



COED PLAYING RULES

2026

Introduction

Our league was established to keep our senior softball sports population in Sun City Lincoln Hills active and social. We play the game for fun and the intent is to keep the Lincoln Hills version of the game exactly that, **FUN**. We promote good sportsmanship, fair play and above all, safety when playing. We try not to overburden our play with a lot of unnecessary rules that just confuse more than clarify.

We have certain philosophies regarding how the game should be played. For a comprehensive guide on Rules of Conduct, refer to Section 2.5 in our Policies, Procedures and Regulations document. The rules Lincoln Hills Senior Softball League (LHSSL) play by are governed by Senior Softball USA (SSUSA), with certain exceptions compiled by the LHSSL Rules Committee with review and final approval by the LHSSL Board of Directors. A goal of the Committee when the rules were developed, because of the wide age disparity in players, was player safety. While safety cannot be addressed in every rule, the basis for our play is safety first, and it is expected that each member of the LHSSL adheres to basic safety practices whenever they play.

Some examples are: We have a bat safety rule for 100% composite bats: they may only be used in League play by our female members and any male aged 75 and over in the calendar year they turn 75. Dented or cracked bats are not allowed. We allow courtesy runners for players with limited running ability. We have a substitute system for teams that are shorthanded a player on a given day to pick up a player and still play the game. The system works, and it's designed to keep folks playing. We also have a requirement that all players who show up for a game are in the lineup. Defensive play is the option of the player, but we do have a rule (Section III. B) for the minimum number of innings for players electing to play defense. There will always be special circumstances. In the end, we have a Fair-Play philosophy that allows managers and umpires to agree to play a game the way everyone agrees to play a game. Rules don't cover everything and when they do not, we are accommodating and put in force our Fair-Play philosophy to keep folks playing. It's simply a "game-time agreement" reached at the start or during a game that that's the way we'll play that game.

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The Lincoln Hills Senior Softball League (LHSSL) is governed by the SSUSA rules and regulations (current edition) with exceptions/additions authorized by the LHSSL.

I. FIELD LAYOUT

A. BASE DISTANCE

Coed plays with 65-foot base distances. All bases are *run to*.

B. PITCHING DISTANCE

Coed plays using 53 to 59-foot distance and a pitcher's box measuring 6 feet long and 2 feet wide.

C. PITCHING SCREEN PLACEMENT

The screen shall be placed seven (7) feet in front of the pitching rubber/pitcher's box. For right-handed pitchers the screen's right edge is placed in line with the center of the pitching plate. For left-handed pitchers the screen is flipped just the opposite. The screen's wheels are toward first base for right-handers and on the third base side for left-handers.

D. BATTER'S BOX

The batter's box consists of a practice batting mat. The edge of the batting mat is the outermost edge of the batter's box. The edge of the mat is treated as if it were the outermost portion of the standard chalk line.

E. OUTFIELD 175-FOOT LIMIT LINE

An arcing line, 175-feet from home plate running foul line to foul line is used. It's marked by strategically placed cones. Outfielders cannot cross the line to make a play until the ball is hit. If they cross before the ball is hit, the batter is awarded first base and all other runners are advanced one base from the base last occupied.

F. RUN PAST (Commit) LINE

The commit line is 30-feet from home plate. A runner cannot return to third base if they pass this line.

II. EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

A. BATS

- Bats must have an ASA or USA Softball Certification Mark. Bats can be single wall or double wall construction.
- Bat barrels can be 100 percent alloy or aluminum.
- Bat handles can be 100 percent composite or aluminum/alloy materials.
- 100 percent composite construction tournament bats with a 1.21 rating can be used by women and members age 75 and over in the calendar year they turn 75.

B. SOFTBALLS

Softballs are 12-inch 44 Cor/375 compression Trump Rock or similar softballs for men. Women have the option to use a 12-inch or 11-inch softball. Ball rotation will be handled by the plate umpire as needed.

C. PITCHER'S SAFETY GEAR

- The use of a face mask and shin guards are MANDATORY for all pitchers. Failure to wear this equipment will result in the pitcher being removed from the pitching position immediately.
- The pitching screen is MANDATORY for the safety and protection of pitchers during play. It is encouraged, but optional, for the pitcher to take a position behind the screen after the ball is pitched to avoid being struck by a line drive.

D. UNIFORMS

Uniforms are league issued numbered jerseys and caps/visors. They shall be worn properly by all team members while playing their games. Can Players must be attired in clothing appropriate for playing softball. Note: A Can Player cannot wear a jersey for the team they will be playing for.

