

OTOW SOFTBALL CLUB

SUPPLEMENTAL RULES

January 01, 2026, approved by the membership

1.0 ESTABLISHED RULES

The OTOW Softball Club uses 2024 SSUSA updated (Senior Softball USA) rules to govern play. The club has also developed supplemental rules tailored to the specific needs of our club. The Club will use these supplemental rules as a primary reference for league play. When an issue arises not covered by our supplemental rules, then the SSUSA rulebook will apply.

2.0 BATS

- 2.1 Bats are required to have an ASA or USA certification label on the bat for use in OTOW Softball Club games during league play. Bats that have a USSSA certification label only are not authorized for use.
- 2.2 Senior bats are allowed in league play provided they have the appropriate certification stamp on the barrel of the bat "SSUSA-Senior Softball". Senior bats typically have a BPF (Bat performance factor) of 1.21.
 - 2.2(a) Players that will turn 70 years old during the calendar year may use a senior bat.
 - 2.2(b) Senior bats used in league play must have yellow tape placed just above the handle for easy identification.

3.0 FILLING ROSTERS AT GAME TIME (CARD DRAW)

When the team managers' report that they have less than eleven players for the upcoming game, club members will be solicited and asked to stand on the third base line. A card draw will determine what players will be available for selection by the team managers.

- 3.1 All club members standing on the line will be given a card. Cards will be randomly drawn to determine who plays or who is eliminated.

EXAMPLE: If 7 players are on the line and only 4 players are needed, cards will be drawn to eliminate three players. The remaining players will then be selected by the team managers to fill their rosters.

- 3.2 Remaining players after the card draw will be selected with the first pick being made by the team with the fewest wins, then alternating picks until all players have been chosen. If the teams have identical records, the visiting team will select first.
- 3.3 When a pitcher is needed, only those club members who have pitched previously in a game or have pitched in batting practice and found to be competent will be considered and will be selected via a card draw. The card draw for Pitchers will occur first, then an additional card draw will determine position players.
- 3.4 Any player wishing to stand on the line must be able to run for themselves to first base in order to stand on the line. A substitute runner may be requested from first base.
- 3.5 Any paid club member in good standing is eligible to be on the line (injured recovery, missing numerous games, etc.) when they are available. However, they **will not have priority** over other club members standing on the line and will need to participate in the card draw to determine if they will be selected to play.

4.0 SUBSTITUTE PLAYERS

- 4.1 Show time for players is 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start time.
 - 4.1.1 Any player arriving after the card draw has begun will sit a minimum of two innings and will be placed at the bottom of the lineup after all substitute players.
 - 4.1.2 All substitute players selected via the card draw will remain in the game.
- 4.2 Substitute players will be placed at the bottom of the lineup after rostered players.
- 4.3 New members who have successfully completed the NPO Program, paid their membership fee, and received their uniform shirts, will be given priority on the pickup line for two games if they have not been placed on a roster. After the automatic pickup, they will be allowed to stand on the pickup line just as any other player volunteering to play would be allowed to do so.

- 4.3.1 Players completing NPO **will be offered the opportunity** to play in at least 2 games (via the line) on different days before being placed on a club team. However, they will not have priority over other club members standing on the line after they have completed their 2 **special preference games** and will need to participate in the card draw to determine if they will be selected to play. Players coming out of NPO or Bullpen will only be placed on a team the second & last Wednesday of each month.
- 4.4 During the card draw, an alternate player **should be selected** (*by each team*) to stand by in case of injury or other circumstances that require an additional player.
- 4.4.1 If an injury occurs during the game requiring a substitute player to enter the game, and no substitute player was selected from the line, then the team manager may select a replacement player from any club members present at the field at the time of the injury. **Both Team Managers** must agree to the replacement player selection (if more than 2 willing players are available to enter the game).*
- 4.5 All substitute players must wear the appropriate colored uniform shirt for the team they are playing on. There are two exceptions below:
- A new club member that hasn't been issued the appropriate uniform shirts.
 - There are not enough substitute players with the correct color game shirt to fill rosters.

5.0 SUBSTITUTE RUNNERS

Substitute runners are allowed for any player who is physically unable to run or has sustained an injury preventing that player from running. In the spirit of good sportsmanship, a substitute runner should not be used solely for the purpose of gaining an offensive advantage.

- 5.1 A player who runs for a teammate as a substitute runner may only do so once per inning and cannot run for multiple players in the same inning.
- 5.2 A player who runs as a substitute runner can only do so up to a **maximum of four times** per game.
- 5.3 Managers cannot replace a substitute runner with another substitute runner unless the first runner sustains an injury or illness.

