

Softball Rules and Regulations

SAMPLE OF GAME RULES TO LIVE BY:

1. **Starting the Game:** Please try to arrive early so that your captain can have the team's line-up ready prior to the game and we can start on time. Games are to be started no later than 10 minutes after the scheduled start time or forfeit runs shall be assessed as outlined below against the team unable to field a squad. The schedule will show home/visitor for that week. Otherwise the umpire shall flip a coin to determine who bats first. In the playoffs, the higher seeded team is ALWAYS the home team.

Warm-up Time: Pitchers will be permitted a few courtesy practice pitches each inning. Fielding warm-ups shall be limited to the pitcher's practice time. Please pay attention to get practice balls off field as soon as possible to start inning.

Warm-up Area: If your team is waiting to play, use of open areas is allowed for warm-up as long as the open area is away from the field of play, including foul territory and permitted by that facility.

2. **Method of Scoring:** Single point runs score all games. Games are won by a one run advantage. The umpire prior to each inning should announce the inning and score as he/she has it recorded. Teams switch hitting/fielding following each three-out rotation in the line-up.

Runs are scored when a player has contacted first base, second base, third base and home plate prior to three outs in a hitting rotation. A forced 3rd out always supersedes a fast base runner from third base who may have crossed the plate prior to the forced third out made at another base. All runs will be called at umpire's discretion. Remember to touch home plate, not the strike mat to score!

Tie games will be scored as such during the regular season. Playoff games will be played until there is a decisive winner.

Scoring discrepancies in the standings? Contact your SMC local office for clarification.

3. **Game Length:** Please check your location for scheduled game duration. Game duration may be either 7 innings or the time allowed for play, whichever comes first. Some local programs may offer shortened or extended available time as advertised. The SMC umpire shall announce the final inning to be played on/around 10 minutes remaining in the game. Note that this announcement may be made during what turns out to be the final inning of play if it is running long.

Special Note: Should inclement weather or other factors limit normal scheduled game duration, SMC shall consider a 4-inning game played as officially recorded. A minimum of 4 innings at-bat by the visiting team (if losing) is required. If the home team takes a lead in their 4th inning at-bat and the game has to be called, that score shall be recorded and counted as official. Incomplete games shall be recorded as such and SMC shall make every effort to finish an incomplete game through at least 4 innings at another time. Otherwise, a tie shall be recorded in the standings.

Slaughter Rule: Ouch! It hurts to get slaughtered so we have a rule in place that a game is stopped once a team reaches a 12-run lead over their opponent after 4 at-bats by the losing team. Teams may opt to continue play for fun if time permits but the official scoring shall cease once a slaughter has been reached.

Extra Innings: To keep all game times starting on time, there are generally no extra innings for regular season games. Games may end in a tie and both teams will earn 1 point in the standings. Playoffs will have an extra innings played until there is a winner.

4. **Time-out:** This is softball! There are no time-outs in softball. You can rest your butt on the pine.

5. **Playing Area:** The entire marked field is considered within play. Lines are considered in play through 1st and 3rd base and extended through the outfield. Foul balls may be played in the air for outs. If a foul ball goes beyond the marked or understood playable distance, the umpire shall declare the ball "Out of Play" and that ball is dead. Please be careful of balls going out into street or parking lot areas and watch for trees or shrubbery at unfenced locations.

Fields should have first and third baselines clearly marked. For fields without foul posts or fences, there should be cones placed 20-25 feet outside the first and third base lines to clearly mark the playing area.

6. **Substitutions and Scorebooks:** Each team is allowed unlimited substitutions between innings. Scorekeeper must clearly mark the substitute players in the batting order. It is advised that coed leagues sub male/male, female/female to help keep better track of who is on field and maintaining proper batting orders.

SMC does not provide paid scorekeepers to keep your costs lower. Each team is responsible for maintaining their line-up and results either in their own book or in the book SMC provides. If your team does not keep an accurate scorebook and questions their score, the umpire shall keep default score he/she kept and there will be no challenge accepted. Please understand that if your umpire is maintaining the scorebook, the game will run slower. Don't know how to keep score? Check this out: <http://www.baseballscorecard.com/downloads/tutorial.pdf>

7. **Gender Ratio:** SMC softball leagues are set-up for 10 players on the field at all times. Men may not participate in SMC leagues designated for women. Women may not participate in SMC leagues designated for men unless expressly granted by the local office with notification provided to all teams. Please do NOT bring a woman to play in a men's game without receiving local approval first as she will not be allowed to play.

