

HANOVER SENIOR SOFTBALL LEAGUE 2016 RULES

The Hanover County Senior Slow-Pitch Softball League will play by the official playing rules of the Amateur Softball Association of America, ("ASA"), with the exception of the following changes and additions:

I. PLAYERS: ELIGIBILITY AND TEAM ASSIGNMENTS:

1. An "eligible player" is an individual who has been "accepted" into the organization by the Board of Directors or its designee. The age criterion for acceptance into the League is specified in the organization's bylaws. Any individual not so accepted is deemed an "ineligible player".

In order to play in the League a player must be assigned to a team roster by the Team Selection Committee. Any violation may result in the expulsion of the unassigned player(s) from the League and/or forfeiture of any or all games in which the unassigned player(s) participated.

2. The Team Selection Committee has the authority to move players as necessary to meet the needs of the League.

II. TEAM REQUIREMENTS FOR AN "OFFICIAL GAME":

1. A minimum of seven (7) roster players per team is required.
2. A minimum of eight (8) "eligible players" including at least one (1) female player is required.
3. In order to meet the requirements for an "official game" and the League's preference for at least a 10 player lineup with eight (8) men and two (2) women, the League will provide, if possible, up to three "substitute players" for a team that has less than 10 roster players available. A pitcher can be provided for a team without an experienced pitcher regardless of the number of roster players available. A team with less than two (2) women may pick up enough women to have two (2), and a team with less than eight (8) men, may pick up enough to have eight (8); A maximum of three (3) total pick-up players is permitted. A team picking up men to have eight (8) must play eight (8) men on defense.

- A. All "substitute players" must be "eligible players" as described under Section I (Paragraphs 1 & 2).
- B. Each team will have a minimum of ten (10) positions in their batting order with a minimum of two (2) female batting positions. A team with less than ten (10) actual players must take an automatic out in the batting order for the missing player(s) using either the designation "MM" (missing male) or "MF" (missing female), as appropriate. A team with at least ten (10) players and only one (1) female must also take an automatic out (MF) somewhere in the batting order.

Note: A team with only eight (8) players (roster and substitute) will be the only team that will be required to take two (2) automatic outs.

- C. All substitute players will be placed at the bottom of the batting order.

Exception 1: If the team's only female player(s) are "substitute" players, one must be placed in one of the top five batting positions.

- D. Late arriving roster players will be placed at the bottom of the batting order, unless arriving in time for their designated spot in the batting order.

4. PROCEDURES FOR OBTAINING SUBSTITUTE PLAYERS:

A. When known in advance:

The League will maintain a list of players by position and skill level. Teams needing players must contact a designated League official who will discuss the team's needs. The official will then decide what position(s) need to be filled and will select the substitute player(s) from those available matching the position(s) of the missing player(s) as much as is feasible. The designated league official will average the skill rating of the absent male or female players and provide a substitute equal to the average of the missing players. This also applies to a team picking up a pitcher. The intent is to provide the short team with a full (8-2) defensive team while maintaining fairness of team rosters. All decisions concerning substitute players will be made by the League official and are final. If a manager and/or team secures a substitute player(s), and then has enough roster players show up so they don't need the substitute player(s), the substitute player(s) will play the first game and have the option to play the second game. The roster player(s) who were not expected to play, will have to sit out the first game. If the substitute player(s) choose to play in the second game, those roster player(s) will have to sit out that game as well. (Exception: Unless he/she was initially asked to fill in for just one game). If a team recruits their own substitute players without going through the designated league official they will not be allowed to use the substitute players and will have to forfeit their games for that night.

B. At the field:

A manager who unexpectedly has fewer than ten (10) total players and/or less than eight (8) men or two (2) women players may request pick-up players from any Board member that is not a member of either the manager's team or their opponent. The Board member will then select available players to fill the team's needs keeping the intent of the above substitution rules in mind.

5. When any player is injured and cannot continue to play, or otherwise must leave the game, his/her position in the batting order will be "skipped" each time through; no penalty out. If the loss drops the team to less than ten (10) players or less than two (2) women or eight (8) men, then the team may replace such players if a substitute is readily available; such replacements must be selected by a Board member who is not on either team's roster. The "replacement player" will be put at the bottom of the lineup unless they are replacing the only women batting in the top five (5), then they will be placed in her batting position.
6. In the unlikely event that a "Board member" cannot handle the request for "pick-up" players, the opposing manager will determine what relief, if any, is allowed.
7. The Board of Directors will review any instances of non-compliance with these rules that is brought to their attention by "protest" or other timely method and will determine what, if any, penalty shall be imposed. Such penalty may include forfeiture of the game(s) in question.

III. FIELDS AND EQUIPMENT:

1. **Distances:** The distance between the bases is to be sixty-five (65) feet. Bases must be secured to the ground. The distance from the front of the pitching rubber to the back of the home plate is to be fifty (50) feet. The outfield line will be set at 160 feet.
2. **Double Bag-First Base:** A double bag or a mat, at least equal in size to the regular bag, is to be used at first base and is to be located in foul territory adjacent to first base.
3. **Commitment Line:** A line, thirty (30) feet from home plate and perpendicular to the third base side foul line, is to be used as a commitment line.

