

Fall ball at Featherland Rules  
2020

**Gameplay:**

- USA Softball rules will be applied except where there is conflicted with this rule set, in which this rule set will take precedent over USA rules.
- A player may only play for one team.
- Seven (7) inning games. If the game is tied after seven innings, extra innings will be played. However, if the game had a scheduled start for 6:45 PM and another game is scheduled to begin afterwards, no new inning will start after 8:45 PM. If the game had a scheduled start of 8:15 PM, or if a 6:45 PM game was the only game scheduled, no new inning will start after 11:00 PM.
- Minimum number of players to start a game is nine (9). If a team does not have nine players at the scheduled start time of their game, they will be given 15 minutes to field a full team before a forfeit is entered.
- Mercy rule is 15 runs after losing team has batted five (5) times.
- Any team that does not show up for a scheduled game will be credited with a forfeit. Forfeited games will not be rescheduled. A score of 7-0 will be recorded on all forfeited games.
- If a regular season game is called off during play for any reason before a five full innings have been played (or 4 ½ innings if the home team is ahead), it will rescheduled and the game will be restarted from the beginning (Top of the first, 0-0 score). If more than five innings have been played and the game is tied, the game will resume from where it was halted. Managers should note the score and where each team is in their respective lineups and will attempt to field identical teams when the game is completed. If more than five innings have been played and one team is winning, the game will be final.
- Teams are required to bat all players in their lineup. A player is not required to play in the field.
- A player may in the field may be subbed in and out of the game at the team managers discretion. This includes the team's pitcher. There is no limit to the amount of fielding substitutions teams can make (including bringing the original pitcher back into the game multiple times).
- All batters must wear a helmet.

- A runner may not leave the base until after the ball has been released from the pitcher's hand.
- Stealing: both teams must agree before the game to allow stealing. If one team does not agree, there is no stealing and baserunners may only advance on pass balls that make contact with the backstop or go out of play as determined by the umpires.
- If stealing is allowed, any baserunner may be picked off at any base by a tag play. The play is also live from the time the pitcher releases the ball until the time the ball is returned to the pitcher within the direct vicinity of the mound (sometimes referred to as the Circle) or if the umpires call a time out.
- If stealing is allowed, dropped third strike rules are in effect.
- If stealing is not allowed, any baserunner may be picked off at any base by a force play (e.g. catcher throws down to 1B, 1B does not have to tag runner but step on the base with the ball before the runner is on the base) or a tag play. If stealing is not allowed, on a catcher's throw to a base, the ball is live and other runners may advance granted they re-tag the respective base they are on prior to advancing.
- If stealing is not allowed, runners may not advance on pass balls if they are on 3<sup>rd</sup> base.
- Bunting: bunting is allowed. If a player squares to bunt, they cannot pull back and deliver a full swing. This action results in an automatic out and potential ejection.
- Alcoholic beverages may not be consumed by players during the game. Umpires may remove players at their sole discretion suspected of intoxication.
- For avoidance of doubt, if a player arrives after the first pitch of the game, they must be placed at the end of the batting order and the other manager must be informed of the late players arrival and entry into the order.
- Lineup cards must be filled out prior to the game and initialed by the opposing manager after the game. They must clearly read the last name of the player and the first initial (or full name). Lineup cards should be placed inside the box in the softball shed behind home plate.
- Once a batter has an official at-bat or has played in the field, they must not be removed from the batting order for any reason other than injury or an emergency. If a player is in a team's dugout but does not intend to play, the manager for their team must disclose this to the umpire and other team's manager prior to the start of the game. A manager cannot have a "tentative player" in their dugout who they only intend to play if another player does not show up or if the game starts a

certain way prior to that player entering the field or having an at-bat.