- 5.4 If a player enters the game as a substitute runner and is left on base when it's his turn to bat, that player loses his turn at bat and will be called out. The substitute runner will remain on base.
- 5.5 Only a player on base may ask for a substitute runner and must inform the umpire of the reason for requesting a substitute runner before leaving the base.
- 5.6 Before the game begins, any player who needs a substitute runner should advise his manager, so the manager has time to arrange for that substitute runner.

6.0 BASE RUNNERS HIT BY A BATTED BALL

- 6.1 If a base runner is hit by a batted ball while in contact with the base, the umpire will declare a dead ball and award the batter first base.
- 6.2 If the base runner is hit by a batted ball while not in contact with the base, the umpire will declare a dead ball and the runner will be declared out, and the batter will be awarded first base.

7.0 BASE RUNNING

- 7.1 Running to first base.
 - 7.1.1 When a batted ball is hit within the infield, the runner must run to the outside base. Failing to do so will result in the runner being called out.
 - 7.1.1 (a) When a runner is approaching first base, the runner may run to the inside base only to avoid a collision with a defensive player.
 - 7.1.2 When a batted ball is hit to the outfield, either on a fly or ground ball, the runner may run to either base.
- 7.2 A runner may not slide into any base. If the base is over-run, the runner may dive back to the base as long as diving back doesn't interfere with a defensive player.
- 7.3 Base runners attempting to advance to the next base can only reverse direction one time. If the runner reverses direction a second time, the **umpire** will call the runner out.

- 7.3.1 A runner who reverses direction must return to the last base he touched and retouch that base. Failing to do so will result in the runner being called out (*by the umpires*).
- 7.4 **Commitment line** - The commitment line is a line drawn 30 feet from home plate along the base path between third base and the alternate home plate. An additional line is also drawn down the 1st base line.
- 7.4.1 When a runner passes third base advancing toward home plate and does not pass the commitment line, the runner may reverse direction one time and must return to third base.
- 7.4.1 (a) If the runner advancing toward home passes the commitment line, he may not reverse direction and must continue to run to the alternate home plate.
- 7.5 A runner attempting to score must run to the alternate home plate. If the runner touches any part of the green carpeted batter's box or strike plate; the runner will be called out.
- 7.5.1 Defensive players will not attempt to tag a runner that has crossed the commitment line attempting to score. If the defensive player tags the runner once passed the commitment line, the runner will be called safe, and a run will score. A runner may be tagged between third base and the commitment line resulting in the runner being called out.
- 7.5.2 All outs at home plate will be made by a defensive player touching the strike plate and in control of the ball before the runner touches the alternate home plate.
- 7.5.3 If a batter is using a "Rabbitt" or substitute runner and the ball is put into play, if the batter runs toward 1st base crossing the commitment line, the batter will be called out by the umpire.
- 7.5.4 Any batter using a "Rabbitt" substitute runner can only advance to first base. The runner may not advance to another base on the hit, even on a bad or passed throw to first. Only exception is on a ground rule double or on a home run.

- 7.6 All runners must remain in contact with the base or remain behind the home plate start line for substitute runners until the batter contacts the ball. Failing to do so (leaving early) will result in the base runner being called out.
- 7.6.1 If the batter swings at a pitched ball and misses the ball causing the base runners to jump off the base or causing the substitute runner from home (*ie. the rabbit*) to step over the start line, the base runners will not be called out and must return to the base and remain in contact with the base, or behind the start line, before the next pitch, or be called out.
- 7.7 For safety reasons, a base runner may step off the base into foul territory only after notifying the umpire. (eg. Standing on first base with a left-handed batter that's known for pulling the ball down the first base line.) Once the batter contacts the ball, the base runner must re-touch the base before advancing.

8.0 MINIMUM PLAYING REQUIREMENTS

Managers are required to play all team players available a minimum of three defensive innings per game. The batting order will include all rostered players.

9.0 TEAM FORFEITS

Teams must have **at least 6** rostered players available 15 minutes before game time and before the card draw for substitute players to count as an official game. Any less than **6 rostered players** will result in a forfeit. Once a forfeit is declared, an unofficial (exhibition) game may be played.

10.0 TIE GAMES

Games that end in a tie will play one extra inning if time is remaining on the game clock. Teams will use the "Texas Tie Breaker" rule beginning the inning with a player on second base. The player on second will be the last batter to score an out from the previous inning. If after one additional inning is played and the score is still tied, a second extra inning may be played if time is remaining on the game clock and both managers approve.