4. **Extra Home Plate:** An extra home plate will be placed in foul ground adjacent to home plate.
5. **Bats:** All ASA100 approved bats are legal unless they are listed as of April 1, 2015 on the official ASA softball list of illegal bats. Players will be allowed to use these bats for the entire 2015 season and playoffs. The decisions of the umpires are final. It is the player's responsibility to know if the bat they are using is legal. (Penalties for using an illegal bat are covered in ASA rules.)
6. **Senior Bats:** All female players may use a senior bat. All male players seventy (70) and older (in current calendar year) may use a senior bat.

Regulations:

A. Bat must clearly display a pink band of at least one-half inch ($\frac{1}{2}$ ") wide on throat/handle.

B. Player approaching the batter box (for each at bat that a senior bat is used) **must:**

1. Notify the catcher and the umpire that a senior bat is being used.
2. Raise the bat straight up and over their head so as to notify the defensive team.

If a qualified player fails to notify the defensive team and strikes the ball, the defensive team has the option of either accepting the play or the batter is called out and all base runner(s) retreat to their "before at bat" position(s).

Violations:

First Offense: If an unqualified batter/player strikes the ball, he will be called out and all base runner(s) will retreat to their "before at bat" position(s). The batter will be immediately suspended for the remainder of that night of play and the next night of play. The player must immediately leave the complex and may not return until his suspension is lifted. During the suspension, the player may not participate in any League activity.

Second Offense: The batter/player is DISQUALIFIED PERMANENTLY from the League and banned from any and all League activity including League sponsored tournaments.

7. **Uniforms/Dress Code:** Players will be provided with a "uniform jersey" and will be expected to wear that at all League games as much as possible. No exposed midribs will be allowed. If a player is not appropriately attired, the player does not play offense or defense until rectified.

Players joining the League after the distribution of "uniform jerseys" or in the absence of said jersey may wear other attire of their choosing (t-shirt type), providing it does not contain any text or graphics which is deemed by the Board to be offensive to the general public. Procedure/Penalty: Player shall be advised and warned. Repeated occurrences may result in the player's expulsion from the League.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE:

1. Rained out games may or may not be rescheduled.
2. The League Standings will be computed using the team's won/loss record. Games that are

rained out will not affect the standings. Tie games will result in each team receiving credit for one-half game in the win column and one-half game in the loss column.

Chapter 1: All rules can be modified at any time, including during the season, at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

V. RULES OF PLAY:

1. General:

- A. Games are scheduled to be played at 6:30, 7:20, 8:10, and 9:00 P.M. on each Wednesday until the end of the season (usually late September).
- B. A game consists of seven (7) innings or fifty (50) minutes, whichever comes first. No inning shall begin after fifty (50) minutes except in the event of a tied game. **Note that a new inning begins immediately after the final out of the previous inning, provided time is still remaining on the clock.** One extra inning will be played for any game that is tied at the end of the time period or seven (7) innings, whichever comes first. The extra inning will be "one pitch" and there will be a three (3) run limit.
- C. Official Game: Provided three (3) complete innings are played before the umpire declares a rainout, the game will be declared an official game. **This will also apply to games in progress when the lights go out at 11:00 p.m.** The final score at the end of the last complete inning played will determine the game winner.
- D. Each team may score a maximum of **five (5)** runs in each of the first three (3) innings. The Fourth (4th) and all subsequent innings will be "unlimited".
- E. Unsportsmanlike conduct, abusive language, and/or cursing are not permitted at the softball complex. Any player ejected from a game for such conduct will be immediately suspended for the remainder of that night of play and the next night of play. The player must immediately leave the softball complex, and may not return until his/her suspension is lifted. During the suspension, the player may not participate in any League activity. A second offense will result in immediate suspension until the Board determines the player's return eligibility.
- F. Umpires have the authority to control the games.

2. Batting:

- A. When a team consists of more than ten (10) players, each player will bat. There must be at least one female batter in one of the top five batting positions. The batting order at the beginning of play will remain unchanged except for late arrivals. See Section II (D).
- B. Two (2) strikes constitute an out; three (3) balls constitute a walk.
- C. A batter who fouls two (2) pitches after having one (1) strike will be declared out.
- D. If a male batter who precedes a female batter is walked, intentional or not, the male batter is walked to second base. **The male batter must touch first base before proceeding to second base.** Any current base runners will advance as forced. The female batter will bat if there are less than two outs. With two outs, the female batter has the choice to take her turn at bat or take a walk to first base.

3. Pitching:

- A. When facing male batters, pitchers are to use twelve-inch (12") balls; when facing female batters, pitchers are to use eleven-inch (11") balls.
- B. Pitchers may begin their delivery with their feet on or within six (6) feet behind the pitching rubber.
- C. The arc of the pitch must reach a height of at least six (6') while not exceeding a maximum height of 12 feet (12') from the ground.
- D. Any pitch, not ruled "illegal" by the umpire, that strikes the plate or the mat will be a strike.

