

NATIONAL LEAGUE RULES

- Spring 2024 -

A. GENERAL

The National League Committee (NLC) shall consist of a maximum of seven (7) members including its Chairman.

(Refer to "National League Committee Guidelines" for further detail). The National League consists of ratings: 7, 8 & 9. Central League consists of ratings: 4, 5 and 6. American League consists of ratings: 1, 2 and 3.

B. ORGANIZATIONS

1. The League will be composed of players from the Sun City West Softball Club only. The number of teams will be determined by the National League Committee. Selection of players to teams will follow National League Committee Guidelines for all sessions.
2. All National League team Managers must be approved by the National League Committee.
3. Team Managers are required to have access to a computer and Printer and possess reasonable computer skills, i.e. Send, Receive and Respond to emails or Send and Receive Text Messages.

C. UNIFORMS

1. The applicable club furnishes pants, shorts, belts and hats. Articles of uniforms are for league play only and not to be used for non-league/club activities. Team shirts are issued to players for use only during the session and are returned at the conclusion of the session. Alterations are not permitted except for temporary "tucks" for fit. All articles of uniform are the property of the club and will be returned by any player who resigns his membership. In support of our sponsors, shirts should be worn so the sponsor's name is clearly visible, **shirt tails tucked in.**

2. All Coaches, and Managers **Must** wear their team shirts.
In case of cold or inclement weather, protective clothing will be allowed over uniforms.

3. Uniforms are provided to identify individuals as teammates. Expressions of individuality are not encouraged and may be prohibited if deemed inappropriate by the NLC.

D. GAME RULES

1. GENERAL

a. The clock for the first game of the day will start with the first pitch. The clock shall be set at Fifty-Five (55) minutes. When the Game Clock expires, complete the current inning. Play one additional inning with 'Unlimited' scoring.

b. Maximum of seven (7) innings per game. Minimum of 5 innings.

c. Teams are limited to four (4) runs per inning except for the 7th inning (or last inning as determined by the Clock and signaled by the Scorer and Umpires), during which each team may score an unlimited number of runs.

2. MERCY RULES:

a. **Three (3) Run Rule (referred to as the "flip"):** If the visiting team is ahead by Three (3) runs or more after the last inning has been declared, the home team will clear the bases and continue to bat in the top of the last inning. If home team does not tie or go ahead, the game is over. If in the event the home team ties or goes ahead the visiting team will get their last at bat.

b. **Ten (10) Run Rule:** If either team is ahead by ten (10) or more runs at the end of six (6) innings, GAME OVER.

c. **Twelve (12) Run Rule:** If either team is ahead by twelve (12) or more runs at the end of five (5) innings, GAME OVER.

3. **TIE GAMES:** If score is tied after the final complete inning, each team will be credited with a ½ win.

4. **Canceled / Delayed Game:** Games may be canceled by the Game Umpire, Field Manager, N.L. Committee Member, or Softball Board Club Member, and in that order. If any game is canceled due to inclement weather or poor field conditions, all succeeding games at the field will be canceled. When part of the day's schedule is completed and the weather closes the field, completed games will NOT count for the record.

E. PLAYING RULES

1. Team Organization:

a. Each assigned team will consist of a minimum of eleven (11) and a maximum of 12 players. When more than eleven (11) players are assigned, all will bat and each player will play at least three (3) innings on defense, a Player may player chooses to play less. If a team has 11 or more roster players, substitutes are not allowed, unless the team needs a pitcher.

b. A tardy player who arrives before the team has batted through the batting order may play; player will bat at the bottom of the order and play any position. A tardy player who arrives after team has batted through the batting order **will not play**.

c. A **non-injured player** who leaves a game early for a Manager informed scheduled appointment when the game is more than 15 minutes late can be **Substituted** for with a like or less rated player.

d. A **non-injured** player leaving the game without his managers prior knowledge or with less than a sportsman's attitude will be declared an "out" each time they would have come to bat. During a game, **NO substitutions** are allowed for a non-injured player.

e. Teams can play with any number of roster players and subs as long as the total is at least nine (9). If a team has a maximum of twelve (12) in the line-up and a player leaves the game due to an injury, the player's

position in the lineup for future at bats will be bypassed with NO PENALTY and team will continue play with (11) players.

(i) **Exception:** If the injured player is the team's pitcher, and no other team player will pitch, the manager can choose to get a pitcher to substitute. Rules E.2.a., E.2.b. and E.2.c. apply.

2. Substitute Players: Substitute players are REQUIRED to be obtained from the sources and in the following order:

1. **First:** The published *player placement pool or sub pool player* listed on or appended to the roster.

2. **Second:** Regular Sub List

3. **Third:** The Bye Team: You are to call the Rated player you need. Asking if they can play a certain position you need.

4. **Fourth:** Any Team that has already played for the day.

a.) In the case of the first schedule game of the day pick from any team.

