

# SPIRIT FIELD

## CHURCH SOFTBALL LEAGUE 2021 REGULATIONS

The mission of the Church Softball League is to provide a family-oriented, recreational program that enables faith-based organizations to reach out, mentor, and build relationships with people of all ages.

The following information is to be considered a supplement to the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) slow pitch rules and regulations.

### I. Rules for Each Division

- A. Each Team must provide a Certificate of Liability Insurance naming Faith Assembly of God as an additionally insured.
- B. Each player should attend at least half of the monthly services at his or her church or s/he is considered ineligible.
- C. Each player must be at least 15 years of age to participate in the Church Softball League. He/she is eligible on his/her 15<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- D. Each player must sign the team roster.
- E. Each player is responsible for his/her own accident insurance.
- F. All league games will have one ball and one strike starting count with no courtesy foul.
- G. A mat will be used for the strike zone. If a ball hits the plate and the mat at the same time it is a strike. If a ball hits the plate only it is a ball.
- H. Each player may only participate on one team in each nightly division. *Exception:* Teams that are short players may use a substitute player from another team's roster with approval from the opposing captain and umpires prior to the game. Maximum 10 players when using subs from other rosters.
- I. Women are allowed to play in the coed division only.
  - 1) Each team must have at least four women in the batting lineup.
  - 2) Each team must have at least three women on the field each inning.
  - 3) Men and women may occupy any position on the field or in the batting lineup.
  - 4) If only three women are present at the game, a spot in the batting lineup must be designated for the missing woman and an out will be given each time that spot comes up.
  - 5) A team must have at least three women in the batting lineup to start and finish a game. If not, the game will be declared a forfeit. *Exception:* If a woman becomes injured during the game and is unable to continue playing, the game may continue at the discretion of the umpires and captain of the opposing team.

- J. Once division schedules are created, game times will not be changed. Every attempt will be made to accommodate church event schedules.
- K. Coed division - home team will be listed second on the schedule.
- L. Men's Division - home team will be listed second on the schedule.
- M. **Home Run Rule:** There will be a home run limit imposed during league play. The limit per team will be set at **three (3)**. A home run is considered to be a batted ball hit directly over the fence without being touched or deflected by any defensive player. An inside the park home run does not count toward the home run limit. Any home run hit in excess of the limit will result in the batter being declared out.
- N. **Base Stealing: Men's division only.** A runner on base may leave to steal once a pitched ball crosses the front plane of home plate. Leading off bases is not allowed.  
**If a dead ball is called, a runner's steal attempt is stopped and he must return to the current base. Dead balls occur when:**
  - 1) **Batter is hit by pitch.**
  - 2) **Pitched ball touches home plate.**
  - 3) **Pitched ball touched ground in front of the plane of home plate.****Stealing home is NOT allowed on a passed pitched ball, but is allowed after throw back to the field.**

## **II. Uniforms and Equipment**

- A. **Metal cleats are not allowed.** If a player is found wearing metal cleats while playing, the cleats must be removed immediately. The player will not be allowed to continue unless s/he has appropriate footwear.
- B. Matching uniforms are encouraged, but not required.
- C. Exposed jewelry such as wristwatches, bracelets, earrings, neck chains or any other item judged dangerous by the umpires may not be worn during a game. Medical alert bracelets or necklaces are not considered jewelry, but if worn, they must be taped to the body. *Note:* A player may be asked to remove jewelry and will be ejected from the game if s/he fails to do so.
- D. All bats must be on the ASA approved bat list. This list may be obtained from the ASA website at [www.softball.org](http://www.softball.org).
- E. Altered Bats: A bat is considered altered when the physical structure of a legal softball bat has been changed.
  - 1. If a batter enters the batter's box with or is discovered using an altered bat the ball is dead, the batter is out, and the player is ejected from the game. Base runners may not advance.
  - 2. If the same altered bat is discovered in league play for a second time, the game will be called a forfeit.

## **III. Playing the Game**

- A. Each game will have a time limit of one hour and ten minutes.
- B. Each team must have a minimum of **eight players** to start and finish a game. If not, the game will be declared a forfeit.

C. Game time: The starting time is on the schedule. Each team must have a sufficient number of players to start the game at the set time or five minutes after the conclusion of the previous game, should that game run past the scheduled time. If not, the game will be declared a forfeit.

D. The starting pitcher for each team will be given five warm-up pitches the first inning and one warm-up pitch each inning thereafter. Each team will be allowed warm-up balls to throw around the infield and outfield in the first inning. No batted ball infield or outfield practice is allowed.

F. Pitches shall have an arch between **six** and **ten** feet in height.

G. Each team is required to keep a scorebook with an inning-by-inning account of the game.

H. Safety Base: The base runner must use the orange safety base at first unless s/he is continuing on to second base.

I. Players and substitutes:

- 1) All players are to be included in the batting order and that batting order must be followed for the entire game. Players may be substituted on defense as many times as the coach wants in order to allow all players to participate defensively.
- 2) If a team has only eight or nine players and a new player (who is listed on the roster) arrives while his/her team is at bat, the new player may be added to the bottom of the line-up as long as the team has not batted around.
- 3) If a new player (who is listed on the roster) shows up after the team has batted around, the player may be added to the bottom of the line-up, but must play the field before being allowed to bat.
- 4) If a team has only eight or nine players and a new player arrives while his/her team is on the field, the new player will be allowed to enter the field upon completion of the batter at the plate and added to the end of the batting order.
- 5) A player may only be dropped from the line-up due to an injury incurred during the game.
- 6) The standard ASA substitution rule may be used as long as the umpire is notified prior to the game. The umpire will notify the opposing team captain.

