



## West End Division Softball Rules

### Key Rules

- Shorthanded teams may have only one (1) player from another West End team play. A team may pick up an unlimited amount of non-West End players during the regular season to fill out their game roster.
- All games are seven (7) innings. Most divisions have a 1 hour, 15 minute time limit. Mercy rule is 12 runs after **four** innings
- Teams without the minimum required women will be penalized two (2) runs per woman missing at the top of the third inning only. A ghost out will also be placed in the lineup.
- The batting order may not have more than seven (7) male batters in a row.
- No fake tags, no blocking a base (or basepath), no intentional takeouts or plowing over fielders.
- Hitting the league photographer with an errant throw or batted ball, regardless of how much he is in the way will result in your team playing at 7am for the rest of the season.

### 1. Rosters & Eligibility

- All players must sign an West End Softball League waiver prior to playing, either at the start of the season or before their first game.
- A player must play in a minimum of four (4) regular season games to be eligible to play in the postseason.
- Prior to each game, the captain of each team will provide the scorekeeper a copy of their lineup for that game. All lineups must include players full name, and number if applicable.
- Players not on the team's roster should be noted by captain for bookkeeping purposes.
- If a team is shorthanded, they may have only one (1) player from another West End team play. That player must be noted by captain to scorekeeper. You may not pick up an extra player if you have ten (10) members of your team present. This is not allowed during the postseason.

### 2. Ground Rules

- All games are seven (7) innings.
- Alcohol or drugs during or after a game are not permitted at any field. Violators will be expelled from the league without refund.
- Team captains and umpires must meet before the game to clarify the rules and to determine field ground rules and how to handle controversial plays.
- During the game, only captains may approach the umpire with a grievance. Teams must abide by the umpire's decision. Umpires can remove unruly players from the game, after first issuing one (1) warning to both captains or the player(s) involved.

- All EMAAC divisions have a three (3) homerun limit. Any additional homerun is an out. This applies on all fields with boundaries allowing for unchallenged homeruns. Inside-the-park homeruns are not restricted.

### 3. Game Requirements

- The HOME team is the team listed second on the schedule.
- Teams must begin the game if seven (7) or more players are present at scheduled start time.
- Teams must field a minimum of seven (7) players by ten (10) minutes after start time or forfeit the game. If a team forfeits three (3) games, that team will be automatically dropped from the division playoffs. Teams can play with less than seven (7) players if opposing team agrees. A 12-run mercy rule will be in effect the entire game, or until the team fields the requisite amount of players.
- If a team has 8 or fewer players, the opposing team must supply a non-defensive courtesy catcher. Any defensive infielder may cover plays at home plate.
- Each team must field a minimum of two (2) women at all times during the game. Maximum number of men on the field at any one time is eight (8). In 2013, the ratio will increase to three (3) women on the field.
- **Teams without the minimum required women will be penalized two (2) runs per woman missing at the top of the third inning only.** This penalty is assessed only once. In addition, any missing woman will be put in the lineup as a ghost batter and will be an automatic out each time the ghost batter comes up to bat. The ghost batter must be inserted by the captain in the lineup at the start of the game.
- If a female player arrives, she may bat in place of the ghost batter without any further penalty.
- If a female player arrives prior to the top of the third inning, the team is not penalized two runs. If she arrives after the runs have been posted, she may still bat, but the penalized runs remain.

### 4. Shortened Games

- In the case of a game being shortened due to inclement weather, darkness, etc., the following rules will be applied.
- During the regular season, any game stopped prior to the fourth inning will be replayed at a later date. Any game longer than four complete innings will revert back to the score of the last completed inning.
- Any game stopped during the playoffs will be continued at exactly the spot where it was stopped and will be played to the completion of a 7-inning game. In this case, there may be no changes to the lineup, with the exception of replacing any players who cannot make it to the continuation. When players are replaced for this reason, you may only replace a male with a male and a female with female. There may be no other additions to the batting order.
- Some fields require time restrictions on games, and those restrictions vary by division.

### 5. Batting Order

- Teams may establish their batting order in one of two ways:
  - (1) Bat all players present. With this type of batting order, there may be free substitution on the field.
  - (2) Bat only 10 players, with a minimum of 3 women. With this type of batting order, a player may only bat in their designated position in the batting order, which means

that there must be specific player-for-player substitution. For instance, if Player B (the pinch hitter) substitutes for Player A (the starter), Player A can only reenter the game in place of Player B. It is important to note that once Player A reenters for Player B, Player B is out of the game for good. This is known as the Re-entry Rule.

- Players arriving late may be placed at the end of the lineup. Female players can be inserted into the “automatic out” slot if the team started the game without the required number of players.
- The batting order may not have more than seven (7) male batters in a row at any time in the game. (This includes when the bottom of the order loops back to the top.) Captains may insert an “automatic out” slot if needed.

## 6. Pitching

- Pitching is regulated by ASA rules. The pitcher may hold or grip the ball in any manner. The pitch must be delivered in a definite underhanded motion. The pitch must be delivered between the shoulders and knees with a 6’ to 12’ arc.
- If the umpire determines that a pitched ball does not meet the required arc (6’ to 12’), the umpire shall declare the pitch illegal, while it is still in flight. At this time, the batter still may swing at the pitch and the pitch (and results of batter swinging) becomes legal. If batter chooses not to swing, the pitch will be ruled a ball.