Coed leagues are set-up for 6 men/4 women on the field at all times. If male players are missing, a team may opt to field more than 4 women. If female players are missing, it is up to the discretion of the opposing team whether more than 6 men will be allowed during the regular season. Once agreed upon by the opposing captain to allow extra male player(s), the decision is binding through the remainder of the game. However, upon the late arrival of extra female player(s),

that team MUST remove corresponding extra male players and substitute in the newly arrived female players. SMC outlined gender ratio must be followed during the playoff

8. **Called Balls and Strikes:** To help the games move along, each player at bat starts with a 1-1 count (one ball, one strike). Players will strike out on their third strike. Foul balls are considered strikes. You may strike out on a foul ball for a third strike.

An umpire will call strikes on any cleanly pitched ball (see section below) that lands past home plate and within the pitching parameters. The ball hitting the back trim of home plate will count as a strike as long as the ball crosses within the player's strike zone.

a) Foul Balls: Foul balls are considered strikes. Batters can strike out on foul ball on the third strike.

9. **Pitching:** All pitches must be thrown underhand and have an arc of not less than six (6) feet and not more than twelve (12) feet from the ground. Umpires shall call out "ILLEGAL" or "HIGH" or "FLAT" for pitches out of the approved range prior to the pitch reaching the plate. Players may opt to swing at called illegal pitches but the result shall stand. Players who do not swing at an illegal pitch shall automatically receive a called Ball for their count.

Any pitch landing on/or before home plate shall be called a Ball, unless the batter swings. The strike zone is from the shoulders to the knees for any cleanly pitched ball. Please note that umpire's called strike zone may vary somewhat due to his/her subjective opinion. If this is an ongoing concern, please contact your local SMC office.

As SMC leagues always promote the spirit of good sportsmanship, the league frowns upon teams actively seeking walk, after walk, after walk, after walk, after walk (get the point?) off of a struggling pitcher – especially in recreational level leagues! At the umpire's discretion, he/she may offer a sportsmanship suggestion to swing at close pitches. In cases where this helpful suggestion is ignored, the umpire has the authority to increase the strike zone to encourage batting action. Clearly, if a pitch is unplayable, the umpire will continue to call Balls.

Pitcher must be in contact with the pitching rubber at time of ball release. Pitcher may make a pitch any time the game is called live and the batter is in the batter's box. Batter may step out of the box to slow a quick-fire pitcher and the umpire will call time.

Automatic walk available for females – If a male player has been walked prior to a female batter with *bases loaded* (become loaded with male player walk or already were loaded) and *two outs*, the female batter may opt to take an automatic walk or bat per normal. If she opts to bat per normal, the result of that at-bat shall stand.

10. **Batting:** SMC permits an 11-batter rotation in any skill level. For recreational skill level leagues, there is an unlimited batting rotation so long as there is at least 1 gal for every 3 extra batters. Make sure you confer with your umpire if you have any questions about adding batters. In all SMC coed leagues,

there is no prescribed male-female batting order. We view that as sexist and such a requirement takes away from the strategy of the game. So, you can bat all the guys first or all the gals first or anywhere in whatever order and that is fine with us so long as 4 gals are batting in an 11-person rotation.

Missing gals in coed league? It is REQUIRED in SMC coed leagues that every missing female player be entered into the 10-11-person batting rotation as an out – no exceptions. It is up to that team as to where those missing players are put into the rotation.

Base coaches are allowed outside of 1st and 3rd bases.

Bats as allowed by the most recent ASA (USA Softball) list are permitted. Check with your umpire if you have questions about a specific bat.

