

Palm Beach Senior Softball Association

League Rules Of Play (Updated for Winter 2012)

01/03/12

Players shall have reached 55 during the calendar year in which the Winter Season occurs in order to be eligible. Allocation of players by Division is strictly the province of the Board of Directors and/or Ratings Committee or their designees.

Players new to the PBSSA will not be placed in any Division or "reserve" until such time as they have participated in sufficient practice sessions to allow an accurate rating of their skills.

Players may not participate in League games or practices until registration fees have been paid in full.

Players not available on DRAFT DAY may be placed on a waiting or reserve list.

A team assigned player who misses 3 consecutive games, or 4 in total, may be removed from the teams' roster and designated as a "reserve player".

Practice games are restricted to registered players only - i.e. those who have signed the waiver and paid the membership fee. All players participating must be at least 55 years of age.

Gold division players may not play in Silver division games.

All players, except those opting to wear a protective face mask, must wear the cap provided by the league. The cap's bill must face forward.

Metal cleats are prohibited.

Every player MUST furnish their own approved bat for game use.

No player may use another players' bat without the approval of the bat owner...

All bats must be inspected and approved by the Board of Directors prior to use in league games or practice sessions. Stickers will be affixed to bats that have been inspected and approved. Players may consult the website www.pbssa.org for current information or contact a Director.

Rain-outs prior to the first pitch are determined by the onsite Directors or by the managers in the absence of a Director. The Board may develop a procedure of telephone relays to provide advance notice to managers and players. Unless notified in advance that games have been cancelled or delayed, managers and players should report to their assigned fields as scheduled.

Once the game starts, the umpires are in control of the game and playing conditions.

A game must be at least four & one half (4 ½) innings to be considered an official game if the home team is leading or five (5) innings if the home team is tied or trailing.

A team may not score more than 5 runs per inning except for the last inning when scoring is unlimited.

Runners MUST give way at second or third base to fielders in the act of playing the ball, e.g. completing a double plays or force outs .No sliding into any base or base overruns are permitted. Players may slide or dive back to a base they previously legally occupied.

Runners may leave a base when the pitch passes the plate, hits the ground or is hit by the batter.

*Each runner must reach first base by his own efforts. Any player may be replaced by a courtesy runner at his request or by manager's discretion. ***See Supplemental Gold & Silver Divisional Rules.*

A courtesy runner on base when it is his turn to bat will be declared "out". The courtesy runner will be removed from the base – and not replaced – and take his turn at bat. Such an "out" may be the last out of an inning or game.

A game will end due to a "mercy rule" if a team is 15 runs ahead after 7 innings in a 9 inning game or after 5 innings in a 7 inning game.

League games will be played on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 9:45AM during the Winter 2012 season. Regular games are scheduled for 9 innings. Should 7 inning doubleheader games be required, the first game will begin at 9:15AM. The second game will begin no more than 10 minutes after the completion of the first game.

Players are expected and required to report to games in sufficient time to adequately "warm-up" and prepare to play. They are also expected and required to be regular in attendance. They shall notify the manager as soon as possible if they will be absent from a game.

Managers will exchange lineups no later than 15 minutes before a games' starting time. They are to fully discuss absent players, players requesting early dismissal, players who are requesting an exemption from playing defensive innings and other unique factors concerning the upcoming game.

Rosters may consist of a maximum of 12, 13 or 14 players as determined by the Board of Directors prior to the beginning of each season.

A "starting" team will consist of 11 defensive players (12 in the Silver Division if teams are at even strength or have more than 12 players present).

*Players present must be in the batting order and play defense unless provision has been made for an extra hitter (EH). *See EH definitions. There is unlimited substitution.*

A non-roster player may not be used until they have been rated by the Board and assigned as needed.

The Home Team provides one "NEW" ball at the beginning of the game. The Visiting Team provides a "GOOD" back up ball.

An umpire's judgment CANNOT be questioned. Managers may ask the umpire for clarification.

