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SOFTBALL LEAGUES RULES AND REGULATIONS

The following rules govern teams and players participating in all Escondido Community Services Department-sponsored softball leagues. The leagues will use the rules of play as adopted by the Southern California Municipal Athletic Federation (S.C.M.A.F.) with certain exceptions as noted herein. The Community Services Department shall have the power to make decisions on any points in the rules or to revise any rule as they deem necessary. Final decisions shall be made by the Community Services Department.

NOTE: The term PLAYER, as used herein, shall refer to all teams' personnel, such as managers, coaches, batboys, scorekeepers, sponsors, spectators, etc.

The term OFFICIAL, as used herein, shall apply to all Community Services personnel, such as field supervisors, umpires, scorekeepers, maintenance crews, office staff, etc.

1. INSURANCE

A. The City of Escondido does not carry sports insurance to cover the players. Teams or players must carry their own insurance if they wish to be covered.

2. PLAYING DATES AND TIMES

A. Schedules of dates and times of games will be supplied to the team managers and it is their responsibility to inform the rest of their team. Updated Schedules will be either noted on hotline or web site. **Calling the Recreation Department is available however is considered to be a courtesy only and will not be determined as an official notification.** Only the Recreation Division can change the playing dates or times of games.

B. Games must start promptly as scheduled. **Forfeit time is game time.** Option for 6:15 games only: At game time, if a forfeit situation exists, the team present has two options: a) start the game clock for a maximum of 10 minutes, or b) accept the forfeited game. If (a) is chosen the game will begin if the other team gets 8 players present on the playing field during the 10 minute time period. No time will be made up. If ten

minutes expire and the game is still unable to be played a forfeit will be declared by the umpire. If neither team has the 8 players needed to start a game the option does not apply and a double forfeit will occur.

- C. Time limit on all slow-pitch games is one hour and five minutes. This time limit may be adjusted during post season play. The scorekeeper is responsible for keeping the official time on all games.
 - D. A team must have at least eight (8) players **on the playing field** to begin a game, and at all times during a game. A team may begin and/or play a game with eight (8) rostered players. See Rules and Clarifications – “F” for more information on Batting order and Substitutes.
3. **ROSTERS AND ELIGIBILITY**
- A. **Rosters may not exceed 16 players. No players may be added or dropped after 50% of the league game has been played. A fee of \$2 per add/drop card must be paid for all players added or dropped to the roster after it has been turned in. NOTE: Add/Drop cards are available and accepted at the softball complex office.**
 - B. **Each player must sign the sports league team roster/waiver.** This form must be submitted to the Community Services Department prior to participation in the City leagues. **Any person participating without having submitted their roster/waiver form will be declared an ineligible player. Penalty for above is forfeiture of all games in which the ineligible player(s) participated.** Ineligible players and managers accepting ineligible players are subject to suspension.
 - C. Any player playing under an assumed name or age will jeopardize the team for which he/she plays and can be suspended. Penalty for above is forfeiture of all games in which the ineligible player(s) participated. Managers accepting ineligible players are subject to suspension. **Softball supervisors, upon notification or observation of a team using an illegal player, can automatically forfeit said game.**
 - D. Medical -No player shall play in a cast. Any woman who is pregnant must obtain a physician's release and concurrence that they can participate in this activity. This release must be submitted to the Recreation Division prior to playing any games.
 - E. The softball supervisor, umpire, or scorekeeper may ask for identification from any player. Identification must be presented at that time. Teams may also be asked to sign in before a game. Refusals to comply by any player or team may cause the game to be forfeited. Please see new requirements for playoffs on page 6.
 - F. Age Limits:

Men's Division 1 is open to any male 18 years of age or older.

Men's Division 2 is open to any male 35 years of age or older. However, each Division 2 team may carry two players under 35 but at least 18 years of age.

Women's Division 4 is open to any female 18 years of age or older.

Coed Division 5 is open to any player 18 years or older.

- G. Players may play for more than one division; however, may only play on one team within that division, the exception is the Co-ed division; a player may play in both the Monday and Sunday leagues when offered.
- H. Players transferring from one team to another must obtain approval from the Recreation Division and wait out one game. No transferring after 50% of the season.
- I. If a team is removed from the league or forfeits out of the league, the players on that team will not be allowed to add to another team without the written permission from the Recreation Division.

