

Church Softball Rules - Updated 4/3/19

(Official USSSA Slow-pitch Softball rules will be observed with only the exceptions noted in the following items below)

1. Five Home Runs per game per team --- All other Home Runs are recorded as Outs.
A no trot rule (optional) is also in effect for all Home Runs.
2. Each Team must have at least seven players to start a game or it will be recorded as a forfeit.
No out penalties are enforced unless a team drops below the # in the initial line up.
3. Lineups can have unlimited batters --- Everyone may bat that is an official rostered player.
After the game has started, extra hitter(s) MAY ONLY BE added to the bottom of the lineup AS LONG AS the batting order has not turned over (i.e. the leadoff hitter has not batted a 2nd time in the game). Otherwise any extra players MUST BE used as subs for the remainder of the game. EXCEPTION: TEAMS MAY ADD ANY EXTRA PLAYERS (**UP TO 10 ONLY IN THE BATTING ORDER**) TO BOTTOM OF THE LINEUP AT ANYTIME DURING THE GAME.
- No out penalties will be enforced unless a team drops below the # in the initial STARTING lineup.
4. Free Substitutions -- players must stay out at least one inning before returning to the lineup.
 - a. A substitute (courtesy) runner may be used in the event of injury; however, the player that is substituted for MUST stay in the game if there are no bench players to replace him/her, otherwise an out will be recorded when his/her spot comes up again in the line-up. (Only 1 runner per inning may be used UNLESS there is more than 1 injured player in that particular inning). [If a pinch-runner is being used for anything other than an injury to a player, then he/she MUST stay in the game for at least one complete inning (in the substituted players batting spot) & the player substituted for MUST also stay out for 1 complete inning].
 - b. The COURTESY RUNNER MUST BE the last recorded out of the game. (If it is the 1st inning & no outs have been recorded, then the courtesy runner can be anyone in the lineup PER umpire's approval).
5. A 20-run rule after 3 innings and a 15-run rule after 5 innings is in effect, unless the game exceeds the time limit or is called because of weather.
Valid games must be at least three innings to be recorded as an official game.
6. No new inning after 56 minutes of play—all innings started shall be finished. **Ties will stand.** Scoreboard clock shall be used to determine time limit (if scoreboard and/or clock is non-functional then umpire shall use watch to determine when time limit is up).
7. The Umpire is responsible for keeping Official Time.
8. The 6:30 & 8:30 games will begin with a Prayer provided by the Home Team.
9. The Home Team is responsible for the official score and reporting the results to the Division Commissioner.
10. Ground Rules will be discussed prior to the beginning of the game to clarify boundaries or special circumstances.
11. The Umpire will verbally call an "illegal" pitch while the ball is in the air (flat or too high).
12. Bats will have solid tape (no frails). Bats will be free of dents and/or cracks. **All bats must have Church League sanctioned sticker in order to be legal for League play.**
13. Texas League (1 ball, 1 strike) count will be in effect for all games.
14. Men & Women age 16 and over are eligible to play upon signing the Team Waiver Form.
15. No Warm ups for pitchers and players after the 1st inning. Substitutes will be allowed to warm up as needed.
16. Umpires are required to wear red shirts. Umpires will be paid ASAP at the end of each month.
17. Slide Rule—Sliding is recommended on any close play. However, if there is there is no slide on a close play & NO CONTACT IS MADE, runner shall be declared safe if no tag or force out is made. If CONTACT IS MADE WITHOUT A SLIDE, it shall be umpires discretion if runner shall be declared out on play (intent).

18. **Penalty for ejection by the umpire from the game or when the game is over:**
- If a player uses vulgar language and/or threatens or becomes a threat to the umpire after ejection from the game, even though the game is over, such player shall serve a 1 night or 2 game suspension, whichever is greater
 - For a 2nd occurrence during the season, player shall be suspended for one (1) year from the time of the infraction or incident.
 - Any ejection occurring during ANY TOURNAMENT GAME shall result in such player being suspended from the REMAINDER OF THE TOURNAMENT; If such player is found to be playing in a game after ejection, then ENTIRE TEAM shall be ejected from the tournament.
 - Any player that strikes or hits an umpire intentionally for any reason shall be suspended from the League for one (1) year from time of infraction or incident.
 - Player must apologize to umpire either verbally or in written form before reinstatement shall be granted.
19. The team with the BEST OVERALL record at the end of the season will change Divisions the following year regardless of where they finish in the Standings for each Half; likewise, the team with the WORST OVERALL record at end of the season will also change Divisions the following year regardless of where they finish in the Standings for each Half. (tie-breaking procedures will be as follows):
- Tiebreakers for 1st and last place shall be determined based on head-to-head matchups between involved teams
Most total runs scored will be the determining factor when 2 or more matchups are played & a split of the games played is involved.
 - In the event that no tiebreaker can be determined (i.e. same total runs for both teams), then a 1 game playoff at the end of the season shall determine either champion or last place team.
FYI: The above scenarios will also be used at the end of each half to determine tournament seeding, if necessary.

New Rules added in 2010

20. Players may play for only one (1) Church League team regardless of attendance at more than 1 church that both field a team in the Church Softball League (also, if church they attend has 2 or more teams playing in the Church League, player may play for only ONE of the teams) --- player must choose on which team they will play BEFORE the start of the season.
21. All other players must play for the Church League team of the church that they attend on a regular basis--players who attend a church that does not have a team in the Church League may play for any team.
EXCEPTION TO RULE: If player is already playing for a Church League team that he does not attend (due to their church had no team at the time they started playing), such player may continue playing with their current team *grandfathered in, per se*) if they so wish, even though today their church now has a team in the Church League--(however, player must decide BEFORE the start of the season if they will be switching to the current team of the church they attend that now has a team in the league).
22. Penalty for violating rule: All games played with illegal player shall be recorded as a forfeit for the team that used the illegal player – no exceptions.

New Rules added in 2019

23. Swearing Rule – If umpire hears player exclaim Sh, F, GD, or JC player,
1st Offense – player must sit out for one complete inning.
2nd Offense – player is done for the night.
Note A verbal warning will be given during before the game during prayer.
24. Jersey Rule (effective 2020)
All players on a team shall properly wear uniforms that are IDENTICAL in colors, logo, design, and style. An Arabic whole number (0-99) of contrasting color, at least 6 inches high must be worn and visible on the back of all uniforms. No players on the same team may wear identical numbers. (Numbers 0 and 00 or 3 and 03 are examples of identical numbers.) All numbers must be permanent – no tape, etc. will be allowed. Church teams will not be allowed to use equipment or uniforms advertising vice items or handled case by case by the executive committee.
35. Alcohol Rule – No open container in the dugout. If you are inebriated by the umpire's judgement, the umpire will talk to your manager and you will no longer be able to play for the rest of the night.
36. Smoking Rule – No smoking in stands or dugouts.