

SCW CENTRAL LEAGUE RULES

January 12th, 2024

GENERAL: The Central League will be governed by SSUSA rules except as modified. (If needed, use the USA/ASA rules for clarification of SSUSA rules only).

ORGANIZATION

The Central League will be composed of players from the Sun City West Softball Club who have received a player rating of 4, 5, or 6.

UNIFORMS

1. The club furnishes pants, shorts, jerseys, and caps/woman's visors. Articles of uniforms are for league or club play only and are not to be used for non-league/club activities. Alterations are not permitted except for temporary "tucks" for fit. Any permanent alterations will result in a charge to the player. Caps/visors, pants, and shorts will be replaced on an exchange basis only, if worn out or damaged by play. All articles of uniform are the property of the club. Any player who resigns his/her membership must return jersey's pants, and shorts, unless purchased by the player.
2. In support of our sponsors a full league issued uniform consisting of cap/visor, pants, shorts, and team jersey must be worn so the sponsor's name is clearly visible, and shirttails tucked in. The Central League Committee may allow an exception to the tuck rule if tucking the shirt hides information that the sponsors wish to be visible. Except for the umpires, all players, coaches, and managers must wear their league issued uniforms. In case of cold or inclement weather, additional clothing will be allowed. However, an injured, non-playing roster player is not required to wear the league issued pants to be a base coach.
3. Players will not be allowed to play unless dressed in their properly worn, league issued uniforms. However, players will be given one warning by the umpire to immediately fix the uniform problem or be removed from the game. The team will be charged with an out each time the player would have to bat. The team will continue to play minus the removed player. The respective Board will be notified of repeated offenses and be dealt with accordingly. This rule is for the benefit of the sponsors, for proper newspaper/team pictures and for the professionalism of the SCS.

GAME RULES

1. General

Each game will be 7 innings or a 65-minute time limit.

If time runs out, the current inning will be completed and one more 'Open Inning' will be played regardless of inning number and will be completed.

If a frost delay occurs, game times will be shortened as follows:

*A 30-minute delay will result in each game being a 60-minute time limit.

*A 60-minute delay will result in each game being a 55-minute time limit.

The first game will start no later than its prescribed time from the schedule, unless otherwise indicated. At the designated time, the scorekeeper will start the clock whether teams are ready or not.

Teams are limited to four (4) runs per inning except for the last inning in which each team can score unlimited numbers of runs.

2. Flip-Flop Rule

Games will be 7 innings, or the time limit, whichever comes first. If the visiting team is ahead by five (5) or more runs, the open inning will be reversed. The home team bats first and the visiting team bats if needed.

3. Mercy Rule

If a team is ahead by 12 runs after 5 innings the game will be over. 4 1/2 innings if the home team is ahead.

If a team is ahead by 10 runs after 6 innings the game will be over. 5 1/2 innings if the home team is ahead.

4. Cancelled or Delayed Games

In the event games need to be canceled, the decision shall be made by the field manager, Central League Committee members, or a club board member in that order. When any game is cancelled due to inclement weather, succeeding games at the field will be cancelled. The person cancelling the games must contact all the managers of subsequent games at the field to notify them of the cancellation so they can call their players. Games that had been completed prior to cancellation will not count in the standings.

In the event games are delayed due to frost or other temporary conditions, the decision to delay games will be made by the Field Manager, Central League Committee member, or Club Board member, in that order. If games are not cancelled and only delayed the field manager has the discretion to determine how long the games are delayed before starting the days' schedule.

5. Extra Innings

In the event of a tie game following the seventh inning or last time limit inning one extra inning will be played. Each team starts each inning with a runner on second base and one out. This would involve the last batter of the previous inning whose turn at bat had been completed, assuming a position on second base. No substitute or courtesy runner may replace him until he has reached third base. Important: If the last batter out cannot continue to play because of injury, illness, etc., he will be declared out and the next previous batter will be the tie-breaker runner. Teams will be limited to four runs in the extra innings.

