



CHARLESTON SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB

Official Softball Rules

Revision Date: October 28, 2026

(newest rules highlighted)
(recent rules highlighted)

Unless otherwise stated, ASA rules govern this league.

Game Regulation

Duration

- All games will last 50 minutes or 9 innings, whichever comes first.
- Games will be official after 5 innings or 4½ if the home team is ahead.
- If time has not expired and the game is tied, the game can go to extra innings.
- Games can end in a tie.
- On all fields, if there is time to start an inning, that inning will be finished.
- There is a 9-run limit per inning.
- Championship games will consist of 7 untimed innings.

Equipment

All teams must bring two 12" 52/300 ASA Certified balls for use in each game. Female batters may bring and use an 11" ball. The CSSC will not provide any balls. CSSC will provide all bases, a catcher's mask, and a batting helmet. A few bats and gloves are supplied by the CSSC.

All bats must be approved by the ASA 2004 certification mark; it will be left to the judgment of the umpire if a bat can be used. The complete non-approved ASA bat list is available at www.softball.org. No fast-pitch balls or bats are allowed. Catchers are advised to wear the mask at all times behind the plate.

Batting Lineup

- Every player must be in the lineup. Example: If a team has 15 players, then all 15 must be in the batting order.
- Any number of females may bat in a row, but no more than 2 males may bat in a row.
- **All females playing must bat before a male is allowed to bat a second time.** If you are short on females, you must still bat four females in the order, meaning that four females would need to bat before any male bats a second time.
- A female may bat twice in the same lineup to accommodate the 2-male to 1-female maximum ratio.
- The batting lineup cannot change. Late players can be added at the end of the lineup, keeping the 2-to-1 ratio in mind.
- The batting lineup must be presented to the opposing team or home-plate umpire prior to the game, if requested.

Examples of Legal and Illegal Lineups

Example team has seven males and five females.

Legal	Illegal
<i>(All players bat in the lineup, no more than two males in a row, all females must bat before a male may bat a second time, any number of females may bat in a row)</i>	<i>(The "2 to 1" ratio is not mandatory. The team does not have the correct number of males and females to maintain a 2-to-1 ratio legally throughout the lineup. Males are batting for a second time before females bat their first time.)</i>
1. Male 1 2. Male 2 3. Female 1 4. Male 3 5. Male 4 6. Female 2 7. Male 5 8. Female 3 9. Male 6 10. Male 7 11. Female 4 12. Female 5	1. Male 1 2. Male 2 3. Female 1 4. Male 3 5. Male 4 6. Female 2 7. Male 5 8. Male 6 9. Female 3 10. Male 7 11. Male 1 (illegal) 12. Female 4 13. Male 2 (illegal) 14. Male 3 (illegal) 15. Female 5

Fielding

- You may play with a maximum of ten players on the field. With ten players on the field, at least four must be female. With a full team of 10 players: of the six infield positions (Pitcher, 1B, 2B, SS, 3B, and Catcher) at least two must be female, and at least one female outfielder.
- The minimum number of players to start the game is 6 (2 of the 6 players must be female). If you are short females, you must sit a male from playing in the field for every female short. (e.g., if you have only 3 females, then only 5 males may play in the field). That is the only penalty; being short on females will no longer constitute an out in the lineup. No more than 6 males are allowed in the field, but there is no limit to the number of females.
- Players may freely move from field position to field position, but the batting order must stay the same.
- Outfielders must be behind the 150-foot markings (cones or paint) until the ball is hit. If the outfielder is closer than the 150-foot line and makes a play, all runners are considered safe. (65-foot diamond) You are allowed to bring in a "5th man" into the infield only when a male is up to bat. The "5th man" can only be a male and has to remain in the dirt area on the infield at all times. A "5th man" is not allowed when a girl is up to bat.

Any ball that is thrown into the dugouts or that hits equipment (bats, gloves, etc.) near the dugouts will result in a dead ball. All runners shall advance one base. It is the responsibility of each team to make sure their equipment is inside the dugout and the dugout door is closed.

Home Run Rule

Each team may only hit three unassisted over-the-fence home runs per game. Any home runs after three will be a single, and all runners on base will advance one base regardless of being forced or not. This rule is in effect for all fields.

Pitching

- The ball must be delivered with perceptible arc and reach the height of at least 6 feet from the ground, while not exceeding a maximum of 12 feet from the ground.
- A strike is any ball between the batter's armpits and bottom of the kneecaps and over home plate.
- If a pitch hits any part of home plate or lands in front of the plate, it will be called a ball.
- A pitching net will be available for any pitcher who wishes to use one.

