

**Sherwood Park Ladies Fastball Association (SPLFA)
PLAYING RULES**

1. GAME LENGTH, START TIME & FORFEITURES

- a. **Single games are 90 minutes; no new innings after 75 minutes.**
- b. **Game start times will vary based on diamond assignments, and/or night of play.**
 - 6:30/8:00 for double headers (**D/H = same teams play each other back to back**)
 - No new innings after 7:45/9:15.
- c. Games may end in tie scores and points awarded accordingly; no tiebreaker rule in effect.
- d. Games shall commence within 15 minutes of posted time or the late team forfeits. Teams may agree to play an exhibition game to take advantage of the field allotment and umpires; however, the game is officially recorded as a forfeit. All forfeitures will be recorded as 10 runs for the winning team and zero runs for the losing team.
- e. Should a situation arise when both teams are in a forfeit situation, the game will be considered a tie. A tied game will be recorded with a score of 1-1.
- f. It is the WINNING team's responsibility to communicate (email or text) the results to the league, via the contact person listed on the schedule.

2. HOME TEAM responsibilities

- a. Home team is first team listed on each scheduled game.
- b. Home team is responsible for diamond set up:
 - i. pitcher's plate = 43 feet from home;
 - ii. pitcher's circle is an 8 foot radius from center of pitcher's plate;
 - iii. 1st base is 60 feet from home and must be a double base;
 - iv. 3rd base is 60 feet from home ;
 - v. 2nd base is 84 feet and 10 ¼ inches from home.
- c. Home team is to supply 2 game balls to the umpire at the start of each game; one new regulation ball and one good/used regulation ball.

3. RAINOUTS

- a. If the weather is questionable, a rainout will be declared by 4:00 pm on game day:
 - i. Sherwood Park games declared by league representative (**Loretta**).
 - ii. Tofield games declared by TRIGGERS representative. (**Leanne**)
 - iii. League representative will provide notification to umpire assigner (via text message)
- b. Rainouts will be played as double headers in subsequent rounds, where possible. **Alternatively, teams may opt to play one game for double points. Must advise league scheduler (Loretta) in advance.**
- c. If rainout is not declared by 4 pm, the teams must show up as scheduled for a game time decision. If it begins to downpour at the diamond, it is the umpire's decision to call a rainout if conditions become unsafe. Teams should be prepared to play in light rain due to our limited time slots for rescheduling.

4. POSTPONEMENTS

- a. Postponements will only be considered when both teams have agreed upon a rescheduled date/location.
- b. Requests to postpone must be confirmed with a league representative prior to noon, to avoid umpire costs. Requests after noon will be considered forfeitures.

c. Schedule changes will be assessed a \$25 fee.

5. CANCELLATIONS

All cancellations (except those caused by weather) will result in forfeiture of points for the team requesting the cancellation if the game is not rescheduled and played; and the cancelling team will be assessed a \$25 fee.

6. ROSTERS

a. The minimum number of players to start and end a game is 8; otherwise the game is a forfeit. Ejection of a player from the game does not impact this rule. The team can continue to play as long as there are 8 players. If a game is played with 8 players, the 9th position in line-up is an automatic out. 9th player may enter game at any time with notice to the umpire.

b. Substitution Method: Each team can choose either the 'standard' or 'unlimited' method of substitution but must announce their preferred method to the umpire and opposing team PRIOR to the start of the game. Once the choice has been made, a team must abide by the respective rules of each. A game can occur with each team using a different method, or both teams using the same method.

- i) STANDARD SUBSTITUTION: teams must list the players that will bat and play defense on the score sheet (maximum of 10 including defensive player). The starting players may be taken out of game one time and may re-enter the game one time. Teams can make changes during and between innings if they choose to do so, and must notify the other team accordingly.
- ii) UNLIMITED SUBSTITUTION: teams may list all players on the score sheet. This number may exceed 9 players; however, only 9 players may play defense at one time. Each player listed on the score sheet MUST bat. Unlimited exit and re-entry applies but teams can only make defensive changes between innings.

7. MERCY RULE

a. 1) After 2.5 or 3 complete innings of play there is a difference of 15 or more runs

2) After 3.5 or 4 complete innings of play there is a difference of 10 or more runs

3) After 4.5, 5, 5.5 or 6 complete innings of play there is a difference of 7 or more runs

b. Teams may choose to play out the **time limit** if both in agreement; however, the OFFICIAL SCORE will be that as of the end of the inning where the mercy rule came into effect.

c. The decision to play out the **game** is that of the two teams, NOT the umpire.

8. RUNS SCORED PER INNING RULE

Maximum runs scored per inning by one team are 7 for every inning except for the last which is unlimited. Normally this means the 7th inning is unlimited unless the game is shortened due to time or any other constraint (which doesn't require an immediate stoppage in play, i.e. weather); should a game be shortened in this manner, then the final inning called by the umpire will be the unlimited inning. For example, the umpire calls time limit which makes the 5th inning the final inning instead of the 7th then the 5th is unlimited for both teams.

