



City of Watsonville Parks & Community Services Department
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SOFTBALL

RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. LEAGUE & PLAYOFF PROCEDURES

- A. There will be **Eight (8) weeks** of regular season play (Round Robin format), followed by one (1) week of playoffs/finals (single elimination format).
- B. The number, variety, and type of league shall be determined, planned, organized and governed by the Watsonville Parks & Community Services Department, but teams may request league preference when they are registered.
- C. The League Director has the option of moving teams to whatever division and night, if it is in the best interest of providing a balanced league.
- D. NO METAL CLEATS MAY BE WORN. Rubber cleats are permissible.
- E. No schedule changes are allowed.
- F. All league games are played with ten (10) defensive players. No team may start or continue a league game with less than eight (8) players. Less than eight (8) players constitute a forfeit.
- G. The umpire is empowered to call a game at any time because of darkness, rain, fire, panic or other causes, which places the patrons or players in peril.

H. Playoffs and Championship Games

- a. The top four (4) teams with the best record will make the playoffs. The top seeded team will play the fourth place team and the second place team will play the third place team. The winning team of each of these games will advance to the championship game.
- b. Tie breakers will be determined in the following procedures:
 1. 1st tie break: head-to-head record. A forfeit=automatic lower seeding.
 2. 2nd tie break: run differential in head-to-head record.
 3. 3rd tie break: fewest runs given up in season.

I. Game Time

- 1. Games shall be played to either the 7th inning or 70 minutes (whichever comes first). A game will be declared official after 4 complete innings.
- 2. Any inning begun seven (7) minutes before time expires shall be completed.
- 3. In the event of a tie, one additional inning will be played under the "One-Pitch" Tie Breaker Rule. The tie-breaker will begin immediately following the expiration of the time limit or the prescribed number of innings. For example, if time has expired during the 5th inning and the score is tied at the end of that inning, the 6th inning will be played under the "One-Pitch" Tie Breaker rule. The last batter in the fifth inning for each team will be placed on second base. That inning will otherwise be played in accordance with the general softball rules. **The home plate umpire and scorekeeper are responsible for keeping the time.** You may not protest a game regarding playing time. The umpire's decision is final.
- 4. Any time a team is 15 or more runs ahead after five (5) innings, the game will be considered complete
- 5. Any time a team is 20 or more runs ahead after four (4) innings, the game will be considered complete.

J. The slow-pitch and Co-ed count is 4 balls, 3 strikes and will start with a 1-1 count.

K. Official ball will be the *Dudley SY-12HCY Thunder HyCon .52 COR/300 lbs.* Game balls will be provided by the League for each game and are to be returned to the game officials.

L. Pre-Game Rules:

- 1. No batting or infield practice is allowed.
- 2. Home team uses the third base dugout.
- 3. Visitor team uses the first base dugout.
- 4. Line –up cards need to be given to scorekeeper at least 5 minutes prior to game start time.

(LEAGUE/PLAYOFF RULES continued on next page)

(LEAGUE/PLAYOFF RULES continued)

M. Batting Order

1. Up to 12 players may be placed in the batting order.
2. Any time a team loses a player due to an ejection or disqualification, his spot in the batting order will be considered an automatic out each time it comes up (even if a substitute is available).
3. In the case of an injury or if a player has to leave early, there will be no penalty and that spot in the batting order will be skipped over if there is no substitute available.
4. Late arriving players may be added to end of the line up, until the batting order has been completed once. Once the batting order has been completed once, any additional players may be used as extra players only. The exception is if a team is playing shorthanded, they may add up to the 10th batting position.
5. If you have more than 12 players present, these players are considered extra players (EP's) and must be added to the EP section of the line up card.
6. **Free Substitution** will allow 10 players to play defense and all eligible players to bat.

N. Batters must take a full swing. No bunting will be allowed. The umpire will make the call. All bunts are considered strikes.

O. The team at bat must provide a shagger. If the ball is not returned by the next at bat of the batter that hit it out of play, the batter will be out.

P. The League Director will interpret any rule or situation that is not specifically covered by these rules.

Q. Two (2) referees and a scorekeeper should umpire each game. In the event that only one (1) referee is present, the game shall be played. If no referees show up, games will be postponed and made-up at a later date.

R. **RAIN OUTS:** Call 768-3262 after 3:00pm and before 5:00pm if you are in doubt as to the status of your game. After 5pm teams must go to their field to see if the games will be played or not.

2. USA SOFTBALL RULE EXCEPTIONS

A. NOTE: Local Rules supersede USA Softball (formerly ASA) rules. Final decisions regarding player eligibility, suspensions, probation, or rule interpretation will solely lie on the hands of the League Director(s) operating this league.

B. Unless otherwise stated, USA Official Softball Rules govern league play.

C. Sliding will be allowed.

D. Courtesy Runners: A batter with a courtesy runner may use the courtesy runner again any time their at bat comes up in one inning.

