

Night Play Rules

Redwood City Señors Softball Club

Redwood City Señors Softball Club has special rules designed for its membership's safety and to maintain balanced competition. ASA/NCSSA rules of play apply in situations not expressly covered by these guidelines.

1- Game Structure:

- a. **Game Length:** The first game should be completed before one hour and 15 minutes has expired. Therefore the open inning should be the next inning after one hour has expired. A game shall typically be 7 innings. Upon agreement of the umpire(s) and managers, the game may be shortened or lengthened.
- b. **Extra Innings:** Typically no extra innings will be played; the game will end in a tie. An extra inning may only be added, if the extra inning can be completed within the one hour and 15 minutes time frame.
- c. **Ball/Strikes:** The batter will start with a one ball – one strike count.
- d. **Two at Bats:** The visiting team shall bat two innings before switching to defense, and then the home team will bat two innings. Base runners will be cleared between innings. Teams will continue to alternate batting two innings at a time, until the seventh or open inning. Based on game time remaining, the umpire will determine when to switch to batting one inning at a time.
- e. **Five Run Rule:** There is a maximum of five runs that can be scored per inning except the last (open) inning and extra innings.
- f. **Open Inning:** In the last inning of the game a team may score unlimited runs.
- g. **Flip/Flopping Home and Visiting Teams:** If the visiting team is leading by 10 or more runs going into the open inning, the visiting team shall remain on the field to defend their lead. The visiting team will have the opportunity to bat in the bottom of the open inning, if necessary. If in the opening inning the visiting team goes ahead by 15 runs or more, the situation will be recorded and the teams will switch positions. If necessary, the visiting team will return to bat in same situation they left earlier.

2- Players:

- a. **Code of Conduct:** All members are expected to conduct themselves in respectful manner and adhere to the club's "Code of Conduct".
- b. **Number of Players:** Teams may play up to **twelve (12)** players on defense.
- c. **Lineup:** All players in attendance must be in the batting order. Picked-up players must bat after all regular team players.
- d. **Pick-up Player Selection (bucket players):** When a team is short of players, they can add as many players as needed to reach eleven players. Managers needing players will make a blind draw in priority order as shown below:
 1. Players not assigned a team
 2. Players whose team has a bye

Night Play Rules

Redwood City Señors Softball Club

3. Remaining players (Any player who played in the first game is not given priority in the second game)
4. Pick-up players should be selected to create an equal number of players on each team.
5. If both teams pick-up players then they must have the same number of defensive players. The only time a team can play with an additional defensive player is when the team has a full team without picking-up players and players are not available for the other team. For example teams can play 11 players against 10 players. If a team has two more players than the other team, then one player should be loaned to the other team.
6. Due to player injury during a game, the managers should adjust the teams to balance the number of players on each team.

3. Equipment

- a. **Balls:** Men use 12 inch balls. When women are at bat, they may elect to use an 11 inch ball.
- b. **Bats:** Bats must be ASA or USSSA approved. Women and Men 65 and over may use Senior Softball USA approved bats.
- c. **Metal cleats:** Metal cleats are not allowed

4. Substitute Runners

- a. **Unlimited:** An unlimited number of substitute runners are allowed per game.
- b. **Once per Inning:** A player may only be a substitute runner once per inning.
- c. **Timing:** Players may request a substitute runner from any base during any dead ball situation.
- d. **Batter:** A batter can request a substitute runner. The substitute runner will start from a position located behind an imaginary extension of the third base line. The substitute runner can start running upon the batter making contact with the ball.
- e. **Requests Only:** A substitute runner may be used only for those players requesting a runner.
- f. **Replacement:** A substitute runner can not be replaced, except upon an injury to the initial substitute runner.
- g. **On Base when at Bat:** If a substitute runner is on base when their turn at bat comes up, an out is called; the runner is removed from base and the runner becomes the next batter. This rule is waived for teams with nine or less players.

5. Base Running/ Batting

- a. **Collisions:** Runners must avoid collisions or be at risk of being called out. On close plays at a base, runners must avoid the fielder, and instead cross a line that extends from the leading edge of the base. To be called safe, the runner's foot must be down on the line or base or across it with a foot down, before the ball is caught by a fielder touching the base.