11.0 RUN RULES

- 11.1 **Mercy Rule** - When one team leads another team by 10 runs after the completion of five innings, the umpire will declare the game over and the team ahead the winner.
- 11.2 **Filp/Flop Rule** - Mandatory when Home Team trails by 6 or more runs going into the top of the 7th inning of a game. The Home Team will bat first to catch up or surpass the Visting Teams score. In the event the Home Team ties or takes the lead the Visitors Team will have the opportunity to bat in the bottom half of the inning. If the Home Team fails to tie or take a lead the game ends.
- 11.3 **Five Run Rule-** During innings 1- 6, the maximum number of runs that can be scored by either team shall be limited to five (5) runs. Exceptions to this rule only exist under 11.4 & 11.5 below)
- 11.4 **Catch-Up Rule** - If a team is behind by more than 5 runs at any time during the first 6 innings, the batting team is permitted to catch up and tie the other team's run total. The batting team may not surpass the other teams run total under the catch-up rule; they are only afforded the ability to tie the opposing teams run total. Only Exception applies under 11.5 (Home Run Over the Fence) and the batting team will be credited with the additional run.
- 11.5 **Home Runs over the Fence** – give credit to the batter even if over the 5 runs to an inning has been reached. Maximum a team can score is 6 runs for an inning, unless behind in the game and the 11.4 (Catch-Up Rule applies).

12.0 POSITIONING DEFENSIVE PLAYERS

- 12.1 Infielders must position themselves with both feet on the infield dirt until the ball is batted.
- 12.2 Outfielders must remain outside of the cones until the ball is batted. The outfield cones will be placed 160 feet from home plate.
- 12.2.1 Outfielders may not throw the batter/runner out at first base.

12.1.1(a) Once the batter/runner reaches first base, an outfielder may throw the runner out at any base, including first base, if the runner attempts to return to first after making the turn toward second base.

12.2.2 The “Infield Fly Rule” will not be enforced.

12.3 Infielders can move to the outfield, but must stand outside of the cones, however, outfielders may not move to the infield.

13.0 PITCHING SCREEN

13.1 The pitching screen must cover at least one half of the pitcher rubber.

13.2 The pitching screen will be placed no more than four feet in front of the pitching rubber.

13.3 The pitching screen cannot be moved once the first pitch is thrown to a batter. Minor adjustments may be made with the umpires’ approval but only in between batters.

13.4 Once a pitcher releases the ball, he must place his entire body behind the pitching screen and stay behind the screen until the batter contacts the ball.

13.4.1 If the pitcher fails to follow rule 13.4, the home plate umpire will issue a warning after the first violation. Subsequent violations of rule will result in the home plate umpire calling a dead ball and recording a ball for the pitch in which the violation occurred.

13.5 The first time a batted ball hits the pitching screen, the home plate umpire will declare a dead ball. The second time a batted ball hits the pitching screen from the same batter, the home plate umpire will call a strike.

13.5.1 For the purposes of rule 13.5, the pitching screen will be defined as the screen itself including any parts or appendages that are attached to the screen or frame (ie. the fiberglass whip antenna and flag attached to the screen for height reference).

13.6 Once the ball is put into play by the batter, any thrown ball that hits the pitching screen will remain in play and a live ball.

14.0 PITCHING

The pitching mound has a pitching rubber 50ft. from the center of home plate, a three-foot section of green carpet in front of the rubber, and another pitching rubber in front of the green carpet used solely for ladies play.

- 14.1 Pitching shall be from the back rubber (50 ft.) only.
- 14.2 All pitchers must have one foot in contact with the pitching rubber at the start of each pitch and have at least one foot in contact with the green mat throughout the pitch until the ball is released. Failure to do so will result in a ball being called by the umpire.

15.0 APPEALS

- 15.1 There are no appeals for judgment calls (i.e. a safe or out call at a base), however an appeal may be granted for the following:
 - 15.1.1 A base runner leaving the base early on a fly ball.
 - 15.1.2 A base runner missing a bag while advancing.
- 15.2 An umpire may ask another umpire for “help” at his discretion if he feels that his vision was blocked and couldn’t see the play clearly.

16.0 EJECTIONS

All club members are required to acknowledge and sign the Club’s Code of Conduct annually.

- 16.1 If a player is ejected for violating the Code of Conduct, he will leave the ballpark immediately.
- 16.2 The ejected player will not be replaced by a substitute player. *with one exception. If the ejected player was selected from the line and is NOT a regular player on a team roster. In this situation the team manger may select a replacement player from any club members present at the field at the time of the ejection. Both team managers must agree to the replacement player selection (if more than 2 willing players are available to enter the game). Proposed Rule to be Voted on.*
- 16.3 When the ejected player is due to bat, an out will be recorded.

16.4 The **umpire** ejecting the player will contact a Board Member and relay the circumstances surrounding the ejection. Once the information is received, the Board will decide if a suspension is appropriate and notify the player who was ejected. If a suspension is issued, the suspension will not include the game the player was suspended from.

17.0 POST GAME CLEANUP

After the last game of the day, both team managers are expected to follow the post-game checklist posted in the dugouts to ensure the equipment, field, and dugouts are put away and cleaned for the next day's games.