

Rule Revision Dated October, 2023



See below for rules specific to La Mesa Senior Softball Association

**LA MESA SENIOR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION:
“A” DIVISION PLAYING RULES**

**La Mesa Senior Softball Association rules supersede SSUSA except
when additional clarification is needed.**

The Senior Softball USA (SSUSA) rules shall be referenced after consulting
La Mesa Senior Softball Association: “A” division playing rules.

Reference: www.seniorsoftball.com
Or Official Senior Softball-USA Rulebook

1. PITCHING:

- A. The ball will be pitched underhand from within the Pitchers Box. The box location is 50 feet from the plate to the initial pitching rubber and extends back 10 feet from the 50 foot pitching rubber located on the pitcher’s mound. The pitcher will use an arc, which is not lower than six (6) feet and no higher than twelve (12) feet from the ground. This shall be considered a legal pitch. Illegal pitches, higher than 12 feet, or lower than 6 feet, shall be signaled verbally by the umpire at its height or depth prior to reaching the batter. If the batter hits an illegal pitch, the play shall proceed and be treated as if an illegal pitch were not called. If the batter swings and misses the pitch, the umpire shall rule the pitch as a strike and the ball is dead.
- B. If a pitched ball lands on the home plate mat which covers the home plate rubber, and is at least 6 ft high but less than 12 feet shall be declared a strike. The mat is 19 inches wide and 34-1/2 inches long. If the ball fails to hit the mat it shall be declared a ball.
 - 1. For detailed descriptions of illegal pitches refer to: SSUSA rules.

- C. A starting pitcher may be allowed 5 pitches to warm up (first inning only). Thereafter, the pitcher will be allowed only one warm up pitch per inning. New pitchers may have 5 warm up pitches the first time on the mound. Infield/outfield warm ups are allowed until the pitcher is ready. The umpire will announce "Play Ball".
- D. Pitcher must wear a mask and is encouraged to wear shin guards and a chest protector. A protective screen will be supplied by the league and will be placed 6 to 10ft. in front of the pitcher's mound. The screen may be moved to either side of the mound depending if it's a right handed or left handed pitcher but must cover ½ of the mound. Right handers must pitch around the screen on the right side and left handers on the left side. Pitchers may not pitch over the screen. If the screen is hit by a thrown ball and bounces away it is a live ball. If the thrown ball lodges in the screen, it is a dead ball and all runners advance one base from where they were when the ball became lodged in the screen.

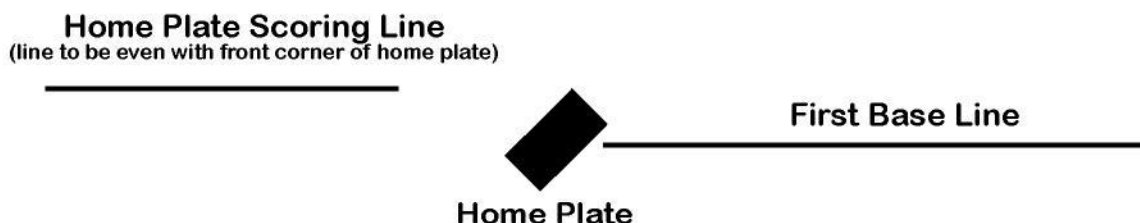
2. BATTING:

- A. There shall be no bunting or chop hits, (i.e. attempting to deaden the hit or chopping the bat down on the pitched ball). Penalty: The batter is declared out and all base runners must return to their respective bases.
- B. No pinch-hitting is permitted.
- C. Batters will begin each at bat with a count of one ball and one strike. No courtesy foul ball will be allowed when the batter has two strikes. The batter will be declared out when a foul ball is hit after two strikes. If a fly ball is caught in legal foul ground, the batter is out but all base runners may advance with the risk of being thrown out.
- D. A player may be awarded an intentional base on balls by the opposing pitcher without having any pitches thrown. Intentional walks should only be awarded in critical baseball situations in a close game.