## 7. The Count

- A batter will be declared out if he/she fouls off two pitches after having two strikes in the count.
- The league will adhere to the ASA rule regarding walking a male batter when a female batter is on deck. When a male batter is walked with a female batter on deck, the male batter will be awarded second base. If there are less than two (2) outs, the female batter must bat. If there are two (2) outs, the female batter has the option of accepting an automatic walk or batting. Of note to umpires, our league only requires 2 female batters in the order, so this ruling would only be applied in cases where a female is on deck. Ghost outs count as female players. Runners advance two bases before the out is applied.
- Any batter may refuse a walk when batting before a ghost batter only when there are two (2) outs.

## 8. Courtesy Belt

- A courtesy belt of 60 feet from the bases to the outfield is required for all women batters. One (1) outfielder may move in behind 2nd base, as long as that fielder is in the infield. In cases where a field does not have a dirt infield to distinguish the area in which this fielder may go, the fielder should be within 4 feet behind 2nd base. All outfielders must move behind the 60’ area. No fielders are allowed in this 60’ area while the courtesy belt is in effect. The umpire will count off the 60 foot area down the left and right field lines. This will aid the umpires in determining the line, which outfielders must stay behind.

## 9. Mercy Rule (a.k.a. Slaughter Rule)

- The Mercy Rule applies after four (4) full innings (12 run rule). The Mercy Rule only applies during the regular season. There is no Mercy Rule during the playoffs.
- Flip/Flop rule can be used for all Divisions at the umpire’s digression. In the inning when the Run Rule is exceeded (after the fourth inning) and the home team is losing, the home team will remain at bat and become the visiting team. If the new visiting team does not score enough runs to reduce the run difference below the Run Rule the game is over. If they

reduce the run difference to below the Run Rule then the new home team will bat. If they subsequently score enough runs to exceed the Run Rule the game will be over; if they do not the Game will continue under that format. If the situation reverses, the teams would flip/flop again.

## 10. Rules of Play

- Pinch hit only once per batting order when a team goes with a lineup of only ten (10) players (male for male batter/woman for woman batter). Pinch hitters must take the field in the same inning that they pinch hit. A pinch hitter can be replaced by the starter. However, once a pinch hitter has been replaced, s/he is out of the game for good. (This is the softball Re-entry Rule.)
- Runners may leave a base only after the pitched ball crosses the plate, or the runner may be called out.
- No aiding a runner. If a coach or anyone from the bench aids a runner, the runner may be called out.
- **No fake tags**, or the umpire will give one (1) warning to the team. Any fake tags after the warning will result in the umpire awarding the runner an extra base.
- No blocking a base (or basepath), or the runner will be awarded an extra base.
- No intentional takeouts or plowing over fielders. This will result in an automatic out and ejection from the game.

## 11. Equipment

- All softball bats used in the EMAAC and the West End Softball League must be ASA slow-pitch approved and be clearly marked that it does not have a BPF (Bat Performance Factor) which exceeds 1.20. Any batter using an illegal bat will be declared out, the team will be warned, and the bat will be removed from the field. If the bat is used again, the batter will be declared out and ejected from the game, whether it is the same player who previously used the illegal bat, or not.
- The West End Softball League recognizes and adheres to the "Illegal Bat List" produced by the ASA organization. Any bat appearing on this list is not allowed to be used in any game. To view the list of bats banned by the ASA.
- The West End Softball League uses 12" balls for both male and female hitters.
- Gym shoes or molded rubber cleats are allowed. No metal or screw-in metal cleats will be allowed. ALL PLAYERS MUST WEAR SHOES.
- Participants must remove all jewelry prior to competing, unless the jewelry is incredibly awesome. Awesomeness is determined by official.

## 12. Ejections

- A player ejected by an umpire or league official during a game must immediately leave the field and grounds. If the player doesn't not leave, the game will be declared a forfeit loss.
- If a player is ejected and no substitute is available, that player's spot in the lineup will be taken as an out.
- A player ejected during a game is automatically suspended for the team's next two games, including postseason play if applicable.
- A player ejected twice during the season will be suspended for the remainder of the season.

## 13. No Umpire Play Rules

- If there is no umpire or scorekeeper, contact Division Coordinator immediately.

- If only one official is present, he will serve as umpire. Offensive teams will be required to keep statistics. (For softball, please make sure statistician is competent in baseball scorekeeping.)
- If you have no officials:
  - Strike zone measurements will be measured from the back tip of the plate. A standard sized softball bat (32" to 34") will be used to measure the depth of the box. The Captains will draw a line to represent this back measurement to aid in the calling of balls and strikes. The width will be the width of the plate.
  - When you play with no umpire, close calls will be awarded on an exchange basis. (First close call your team is safe, next close call your team is out, and so on.)
  - Pitchers must allow the batter the opportunity to hit the ball. This will help minimize delays in the game. If ten (10) pitches to a batter fail to cross the plate, hitting team's captain will request and receive a new pitcher.