9. UNIFORMS and EQUIPMENT

a. Teams in SPLFA League are NOT required to follow uniform regulations outlined in Softball Alberta Operating Rules while playing in this league.

- b. Metal spikes or shoes with detachable cleats are NOT permitted.
- c. Helmets are required while batting and running the bases. A protective helmet is one that is fully enclosed with ear flaps, a foam liner and a peak. The helmet must fit properly.
 - **Minor aged players must abide by the Softball Canada rules for helmets**
- d. All players and coaches to wear shoes with enclosed toes.
- e. CATCHERS are required to wear the appropriate glove, helmet, chest protector, mask with attached throat protector, and shin guards during games. The equipment must fit properly.
- f. PITCHERS are not allowed to wear a glove that is (or is adorned with) the same color as the ball.
- g. JEWELRY – it is each player’s responsibility to ensure any jewelry is non-hazardous and safe for play. If the jewelry is reported as a distraction or unsafe, then the umpire may ask that it be removed or covered.

10. COURTESY & SUBSTITUTE RUNNERS

- a. A courtesy runner for the catcher may be used to speed up the game when there are two outs. The second out (player) will replace the base runner (catcher) IF the offensive coach chooses to use the courtesy runner.
- b. In the event of an injury, if necessary, a substitute runner may be inserted to a maximum of 3 times per game/per team. The runner used must be the player who was last out, unless they are also injured; then it must be the second last out.

11. MISC RULES

- a. *AGE OF PLAYERS*: There is no minimum or maximum AGE limit for players.
- b. *OBSTRUCTION*: Where the defensive player obstructs the runner/batter, a fake tag may result in an extra base being awarded IF the umpire deems it obstructive
- c. *ILLEGAL BATS*: unless **bearing one of the following logos, a bat is considered illegal:**

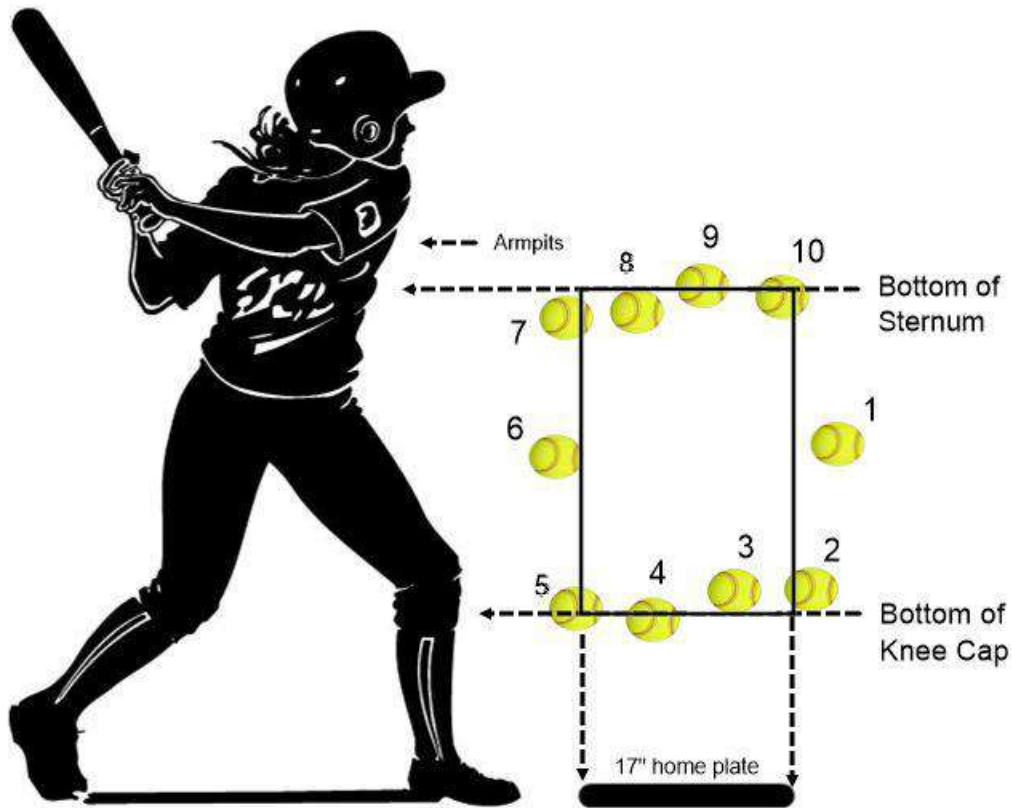


- d. *BATTER’S BOX*: Batters must keep one foot in the box between pitches. A strike will be assessed for violation.
- e. *PASSED BALL 3rd STRIKE*: On strike 3, if catcher is right handed, the defensive player can play either bag at first base. If fielder is player the orange bag, the runner MUST yield.
- f. *DEFENSIVE CONFERENCES*: There are only 3 defensive conferences allowed per game, and a max of 1 per inning. A 2nd conference with the pitcher results in removal of that pitcher.