The height of a legal pitch is from 6 to 12 feet high as determined by the umpire. A legally pitched ball landing on any part of home plate or the mat is a strike. Distance from the front of the plate to the rear of the mat is 32 ½ inches.

The pitchers' rubber will be 50 feet from home plate. Additionally an area the width of the pitching rubber and extending 6 feet to the rear has been established as a "pitching box". The pitcher may opt to pitch anywhere within this extended area provided he establishes a pivot foot and makes a legal pitch. (Intent: allow the pitcher to field the position effectively and protect him from injury).

Should adverse windy conditions influence the ability of both pitchers to throw strikes, the umpire, with concurrence of the Directors present, may restrict calls to "strikes only". Walks would be eliminated.

The commitment line is twenty (20) from home plate. Once a runner crosses the line he may not re-cross in the direction of third base. Violation results in an "out".

The scoring home plate is an extension of the 1st base line and 10 feet from the corner of home plate closest to third base into foul territory at a 90 degree angle to the third base line. A foot down on the scoring plate is the same as a foot down on home plate in terms of scoring a "run". A runner that has passed the commitment line but has not reached the scoring plate is "out" if a defensive player in possession of the ball touches home plate (Effect: all plays at home plate become a force out), or a runner runs into a defensive player with or without the ball in the umpire's judgment.

An extra first base is provided for use by the batter-runner. The defensive player uses the original first base for all put-outs.

A time-out is not required to insert a courtesy runner as long as the umpire has been notified before the inserted runner touches the base. The original runner remains on the base until the courtesy runner arrives.

A courtesy runner is considered in place upon touching the base.

A player ejected from a game by the umpire must also "sit out" one additional game at which he is physically present. If the ejection results in the TEAM having fewer than 9 players the game is "forfeited" at that point. Should the game continue an "out" shall be recorded each time the ejected player is scheduled to bat.

Ejections by the umpire, unsportsmanlike conduct, or conduct detrimental to the league may result in corrective action up to and including expulsion. Unacceptable conduct may include, but is not limited to, leaving the field arbitrarily without permission of the manager, physical contact with another person, improper language, excessive criticism of opponents or teammates and ethnic or racial slurs or comments. The Board of Directors has the responsibility to act at its' discretion to insure that all participants adhere to the Code of Conduct.

Managers and players are responsible to make certain that all equipment (bats, balls, gloves, helmets etc....) are out of the field of play including the sidelines during all games.

Reasonable accommodation will be made to players with documented medical conditions that prevent them from fully participating in our program provided they apply to the Board of Directors. Such accommodation must take into consideration the ability of the player to perform in such a way as not to be harmful to themselves or others.

The league follows SSUSA playing rules that apply to seniors with the exceptions found in the GENERAL RULES and Division appropriate SUPPLEMENTAL RULES.

Currently the Division appropriate SUPPLEMENTAL RULES address:

1. Walks permitted per inning (Silver and Gold)
2. Ball/strike count (Silver and Gold)
3. Courtesy Runners (Silver and Gold)
4. Infield Fly Rule (Silver and Gold)
5. Short-handed Situations (Gold & Silver)
6. Double-Header Games (Gold & Silver)
7. Use of the Pitching Screen (Gold & Silver)
8. The Flip-Flop Batting Rule (Gold & Silver)
9. The Extra Hitter – EH (Gold & Silver)
10. Tie-Breaking Procedure (Gold)
11. Base Running (Gold & Silver)

Silver Division Supplemental Rules

WALKS PER INNING: (3)

Subsequent to the 3rd walk, batters will hit until they strike out, hit the ball in fair territory or hit a foul fly ball that is legally caught by a fielder.

If a pitcher cannot or will not throw strikes after the third walk, he will be warned by the umpire.

If the situation continues, he will be removed from the mound but will remain in the game at another defensive position.

BALL/STRIKE COUNT: (4/3)

Four (4) balls will constitute a Walk.

Three (3) strikes will constitute a strike out.

No COURTESY foul.

INFIELD FLY:

The infield fly rule will NOT be in effect.

