



ADULT SOFTBALL RULES & GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **Age Eligibility:** All players must be 16 years old or older to play
2. **Spring/Summer League Structure:**
 - a. 12-week regular season split into two separate 6-week seasons
 - b. After 6 weeks, all W-L records will reset and new competition levels will be assigned
 - c. Single elimination bracketed tournament after regular season
 - d. First half champions receive \$50 gift card to Vitale's (Zeeland)
 - e. Second half champions receive championship t-shirts
 - f. Tournament champions receive championship t-shirts
3. **Fall League Structure:**
 - a. 6-week regular season
 - b. Single elimination bracketed tournament after regular season
4. **Competition Level Placements:**
 - a. Select Preference During Registration: Select based on what level fits your team best (ex: A, B, C)
 - b. Competition Level Placement Process: Your request, along with a review of previous season results (if applicable), will be used to determine your competition level placement
 - c. Regular Season Split into Two Halves: Splitting regular season into two 6-week seasons allows us to move teams to competition levels that fit best after the first 6 weeks of the season
 - d. Travel Players on Lower Level Teams: We strongly prefer that players that participate in travel leagues do not play in our lower level leagues (ex: B or C leagues) to ensure all teams and players have a positive experience
5. **Refunds:** Refunds are provided until the refund deadline (2024 Spring/Summer: Fri, Apr 12). After the refund deadline, no refunds can be provided
6. **Team Managers Expectations:** Team managers are responsible for the behavior of its team members/spectators, communicating league rules to team members, submitting/updating rosters and responding promptly to Rec staff communication. Communication with the Rec office must be handled through the team manager only
7. **Preseason Practices:** Usage of DeWitt Sports Complex softball fields are on a first come, first serve basis (as long as they aren't reserved by ZPS programs). If you wish to use a field, you can show up and see what is available (for free) or you can attempt to rent or reserve a field by contacting bgeertsm@zps.org
8. **Weather Cancellations:**
 - a. Managers will receive an email if games are canceled due to weather. When in doubt, show up to your game
 - b. Participants may also get cancellation information via our "Weather Cancellation Line" (616-748-3235), website (www.zeelandrecreation.org), or social media pages (@zeelandrecreation)
9. **Tobacco & Alcohol:** Tobacco products and alcoholic beverages are prohibited on Zeeland Public School property
10. **Game Protests:**
 - a. Protests can be made on rule and roster violations only
 - b. Protests cannot be made on judgment calls.
 - c. Rules Protests: Must be verbalized to the ump's before the next pitch is thrown. After a protest is verbalized to the ump's, they will take note of the protest and continue the game. After the game, the umpires will pass the protest information onto the league director for review and a decision.

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- d. **Roster Protests:** Must be verbalized to the umpires on site before the completion of the game. The umpires will then approach that player and ask for their first and last name and then pass that onto the league director for verification. If that player is not on that team's roster, that team forfeits that game. If that player refuses to give a name or gives a false name, that game will be forfeited and that player will be suspended for two games

11. **Scoreboard Controller:** Home teams are listed first on schedule + sit in 3rd base dugout + manage the scoreboard

12. **Bat Testing:** The use of illegal, altered or hazardous bats are not allowed in order to prevent serious injuries and to promote a level playing field. Below are our bat testing protocols.

- a. Bat testing times will be communicated to team managers prior to the season
- b. Bats must be tested prior in order to be used in games
- c. All bats must meet the following requirements in order to be used in games:
 - i. Proper bat compression (minimum compression standards are different for each bat brand)
 - ii. No burs, rattles, dents, cracks, sharp edges, excessive wear, etc.
 - iii. Cannot be listed on the USA Softball "Non-Approved Bat List"
 - iv. Must display ASA 2000, 2004 or 2013 certification marks or USA 2019 certification marks (see below)