Batters are to remain in the batting box when swinging at a pitch. If there is no clearly defined box, the understood batting box shall be two feet behind home plate to two feet above home plate. The batter will be called automatically out if:

- a) He/she steps over home plate to swing at a pitch
- b) He/she steps too far behind or too far above home plate to swing at a pitch
- c) He/she throws the bat following contact with the ball. In most cases, the umpire will issue a warning first on thrown bats but this is not required.
- d) He/she steps on the plate when making contact with the ball

SMC also asks the assistance of the fielding team's catcher to move a bat out of the playing area. However, if this is not possible due to nature of the live game, it is expected that the batting team will have a player remove the bat from the playing area. If these courtesies are not extended, the umpire may issue a warning and subsequent outs if teams do not comply.

11. **Bunting:** Intentional bunts are not allowed – will be called a strike. A swing that results in a dribbler or a hit shall be counted.

12. **Base Leads, Running, Tagging and Stealing:** Taking leads off of any base are not allowed. Runner must wait until pitch crosses home plate before leaving base. Umpire will issue a warning for the first infraction and then call offenders out.

To stop base runners and put an end to a play, a ball played in the outfield must be thrown into the infield/pitcher, and fielded cleanly inside the base path. So long as runners are not already in motion towards the next base, the umpire will hold both hands up and outstretched to indicate the play has ended.

For fields with fences marking fair/foul play, any ball thrown inside the fence shall be considered live and base runners may advance at will. Should the played ball be thrown outside of a fence OR if a field does not have a fence and the thrown ball goes past the marked fair territory, umpire shall indicate base runners may proceed to the next base and stop there.

A base runner may tag-up – meaning they make sure the base they were on has been touched following a caught fly ball – whether fair or foul – and attempt to run safely to next base. Failure to properly tag-up shall result in a called out.

Stealing is not permitted.

13. **Sliding:** Use safe sliding! Slides may be feet first or head first. A dirty slide or extensive contact made by not sliding will result in an out (Umpire's discretion). Aggressive sliding is not permitted. (Avoid contact with defensive player, period!).

Runners are to slide for all close plays (excluding first base). This is to avoid collisions with other players, especially in coed leagues. A close play shall be called at the umpire's discretion. Runners who fail to slide for a close play shall be called out.

Safety of all players is our main concern.

Home plate mats will be used to avoid runner and catcher collisions.

14. **Pinching:** Stop pinching me! That hurts – I'm telling – Mommmmmmy!

a) Pinch Runners – Only allowed if player is injured and will not be playing in the field following that at-bat. Pinch runner is to be the last player of the same sex to get out.

b) Pinch Hitters – Not allowed. Substitutes may utilize to switch one player for another in the scorebook.

15. **Fielding:** The following rules are specific to fielding a ball:

a) Outfield players are NEVER to be standing in the infield when a batter is at the plate. Outfielders may run into the infield to make a play but cannot be positioned there. Most fields have a clearly defined infield but if your location does not, inquire with the umpire as to how far in you can stand.

b) Infield players are to stay out of the base path and not block bases. It is understood that the transition of the live game or required movement to field a ball may take one into the base path. It will be the umpire's discretion to issue a warning and/or call a runner safe or out due to obstruction.

c) If, in the opinion of the umpire, a runner arrives at a base simultaneous to the thrown ball, the tie shall go to the runner.

d) The Infield Fly Rule – umpire shall call out an infield fly with runners on first and second or bases loaded and less than two outs.

e) There may be occasional unexpected field obstructions or field features unique to a specific location. The umpire shall determine the result for a ball played near or into that obstruction or feature.

16. **Uniforms/Attire:** Players are encouraged to wear same colored permanent numbered shirts. However, this is not a requirement for softball. Teams may be a motley assortment of shirts and colors and be fine to play.

Shirts are required for play. Feel free to prance around and preen before or after your game shirtless but not during play. Those headfirst slides would become extra painful otherwise...

Baseball/Softball gloves are permitted for all male and female players in 12" format leagues. Gloves are permitted for female players for 16" format leagues.

Athletic shoes are encouraged. Bare feet are not permitted. Metal cleats are not permitted. Cleats must be molded rubber.

17. **Bat Rules:** Unless otherwise noted, SMC softball leagues follow USA Softball bat rules as a guideline.

18. **Have Fun:** This is your leisure time, enjoy it. You're not playing for money, only the pride and prestige a Sports Monster championship brings and the adoration of thousands of area residents wishing they were you, a Sports Monster.

