

**LEAGUE RULES WILMINGTON SENIOR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION  
(ASA Rules Govern League Play Except for WSSA Rules Below)**

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## **1.0 Definitions**

### **1.1 Commitment Line**

A commitment line shall be marked perpendicular to the foul line 20 feet from home plate. Once a runner's foot touches on or past this line, the runner may not re-cross it in the direction of third base, i.e., runner must continue toward the scoring line. Violation will result in an automatic out. The ball is alive and runners may advance.

### **1.2 Scoring Plate**

A scoring plate is a second home plate in foul territory on the third base side eight (8) feet from the original home plate. The runner must touch the second home plate to score a run.

A runner who has passed the commitment line and not reached the scoring plate shall be declared out if:

A. A defensive player in possession of the ball touches home plate before the runner makes contact with the scoring plate.

B. The runner touches the original home plate or strike mat.

A runner who has passed the commitment line but not scoring plate shall not be declared out if tagged by a defensive player.

### **1.2 Scoring Line**

If there is no second home plate then a line shall extend from the corner of home plate closest to third base into foul territory at a 90 degree angle to the third base foul line. A foot down on or beyond the scoring line shall be the same as a foot down on home plate for the purpose of scoring a run.

### **1.3 Double First Base**

As a safety precaution, a double base at first base will be used. The inside base (white) belongs to the defensive player and the outside base (orange) belongs to the runner. A RUNNER MUST run to the outside orange base when a play at first base is attempted. A runner who touches the white base is subject to an appeal play by the defensive team and shall be called out by the umpire if he sees the play. If the batter gets a base hit, he can touch either base. Exception: If the 1st baseman is covering the orange base, possibly due to a bad throw, the runner may touch either bag.

### **1.4 Strike Mat**

A legally pitched ball hitting the strike mat (21" x 35" This is a new larger mat size) or home plate will be called a strike.

### **1.5 Infield Positions**

Infielders may position themselves wherever, in the dirt infield or on the outfield grass.

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### **1.6 Illegal/Altered Bats**

A bat not approved by A.S.A. or one that has been altered will be illegal. The use of such a bat during a game will result in the ejection of the player from the game and the team penalized with an out. Additional penalties will follow strict ASA guidelines.

## **2.The Playing Field**

### **2.1 Home Team Responsibility**

At every double header game the team status will alternate home team advantage, however, teams will not be required to move to alternate dugouts The first named home team on the schedule must use the first base dugout.

## **3.Equipment**

### **3.1 Uniforms**

Matching shirts with a number (at least 6 inches) on the back should be worn. A matching hat is recommended.

### **3.2 Shoes**

Metal cleats are not permitted. Plastic or rubber cleats are recommended.

### **3.3 Mask**

A mask is optional for the catcher and infielders, and optional for the pitcher only provided he sign a non-responsibility waiver.

### **3.4 Softballs**

First named home team as listed on the schedule must supply one new softball and one quality used softball before each doubleheader. If specified softballs are not supplied, the visiting team may loan the home team two specified balls, or, agree to play with unspecified softballs.

## **4.0 Players and Substitutes**

### **4.1 Players**

All players must be 55 years of age or older by Dec. 31st of the year to play. Any deviation to this requirement may be allowed on an individual basis by the Atlantic Division president with the approval of the majority of the Atlantic Division managers.

### **4.2 Team Players**

Ten (10) position players will be considered a complete team in the Atlantic Division. The Coastal Division may use 11 players in the field. Failure to have at least nine (9)

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position players at the start of, or anytime during the game, will result in a forfeit. A team starting a game with nine (9) position players may add a position player after the start of the game but that player must bat at the end of the batting order/line up.. If one team is short players, the team that is short may borrow a player from the opposing team. The team with the most players must loan a player to the other team and this player will be in the lineup, will play in the field and will bat. If the team is still short one player, then the team with the most players will have someone catch for them, but he does not bat.

#### **4.3 Rosters**

A roster with emergency contacts will be submitted to the Division President no later than May 31st by the team Manager. Once a player is assigned to a roster that player may not move to another team without being released by his assigned teams manager. The manager will then notify the Division President who will arrange and approve the trade for this player. If a trade cannot be successfully made, the player may be temporarily assigned to a team at the discretion of the Division President. No new players will be added to any team after August 30th but any new prospects may take batting and infield practice with the teams before a game if approved by the manager. Special exceptions to this rule are at the discretion of the Division President.