3. RUNNING:

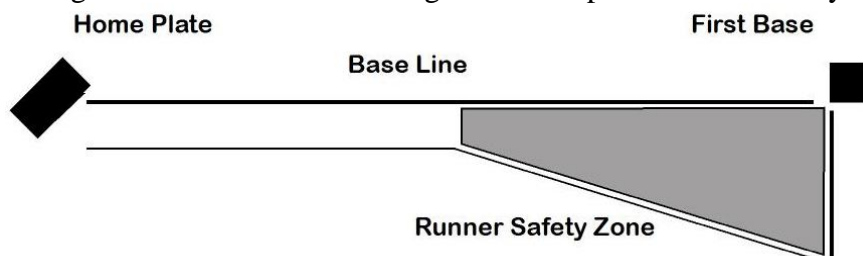
- A. Runners are allowed to leave the base when a pitched ball reaches home plate, touches the ground or is batted. The umpire will declare any runner "out" who leaves a base early. The pitcher's delivery shall be declared a no pitch, the ball is dead, and all other runners shall return to their respective bases. The runner on first, second or third base may stand on the line perpendicular to the direction he is going rather than on the base.
- B. There will be no sliding at any base. Any runner who slides into a base, from either direction, will be automatically out. All other runners will remain on the base they occupied at the time of the slide. This rule is in effect whether there is a play made on the runner or not.

- C. Runners may over run all bases from either direction. The overrun must be in a straight line beyond the base. A runner making an attempt towards the next base may be tagged out or forced out by the defensive player. Retouches of the base are not required on overthrows/errors. When not over-running second going to third or third going home, the runner must touch the bases. If he misses, it is an appeal play.
- D. **The burden is on the base runner to avoid contact with the fielder. The runner must run on either side of a base without touching it, in order to avoid colliding with the fielder or interfering with his ability to catch a thrown ball or to make a throw to another base or the runner is out.** The runner must run to the side away from where the play should be made if at all possible. The runner shall be declared safe, if, in the umpire's judgment, he would have been safe had he run directly to the base. The umpire shall call the runner out when fielder clearly has the ball in his possession, the base runner runs into the defensive player, or obstructs his line of vision with an incoming thrown ball or otherwise interferes with the play. If the fielder who is going after a thrown ball moves into the runner and is unable to handle the ball and the runner is in the proper position to avoid interference, no interference will be called. The runner will be awarded the base he is going to and the ball will be declared dead.
- E. Runners coming home to score a run must touch the auxiliary scoring line or the area beyond the line. An 8-10ft. line will be placed about 6 feet from home plate, towards the backstop and parallel with the first base line. See diagram concerning this line.



- F. The catcher or fielder shall touch the home plate mat with the ball in his possession to make an out. Catcher or fielder may NOT tag or touch a runner attempting to touch the auxiliary scoring line. Any runner touching home plate/mat instead of the auxiliary scoring line will be declared out.
- G. Runners may not return to 3rd base if they touch or pass the commit line which is approximately half way between 3rd base and home plate. Penalty: Runner is out. (The umpire will call the runner out, ball is still live).
- H. A runner may be forced out at any base, regardless of which direction the runner is running. A runner advancing to second, third or home base may change his direction only once. If the runner changes direction more than once, he shall be declared out. The runner may be forced out at the base to which he is returning or tagged out by a fielder. If the fielder, attempting to make the tag drops the ball, or the ball is thrown wildly, the runner is not out and is free to advance.
- I. On a hit ball to an infielder, the batter/runner must run to the auxiliary line on the foul side of first base (to avoid any potential collision with the first baseman on a throw to first).

J. See image below for details showing the runner path to the auxiliary line



- K. On any automatic home runs over the fence, the batter must touch first base only and then may proceed off the playing field. All other runners on base at the time of a home run must touch the next base before proceeding off the playing field.
- L. A runner on base who has left the base when a line drive is being caught by a fielder should not go directly back to the base but should go to the opposite side of the fielder when returning to the bag. However the runner won't automatically be called out unless the runner interferes with the fielder or the throw to that base.

4. COURTESY RUNNER:

- A. A courtesy runner may be allowed once the batter has reached first base safely. A courtesy runner may be any player on the team, but no player can be a courtesy runner more than once in any inning. If a batter has had a courtesy runner substituted for him in an inning, he may not be a courtesy runner for another player in that inning. If a courtesy runner is on base when his turn at bat comes up an automatic out shall be recorded. The runner will be removed from the base and a second runner cannot be substituted. The courtesy runner will then take his turn at bat.
- B. A courtesy runner is officially in the game when he touches the base. The batter/player receiving the courtesy runner must safely touch that base before the courtesy runner, if the courtesy runner is determined to be illegal, he will be called out upon touching the base, no other courtesy runner is allowed and the base will be vacated.
- C. Batting around constitutes a new inning for the purpose of the courtesy runner rule.
- D. A courtesy runner from home will be allowed for one person per team, designated at the start of the game. Runner will leave from line adjacent to backstop and will only be allowed a single, ground rule double or home run. If the runner rounds or attempts an additional base on a "single" he can be thrown out.

