

Sudbury Men's Softball League Rules (2021 Printing)

I General Rules & Player Eligibility

1. In conjunction with these rules, the Sudbury Men's Softball Code for Player Conduct and USA Softball rules shall apply to all games. Where USA and local rules conflict, the Sudbury Men's Softball League rules shall take precedence.
2. A protest must be declared during the game informing the umpires and the opposing manager except for player eligibility. All appeals to the rules must be made to the commissioners within 48 hours and will be decided by the commissioners, after investigation. The decision by the commissioners will be final.
3. Players must live or work full time in Sudbury, be a graduate of Lincoln-Sudbury RH, or be a graduating senior.
4. Three ineligible players per team may be added to the roster prior to opening day.
5. A player may only play for one team across all divisions.
6. Any player who has played at least 10 consecutive seasons on any one or more Sudbury Men's Softball teams in compliance with rules 3 & 4, above, is grandfathered from ineligibility.
7. Rosters may be added to until July 1. Anyone can be added to a roster until the first game. After the first game, a player added to a roster must wait 5 days before he can play in a game (Note, see #4 above on ineligible players). The league commissioners must be notified before a new person is added to a roster.
8. A player shall be eligible for the playoffs if he has played in at least six (6) of the team's regular season games.
9. No drinking of alcoholic beverages on the bench, bleachers, or in the general area when your team is playing. Players who show up for a game intoxicated shall not be permitted to play. Umpires have the authority to forbid or remove any player from playing if he feels like the player is acting under the influence, or in an unorderly manner.
10. Any player ejected from a game shall receive a 1 game suspension, a second ejection shall be a 3 game suspension and a third ejection shall result in the removal of the offending player from the league.
11. Playing an ineligible or illegal player shall result in a forfeit. Forfeiture due to playing an illegal player may alter the standings at the end of the season.
12. Any team that forfeits 3 games will be removed from the league immediately.
13. Managers will review all rules with their team to avoid arguments. Ignorance of the rules will not be allowed as an excuse for violation.

II Equipment

1. Players may NOT participate without some type of shoe or sneaker. Bare feet, stocking feet, thongs, etc. will not be allowed under any circumstances. Rubber cleats may be worn, metal spikes may not.
2. All bats used in play must conform to the USA rules, including the USA approved bats list.
3. Helmets must be worn by all offensive players on the field (batter and runners) (USA rules). Helmets are to be provided by each team.
4. The catcher MUST wear a mask with a throat protector.
5. All bases must be securely fastened when possible.

6. Where ever possible the league shall employ a double bag at first base. When a double bag is used the fielder is entitled to the white portion of the bag and the runner to the colored portion (per USA rules).
7. No equipment shall be left lying on the field, in either fair or foul territory.
8. Whenever possible a 12", leather covered, cork center, core .47, yellow optic softball shall be used for game play.

III Pre-Game & Umpires

1. The commissioner of Umpires is responsible for providing umpires for each game. Call the commissioner by 4:00pm if your game is not being played due to inclement weather. The second game will be automatically canceled if the first game is not played due to inclement weather. The first game managers will also call the second game managers.
2. Any game (early, late, Curtis or Feeley) may be called off by the consent of both managers prior to the first pitch. Once the game has started, it can only be postponed or stopped by the attending umpires.
3. Games rained out will be rescheduled at the discretion of the commissioners, on a weekday evening at either free field.
4. Home team shall be decided by the first team listed on the schedule.
5. The home team manager is responsible for retrieving and returning the bases, for lining the field, and for turning on and off the lights (Feeley Field bases located at the police station).
6. Batting practice must not be taken at home plate. Move back near the backstop. Suggestion; each team take one side and alternate pitches.
7. Infield practice shall not be hit from the batter's box.

IV Game Lineups

1. Bat in rotation; every player must be in the lineup. Example; if 15 show up -- everyone bats not just 10 or 11. If only 11 are listed, the other 4 may not play at all that game.
2. Lineup cards shall be reviewed by the opposing manager prior to the start of the game. Lineup cards at a minimum shall contain the following;
 - Team Name
 - Game Date
 - Players names arranged in batting order
 - Opposing manager's signature or initials – *Note a manager's signature does NOT denote acceptance of the player's eligibility. A manager may still challenge a player's eligibility after the game despite signing a lineup card.*
3. If a player arrives at a game after it has started, he bats after the last player listed in the lineup, and after informing the opposing manager, can be added to the lineup card.
4. A properly filled out lineup cards must be submitted to the league for every game, and will be the primary basis for setting playoff eligibility. It is the responsibility of the manager to submit the proper lineup card for each game. Games with out cards will NOT be counted towards playoff eligibility.
5. A player may play any time in the field, at any position, and come in and out of the field at the discretion of the manager; *pitcher included.*
6. Every batter need not be a *fielder* ever.