#### **4.4 Lineup Cards**

The official lineup card must be presented to the opposing manager or scorekeeper five (5) minutes prior to each game. The card should list the last name of each player and their position.

#### **4.5 Roster Availability**

Each team must have a copy of its roster available for review at every game. The Coastal Division requires all players on the team roster that report to the field to play must play a minimum of 3 innings per game or 6 innings per double header (in any combination.)

#### **4.6 Re-Entry Rule**

A player may leave the game (substitute allowed) and then re-enter the game at a later time. The substitute is replaced by the original player. They keep the same spot in the batting order.

#### **4.7 Extra Players**

Use of one or more extra players in the batting order is optional, however, extra players cannot be added to the original lineup once the game has begun. An extra player starts the game as a hitter only, but may replace a position player in the field, but must keep his original place in the batting order. **Specific rules for the Coastal Division don't allow** first year players to be used as EP, they must play both offense and defense during the games for the first year they are playing in the division

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#### **4.8 Empty Slot in Lineup**

Anytime a player is taken out of the lineup due to an injury, and there is no replacement, the team with the injured player will not be penalized by an automatic out; however, the other team manager must be notified when the injured player leaves. If a player leaves for any other reason other than an injury the team will suffer an automatic out when that player was due up to bat. The opposing manager must be notified immediately anytime a player leaves the game.

#### **4.9 Tournament**

A player must participate in half of all regular season games in order to be eligible to participate in the year ending tournament. If questioned, the team manager must be able to prove attendance to the Division President.

#### **4.10 Injured Players**

An injured player at the start of a game may elect to play only offense or defense (American Disability Rule). Only one player per team may implement this rule at a time. A player injured during the game may elect to play only offense or defense without penalty of an out should he miss his turn at bat due to the injury. The injured player requesting to play only defense or offense must notify his manager who must then notify the manager of the other team and the umpire before the start of the game. At no time during the game can this player change his position regarding this rule. An injured player may request not to play either offense or defense and remain in the dug out to support his team. However, he cannot enter the game at any time during the double-header contest.

### **5.0 The Game**

#### **5.1 Pre-Game Warm-Up**

Infield and batting practice for both teams must be completed in order to begin the game at 9:00 AM.

#### **5.2 Starting Time**

Starting time is 9:00 AM. A team must be ready to play at game time or suffer a forfeit. A scheduled game may be delayed for up to twenty (20) minutes. After a 20 minute delay if a team cannot field at least 9 players they will forfeit the first game. Normally there will be a delay of 1 hour and 15 minutes before the second game is forfeited. However, the manager of the forfeiting team may elect to waive this rule and accept a forfeit for the second game at this time. During the delay, a practice game may take place with the available players and possible loaned players from the team to which the game was forfeited.

#### **5.3 Game Length**

The length of a game is seven (7) innings, with extra innings played until a tie is broken.

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A time limit of one hour and fifteen minutes will be used for each game. After the time limit has been reached, the umpire will stop the game and notify both teams that they will finish this inning and play one more additional inning. In this additional inning each team can score an unlimited number of runs. Exception: During end of season tournament there is no time limit.

#### **5.4 Hot Weather Rule**

During the season, when there is extreme hot weather, the two teams may elect to shorten the games to 5 innings, or use the 1 and 1 count. Home team makes the decision on the first game, while the visiting team makes the decision on the second game. The Atlantic Division will play regardless of temperature.

#### Specific Rules for the Coastal Division

The managers agreed to using a temperature rating to define when and how the Coastal division will handle hot weather rather than using the heat index.

Temperature	Action to be taken
89 and below	The two managers may elect to shorten games
90 – 94 degrees	Mandatory use of the existing hot weather rule as outlined in the rule document
95 - up	All games stop no further play is allowed.

In addition, the following guidelines are to be followed for all future games of the Coastal Division during the season. The stated goal is to have the games completed by 11:00 AM. However, if during any game the temperature reaches 95 degrees the games will stop. If 5 innings have been played the team leading will be declared the winner. When 5 inning games are used 4 innings will be the end (Teams should follow the same procedures as a game called for rain in deciding when it will end).