4. **PLAYING FIELD**

- A. The official diamond shall have 65-foot baselines and a pitching distance of 50 feet.
- B. A double base will be used at first base as described in the S.C.M.A.F Rule Book. See Rule 2, "A DOUBLE BASE." If a play can be made on the batter runner at first base the batter-runner must use the outside base, if the runner touches any part of the inside base said runner shall be declared out. Ball is alive. Only if the batter runner has a reasonable chance to advance to second base and is making the turn attempting to advance may the inside bag be used without penalty.

In the case that the defensive player is required to touch the inside base and touches any part of the outside base, said defensive player shall be considered to have missed the base.

- C. **PITCHER'S BOX-A** "Pitcher's Box will be in use in all divisions. A box is drawn extending from the pitcher's plate, for (6) feet. Thus the dimensions of the "Pitcher's Box" are twenty-four (24) inches wide, by (6) feet long. The pitcher may deliver the pitch from any point inside the "Pitcher's Box without penalty.

**** All Divisions, All Leagues**** – Upon the discretion of the umpire, any line drive hit by the batter that enters or passes through the pitcher's box no higher than the pitcher's head will be declared an **OUT**, dead ball. Hit balls that in the discretion of the umpire are over the head of the pitcher at full height regardless if it passes through the "Pitcher's Box" will be declared a fair ball and in play. If the pitcher has one or more feet in the box including on the line and is struck by a batted ball that has not hit the ground an **OUT** will be declared, ball will be dead.

- D. In Co-ed a "scoring plate" will be used at home. All plays at home plate shall be by force out only, provided the runner from third has crossed the commitment line. To score, the runner must touch the "scoring plate" before the defensive player touches home plate with the ball in possession. The defensive team may not tag the runner going home. The runner will be declared out, and the ball declared dead if they enter the batter's box area in attempt to score. This includes any runner forced to advance by rule.

5. **EQUIPMENT**

- A. **BALL:** The Recreation Division will provide the game ball and a backup ball in good condition, not necessarily new. All men's teams will play with a 12-inch softball; women's leagues will use an 11-inch softball. Coed leagues will alternate using both the 11- and 12-inch softballs. Men will hit the 12-inch ball and women will hit the 11-inch ball.

In coed play, men will hit a 12-inch ball and women will hit an 11-inch ball. If the wrong ball is used and appealed properly prior to the ball being put into play, the correct ball will be switched into the game and the count on the batter shall not change. If the wrong ball is put into play, a proper appeal, made by either the offensive or defensive team, must be requested prior to the first pitch to the next batter. When appealed, the umpire will return all base runners to the original bases which were occupied before the incorrect ball was put into play. With the exception: If the batter is female, the batter has the option of keeping the "at bat" or taking the "at bat" over. The batter will then be pitched the proper ball, assuming the same ball/strike count that existed prior to the wrong ball being put into play.

- B. **BAT:** The official bat allowed must meet all the requirements set by ASA Softball, and Escondido Recreation. All Bats must bear an ESCONDIDO APPROVED seal available for purchase for \$1.00. Without this seal a bat will be declared ineligible for play.

Only official softball bats shall be used, and must fit the diameter ring and be taped or sure-gripped. Baseball bats, weighted bats, or other illegal bats will not be allowed. Bats shall have a Bat Performance Factor (BPF Rating) not exceeding 1.20. **If a bat cannot be identified by the umpire or Recreation Staff, it will be considered illegal.** A list

of ASA banned bats is available in the softball office, or on the ASA web site. www.asasoftball.com

League umpires or representatives are authorized to remove from play any bat which shows wear such as worn off or cracked graphics or damaged barrels, handles, tapers, plugs, caps or knobs.

If any bat is suspected to be altered the league representatives will have the authority to suspend the player using the bat and or owner of the bat for up to one year of play. In addition; the manager of the team will receive a two game suspension.

Altered bats are bats, which have:

Had the surface of the barrel or the tape changed in any way such as by sandpapering or applying a solvent to the surface such as fingernail polish remover or by any other means.

1. Had the plug or knob removed/replaced or changed in any way.
2. Had anything removed or added to the inside or outside of the bat other than tape at the handle, or the Escondido Approved sticker. For example wall thinning, barrel shaving, loading, painting etc.
3. Had heat and or pressure applied to the barrel portion of the bat, for example rolling, hammering etc.

Proof is not necessary to impose the suspensions, if in the discretion of the league representatives the bat has been altered, the bat will be determined altered and the suspensions will be implemented. The fact that any individual did not know that the bat was altered is not a factor in imposing the suspensions.

If for any reason a seal is removed or comes off a bat, the bat becomes illegal, it must be inspected again by Recreation staff in order to be eligible for use, the \$1.00 fee will apply.