E. Unlimited pitching arc for men/6'-12' pitching arc for women and the extended mat will be in effect. A pitched ball that strikes home plate or the extension is a strike.

F. No player shall intentionally run over an opposing player. Penalty: Ejection from game.

G. Home run rule: There is a limit of five (5) homeruns per team, per game. Every homerun hit after the fifth homerun will be recorded as an out. Any time the batter is ruled out because of the excessive homerun rule, the ball is dead and no runners can advance. Inside-the-park home runs do not count toward the team total homeruns.

H. Any fair fly ball touched by a defensive player, which goes over the fence in fair territory, **will** be declared a homerun and will be counted towards the team homerun total.

I. **One Deck Rule:** Only one person is allowed on deck once an inning has begun. All other players, excluding base coaches, are to remain in the dugout. Children or relatives are not allowed in the dugout. (Players only please!)

J. Stealing bases is not allowed. Base runner must remain on the base until the ball is hit. Penalty is an automatic out.

K. A runner may only advance one base on over-throw that goes out of play.

L. City of Watsonville Parks & Community Services Department reserves the right to remove any bats that appear to be altered, and/or send to USA Softball for bat testing. Should these bats be altered, painted and/or deemed illegal, the owner will be suspended from SANCRA for up to one (1) year. If the player/owner should refuse to turn the bat over, then they will be suspended for one (1) year. By playing in this league, all players agree to these conditions. For further details, please refer to the *Illegal Bat Policy*.

M. **Pitcher Safety Zone:** The Pitcher Safety Zone is the width of the pitcher's plate and extends 5 ft. behind the pitcher's plate.

The Pitcher: The pitcher may deliver a pitch from anywhere inside the box as long as they (a) have one foot planted inside the box upon release, (b) pause for a minimum of one second before starting their pitching motion, and (c) abides by all USA Softball pitching guidelines.

The Batter: If a ball is hit directly at the pitcher while they are in the safety zone, the batter may be called out- this will be a judgment call based on the umpire's discretion. **The batter will receive one warning.** If a ball is hit directly at a pitcher a second time by the batter, the batter will be disqualified from further play. The batter's spot in the line-up will be an out every time it comes up.

3. ROSTERS

- A. Each team will be allowed up to 18 players on the roster. New players may be added before the third game. Any changes must be presented to the League Director for approval.
- B. All players must sign their team's roster before playing in any league games. All names, addresses, phone numbers and signatures must be neat and legible on the Team Roster. If a player's contact information and signature are not legible on the team roster, that player will not be allowed to play.
- C. Once a player signs the roster with a team, his/her manager prior to playing on another team must release him. After the player is released, he/she can sign with another team after sitting out one game. EXCEPTION: If a player has officially played in one or more league games and then is released, he/she may not play on another team in the same league in which he/she was released.)
- D. The League Director prior must approve all changes to rosters.
- E. The League Director has the authority to make exceptions regarding eligibility and roster procedures.
- F. Teams will play in the same division last played in if the team roster has 51% or more of returning players. Teams may be considered "new" and play down a division if 1) team placed last in said division, 2) team roster has 49% or less of returning players.
- G. There is no priority registration. "First to Pay, First to Play" is registration policy. Once a division is filled, all subsequent teams will be placed on a waiting list.

4. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

- A. All players playing, or attempting to play, under an assumed name, without being on a roster, or while on suspension will be suspended from the league for a minimum of one (1) year. Players are required to show proper I.D. when requested to do so by an umpire or representative of the City of Watsonville Parks & Community Services Department. The game will not be delayed. If a player cannot prove his or her identity, he or she will be asked to leave the game and must bring a pictured I.D. to the Recreation Office by 5 p.m. the next working day or that team's game or games will be forfeited.
- B. Players may play in more than one division, up or down one. Men can only play in one co-ed division, women may play in more than one.
- C. If, in the opinion of the League Director, a player is too exceptional in ability to participate in a lower league, said player will be dropped from the roster.
- D. **Player Substitution:** Managers who lose players during the season due to injury or employment transfer, may petition the League Director to obtain permission to replace the injured or transferred player. The League Director must approve all substitutes before they are allowed to play. Proof of the above must be submitted with the petition. Injured or transferred players may not be re-added to the team roster once the substituted player has played in one game.
- E. All roster players must appear in the line up at least 3 times to be eligible for the playoffs. **Team manager will be ejected with an ineligible playoff participant found to have not played in at least three(3) games during the season.**
- F. **Ejections**
 - 1. **Any player ejected from the game will receive an automatic two (2) game suspension minimum.** Further suspension and/or probation may also be applied.
 - 2. Any player ejected from a game will be directed by the officials to leave the park immediately. Failure to do so can result in suspension for the remainder of the season AND/OR forfeit of the game.

