

**SUN CITIES SENIOR SOFTBALL LEAGUE**  
**NATIONAL LEAGUE RULES**

**New NLC dated 10-12-2017**

**The League will be governed by SS-USA rules except as modified.**

**(If needed use ASA rule book for clarification of SS-USA rules)**

**A. General**

The National League Committee (NLC) shall consist of a maximum of six (6) members including the Chairman and/or an information technology specialist. A minimum two (2) Sun City West and two (2) Sun City National League players will serve as Committee Members and represent equally managers and players. (Refer to "National League Committee Guidelines" for further detail).

**B. Organizations**

The League will be composed of players from the Sun City West Softball Club and the Sun City Softball Club. The combined membership is referred to as the Sun Cities Softball Club. 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.

**C. Uniforms**

The applicable club furnishes pants, shorts, 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, shirttails tucked in.

All players, coaches, and managers should wear their team shirt. In case of cold or inclement weather, protective clothing will be allowed over uniforms.

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 at the designated time regardless of whether the teams are ready or not. The clock shall be set at sixty (55) minutes. End of play will be conditional on the number of games scheduled for the day.

1. 5 Game Day Schedule:

When time expires the inning in progress will be completed and one more inning will be played.

2. 6 or 7 Game Day Schedule:

When time expires the inning in progress will be completed and Game Over. The final inning's run limit must be equal. (Such as; 4 or unlimited, see C. below)

Managers and umpires have the responsibility to expedite play at all times.

Stalling is not tolerated.

B. Maximum of seven (7) innings per game except as discussed below under Mercy Rules 2-A, 2-B, and Tie Game 3.

C. Teams are limited to four (4) runs per inning except for the 7th inning (or last inning as determined by the umpires). In which each team can score an unlimited number of runs. Play in extra innings reverts to the four (4) run per inning rule.

2. Mercy Rule

A. 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 7th 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 last at bat. If tied after 7th inning and more than three (3) minutes are left on the clock the visiting team will bat first in the eighth (8) inning.

B. 10 Run Rule

If either team is ahead by ten (10) or more runs at the end of (5) innings, GAME OVER. If home team is ahead by ten (10) or more after 4 ½ Or 5 1/2 innings, GAME OVER.

3. Tie Games

If score is tied after the final complete inning, and the time has expired, each team will be credited with a 1/2 win. If the score is tied after the final (7th) inning and there are three (3) or more minutes left on the clock, only one extra (8th) inning will be played. Each team will start succeeding eighth (8th) inning with the last batter on second base. No substitute runner allowed except rule E-3, "Courtesy Runner".

4. Cancelled / Delayed Games

Games shall only be cancelled by a Field Manager, N. L. Committee Member, or Club Board Member in that order. When any game is cancelled due to inclement weather or poor field conditions, succeeding games at the field will be cancelled. When part of the day's schedule is completed and the weather closes the field,

completed games will count for the record. A completed game is any game five (5) innings or more; four and a half (4 1/2) innings if home team is ahead. In the event games are delayed due to frost or other temporary conditions the games will be played after the delay and a reduction of innings played may be implemented if the delay is more than thirty (30) minutes. A reduction of innings must be decided by a member of the National League Committee.

## **E. PLAYING RULES**

### **1. Team Organizations**

A. Each assigned team will consist of a minimum of eleven (11) and a maximum of 12 players. When more than 11\_players are assigned, all will bat and each player will play at least five (5) innings on defense, unless individual player chooses to play less.

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 reason will be declared an "out" each time he would have come to bat. No substitutions allowed for a non-injured player.

D. 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 line-up for future at bats will be by-passed with NO PENALTY and team will continue play with eleven players.

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 sub. Rule 2 D applies.