- A player who needs a courtesy runner must be identified by their team's manager before the game, with the exception of an in game injury. No other players will be allowed a courtesy runner.
- If a courtesy runner is needed, the last batted out will run in place of the player (if the last batted out cannot run, the next batted out will be the runner, and so on). If stealing is allowed, a courtesy runner may not steal but may attempt to advance on a pass ball or wild pitch. Any dispute over whether the pitch resulted in a wild pitch or passed ball will be the sole discretion of the umpires. If stealing is not allowed, a courtesy runner may advance on pass balls that make contact with the backstop or go out of play as determined by the umpires.
- Runners must avoid contact during a close play at a base (or peel off in the case of a double play ball). The umpire has sole discretion in determining if a player did not attempt to avoid contact and may rule the player out. Catchers may not block home plate (runner must have some access to the plate). Runners have the following options during a close play:
  - They may slide
  - Jump over the defender holding the ball
  - Go around the defender
  - Return to the previous base touched
  - Give themselves up(8-7Q Rule supplement 13)
- If a batter is hit by a pitch, they must take first base unless, at the discretion of the umpires, the umpires determine that the batter did not make an attempt to avoid being hit by the pitch. A batter cannot unilaterally elect to stay at bat after being hit by a pitch.

### **Results/ standings:**

- Both team reps should email game results to the organizers within 24 hours of the game. The results will be posted upon receiving identical final scores from each team rep.
- Standings will be posted online at [sudburysoftball.com](http://sudburysoftball.com)

### **Playoffs:**

- Players must play in 4 out of 8 regular season games to be playoff eligible. However, the league organizers do have discretion to allow players who have played less than 4 games to be playoff eligible. Possible discretionary reasons for a player to be playoff eligible without having played 4 games includes, but is not limited to, missed games resulting from: injury, illness and/or quarantining

due to possible COVID-19 exposure.

- Playoffs will consist of the top four teams in the division from the regular season.
- Semi-finals will be best-of-three series with #1 seed vs #4 seed and #2 seed vs. #3 seed. Higher seed is home team for games 1 & 3. Lower seed is home team for game 2. The finals will consist of a best-of-three series with the highest remaining seed designated as the home team. Same structure as semi-finals (home-away-home).
- If a playoff game is called off during play for any reason, the game shall be continued from the point of stoppage until completion. Managers should note the score and where each team is in their respective lineups and will attempt to field identical teams when the game is completed
- Regular season tiebreakers will be as follows:
  1. Head to head win loss record
  2. Fewest runs allowed in head to head play
  3. Fewest runs allowed in the season
  4. Higher overall season run differential between runs scored and runs allowed
  5. Tie breaking game

#### **Forfeits:**

- If a team cannot field at least nine players, they must notify the umpires and league organizers two hours prior to the scheduled start of the game.
- Forfeits will be recorded as 7-0 for the official run keeping record. (E.g. seven runs for the winning team and 0 for the forfeiting team).
- No players receive a game played for the forfeiting team. All players from the “winning” team will be credited with a game played.

#### **Rain make-ups**

- Rainouts will be rescheduled on an ad hoc basis at the discretion of the organizers.
- Note: Given the shortened season, rainouts are most likely to be scheduled in late game slots.

#### **Equipment:**

- All bats must conform to USA Softball standards. If a player uses an ineligible bat in a game, the play results in an out and the player is to be removed from the

game. This rule is written for player safety.

- A player must wear some type of shoe or sneaker. No metal spikes may be worn during gameplay.
- Helmets must be worn at bat and on the basepaths.
- Approved game balls: A.D. STARR Pro Leather-Poly Core (OA1247PL).
- Catcher equipment must be worn by a team's catcher (including a throat protector).
- First base will be a double base. The fielder should use the base inside the baseline and the batter should use the base outside the baseline. Failure for either player to use their intended base can result in the runner being automatically called safe or out at the umpires' discretion.
- Home team is responsible for lining the base paths prior to the start of the game.
- No equipment shall be left lying on the field of play, including the on-deck area.
- Batting practice cannot be taken from home plate.

### **Pitching:**

- Modified fast-pitch pitching style.
- Begin with two feet touching the mound. Shoulders and hips square to home plate. No stepping behind the mound. Pitcher may push off the mound only.
- Body may not turn during the delivery of the pitch (shoulders/ hips square with 1B/3B throughout the motion).
- Turning of wrist is acceptable.

### **Sportsmanship:**

- Players, teams, managers and spectators are expected to show good sportsmanship at all times.
- Any player, teams, managers, or spectators that are involved in a fight are subject to suspension, dismissal from the league and possible prosecution.
- If a player is ejected, they are automatically suspended for their team's following game. No exceptions. Two ejections result in dismissal from the league.

### **Game times:**

- All games start at 6:45pm unless specified otherwise.

**Location:**

- Featherland Park, Sudbury, Massachusetts 01776.