



## WESTERVILLE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT 2024 SPRING/SUMMER ADULT SOFTBALL RULES

**Weatherline: 614-901-6888**

Teams may call the weatherline for a recorded message regarding game cancellations after 4:00 p.m. on weekdays and 3:00 p.m. on Sundays. Team Managers are responsible for notifying the rest of the team.

### **General Rules**

The Westerville Parks and Recreation Department has established the following rules and regulations for citywide softball leagues. This information supplements the playing rules published by USA Softball (formally known as Amateur Softball Association (A.S.A.)).

The Team Manager is responsible for the behavior of all team members, as well as direct communication with league administration. Players from each team are NOT to contact league administration without their Team Manager. Any player attempting to contact league administration without their Team Manager will be instructed to return with their Team Manager before any action is taken.

### **Waiver of Rules:**

Experience has proven that it is impossible to anticipate all problems which may arise when rules are formulated and adopted. Therefore, the Westerville Parks and Recreation Department reserves the right to waive any rules governing play in any league under their jurisdiction when, in its judgment, the application of said rules will result in gross unfairness or unreasonable hardship

### **Fee Policy:**

“Resident” teams will pay the Resident rate. A “Resident” team is one managed by a person who lives or works in the city limits of Westerville. Working will be defined as any individual who works full-time and pays income tax to the City of Westerville. Eligibility will be affirmed through employer verification or other means. A “Non-Resident” team will pay a \$45 increased fee. “Non-Resident” team is a team managed by a person living or working outside the city limits.

### **1st Priority When Registering a Team**

#### **Resident Team Registration**

Resident teams will be registered before all other teams.

**\*\*Churches may begin registration the same period as resident teams, if the church's address is within the Westerville City School District Boundaries.\*\***

## 2nd Priority When Registering a Team

### Open Registration

“Non-Resident” Teams will be accepted to fill space available in our leagues on a first come, first served basis until the leagues are full.

### Team Rosters and Roster Changes

There are minimum and maximum numbers for rosters. For men's and women's teams, there is a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 20 players. For coed and church teams, there is a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 24 players.

*Tournament roster eligibility is based on a player participating in three (3) regular season games.*

*ALL PLAYERS ARE SUBJECT TO ID CHECKS IF ELIGIBILITY IS QUESTIONED!*

After the first game, a team may make no more than the following number of roster changes, exempting service or disability (See page 8).

The roster changes are as follows:

- Men's Teams: 8 roster changes
- Coed Teams: 8 roster changes
- Church Teams: 8 roster changes

*One "change" equates to a removal AND adding of one player.*

No roster changes, exempting service or disability, can be made after the 8th game for all leagues.

Additionally:

- Players may be subject to ID checks at any time.
- A player may only be on one roster per team in the same league. We realize multiple rosters may be submitted from different managers and may contain the same player. The player must remain on the roster of the first team they play for in the event of the dispute.
- If a protest is upheld on an ineligible player, the team will forfeit all games in which that player participates.
- The burden of proof is on the manager who signed the roster with the alleged ineligible player.
- *If both managers or team representatives agree to allow a player to play, then eligibility cannot be protested. Teams may pick up player(s) on site in order to fill a team if both teams agree. The new player must bat at the end of the lineup.*

**To play a player under an assumed name is considered a serious infraction. Managers as well as players are subject to indefinite suspension if they resort to such**

**unsportsmanlike conduct. The team franchise may also be in jeopardy for future participation in the Westerville Parks and Recreation Department program.**

### Players

All players must be at least 18 years of age in order to participate.

No Men's League game can start with less than 9 players on either team. No Mixed or Church League game can start with less than 8 players (4 men and 4 women).

For Mixed or Church Leagues: A game may start with 9 players, 4/5 either way. But when the 10th spot in the order comes up, it will be an automatic out. If you play with 8 or 10 players, no outs. If a player becomes ill or injured, the game may continue with 8 players, but the game cannot continue with less than 8 players.

If a player is ejected, causing the number of players to be less than 10, the game will be forfeited if you have no legal substitute (which is a USA requirement).

*If a team is short players, and as long as the opposing manager or team representative agrees, teams can pick up players so the team can play. Both teams must agree to the players. That "new player added" must bat at the end of the batting line-up. All additions must occur prior to the start of the game or within the 5-minute grace period for the first scheduled games, or the team short of players forfeits.*

### Substitution

USA rules will be used as guidelines for substitution. The Westerville Parks and Recreation rules listed below supersede USA.