Hitting

- A batter begins their at-bat with a one-ball and one-strike count.
- A walk occurs when a pitcher throws three additional pitches outside of the strike zone (four balls total), none of which are swung at by the batter. The batter is awarded first base and all other runners on base will advance if they are forced. (See Walks section for additional notes.)
- If the batter earns two additional strikes (three total), either by a called strike, a missed swing, or a foul ball, they will be called out.
- Each batter will receive one "courtesy" foul when the count reaches two strikes. The batter may foul one additional pitch off with no penalty. Any additional foul following the courtesy foul will result in strike three and an out will be recorded on the batter.
- If the batter swings and tips a pitched ball behind them, the ball must travel above the batter's head in order for an out to be recorded by a catch. Any ball that is foul-tipped backwards but does not travel above the batter's head will be a foul ball.
- If a batted ball strikes the pitcher directly (or the pitching net if being used), either on the ground or in the air, the batter shall be ruled out, the ball is dead, and no runners may advance.
- If the pitcher moves into the path of the ball (e.g., the pitcher sticks his arm out and attempts to catch a batted ball which otherwise would have gone past them) and is hit, no penalty will be enforced.
- If the pitcher should have been able to avoid the ball with reasonable effort (umpire's discretion), no penalty will be enforced.
- If the pitcher catches or fields the ball, the play remains live and no penalty will be enforced.

Walks

If the defensive team walks a male batter with a female up to bat next, he is awarded second base automatically, and if there are two outs the female batter will have the option to walk or bat.

Running

- Runners must stay within the base line or their established base path unless they are avoiding a defensive player attempting to field a batted ball.
- Defensive players must stay out of the base line unless they possess the ball and are attempting to tag the runner or field a batted (not thrown) ball. If the fielder obstructs a runner (umpire's discretion) under any other circumstances, the runner shall be ruled safe.

Example: A batter hits the ball on the ground to the third baseman. The third baseman throws the ball to the first baseman in an attempt to make the force out. The throw is off target and the first baseman crosses over the base path to catch the ball, which forces the batter/runner to slow down (or alter their path) to avoid collision. The runner shall be ruled safe.

- Fielders attempting to make an out by way of tagging the base may have their foot on the base but must lean out of the way of the baseline.

- Players may run through first base. If a player makes an attempt (umpire's discretion) to go to 2nd base, he or she can then be tagged out.
- Stealing is not allowed.
- All hitters must drop the bat before they reach first base. If a hitter throws the bat while hitting, intentionally or unintentionally, he or she will be ruled out.
- There are two bases at first base. The base that is in foul territory is only used for the batter running to first base on a close play in which he/she would be running through the base. On any close play at first base, the runner is required to touch the foul (safety) base or should be ruled out. The base that is in fair territory is used for the defense. Once the batter successfully reaches first base, he or she uses the fair base from then on.
- A runner leading off a base when the ball is hit will immediately be called out. The play is called dead, all other runners on base will return to their occupied base at the start of the play, and the pitch will not be counted. The count on the batter will remain what the count was prior to the pitch.
- After a hit ball is caught, runners must tag their original base before proceeding to the next base (i.e., tag up). A player can tag up as soon as the fielder touches the ball (not necessarily catches the ball). If the runner has not left the base, he/she may simply run to the next base without a tag-up.
- All ties go to the runner.
- One base on an overthrow that is thrown over the fence. Once the ball goes out of play, the umpire will judge where the runners are. If the runner is more than halfway to the next base, they have earned that base already. Therefore, their "extra base" would be the next base after that. Once the runner earns their one base, the play is over.
- If two runners are on the same base at the same time, the fielder has a choice to tag either runner with the ball. That runner is out and the other may stay on that base.
- If a runner intentionally touches or stops the ball, the play ends and the runner is called out. A runner must make an effort to get out of the way of a hit ball. All other runners will be sent back to the base they earned at the time of the infraction.
- Pinch runners are allowed to be used one time per inning without penalty. The pinch runner must be the last player an out was made on of the same gender as the player being substituted for.
- If a second pinch runner is used during the same inning, the player being substituted for must sit out the remainder of the game.
- A runner must attempt to get out of the way of a hit ball.
- If the runner is hit by a ball in fair territory, he or she is out.
- If a runner is on third base, is not forced to run, makes an attempt to avoid the batted ball, but is hit with the ball in foul territory, he is safe and the play is dead and the ball is foul.

