE FINAL. The umpire will call balls and strikes. **There will be NO discussions on balls and strikes or the height of a pitch WHATSOEVER from pitchers or hitters.**
- 2) Batters begin with a 1 and 1 count. **A batter who fouls a pitch with a 2-strike count is out.**
- 3) There may be up to 10 players in the field. All roster participants who are present at the game must be included in the batting order. If there is an injury, that player's spot in the order can be skipped.
 - a) A lineup must include at least 9 players to not be "penalized"
 - b) A team that has only 8 players will be forced to take an out for the 9th batter in the lineup.
 - c) If a player is ejected, an automatic out will be recorded for that player's batting position for the remainder of the game.
- 4) All players in attendance at the beginning of each game must be in the batting order and play (defensively) for at least 2 complete innings. The only exceptions are in the case of injury or the mercy rule.
- 5) Usage of illegal bats constitutes a dead ball. The batter is out and the player is ejected from the game. Any player using the same illegal bat a second time will be suspended from the league for the remainder of the season. Runners return to the base prior to the ball being in play. Umpires and team captains will monitor approved bats. **The League commissioner and committee can deem any bat illegal at any point in the season, and they will provide notice to captains of any changes prior to the next scheduled game.**

The following are the criteria for a legal bat:

- a) **Non- Composite barrel.**
- b) **Non- Composite handle.**
- c) **ASA 2000, 2004, 2008, or 2013 Approved**
- d) **Bats must be either single wall or multi wall aluminum**

The only thing allowed to be composite on a bat and used in JCNSL is the grip, and ONLY the grip. All composite bats, composite-like, and "half and half" bats are ILLEGAL. Bats that are illegal for game use may also not be used for batting practice. **If you have questions about the legality of a bat, please reach out to Jeremy Lason (jeremy@gmail.com) or Asher Sondhelm (asondhelm@yahoo.com)**

- 6) Intentional walks are permitted. Please notify the Umpire when you decide to intentionally walk a player to speed the game up.
- 7) Bunting or intentionally chopping the ball down in front of home plate is not permitted.
- 8) Captains must report game scores to the Commissioner within 24 hours after a game ends.

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Pitching

- 1) Pitching preliminaries
 - a) The pitcher must have one or both feet on the pitching rubber
 - b) The pitcher must come to a full and complete stop on the pitching rubber
 - c) The pitcher has 10 seconds to deliver the ball
- 2) Legal delivery
 - a) a step is not necessary, but if taken, it may be forward, backward, or to the side
 - b) arc limit -- 6' and 12'
 - c) illegal wind-ups include: a stop of the continuous motion; a reversal of the forward motion; more than one pass past the hip (windmill); continuing the wind-up after the release; pitches behind the back or between the legs
- 3) No pitch
 - a) if pitch is delivered before the umpire is ready
 - b) if catcher is not in catching position
 - c) if the runner leaves the base too soon on a pitch
 - d) if the ball slips from the pitcher's hand during the wind-up
- 4) Illegal pitch
 - a) one that does not meet arc limits
 - b) one delivered illegally
 - c) a quick pitch

If the batter swings at the pitch, the illegal pitch is ignored; otherwise a ball is awarded to the batter

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Running

- 1) **Pinch running** – once a hitter reaches first base, the team may use a pinch runner for that hitter. The pinch runner **MUST** be the last teammate to commit an out. The hitter does not have to forfeit his place in the batting order and can hit again. A team can pinch run for a hitter as many times per game as they want.

Note, if a pinch runner is already on base and the **next** hitter reaches base as well, a second pinch runner may also be used. (The second pinch runner must be the player who recorded an out prior to the last pinch runner.)

- 2) Base stealing is not permitted.
- 3) Leading is not permitted.
- 4) A baserunner may begin running on the batter's swing but not before.
- 5) Tagging up on fly balls is allowed from any base.
- 6) **A "commitment" line will be marked on the field between home plate and third base. If the catcher has possession of the ball and is in position to tag out the runner, the runner will be called out if they have passed the "commitment" line to prevent a collision at home plate. The call is made at the discretion of the Umpire.**
As part of this rule, there will be two home plates. The catcher must have possession of the ball with a foot on the standard home plate, similar to a play at first base. The runner must run parallel to the home plate and step on the "runner home plate." It is up to the judgment of the umpire if the runner beats the throw or not.
- 7) **Two first bases** – There will be two first bases, on each field. One on the inside of the right field line and one on the outside of the line. On all close plays at first, the first baseman should be standing on the inside first base while the runner must step on the outside first base. (This rule is intended as a safety precaution to avoid collisions at first base.)
 - a) On any plays where the fielder can conceivably make a play at first base, the runner **MUST** use the outside base. On a play where the runner is clearly rounding first and going to second, the runner can use either base.