Here are some handy regulations for SMC Softball leagues:

1. **Starting the Match:** Players must have line-up in scorebook prior to batting. Scheduled match time is the ideal start time for your game. However, there may be a 5-minute warm-up delay into the hour but not more than 10 minutes into the hour. If games do start later than 5 minutes into the hour because of tardy or unprepared players, you may find your game to be less than 7 innings. If games do not start on time because of your umpire, please notify the local office.

Use of open areas is allowed for practice prior to game play in areas away from a live game. Teams not ready to start on time will not be given extra time and the game will be started immediately.

Visiting/Home team will be marked in the schedule and the Visiting will bat first.

2. **Player Eligibility:** During the registration or invitation process, players will accept Sports Monster's Waiver of Liability to be eligible for play. If a player refuses to accept the Waiver of Liability, they are not permitted to play.

The team captain is responsible for making sure that their team roster is up to date and current. Captains may update their roster with new players immediately prior to or during a match. However, the invited player must accept the invitation and show the referee/umpire/monitor/scorekeeper that they are allowed to play during a regular stoppage of play, such as half time or between innings or between games in volleyball or tennis. There will be no official time-outs, although a team may take a time-out (where permitted). There will be no special consideration provided for any connection issues.

Any player found to be participating who is NOT on that team's accepted online roster shall be immediately disqualified, the match shall be stopped, a forfeit declared, and all participants from that team are to leave the facility as soon as possible.

For participants in weekly pick-up programs, first time attendees MUST register online to participate. Online registration shall be annual, meaning attendees have

to be in our system during the current calendar year. Additional participation within a calendar year may be registered in advance or via walk-up. Participants refusing to register online shall be banned from play.

All players must be 19 years of age or older - picture ID's must be produced upon request of referee or league official. Failure to produce accurate picture ID upon request shall result in removal of player from match play until such a time as proof of age/identity can be verified.

To be eligible for playoffs, all players must have participated in a minimum of two week's matches.

3. **Match Scoring:** All games are scored by runs. Runs are:

One runner scores = One run

Games are won by a 1 run margin. Ties during regular season are recorded as such due to time constraints. Playoffs will have extra innings.

Scores are kept by each team in scorekeeping/line-up book. Contact SMC rep with any game rules or fault infraction questions regarding scoring.

4. **Season Ranking:** Teams will be ranked on overall won-loss record. Teams with the same won-loss record will be ranked based on higher run differential. The run differential is the total number of runs scored AGAINST each team subtracted by the total number of runs scored FOR that team. The team with the higher number will be ranked higher. Head to head scores are ONLY considered if there remains a tie for W/L and run differential.

5. **Forfeits:** All around bad news and offending teams shall be noodle-whipped the following week. A game forfeit will automatically score the offending team in the standings as -3 standing points, 0-1 game, and 0-50 points. Any team that forfeits three regular season matches for any reason shall automatically be removed from playoff contention.

Forfeited points will start to be declared if there are less than the required number of rostered/registered players available to start the match. Forfeit points will be awarded for every of the following time limits:

2 runs down 11 minutes into the hour and start as 2nd inning

4 runs down 16 minutes into the hour and start as 3rd inning

Game lost 21 minutes into the hour

Captains can add players to their rosters, and players can accept invitations, prior to the start of a match. However, delays in updating a team roster will not delay the start of a match without incurring late start sanctions as noted above. If a team does have less than the required number of players by format after 11 minutes from the scheduled start time, your SMC referee will get officially rostered players playing in a scrimmage.

During a scrimmage, captains can request an official to check an updated roster so that an official match may begin OR allow new players to join an already forfeited

match. In such cases where a match has yet to be forfeited, accumulated forfeited points shall be announced at the start and actual time played may be shortened and still be considered a legal match. In addition, such games shall end exactly as originally scheduled.

Any person not on the official roster is required to leave the immediate playing area and may remain in a designated spectator area (where allowed).

Forfeits incur a \$30 fee to the offending team (\$5/individual not in attendance for individual team rosters) and a \$30 bar tab awarded to the offended team. Advance notification of forfeits is appreciated. If a team can pre-notify the League office 72 hours in advance of a scheduled match, the forfeit fee is waived.

Three (3) regular season forfeits automatically disqualify any team from playoff scheduling and voids any consideration for refund or future credit.