Bats may be inspected at the adult softball complex during league play Monday-Friday 6:30-9:30 PM.

- C. Metal cleats are not allowed. This includes ALL leagues -- Men's, Women's and Coed

6. **PLAYOFFS**

- A. It is the team's responsibility to find out if they have made the playoffs. First place teams of the first and second halves automatically qualify. In some circumstances wild card teams are also invited to play.

- B. If your team is unable to make the playoff game(s) your team will be charged the appropriate forfeit fees.
- C. In addition to the minimum game rule; in order to be eligible to participate in a playoff game a picture ID must be presented to the scorekeeper just prior to game time. Verification will be made that said player is on the roster and eligible. This will not be done randomly; all teams will be checked. If a player does not have a valid picture ID, they will not be allowed to participate.
- D. If at the end of the regular season two or more teams in the same league finish with identical win-loss percentages, the following steps will be taken to determine the championship and which team will be invited into the final tournament.

Two Teams

1. Fewest paid forfeits in pre-season and league games.
2. Head-to-head (best win-loss-tied percentage in games between the teams).
3. Best net runs in head-to-head competition.
4. Best net runs in all league games.
5. Coin toss.

Three or More Teams

If two clubs remain tied after a third team is eliminated during any step, tiebreaker reverts to step 1 of the two-team format.

NOTE: Net runs are determined as follows:

Subtract the runs scored against a team from the runs the team scored, the remainder will be the total. The team with the highest plus total will be the winner.

A maximum of 12 net runs for any game can be accumulated.

- D. During the play-offs, the tiebreaker rule (#3 S.C.M.A.F. Tournament Rules) will be used for all divisions.
- E. Only players who have participated in 3 regular season games are eligible to participate in the post-season tournament. Preseason play is not taken into account. No exceptions will be made!

7. **POSTPONEMENT**

If there is a possibility of rain or wet fields, it is the teams' responsibility to call the Recreation Division's sports line after 3:00 p.m. to verify if games will be played. (Call **760-839-4549**.) The sports line will inform managers of game status and when the games will be rescheduled.

8. **PROTESTS**

- A. **Only misinterpretation of the rules and players' eligibility is protestable. Player eligibility protests must be made prior to the last out of the game and is limited to three players only.**
- B. Managers should be thoroughly familiar with Rule 9, Appendix A in the S.C.M.A.F. Rule Book. **At the time of the incident, the manager of the protesting team must immediately (before the next pitch) notify the umpire, scorekeeper and the opposing team manager of the protest.** The protesting manager must submit a detailed statement of facts, including rules misinterpreted, and a \$20 deposit to the Community Services Department within 48 hours after the scheduled game time. Protests that arise from games on Fridays shall be turned in no later than 5:00 p.m. on the following Monday. The deposit will be returned if the protest is upheld.

9. **UMPIRE AND SCOREKEEPER**

- A. The plate umpire shall be the head umpire. He/She shall be in complete charge of the game including the scorekeeper. His/Her authority and the exercise of the powers granted to him/her by the rules of the game commence as soon as he/she arrives in the park and **continue for as long as he/she is in the park.**
- B. Umpires have the authority to remove any participant from the game for violation of the rules, player's code of conduct, or due to physical limitations or conditions resulting from injury that may place themselves or others in harm.
- C. In the event that the assigned umpire or scorekeeper fails to appear for a game, the manager shall agree on a volunteer to assume the duties until the assigned umpire or scorekeeper appears, or the game is completed.
- D. Umpires and scorekeepers will be scheduled for all games. Two (2) umpires may be used for playoff games, and one (1) umpire for classification and league games. One scorekeeper will be assigned. Teams will be required to pay the umpire and scorekeeper before each game **(cash only, exact change).**

- E. SLOW-PITCH FEES- The scorekeeper fee will be \$7 per team per game. The umpire fee will be \$13 per team per game. During playoffs an additional fee of \$13 is required if a second umpire is assigned.

10. **TEAM DISMISSAL AND FOREFEITURES**

- A. If a team forfeits a game they must pay:
\$40, in cash on the field at time of forfeit, or
\$50, to the City **before** the next scheduled game day, or
\$60, in cash at that field **on** the next scheduled game day.