Night Play Rules

Redwood City Señors Softball Club

- **Second Base:** When running to second base and the ball is being thrown from right or center field, the base runner must run to the line on the third base side of second base. If the throw is coming from left field, the runner must run to the right field side of second base.
 - **Third Base:** When running to third base and the ball is being thrown from left field or center field, the base runner must run to the line on the home plate side of third base. If it's coming from right field, the runner must run to the left field side of third base.
- b. **Overrunning Bases:** Runners may overrun any base. If they overrun a base and then want to advance, they must re-touch the base before advancing. Exception: After overrunning first base, runners may advance without retreating to the base. If a runner in the process of overrunning a base makes a noticeable attempt to the next base, they are in jeopardy of being tagged out.
- c. **Sliding:** Sliding going forward is not permitted and the runner will be called out. But diving or sliding back into a base is permitted.
- d. **Home Plate:** If a base runner touches home plate or the strike mat, they will be called out. Instead, the base runner crosses the scoring line. To be safe at home plate the runner must contact the ground on or behind the line before the ball is caught by the fielder in contact with home plate or the strike mat. A runner must avoid running through the batter's box. The first time this occurs in a game both teams will be warned, the second time the runner will be called out.
- e. **Commit Line/Point-of-No-Return:** There is a commit line on the third base line twenty feet from home plate. Runners touching or passing the commit line must continue toward home plate and cannot retreat back to third base. Fielders cannot tag a runner who has crossed the commit line. The fielder must touch home plate or the mat, with ball in hand, before the runner contacts the ground on or behind the line. A base runner re-crossing the commit line is immediately out.
- f. **Runner Safety:** A base runner, on first or third base, may move into foul territory to avoid being hit by a batted ball. The following guidelines apply to this situation:
- The base runner must announce to the umpire their intention to be off the base prior to leaving the base.
 - The base runner must be at rest immediately adjacent to the base they occupied and the base coach must not be in between the runner and the base.
 - The base runner must "retouch" the occupied base after the batter contacts the ball and prior to advancing to the next base.
 - A base runner that has not yet "retouched" the base is in jeopardy of being tagged out.
- **Bonus Ball:** A batter can chose to have one additional pitch instead of taking a walk. One pitch only. If it's a ball, then a walk is issued; if it's a strike, the batter is out; if it's a foul, the batter is out; or a hit.

Night Play Rules

Redwood City Señors Softball Club

6. Defense

- a. **Force Plays:** All plays on runners advancing to any of the four bases shall be treated as a “Force Play”. The defensive player’s foot must be in contact with the base, plate or strike mat. The base runner’s foot must either touch the base or the ground beyond the forward edge of the base prior to or at the same time as the defensive player catching the ball to be considered safe on a force play.
- b. **Non-Force Plays / Tagging Situations:** In non-force out situations, the fielder should not tag the runner; instead the defensive player must:
 1. Have control of the ball
 2. Be in contact with the base
 3. “Sweep Tag”- the defensive player must break the plane of the front edge of the base.

Note: A runner between bases can be tagged out except when they have passed the commit line, and then the ball must be controlled while a defensive player touches home plate or the strike mat.

- c. **Returning to a Base:** Returning to a base is not a force situation. The runner must be tagged out prior to returning to the base. [The runner can't over run the base.](#)
- d. **Strike Zone:** A strike mat will be used to determine balls and strikes. A legally pitched ball that contacts top surface of home plate or the strike mat on the fly will be a strike.
- e. **Outfielders throwing to first:** No outfielder or short-fielder (rover) can directly throw out a batter-baserunner advancing to first base. Use of a relay throw to first base can be used. Infielders are defined as the closest fielders to the batter excluding the pitcher, not by if they are on the dirt or grass. Teams may use a five-person infield and all five infielders may throw out batter-baserunner at first.
- f. **There shall be no more than five fielders on the infield.**
- g. **Pitching Screen:** A pitching screen may be used by the pitcher. The screen is not required and the screen’s use is the pitchers option, but if the pitching screen is not used then the pitcher must wear a face mask and shin guards. If a batted ball contacts any part of the screen, the ball is dead, no pitch is called, and the batter returns to the batter box with the same count as before the pitch. If a thrown ball contacts the screen then the ball is live and the runners advance at their own risk.

If a pitching screen is used, the screen shall be positioned so that the pitcher is protected on a ball hit “up the middle.” The pitcher may pitch the ball either side of the screen. Right-handed pitchers must release the ball from the right side of the screen, and left-handed pitchers must release the ball from the left side of the screen. If a pitcher chooses not to use the Pitching Screen than the screen will be removed from the field.

Night Play Rules

Redwood City Señors Softball Club

The pitcher must pitch from the pitcher's box, the pitching box shall be three-feet wide and extends from 50-feet to 60-feet from home plate. The screen may be placed five feet in front of the 50-foot pitcher's box. Some part of the screen must be within the box 45 to 60 feet from the plate and as long as the pitcher pitches from behind the screen.

If a batted ball contacts any part of the screen, then it will be a dead-ball-no-pitch; the batter will return to the batter box with the same count before the pitch. If a thrown ball contacts any part of the screen, it will be a live ball.

7. Special Ground Rules:

- a. **Burton Park:** Only single wall bats are allowed
- b. **Hawes Park:** A ball hit over the right or left outfield fence is three outs and will carry over to the next inning and the player is suspended one game.
- c. **Highlands Park:** If a batted ball goes over the sidewalk or contacts equipment (soccer goal etc) or person behind an outfielder, a ground rule triple will be called; it does not matter if the ball is touched.

8. Amendments to Guidelines:

- a. New guidelines or changes to existing guidelines should be submitted to the Night League Commissioner(s) and require approval of the Redwood City Señors Softball Club Board of Directors. The changes shall be effective immediately on their adoption.
- b. These guidelines can be temporary changed for a single game if both Managers and the Umpire agree. For example, in game with strong wind, it can be agreed that no walks will be issued.

Revision History

Date	Revision	Description	Adopted by
5/1/2013	A	Initial Release	Redwood City Señors Softball Club Board of Directors
9/14/2015	B	Add Pitching Screen	Pete Lewis, Night Commissioner
3/27/2018	C	Mask, 15 runs,65 age	Pete Lewis, Night Commissioner
4/28/2022	D	Batter to 1 st , Pitcher, GR	Pete Lewis, Night Commissioner
8/2/2022	E	5th Infielder limit	Sergio Ramirez, Night Commissioner