### **2. Substitutes - Substitute players may be obtained from the following sources:**

A. The published player placement pool or sub pool listed on or appended to roster.

B. Any "bye" team (if-when scheduled).

C. Players from the any game

D. A seven (7) rated player may sub for a seven (7) or eight (8) rated player providing that the number of (7) rated players does not exceed the session stipulated maximum (6). An eight (8) or a nine (9) rated player may sub for any player.

E. Exception Number 1 (not used)

F. Exception Number 2 - Substitute pitchers may be obtained from any team. Rule 2 D applies.

To further clarify - If a team has 12 players whose Pitcher is missing and no other player will pitch, the manager may substitute for the pitcher ONLY. Rule 2 D applies.

G. Exception Number 3 - An injured player may be replaced if team strength drops below eleven (11). Select a player from the stands (prior game if possible). Selected player must have same player rating. Rule 2 D applies. The replacement bats in the injured players batting position.

H. Exception Number 4 - If a team has an unexpected NO SHOW for the first game of the day and a player from the second game is not available, manager may select any available player. Selected player must have same player rating. Rule 2-D applies.

I. Managers may call in advance to obtain substitutes from any of the above mentioned sources.

J. 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.

K . An assigned player may substitute only two (2) times each week and only one (1) time for the same team. They may play a maximum of 4 times a week. If an assigned player has a bye the player may sub 3 times that week.

Exception: If the player is listed on the sub list or placement pool they may substitute four (4) times each week but still only one (1) time for the same team.

L. Substitute players may be placed anywhere in the lineup. (Not for injury rule 2-G)

M. If 2 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

A. Effective - October 30, 2012 Courtesy Runners from Home Plate will NO longer be allowed. Exception any player that is listed as needing a runner from Home Plate as of October 30, 2012 will be GRANDFATHERED. If at any time such Grandfathered player runs from home plate in this league or any league their Grandfathered status will be revoked.

B. Players who are not GRANDFATHERED but have a chronic medical limitation that prevents them from running beyond 1<sup>st</sup> base may request a courtesy runner. Accommodation of the request depends on a game to game situation as determined by the team manager.

C. Prior to the start of the game, The Manager, must register with the scorekeeper and opposing Manager those players requiring a courtesy runner. A TEAM MAY HAVE A MAXIMUM OF TWO (2) PLAYERS WHO NEED A RUNNER PRIOR TO START OF GAME. If any other player (other than the 2 designated) becomes injured during the game and cannot run, the player shall leave the game to avoid more serious injury and protect teammates from excessive effort. The manager may obtain a substitute (rule 2.D applies), or play shorthanded (min. of 9 players).

D. Players designated as needing a courtesy runner from home (Grandfathered) may not advance beyond 1<sup>st</sup> base.

E. A player may be used as a courtesy runner once (1) per inning and no more than three (3) times per game.

F. A courtesy runner from home plate shall not cross the runner line until the ball is struck. Should the runner leave early, the batter is to be out only in the event batter hits the ball into fair territory. The primary responsibility for this call goes to the base umpire, although either umpire can make the call

G. A player that is registered for a courtesy runner must use one for every time at bat.

H. A courtesy runner whose turn at bat comes while on base will be called out. The player will be removed from the bases and come to bat. A second courtesy runner cannot be substituted

I. A courtesy runner may not run for another courtesy runner.

J. A pitcher who is on base with 1 or more outs may request a courtesy runner (CR) for the purpose of returning to the dugout to begin donning his protective gear to expedite the inning transition. A pitcher requesting CR for this purpose does not have to be listed on the line-up as requiring a CR.

#### 4.. Balls / Strikes

A legal pitch with an arc between six (6) ft. to twelve (12) ft. that touches any part of the plate or mat extension is a strike.

## 5. Base Running

### A. No infield fly rule.

B. Double first 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 may be called out by the umpire. If 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 the base. The batter/runner can use either the white or orange base in this situation.

C. 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.

D. Sliding and Diving: From a running or standing position toward the base or home plate from any direction is prohibited. A runner, who falls down short of a base or just beyond it, may crawl back to the base without a penalty.