COURTESY RUNNERS:

A courtesy runner may be used for a base runner at any time, but the same courtesy runner may not be used more than once per inning. Any courtesy runner found running more than once per inning will be called out (Appeal Play).

A runner who is replaced with a courtesy runner may not be used as a courtesy runner for the remainder of the inning.

A courtesy runner may not be replaced by another courtesy runner except for injury causing removal of the original courtesy runner permanently from the game.

A courtesy runner on base when it is his turn to bat will be declared out. The runner will be removed from the base and a second courtesy cannot be substituted. The courtesy runner called out does not lose his turn at bat.

A courtesy runner is in the game when he touches the base. If a courtesy runner is determined illegal, he will be called out upon touching the base and no other courtesy runner is allowed. The original runner may not now return as the runner (Appeal Play).

Under special physical and/or medical circumstances a player may apply for a runner from home plate. The runner cannot go beyond first base on the play in question and must not advance towards second base. Board approval must be granted and there will be only one position available to any Silver Division team.

SHORT-HANDED SITUATIONS:

A starting team will consist of 11 fielders (12 in the Silver Division if both teams have that number). Teams must have a minimum of 9 players to avoid a forfeit. If one team has more than 11 and the other only 9, the team that is short will receive a DEFENSIVE CATCHER. The team having 9 players + the defensive player will play with a field of 10 players and bat 9. If the team has 10 players they will bat and field 10 players. There will be NO LENDING OF PLAYERS TO THE OPPOSING TEAM.

Everyone must play the field and bat in-turn (*except an EH who does not have to play unless needed) The EH will not be used unless teams have more than 12 players. The EH designee is on a voluntary basis... All team members, including those on the bench, will bat in-turn. Failure to conform will result in forfeit. Removal of an injured player or previously (pre-game) approved early departure will not result in an automatic out when it is time for his at-bat. His turn will be by-passed. There is unlimited substitution.

In the Silver Division each player MUST play at least four (4) innings in the field in a nine (9) inning or at least three (3) in a seven (7) inning game (refer to EH rule).

DOUBLE-HEADER GAMES:

As stated above each double-header game is scheduled for seven (7) innings. The first game will start at 9:15AM. The second game should start 10 minutes after the conclusion of game #1.

Gold Division—Supplemental Rules (Winter League 2012)

MAXIMUM WALKS PER INNING: (4)

Subsequent to the 4th walk, batters will hit until they strike out, hit the ball in fair territory or hit a foul ball that is legally caught by a fielder or until they receive a “virtual” walk which will reset the ball/strike count to “0-0”.

BALL/ STRIKE COUNT: (4/3) Experimental for the Winter 2012

Four (4) balls will constitute a Walk.

Three (3) strikes will constitute a Strike Out.

No courtesy Fouls.

BALL/STRIKE COUNT: DOUBLEHEADERS/ OTHER SEVEN INNING GAMES:

Three (3) balls will constitute a Walk.

Two (2) strikes will constitute a Strike Out.

One courtesy Foul allowed.

INFIELD FLY:

With runners on first and second or first, second and third base with less than two (2) outs the infield fly rule is in effect. Runners may advance at their own risk.

COURTESY RUNNERS:

A team may run for a maximum of two (2) players per inning.

Players replaced by a courtesy runner MAY NOT be used as a courtesy runner thereafter.

An eligible player may be used as a courtesy runner one time (1x) per inning.

An eligible player may be used as a courtesy runner a maximum of two times (2x) per game.

A courtesy runner that is on base and becomes "injured" may be replaced by an eligible player.

- a. If he is the team's second runner of the inning it will be "charged" against the team and player.
- b. If two runners have already been used it will be "charged" against the player.
- c. The "injured" player that was removed from the base must "sit out" the next defensive inning.

An injured base runner may be replaced by courtesy runner. The replacement runner will be considered a "courtesy runner" subject to the same rule as an "injured" courtesy runner.

Violations will result in "outs" upon successful appeal.