Teams may bat all players present. If all players are in the batting order, free substitution in the field is allowed. Players not in the batting order are subject to the USA guidelines.

Players arriving late may be added to the bottom of the batting order only if the team has not completed one turn through the order. *The late player must be added at the bottom of the order. (Teams can go from 9 to 10 at any time, but the 10<sup>th</sup> player must be added at the end of the order.)*

If a team is batting 10 players in the Men's leagues and a player (for any reason) must leave the line-up, that spot in the line-up will be considered an out if no substitution is available. If batting 11 or more, then there is no penalty for leaving, as long as 10 are remaining and the player leaving the lineup was not ejected.

If a team is batting 11 or more players in the Men's leagues and a player is injured, they can come out of the batting order as long as 10 players are able to play defensively. When the injured player's spot comes up in the batting order, no out will have to be taken.

If a team is batting 10 players in the Men's leagues and an injury occurs, the game can continue with 9 players but an out will be taken in the injured players' spot if no substitute is available.

Mixed/Church Leagues will have to bat an even number. For example, if you are batting 12 players (6 men/6 women) and a female player is injured, a male player will have to be taken out of the line-up also, so the team is batting 10 - no penalty. The injured player may not re-enter the game.

Courtesy Runners will be allowed. One courtesy runner per game.

- The courtesy runner must be the previous batter or runner to have made an out.
- In coed leagues, the courtesy runner must be the same sex. In coed leagues a courtesy runner for each sex may be used, subject to rules of the courtesy runner.

### **Schedules**

There will be a 5-minute grace period for starting the first scheduled games only. No grace period for second or third games.

One warm-up pitch or 30 seconds will be allowed between innings. Teams are not allowed to take a ball onto the playing fields between innings.

### **Time and Run Limits**

Time - No new inning may start after one hour and ten minutes of playing time has elapsed. If less than five innings have been played, the game will still be considered official (consideration will be given to extenuating circumstances). A full inning will not be played if the home team is ahead.

Runs - If one team is ahead by 20 or more runs at the end of four innings, or 12 or more runs after 5 innings, the game will be called.

Run Limits - In an effort to keep the **Friday Church League** as recreational as possible, a run limit will be established for each team to only score 17 total runs. The breakdown of cumulative score after each inning is as follows:

*Run Limits: 1st – 7, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 10, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 12, 4<sup>th</sup> – 14, 5<sup>th</sup> – 15, 6<sup>th</sup> – 16, 7<sup>th</sup> – 17.*

**\*New to 2024\***

### **Safety Home Plate and Commitment Cone**

In an attempt to avoid collisions, the Friday Church League will be utilizing a safety home plate (SHP). With the SHP in play, runners cannot be tagged out at the traditional home plate. The traditional home plate will remain in use for all batting purposes, and the SHP will be utilized for all runs scored.

A commitment cone will be placed 25 feet from third base. Once a runner has passed the commitment cone, they cannot return to third base and must continue to the safety home plate. Additionally, any runner who has passed the commitment cone can no longer be tagged.

A baserunner touching the safety home plate prior to the ball being controlled by a defensive player touching the batting plate results in the scoring of a run. All outs at home plate are force outs; there cannot be a tag at home plate. Even if there is no play, the runner will be declared out if they slide into the safety home plate or run through the batter's box. The ball is still live.

### **Bats**

Bats must say "Official Softball." As well as having an "ASA certified Stamp" Titanium alloy bats are deemed unsafe for Westerville leagues. If it has no markings whatsoever, it won't be allowed. All Bats (except Miken Ultra and Miken Ultra II) with ASA certification will be allowed even if on the list except Miken Ultra and Miken Ultra II. If a player enters the batter's box with a non-approved bat, both the player and the bat will be removed from the game. The player's spot in the lineup is considered an "out" if no substitute is available (batting more than 10). If batting 10 or 9 and this occurs, the game is a forfeit if there is no substitute. (New ASA rule for 2007). Warm-up bats must be official softball warm-up bats. No sledgehammers, lead pipes, donut rings, etc. are allowed.

**Senior Bat Rule:** Prior to the first pitch, any senior 60 years or older must present themselves and their ASA approved senior bat to the field umpire for approval. Only these players 60 years and older can use the approved bat. If the bat is used by other players not within the senior age, an out will be assessed and that player will be ejected.

All bats used in ASA play for the Fall Session must be Official Softball Bats certified by the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) and / or marked BPF 1.21 or less. Bats must have their original paint markings for complete identification. These bats must still meet all other provisions.

Warm-up bats must be official softball warm-up bats. No sledgehammers, lead pipes, donut rings, etc. are permitted.