- d. Bats that pass the test will receive an approved sticker (sticker will change each year). The sticker will replicate the sticker used for Holland Recreation Softball, so any bats approved by Holland Rec or Zeeland Rec can be used for both leagues (you don't need to get them approved by both leagues)
 - e. Umps will inspect bats before each game to determine if bats have the authorized sticker
 - f. Consequences for using a bat without the authorized sticker:
 - i. 1st Offense: That player will be called "out" and the bat will be removed from the game
 - ii. 2nd Offense: That player will be ejected from the game
 - iii. 3rd Offense: Minimum two-game suspension, all the way up to a season-long suspension
 - g. Injuries sustained as a direct result of a player using an unapproved or altered bat may also result in personal liability exposure to that player
13. **Roster Guidelines:** If a team violates any of these guidelines, that game is forfeited. Players who violate these rules will be suspended for two games.
- a. No team will be allowed to play until their roster is officially submitted to Zeeland Recreation
 - b. You may not have a player play for your team if they are not on your official roster
 - c. No players may be on your roster if they are on another roster in your same competition level
 - d. Additional players can be added to rosters **at any point during the regular season**. To add players to your roster, fill out the "Roster Change" form on the Adult Sports Page on our website. That form must be filled out prior to the start of the game in order for that player(s) to be eligible to play in a game
 - e. To participate in tournaments, players must have played in at least two (2) regular season games with that team
 - f. **Women are allowed to play in men's leagues**



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14. Church League Roster Rules:

- a. 75% of each team's roster must be members of that church
- b. Women are allowed to play in the church league. However, having women on your team is not required

15. **Start of Game:** Teams must have at least eight (8) players to start a game. Teams with less than eight (8) players at game time are given a 5-minute grace period before a forfeit is enforced. However, before a forfeit is enforced in a 7-player or less situation, the umpire must ask the opposing team manager whether or not they want to play the game. If the team manager opts to play, they must accept the result of the game. Additionally, if a team with seven (7) or less players plays a game, they become the visiting team and have a 10-run mercy rule in effect starting in 1st inning

16. Ejections:

- a. Ejections: Players, fans and/or coaches can be ejected by an umpire, site supervisor or league director. If ejected, that individual will be suspended for at least the next playable game (possibly more, depending on severity of the offense) and they must leave the DeWitt Sports Complex property immediately ****If a player is ejected, that players spot in the batting order counts as an out each time that spot in the batting order comes up unless their team has an available sub from their roster that can fill that players spot in the batting order***
- b. Physical Contact: Any player, coach or fan who makes physical contact with and/or throws an object at an umpire, site supervisor, opponent, fan, or teammate will be suspended from all Zeeland Rec activities for a minimum of two (2) games and a maximum of a permanent ban (decisions are made on a case-case basis by the League Director)
- c. Suspension Protocol: During a suspension, suspended players may not be on site at that facility
- d. Appeals: All suspensions are subject to a written appeal by the team manager within 24 hours of the suspension

17. Regular Season Championship Tie-Breakers:

- a. Two Team Ties: If there are two teams tied with the same record at the end of a regular season, head-head record will determine the champion. If the head-head record doesn't clearly determine a champion, co-champions will be named
- b. Three + Team Ties: If there are three or more teams tied, head-head record will determine the champion. If the head-head record doesn't clearly determine champion, co-champions will be named
- c. If All Teams Haven't Played the Same Amount of Games: No team will be withheld a regular season championship or co-championship due to having played less games than another team. For example, if one team finishes with a 9-1 regular season record and another team finishes with a 8-1 regular season record, those two teams will be named "co-champions" (unless the head-head tie-breaker breaks that "tie").
- d. Score Differential: Score differential does not factor into tie-breaker decisions

18. **Completed Game Policy:** A game terminated by inclement weather will be deemed a completed game if five (5) innings are completed or 45 minutes of game time has elapsed (or if the home team is leading after 4 ½ innings). Umpires have authority to determine the continuation or termination of a game due to weather

19. **Mid-Game Postponements:** A game that is postponed in the middle of the game without completing 5 innings or 45 minutes will be rescheduled and will begin in the exact same inning, score, and game situation as when the postponement occurred (ex: bottom of 3rd inning, one out, runner on 2nd base, 5-3 score). Additionally, best efforts should be made to keep the batting order the same during the re-scheduled game, but that is not mandatory