If a team forfeits 3 games or fails to pay the forfeit fee they may be removed from the league.
- B. If a double forfeit occurs, both teams involved will receive a full game loss in the league standings. Each team must pay the forfeit fee that applies.
- C. Any team that continues unsportsmanlike acts during any game or from game to game, and causes the opponent and/or fans to cease to receive recreational satisfaction from the game, will be removed from the league. Any player who exhibits unsportsmanlike behavior will be ejected immediately and is subject to suspension.
- D. If in the umpire's judgment a team is stalling for time, he will issue them a warning, and continued violation may result in forfeiting of the game to the opposing team.
- E. If in the umpire's judgment, a team is purposely trying to lose a game, he will issue them a warning, and continued violation may result in the manager being suspended from that game and the following game.

11. **COURTESY RUNNERS**

Courtesy runners will be allowed. Any team found abusing this rule may lose the privilege. One courtesy runner per inning (no approval necessary). If a batter reaches base safely more than once in the same inning and received a courtesy runner, the additional times the runner reaches base they may continue to have a courtesy runner.

Division II & IV will be allowed two (2) courtesy runners per inning.

Division V will be allowed one (1) male and one (1) female courtesy runner per inning.

12. MANAGERS' RESPONSIBILITY

Team managers are responsible for controlling the actions of their players and fans. Managers should be sure that each player on his roster knows and understands the Players' Code of Conduct.

Please ensure that the children of your players are being supervised. Failure to supervise children could result in the parent/guardian being ineligible to play.

13. RULES AND CLARIFICATIONS

- A. **Alcoholic beverages are not permitted in City parks.** Teams are responsible to see that their players and spectators do not consume alcoholic beverages in the park before, during, or after the games. Teams or players who violate this rule may be removed from the league. Players caught drinking during game time will be removed from the game.
- B. **NO** smoking is allowed inside City-owned buildings, or within twenty (20) feet outside per state code. It shall be unlawful to possess a lighted or burning tobacco product or tobacco-related product at any time within **the boundaries of any park**, public open space or trail, including designated parking areas of any such City recreational area.
- C. Unsportsmanlike conduct which includes, but is not limited to, rough tactics against other team; the heckling of officials or members of an opposing team; use of obscene language; the failure to follow directions of the official will not be allowed. Players judged to have exhibited unsportsmanlike conduct will be, at minimum, ejected from the game and suspended from the next game.
- D. Any player ejected from any game for any violation is **automatically suspended from the next game** in which his team participates and may face further suspension after review by the Recreation Division. If a player or manager is ejected two times during a season, he may not be permitted to continue to play in the league. **Any player ejected from any playoff game for any violation is automatically suspended from the next two games (whether they be playoff or future season games) in which his or her team participates and may face further suspension after review by the Recreation Division.**
- E. The base runner/batter runner will be out and ejected from the game if they attempt to avoid the fielder by going over the top of the fielder when the fielder has the ball and is waiting to make a tag.
- F. Lineup cards, including all substitutes, must be turned in 10 minutes before game time. **If a lineup card has not been turned in, the game will not be started but the time limit will begin.** Players listed on

lineup card at game time but not physically at game will be an out the first time up and will not play the rest of game.

- G. Batting order. Teams will have the option of batting up to 16 players or any number of players from 8 to 16. The batting order must be established before the game starts. The starting batting order must be followed, but defensive changes may be made at any time.

Late arriving players may be added to the end of the batting order when they arrive and may take their turn at bat.

All players present at the beginning of the game may be either put in the original batting order and bat throughout the game or may enter the game at a later time as a substitute only. When substituting, the new player must take the place of an existing player in the batting order, making the existing player no longer eligible to play. This even applies if a team is playing with less than 10 players.

The scorekeeper need not be notified of any defensive changes, but must be told of any substitution changes. **In addition, if a player leaves the batting order for any reason, the scorekeeper must be notified or the game will be forfeited.** Any batter failing to bat for any reason, regardless of number of batters in the batting order from 8 to 16, shall be automatically out if no legal substitute is available. First time a batter fails to bat, said player shall not participate any further in the game. This space shall be skipped for the remainder of the game with no further penalty.

Coed. A batting order must be submitted prior to the game and followed during the game. The batting order may not exceed sixteen (16) players and must list men and women separately and followed alternately, such that two (2) batters of the same gender may never bat consecutively.

- H. In coed play, a game may be played without forfeit with eight (8) rostered players: four (4) men, four (4) women). Normal defensive teams shall consist of ten (10) players: five (5) women and five (5) men. Maximum number of defensive fielders – five of either gender. There will be no restrictions on a player as to which defensive he or she may play except for rover position, when a female is at bat the rover position must be a female.
- I. The ball must arc higher than the batter's head and must not exceed 12 feet.
- J. All batters in all slow pitch divisions will start with a 1-1 count.
- K. At the beginning of each game or when a pitcher relieves another, no more than three (3) balls may be delivered to the catcher or other teammates. At no time may an existing pitcher deliver balls during the half inning.