FORFEITS:

A team must have at least nine (9) rostered players present no later than five (5) minutes after the scheduled starting time of a game to avoid a forfeit. The opposing team will loan a "defensive catcher". Should both teams have but nine (9) players each will receive a "defensive catcher" and play at "even" strength.

DOUBLE-HEADER GAMES (also seven (7) inning Delayed Start Games):

Three (3) balls constitute a Walk

Two (2) strikes will constitute a Strike Out

One Courtesy Foul allowed

TIE-BREAKING PROCEDURE: DOUBLEHEADERS/ OTHER SEVEN INNING GAMES:

The last batter that went to the plate in the previous inning will be placed on second base. One (1) "out will be recorded. The placed runner MAY NOT be replaced by an eligible courtesy runner until reaching third base. Play continues in the manner until the game is completed.

PLAYER INJURED OR LEAVING EARLY WITH PRE-GAME PERMISSION:

No "out" shall be recorded in the batting order for a player that becomes (a) injured and is unable to continue the game or (b) leaves early after receiving pre-game permission PROVIDED his team has eleven (11) or more players remaining in their batting order and/or the absence does not result in a SHORT HANDED SITUATION.

SHORT HANDED SITUATION:

A "standard" game consists of two eleven (11) player teams or when both teams are at "even" strength. (9 on 9; 10 on 10; 12 in 12; 13 on 13; 14 on 14).

Any time a team falls below eleven (11) players in the batting order AND the other team has two (2) more batters in their hitting order the "shorthanded" team will take an "out" at the end of their batting order. (9 vs. 11, 12, 13 or 14; 10 vs. 12, 13 or 14).

The batter preceding the "out" is not eligible to receive a WALK if the "out" will be the final "out" of the game.

The defensive team may not walk 2 or more consecutive batters to achieve the 3rd out in any inning by getting to the "automatic out" in the batting order. If this should occur the "automatic out rule" would NOT apply and the leadoff batter would take their turn at bat. No out will be recorded.

EJECTED PLAYER:

An "out" will be recorded each time an "ejected" player's turn comes to bat the remainder of the game.

PLAYER LEAVING EARLY WITHOUT PERMISSION:

An "out" will be recorded each time this player's turn comes in the batting order if that results in his team having fewer batters remaining in their batting order than the opposing team. The batter preceding this "out" is not eligible to receive a WALK if the "out" will be the final "out" of the game.

MINIMUM DEFENSIVE PLAYING TIME:

Each player must play a minimum of four (4) defensive innings in a seven (7) inning game or five (5) defensive innings in a nine (9) inning game.

EXTRA HITTER(S): (EH) (EH, EH):

A team that has thirteen (13) players present and in the batting order may designate an Extra Hitter (EH) prior to the game. The Umpire and opposing Manager must be notified.

A team that has fourteen (14) players present and in the batting order may designate two (2) Extra Hitters (EH,EH) prior to the game. The Umpire and opposing Manager must be notified.

Extra Hitter(s) (EH) are not required to play the Minimum Defense Innings. However, they may be used defensively at their Managers' discretion.

A player may not serve as an Extra Hitter (EH) in any two (2) consecutive games in which his team opts to use this provision.

CALOOSA FIELD FOUR (4) (BASEBALL FIELD):

Provided that both teams have twelve (12) or more players available each team may play twelve (12) defensive players in the field.

BASE RUNNING:

A runner **MAY NOT** slide or dive **INTO** the scoring plate or any base.

A runner **MAY** slide or dive returning to a base that he previously legally occupied.

A defensive player **MAY NOT** occupy a base nor block a runner's path while **NOT** in possession of the ball.

A runner must "give way" or "veer" prior to reaching the base if the fielder at the base is in possession of the ball. The fielder must complete the play "cleanly". If he fails to do so, the Umpire has the discretion to declare the runner "safe" if in his judgment the runner would have been "safe" except for the "give way" or "veer" to avoid colliding with the defender.

Runners are not permitted to over-run second and third base without jeopardy of being tagged out.

An over-run occurs when a runner runs directly to and past the base (whether or not he touches the base) without any attempt to "give way" or "veer".