6. **Minimum Age:** All SMC participants must be at least 19 years old. Valid picture id may be requested. Failure to provide a valid picture ID shall void participation until such time as proof of ID can be provided.

7. **Substitution Policy:** Teams are welcome to add as many one-time subs to their roster as needed. Those added subs MUST accept the team's invitation to join prior to participation. Due to insurance costs, every substitute player added above that league's standard team roster size incurs a \$10 fee.

Substitutes from other teams are allowed and encouraged. Opposing team may not challenge a Sports Monster approved player as a substitute. However, teams may ONLY pick up the number of subs needed to fill a full team. There can be no players on the sidelines. If regular rostered players arrive late, league subs are to be removed at the next change of possession.

There is ONE intra (meaning from another same day) league sub allowed for playoffs. NO new intra league subs are allowed for the semi-finals or final matches.

Opposing team may challenge suspected ineligible substitute to ref or league official. Challenges for late arriving players are allowed at half time and at the end of the match. A forfeit shall be declared for any teams found to be in violation of the player eligibility requirements.

Registered players will be defined as those on that team's online accepted roster by the sixth week. Players who have attended at least two (2) regular season games will be considered regular roster/registered players for that team. There is only one exception: If you know that you will be unable to complete the season, notify Sports Monster at least one week prior to the playoffs. Upon approval, your substitute must be added to the team's roster, accept that invitation, and be allowed to play. Such approved playoff subs may not successfully be challenged by an opposing captain.

8. **Team Rosters:** Please keep in mind that each team has paid for league play. Each team determines their own roster and who will be playing and how much per person owes the captain. SMC does not dictate any team's roster unless there is a disciplinary issue. If players have been added to your team's roster without the team captain's knowledge or permission, please contact your SMC office.

ALL players MUST accept the online waiver AND have played in at least two regular season games to be considered eligible for playoff games. It is required that players be listed on the online roster as the waiver is included with being on the online roster. Officials will not have paper waivers. Everything must be done online to participate.

Sports Monster **does** permit players to play for more than one team. We look at the big picture and if any team wants to sign up players from other teams to play with them so everyone has more fun, so be it. If teams pick up a player from another team during the season, then that player be on that team's online roster on/by Week 6 to be considered a regular player and not a sub. Such multiple team players will be permitted to play for those teams through the playoffs BUT must select only one team to play with if both teams play each other in any round.

Individual Teams ONLY: All outside roster additions and substitutes MUST be approved by SMC for new players to play. Please do not bring new players as they will NOT be allowed to play.

9. **GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP:** *Please observe standards of good sportsmanship during your time with us. Most people are great but there are some sour apples out there who try to ruin everyone's experience.*

We understand that competition can generate strong emotions; however, your emotions and actions must not negatively affect the enjoyment, comfort or safety of any of our other participants!

Foul language is not acceptable. Learn new words such as "sugar" or "fudge."

Taunting opponents is not acceptable. Tantrums (throwing objects and/or yelling) are not acceptable. You are not a two-year-old or teething, so calm it down. Opposing team may call a time out and address the umpire for consideration if it is felt that bad sportsmanship is being displayed by one or more on the opposing team.

At the discretion of the SMC ref, any displays of bad sportsmanship will result in the following penalties:

For individuals: 1 = verbal warning

2 = Player expelled from game

If an individual is expelled from the game, that team shall play down a player and an out will automatically be assessed when that player would normally be at bat. If that player is required to leave, play will only commence upon departure. Should player not leave facility that player's team will lose all runs or the full game following point of infraction. Team penalties may also be imposed at this time.

At the discretion of the SMC ref, any displays of bad sportsmanship will result in the following penalties

For team: 1 = verbal warning

2 = final warning: an out will be assessed if the batting team is warned. Should there be base runners, the runner closest to home shall be called out. If warning is assessed to the fielding team, they will start their next at-bats with an out.

3 = Game called (game forfeiture)

We are serious about penalizing the flagrant use of foul language. Aside from being offensive, you are playing in schools, church or park facilities that have young children around at all times. If your umpire does not actively pursue infractions, notify SMC.