4. Defense:

- A. No more than ten (10) defensive players may be on the field at any given time and a maximum of eight (8) of these players may be male.
- B. All outfielders must remain behind the white line of the outfield until the batter hits the ball. Note: The umpire must see the infraction in order to impose any penalty.
 - 1. If an umpire sees an outfielder "over the line" before the pitch is delivered, he should stop play and instruct the player(s) to move back.
 - 2. If the outfielder causing the infraction is not involved in the play - No Penalty will be enforced; the play stands.
 - 3. If the outfielder causing the infraction fields the ball or makes contact with the batted ball - play continues until conclusion and the offensive team has an option:
 - a. Take the result of the play; or
 - b. "No Play" is called and the batter is awarded first base and all runners move up as forced.
- C. No batter (male or female) may be thrown/tagged out by an outfielder before successfully reaching first base, even if the outfielder relays to the infielder.
- D. All physically able players must play at least every other inning of defense per game.

Exception: A team may choose to use one pitcher for the first game and a second pitcher for the second game.

5. Base Running:

- A. Base stealing is prohibited.
- B. Sliding into any base is prohibited. A player may "slide back into" a base they have already passed.
- C. If there is a play on a batter going to first base from home plate, he/she must touch the portion of the double bag extending into foul territory. The batter may be called out for failing

to do so. If there is no play at first base, the batter is allowed to touch the bag in fair territory. Players may over-run first base with impunity as long as they do not, in the judgment of the umpire, “make a move” toward second base after touching the first base.

- D. Base runners may not leave their bases until the batter has made contact with the ball or the ball crosses the plate.
- E. A base runner who has passed and tagged third base may return to that base, unless his/her foot touches the ground on or beyond the commitment line. He/she is now “committed to home” and may not re-cross the commitment line in the direction of third base. Violations will result in the base runner being called out.

In order to score, a base runner must tag the extra home plate before a defensive player in possession of the ball touches home plate. To get a runner who is “committed to home” out, a defensive player must touch home plate while in possession of the ball before that runner tags the extra home plate. He/she must touch home plate, not the base runner. Contact with a base runner, who is committed to home, by any defensive player may result in an “obstruction call” by the umpire in which case the runner will be awarded home plate.

A base runner will also be called out if he/she touches or crosses any portion of home plate.

6. Courtesy Runners:

- A. The request for a courtesy runner must come from the batter or base runner.
- B. Any team member may be used as a courtesy runner, however:
 - 1. That runner may only substitute once per inning.
 - 2. Will be called out if caught on base when due up to bat.
- C. No courtesy runner will be permitted from home. The batter must reach first (1st) base on his/her own.**
- D. A courtesy runner may only advance one (1) base as result of the next batter’s at bat attempt, that is:
 - 1. If substituted at first (1st) base can only advance to second (2nd) base.
 - 2. If substituted at second (2nd) base can only advance to third (3rd) base.

If the courtesy runner forgets to stop at 1 base he/she will be directed back to the proper base without risk of being tagged out.

The above is for the **next batter only**. After which the courtesy runner may advance at will.

EXCEPTIONS:

Ground Rules: If a played ball goes out of play (out of bounds) the courtesy runner may advance as the ground rule dictates, i.e.:

1. Ball thrown to first goes over the fence or in the dugout. Ground Rule allows all runners to advance one (1) base including courtesy runner(s). This also applies at third (3rd) base.
2. Ball hit to the outfield in fair territory bounces over the fence is a ground rule double. Ground Rule allows all runners to advance two (2) bases including courtesy runners.
3. Ball is hit fair and rolls out of play on either the first (1st) base side or third (3rd) base side. Ground Rule allows all runners to advance two (2) bases including courtesy runners.
4. Ball hit over the fence in fair territory is a home run. All runners including the courtesy runner(s) also circle the bases.

D. A courtesy runner may not be replaced by another courtesy runner unless he/she suffers a discernible injury and cannot run.

VI. SMOKING:

ASA Rules provide a No Smoking environment. Participant(s)/Player(s) may not smoke inside the dugout or on the playing field. **This rule will be strictly enforced.**

VII. ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES/CONSUMPTION

Hanover County prohibits the use of alcohol within the County parks and will be enforcing this regulation. The League requires strict adherence to this regulation.

VIII. PROTESTS:

1. A manager who believes that the opposing team is guilty of a rules infringement shall inform the umpire immediately that he/she is protesting the game. The protest must be written by the protesting manager and signed by that manager and the umpire before the teams leave the field. The protest must include the specific rule(s) which was (were) violated and the names of any individuals involved.
2. Managers involved in a protest must provide League officials with accurate copies of lineups and/or scorebook pages from the protested game.

IX. VIOLATIONS:

Violation(s) of any of these rules by a manager, whether a protest is filed or not, is/are subject to review by the Board of Directors who will decide on any appropriate action(s) to be taken which may include forfeiture of the game(s).

The above rules were approved by the
Hanover Senior Softball League's Board of Directors
on January 27, 2016.