



Village Sports League – Official Men’s Softball Rules

General Rules

Field of Play: Field of play will be a softball/baseball type field with 65 feet base paths.

Fair/Foul Territories: Fair territory consists of the area between (and including) the 1st and 3rd base lines. Foul territory consists of any area outside the 1st and 3rd base lines.

Game Ball: Softballs (12-inch regulation size for males) will be provided by VSL and must be used during league play.

Bats: VSL will follow the USA Softball (USA) approved list for bats.

Baseball/Softball Glove: A baseball or softball glove is required for all fielders on defense. **Players must provide their own glove.**

Game Officials: At least one (1) umpire will be provided by VSL to officiate and enforce the rules of the game. The umpire’s responsibilities include:

- Starting the game on time
- Announcing the top and bottom of each inning
- Calling and tracking balls, strikes and outs.
- Calling base-runners either ‘safe’ or ‘out’ on the field of play.
- Settling disputes and disputed calls

All umpire’s judgment decisions are final. Any excessive player disagreements with the umpire will result in an ejection from the game (and/or league), if deemed necessary.

Scorekeeping: It is the responsibility of both team captains to help keep track of their scores. VSL staff and the umpire will assist in the tracking of scores and any discrepancies with the scores. The game’s final score must be verified by both team captains with VSL staff at the end of the game.

Game Duration: A regulation game will be seven (7) innings, or end after 50 minutes. The 50-minute game clock shall begin at the start of the scheduled game time. No new inning will start after the 50-minute game clock has expired. However, the game will conclude after the final out of the current inning.

Weather / Rain Out Policy: All game day, weather dependent decisions will be made by 2pm the day of the game. Temperatures estimated to be over 105 degrees or under 30 degrees at the time of play will result in a postponed or canceled game, decided by the VSL coordinator. Rain that has left the field in an unplayable condition will result in a postponed or canceled game, decided by the VSL coordinator. Players will be notified of any schedule changes by

email and can also call the rainout line at 214-772-2409 for the most up to date game day decision.

Run Limit (Per Inning): Each team has a six (6) run limit per inning (for Innings 1 through 4). When a team scores 6 runs in those designated innings, then the teams switch (regardless of the number of outs). However, unlimited runs may be scored (in Innings 1 through 4) if one of those innings is declared the final inning of the game (based on time). There are unlimited runs for Innings 5 through 7, until a team gets their third out.

End of Game: The team with the higher score at the end of regulation wins the game. The game officially ends.

Ties: If the score is tied at the end of regulation during the regular season, then the game will officially end in a tie. Extra innings will not be played.

Mercy Rule: The game officially ends, and a team wins if they are ahead by: - 12 runs after 4 complete innings, or - 10 runs after 5 complete innings
Forfeits: If a team forfeits a game due to no-showing or not having the minimum number of players, then the opposing team will be awarded a 10-0 victory.

Substitutions: In the event a team does not have the adequate amount of players, they are allowed to use substitute players. The substitute must complete a liability waiver with the VSL coordinator. Substitutes are allowed to play in a playoff or championship game only if they have played and signed into a regular season game. Substitute eligibility should be confirmed with the VSL coordinator prior to a playoff or championship game. Substitutes may only participate in a game in the event a team does not have the minimum number of players to start the game. If paid players arrive after the start of game time, they take priority to a substitute. Subs are permitted to play in 3 regular season games only. If a substitute player is eligible and needed to play in a playoff game, they are only eligible to play with one team.

Code of Conduct: VSL offers recreational sports leagues and will not tolerate unsportsmanlike conduct. Players displaying unsportsmanlike conduct with an official or player will first receive a verbal warning. If said player displays inappropriate behavior again, they will be suspended from the next scheduled game of the season. Depending on the severity of the conflict, season suspension may be enforced by the VSL coordinator. All warnings will be communicated by the official and via email by the VSL coordinator. Please note that officials serve the right to eject players from the game or place suspensions.

Fielding Rules

Players on the Field: The fielding team must have ten (10) players on the field of play. For the batting team, a 1st base and 3rd base coach is allowed. All other players from both teams need to be in their respective dugouts. If the umpire believes a ball was interfered with due to players outside of their respective dugouts, a "dead ball" will be called. Defensive Dugout Interference results in runners advancing one (1) base from where dead ball was called. Offensive Dugout Interference results in runners returning to the last successful base reached prior to the dead ball being called

Catcher: The fielding team must play a catcher at home plate. The catcher must stand behind the batter and not interfere with the batter's ability to hit the ball or advance to 1st base. Catcher Interference shall result in the batter being awarded 1st base and all other base runners advancing one (1) base.

Infield/Outfield Line: The “infield/outfield line” will be designated as where the infield-dirt and outfield-grass meet. If there is no clear “infield/outfield line”, then the umpire will designate a line (approximately 10 paces) beyond the bases to act as the “infield/outfield line”. There can be no more than six (6) fielders on the infield at any point before the ball is hit. Any fielder that starts in the outfield cannot enter the infield until the ball is hit.