### **Spikes**

No metal spikes, or football cleats are permitted. Shoes with round metal spikes are illegal.

### **Jewelry**

No jewelry is to be worn during the game for the safety of the players. Each team will be warned about jewelry before the start of the game. If a player enters the batter's box wearing jewelry, he/she will be asked to remove it. If the player refuses, he/she will be ejected from the game and an out will be taken for their position in the line-up.

### **Ball/Strike Count**

Each batter will step to the plate with a 1 and 1 count (1 ball and 1 strike). A batter will walk when obtaining 4 balls and strike out on 3 strikes, unless in extra innings. All pitches must fall in between the 6' and 12' rule with the pitch reaching the minimum of 6' and maximum of 12'. Batter must be set and ready to receive the pitch to prevent any "Quick Pitch" looking for an easy strike.

\*The plate umpire **does not** have to indicate either by voice or use the delayed dead ball signal to call an illegal pitch. The plate umpire will not make a call until the pitch crosses the plate.

### **Stealing**

Base stealing is not allowed in the Westerville Leagues.

### **Clarification of Collision Rule/Sliding**

The base runner is responsible for any collision, intentional or unintentional, which results in the bowling over or unnecessary contact of a fielder during a live ball. If there is a possible play being made that could result in contact, then the base runner must avoid collision, concede the out or get out of the way.

The fielder will be held responsible for any illegal blocking of the base (without the ball) and will be called for obstruction by the umpire and the base runner will be awarded the base. A warning should be given and the next illegal obstruction by that player will result in ejection. If contact occurs, the responsibility will be on the base runner.

*When the ball, runner, and the defensive player arrive at the same time and place, and contact is made, the umpire should not invoke interference or obstruction. This is merely incidental contact, or what some persons commonly call a "wreck". When a defense player is fielding a thrown ball and the flight of the ball carries or draws them into the path of the base runner, any contact is incidental.*

**PENALTY:** For any unnecessary contact, the base runner is out and shall be ejected from the game.

## **Home Run Limits**

3 with the one up rule.

- One up rule: Once both teams have reached their respective home run limit (3 at Hoff) either team may hit an additional home run; however no team may ever go more than one (1) home run up on the other team after hitting three (3) home runs.
- Any additional home runs above the “one up” will be declared an out.
  - a. A hit must be an over-the-fence home run to count against the limit.
  - a. **Teams can NOT go “one up” in the bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning.**

Once a hit is announced and signaled as a homerun by the umpire, the batter and any runners on base can proceed immediately to the dugout. Batters and runners no longer need to touch the next base.

## **Extra Innings**

If, after the completion of seven (7) innings of play (and still within the one hour and ten minute time limit) the score is tied, the following rule will be played to determine a winning team:

A runner will be placed on second base at the start of each extra inning. That runner will be the player in the batting order immediately preceding that half-innings leadoff hitter, or pinch runner. Example: if the no. 7 hitter in the order is due to leadoff, the no. 6 runner (or pinch runner) would be placed on second base.

Teams will go to a one-pitch “Texas Shoot-Out” format. Each batter will come to the plate with a count of 3 balls and 2 strikes. Men’s coed and church leagues: No free foul.

Also in the tiebreaker: If a batter is walked, he/she is placed at 2<sup>nd</sup> base. In coed and church leagues, if a male walks, the female following in the order has the option to bat or go to first base.

## **Balls**

In the interest of consistency, the **12” Dudley Leather Thunder Heat .52 COR/300** pound compression softball will be the only ball approved for Men’s, Mixed and Church league play. WPRD Staff will provide game balls day-of-game.. The umpire's judgment of the suitability of the balls presented will be final.

## **Umpires**

The official score will be kept by each team and reported to the umpire between each half inning.

The umpire will set ground rules with the team managers prior to the start of the game.

The umpire has the right to call a game in case of darkness, sudden rain, field conditions, or other extenuating circumstances.

Swearing at or arguing with an umpire does not have a place in our leagues and will not be tolerated.

Any umpire's decision which involves judgment is final. No manager, coach or substitute shall object to such a decision. Offenders will be ejected from the game (see "Unsportsmanlike Conduct").

**Physical or vocal abuse by a team member, manager or fan toward an umpire or league official may result in forfeiture of the game. This includes before, during and after the game.**

### **Rainouts, Postponements, etc.**

Make-up games will be played as scheduled by the League Supervisor and may not necessarily be on the league's regular day.