PLAYING RULES

1. Team Organization

Prior to the start of each new Central League season team managers shall gather to conduct a team draft. Each team will consist of 11 players, including a player/manager and shall have a predetermined equal number of 4, 5, and 6 rated players. However, any central league member may request to participate and remain active in the club as a manager only. In the event current managers and/or members wishing to manage outnumber available teams, the determination of who shall manage, during the upcoming season, will be at the discretion of the league committee.

The declared team manager shall be present for the draft process and should solely be responsible for the drafting of their team, unless the Central League Committee determines they have a valid reason for not being in attendance. An acceptable absence may include but not be limited to unexpected illness, covid, bereavement, and/or family emergencies. Absence due to playing in another softball game or tournament will not be deemed a valid reason. The manager must declare in advance that they will be absent from the draft. The committee shall review the reason for the absence and determine if the manager may retain the option to draft via cell phone or if they will be disqualified as a manager.

Any 4 or 5 rated players may request to be entered into the A.L. draft and any 7 or 8 N.L. rated player may request to enter the C.L. draft. A request does not guarantee the requestor will be drafted into the higher league.

Following the Central League draft process any player not drafted will be rerated as a 7. That player has the options to do one of the following:

- Declare for the National League Draft.
- Declare their intention to validate their current rating by participating in a Green Team evaluation.

If the player chooses to attempt to validate their current rating the Green Team evaluators shall determine the correct rating determined by their assessment. The player shall have the following options based on the Green Team evaluation.

- If the Green Team validates that the player should still be a 6-rated player than the player may request to be put on the Central League substitution and/or the placement list.
- If the Green Team determines that the player should be a 7-rated player than the player may request that the National League put them on the substitution and/or the placement list.

In the event of extenuating circumstances, at the discretion of the committee, an undrafted 6 rated player may retain their rating in lieu of attending the green team.

Both lineups are official after the first pitch of the game is thrown.

If a player is late at game time, the team manager has two options:

1. Choose an available substitute who is officially in the line-up once the first pitch is thrown. The chosen substitute must be eligible to play in the game based on the rules related to substitutions. If the late player arrives after the first pitch, he/she may NOT enter the game.

OR:

2. Play initially with 10 players and wait for the late player to arrive. The late player may enter the game upon arrival. If the late player has not arrived for his/her turn at bat, an out will be declared.

After the initial pitch of the game, there can only be a substitute for an injured player.

A non-injured player who leaves the game early for any reason will be declared an "out" each time he/she would have come to bat. No substitution allowed for a non-injured player.

Teams must have a minimum of (9) players including substitutes to avoid a forfeit.

2. Substitutes

In the event a team needs a substitute for a given game the manager shall inform the sub coordinator of the missing players rating and shall be assigned a same rated player from the sub list. In the event a substitute of similar rating is not available on the sub list the team shall be assigned a substitute from the active player roster. The manager may request an infielder or outfielder but may not request by specific position. Last minute day of game substitutes are allowed to be acquired by a manager, The manager shall inform the opposing team as to the substitute prior to the game and as soon as possible following the game inform the substitute coordinator of the substitution.

Roster and Sub players can sub three (3) times per team per session.

Subs need to be the same rating or lower.

Roster and Sub players may play three (3) times per week, with a maximum of two times per day.

Emergency Pitcher - During the game should the pitcher become sick or injured a replacement pitcher can be obtained from the stands. Player of any rating can sub as a pitcher only, however, only two 4-rated players may occupy the lineup at any time. Replacement pitcher is exempt from the substitute rule for the game.

Once the game has started a player who is injured or has an emergency may be replaced if the team strength drops below eleven (11). Select a player from the stands. The selected player does not have to count this game as it relates to the substitution rule. The replacement player bats in the same batting position of the player who has left the game.

