

2025 RUSSELL ARTHUR SENIOR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION (RASSA) REGULAR SEASON RULES OF PLAY FOR MORNING DIVISIONS

League games will be played in accordance with current Senior Softball USA Rules, with the following local rules, exceptions, clarifications or points of emphasis.

Section 1: The Playing Field:

Rule 1: Seniors Division (consisting of age 55 and over men) games will be played at Liberty Park on field # 5, with the outfield fence located approximately 300 feet from home plate. Masters Division (consisting primarily of age 73 and over men and age 50 and over women) will be played at Liberty Park on field # 6, with the outfield fence located approximately 225 feet from home plate.

Rule 2: The distance between bases will be 70 feet in the Seniors Division and 65 feet in the Masters Division. Pitching distance will be 50 feet from pitching rubber to plate.

Rule 3: Home plate will be modified by placing on top of a rectangular rubber mat extending the length of the plate to 36 inches from front to back, maintaining a width of 19 inches. A second “scoring” home plate of traditional size and shape will be used by base runners for safety purposes. This scoring plate will be located in direct line with home plate and approximately 9 feet outside the traditional infield diamond behind the right handed batter’s box, intersecting with an angled base line which must be used by base runners, extending from third base to the scoring plate. A base runner’s commitment line will be placed along and perpendicular to this angled base line at a distance of 30 feet from home plate, and will extend inward to the standard third base foul line.

Rule 4: For Masters Division play only, field # 6 will be marked with an outfield arc at a distance of 170 feet from home plate for the purpose of limiting the positioning of outfielders as specified in Section 3: Rule 2.

Section 2: Equipment:

Rule 1: Any bat approved by SSUSA may be used. Fast pitch bats may not be used.

Rule 2: The 12-inch softball used by the league will be an optic yellow color, with a .44 COR and 375 compression rating. At least one new ball will be used per game, supplemented with balls used previously, but still in good condition.

Rule 3: Metal cleats or spikes are not allowed.

Rule 4: A pitcher's net will be placed approximately 3 to 5 feet in front of the pitching rubber and must cover at least half of the pitching rubber on the glove side of the pitcher. A chalk line will be placed in the middle of the pitching rubber, extending 5 feet from that point toward home plate. This rule will be enforced by the home plate umpire. Pitchers are strongly encouraged, but not required, to wear a protective pitcher's mask.

Note: The home teams for the 9:00 games are expected to help move field equipment and dugout supplies from the storage room to the field and to set up the equipment for play. The home teams for the 10:30 games are expected to help return the field equipment and dugout supplies to the storage room. All teams are responsible for helping to ensure that all trash is removed from their dugout after their game ends.

Section 3: Defensive Play, Substitutes and New Players:

Rule 1: Masters Division play will consist of 11 players on defense, including 5 outfielders. Seniors Division play will also consist of 11 players, with no restrictions on where players may be positioned other than the pitcher and catcher. It is each Manager's responsibility to have enough players available for each game. Substitutes may be used, if necessary, in accordance with rules 3 and 4 of this section below. Any team will be allowed to play with a full complement as described above, even if their opponent is 1 or 2 players short of the complement. A team may start the game up to 2 players short of the full complement described above, even though they will be at a defensive disadvantage. If one team has more than the full complement of players and their opponent has less than the full complement, the full complement team's manager may offer one or more of their players to the other team. The short complement manager will decide whether to accept any offered players, or instead to start the game up to 2 players short of the full complement. If a team cannot field the minimum number of required players, it will forfeit the game. In such a situation, the players at the field may play a "pickup" game.

Rule 2: This rule applies only to the Masters Division. Outfielders may be positioned anywhere, as long as they remain outside of the outfield arc described in Section 1: Rule 4 (between the arc and the outfield fence) until the batter puts the ball in play by swinging at a pitch. Outfielders may not throw a batter out at first base before the batter or a designated pinch runner the batter has first reached base. Infielders must be positioned on the infield dirt until the ball is hit, but may move beyond the infield after the ball is hit to make a play. A batted ball touched by an infielder before it reaches the outfield grass may be thrown by that fielder or by another fielder to first base, attempting to retire the batter.

Rule 3: All roster players participating in the game and capable should be put in the batting order and given the opportunity to play on defense during the course of the game, even if it means playing them out of their normal position. Teams may replace any absent player with a substitute from another team. Each substitute must be from either the same rating or a lower rating as the player they are replacing. Managers are not required to pick up substitute players if they believe they can field a competitive team without them. Managers are responsible for picking up substitutes as needed in advance of the game. Managers may place substitutes anywhere in the batting order. Both managers will meet at home plate prior to the start of the game to ensure that any substitutes being used are in compliance with league rules.

Rule 4: A manager in need of substitutes may only pick up players as described in this section. Players in the Seniors Division cannot be used as substitutes in the Masters Division unless they are on the list of approved Masters Division substitutes(primarily from age 70 to 72). All players in the Masters Division are eligible to substitute in the Seniors Division. Any such substitutes must be selected in compliance with Rule 3 above with regard to player ratings unless an exception is agreed upon by both managers.