Any unplayed games (i.e., upheld protests, etc.) will be played at the end of the season only if they affect the league championships.

Any game, which is not regulation and has been called due to an act of nature, will be rescheduled from the beginning (e.g., rain and lightning, etc.)

Umpires will immediately clear the field when lightning is sighted. Lightning Prediction System will be used in most cases but not all.

- Teams are encouraged to seek shelter.
- Games may resume 20 minutes after the last lightning sighting if the fields are still playable.
- The final decision regarding playability rests with the umpire.

### **Protest Procedure**

The protest must be announced to the umpire before the next pitch. The umpire will note the protest on the scorecard, along with game conditions (inning, score, base runners, count on batter, etc.) to the agreement of both managers.

Protests must be filed in writing to the Recreation Office within 24 hours of the game, must be signed by the team manager (with phone number provided) and must include a \$50.00 (cash) fee.

The protest fee will be returned if the protest is upheld. The game will be replayed from the point of the protest at the end of the season only if the game results affect the league championship.

The protest will be ruled on within three days of filing. An appeal must be filed within three days of the ruling.

An appeal of the protest will be reviewed by the League Supervisor, Recreation Director, and a Recreation Advisory Board member.

Protests based upon the umpire's judgment in calling plays will never be upheld.



### **Forfeitures**

If a team forfeits 2 games, it may be dropped from the league with no refund given.

A team that forfeits 2 or more games in a season may not be allowed to renew its franchise the following season.

### **Determining the League Winner**

The league winner will be determined by overall record.

In case of a tie, the winner will be determined in the following order:

- A) Team record in head-to-head competition
- B) Run differential between those in head-to-head competition
- C) Head to Head competition against other league teams in rank order. The tied teams will be compared to the first place, second place, third place, etc. until one team holds an advantage over the other tied team
- D) Coin Toss

### **End of Season Men's, Mixed and Church League Tournaments**

The League Supervisor will schedule the league tournaments at the end of the season.

Tournament dates are subject to be held on days other than previously played league days if necessary.

All leagues will play in a single-elimination league tournament.

All teams will qualify for the league tournament with seeding determined by regular season results.

All regular league rules apply.

Only players who have participated in three or more regular season games will be eligible for postseason play.

### **Military Service and Disability**

At any time during the season a name may be added to the form to take the place of a person entering military service. Proof that a player has left for military service must be presented to the Parks and Recreation Office before the change can be made official. Such changes must be made within two weeks after their induction. This rule does not apply to a person called for their physical examination. The added player assumes all the qualifications held by the player entering the military, which may qualify them for league playoffs or series. A player returning from military service may be added back to the original roster immediately with the removal of another player.

A person who has participated as a starting player in approximately 60% of the games played by their team since their name was placed on the eligibility form may be replaced, if they sustain an injury, which will prevent them playing for the rest of the season. Such replacement must be made within two weeks of the injury. Such a player will assume the accrued number of games played by the injured player to qualify them for the league championship tournament. A doctor's certificate is required in such cases before the change can be made official. In no case will the replaced player be allowed to resume playing during the current season with any team in the Parks and Recreation Department leagues even though their disability is removed. Penalty for such action would be a suspension period of twelve months, effective the day on which they participated.

A female player who has participated as a starting player in 60% of the games played by their team since their name was placed on the eligibility form may be replaced if she is pregnant and unable to continue play during the season. A doctor's certificate is required in such cases before the change can be made official. In no case will the replaced player be allowed to resume playing during the current season.

## LEAGUE - SPECIFIC RULES

### Men's Leagues

- All players must be at least 18 years of age.

### Church League

- All players must be at least 18 years of age.
- Eligibility - All players must be members of the church sponsoring the team.
- **\*New to 2024\* Safety Home Plate and Commitment Cone**
- In an attempt to avoid collisions, the Friday Church League will be utilizing a safety home plate (SHP). With the SHP in play, runners cannot be tagged out at the traditional home plate. The traditional home plate will remain in use for all batting purposes, and the SHP will be utilized for all runs scored.
- A commitment cone will be placed 25 feet from third base. Once a runner has passed the commitment cone, they cannot return to third base and must continue to the safety home plate. Additionally, any runner who has passed the commitment cone can no longer be tagged.
- A baserunner touching the safety home plate prior to the ball being controlled by a defensive player touching the batting plate results in the scoring of a run. All outs at home plate are force outs; there cannot be a tag at home plate. Even if there is no play, the runner will be declared out if they slide into the safety home plate or run through the batter's box. The ball is still live.
- Run Limits - In an effort to keep the **Friday Church League** as recreational as possible, a run limit will be established for each team to only score 17 total runs. The breakdown of cumulative score after each inning is as follows:
- *Run Limits: 1st – 7, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 10, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 12, 4<sup>th</sup> – 14, 5<sup>th</sup> – 15, 6<sup>th</sup> – 16, 7<sup>th</sup> – 17.*