III. GENERAL GAME PLAY

A. Game Time Limit

The time limit is seventy (70) minutes. When 70 minutes are up the umpire notifies both teams that the current inning, if it's not the open inning, will be completed and the following inning will be the open inning. When the third out is recorded, the inning is over. Tie games are allowed during the regular playing season. The only time the clock is stopped is for an injury. The decision is the plate umpires only.

B. Lineups/Rosters

- Lineup cards must include names and jersey numbers for all games.
- Copies must be provided to the plate umpire, the opposing manager and scorekeeper before games start.
- Managers will identify players using a 100 percent composite bat on the lineup card by placing an asterisk (*) after their name/number.
- Managers will identify players filling a Designated Hitter role by indicating "DH" after their name/number on the lineup card.
- All players must bat and be shown on the lineup card. All players appearing on the lineup card must be given the opportunity to play 3 innings in the field before the 7th inning, if they so desire. **Managers may not overrule this option.**
- A team must have a minimum of eight (8) roster players to start a game. Managers can choose to forfeit, play with nine, or use a Can Player (see Section V. Can Player). Late arriving players are added to the bottom of the batting order.
- If a player leaves the game for a legitimate reason, there is no penalty—the lineup is adjusted, and play continues. If the departure leaves the team short-handed, the Fair Play Rule **may** be used to request a Can Player, who will bat at the bottom of the order. The clock only stops for injuries and resumes once the player exits the field.

C. Batting—Counts, Fouls, Dead Balls, and Home Runs

- The batter starts with a 1-1 count.
- If the batter hits a foul ball with two strikes, the count remains at two strikes. Another foul ball constitutes a strikeout.
- Any batted ball tipped off the bat and caught by the catcher is considered an out.
- Any batted ball hitting the pitching screen is a dead ball with no strikes given to the batter.
- Any ball hit over the 10-foot fence in right field, left field and/or the scoreboard/clock, in fair territory, shall be declared a home run. (Exception: Can players.) No limit on home runs.

D. Mercy Rule

The Mercy Rule keeps games from being blowouts and keeps games on schedule. If the home team is trailing by 10 or more runs at the completion of the 5th inning, the 6th inning will be declared the open inning and the flip-flop rule will be used.

E. Pitching

Pitch heights are a minimum of 6 feet and a maximum of 12 feet judged by the plate umpire. Pitcher must start with both feet within the 6-foot pitching box. Violation of pitching heights or pitching mechanics will be called as illegal pitches and counted as balls by the plate umpire.

F. Courtesy Pitcher (New)

A team may request a courtesy pitcher to be able to play a game. If both managers agree to the use of a courtesy pitcher the following will constitute what the duties are for the pitcher. The courtesy pitcher can only pitch during the game. The courtesy pitcher cannot do anything except pitch. After the release of the pitch to the batter the courtesy pitcher cannot participate in any other play.

Effect may result in awards to the offensive team, i.e. bases.

G. Defensive Positioning

~~Only one infielder may be positioned on the outfield grass before the pitch and must remain in front of the 175' cones. Penalty: If two or more infielders are on the grass at the time of the pitch, the batter-runner is awarded first base, and any forced runners advance.~~

All infielders MUST stay on the dirt infield until the Batter Runner hits the ball.

Effect if an infielder is on any part of the grass at the time a batter runner hits the ball, the batter runner can not be put out at first base. All runners on base that are forced to move to the next base cannot be put out. Once the batter runner has secured first base and all other runners that are forced to move to the next base and make it safely, all runners now can run at their RISK. This is a Delayed ball call by the Umpires.

H. Double First Base

The batter-runner must step on the orange (safety) base when a play is being made at first base. Failure to do so will result in an automatic out for safety reasons.

I. Force Out at First Base Exception

A batter hitting a ball to the outfield cannot be thrown out directly at first base by an outfielder unless the ball is first touched by an infielder. Relays from an outfielder to first base are not allowed. Infielders playing on the grass are considered infielders.

J. Live Ball—Screen

If a thrown ball hits the pitching screen it is a live ball and playable.

K. ~~Runner safety (New)~~

~~A runner on first base or third may request to the Home plate umpire that they want to vacate their base for safety issues. The base runner may stand anywhere off the base in foul territory to be able to avoid a batted ball. The home plate umpire must approve this action. Once the batter runner hits the ball the base runner must retag their base they were on to advance. Effect, if the base runner dose not retag their base they are in jeopardy of being called out by appeal of the defensive team. This is a dead ball appeal.~~

This rule has been revoked 4/17/2026

IV. COURTESY RUNNER (CR)

A CR is any player who runs for another player.

A. Allowances

- A CR can run for anyone on base or the batter.
- A CR is officially in the game as a runner when they touch the bag they are running from, including the starting point behind home plate. The CR must stand behind the white line perpendicular to the plate. No part of the body should extend beyond this point.