Rule 5: Any roster player who arrives late may replace their substitute at the start of the next half-inning and must bat in the substitute's place in the batting order. If a team has fewer than the minimum number of allowed players at a given point during a game due to injury, illness, disqualification for misconduct, or any other circumstances, a player of equal or lower player rating group may be picked up if one is available. This player will bat in the spot occupied by the departing player.

Rule 6: If a player voluntarily chooses to bat but not play in the field for an entire game due to injury or other physical limitations, they may do so. If this results in the team having fewer than the full complement of players in the field, the manager may pick up a substitute with the same or lower player rating. The intent of this rule is to allow players to continue to participate at whatever level they are capable. Choosing to bat but not play in the field the entire game must be something the player does voluntarily. Both the opposing manager and the league director should be notified prior to the game.

Rule 7: If a player joins the league during the season, he or she will be temporarily assigned to a team until evaluated and assigned a rating by the Commissioner and League Directors. Once the rating is determined, he or she will be assigned to a permanent team by the Commissioner in consultation with the League Directors and Managers. New players must be approved and assigned to a team by the Commissioner and/or the League Director. Managers may not play a new player without the Commissioner's/Director's approval.

Rule 8: If any player commits to play as a substitute for any team that is playing a 9:00 game, and that game is still underway at 10:30, that player is expected to continue as a substitute until the game is complete. In such cases, any 10:30 games affected will not start until any such delayed players are available.

Section 4: The Game:

Rule 1: Games will normally consist of 7 innings. A maximum of 5 runs may be scored by a team batting during their offensive half inning, except for the 7th inning or “open inning”, where there is no limit on the number of runs scored.

Rule 2: If the game is tied after seven innings, one extra inning will be played and runs will be limited to 5 per team. The batter who made the last out for each team in the seventh inning will start as a runner at second base in the extra inning. If the game is still tied after one extra inning, the game will be declared a tie for record purposes. If a game is limited to six innings due to extreme heat and is tied after six innings, the same rules will apply as stated above.

Rule 3: Teams will flip/flop batting if the visiting team has at least an eight-run lead at the end of the sixth inning. In other words, the team behind (the home team) will bat twice consecutively (taking its 6th inning at-bats and its 7th inning at-bats in succession). If the team behind should take the lead or tie, the other team (the visitors) will get its 7th inning at- bat that was skipped.

Rule 4: During the hottest part of the season (typically July and August) the game may be limited to 6 innings, and all of the open inning, extra inning and 6th and 7th innings flip/flop references in Rules 1, 2 and 3 of this section will apply instead to the 5th and 6th innings of the shortened game.

Rule 5: In the case of rain, the team winning after four or more complete innings will be declared the winner for record purposes. The one exception to this rule is as follows: If the home team is ahead after a half inning and at least four full innings have been played at the time the game is called, the home team will be declared the winner. Otherwise, the game will be declared a rainout.

Section 5: Pitching:

Rule 1: The pitcher may begin his pitch by placing his foot on the rubber or from any point directly behind the rubber but no more than 6 feet behind it. Any pitch reaching its highest point above the playing surface at less than 6 feet or more than 12 feet is considered an illegal pitch and will be called a “ball”. If the batter chooses to swing at an illegal pitch the ball is considered in play.

Rule 2: Intentional walks are not allowed. Pitchers are expected to pitch to each batter with the intent to achieve an out.

Section 6: Batting:

Rule 1: A strike is called by the umpire for each legally pitched ball that lands, before bouncing, on any portion of the entire extended home plate (19 inches by 36 inches).

Rule 2: A ball is called by the umpire for each legally pitched ball that does not land on any portion of the entire extended home plate. The pitched ball must be thrown in an arc ranging from 6 to 12 feet at the top of the arc. Otherwise, Section 5: Rule 1 applies and the pitch will be called a "ball" by the umpire unless swung at by the batter.

Rule 3: Each batter will start his turn at bat with a count of 1 ball and 1 strike. If a batter has 2 strikes and then hits a foul ball, the batter gets another strike. If the batter hits another foul ball, the batter is out. The ball is considered dead unless caught on the fly, in which case base runners may advance by tagging, leaving after the ball is caught.

Rule 4: Any ball that is hit outside either foul line will be called a foul ball by the umpire. If a fielder is attempting to catch a ball in foul territory, it is still a foul ball based on where the ball is (not the player).

Rule 5: If a ball is hit and it strikes the pitcher's net before the pitcher touches it, it will be considered a dead ball foul. If a ball is hit towards the pitcher's net and the pitcher touches it prior to it striking the net, the ball is considered live and in play until time is called.

Rule 6: Any foul tip caught by the catcher will be declared an out by the umpire, regardless of how high in the air it goes.

Rule 7: The batter is expected to safely drop the bat after putting a ball into play and well before reaching first base. Failure to do so may result in being called out by the umpire.

