

Strictly for the Proprietary Use of RASSA

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 70 and over men and age 50 and over women) games 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 home plate.

Rule 3: Home plate will be modified by centering a rectangular wooden hitter's plate on top of the traditional plate and with front edge even with the traditional plate, extending the length of the plate to 35 inches from front to back and maintaining a width of 22 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 with the front edge parallel with the front edge of the hitter's plate and the front left corner 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.**

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Section 2: Equipment:

Rule 1: Any slow pitch 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 to be used for play.

Rule 4: A protective pitcher's screen with net will be centered parallel with and 15 feet in front of the pitching rubber and will remain there for the duration of the game. 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.

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Section 3: Defensive Play, Substitutes and New Players:

Rule 1: Masters Division play will consist of 10 players on defense, including 4 outfielders. Seniors Division play will also consist of 10 players, but 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 may 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, which will not be considered official nor used in maintaining league standings.

Rule 2: This rule applies only to the Masters Division. Outfielders must 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 either the batter or a designated pinch runner for the batter has first reached base safely. Infielders must be positioned on the infield dirt until the ball is hit, but may range beyond the infield after the ball is hit to make a play. Any batted ball which first lands in the infield dirt may be fielded and thrown by an infielder from the outfield grass to first base in an attempt to retire the batter.

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Section 3: Defensive Play, Substitutes and New Players (continued):

Rule 3: All roster players participating in the game 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 with 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 that they can field a competitive team without doing so. Managers are responsible for picking up substitutes as needed in advance of the game, and may place substitutes anywhere in the batting order. Both managers will meet at home plate prior to the start of the game to reach agreement 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 (players age 70 and above or otherwise approved by the RASSA Board). 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 may be picked up if one is available. This player will bat in the lineup spot occupied by the departing player.

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Section 3: Defensive Play, Substitutes and New Players (continued):

Rule 6: Any player may voluntarily choose to bat but not play in the field for an entire game due to injury or other physical limitations. 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. 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 9:00 game is complete. In such cases, any 10:30 games affected will not start until all delayed players are available.

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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 in the extra inning will be limited to 5 per team. The batter who made the last out for each team in the 7th 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 the purpose of league standings. If a game is limited to six innings due to extreme heat and is tied after the 6th inning, the same rules will apply as stated above, with the 7th inning serving as the extra inning.

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 home team should take the lead or tie the game in the top of the inning, the visiting team will then receive their at-bat in the bottom of the inning.

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. If the home team is ahead after any top 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 suspended game, to be completed at a later time.

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Section 5: Pitching:

Rule 1: The pitcher may begin his pitch by placing either foot on the pitching rubber, stepping toward the plate and releasing the ball while the pitcher's foot is still in contact with the pitching rubber. Any pitch must pass over some portion of the protective pitching screen rather than around it to be considered legal. Any pitch reaching its highest point above the playing surface at more than 12 feet is considered an illegal pitch and will be called "illegal" by the home plate umpire solely at his discretion and as soon as practical and recorded as a ball. If the batter chooses to swing at a pitch called "illegal" due to exceeding the maximum 12 feet pitching arc, the ball is considered in play. Any pitch which clears the top of the protective pitching screen will be considered as having met the minimum 6 feet pitching arc requirement. Any pitch which fails to clear the top of the protective pitching screen and which makes contact with any portion of either the frame or netting will be immediately called "illegal" by the home plate umpire at his discretion and recorded as a ball. Any pitch which the home plate umpire, at his sole discretion, determines as having been pitched around the protective pitching screen rather than over it will be called "illegal" and recorded as a ball.

Rule 2: A strike is called by the umpire for each legally pitched ball that lands, before bouncing or sliding, on any portion of the entire extended wooden home plate (22 inches by 35 inches).

Rule 3: A ball is called by the umpire for each legally pitched ball that does not land on any portion of the extended wooden home plate (22 inches by 35 inches). To be considered a legally pitched ball, the pitched ball must be thrown in an arc, ranging from a minimum of 6 feet to a maximum of 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 the batter chooses to swing at a ball exceeding the maximum 12 feet arc.

Rule 4: Intentional walks are not allowed. Pitchers are expected to pitch to each batter with the intent of achieving an out.

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Section 6: Batting:

Rule 1: Balls and strikes will be called as described in **Section 5: Rules 1, 2 and 3.**

Rule 2: Each batter will start their turn at bat with a count of 1 ball and 1 strike. Any batted ball that lands outside either foul line, or which is first touched by a fielder outside either foul line before reaching either first base or third base will be called a foul ball by the umpire. Batted balls which make contact with any part of the protective pitching screen before being touched by a fielder are also considered a foul ball.

Rule 3: Any batter reaching a 2 strike count, whether by called strike, swinging strike or by foul ball, will be allowed one courtesy foul ball, with the count remaining at two strikes. Any subsequent foul ball hit by the batter in that same plate appearance will result in the batter being called out. The ball is then considered dead unless caught on the fly by a fielder.

Rule 4: On any batted ball first touched by a fielder close to either foul line, the umpire will use his sole discretion to determine whether the ball was in foul or fair territory when touched.

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 the ball before it makes contact with the net, the ball is considered live and in play until time is called.

Rule 6: Any foul tip caught in the air by the catcher before contacting the perimeter fence or any part of the field of play will be declared an out by the umpire.

Rule 7: The batter must safely drop the bat after putting a ball into play before reaching first base or risk being called out by the umpire.

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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 orange base adjacent to and outside of the regular white base, and may only touch the regular white base in an attempt to avoid a collision with a fielder (umpire's decision).

Rule 3: When running to second base, it is the runner's responsibility to stay out of the way of both the defensive player attempting a double play and the throw by ducking, sliding or preferably peeling off to either side of the base line. Base runners must make every effort to avoid interfering with fielders attempting to make a play on the ball.

Rule 4: If a runner continues beyond any 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 while off the base, the umpire will use his discretion to determine whether or not the runner left the base of his own accord (resulting in a call of out) or was pushed off the base by the defensive player (resulting in a call of safe).

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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 already 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 from the plate 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, perpendicular to the first base line and in line with the front edge of the scoring home plate.

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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 scoring 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.

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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 may advance as far as he dares at his 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 a thrown 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.

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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 dead ball single and only forced 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 dead ball single, and only forced runners on base will be allowed to advance one base.

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Section 13: Standings and Post Season Games:

Rule 1: The regular season 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 mind and behave accordingly.