10. **Taunting:** If a player blatantly taunts an opponent, a call of bad sportsmanship shall be assessed. His/her behavior will be the determining factor. Simultaneous taunting is a verbal altercation.

A PLAYER(S) GUILTY OF TAUNTING MUST BE SINGLED OUT AND PENALIZED. If a previous unsportsmanlike act has been committed and if this situation is BLATANT, a called out must be assessed and the guilty player(s) must be ejected.

11. **Playoffs:** Unless otherwise noted in the specific league or tournament outline overview or rules, all teams will make the playoffs. Overall 1st place team going into playoffs is determined by regular season won/loss record. If there are tied teams, it will be broken by the higher plus point differential. If a tie still exists, overall head to head game scores will be compared. Playoff format will be single game elimination.

Playoff games will be bracketed in a standard bracket based on a 16-team pool of teams. Most SMC leagues have less than 16 teams but the first round will still be predicated on the larger bracket - meaning for a 10-team league, the first round would have 8th vs. 9th, 7th vs. 10th before 1st and 2nd seeded teams would play, etc.

For any league of more than 8 teams, please be aware that you may have to play 2 or more games in one week to finish playoffs. Smaller (4 or 5 team divisions) leagues may be completed in one week of playoffs.

Player eligibility may be challenged by opposing team captains or umpires prior to the start of a playoff game or at the end of the second inning. NO NEW PLAYERS will be allowed to play once the second inning commences. A player who has not signed that team's waiver form (and is not the one intra-league substitute allowed for teams not fielding a full complement) is not eligible for play in that game. As long as the umpires are in agreement that the player has played at least 2 games, that player would be eligible for the next game, should their team progress but ONLY if they have signed the team waiver when originally challenged.

12. **Umpires:** All SMC leagues are organized for one paid umpire to be on site. Umpire is paid BY THE LEAGUE as part of your registration fees. So, if they ask for money, please notify the local office. There may be a rare occasion that there is no

umpire present. In such a case, teams are to play a regular game, keep score and make courtesy calls. We apologize in advance should a no umpire situation occur in one of your games. However, the largest single expense in your league is for facility rental and it is important that you play your game as there will not be a rescheduled game time. Game results will count towards final standings. Only in cases where a no umpire game occurs more than once in a season to any one team will there be future credit consideration.

SMC umpires are provided to make the game run as smoothly and error-free as possible. Obviously, no one is perfect and there may be occasion to question an individual call if the umpire hasn't already offered an explanation. The only person permitted to question an umpire's call is that team's captain. Should any other person other than the captain approach the umpire during a game, a ruling of bad sportsmanship may be applied (see #8).

SMC umpires sometimes will offer an explanation of calls as they are made, but this is not required and should not be expected. Signals should be clear and known to players. If no explanation has been offered, it is at that time that a captain's inquiry would be appropriate. Please keep in mind your tone of voice and to form a question. Scathing sarcasm and/or a demonstrative proclamation demanding a response usually will not be viewed favorably and a warning or penalty may be imposed.

Whether you agree or not, the umpire's judgment is the final word during the game. A challenge (see #12) may be filed with the SMC office following the game and a final determination/ruling will be made prior to the next week's game.

Any foul or abusive language directed at the umpire or within earshot will result in an automatic individual or team warning. Contrary to what you may think, no, you do not pay us enough to put up with abusive crap. A second warning will quickly be applied resulting in game expulsion. Possible suspension or league expulsion penalties may result as well.

Any physical action taken by any individual against an umpire will be met with full prosecution by SMC against that individual including involvement by law enforcement. That individual will be banned from SMC league play and full team forfeiture may be imposed.

Please realize that umpires can oversee hundreds of games each year and really do not care who wins. They do care about running a cleanly played game and that people enjoy their playing experience.

Any questions or concerns specific to your league's umpires should be addressed to your local SMC office during regular business hours and we encourage you to communicate with us while the season is underway so we can quickly address your concerns.

13. **Challenges:** SMC will not consider challenges if they are based solely on a decision involving the accuracy or judgment on the part of an umpire pertaining to called plays/kept time.