B. Restrictions

- A player can be a CR no more than three times per game and only one time per inning no matter the circumstance.
- A CR cannot replace another CR except in the case of injury provided the runner does not run twice in the inning.
- A CR for the pitcher will count. There is not an exception to allow the pitcher to gear up for the next inning.
- A non-playing manager and/or a Can player cannot be used as a CR.
- A CR from home plate may advance only to first base. If the CR attempts to advance beyond first base, the defense may appeal to the umpire. Upon a valid appeal, the CR is declared out, the ball is dead, and all runners must return to the base they occupied at the time of the apOnce the CR safely reaches first base, they may advance without restrictioeal. n on any subsequent play.
- A player may not act as a CR in the same inning they were run for.
- A batter who has a CR from the plate must vacate the batter's box after hitting the ball or be called out.

C. Misuse

Misuse of a CR is an appeal play and must be made by the opposing manager before the next pitch. Penalty: CR running illegally and appealed properly is an OUT. Infractions caught before the CR is placed result in a warning by the plate umpire and a manager's removal, if repeated.

V. CAN PLAYER—Game Day Substitution

A Can Box is located at the field. A team needing a game day substitute player may request a player on a temporary one-game basis.

A team receiving one Can Player must give three (3) runs to the opposing team. A team receiving two Can Players must give five (5) runs to the opposing team.

A. Player Eligibility

A Can Player is an eligible player temporarily joining a team who is not on the roster for that team. To qualify, they must have paid to play at DWF. Eligible players wishing to substitute must place their name in the Can Box.

B. Selection Process

Managers are **prohibited** from contacting members directly to play out of the Can. A manager must notify the LHSSL Secretary of the need for a Can Player, when possible. The Secretary will notify the membership. Managers cannot refuse to accept the player drawn from the Can. The Commissioner or designee draws the names from the Can.

1. Player Priority

- 1st—players who are on the Wait List for team assignment—pink slip.
- 2nd—players assigned to a team—yellow slip
- 3rd—can-only players—blue slip

2. Limitations

- Players out of the Can are limited to one (1) game a day unless no other players are available.
- Can Players may not act as CRs.
- Can Players may not play positions other than catcher, right field or first base.
- Can Players must bat at the bottom of the lineup.
- Can Players are limited to singles, including balls hit over the fence. Other base runners can advance without restriction.
- If a Can Player attempts to advance beyond first base, the defense may appeal to the umpire. Upon a valid appeal, the Can Player is called out, the ball is dead, and all runners must return to their last occupied base. Once a Can Player safely reaches first base, they may advance on any subsequent play without restriction.

VI. MANAGERS

Managers may coach bases, instruct players, make lineup cards and otherwise represent their team in all LHSSL business.

A. Playing Manager

A playing manager must be included in the lineup. They cannot pick and choose when they will play in a game. An exception can be made for injury or illness provided the opposing manager and plate umpire agree. Agreements regarding non-play will fall under the Fair Play rule.

B. Non-playing Manager

A non-playing manager is a manager that does not play in games. The only exception is when their team is missing players and there are no Can Players available. Agreements regarding play will fall under the Fair Play rule.

VII. PLAYER REPLACEMENT

Players are selected during the annual coed draft. Once a player is drafted, they are connected to that team for the playing year.

- If a player must miss four weeks of games, a replacement player may be assigned from the Coed Division's Player Wait List. The replacement player will be within one point of the missing player's rating.
- If the player returns to play, they must rejoin their team. The replacement player is reassigned to the Wait List.
- No player may be replaced or added two weeks prior to the end of the regular playing season to preserve the integrity of the year-end tournament.

VIII. TEMPERATURE AND AIR QUALITY INDEX (AQI)

- If a game has started and the temperature measured in the shade (under the Scorekeeper's tower) at DWF is 97 degrees or below, the game will play to conclusion. If only one team wants to stop play, they incur a forfeit. Any games scheduled to start with a temperature of 98 or above, will be canceled.
- A game will not be played if the AQI is 140 and above. The AQI reading will be monitored using the AccuWeather application. Any player may opt out if the conditions are unacceptable to them.

IX. FAIR PLAY

Generally, prior to the start of the game, any proposed "fair play" rule must be mutually agreed upon by both managers and the plate umpire. If no agreement is reached, the plate umpire will make the final decision. While fair play rules may be considered, it is recommended that they do not take precedent over established rules. Fair play rules should only be used in situations where they do not provide an unfair advantage over an opponent.

X. PLAYOFFS

All Coed rules are in effect for the playoffs and championship game(s) with the following exceptions:

- Can Players may not be used.
- All games will be seven (7) innings unless there is a tie. Extra innings will be played until a winner is determined.