20. Tournament Rules & Structure:

- a. Home Team: The home team is the higher seeded team
- b. Single Elimination: A single-elimination tournament is played at the completion of the regular season



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- c. 1st Place Teams Move Up: Teams that finish in 1st place in regular season are moved up a competition level
- d. Last Place Teams Move Down: Teams that finish in last place in regular season are moved down a competition level
- e. 55-Minute Time Limit: All tourney games, except the championship game, follow our 55-min time limit policy
- f. Championship Games: Tournament championship games play a full 7-innings with no time limit
- g. Mercy Rules: Normal mercy rules are in effect for tournament games

**The league director has the right to move as many teams up or down for tournaments as they deem necessary in order to create the most competitively balanced and fun tournament possible*

RULES:

All USA/ASA Softball rules apply, with the exception of the below local rules ...

1. **No Metal Spikes**: Metal spikes are not allowed
2. **Softball Used**:
 - a. Men's and Coed Leagues: USA Certified AHD-12" Hot Dot (.52 COR | 300 lb Compression)
 - b. Women's Leagues: USA Certified ADH-11" Green Dot (.52 COR | 300 lb Compression)
3. **Strike Zone, Counts, Grace Foul Balls, Intentional Walks**:
 - a. Strike Zone: Width of plate and between front knee and back shoulder (based on standing adjacent to the plate)
 - b. Count: All batters will begin with a 1-1 count
 - c. Grace Foul Balls: Once there are two strikes, one grace foul ball is allowed. A 2nd foul ball with 2 strikes = out
 - d. Intentional Walks: If a team wants to intentionally walk a batter, they may do so by informing the umpire
4. **Pitch Arc Rules**: Pitches must be a maximum of **10'** high and a minimum of **6'** high.
5. **55-Minute Game Time Limits**:
 - e. A 55-minute timer will be started at the first pitch
 - f. No new innings can begin 55 minutes after the first pitch
 - g. If an inning is in process when the 55-minute time limit arrives, the top and bottom of that inning may be finished and then the game is over
 - h. If an inning ends with five minutes or less remaining in the game, the "Flip-Flop Batting Order Rule" goes into effect (see rule #6 below for details)
6. **Flip-Flop Batting Order Rule**: If the home team is trailing by seven (7) runs or more when an inning ends with five (5) minutes or less remaining in the 55-minute game time limit OR after 6 complete innings, the losing team bats first to start the last inning.
7. **Mercy Rules**: 20-run lead after 4 innings, 15-run lead after 5 innings, 10-run lead after 6 innings (or later)
8. **Defensive Guidelines**: Defenders are interchangeable at any time. Players do not need to be in the batting order in order to play defense
9. **Batting Order Guidelines**:
 - i. A team can have as many players as they want in their batting order
 - j. Once the batting order is established, players in the lineup cannot bat in a different spot in the lineup