RUNNERS MUST MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO AVOID CONTACT WITH FIELDERS WHILE RUNNING THE BASES AND/OR SLIDING OR DIVING BACK TO A BASE.

DEFENSIVE PLAYERS MUST NOT OBSTRUCT ANY RUNNERS AND MUST ALSO AVOID COLLISIONS.

Runner May Stand in Foul Territory

A runner MAY move into foul territory behind and further from home plate at first or third base for safety. The runner is in jeopardy of being tagged or forced out while off the base if the ball is "live". (i.e., third baseman catches a line drive or ground ball and tags the runner out before he can retouch third base.) Prior to advancing to the next base then runner MUST retouch first or third base respectively.

Supplemental Rules (Gold & Silver)

EXTRA HITTER (EH):

If a team has thirteen (13) or more players present and in the batting order the manager may designate an Extra Hitter(EH) prior to the game. In the Gold Division a team that has fourteen (14) players present and in the batting order may designate two (2) Extra Hitters (EH – EH) prior to the game. The Extra hitter (EH) is a player who under certain circumstances will be placed in the batting order but will not be required to play the minimum number of defensive innings in a game. The Extra Hitter (EH) MUST be identified to the umpire and opposing manager prior to the start of the game. The Extra hitter is eligible to play a defensive position at the manager's discretion.

****In the Gold Division no player shall serve as an Extra hitter in any two (2) consecutive games.*

****In the Silver Division the Extra Hitter (EH) designation is VOLUNTARY.*

USE OF THE PITCHING SCREENS:

Pitching screens shall be used in all Division games.

The screen must be located laterally at the closest short edge of the pitching rubber.

The screen must be located three (3) to six (6) feet forward of the front edge of the pitching rubber.

The screen must be placed on the pitchers' glove hand side.

A pitcher may not move the screen except to position it on his glove hand side.

The pitcher should step behind the screen after releasing a pitch.

The pitcher may field any ball to either side of the screen

The pitcher may come around the screen to field either a slow dribbling ground ball or a pop fly.

A ball hitting the front or back of the screen after being touched or thrown by any defensive player will be in "play".

A batted ball hitting the screen shall be a strike.

*The pitching screen will not be a factor in an umpires' determination of an "infield fly"
Effect: The runners may advance at their own risk if the pitcher does not field the ball.*

Definition: the "screen" consists of the netting, outside railings, legs and base.

FLIP – FLOP BATTING RULE:

In games where the VISITING TEAM is ahead by 7 or more runs at the end of eight (8) innings of a nine (9) inning games (at the end of six (6) innings of a seven (7) inning game) the HOME TEAM will bat first in the “all you can get” final inning. The VISITING TEAM will bat last if the game has been tied or the HOME TEAM has taken the lead.

BASE RUNNING:

A runner MAY NOT slide or dive into the scoring plate or any base.

A runner MAY slide or dive returning to a base that he previously legally occupied.

Runners MUST give way at second or third base to fielders that occupy the base with the ball or are completing a double play or force.

A defensive player may not occupy a base or block a runner’s path while not in possession of the ball.

The umpire may call the runner “safe” if fielder does not complete the play “cleanly” or he determines that the runner would have been “safe” except for the fact that he “gave way”.

RUNNERS MUST MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO AVOID COLLIDING WITH OPPOSING PLAYERS WHILE RUNNING THE BASES AND/OR SLIDING OR DIVING BACK TO A BASE. THE SAME APPLIES TO DEFENSIVE PLAYERS AS FAR AS AVOIDING COLLISIONS.

If a base runner misses a base to avoid a collision that runner may not be called out (umpire’s judgment).

Players are not permitted to over-run second and third base without being in jeopardy of being tagged out. A player has the option of sliding or diving back to the base. The option is so that the runner can avoid a collision.

A runner MAY move into foul territory behind and further from home plate at first or third base for safety when a powerful pull hitter is batting. Prior to advancing to the next base he MUST retouch first or third base respectively.