5. DEAD BALL RULES:

- A. A ball being returned to the pitcher after conclusion of a play by any infielder that is dropped or overthrown does not allow base runners to advance. This is a dead ball situation.
- B. When any defensive player has control of the ball in the vicinity of the infield, and base runners have stopped advancing, the umpire shall call "Time Out" to stop action. The ball is dead even if the umpire fails to call the "Time Out."

6. LIVE BALL/DEAD BALL APPEALS:

- A. Any defensive player on the playing field may make an appeal during a dead ball situation. The defensive player must have possession of the ball. All appeals must be made prior to the next pitch.

7. INFIELD FLY RULE:

- A. If, in the opinion of the umpire, a fly ball can easily be caught by a defensive player in the vicinity of the infield, in fair territory, when there are runners on first and second or first, second and third base with less than two outs, the umpire, in a loud voice, shall declare "Infield Fly if fair, Batter is Out". If, the runners proceed to the next base, they run at their own risk, and are subject to being put out.

8: INJURED PLAYER AND COURTESY RUNNER:

- A. If the Courtesy runner becomes injured while running, another courtesy runner can be inserted. This rule cannot be used if the original courtesy runner was due up to bat. They would be declared out.

9. FORFEITS:

- A. A team must have seven legal players when playing with 10 on the field or eight legal players when playing with 11 on the field to avoid a forfeit. A legal player is either a player on the team roster or an available "floater".

10. FIVE RUN RULE:

- A. No team shall be allowed to score more than five (5) runs in any half inning unless it is the designated last inning due to time. It is then declared an open inning with unlimited runs allowed.

11. FLIP-FLOP RULE:

- A. If the "visiting" team is ahead by 10 runs or more going into the bottom of the 8th inning, the "home" team will bat two consecutive half innings. The bases must be cleared after the first 3 outs and a limit of 5 runs may be scored in the 8th inning. Unlimited runs are allowed for the next half inning (the 9th inning). If the home team ties or goes ahead of the visitors in the 9th inning, then the visitors will get their half of the 9th inning to bat. The visitors will be allowed unlimited runs during their final half, or 9th inning. This same rule applies if the "home" team is ahead. The difference is if the "visiting" team goes ahead in the last inning, the "home" team will get both its eighth and ninth innings at bat.

12. NUMBER OF PLAYERS TO PLAY ON DEFENSE:

- A. Teams will play with 10 defensive players when each team has 12 players drafted and with 11 defensive players when each team has 13 players drafted. When all teams have 12 players drafted and both teams have in excess of ten (10), both managers (upon agreement) may use eleven (11) players on defense. When a team has more than the required players for defensive purposes, no player shall sit more than three defensive innings, unless by the players choice. All players will continue to hit during the entire game. How the players are utilized on defense is up to the managers' discretion.
- B. An effort should be made by managers to NOT make the same player catch every inning unless it is because of an injury or the player agrees to catch. A manager should NOT send the same player to an opposing team in a mini-draft in consecutive games.

13. WHEN EITHER OR BOTH TEAMS HAVE FEWER THAN 10 PLAYERS:

- A. If either team is short of the required ten or eleven players, a mini-draft must occur at five minutes before game time. The order and process of selecting players when one or both teams are short players:
 - 1. Floater(s) (unless they have played that week). New floater may play more than once a week to be evaluated for next draft.
 - 2. Extra players from the opposing team at the discretion of the manager of the team with extra players. Managers may not place themselves on the opposing team and may not be a player in the mini-draft.
 - 3. Bye team player(s).
 - 4. Player(s) from the previous or next game and floater(s) who have already played during the current week.

