



City of Harlingen Parks & Recreation Department

Adult Softball League Local Rules & Regulations

The City of Harlingen Parks and Recreation Department (**HP&RD**) is not affiliated with any slow-pitch softball organization and will play with the rules and regulations set forth in the following set of rules.

Leagues – COED 1, COED 2 & COED 3 (Mon. & Wed.)

Platinum, Gold, Silver & Bronze (Tues. Thurs. & Wed.)

Classification of each league is determined by the HP&RD, according to the caliber of the team registered for a particular night. HP&RD may move a team or teams into another league before the end of the first round of play with their record intact. Placement of teams within a league is final. Any withdrawal by a team due to the placement is non-refundable.

Number of teams per league will be determined by the number of entries and the maximizing of available field usage. Double or single round robin will be used. Schedule changes or cancellations will be rescheduled at the discretion of the HP&RD.

Registration - League registration fees must be paid in full before the designated deadline for each league session. There will be a spring, summer and fall league scheduled. Team rosters must be turned in to scorekeepers before the team's first game. Submit team registration fee to:

Harlingen Parks & Recreation Department

502 East Tyler

Harlingen, Texas

Office Hours: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday – Friday

Awards - Top three (3) teams will receive awards in each league. To break ties at the end of the season, head to head record will be used as the first tiebreaker.

NEW rules effective Spring '19

- Teams that are caught using an illegal player will forfeit that game and will also forfeit their NEXT scheduled game. Failure to pay forfeits will result in forfeiture of a game. Penalty for three forfeits in a row will result in removal of a team from the schedule. Penalty for the illegal player will remain as suspension for three games.
- Rosters must be turned in BEFORE the start of the 3rd preseason week. At the beginning of the third preseason week, the game clock will start at game time but the game will not start until the roster for both teams have been turned in.
- Any team awards will be withheld from a team until all due forfeits for that team are paid.

Rule 1: The Game

Section 1: Assumption of Risk. See signed team roster

Section 2: Pay umpire at the plate (\$10), Home team will be determined by coin flip at home plate. Forfeits MUST be paid. Teams that refuse to pay forfeits will forfeit next scheduled game. 3 consecutive or 5 **TOTAL** forfeits will result in the removal from the schedule. A **REVISED** schedule will be made and issued to all other teams. Softball must be purchased at the ballpark from the head scorekeeper at \$7 per ball.

Section 3: Time Limit- Each game will be fifty-five (55) minutes, run rule, or seven (7) innings, whichever comes first. There will be no ties, game will continue until there is a winner. A minimum of eight (8) are needed to start or continue a game. A team can add up to twelve (12) players at any time during the game. Any vacated batting slot will be recorded as an out by the scorekeeper. This is true for a vacated spot not an empty spot which is different. Empty spots are not outs. For COED the minimum is also eight (8) players. Teams cannot have more males than females in the line-up. Whenever a COED team is starting with less than ten (10) players, the leadoff spot must be used by a female. A male female rotation in the lineup must be used. Two females may bat back to back when using more females than males in the lineup. Run rule for men and co-ed league: 10, 15, and 20 run rule will be used. 20 runs after 3 innings, 15 runs after 4 innings, and 10 runs after 5 innings.

Section 4: Home Runs- All leagues will have a one home run per inning except when designated otherwise by the league director. Bronze League will be allowed 1 HR per game. Any additional home runs will be outs with the home run out being an inning ending out. All home runs over the limit for other leagues will be declared outs. Player hitting the home run or the players on base at the time of the home run does not have to run around the bases on a home run. If the player(s) elects to run bases there will be no appeals for missed bases.

Section 5: Line-ups- Line-up must be turned in to scorekeepers before the start of the game. Only players present should be included in the line-up. Recognized nicknames may be used in the lineup. There will be a 5 minute grace period on all games to avoid forfeit. If you need the grace period, then you will forfeit your first at-bat. The game will start at the bottom of the first inning.