5. FORFEITS

- A. If a team is not ready to start ten (10) minutes after the scheduled game time, with at least eight (8) players, the game will be forfeited to the opposing team. Umpire timer is the official time.
- B. A forfeit is recorded as a loss and the other team will be awarded 7 runs. In the event of a double forfeit, both teams receive a loss.
- C. If a team forfeits two unexcused games, the team may be dropped from the league. A team with two forfeits (excused or unexcused) will lose eligibility of advancing to the playoffs.
- D. There shall be no postponement of games unless otherwise decided by the League Director due to inclement weather, lighting, umpire availability, or other dispositions.
- E. As a courtesy, teams that foresee a conflict with a particular game should notify the League Director 24 hours prior to the scheduled game. Teams doing so will be waived from the \$50 fine mentioned below on the first occurrence of a forfeit.
- F. Teams that drop or are dropped from the league lose any play off rights and the right to reclaim any part of their entry fee.
- G. **Teams that forfeit a game must bring \$50 to the Recreation Office by 5 p.m. on the next business day following the forfeited game, unless other arrangements have been made. If arrangements are not adhered to, the following game will be forfeited. All unpaid fees carry over to any other season.**

6. PLAYER RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The manager shall be the **ONLY** official representative of each team, unless he or she designates *one* of the players as the team captain prior to the start of the game. The manager will be held responsible for all rules stated in this copy of the RULES AND REGULATIONS along with the SANCRA Code of Conduct.
- B. Managers are responsible to see that their players and spectators are familiar with the Rules and Regulations of this league and the S.A.N.C.R.A. Player Code of Conduct.
- C. The team manager or designated captain is the **only** person authorized to discuss an umpire's decision while in the confines of the park whether before, during or after the scheduled game. Other players are not allowed to directly confront an umpire or discuss an umpire's decision.
- D. Managers are required to report all injuries to the game umpires.
- E. Consuming or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not be tolerated in a team's dugout or anywhere in the park before, during, and after their scheduled game. The umpire is required to report the findings to the League Director. Players found consuming drugs or alcohol or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be immediately ejected from the game.
- F. While not at bat, players are to remain in the dugout while the game is in progress. Players are not to be in the bleachers or outside the dugout while their game is in progress.
- G. All teams are registered with S.A.N.C.R.A (Sports Association of Northern California Recreation Agencies). Enclosed in this information packet is a copy of the SANCRA Code of Conduct. Please read and review the information carefully. These rules will be adhered to. All sportsmanship infractions will be recorded and forwarded to all S.A.N.C.R.A agencies.
- H. Managers and players must abide by all Park/Facility rules.
- I. ***All players are responsible for their own health and accident insurance since neither the league nor the City of Watsonville provides such coverage.*** This means that players participate in this program at their own risk. Information on team insurance through A.S.A. can be obtained from the Parks and Community Services Department.
- J. All teams are responsible for cleaning up their dugout after the game. Trashcans are provided. It is the responsibility of all to keep our City and its parks clean.
- K. **PROFANITY IS PROHIBITED.** In all languages. Umpires will call a player out. If player is on defense at time of infraction, their next at bat will be an out.

7. FAN BEHAVIOR

All fans attending City League games are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful manner. Fans may not harass any player, coach, official, or opposing fan with obscenities or negative comments. This behavior may result in fan ejection, team ejection and/or forfeit.

8. PROTESTS

- A. When a matter of protest arises during a game, the captain or manager of the protesting team shall immediately notify the: a) opposing manager, b) the referee and c) the scorekeeper of exactly which rule is being protested. This will enable all interested parties to take notice of the protest. On a protest of a player thought to be ineligible, the protest must be made as soon as the first stoppage of game play.
- B. Protesting teams must file their written protest in the Recreation Office with a \$50.00 protest fee. If the protest upholds the violation accusation, then the \$50 fee will be returned. If there is no violation, then the \$50.00 fee is non-refundable.
- C. Protests shall be based on the interpretation of rules and ineligible players only. Decisions involving the judgment of referees shall not be considered or received.
- D. The written protest should include:
 1. The date, time and place of the game.
 2. The names of the umpires and scorekeeper.
 3. The rule and section of the official rules or local rules under which the protest is made.
 4. The decision and conditions surrounding the making of the decision.
 5. All the essential facts involved in the matter protested.

9. OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- A. The Watsonville Parks and Community Services Department shall NOT be responsible for lost or stolen articles left in the gym before, during, or after your scheduled game. All valuables should be left at home.
- B. **Final decisions regarding player eligibility, suspensions, probation, or rule interpretation(s) will lie solely in the hands of the League Director operating this league.**
- C. Questions, contact the Recreation Coordinator of Adult Sports at (831) 768-3262.
- D. **SANCRA CODE OF CONDUCT IS ENFORCED AND HONORED BY ALL S.A.N.C.R.A. AGENCIES, LEAGUES AND TOURNAMENTS. PARTICIPANTS ATTEMPTING TO PLAY IN S.A.N.C.R.A SANCTIONED EVENTS AFTER BEING SUSPENDED WILL BE SUBJECT TO FURTHER DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS.**