WBSC Strike Zone

The WBSC rule (for Fast Pitch only) defines the Strike Zone as:

*The space over any part of home plate between the **bottom of the batter's sternum (chest plate)** and the **bottom of the batter's knee cap**, when they assume their natural batting stance. The natural batting stance is the stance the batter takes after the release of the pitch when deciding to swing or not swing at the pitch.*



Rulings: 1) ball, 2) strike, 3) strike, 4) ball, 5) ball, 6) strike, 7) strike, 8) strike, 9) ball, 10) ball

A further change to the WBSC code clearly delineates the expectations for passage of the pitch through the zone - for FP only – for a strike to be called:

*i. when any part of a pitched ball enters the strike zone before touching the ground and the batter does not swing, **provided the top of the ball is at or below the sternum or the bottom of the ball is at or above the bottom of the knee cap.***

WBSC Pitching Rule

4.3 LEGAL PITCH REQUIREMENTS

4.3.1 PRELIMINARY ACTION BEFORE DELIVERING A PITCH

Before delivering a pitch, the following actions must occur.

- a) All players must be positioned in fair territory and the catcher must be in the catcher's box and in a position to receive the pitch.
- b) The pitcher must have possession of the ball and be on or near the pitching plate.
- c) The pitcher must have **the pivot foot** in contact with the pitcher's plate and both feet within the 61.0 cm (24 in) length of the pitcher's plate. The hips must be in line with first and third bases.
- d) The pitcher must take, or appear to take, a signal from the catcher while standing on the plate with the hands separated and the ball in either the glove or the pitching hand.
- e) The pitcher must, after taking the signal, bring their whole body to a full and complete stop with the ball in both hands in front of the body. **The non-pivot foot (the stepping foot) must be stationary at the start and during the pause. The non-pivot foot can only move forward with the start of the pitch. Any backward movement of the non-pivot foot during or after the pause is an illegal action.** This position must be held for **not less than two (2) seconds and not more than five (5) seconds** before releasing the ball. (Holding the ball in both hands to the side of the body is considered in front of the body.)

4.3.2 STARTING THE PITCH

- a) The pitch starts when one hand is taken off the ball or the pitcher makes any motion that is part of the pitcher's wind up). The pitcher may not use a pitching motion in which, after being in the pitching position with the ball in both hands, they take a backward and forward swing and return the ball to both hands in front of the body.
- b) **The pivot foot** must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate prior to the start of the pitch. Lifting the pivot foot off the pitcher's plate and returning it to the plate, creating a rocking motion is an illegal act.

4.3.3 LEGAL DELIVERY

FAST PITCH

All of the following must take place for a pitch to be a legal pitch.

- a) The pitcher must immediately deliver the ball to the batter upon making any motion to pitch.
- b) The pitcher must only make one revolution on the windmill pitch. However, the pitcher may drop the pitching arm to the side and rear before starting the windmill motion. This allows the arm to legally pass the hip twice.
- c) The delivery must be an underhand motion, with the hand below the hip, the wrist not further from the body than the elbow and with no stop or reversal of the forward motion.
- d) The release of the ball and follow through of the hand and wrist must be forward and past the straight line of the body.
- e) In the act of delivering the ball, the pitcher may take one step with the leading, non-pivot foot simultaneously with the release of the ball. The step must be forward toward the batter and within the 61.0 cm (24 in) length of the pitcher's plate. It is not a step if the pitcher slides either

foot across the pitcher's plate, provided contact is maintained with the plate, and there is no movement backward off the plate,.

- f) The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate or push off and drag away from the pitcher's plate or be airborne prior to the stepping (non-pivot) foot touching the ground. The pitcher may leap from the pitcher's plate, land and with a continuous motion deliver the ball to the batter. The pivot foot may follow through with the pitcher's continuous action.
- g) All movement of the pitching arm must be continuous as the pitcher steps or pushes or leaps from the pitcher's plate.
- h) The pitcher's push off to drag, leap or hop must start from the pitcher's plate. The pitcher must not crow hop or push off from any place other than the pitcher's plate.
- i) The pitcher's arm on the release of the ball may follow through, provided the wind-up does not continue.
- j) The pitcher must deliver the ball to the batter so as not to deliberately drop, roll or bounce the ball to prevent the batter from hitting it.
- k) The pitcher has 20 seconds to release the next pitch after receiving the ball or after the Umpire indicates "play".

The significant effect of this trial is that pitchers may elect to have only one foot in contact with the pitching slab prior to starting the pitch. If the pitcher chooses to place his / her stepping foot behind the slab they must pause after they place the stepping foot. All movement of the stepping foot after the pause must be forward. A rocking motion is not permitted.

Other effects of note:

- Women (U19 and above) are now permitted to leap, land and throw in a continuous motion. The pitcher's hands must be separated and the arm rotation started prior to landing.
- The pause must be between 2 and 5 seconds. Pitchers must come to a **complete** stop during the pause. A "moving" pause is not legal.
- Pitchers must continue to step directly towards home plate, with the stepping foot landing within the 24" length of the pitcher's plate.