Section 6: Courtesy runner- One courtesy runner per inning can be used by a team (Men or Co-ed). In the first inning when a team needs a courtesy runner and there are no outs, anyone in the line-up can run. Using the wrong courtesy runner and appealed by the defense before the next legal pitch will result in an out.

Section 7: Tie breaker rule-The rule will be used when the teams are tied after time limit has expired or at the end of regulation which is seven (7) innings. At the start of the tie breaker the next legal batter will be placed at second base. Either he or she must go to second and then request the last out to run for him or her. This leadoff runner is in jeopardy of being called out when properly appealed if he does not go to second base. This appeal has to be made before the next legal pitch. One pitch rules will be used for the tie-breaker innings.

Section 8: Bat Racks- Before the start of the game, teams must place all legal bats (current USSSA stamp) that are going to be used during the game. Umpires will inspect and take note the number of bats being used. No bats will be added to this total without the umpire's approval. For players arriving after the start of the game, they must notify the umpire before placing a bat on the rack. Any player bringing a bat out of the dugout during the game will get a warning for the first offense. This first offense warning goes to both teams regardless of who caused it. Any additional bat infractions will result in the next legal batter being called out. Not having the bat amount the umpire has noted will result in the next legal batter being called out. An additional area under the bat rack (bats standing against the fence) will be used for teams that have exceeded the bat rack capacity. All bats that are in their proper place (on or under the bat rack) that are hit with a live thrown will result in the ball staying alive. At the discretion of the umpire the ball may be killed if a safety hazard is caused by the thrown ball. All other bats that are struck outside of this area will be dealt accordingly with the rules in place.

The Team that is batting is allowed 2 coaches (one on first base box and the other at the third base box), batter and on deck batter. All other players and coaches must be in the dugout. There will be one warning per game. First warning is for both teams no matter which team causes the infraction. The team that is on defense may not have any players or coaches outside the dugout. A coach or representative (offensive or defensive) that wants to speak with an umpire, a player that is substituting a defensive player, or a player that is substituting an offensive player will also be allowed to leave the dugout without penalty. PENALTY for being outside the dugout will be an OUT. For an offensive team causing the infraction, an out will be called for the batter that is at bat. A defensive infraction will result in an out being called for the next legal batter in the lineup.

Section 9: Illegal Player- A player hopping leagues or teams will be suspended for three games. He will be removed from the game he is illegal in with the game continuing if that team has 8 players left in the lineup.

Section 10: Un-sportsmanlike conduct- Any players ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct before, during, or after a game will be automatically be suspended for one game. For the player's second offense the suspension will be for two games. On the players third offense the player will be suspended for the remainder of the league session. All player ejections by the umpire will be final. **HP&RD has the right to impose harsher punishments as deemed necessary dependent on the infraction, even if it the first infraction.**

Section 11: Language- The use of abusive language from a coach/player or spectator that is referred to or reflected upon opposing players, umpires, league officials, or other spectators will not be allowed and will result in an ejection or subject to a suspension.

Section 12: Ejections- Any player ejected from a game for unsportsmanlike conduct before, during or after a game will be automatically suspended. Ejections are considered final. Use of an ineligible or suspended player will result in a forfeit. Only team manager (on registration sheet) and/or game captain (person that attend the coin flip for the team on that game) will be allowed to question a ruling or judgment on a play. Any other player will be warned on the first infraction and ejected on the second offense. The warning given is for the whole team.

Section 13: Fighting- ANYONE (players/coaches/spectators) caught fighting will be removed from the league for the remainder of the season. No refunds will be given.

Effective Fall of 2017, anyone caught throwing the first punch in an altercation will be suspended for a period no less than 365 days from the date of the incident. In addition, anyone who retaliates by fighting will also be suspended for a period of 180 days, also from the date of the incident.

For a second occurrence, all players/coaches/spectators involved will be suspended for a period of two years from the date of the incident.