Scoring

- There is a 9-run limit per inning. After the 9th run crosses the plate, the inning ends regardless of the number of outs.
- **Exception:** If a team is behind in the last inning.

Playoffs

- At the conclusion of the regular season, a single-elimination playoff will take place between the top eight (if available) teams per division.
- Seeds are determined by points earned.
- If multiple teams have the same point total, the tie will be broken by the head-to-head regular-season game result if possible. If not, the team with the highest combined Strength of Schedule per-game average score (total points of all opponents played divided by total number of games) + Quality of Win

average score (total points of all opponents defeated divided by total number of wins) will be used to break the tie.

Game Rescheduling

- A team may request a maximum of two rescheduled games per season.
- If the opponent of the team requesting the reschedule agrees, the game will be added to a future week either prior to normal game start times (10 a.m. is the normal start time; the makeup game would be at 9 a.m. or earlier) or at the end of the day after all other games have been played, whichever is more convenient for the opponent.
- If the opponent does not agree to reschedule the game, the team requesting the reschedule will forfeit.

Umpiring

- CSSC will provide an umpire for the games.
- The CSSC umpire has the final call on every play.
- The umpire will keep the official score. Both teams are required to keep their own scorebook in case of questions about lineups or the score.
- During playoffs and championships there will be two umpires per game.
- If there is any problem with an umpire or a player on the field, you can contact the league at charlestonssc@gmail.com.

Forfeits

- If a team does not have the minimum number of players by 10 minutes after game time, they will forfeit. If a team contacts Charleston Sports and Social Club prior to the start of the game, no penalty will be assessed. This will allow the opposing coach to inform his team of the forfeit.
- The first time a team no-shows without notification ahead of time, they will be issued a warning. The second time a team no-shows, they will be removed from the league for the season.

Other Rules

- No alcohol is permitted at any field.
- No parking on the field.
- Please police yourself.
- Coaches are responsible for controlling their team. We are all adults.
- Coaches are responsible for keeping track of batting order, innings, and score in their scorebook.
- Sliding is only allowed in competitive vs. competitive team games.
- The umpire has the final ruling.
- No metal cleats.
- **All contact must be avoided at all times.**

Ejections

Ejections may result from: metal cleats, unsportsmanlike conduct, or arguing with the umpires.

- If you are ejected, your team will play the remainder of the game down a fielder, will take an automatic out every time your spot is reached in the batting order, and you cannot play in the following week's game.

Teams

- All players must be 21 years of age or older.
- You must wear the CSSC shirt provided and be a paid player. You will receive the drinks special at the bar only if you are wearing your team shirt.
- During playoffs and championships, all your players must have the correct CSSC shirt and have their name on the roster; if not, they will not be able to play.

Roster

1. **Number of Players.** There is no maximum number of players allowed on a team roster. All players must be listed on the roster and sign the CSSC waiver to participate.
2. **Adding Players.** Players may be added at any time until the final tee-shirt order date. After that time, until the third week of play, a team may add players by purchasing an individual late-addition shirt (\$35 per shirt for teams of 12 or more players) or drop a player before it may add a player. The dropped player must provide his/her tee shirt to the added player. After the third week of play, team rosters are frozen. Teams must provide an updated roster to the league at the end of the third week. See the website for additional roster forms.

Uniform

3. **Tee Shirts.** The CSSC will provide each team with a tee shirt for all paid team members. All players must wear the CSSC tee shirt for each game.
- **Permitted Alterations:** Players may add their names, numbers, and other similar personal information to their tee shirt. Players may also add depictions of the American flag. Players' additions may not cover the CSSC or sponsor logo.
 - **Excluded Alterations:** Players may not add any corporate information to their tee shirts, including website addresses and/or company names. Players may not include any offensive materials on their tee shirts. CSSC has the exclusive right to determine whether additions are offensive.
 - **Penalty:** Players who do not wear the official CSSC tee shirt will be sidelined for that game unless the other team's captain or representative allows otherwise. Players who are caught exchanging shirts will also be sidelined, and if the player is not listed on the team roster, the team will forfeit the game. A team with players who violate the alteration guideline must purchase new CSSC shirts (\$35.00/shirt), and the team will forfeit all games until it has paid for the new shirts.

Please remember to support the sponsor bars!
Charleston Sports and Social Club