Penalty for an Illegal Substitution - If, after the game has started, an illegal player is detected, the illegal player will be removed from the game and the offending team will play the remainder of the game one player short. No substitute will be allowed for the illegal player in the batting order. Each time the illegal player would have batted will be recorded as an out. If an illegal substitute is detected after the game is completed, there will be no penalty to the offending team.

3. Courtesy Runners.

Courtesy runners can be used from any base 1st, 2nd, or 3rd but not from home plate.

A modified SSUSA rule on courtesy runners will be used. A player may courtesy run 3 times per game. Once the courtesy runner touches the impacted base, it becomes official, and the courtesy runner cannot be replaced. You may only run once per inning as a courtesy runner. A courtesy runner whose turn at bat comes while he/she is on base will be out. The runner will be removed from the base and come to bat. A second courtesy runner cannot be substituted at this time. A courtesy runner may not run for an existing courtesy runner except for an incurred injury or replacement of a courtesy runner pitcher after 2 outs. If a player has a courtesy runner, he/she can't be a courtesy runner in the same inning. A courtesy runner who is discovered to be illegal (more than 3 times courtesy running) while he/she is on base will be out. If discovered after he/she is no longer on the base or has scored and prior to the next pitch the runner shall be declared out.

If a runner is injured and must leave the game, a replacement runner may replace the injured runner. This shall not count toward the three times a player may enter the game as a courtesy runner.

If the current game pitcher reaches any base with two outs or is on base when the second out occurs, a courtesy runner must be inserted for the pitcher. This shall not count toward the three times a player may enter the game as a courtesy runner.

4. Batter's Box

The batter must have at least some portions of both feet on or inside of the lines of the batter's box at the start of the pitch. A batter who steps out of the batter's box at any time during the pitch and then hits the ball fair, or foul shall be called out. "Steps out" means touching the ground completely outside of the lines of the batter box.

5. Catcher's Box

The catcher's box in SCW is an 8 1/2 foot by 10-foot area directly behind the Batter's box, to which the Catcher is restricted. The lines are considered being 'Within the Catcher's box.' At least some portion of both feet of the Catcher must be within the Catcher's Box.

6. Base Running

Double first base: When a play is being made on the batter/runner, runner must touch the orange bag. If runner touches the white bag, he/she will be called out by the umpire. There is no appeal by the defense team. The defensive player must touch the white bag to record an out. If the defensive player at 1st is pulled into foul territory because of a bad throw, the batter/runner and the fielder can use either the white or orange bag in this situation.

A runner on first or third base may, for their own safety and after notifying the umpire, step off the bag. The runner must step off the base in a straight line toward and up to the fence. The runner cannot interfere with any hit or thrown ball and if they do it is considered a dead ball and they are out. The runner must retouch the base before they can advance. Their step off position is considered an extension of the base and therefore they can't be put out on any caught ball.

Sliding or Diving

Sliding or diving, when approaching a base is not allowed. Sliding or diving upon returning to a base after passing or touching it will be permitted.

Avoiding a collision

A runner must make every effort to avoid colliding with opposing players while running the bases. If in the umpire's judgement a runner misses the base to avoid a collision, the runner will not be called out. (see rule 8.6)

If in the judgement of the umpire the runner fails to avoid a collision with a defensive player involved in the play the ball will be declared dead and the runner called out. All base runners, except the batter will be returned to their previous base unless forced to advance. In the umpires judgement the runners collision with the defensive player involved in the play negates a double play, the umpire may award the second out.

b. Commitment Line - Once a runner's foot or any other part of the body touches the ground on or past this line, the runner is committed to advancing to the scoring line. Once both feet have touched beyond the line he can no longer be tagged out. (Rule 8.8).

c. Scoring Line - A base runner's foot or any other part of the body touching on or past the scoring line prior to the ball being received by a defensive player touching the strike-mat results in the scoring of a run.

d. Crossing or Touching Strike Matt or Batter's Box - The runner shall be called out if he/she touches or crosses over any portion of the strike mat or the batter's box. Ball remains alive.

e. Running to First Base - The batter runner is out if they are running inside the first base line and in the umpire's judgement, they interfere with the fielder receiving the ball at first.

f. Foul Tip - Any foul tip, unless it is a third strike foul, must go over the batter's head for a catch to be called an out.