- B. First determine the number of players that are needed to fill out the 10 or 11 man rosters of both teams. Those who desire to play as a substitute should let the managers know. Any players, who are eligible based on the criteria listed above, may enter the mini-draft. Then, using the priority order above, determine who the players are going to be that will fill the needed roster positions. If there are more players available than are needed from the lowest category to be used, put the names of all those players who have said they want to play in a hat. Draw names from the hat until the number of players needed to fill the 10 or 11 man rosters has been reached. Alternate method – extra players may draw playing cards, those holding the highest cards are selected to play).
- C. Note: The hat (or card draw) is only used to determine who is going to play, not what teams they are going to play on. After picking names from the hat have been identified the players who are going to play, the team lowest in the standings makes the first verbal selection. The selection process goes back and forth until both teams have filled their 10-man rosters. This verbal selection should be done discreetly. Example: The "Red" Team is short one (1) player. The "Green" is short two (2) players. Three (3) players are needed. There is one (1) floater available. He is automatically one of the players to be selected. There are four (4) "bye" players available who would like to play. These four (4) names are put in a hat and two (2) names are drawn. Now the three (3) players that are going to play have been identified. The managers then select these three (3) players. The team lowest in the standings, the "Red" Team selects first. The "Green" Team gets the remaining two (2) players.
- D. Non-roster players can be used in the following manner:
1. Floaters, bye players or players from the previous or next game, can only play Catcher, 1st Base, or Right Field, these players must be placed at the end of the batting order. If as many as four players are needed, the next allowable position would be Right Center Field.
 2. Extra players from the opposing team can play anywhere and bat anywhere.
 3. If a player has left the game because of an ejection, an out will be recorded each time his position comes to bat. He can be replaced defensively.
 4. If the player has left the game for a legitimate reason, there will be no penalty. That player's position in his team's batting order will be eliminated and the batter scheduled after him will come to the plate with no penalty. The departed player's position can be filled by having a player from the other team catch for them or another player, not currently playing, catch for them but not bat.
 5. For the first game of the day only: If a team has nine players and is without their #1 draft pick, the team may, 1) use both of any paired players they may have on their roster or; 2) play with their nine players and the opposing team will provide a catcher.

14. LATE ARRIVALS:

- A. Players arriving after the start of their game shall be placed at the end of the batting order. When the late arrival of a player results in more than ten players, extra players on loan from the opposing team shall be returned to their assigned team when the late arriver(s) become eligible to play. All other players will be allowed to play the entire game.

15. TIME LIMITS ON GAMES:

- A. All games shall be a full nine (9) innings if time permits, unless both managers agree to play fewer innings. Time restriction for games that have following games: If the game is in the 7th inning or less at one hour twenty minutes (1:20) (on days when there are two games, and one hour and fifteen minutes (1:15) on days when there are three games). The current inning will be completed and then a subsequent final inning will be played with the "unlimited run rule" in effect. The first game of the day shall be construed to start on time and the 1:15/1:20 rule will apply from the scheduled start time regardless of any delays. When a game goes beyond the scheduled start time of a following game the new start time of that game will be a maximum of 5 minutes after its designated game time. The next game will have the same innings/time limits as the preceding game unless it is the last game of the day. It may then be played to its completion without a time limit as long as both managers are in agreement. The official "game clock" is in the home team's dugout.

16. FLOATERS:

- A. Regular floaters are league players who have chosen to be a "floater" rather than a roster player at the time of the draft. They can play once a week if needed and will have the highest priority. Thereafter, they will have the same priority as players from the previous or next game who are in the player draft.
- B. Prime time Floaters are new league members who joined the league after the current season draft and desire to become assigned members of a team. These players will be treated as eligible to play with the highest priority twice a week. This will allow the current managers and league representative to evaluate the players for proper positioning in team assignments. These players will be assigned to a team when a roster position is available. The assignments are to be made in such a way as to not unfairly help or hinder a team.
- C. End of season and playoff rules governing the use of replacement player(s)**
 - 1. If a team is short (less than 10) that team can select a replacement player(s) as long as they were selected using the draft level of one less round than the missing player, player draft level to be determined through previous draft selection, contact current player representative for replacement player qualifications and status.

2. The replacement player must either be a floater or on a team that has been eliminated from the Post Season Tournament.
3. Unlike regular season rules, the player(s) don't need to be selected by putting their names in a hat, but can be selected by name by the manager missing the player(s)
4. League officials and the opposing manager shall be notified of the player(s) selected prior to the start of the playoff game.

17. BATS:

- A. All bats used must have a legible USA or ASA (2000 or later) sticker. Any bat that is on the USA/ASA unapproved list, whether it has a USA/ASA sticker or not, is illegal in the La Mesa Senior Softball League, "A" Division. A batter using an illegal bat will be declared out and the ball dead. Any runners that may have advanced as a result of a batted ball will return to their original base.
- B. Male players seventy-five (75) years old and older and all female players will be allowed to use a regulation bat not approved by "ASA" (any SSUSA "Senior Bat", Miken Ultra II, or similar). Reference: <http://www.asasoftball.com>
- C. Another player's bat may not be used without permission of the bats owner.