### Mixed Leagues and Church League

- All players must be at least 18 years of age.
- The team will consist of five men and five women.
- Teams may play an official game with 8 (4 men and 4 women).
- A game may start with 9 players, 4/5 either way. But when the 10th spot in the order comes up, it will be an automatic out. 8 or 10 players - no outs.
- The batting order will be per USA rules. *No fielding restrictions.*
- If a male walks on the first 3 pitches, he is awarded 2nd base, and the female that follows in the line-up may choose to bat or be awarded first base.

## **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY**

**Unsportsmanlike or abusive behavior by spectators, players, or teams will not be tolerated - before, during or after the game.**

**Smoking is prohibited in all City Parks, facilities and buildings. No. 525.02**

**Alcohol is prohibited in all City parks, facilities and buildings. No. 965.05**

- If alcohol is seen or suspected on a player(s) on your team anywhere on the premises, including parking lots, the entire team will forfeit and be required to immediately vacate the facility. The guilty player AND the team manager will be suspended from the following week's game(s).
- If a player is caught more than once with alcohol, he/she will be suspended for the remainder of the season.

### **Team Manager Duties:**

- It is the responsibility of the team manager to help enforce all league rules and policies, as well as the removal of an ejected player.
- The Team Manager is responsible for the actions of all of his/her players and spectators. Player actions will directly affect the eligibility status of the team. Penalties include probation, suspension, or removal from the league altogether for the Team Manager, players, and the team.
- No team member is to communicate issues or complaints to league officials or administrators without the Team Manager.

### **Verbal Harassment**

- Players will not be allowed to verbally harass opposing players, umpires, spectators, or City staff. Harassment includes:
  1. Profanity
  2. Objectionable Comments
  3. Questioning Calls
  4. Arguing
  5. Threats
  6. Otherwise rude behavior

- Penalties for Verbal Harassment include:

1. Ejection from a game at any time **WITHOUT WARNING**. If, in the official's opinion, the behavior displayed by the player warrants ejection they may do so without previous warnings.
2. Ejection from the game plus a minimum of 1 (one) week suspension from all league play. An ejected player will be counted as an out for any remaining at-bats in the game.
3. A player receiving his/her second ejection in a season will be automatically removed from the team roster.
4. Penalties occurring at the end of a season will carry over into the next season.

Player Conduct (See Player Code of Conduct at the end of the rules packet)

1. Outbursts of foul language will not be tolerated.
2. Any participant assaulting an official or City employee will be automatically removed from the league permanently and the incident may result in legal action.
3. Threats to an official will result in multiple game suspensions. The Players Code of Conduct will be strictly enforced.
4. There is NO arguing with umpires over calls. There is no exception to this rule. Any player, manager or spectator whose temper gets out of control over a judgment call and confronts the umpire will be ejected from the game and required to immediately leave the premises. Depending on the severity of the infraction, the player may be suspended for additional games or removed from the league permanently.
5. Any player that throws a bat that may endanger other participants or spectators will be ejected from the game immediately.

## **PLAYER CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Westerville Parks and Recreation Department reserves the right to expel any team or player from the league for reasons of poor conduct or failure to observe rules, regulations, and procedures. Written notification of such actions will be provided to the individual and the Team Manager.

### **WESTERVILLE PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT PLAYER CODE OF CONDUCT**

1. No player shall ever touch, push, shove, strike or threaten another player, official, spectator or Westerville Parks and Recreation employee.
2. No player shall refuse to abide by any official's decision.
3. No coach, player, or spectator may make derogatory remarks, gestures, or tone of voice to the official(s) or Westerville Parks and Recreation staff.
4. No profane or obscene language shall be used.
5. No player shall use unnecessary rough tactics in the play of game against the body or person or an opposing team.
6. No Player shall make an abusive verbal attack upon any official, player, spectator or Westerville Parks and Recreation employee.
7. No player, except the Team Manager, shall discuss any decision reached by an official.
8. No player shall discuss his/her personal opinion of any player, any play, or decision by an official publicly with spectators in a derogatory manner.
9. No manager, player, or spectator shall ever follow an official or Westerville Parks and Recreation employee without his or her express invitation in an attempt to discuss an issue or incident.