- L. During league games and Championship games, when a team is fifteen (15) runs ahead after five innings, the game will be called. During preseason and play-offs a game will also end anytime after four (4) innings when a team is behind twenty (20) runs.
- M. The official score book shall be the only official score. The flip charts and scoreboards are used to help inform the players but are not the official score. The clocks on the score board will be used as the official time. For purposes of keeping batting averages, teams should keep their own scorebook. Each team manager should confirm the score at the end of every half inning with the official scorekeeper. A team manager who believes there is an error in the official score must notify the umpire prior to the first pitch of the next half inning.
- N. The team listed as home team on the Schedule must be home and accompany the third base dugout. No exceptions.
- O. **Only players on a team roster (no batboys, scorekeepers, or children, etc.) are allowed on the players' bench.** A maximum of two (2) nonplaying managers and/or coaches will be allowed on a team's roster.
- P. Any regulation game which ends in a tie will be recorded as half win, half loss for each team.
- Q. The City reserves the right to change team names or wording on uniforms that are not in good taste.

NEW!

14. HOME RUN RULE

This rule applies for a batted ball that goes over the fence or net regardless if it is touched by a defensive player.

Division 1 -Wednesday Night ONLY! – Any team may hit a maximum of 4 home runs at any time during a game This is regardless of the number of home runs the opposing team has hit. If a team hits a 5th home run during a single game and every home run after the 5th, the batter will be called OUT, and the ball will be declared dead.

One-up Rule – All Divisions Except Division 1 – Wednesday Night. After a player on one team hits a home run, all other home runs hit by his/her team will count as a single until the opposing team hits a home run. The opposing team can hit another home run to go one-up. The home runs that count as singles, all base runners advance one base.

- A. The one-up rule will be effect at the adult complex only.
- B. Any netting on the outfield fence between the foul lines shall be in play. Any batted ball hanging up in the net will be awarded a ground rule double. Any ball hit over the net shall be declared a home run.

15. **MISCELLANEOUS**

- A. Managers may use the drive-up utility drop box in front of the City Hall for depositing forfeit fees and add cards. Place the materials in an envelope and address it to the Community Services Department.
- B. All registration fees are nonrefundable.
- C. Teams may be reclassified one or more than one league after 50 % of the regular season game to ensure integrity of league. All reclassifications are done at director's discrimination within a team's normal league day or night. **Teams that are moved up a league after reclassification automatically qualify for the playoffs. Teams are only eligible to earn one playoff spot. Wild card teams may fill any open playoff spots.**

16. **PLAYERS' CODE OF CONDUCT**

NOTE: Penalties for these violations are covered in the S.C.M.A.F. rulebook. Penalties for offenses not specifically covered, multiple offenses, or repeated offenses of these rules, will be determined by the Recreation Division.

- A. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** At any time lay a hand upon, push, shove, or strike, or threaten to strike an official.
- B. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Refuse to abide by an officials' decision.
- C. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Be guilty of objectionable demonstrations by throwing of gloves, bats, balls, or any other forceful action.
- D. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Be guilty of heaping personal, verbal abuse upon any official for any real or imaginary wrong decision or judgment.
- E. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Discuss with an official in any manner the decision reached by such official except the manager or captain.
- F. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Be guilty of using unnecessarily rough tactics in the play of the game against the body and person of any opposing player.
- G. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Be guilty of physical attack as an aggressor upon any player, official, or spectator.
- H. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Be guilty of abusive verbal attack upon any player, official, or spectator.
- I. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Use profane, obscene, or vulgar language in any manner, or at any time.

- J. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Appear on the field of play at any time in an intoxicated condition.
- K. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Be guilty of gambling upon any play or the outcome of the game with any spectator, player or opponent.
- L. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Smoke while going on or coming off the field of play, or while on the field of play, or while in the dugout.
- M. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Be guilty of discussing publicly with spectators in a derogatory or abusive manner any play, decision, or personal opinion of other players, during the game.
- N. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Permit anyone to remain in the dugout or on the players' bench during the game who is not a playing member of the team.
- O. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Be guilty of intentionally throwing his bat.
- P. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Mingle with or fraternize with the spectators during the course of the game, but shall remain in the dugout or on the field of play.
- Q. **A PLAYER MAY:** Step outside the gate adjacent to the dugout to smoke.