Section 7: Base Running:

Rule 1: No leading off from bases is allowed. Runners must stay on the base until the ball is hit. If the ball hits the ground without the batter swinging, or if the batter swings and misses, the runner is allowed to step off the base in mid swing.

Rule 2: When running from the batter's box to first base, the batter must touch the alternate red/orange base adjacent to and outside of the regular white base if a play is made on the batted ball, unless he utilizes the regular base to avoid a collision (umpire's decision).

Rule 3: When running to second base, it is the runner's responsibility to stay out of the way of the defensive player attempting a double play by ducking, sliding or peeling off to either side of the base line. Also, when a runner is approaching first, second or third base, both he and the defensive player always should make every effort to avoid a collision.

Rule 4: If a runner continues beyond either second base or third base, he runs the risk of being tagged out. If a runner gets to second or third base and is called safe, but then falls off the base and is tagged by the defensive player, the call of out or safe will depend the umpire's view of whether or not the runner was pushed off the base by the defensive player.

Section 8: Pinch Runners

Rule 1: Managers should announce any player needing a pinch runner to both the opposing manager and the league director before the game, unless that player is designated on the roster as needing a pinch runner. Should any player not announced or designated as needing a pinch runner suffer an injury or other physical limitation that requires a pinch runner at any point in the game, that player's manager should notify both the opposing manager and the umpire.

Rule 2: A player may only serve as a pinch runner once per inning. Pinch running for a batter counts as one turn as a pinch runner even if the batter strikes out or walks.

Rule 3: If a pinch runner's turn at bat comes up while he is on base, another substitute runner may be used in his place.

Rule 4: When running from home for a batter, the pinch runner may only start after the batter puts a ball in play from behind a chalk line marked in foul territory on the first base side, parallel to and three feet behind the third base line.

Section 9: Home Plate

Rule 1: Defensive players may only touch the original home plate (the rectangular home plate used for determining balls and strikes) and runners may only touch the traditional shaped home plate (the scoring home plate).

Rule 2: In order to score a run by being called safe at home, runners must touch the traditional shaped home plate, located adjacent to the right-handed batter's box, 9 feet from the rectangular home plate used for determining balls and strikes.

Rule 3: Should a defensive player with the ball touch any portion of the rectangular home plate before the runner reaches the scoring home plate, the runner is out.

Rule 4: If the runner touches the rectangular home plate, the runner will be called out and the ball will remain live.

Rule 5: Once the runner crosses the commitment line (located on the third base foul line, 30 feet from the scoring home plate), he or she must touch the scoring home plate before the catcher touches the rectangular home plate in order to score a run. The catcher must touch the rectangular home plate to make the put out and may not do so by tagging the runner. If the runner crosses the commitment line and attempts to return to third base, the runner will be called out and the ball remains live.

Section 10: Infield Fly Rule:

Rule 1: The standard infield fly rule will be in effect for the Seniors Division, and is subject to the judgment of the umpire. There is no infield fly rule in the Masters Division. However, if in the judgment of the umpire, an infielder intentionally drops a line drive that results in a double play, the umpire will credit that infielder with a catch/out, and any runners will return to the bases they occupied before the play.

Section 11: Throws to First Base:

Rule 1: When a batter hits a ball that results in a throwing or fielding error at first base (including a bad throw by an infielder or any ball missed by the first baseman), the batter can advance as far as he or she dares at his/her own risk, regardless of where the ball ends up on the playing field. There is no limit to how far a runner (or runners) already on base can run as long as the ball is in play.

Rule 2: If the ball goes outside the playing field (e.g., inside the dugout or beyond the fence), it is considered a dead ball. In that case, a batter running to first base is automatically awarded second base and any other base runners are automatically rewarded the bag they are running toward plus one more base or home plate.

Section 12: Home Runs:

Rule 1: In the Seniors Division, four home runs over the fence by the same team will be allowed in a game. These home runs can be hit by either regular or substitute players. Any subsequent home run hit over the fence by that team will be recorded as a single and runners on base will be allowed to advance one base.

In the Masters Division, each individual player is limited to one home run hit over the fence per game, so the team limit for any game is the number of roster players present for and participating in that particular game. Any subsequent ball hit over the fence in fair territory by a player who has already hit a home run over the fence in the game will be recorded as a single, and runners on base will be allowed to advance one base.

Section 13: Post Season Games:

Rule 1: The standings for both the Seniors and Masters divisions will be kept throughout the season and will be posted on the RASSA Web Site.

Rule 2: Post season tournaments/series involving all teams within each division will be held shortly after the end of the regular season. This may include tournaments or series against teams in the same age division from other municipalities within the state.

Rule 3: A separate schedule for the post season games will be published once the final league standings are determined in each division.

Rule 4 : Any special rules applying to the post season will be communicated in advance of post season play.

Rule 5: Post season games are intended to encourage fun competition, just as regular season games are intended to do. Managers and players should keep this in perspective and behave accordingly.