18. SUNSET PARK FENCE RULE FOR FIELD #1

- A. A fair ball hit over the permanent 8' fence in right field extending from the flag pole to the foul pole will be declared a single. Any ball hit over the fence that hits the flagpole or to the left of the flagpole or hits the top half of the 16' fence, on the fly, will be declared a home run. A ball that hits the top rail of the 8' fence to the left of the flag pole and bounces back into the field will not be declared a home run.
- B. After reaching first base, the batter may leave the field without circling the bases. Any runners on base at the time of the home run must touch the next base and then may also leave the playing field without circling the bases.
- C. No team may be more than "2 up" in home runs at any time. Example: If Team "A" hits 2 home runs, any subsequent home runs by team "A" over the fence will be ruled a single until team "B" hits a home run. This rule lasts for the entire game and is independent of the small fence being open or closed. When the small fence is not in place, and the ball hits above the middle bar of the 16' fence, but not over the fence, for a team that is "2 up" in home runs, it will be played as a live ball.

D. The following will be declared a "ground rule double":

1. A ball hit fair, which then goes out of play down the right or left field foul lines. The left field "out of play line" is defined as the inside edge of the sidewalk from the back side of the pitching cage fence toward the #2 field. The right field "out of play" line is the dugout fence.
2. A ball that gets stuck or goes under any fence. Fielder will put both hands in the air and umpire will verify.
3. A ball that bounces over the temporary Little League fence.

E. Little League Fence: The first ball hit over the fence in each half inning will be declared a single. All runners advance one base. All fly balls hit over the fence thereafter, in the same half inning, will be considered a "foul ball". If a ball is hit over after two strikes it will be ruled as an out. Balls that bounce over the fence shall NOT be counted as a "fly ball" over the fence. Note: A home run as indicated in "A" above does not count as a "fly ball" hit over the fence. When the temporary little league fence is in place, the right field fence also counts as a single for that inning and subsequent balls hit over either fence are foul balls or the batter will be out if he has two strikes already. (When the temporary Little League fence is not in place, balls hit over the right field fence will not be subject to the one per inning rule).

F. If a fly ball is touched by a fielder and is deflected over the fence, it is declared a "single" and does not count as a ball hit over the fence.

G. A batted ball that touches the fence in fair territory then touches a player and goes over the fence either in fair territory or foul territory is a ground rule double.

19. CONDUCT:

A. Any member whose conduct is abusive or unsportsmanlike, as to cause undue embarrassment to members of his team or to the League, may be subject to suspension or expulsion from the League. The Executive Board, with approval of the Division President, will determine any punitive action to be taken.

20. UNIFORM/DUES RULES:

A. All players must be in an appropriate uniform (hat and shirt), their dues paid, the player information sheet completed, and the waiver signed to qualify as a player. Managers will enforce the League uniform/Dues Rules. In a valid emergency or with a doctor's request, clothing may be modified.

21. SAFETY/PROTECTIVE WEAR:

- A. Pitchers are required to wear a protective mask. Infielders, especially pitchers, are "encouraged" to use protective wear (cup, shin guards, mouth piece). Masks are available for loan, and will be located in the storage/equipment room.

22. FIELD MAINTENANCE:

- A. The home team of the final game of the day will be responsible for picking up field equipment and storing it in the storage locker. This includes bases, cones, balls, scoreboards and numerals, water fountain fixtures, clock, pitchers screen etc. Replace base plugs. Pick up trash and abandoned items on the field and in the dugouts.

23. LEAGUE CHAMPION:

- A. Regular season championship to be determined by the best win/loss percentage, including ties. If both teams remain tied based on win/loss percentage, winner will be determined by best record in head-to-head competition, and then, if still tied, by head-to-head run differential.
- B. Tournament playoff championship to be determined by single elimination tournament played during the last week of a season.

24. DISCUSSING RULES WITH UMPIRES:

- A. Team manager or assistant ONLY can discuss rule interpretations with the umpire(s).

25. DUGOUTS:

- A. The designated Home Team shall occupy the First Base dugout.

26. PAIRED PLAYERS:

- A. Paired players may not play in the same game at the same time.
(Exception: See Rule 13, D, 5 above)
- B. There is no limit on how many times one paired player may play compared to his counterpart player as long as they are not in the same game at the same time.

Play fair, play safe. We want you to enjoy La Mesa Senior Softball!