

F.O.C.S.L. Rules

1. General Rules

Rules not specifically outlined in this document are subject to the Amateur Softball Association of America (ASA) rules. Any questions that arise during a game should be addressed to the head of the rules committee, the chair or the vice chair.

2. Eligibility

- A. Players must attend a church.
- B. Players must sign the waiver of liability form before they can play.
- C. Players must be 15 years of age at the start of the season in order to be eligible to play. Minors will need parental permission on the waiver of liability form.
- D. Players must play for the church they regularly attend if that church has a team in the league.
- E. Players must have played in at least four regular season games to be eligible for the playoffs.

3. Governance

- A. The league shall elect a chair, vice chair/treasurer and secretary. Nominations are open and the winner will be determined by simple majority.
- B. The chair shall handle all league operations.
- C. The vice chair/treasurer shall maintain league finances and assist the chair when needed.
- D. The secretary shall take minutes at meetings and report those minutes to the league.
- E. Committees
 - i) The scheduling committee will handle regular season and post season scheduling.
 - ii) The rules committee will maintain and interpret league rules.
 - iii) The tournament committee will schedule a league-wide tournament.
 - iv) Ad hoc committees can be appointed if needed.
 - v) Membership on these committees is on a voluntary basis.

4. Code of conduct

- A. No foul language, alcoholic beverages or smoking is permitted at the games or in the parking lots. The team coaches are responsible for enforcing this rule. The first offense penalty will be ejection from or disqualification for the game in question. Repeat offenses can lead to additional sanctions.
- B. The home team is responsible for prayer before the game and the visiting team is responsible for prayer after the game.

- C. Umpires should be given the same respect that a paid umpire would receive. The umpires have the responsibility to enforce the rules of the league. The umpires have the right to eject a player from the game. If this occurs, the umpire must discuss with the coaches why the player is being ejected.
 - D. Any behavior that takes place before, during or after the game that is not Christ-like will be subject to disciplinary action by the rules committee.
5. Prior to the start of a game.
- A. A minimum of eight players is required to start the game.
 - B. No shoes with metal cleats or metal inserts are allowed. Players may not play barefoot.
 - C. All games will start at the scheduled time. If one team does not have at least eight players by 15 minutes after the scheduled start of the game, that team forfeits the game.
 - D. Umpires are to be determined by the coaches before the game. Ideally, the home team should supply the plate umpire and the visiting team supplies the base umpire. Preferably, the umpires will not be the coaches.
 - E. The home team should explain the ground rules.
 - F. All bats are legal except those on the ASA non-approved bat list (http://www.asasoftball.com/about/certified_equipment.asp). Not all bats that have the 2000 or 2004 ASA approval stamp are still legal. Coaches should carefully review their bats to ensure they are all approved.
 - G. Softballs are to be restricted flight (red laced). Balls will be provided by the league. The home team supplies the game ball and the visiting team supplies a backup ball. Additional balls will be supplied by the home team if necessary.
 - H. Both teams are encouraged to take part in pre-game hitting. Pitchers and batters should alternate during this time.
 - I. Bases should be fixed to the ground in some manner so they do not readily slide.
 - J. Teams may field a maximum of ten players but may bat an unlimited number of players.
 - K. Coaches should use discretion in assigning fielding positions so that the chances for injury are at a minimum.
6. During the game.
- A. Base runners.
 - i) Are not allowed to make deliberate contact with players on the field. Violators will be called out and ejected from the game.
 - ii) You must safely touch the base without touching the other player. If you can't, you must slide or give yourself up.
 - iii) Clean sliding is allowed, but it must be within the base path. If a runner slides outside the paths to break up a double play

possibility, then the sliding runner and the closest runner behind are called out.