1. Games start on or before 8:30 AM until school starts
2. No pitching or infield warm up period after first inning.
3. All teams must have the on deck batter ready to enter the batters box when the last batter is completed with his at-bat – Failure to comply will result with the pitcher sending the ball to the catcher and the umpire will call a strike on the batter regardless of the pitch, this will continue until the batter is called out on strikes or takes his place in the batters box.
4. Courtesy runner must be ready to enter the game when called. Any delay will result in no courtesy allowed for the on base runner looking for relief regardless of which base the request is made for.

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### **5.5 Five Run Rule**

Teams are limited to five runs per inning, except for the last inning or 5th inning. In the last inning each team can score an unlimited number of runs.

### **5.6 Foul Third Strike**

Upon hitting a foul ball on the ground on the third strike, the batter is out and the ball is dead. If a batter hits a foul ball on a fly with two strikes or less and the ball is caught on a fly by the defense, the batter is out and the ball remains alive and the runners may advance at their own risk.

**ASA Rule on a Foul Ball.** If it goes straight to glove or straight to catcher's body and bounces off body and he catches it is a strike. If it is the 3rd strike he is called out. If the catcher needs to move while catching a foul ball he will be called out (There is no rule stating **the ball must go over the batter's head.**)

### **5.7 Amount of Players in Game**

The manager has the option to bat all of his players in the lineup if he wishes, but can only have ten (10) defensive players. Exception: The Coastal Division teams can play with 11 defensive players. All players in the Coastal Division reporting to a game must play a minimum of 3 innings per game or 6 innings per double-header regardless of ability. First year players are not to be used as EP players

### **5.8 Mercy Rule**

When the home team is ahead by 15 runs, after 4 and a half innings, the home team is declared the winner. The visiting team is the winner if they are ahead after 5 complete innings.

## **6.0 Pitching Regulations**

### **6.1 Legal Pitch**

The height of a pitch must be a minimum of six (6) feet and a maximum of twelve (12) feet from the playing surface. The umpire must identify an illegal pitch by shouting **"ILLEGAL" immediately after the highest or lowest point of the pitch has been reached.** A batter has the option to swing at an illegal pitch. Once the batter swings at the pitch, it will then be deemed legal.

### **6.2 Pitcher Location**

The **pitcher's** rubber shall be situated fifty (50) feet from home plate.

### **6.3 Time Limit**

The pitcher must present the ball in front of his body and is required to deliver a pitch within ten (10) seconds after the batter is set in the **batter's** box. A violation will be called

a ball by the umpire.

#### **6.4 Warm-Up Pitches**

No more than one (1) minutes may be used to deliver no more than three (3) warm-up pitches. For excessive warm-up pitches, a pitcher shall be penalized by awarding a ball to the batter for each pitch.

### **7.0 Base Running**

#### **7.1 Reaching First Base**

Each runner must reach first base on his own. Exception: Anyone with a hip or knee replacement is allowed a runner from home plate (also included recent foot/ankle surgery.) The replacement runner must be the last player in the lineup to have made an out. The umpire will identify the starting position for the runner. The batter with the hip or knee replacement is not allowed to randomly select this option once the game has started. If the batter changes his choice after the game has started his at bat will be given an out every time he violates this rule. The rule is the batter requesting relief for the hip or knee condition must declare his intentions at the first time at bat and follow the same choice at every time at bat during the game.

#### **7.2 Courtesy Runner**

The courtesy runner may be any player in the starting lineup or any player on the bench. A courtesy runner can only run as a courtesy runner one time in an inning. If a courtesy runner is on base, when it is his turn to bat, an automatic out will be declared. The runner is out at the base that he reached and he may take his turn at bat, unless there are three outs. No substitution of a courtesy runner by another courtesy runner is allowed, unless he takes ill or gets injured and cannot return. A player that runs for a hip or knee replacement player is considered a courtesy runner. There is no limit on the number of courtesy runners to be used in an inning.

#### **7.3 Contact**

In order to avoid bodily contact and possible injury, a base runner must make every effort to avoid colliding with a fielder who is making a play at a base. In accordance with this rule, if it appears that the runner and fielder may collide, the runner may run past the base without touching it, and will not be in jeopardy of being put out, unless in the umpire's judgment the runner would not have reached the base before being put out or has run outside the baseline to avoid being put out. The runner may go to either side of the base to avoid a collision. A runner who employs this maneuver must return and touch the base he ran by before he may advance to another base.