7. If a player is dropped from the batting lineup, he is out of the game. The dropped player's position in the batting order is eliminated but not counted as an out. This is to be done only in emergencies, and not to be used as an advantage.
8. All teams may use a 10th player (short fielder). This player may be positioned anywhere on the outfield grass. If one team has only 9 men the other team can still play 10 men.

V Game Times and Regulation Games

1. Two games will be scheduled at Featherland each night.
2. At the start of the season through May 31st, the First Game will start at 7pm. No new inning will start after 9PM. If the game is tied after 9PM it is ruled a suspended game and will be continued at a later date.

On June 1st to end of season, the First Game will start at 6:45pm. No new inning will start after 8:45PM. If the game is tied after 8:45PM it is ruled a suspended game and will be continued at a later date.
3. At the start of the season through May 31st, the Second Game will start by 8:30 or when the first game ends which ever is later. The second game may start sooner than 8:30 if all parties (including umpires) agree. No new inning will start after 11:00PM. If the game is tied after 11:00PM it is ruled a suspended game and will be continued at a later date.

On June 1st to end of season, Second Game will start by 8:15 or when the first game ends whichever is later. The second game may start sooner than 8:15 if all parties (including umpires) agree. No new inning will start after 11:00PM. If the game is tied after 11:00PM it is ruled a suspended game and will be continued at a later date.
4. Lights must be out by 11:15pm and the parking lot cleared immediately.
5. All Games at Curtis or Feeley Field will start by 6:30 PM. Games may start earlier if all parties (including umpires) agree. To save daylight early starts at Curtis on Feeley are recommended.
6. Game Forfeits
 - 6.1. A team must field at least 9 players by 15 minutes after start time or they forfeit the game.
 - 6.2. A score of 7-0 (7 for the winning team to 0 for the forfeiting team) will be recorded on all forfeited games.
 - 6.3. On a forfeit that occurs before the game begins.
 - 4 No lineup card will be accepted, and no game credit (towards playoffs) will be given to the forfeiting team regardless of any player who may show up at the field.
 - 5 For the team that takes a forfeit, credit of 1 game will be given to every player on the roster.
 - 6.4. On a forfeit that occurs during a game;
 - 4 Normal lineup cards for both teams will be accepted.
7. Games of 7 innings will be played. Exception; 15 run mercy rule. If the home team is ahead by 15 runs or more after 4 1/2 innings, the game is over. If the visiting team is ahead by 15 runs or more after 5 innings, the game is over. After waiting the appropriate amount of innings, the game ends immediately upon reaching a 15 run or more lead. There is no "Last at bat".
8. A regular season game called by the umpire shall be regulation if 5 or more complete innings have been played, or if the team second at bat has scored more runs than the other team has scored in 5 or more innings.

9. If the first game is called due to inclement weather (official game or not) the second game is automatically canceled.
10. Games called during the regular season, if not yet official shall be replayed from the beginning.
11. Games called during the playoffs, official or not, shall be continued from the point of stoppage until completion.

VI Play

1. Division rules: all divisions -- 10 men plus bunting, stealing optional. Games between teams from different divisions will be played using the lower division team's rules.
2. A runner may not leave their base before the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. Consequences, ball is dead runner is out.
3. Courtesy runners – Before the game begins managers shall get together and identify any player who requires a courtesy runner for the game. With the exception of an in game injury, these will be the only players allowed a courtesy runner. Any designated player who reaches base shall be given a runner. Once designated the player must take a runner every time they reach base. The player who made the last out becomes the courtesy runner. (See Rule #4 below)
 - 3.1 In games where stealing is permitted, A courtesy runner may NOT steal.
 - 3.2 If a player is designated as requiring a courtesy runner, he cannot bunt. A player who reaches base by a bunt may not take a courtesy runner unless injured on the play. Bunts in violation of this rule result in an automatic out and all base runners must return to the base they were on at the start of the play.
4. If the last out is unable to become the courtesy runner, the next out is used until a runner is found.
5. A batter hit by a pitch shall be entitled to first base at the discretion of the umpire. The batter must make an attempt from being hit by pitch.
6. Other than a batter progressing towards first base, a base runner must slide if an attempt to put out the runner is imminent. *Exception; on the front end of a double play attempt, the runner may "peel off" to avoid contact or interference with the fielder.* On a play at the plate the catcher (or any other fielder) must allow a runner access to the plate. Home plate may not be blocked.
7. A batter who squares to bunt on a pitch, and contacts the ball, must bunt. A batter may NOT pull the bat back during the pitching motion, or delivery and then swing. The purpose of this rule is to prevent possible injury to charging infielders. Consequence – The ball is dead and the batter is out. The batter is also subject to ejection from the game at the discretion of the umpire. The decision to eject a player for this rule violation should be based upon the intent and severity of the infraction. By the mutual agreement of the manager/coaches prior to a game, bunting can be prohibited in any game.
8. Optional stealing games;
 - 8.1 If one team does not want to steal neither team can steal.
 - 8.2. No-stealing games
 - 8.2.1. All Runners shall advance 1 base (if available) on any pitched ball that strikes the backstop or goes out of play *without* touching the bat or the batter. Exception: runners at third base are NOT allowed to advance home.
 - 8.2.2. In a no-stealing game all runners must retag their original base on any ball not hit into play.