- iv) Plays at home plate do not require the runner to slide.
- B. Fielders are not allowed to block the base or impede the runner unless they have the ball.
- C. Base runners may not leave the base until the ball is hit.
- D. Bunting will not be allowed.
- E. Catchers should wear a facemask.
- F. Lineup management.
 - i) During the course of the game, the number of batters may not increase or decrease. Should a spot in the lineup be vacated, an out will be recorded any time that spot in the lineup should bat.
 - ii) Players in the starting lineup may leave and re-enter the game once. Players not in the starting lineup are ineligible to re-enter.
 - iii) If a player has to leave a game due to injury and the team has no remaining players that are eligible to enter or re-enter the game, the team may use an ineligible player for defensive purposes only. The team will still be subject to rule 6.F.i. and the player that enters for defensive purposes only will not be allowed to bat.
- G. A ball pitched to the batter must have an arc of at least six feet and at most twelve feet. The umpire should give a warning to the pitcher at the first occurrence. Additional infractions should result in the umpire calling an illegal pitch. This should be called in a timely manner prior to the batter swinging. If an illegal pitch is called and the batter does not swing, the pitch is a ball regardless of where it hits. If the batter swings at an illegal pitch, the results (strike, foul ball or fair ball) stand.
- H. A foul ball with two strikes on the batter results in an out.
- I. The strike zone is defined as home plate, the mat placed behind home plate and the edges of the mat and home plate. The edges count even if they are a different color.
- J. Courtesy runners.
 - i) A designated runner may be used for a player that has a medical condition or injury that hinders their ability to run.
 - ii) The batter/runner must at least reach first base safely.
 - iii) Once the runner reaches first base and the play is dead, time is called and the courtesy runner is put in the game.
 - iv) The courtesy runner will be the player to make the last out.
 - v) The batter re-enters the game either in their next at bat or when the team takes the field. This substitution does not count as a re-entry.
 - vi) When possible, coaches should discuss this prior to a game.
 - vii) Once a batter has requested a courtesy runner they shall not be allowed to advance past first base on any fair ball they hit.

The exceptions would be any ball hit over a fence for a home run, any situation in which a ground rule double occurs or any time the ball is thrown out of play by the team in the field such that all runners are automatically entitled to an additional base. Should the batter/runner needing a courtesy runner make any attempt at advancing past first base, the umpires will rule the play dead. The batter/runner will be called out and any other runners will be required to return to their previous base.

- viii) Once a batter has invoked a courtesy runner, they will be expected to use one for the rest of the game and are therefore subject to the rules for all subsequent at bats.
 - K. There will be no more than three walks allowed to each team per inning.
 - L. If, after 4 ½ innings or anytime thereafter, one team is leading by 15 runs or more, the game ends. If it is the home team that is losing after the visiting team has batted, the home team gets a chance to bat that inning. If the home team scores enough runs to reduce the deficit to fewer than 15 runs, the game continues.
 - M. A game is considered official after 4 innings (3 ½ if the home team is ahead) have been completed. Should rain or darkness cause the game to end at this point, a winner shall be declared if one team is ahead. If the game is not official or the teams are tied, the game shall be replayed in its entirety. If a game is delayed due to weather, but play continues on the same day after the delay, the game shall start from the point it was stopped.
7. Postponing games.
- A. Games should only be postponed due to inclement weather or conflicting church functions. Games should be postponed no later than two hours prior to the start of a game.
 - B. Coaches may mutually agree to reschedule games for other reasons, but if they can not reach an agreement, the team that can not play at the scheduled date and time will forfeit.
 - C. Should a game be postponed, the coaches have 24 hrs to contact the scheduling committee providing the date, time and location for the makeup game. If the coaches do not contact the scheduling committee, the committee will schedule a day, time and location for the makeup without input from the coaches.
 - D. All scheduled games must be played. Postponed games must be rescheduled. Any games not played by the end of the season will be subject to forfeit.
8. Additional rules.
- A. The winning team is responsible for reporting the scores to the website or the scheduling committee.
 - B. League dues will be set at the initial meeting of the year.

- C. Changes to the rules will be passed by a simple majority of coaches present at a given meeting.
- D. The chair or head of the rules committee has the right to decide on rules not covered in this document or the ASA rulebook. In addition, apparent conflicts between ASA rules and the best practices of the F.O.C.S.L. can be addressed by the chair or head of the rules committee.