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Inclement Weather Policy

- 1) In the event of rain, the JCNSL Commissioner will receive direction from Baltimore County about the condition of the fields and the status of the game **2 hours (no later than 5:30 pm)** before the scheduled game. The decision will be announced via the Captains WhatsApp chat and on the league Facebook page.
 - a. **Captains** are responsible for notifying team members of game status. If it is raining hard in one area, do not assume that games are cancelled. Always check with your captain first.
- 2) The Commissioner will communicate about make up dates.
- 3) Upon the first sound of lightning, players are to leave the field immediately and go to their cars. No one will be allowed on the fields until 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder and sighting of lightning.

Safety and Injury Prevention

- 1) Persons wearing casts or other items deemed unsafe by the league committee will not be permitted to play.
- 2) A player who is bleeding must be removed immediately from the game (no out will be enforced for the open spot.) The player in question may return to the game in his previous batting spot once the bleeding stops, at the discretion of the umpire.
- 3) **Metal cleats are not permitted** under any circumstance. Any player caught wearing metal cleats will be ejected from the game. A second offense will result in suspension.

Rosters and Player Eligibility

- 1) Rosters are comprised of 12 players
 - a. Teams are selected by captains via a draft. The draft pool will comprise all players who have confirmed interest in the league and have submitted payment and signed waiver forms
- 2) Any team playing with a non-eligible player (i.e. a player who was not drafted and was not added via the league's substitution process), whether discovered during or after the game, will forfeit all games played with that player.
- 3) Players are **expected** to wear their team uniforms or a shirt of their team color to all games.

Post-Season Tie Breakers

- 1) The top four teams in the standings at the end of the regular season make the playoffs. If there are any ties between teams in the standings, the tie breakers are as follows:
 1. Head to head record
 2. "Best" opponent defeated
 3. 2nd best opponent defeated
 4. 3rd best opponent defeated, so on and so forth
 5. Team with more wins (i.e. Team A may have more wins than Team B but they are even in the standings due to Team B having more ties.)
 6. Flip of a coin/League Committee determination

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Equipment

- 1) For each game, the league will provide new softballs and one catcher's mask to be shared by both teams.
- 2) If necessary, the league will provide bases
- 3) The league will provide team jerseys to all participants
- 4) The league will provide each team with a scorebook at the beginning of the season.

The league will NOT provide any bats, batting gloves, helmets, or any other baseball/softball equipment not listed above. **Teams are STRONGLY encouraged (but are not required) to share their team bats with their opponents, when their opponents are batting.**

Subs

- 1) There are a few scenarios in which substitute proposals may be submitted to the league for approval:
 - a. If a team is missing three or more players, the team may submit proposed substitute players in order to field a team of at least 10 players. Proposed replacement(s) must be equivalent in talent to a combination/balance of the missing players. For example, if a team is missing an 11th round pick, a 7th round pick, and a 3rd round pick, the proposed replacement may be someone who would have been selected around the 6th/7th/8th round.
 - b. If a player completely backs out of the league (on his own volition, not as a result of pressure from his team), the team may replace him with a player who is equal in talent. (The same proposed substitute player submission process will apply in this case as well.) **NOTE – If the league learns that a player was encouraged to drop out of the league by his captain or fellow teammates, there will be SEVERE penalties for the entire team.**
 - c. If a player selected in the first-round is out, the team may propose a one-for-one replacement. The league will only approve the replacement if the committee determines that the player is not a significant improvement in skill.
 - d. If a player selected in the second-round is out, the team may propose a one-for-one replacement but the replacement must be deemed to be one full round lower in talent. The committee will only approve if the replacement is deemed to meet these criteria.
 - e. If a player selected in the third-round is out, the team may propose a one-for-one replacement but the replacement must be deemed to be two full rounds lower in talent. The committee will only approve if the replacement is deemed to meet these criteria.
 - f. If a player will be out for two consecutive weeks, the team may submit a one-for-one replacement. Note, once that sub is approved, the initial player may not return during the planned two-week absence, even if his schedule changes.
- 2) All proposed subs must be submitted to the league by Thursday 9:00 PM, prior to that week's game. This will provide the league with time to vet the proposal. Any submissions beyond this time will be denied.