- 8.2.3. If a play is made to pick off a runner at any base, all runners can advance at their own risk by FIRST retagging their original base. All pick off plays are force plays. Tagging a runner who has yet to return to their *original base* is NOT required.
- 8.2.4. Pickoffs may not be made on foul balls.
- 8.2.5. On a dropped third strike the batter is out and no runner may advance unless a pick-off attempt is made and the runner has tagged up, or the ball goes out of play or touches the backstop (per #8.2.1 above).
- 8.3 In games where stealing is permitted, A courtesy runner may NOT steal.
9. Scores need to be submitted to via the web site (www.sudburymenssoftball.org) shortly after each game. In the event of a rainout, a score of 0-0 and the note "rainout" should be submitted.

VI Ground Rules

1. At Featherland Park, over the fence on a fly -- home run. The ball must leave the park to be considered a home run. Any ball that strikes the fence on the fly and goes over is a home run. A ball that strikes the fence on the fly and bounces back into the field -- "All you can get". Over or under the fence on a bounce -- double. A fair ball that skids past the fence on the right field line -- double.
2. Curtis Field -- hitting the fair portion of the second pine tree down the right field line on the fly -- home run. If the ball hits the First tree that extends into fair play -- the ball is dead and considered no play.
3. At Feeley Field #2, into the tall grass on the fly -- home run. Into the tall grass on a bounce or roll -- "All you can get".
4. All out of play boundaries should be reviewed with the umpires, and agreed to, prior to each game.
5. Unless otherwise modified and agreed to (with the umpires), the following out of play will be in effect at Featherland Park. Balls that enter the openings of dugouts. All light poles are out of play as well as the road.
6. Unless otherwise modified and agreed to (with the umpires), the following out of play will be in effect at Feeley Field. First base -- Straight line from backstop along the bottom of the hill. Third base -- Straight line from backstop to tree line.

VII Pitching

1. The pitching style shall be *Strict Modified*, with the additional guidelines below.
2. The pitcher shall take a starting position with two feet on the pitching plate. Both feet must be pointed towards home plate.
3. Preliminary to pitching, the pitcher must come to a complete stop, facing the batter, with both shoulders in line with first and third base, with the ball held with both hands in front of the body. This position must be maintained for at least one full second, completely at stop, before starting the delivery.
4. The pitch must be made from this position. No step towards the rear.
5. The hand shall be below the hip and the wrist not further from the body than the elbow.
6. Throughout the delivery of the pitch, neither shoulder may turn more than 15 degrees from an imaginary line connecting the pitching rubber and the first and third base lines. The top of the pitching hand may not swing above the level of the pitcher's head.
7. Twisting, turning the wrist, or spinning the ball is allowed.

8. The pitcher cannot push off with the pivot foot from any place other than the rubber. No additional push-off is allowed with either foot. The pivot foot may not leave the pitching rubber until the pitching arm has crossed in front of the pitching side leg.
9. Illegal pitch is a ball. If hit, it does not count. After one illegal pitch, a pitcher will be warned against further violations. After a second warning, if the pitcher is unable to comply, the umpire may prohibit the offending player from pitching for the remainder of the game but the player may remain in the lineup and play another position. After a third warning, the offending player must cease pitching for the remainder of the game but may remain in the lineup and play another position. **VIII Playoffs**

Division Play-offs

1. Three divisions: Top four teams each league shall qualify for the playoffs.
 - a. Semi Finals -- Team 1 vs. Team 4; Team 2 vs. Team 3 in each league
 - b. Finals -- Winners of the Semi Finals in each league

Two divisions: Top four teams in a division with 6 or fewer teams shall qualify for the playoffs and proceed as noted above for three divisions. In a division with 7 or more teams, the commissioners may institute a one-game wild card round (with or without byes) by notice to the manager/coaches prior to the season and have more than the top four teams advance to the playoffs.