J. Handicap rule: This rule is only for individuals with a pre-existing permanent physical handicap. The individual must be able to play the field defensively. S/he will be allowed a designated hitter for the duration of the game. *Note:* The designated hitter cannot play the field at any time.

K. Courtesy runner: A team may use a courtesy runner for any player who becomes injured while base running during the game. If the opposing team agrees, the person who made the last out prior to the injury shall run for the injured player. If this player is capable of playing the field defensively, s/he is capable of running the bases offensively.

#### **IV. Rules, Violations, and Protests**

A. A team captain who desires to protest a game must do so by informing the plate umpire immediately (before the next pitch in a game) that his/her team is playing the game under protest. In addition, a written protest must be filed within 24 hours in the Faith Assembly of God church office at 4000 State Street, Quincy, IL. Each written protest must be accompanied by a \$25.00 filing fee. The church softball league officials will process the protest and notification will be

given within 72 hours. If the protest is upheld, the filing fee will be refunded to the protesting team. If the protest is not upheld, the fee is forfeited to the church softball league.

B. An illegal player is:

1. any player not following the age limitation rule;
2. any player participating who is not on the team roster; or
3. any player who has falsified information on the roster.

C. Questioning an opponent for illegal players:

1. The team captain must inform the plate umpire that s/he suspects use of an illegal player by the opponent during the contest between the two teams.
2. The challenging team captain must specify which player is in question by giving a name, number, field position being played, or by pointing the player out to the umpire.
3. The plate umpire will then inform the opposing team of the situation.
  - a) If the team agrees that a player is illegal, the illegal player is ejected from the game. The game will continue unless the team is left with fewer than eight players, in which case the game will be considered a forfeit.
4. Any participant found to be an illegal player will be suspended for the next regularly scheduled game. S/he may come to the Faith Assembly of God church office to fill out a New Player Eligibility form. The team captain may also be suspended for the next game for knowingly using an illegal player.
5. Once a game is final, a player's eligibility may not be challenged to affect the outcome of that game.
6. The outcome of any game will not be affected unless a formal protest occurs during the game. Rulings on illegal players are unrelated to protests.
7. A second offense by an illegal player will mean ejection from the league for the remainder of the season.
8. The church softball league officials will make final determination on all rulings.

D. Any player or coach ejected from a game, for any given reason, is automatically suspended from participating in the next game on the schedule. Any player or coach ejected for a second time during the season, for any given reason, is automatically suspended from league play for the remainder of the season.

E. The runner is out when a defensive player has the ball and the runner crashes into the defensive player. The runner must make every effort to avoid contact and injury. If a runner initiates contact with a defensive player with the intent to injure or knock the ball loose, the runner will be called out. If the act is considered flagrant, the offender will be ejected. The judgment of the umpire will be considered final.

1. Flagrant action by a player or coach is:

- a. any intentional physical action or conduct that would endanger any other person on the Faith Assembly of God church premises.

- b. the use of obscene language or gestures. That person is automatically disqualified from that game and the next game on the schedule. The plate umpire must notify league officials within 24 hours. Any player or coach found guilty of a flagrant action will be subject to further game suspensions and/or criminal prosecution.
- F. Any team that forfeits two or more regularly scheduled games during the season may be denied entry into the league next season.
- G. \* \* \* NO CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES OR TOBACCO PRODUCTS WILL BE ALLOWED ON FAITH ASSEMBLY OF GOD PREMISES AT ANY TIME. Any violation of this rule may result in forfeiture of the game and could void the team's entry the next season. This rule applies to team fans and spectators as well.

#### **V. Winning a Game**

- A. Each league will use the ten-, fifteen- or twenty-run rule. Twenty+ runs after 3, Fifteen+ runs after four innings or ten+ runs after five innings wins the game.
  - 1. Should the score be tied, the game will continue until a winner has been decided, providing the time limit has not been exceeded. After the time limit, the umpire may use the ASA tie-breaker rule.
  - 2. A game called by the plate umpire for inclement weather shall be regulation if five or more completed innings have been played or if the home team has scored more runs in four+ innings than the visiting team has scored in five+ innings. The score will stand after five or more completed innings.

#### **VI. Tie-breaker Steps**

- A. At the end of the regular season of play, if two or more teams are tied for first, second, or third; the following steps will be taken to determine placement:
  - 1. Win/loss records.
  - 2. Results of head to head competition during the season.
  - 3. Winning run difference in head to head competition.
  - 4. Winning run difference for the entire season.
  - 5. After these steps have been taken, if a tie still occurs for a trophy position, a playoff game will be scheduled.

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