Pitching Rules

Pitcher’s Plate: Before a pitcher begins their pitch, he/she must have one or both feet on or behind the pitcher’s plate. The pitcher must have one foot within 6 feet behind the pitcher’s plate when the ball leaves his/her hand.

Pitch Height: The legal pitch height must go above the batter’s shoulder and not exceed 12 feet above ground. Any pitch that is not deemed legal will be called a ‘ball’ (unless the batter swings at the ball).

Pitcher’s Protection: The pitcher will be protected while defenseless. If any line drive or sharply hit one hopper strikes the pitcher while they are defenseless, then the batter will automatically be ruled out’ (regardless of the batter’s gender). Multiple violations of the Pitcher Protection rule by the same batter can and will result in an ejection from the game (and possible suspension from the league).

Batting Rules

Batting Order/Lineup: Players must follow the same lineup throughout the game.

“Batting the Bench”: Teams may “bat the bench” (where every player in attendance may bat in the lineup). A batter is not required to play defense. However, all fielders on defense are required to bat.

Designated Hitters: Designated hitters are not allowed. All fielders on defense are required to bat. Any attempt at using a designated hitter must be brought to the attention of the umpire prior to game time and can only be deemed allowable by the opposing team captain.

Count at Home Plate: All batters will start with a count of one (1) ball and one (1) strike, Four (4) balls will result in the batter “walking”. Three (3) strikes will result in the batter being called “out”.

Bunting: A batter must make a full swing if they attempt to hit a ball. Bunting (or slap bunting) is not allowed. Walks: If a male batter is walked, then he is automatically awarded 2nd base. If a female batter is walked, then she is automatically awarded 1st base. If there are two outs and the next batter is female, then she can choose to bat or take the walk to 1st base.

Team/Player Requirements

Rosters/Player Eligibility: All players must have been pre-registered via VSL league portal and have a waiver on file. It is the responsibility of both team captains to maintain their respective rosters and line-ups. VSL staff and the umpire will assist in any discrepancies with regards to the coed ratios and player eligibility. All roster check requests must be made to VSL Sports staff prior to the first play of the game.

Minimum Number of Players at Game Time: Each team must have eight (8) players

Failure to Have the Minimum Number of Players at Game Time:

- If a team does not have the minimum number of players to begin, then the team at full strength will be awarded with three (3) runs. The team that is short-handed will have ten (10) minutes to field the minimum number of players. If the short-handed team does not have the required minimum number of players at the end of the ten-minute period, then they will have to forfeit the game.
- If neither team has the minimum number of players to begin, then the 3-run penalty will not be enforced. Both teams must field the minimum number of players within ten (10) minutes after game time. If neither team has the minimum number of players at the end of the ten-minute period, then both teams will forfeit the game. BE ON TIME!

The two team captains can agree to proceed with an official game if VSL staff allows it. However, the team on the verge of forfeiting cannot force an official game to take place, nor is the opposing team required to allow an official game to take place. The VSL staff will ultimately make this decision after talking with both captains.

Shoes/Footwear: Shoes must be worn at all times. Sneakers and rubber-cleated shoes will be allowed. Metal cleats/spikes, open-toed, open-heeled or hard-soled shoes will not be allowed.

General Gameplay

Scoring: A base-runner scores a run by touching home plate or the strike mat. A run is not scored if the third out results in the batter or base-runner being forced out.

Homeruns (One-Up Rule): Teams may hit an over-the-fence home run; however, no team may ever go more than one homerun up on the other team. Any additional home runs above the “one-up” will result in the batter being called out and any base runners will not advance.

1st Base/Safety Bag: There will be two bags at the 1st base position: a white bag (1st base) in fair territory and an orange bag (safety bag) in foul territory. On force-out plays at 1st base, the batter has the right to the orange bag and the fielder has the right to the white bag:

- The fielder must use the white bag to make the out.
- If the fielder uses the orange bag, then the batter will be called ‘safe’.
- If the batter uses the white bag, then the batter will be called ‘out’.
- If the fielder crosses into the base path for any reason (including an attempt to catch away ward throw) and inhibits the batter from taking a clear path to the orange bag, then the batter will be called ‘safe’ for defensive interference. If there is not a force-out play at 1st base, then the batter may use the white bag.