Rule 2: Batting

Section 1: Batting order- Submitted batting order must be followed throughout the game, unless a substitute replaces a player. A substitute must take the turn at bat of the player he replaces in the regular order. Only one player is allowed on the on deck circle. All other players must remain in the dugout with the exception of the two base runner coaches.

Section 2: The batter is out if: Batter bats illegally or hits the ball with an illegal bat. The umpire must discover this illegal action before the next pitch either by observation or from an appeal from the opposing team.

He bunts or chops the ball deliberately downward (fair or foul). Batter must take a full swing.

He steps across the plate with the ball in play and with the pitcher in the pitching position.

No Courtesy fouls permitted (COED games WILL allow extra foul to women only). No base runners may advance if a batter after two strikes is out on a foul ball, whether the ball is caught or not. The ball is dead on both situations.

New beginning summer 2018: Batter that is called out for hitting up the middle will receive a warning for going up the middle into the pitching lane boundaries. The batter's second offense in the game for hitting up the middle will result into the batter getting OFFENSIVELY ejected. He or she can no longer bat for the duration of the game. Hitting up the middle twice without striking the pitcher will have the same penalty as if the pitcher had been hit by the batted ball while in the pitching lane. The umpire has the authority to remove the batter OFFENSIVELY on the first offense if in the judgment of the umpire the ball is hit up the middle intentionally.

Warm-up batting on the fences is prohibited.

Section 3: Player or substitute- The use of an ejected player in the game will result in a forfeit.

Re-entry is permitted in all programs; any of the starting players may be withdrawn once. Starters returning to the line-up must occupy the same spot the batting order it had before. A substitute may not re-enter.

Improper re-entry examples are: Starter who re-enters in an incorrect batting position, Starter who re-enters a second time, or a substitute who reenter the game.

If the improper re-entry is discovered while he is at bat, player is ejected and a proper substitute assumes all balls and strikes. If the improper re-entry is discovered after he has completed his time at bat but before a pitch has been made to a succeeding batter, he is called out and ejected from the game. All bases runners must be returned to where they were prior to that at-bat. If he is discovered after a pitch had been made to the succeeding batter then the improper re-entry is ejected and all play stands.

Section 4: Defensive Player- If a defensive player takes a position in the batter's line of vision, and with deliberate attempt, act un-sportsmanlike in an effort to distract the batter. The umpire shall first warn the offender, and then eject any player from the ballpark who repeats the offense.

Rule 3: Pitching Rule

Section 1: Pitchers must wear a protective mask in all divisions Men or COED. If pitcher pitches a ball without a mask and the batter hits safely in play, the play result will stand. If the batter hits the ball and is out during the play, the batter will be awarded 1st base and any runners on base will advance one base IF forced.

Section 2: At no time during the progress of the game shall the pitcher be allowed to use tape, or any other substance, including a glove on the pitching hand or fingers.

Section 3: At the beginning of an inning or when a pitcher relieves another pitcher, one minute may be used to deliver not more than 3 practice pitches to the catcher or some other teammate.

Section 4: The pitching plate for rule purposes will be two feet wide and six feet deep towards second base. The pitcher must be in contact with the pitching plate and the time of the release of the pitch. Only a definite

underhand motion is permitted in the delivery of the pitch. A pitch must be delivered within five seconds from the start of his pitching motion, failure to do so will result in time being called by the umpire and a ball awarded to the batter.

Section 5: The pitchers lane is 6 feet wide and 8 feet high. The lane extends two feet from each end of the pitchers plate and 8 feet from the ground. Any ball that is hit into this box will result in an out. If a pitcher is hit with a batted ball, the batter is out and will no longer bat. His spot is bypassed in the batting order without a penalty. A substitute that replaces this batter will be allowed to bat. The umpire will pick up the bat used in the hitting of the pitcher. Note: Umpires will have the right to pick up a bat if there is any suspicion on his part by the overuse of this bat.