7. Pitcher's Box

A pitcher's box consisting of the area from the front of the pitcher's plate, extending back 10 feet and 24 inches wide will be used. The pitcher must release the ball after coming to a complete stop with one foot or both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate or within the pitcher's box. One foot must remain in contact with the plate/box when the pitch is released with an underhand motion. A step simultaneous with the release of the ball may be taken in any direction with the free foot. The pitcher must be facing the batter when delivering the pitch.

If the sun presents a problem to the batter in the early morning, the pitcher must move to the side requested, no more than 3 feet outside the pitcher's box.

Pitchers are not allowed to quick pitch. A quick pitch is a pitch made by the pitcher with an obvious attempt to catch the batter unprepared. The penalty is no pitch.

8. Pitcher's Face Mask

SSUSA 2014 Playing Rules Amendment.

PITCHER'S MANDATED MINIMUM SAFETY EQUIPMENT.

Pitchers are required to wear a protective face mask while pitching.

Pitchers are recommended, but not required, to wear additional protective safety equipment, comprised of heart/chest protection and shin guards.

If a team does not have a player who will pitch with a pitcher's mask, that team forfeits the game.

9. Challenges

Challenges/Protests of rule violation interpretation will be settled on the field between the umpires and the two managers. Challenges or protests are defined under rule 1.55 of the Official Senior Softball Rulebook.

Only managers can request an umpire conference to provide assistance on disputed/judgment calls. The request will be honored at the umpires' discretion.

An appeal play on which an umpire may make not make a decision until requested by a manager, coach or player. See rule 1.1 Official Senior Softball Rulebook for types of appeal.

10. Ejections

An umpire or Central League Committee person will eject a player who threatens or uses abusive language directly toward an umpire, player, or spectator. The umpire or Central League Committee person ejecting a player must submit a written report to the Central League Committee Chairperson within 24 hours. If the ejection violation is determined to be flagrant, the player must leave the softball complex. An ejected player is automatically suspended from playing in any games, from the time of their ejection until conclusion of their next regularly scheduled game. Suspension shall be redefined as a player being suspended from all league activities including but not limited to playing in a game, umpiring, scoring, announcing, spectating, special events, practice, etc.

If a player refuses to leave the field / softball complex the player will be suspended for two or more games, and his/her team shall forfeit the current game. Should a player attack an umpire, player, or spectator, the Central League Committee will suspend the player from further play pending a decision on disciplinary action. Copies of the action taken must be forwarded to the Sun City West Club President

Grievance – Should a player disagree with the decision of the Central League Committee they have the right to appeal to their respective Club Board President.

11. Warm-Up Pitches

Start of the game each pitcher will be allowed 5 warm-up pitches.

At the beginning of each inning, three (3) warm – up pitchers or one (1) minute whichever comes first. Five (5) warm – up pitches will be allowed when a pitcher relieves another. Infield warm – up will be for each inning until the umpire calls balls in.

The umpire has the authority to limit or discontinue warm-up pitches.

12. Equipment

No banned bats (see USA/ASA banned bat list) will be allowed during Central League play. Pitcher's screen is not allowed in Central League games.

13. Batting Out of Order

The violation may be brought to the attention of the umpire by the opposing manager or by any other individual involved in the game. The umpire will then verify the violation with the scorekeeper.

If the violation is declared during an at-bat, the correct batter will replace the current batter and assume the current balls and strikes count. If the violation is declared after the batter reaches a base, a dead ball will be called, and runners will return to their previous base(s). The player who should have batted will be declared "out", and the player who batted out of order will return to the plate with a new starting count of balls and strikes.