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- k. If a player(s) shows up after the entire batting order has batted, they can be added to the end of the batting order at any time and join the game
 - l. Pinch hitting and/or subbing is allowed as long as the pinch hitter and/or sub isn't already in the batting order
 - m. If a spot in the batting order is skipped without a pinch hitter or sub, an out is recorded each time that spot in the lineup comes around (ex: a player had to leave early and no subs were available)
 - n. If a player is removed from the batting order due to an injury, that player can be replaced in the batting order by a sub OR that player's spot in the batting order can be skipped without penalty
10. **International Tie-Breaker Rule:** If there is a tie game and there is still time remaining in the 55-minute game time limit after seven innings, this rule takes effect. Each team will have the last batter to record an out start the inning on 2nd base
11. **Tie Games:** Regular season tie games will not be played out and will go as a tie in the standings. Tie games in tournaments must be played out until there is a winner
12. **Courtesy Runner Rule:** There will be one courtesy runner allowed per inning. If the courtesy runner is still on base when his/her spot in the lineup comes up, the runner is removed from the bases and an out occurs, BUT that runner that was removed from the bases still takes their at bat. **Exception: If a player is removed from the batting order due to injury, no out will be recorded when that person's batting order spot comes up. The next player in the batting order bats instead without penalty*
13. **Pitching Rubber Rules:** The pitcher must have a one foot in contact with the pitching rubber when the pitch is released, unless they are within five feet behind the pitching rubber. No steps may be taken before a pitch is thrown except for one "stride step", which must conclude with one foot being in contact with the pitching rubber (unless you are behind the pitching rubber). Pitchers may pitch from the either side of the pitching rubber as long as one foot is in contact with the pitching rubber when the pitch is released
14. **Collision Rule:** Runners must make every effort to avoid collisions. Intentionally colliding may result in an ejection
15. **Forfeit / No-Show Rule:** 1st: Warning | 2nd: \$50 fee | 3rd: League suspension (no refund)
16. **Progressive "3 and up" Home Run Rule:** Three (3) over the fence home runs are allowed for each team per game. However, if both teams reach the 3 home run max, each team can then hit one more home run. If one team then hits a 4th home run, they cannot hit a 5th home run until their opponent hits a 4th home run. Once both teams hit a 4th home run, then both teams home run max is extended to 5 home runs (and so on). However, if there is 100% certainty that the game is in the last inning (whether it is due to the time limit or because it is the 7th inning), the home team may not go +1. Keep in mind that this aspect of the rule only goes into effect if it is 100% clear prior to the start of the last half inning that the game will be over at the end of that inning. If that isn't 100% clear, then the home team can go +1. To help clarify this, umpires will always notify both teams it is the last half inning and that the home team may not go +1. If the umps don't clarify that prior the start of the last half inning, the home team can go +1 without penalty.

ADDITIONAL CO-ED RULES:

17. **Gender Rules:**

- a. Standard roster is 10 players (5 men, 5 women)
- b. Minimum of eight (8) players are required, with both genders represented by at least four (4) players
- c. Minimum defensive gender requirements:



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- i. Two (2) females in the infield (1B, 2B, SS, 3B)
- ii. Male-female pitcher-catcher combination
- iii. If a team has less than five (5) females, that team cannot add a 6th male defender. However, they can play with five (5) men and four (4) females as long as the infield and pitcher/catcher defensive requirements are met

18. **Infield Defensive Positioning Rules:** All infielders must be standing on the infield stone dust when the pitch is released
19. **Outfield Encroachment Rule:** An encroachment line will be used in the outfield **175'** from home plate. If an outfielder crosses in front of this line before the batter hits a fair-batted ball, the batter will receive a double, or the result of the play, and the base runners will advance accordingly.
20. **Batting Order Rules:**
 - b. The batting order must alternate sexes, unless two women bat back-back
 - c. In the event that there are more men than women in the batting order, the women must “weave” in to ensure that men do not bat back-to-back.
 - d. A team can have as many players as they want in their batting order
 - e. Once the batting order is established, players in the lineup cannot bat in a different spot in the lineup
 - f. If a player(s) shows up after the entire batting order has batted, they can be added to the end of the batting order at any time and join the game
 - g. Pinch hitting and/or subbing is allowed as long as the pinch hitter and/or sub isn't already in the batting order
 - h. If a spot in the batting order is skipped without a pinch hitter or sub, an out is recorded each time that spot in the lineup comes around (ex: a player had to leave early and no subs were available)
 - i. Injury Exception: If a player is removed from the batting order due to an injury, that player can be replaced in the batting order by a sub OR that players spot in the batting order can be skipped without penalty
21. **Walking a Male Batter Rule:** Any walk to a male batter will result in a two-base award (sent to 2nd base rather than 1st base). *Exception: With two outs, the female batter that is up next has the option to walk or bat.*
22. **Courtesy Runner Rules:** Men can only run for men and women can only run for women. You can use one courtesy runner for each gender per inning one. The courtesy runner can be anyone on your roster. If the courtesy runner is still on base when his/her spot in the lineup comes up, an automatic out occurs, the runner is removed from the base paths, and that runner then takes their scheduled turn to bat in the batting order. **Exception: If a player is removed due to injury*