A defensive player may not straddle a base when a runner is approaching. If a violation

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of this rule is apparent to the umpire, the runner may be called safe. In an extreme Violation of the rule, an umpire may eject a player. If it looks like the runner and fielder will collide, then the runner must make every effort to avoid colliding with the fielder. Sliding or diving to 2nd or 3rd base or back to any base is optional in both Divisions. In the event of contact at any base the runner may be called out at the discretion of the umpire and the umpire may impose additional penalties

#### **7.4 Over Running**

A base runner is permitted to overrun 2nd and 3rd bases without being subject to a tag out. However, a runner is subject to being tagged out, if in over running a base, he obviously moves toward the next base. In this case, he is subject to being tagged out while attempting to advance or returning to the base he over ran. Should a runner over run a base and stop. He must return to that base and “tag up” before advancing.

### **8.0 Protest Procedure**

#### **8.1 Notification**

A protest should be made immediately before the next pitch. The manager or his representative should approach the umpire and register the protest.

#### **8.2 Protest Time Limit**

An official protest must be filed within forty-eight (48) hours of completion of a game by contacting the Division President and informing him of the protest.

#### **8.3 Protest Form**

The protest to the Division President should be followed up in writing and must include the following: a) Date, time and location of the game being protested, b) Umpires and scorekeepers names, c) The rule and section under which the protest is made, d) The decision and conditions surrounding the making of the protest, e) All facts involving the protest.

#### **8.4 Protest Handling**

As soon as possible, the Division President will convene a protest committee for a hearing and a decision. Note: Protests will not be received or considered if they are based solely on a decision involving the accuracy on the part of an umpire. The protest is to be based on a rule interpretation.

### **9.0 Re-Scheduling Games**

#### **9.1 Early Notice**

The home team will be responsible to have a representative check the fields when there

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is adverse weather or field conditions. The home team will notify the League Vice President as soon as possible, that is, the preceding day or by 7:15 AM the day of the game of the poor field conditions. The Vice President will in turn notify the umpires. The home team manager will notify the visiting team manager of the field conditions.

## **9.2 Umpire Options**

Once a game is in progress it is up to the umpire to decide if a game can continue. Once both teams arrive at the field, the umpire will decide if a game will be played, and when and if a game can continue.

## **9.3 Reschedule Procedure**

A **game's** schedule date can be changed for any of the following reasons:

- a) If, as a convenience, both managers agree to an alternate playing date, no obligation has been incurred to the umpires and the reschedule is approved by the Division President.
- b) Weather
- c) A traumatic situation (accident, death, etc.). If during the course of a game, if a player gets seriously injured and cannot continue, the game will be considered suspended. The game will be rescheduled. The suspended game will continue from where it was left off and it will be played prior to the next **team's** scheduled doubleheader. If a game ends in a tie for any reason, it will be played from where it was left off prior to the next scheduled doubleheader between the two teams.
- d) Two or more team members are participating in a recognized Wilmington Senior Games activity or a WSSA Tournament or a recognized team function.
- e) Both managers and Division President agree to the postponement.

## **9.4 Reschedule Date**

All canceled/postponed games will be rescheduled (If time allows) by the Division President. All rescheduled games must be played on the assigned rain date, or lose on a forfeit.

## **9.5 Forfeit Rule**

All games must be played as scheduled. Any team that cannot field 9 players by the start of the game will lose on a forfeit. The opposing team may lend the aforementioned team that is short players, if there is enough for at least nine players on each team then both teams may play a practice game, however, it is still a forfeit.

## **10.0 Game Rules Review**

### **10.1 First Game**

WSSA Rules (which have some exceptions to the ASA Rules) and the ground rules should be reviewed by the managers with the umpires before the start of the game.

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### **10.2 WSSA Game Rules Available**

Each manager should have a copy of the WSSA Game Rules available at each game

### **10.3 Temporary Rule for shortage of players for the Coastal Division**

The following solution was agreed upon by the seven team managers to address the shortage of players during the 2015 season this rule will remain in effect until changed by the Division President:

The team that is resting on the daily bye will be the go to source for meeting the needs for extra players, Only a C or D rated player can be used. And the team in need of a player must resolve the arrangement prior to the start of the game, if a team cannot source a player and can only field 8 players said team will forfeit the game.

The following is a simple description of the above solution:

1. Only C or D rated players can be used to support the needs of a team that is short players
2. If loaned play is discovered to be a IP, A, or B, rated player the game(s) will be forfeited
3. No team can have more than 2 loaned players in the lineup.