5. **Emergency:** where no qualified substitute player is available from any of the preceding sources, qualified substitutes player may be obtained from teams that play later that day.

a. Players rated as a seven (7) may only substitute for 7-Rated players. Players rated as eight (8) may only substitute for eights (8). Nine (9) rated players may substitute for anyone. If no 9's are available, 8-rated players with batting averages under .500 may be used. This rule also applies to pitchers.

b. **Pitchers:** Substitute pitchers may be obtained from Placement Pool, Sub Pool or any National League team, in accordance with the Rules.

To further clarify, substitute pitchers must have the same or lower Rating then the pitcher they are substituting for.

i.) **Exception:** If there are no other pitchers of equal or lower rating available then ANY National League Pitcher can pitch until one is obtained or to complete the game.

3. Injury Exception: An injured player may be replaced if team strength drops below eleven (11) players. Manager will select a replacement player from the stands (*from prior game if possible*). The selected replacement player must have same player rating, or lower, as the injured player. The replacement player will take the injured player's position in the team batting order.

a. **"No Show" Exception:** If a team has a player unexpectedly fail to show up for the first game of the day, managers may select any available player with the same or lower rating as the missing player.

4. Maximum Substitutions by a Player: All Players may **Play and Substitute** in 4 games per week playing as a Substitute only one (1) time for the same team per week. Player violation, that team plays without a substitute and take the out each time the player comes to bat.

5. Penalty for an Illegal substitution: If a player is identified as an illegal substitute per the substitution rules, that player will be removed from the game. The offending team

will continue to play minus the illegal player. The position will remain open in the lineup and an out will be recorded each time that "position" is scheduled to bat. Managers may call in advance to obtain substitute players.

- a. Substitute players may be placed anywhere in the lineup, unless the substitute is replacing an injured player. In that situation Rule B.2 applies (*injury exception*).
- b. If two equally rated players desire/agree to share a position, they may ask the National League Committee to treat them as one for roster and substitution purposes. Players so designated will alternate by inning on defense and at bats on offense.

3. Courtesy Runners: National League Players have a right to run for themselves. CR's will be allowed to run if asked for by the player as needed in an At Bat-to-At Bat situation. The Batter should request a runner before entering the 'On Deck' circle.

- a. **Courtesy Runners may 'RUN ONCE PER INNING'.**
- b. Effective April 12th 2024, Courtesy Runners *from Home Plate* are **NOT allowed!**
- c. A courtesy runner, whose turn at bat comes while on base, will be removed from the bases and take their turn at bat. The player who was replaced by the courtesy runner on base will be out. The out occurs on the bases. A SECOND courtesy runner cannot be substituted.
- d. A courtesy runner may not run for another courtesy runner.
 1. The Pitcher running as a Pitcher **Must** be replaced on base after 2 Outs.
 2. If a Pitcher has pitched his final inning the pitcher **may** remain as a base runner.
 3. If a Pitcher runs as a Courtesy Runner the pitcher may NOT be replaced.

4. Balls /Strikes: A legal pitch with an arc between six (6) feet to twelve (12) feet, that touches any part of the plate or mat extension, is a strike.

5. Base Running

- a. No infield fly rule.
- b. If a defensive player at 1st is pulled into foul territory as a result of a bad throw, the defensive player can also touch orange base and record an out prior to the batter/runner reaching 1st base.
- c. **Double 1st base: When a play is being made on the batter/runner, runner must touch the orange part of the bag. If he touches the white he shall be called out by the umpire. To avoid a collision, offense and defensive players may use either base, white or orange.**
- d. **Runner from Home Base: Runner Line:** A line that is on first base side and extended four (4) ft. from the fence and aligned with fence marker. Used by a runner who is running for a batter (batter is listed as needing courtesy runner on score sheet). Line treated same as any other base as far as leaving the base early. Line placed three (3) feet behind the foul line.

e. **Sliding and Diving:** Page 51: 8.6 SUSSA

f. **Contact:** Runners must avoid unnecessary contact with a defensive player who is fielding the ball and must veer out of the base path to avoid contact. A defensive player may not block a runner when he is not fielding the ball.
Page: 5.

g. **Commitment Line:** If the runner has passed the commitment line (twenty 20 ft. from home base) and continues to run on the foul line and interferes with the catcher taking a throw at the original home plate, a dead ball shall be declared and the runner is out. The scoring line is placed eight (8) ft. from the home plate and base runners should be using the guiding line from the foul line to the scoring line to avoid contact with defensive player. Ref. 1.15 Page 3 also 8.8.

h. Runners must cross the scoring line with their foot down on the ground and beyond or on the line located adjacent to the right-handed batter's box in order to be safe at home.

i. Runners tagged by the defensive team after crossing commitment line will be safe.

j. If the runner touches/crosses home plate, or the batter's box, including the lines, the runner will be out and the ball remains live.

k. Defensive players cannot decoy the base runners into thinking a play is being made on him or her to impede progress.

6. Pitchers Box (Page 34, 6.6 A&E)

7. **Mandated Pitchers Mask:** All pitchers will wear a protective face mask while pitching.

- a. Failure to wear the protective mask will result in forfeiture of the game.
- b. It is recommended that the pitcher wear any protective safety equipment they choose in addition to the face mask, or they may utilize the "Pitcher Screen", see 8 below.
- c. Use of the pitchers Screen DOES NOT Replace/Diminish the mandated use of a face mask.