Rule 4: Park Rules:

Section 1: Intoxicating beverages are not allowed within the softball complex including dugouts and playing field. Any coach/player/spectator/manager that is in possession of an alcoholic beverage in the dugout will be ejected. The person in possession of the alcoholic beverage will be ejected along with the coach. The player ejection will be for the remainder of the season, while the coach must sit out one game and not be in the dugout for that game. The second infraction for that team will result in both the player and coach/manager being ejected for the remainder of the season.

Rule 5: Uniforms

All players on a team shall wear uniforms alike in color. If player does not have the standard team shirt and is a player on the roster, the player can wear a shirt of alike color (style of shirt may vary) with a NUMBER printed or ironed on the back (no tape or marker) and does not need a team logo. If shirt has a logo in the front it must be team name but does not need to be same exact font, size, style, etc. **Teams will have to be in uniform during any mid or end of season tournaments. Players must have played in the regular season with the team and be on the roster to be allowed to play in the tournament.** Team shirts must be worn on the outside of any other shirt being worn. This is in addition to the current shirt rule now being enforced. Team shirts from past seasons that are not like current season will not be allowed. A batting jacket or windbreaker may be worn over the team shirt. Jacket or windbreaker must be of the predominant team color and must have a number. Exceptions to this rule (jacket or windbreaker) will be made due to inclement weather (cold).

Additional CO-ED Rules

(All previous rules apply)

At least eight players (legal lineup) must be in the lineup at all times. Same ball will be used for male and female batters. A base on balls to a male will be a two base award with the female having the option to also walk or hit. Run rule would be the same as the regular men's league. For purposes of playing the game, a team can start with more women than men as long as there are 8 player minimum. In such a case the leadoff for that team will have to be a woman and if needed women can bat back to back. However, men will not be permitted to bat back to back; this includes a spot vacated by a woman that not filled. The vacated spot will result in an out. If the vacated spot in the lineup results in there being more men than women in the lineup, the game can continue. However, there cannot be more men than women on defense. At the start of the ball

game there cannot be more men than women in the lineup and/or on defense. Men must bat opposite of their **dominant side**. Women will be permitted an extra foul.

Pitcher and catcher may not be of the same sex; exception, if all the team players in the lineup are women. Pitcher has the right to switch the batter to other side of the plate.

If a Female batter hits the ball up the middle toward the pitcher between the pitching lane boundaries and the ball makes contact with the pitcher then not only is the batter out, she can no longer bat for the rest of the game but can still play defense. However, if she is substituted for then the new batter is allowed to bat. If she CANNOT be substituted for then it will be an OUT each time that vacant slot comes up. The bat used will be picked up and not in play for the remainder of the game but will be returned to the team after the game.

Protests

Protests are allowed on rule interpretations, league rules, or player eligibility. **Umpire judgment is not protest able.**

During league play, all protests must be turned in writing with a protest fee of \$25.00. The team protesting must protest the game while the game is in progress. After protesting the game at the field, the team has the next business day to file protest at the Harlingen Parks & Recreation office.

During tournament play, all protests must be ruled upon by the league officials and/or HP&RD on the spot.

A protest on rule interpretation will be allowed during the game before the next legal pitch only. A protested game in which the protest is allowed will continue at the protested point if ruled upon in the protesting team favor. A player eligibility protest (league or tournament play) will be allowed during and after the game. If the protest is made during the game and the protesting team wins the protest, the protesting team will get the win. If the protest is done after the game and the protesting team wins the protest, the protesting team will not get the win. There will be no winners in the game. In league play there will be two losers in the game, while in tournament play there will also be two losers with the next opponent getting a bye. The offending team is removed from the tournament. During tournament play all protest will be ruled on the spot without a fee involved. The team protesting player eligibility (league or tournament play) will have its own roster checked for eligible players by using the scorekeepers game score sheet and team rosters.

Fights and altercations are NOT protest able. The aforementioned penalty will be enforced by Harlingen Parks & Recreation.

LEAGUE OFFICALS HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE ANY NECESSARY RULING TO KEEP THE TIMING OF PLAY ON ANY RULE OR SITUATION THAT IS NOT COVERED IN THE PREVIOUS RULES