E. 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.

F. 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. Defensive player can only touch the original home plate and runners can only touch the scoring line.

1. 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 batters box in order to be safe at home.

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

3. 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.

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

H. If Courtesy Runners from home and the batter both run past the designated runners line, the batter will be called out, the ball is dead. The designated line will be drawn approximately twenty four (24) ft. from home plate, at the foul line.

#### 6. Pitchers Box (Optional)

A line will be drawn six (6) feet back from the pitching rubber and the same width of the pitching rubber. That line along with the pitching rubber will form a pitchers box. The pitcher must present and release the ball while standing within the imaginary box.

#### 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. When the "Pitcher Screen" option is chosen it does not replace/diminish the mandated use of the face mask.

#### 8. Pitcher Screen (Optional)

Both Sun City and Sun City West Softball clubs will provide a pitcher's screen to be used by the pitcher should they choose to do so. Should 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.

(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-take off devices)

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.

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

A. 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.

There is a secondary position for the rectangular (carry out) pitching screen. It may be located 15 feet directly in front of the pitching plate. Any club screen may be used from the traditional location as previously spelled out in the rules.

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

C. Balls thrown into the screen are live

D. 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

Only a MANAGER may appeal a call. Judgment call such as balls or strikes, runner out or safe and foul or fair balls are not grounds for appeal.

Interpretation of the rules will be the only grounds for a protest and will be settled on the field between the umpires and two managers. Managers must appeal other violations such as an ineligible sub or runner, runner missing a bag, interference and batter batting out of order to the home umpire. Any situation where a rule is not covered in our National League Rules, two managers and umpires must agree to a solution.

#### 10. Ejections

An umpire may eject a player who threatens or uses abusive language directly or indirectly toward an umpire, player, or spectator. Umpire ejecting a player must submit a written report to the National League Committee Chairman within twenty four (24) hours. An ejected player must leave the field within one (1) minute or the game will be forfeited to the opposing team. An ejected player is automatically suspended from playing in any games, from the time of their ejection, until the conclusion of their next regularly scheduled game and will be subject to further disciplinary action. If a player attacks an umpire, player, or spectator, The National League Committee suspends the player from further play pending a decision on disciplinary action. Presidents of both the Sun City West and Sun City Softball Clubs are to be sent copies of action taken. All discipline should be handled by the National League Committee.

A. Grievance - should a player not agree with the decision of their respective committee, they have the right to appeal to their Club Board President.

#### 11. Warm-Up Pitches

At the beginning of each inning, three (3) warm-up pitches 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 discontinued after the 3rd inning.

#### 12. Equipment

No banned bats (See ASA banned bat list) will be allowed during National League play.

#### 13. Batting Out of Order



The scorekeeper shall notify the home plate umpire immediately if a batter is hitting out of order and only the correct batter will bat. No Penalty.

## **F. 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) successive games will be assigned to the placement sub pool.

### 2. Umpires and Scorekeepers:

The team manager will assign Umpires and Scorekeepers. It will be the responsibility of the player assigned to arrange for his own replacement if he is unavailable. Umpiring and score-keeping 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 must consult with each other on protest or appeal calls.

C. Coaches/Players should not attempt to make the base running out or safe calls.

### 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) Before the start of the second game and every game thereafter the home team is responsible for grooming the base paths between games at Sun City only.

### 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 Pool:

Players are responsible for notifying the National League Committee member of their intention and availability to play in next scheduled session. Individuals must insure they are listed in the player pool in order to be placed on a team.

### 6. Banned / Altered Bats:

A. 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

B. Any umpire, club board member, or any member of the League Committees 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 their bat for inspection. If the bat is suspect then the bat may be digitally x-rayed for any alterations.

C. Any player refusing to surrender their 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.

D. 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. The infraction would also be subject to being reported to all local, state, and national organizations. The player would then be subject to any ban these organizations impose.

E. If any player is 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.