Fair Balls: A fair ball is defined as

- A batted ball that touches and stays in fair territory
- A batted ball that touches fair territory, and goes into foul territory after passing 1st base or 3rd base
- A batted ball that touches foul territory, but goes into fair territory before passing 1st base or 3rd base
- A batted ball (in fair territory) that touches a player before going into foul territory

Foul Balls: A foul ball is defined as:

- A batted ball that touches foul territory without going into fair territory
- A batted ball that touches fair territory, but goes into foul territory before passing 1st base or 3rd base.
- A batted ball that hits a backstop, a tree (or anything extraneous to the playing area) before going into fair territory

Outs: An out will be called in the following situations:

- The batter is called for a 3rd strike
- The batter hits a second foul ball after getting two strikes
- A foul ball goes is caught in the air before touching any part of the fence or ground
- A batted ball is caught in the air before it touches the ground
- A force-out is called at a base before the base-runner reaches that base
- During a force-out play, if the fielder is making contact with the base, he/she must demonstrate complete possession of the ball
- During a force-out play at home, if the fielder is making contact with home plate or the strike mat and is demonstrating complete possession of the ball
- A base-runner is tagged by a fielder with the ball (that was put into fair play) and the baserunner is off the base.
- A batted ball hits a base-runner in fair play (while he/she is off base or is forced to run off base). The base-runner will be called “out”, the batter is awarded 1st base and all other base runners must return to their original base.
- If a batter overruns 1st base and makes an aggressive turn toward 2nd base and the batter is tagged with the ball before getting back to 1st base.

Infield Fly Rule: An infield fly consists of the following:

- Any fly ball that can be caught by an infielder
- There are less than two (2) outs
- There are base-runners on:
 - 1st base and 2nd base, or
 - 1st base, 2nd base and 3rd base

The batter is automatically called ‘out’ on an infield fly and base- runners can advance at their own risk.

Live Ball/Dead Ball: The ball is live at all times until ‘time’ or ‘dead ball’ is called by the umpire. ‘Time’ will be called by the umpire when a fielder has controlled the ball in the infield and all baserunners have reached (or retreated back) to their respective base. Any contact with a live ball during the course of play (by the base-runner) is an out.

Out-of-Play Balls: All thrown balls are deemed “out-of-play” when:

- The ball is thrown over the fence
- The ball is thrown beyond the fence (or “no complete” fence at the park)
- The ball is thrown or carried beyond the imaginary line (if there is no fence) extending from the end of the backstop. This imaginary line also applies to overthrows and caught foul balls On balls that are ruled “out-of-play”, the base-runners are granted the base he/she were going to (at the point of the throw), plus one (1) additional base. In cases

where a base-runner runs past 1 st base, he/she must have clearly made an aggressive turn towards 2 nd base, in order to be granted 2nd base and 3rd base during an out-of-play scenario. If the ball is overthrown and hits the fence behind the 1st or 3rd base lines, this is not considered “out-of-play” and the runners may advance (at their own risk).

Leadoffs/Stealing: Leading off a base or stealing a base is not allowed. Base-runners can leave the base once the ball is hit. If it is determined that a base-runner leaves their base early before the ball is hit into play, then a ‘dead ball’ will be called and the base-runner is called ‘out’. If this is the batting team’s 3rd out of that inning, then their batter at the plate will be the first batter in the next inning.

Tagging Up: The base-runner may leave when a fly ball is touched in flight by a fielder. If the base-runner fails to tag up on a fly ball out and the fielder completes a force-out at the base-runner’s original base, the base-runner is called ‘out’.

Fielder’s Obstruction: A fielder may not block the base path (or block/stand on a base) for an incoming base-runner, unless he/she has possession of the ball. The base-runner will be ruled “safe” if he/she would have reasonably reached the intended base safely. The fielder cannot interfere with a runner without possession of the ball, this includes waiting for a throw or about to receive a throw.

Base-Runner’s Interference: A base-runner may not disrupt or interfere with a fielder making a play on the ball. A dead ball is called and the base-runner will be ruled ‘out’. All other base-runners must return to the last base that he/she touched, prior to the interference.

Base Coaches: The batting team is allowed to use 1st and 3rd base coaches. These coaches are to stand in foul territory in the designated coach’s box. Base coaches must attempt to move out of the way of a play in their area. If, in the eyes of the umpire, a base coach is found to have interfered with a play, an “out” will be awarded to the defense. This includes, but is not limited to, inhibiting a defender from pursuing a foul ball or touching a base runner during a live play.

Courtesy Base-Runner: Teams are limited to one courtesy base runner per inning per gender. Anyone on the roster may serve as the courtesy base runner. A courtesy base-runner cannot be used to replace a base-runner based on speed (or athletic/base-running ability). A violation of this rule will result in an “out”.

Excessive Contact: VSL staff/officials will closely watch base-runners and fielders that engage in excessive contact. Any excessive, unnecessary contact or collisions will result in an out and/or ejection. This includes contact with the catcher (or fielder) at home plate. Sliding is allowed by the base-runner. All plays at home plate require the base-runner to either slide or bail out to avoid contact. Any sliding into a base to break up a double/triple play, or any intentional interference (in the eyes of the umpire) with the fielder, then all base-runners may be called ‘out’.