14. Home Runs

Any fair ball hit over the fence will count as a home run. The batter and all runners may exit the field as the ball is now considered dead (hit and sit).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PLAYERS

1. Absentees or declares they will miss 6 games

A player who misses six (6) games during the session will be replaced by a placement list player of equal rating. The replaced player will be put on the sub list and at the bottom of the placement list. If the manager of the team losing a player wishes, he/she can replace that player with a lower rated player from the placement list. If a lower rated player is so chosen, the rating of that player will be increased to match that of the departing player for the remainder of that session.

Any player who will miss the first four (4) games of the session is not eligible for the draft and will be placed on the sub and placement lists.

Any player who is subject to and impacted by this rule has the right to petition the Central League Committee to receive an exception to the rule due to special circumstances. By majority vote the committee may grant the exception.

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, Scorekeeper, and Scoreboard Operators

Assignments of umpires, scorekeepers, and scoreboard operators will be scheduled by the respective assignors.

The Central League umpire roster will be comprised of dues-paying members of the Sun City West Softball Club.

3. Field Maintenance

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

4. Resigning

If a player voluntarily quits a team, he/she will be out of the League for the rest of the session.

5. Bat Standards/Restrictions/Penalties

The Central League uses bat standards approved by the SCW Softball Club.

A bat is considered altered when the physical characteristics of a legal bat have been changed. Anything done to a bat to enhance the performance of a bat is illegal. Inserting material inside the bat, shaving the bat, applying excessive tape (more than 2 layers) to the bat grip, or painting the bat other than at the top or bottom for identification purposes are examples of altering a bat. Exceptions: knob grips/cones, colored tape for identification purposes, address labels, or friction tape are not considered altering a bat.

Any umpire, club board member, or any member of the American, Central, or National League Committee have the right to inspect any bat that they have "reason to believe" has been altered. If there is "probable cause" the person must surrender his/her bat for inspection. If the bat is suspect, then the bat may be digitally x-rayed for the alterations.

Any player refusing to surrender his/her bat for inspection will be suspended from play immediately, the player will remain suspended from all play until such time that an inspection of the bat in question has been made. If the bat has been determined to be altered the player must appear before the Board of the club they belong to for disciplinary action.

Any player found to have used an illegal or altered bat is subject to suspension from our league for up to one (1) year. Flagrant or more than one offense is subject to further punishment.

Any player found to be using an illegal or altered bat during a game. The following rule applies: if the bat is found prior to batting, the bat is removed from the game at that time. If the bat is found after the player bats, the batter is out and all runners return to the base they were at prior to the at bat.

6. Alcohol/Disruptive Behavior

Alcoholic Beverages may not be consumed while playing, umpiring, announcing or scorekeeping a game.

An individual or individuals who have deemed to be causing a disruption while in attendance at league softball games will be given a warning. Any further disruptions will be reported to the SCW Board President for further disciplinary action.

7. Artificial Turf

Sunflower seeds, chewing tobacco and gum are not allowed on Liberty Field.

8. Replacement Pool

The Replacement pool is for players who request to be on the placement pool, new players (green team), players returning after six (6) absences, and players arriving after the first four (4) games of the season.

Managers may request players from the replacement pool as follows:

The manager needs to contact the Central League Committee Chairman immediately “after” the player has a sixth absence and/ or declares he will miss six. A bye or rain out does not count as a missed game. The committee chairman concurs on the sequence of loss in case more than one manager needs a replacement player. The sequence for manager selection would be determined by the actual game date and game time the player missed a sixth game. If these two factors were identical, managers would flip a coin to determine the order.

The Central League committee 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.

In the interest of player safety, any player suffering a head trauma, either defensively or offensively, shall be removed from the game, except for those wearing a protective helmet.