8. Pitcher Screen: (Optional)

Sun City West Softball clubs will provide a pitcher's screen to be used by the pitcher should they choose to do so. Should an opposing team pitcher not want to use the screen the team using the screen is required to remove screen from the mound and place along fence by the on deck circle in a timely manner.

a. The use of the pitcher's screen is intended to provide protection for the pitcher without encumbering personal protection devices and the delay encountered for the pitcher to put on and take off protection devices)

b. Pitchers using the traditional screen location are required to step behind the screen immediately after releasing the ball. Failure to step behind the screen can be penalized by the umpire declaring the pitch a ball no matter where it is located or if it was fouled off. Umpire will warn the pitcher once before calling a ball.

c. Pitchers who do not consistently use the screen to protect themselves may have this option individually revoked by the National League Committee.

i. When the Pitchers Screen option is chosen: The edge of the screen closest to the pitcher will be aligned with the outside edge of the pitching rubber, forward of the closest rubber to the plate a min. of 4 ft. but no more than 8 ft.

d. A batted ball hitting the screen is a dead ball. No strike on the batter.

e. Balls thrown into the screen are live.

f. Pitchers can be defensive and field any ball they can. If a pitcher is hit with a batted ball, live ball, no penalty.

9. Protests /Appeals: (See 1.1 SSUSA)

10. Ejections: (Page 27 4.8 - SSUSA)

11. Warm-Up Pitches: (Page 36 6.12 SSUSA)

For the first inning five (5) warm-up pitches are allowed. For the remaining innings, two (2) warm-up pitches will be allowed. Five (5) warm-up pitches will be allowed when a pitcher relieves another. Infield warm-up will be discontinued after the second inning.

12. Equipment:

Only USA or NSA bats, rated 1.20 or less, may be used in National League play. Bats rated at 1.20 or less which were previously ASA approved may be used provided they are not on a banned bats list. No banned bats will be allowed during National League play. All National League ladies may use a Senior/Tournament bat. Bat's must MARKED with the designated colored tape by the handle.

13. Batting Out of Order: (Page 39, 7.1.d SSUSA)

A. PLAYER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Absentees:

Managing a team is a difficult job requiring the full cooperation of all the team members. If you are going to be late or miss a game, notify your manager well ahead of time. Arrive at the field at least thirty (30) minutes before your game to loosen up properly and thus avoid unnecessary muscle injuries. *A player who misses five (5) session games will be assigned to the placement/sub pool.*

In addition, any player absent from league play for one year or more must go through the Green Team and be re-rated.

2. Umpires and Scorekeepers:

The Chief Umpire or the Umpire Committee will assign umpires. Team Managers will assign scorekeepers. It will be the responsibility of the players so assigned to arrange for their own replacement if they are unavailable. *Umpiring and Scorekeeping responsibilities take precedence over any request to substitute as a player on another team.*

a. Alcoholic beverages are not to be consumed while working games.

b. Umpires should consult with each other on protest or appeal calls.

c. Coaches/Players MUST NOT attempt to make the calls for Base Running i.e., Safe or Out.

3. Field Maintenance: The home team is responsible for preparing the field before the first game and securing the field after the last game.

(BEFORE LEAVING FIELD MAKE SURE ALL BUILDINGS ARE LOCKED)

4. Resignations: If a player quits a team, then that player becomes ineligible to play in the league for the remainder of the session. A player cannot switch leagues until the end of each session.) Players are responsible for notifying the league if they are going to be inactive for a period or resigning their membership from the league. In case of injuries, notify league of your return date.

5. Player Registration:

Players are responsible for Registering Online with a link provided

at: <http://azsrssoftball.com> or received in an email their intention and availability to play in next session.

6. Alcohol:

Scorer, Alcoholic Beverages may not be consumed while Playing, Scoring, Announcing or Umpiring a game. No Alcoholic beverages in the Dug-Out.

7. Artificial Turf: Sunflower seeds, chewing tobacco and gum are not allowed on Liberty Field.

8. Sub & Placement Pools:

The Sub pool is for players who request to be on the sub pool.

The Placement pool is for: new players (green team), players returning after five (5) absences, and players arriving after the first four (4) games of the season. Managers may request players from the Placement pool as follows: The manager needs to contact the National League Committee person immediately “after” the player has a fifth absence. A bye or Rain-Outs do not count as a missed game. The NL Chairmen or Committee member, in case of more than one manager needing a replacement player. The sequence for manager selection would be determined by the actual game date and game time the player missed a fifth game. If these two factors were identical, managers would flip a coin to determine the order of Placement Player selection.

The National League Chairman will let the manager know who the new player will be.

9. Safety Protocol: All players must follow all safety protocol rules as mandated and published by the Sun City West softball club. Violations of those rules may affect a player’s ability to participate in games.

a.) **STEP-OFF Rule:** Players may request to step-off 1st and 3rd to avoid being hit by a batted ball. Players are considered to be in FAIR territory and as if standing on the base. They may not be tagged out by a Basemen caught ball.