General Play-offs

1. All playoff series will be 2 out of 3 unless the commissioners have designated a one-game wild card round for a division of 7 or more teams.
2. A player shall be eligible for the playoffs if he has played in at least six (6) of the team's regular season games and has properly registered for the league through the league website.
3. A list of all eligible players for the playoffs shall be created from the submitted lineup cards and distributed by the commissioners prior to starting the playoffs.
4. Playing an ineligible player in a playoff game will result in a forfeit of the game. **IX League Alignment**

1. Any team that wins the league (not the playoffs) in a lower division two years in a row MUST move up to the higher division the following year. When a team moves up the last place team in the higher division MUST move down.
2. Any team that comes in last place in the upper division two years in a row MUST move down to the lower division the following year. When a team moves down the first place team in the lower division MUST move up.

IX Tie Breaking Rules

1. Head to head win loss record
2. Winning % in own division
3. Fewest runs allowed in head to head play
4. Fewest runs allowed season
5. Most runs scored season
6. Tie breaking game

I. General:

- a. In order to establish fair play, good sportsmanship and a fun environment for all teams, and umpires, the Sudbury Men's Softball League has established a code for player conduct. These standards will apply to teams and players before, during, and after games. The league will have ZERO TOLERANCE for violation of these standards.

II. Umpires:

- a. Umpires are hired by the league and are to be treated with respect.
- b. Any taunting, abusive language, threatening or "riding" of the umpire, directly or indirectly, will result in a warning being issued to a player and any subsequent violation will result in immediate ejection.
 - i. On a serious offense, as judged by the umpire, a player may be ejected without warning.
- c. It is understood, by the league and umpires, that sometimes controversial or critical calls are made by the umpire that may cause a player to question the decision. Excessive arguing or continuing to "ride" the umpire well after the play has ended will result in a warning or ejection of the player.
- d. A manager/coach, who feels an umpire failed in their duties or is not up to proper standards, may file a written complaint to the league giving as much detail as possible. After review, the complaint will be forwarded to the Commissioner of the Umpires who will take appropriate action.

III. Manager/Coach:

- a. The manager/coach of a team shall be the only one to deal with the umpires in appealing or challenging calls during the game.
- b. The manager/coach has the responsibility to control the conduct of the players on their team.
 - i. If improper behavior cannot be identified to a single player the manager/coach and team shall be warned. A second incident shall result in the manager/coach being ejected from the game for failure to control the team.
 - ii. The manager/coach will review this conduct policy with all players to assure compliance. Ignorance of this policy will not be accepted as an excuse.
 - iii. The commissioners reserve the right to discipline a manager/coach for repeated violations of the Code for Player Conduct by the manager's team.

IV. Players:

- a. It is the player's responsibility to maintain proper conduct and control before, during, and after games. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.
- b. A player is subject to this code of conduct during their team's play whether or not they are in the official lineup (this includes suspended, hurt, or other players who choose not to play).
- c. Taunting of other players is not allowed. It is understood, by the league and umpires, that a certain amount of "gamesmanship" or chatter occurs between teams and players over the course of a game.
 - i. At any point if this "gamesmanship" or chatter becomes taunting, offensive, personal, or excessive, the player will receive a warning from the umpire to stop. Additional violations will result in ejection from the game.
 - ii. On a serious offense, as judged by the umpire, a player may be ejected without warning.

V. Actions:

- a. An ejected player must gather their belongings and leave the field and general area immediately and cease disruption of the game and not return. Failure to do so will result in a warning being issued to the player's Manager/Coach. If the player continues to remain on the field or continues to disrupt umpires or other players from a distance (such as the parking lot), the game will be stopped and a forfeit shall be declared.
 - i. Any team who cannot field at least 9 players after the ejection will immediately forfeit the game regardless of score or inning.
- b. Per league rules, any ejection of a player will result in the following additional action
 - i. 1st ejection – 1 game suspension
 - ii. 2nd ejection – 3 game suspension
 - iii. 3rd ejection – Removal from the league
- c. Any team that plays a suspended player shall forfeit all games played by that player during the suspension. In addition the violating player's suspension will be doubled.
- d. A suspended player may sit in the stands and watch, but may not aid in the play of the game. This includes (but not limited to), sitting on the bench, managing/coaching the team, coaching bases, keeping the official lineup or team score.

VI. League:

- a. A manager/coach may appeal the suspension of a player to the league. This must be done in a timely manner and will be decided by the commissioners after investigation to include talking to all parties.
 - i. The decision of the commissioners will be final.
- b. The league reserves the right to review any issue involving player or manager/coach conduct, whether or not it involved ejection, and take additional action up to and including removal from the league as warranted by the circumstances.

Approved June 8, 2003 by;

League Commissioners

Umpire Commissioner

As amended through April 2020