SMC does offer a two-level challenge format available following a game regarding strong disagreement regarding an umpire's ruling resulting in specific sanction(s) or player eligibility or failure to abide by written league rules as provided herein:

a) Contact your local SMC office's manager for your sport to address your challenge. In some cases, this person may be the local market manager. Any verbal challenge must be accompanied with a written challenge outlining the team/player's position and circumstances to be formally considered. This written challenge may be sent via e-mail for expedience. However, SMC confirmation of receipt is required for e-mail challenges. Please allow 2-3 business days for information from all parties to be processed and a ruling to be determined.

b) If you are not satisfied with the challenged ruling, you may contact that office's general manager or SMC headquarters and re-submit your challenge. You will again need to allow 2-3 business days for information from all parties to be processed and a final ruling to be determined.

As it is possible that a sanction may be reduced, it is also possible that a sanction may be increased upon review of the challenged situation. Upon issuing any challenge, it is understood that the challenging party will abide by the final league ruling.

Because many rulings and sanctions are time sensitive, it is important that any challenges involving a ruling or suspension be officially recorded in writing within 48 hours of the initial on-site ruling. Failure to do so can impact the ability of a final ruling being issued before the sanction occurs. Once a time sensitive sanction has already been enforced (example: one-week suspension ruling and the next week's game has already occurred with player sitting out), there may be no recourse for overturning the original ruling except for general clarification.

In cases where a general ruling is challenged solely for clarification, there is no deadline for submission.

GUIDELINES FOR INFECTION CONTROL: Special guidelines may be in place for any ongoing health concern. Please adhere to any current guidelines as provided by the league and/or host facility.

For injury during play - If a player suffers a laceration or a wound where bleeding occurs, the umpire shall suspend the game at the earliest appropriate time. Upon suspension of play, the captain shall be informed that he/she has the option to, immediately, substitute for the player or call a timeout. If a substitute replaces the player, the opposing team shall be allowed to substitute one player. The injured player may return to the game when they have the appropriate bandage. If the player returns to the game, the umpire should make certain that any lesion, wound or dermatitis is covered with a dressing that will prevent contamination to and/or from other sources. A wrist or sweat band is not considered a suitable bandage. ONLY the injured player may be removed from the game under these circumstances. That player's team may make a substitution as necessary to replace the injured player even if it is in the middle of an inning.

14. **Alcohol:** It is strictly forbidden to bring alcoholic beverages onto/into any Sports Monster league site. Regardless of local guidelines, we do not allow open containers in any of our games - specifically in the bench area and playing field. If spotted, you will be asked to remove your stash. Failure to do so will result in an automatic suspension in addition to possible police involvement. Note that this restriction includes fans in attendance also.

If a player, in the judgment of an SMC umpire or scorekeeper, is intoxicated, they will be removed from the game and receive a warning. A second offense shall result in league expulsion. We are not your mothers - unless she is a fabulous umpire and then have her call us because we always need good umps - so common sense and personal responsibility are expected.

15. **Equipment:** Sports Monster will provide softballs, bases, umpires and facilities for game play. No player equipment other than athletic shoes is required. Teams may use their own softballs upon agreement by both teams.

It is very common for teams to bring their own bats. Should the opposing team want to question the eligibility of a bat's use, they should do so immediately with the umpire. Should the bat be found to be illegal, that batter shall be called out. Should the bat be found to be in use later in that game, the offending team shall have ALL runs scored to that point be forfeited and another automatic out shall be assessed.

SMC asks that teams show common courtesy in allowing those teams less fortunate with the wealth of equipment you might have and share your bats.

Catchers may wear full protective equipment if they wish but none is provided for slow-pitch softball.

16. **Attire:** Athletic shoes are required. Field only athletic footwear is recommended. No bare or stockinged feet are allowed. NO metal cleats!

17. **Prizes:** There will be prizes for the winning team. Don't pester us about what they are: okay, well tell you, it's a dented 20-year-old bat we found in the alley. Cash prizes are not awarded. If you would like to receive cash prizes in future leagues, let us know & fees will be adjusted accordingly.

18. **Have Fun:** This is your leisure time, enjoy it. You're not playing for money, only the pride and prestige a Sports Monster championship brings and the adoration of thousands of area residents wishing they were you: A Sports Monster champion.

These rules have been updated as of 07/01/2020 and shall remain in effect until such time as another update is required. Thank you for choosing Sports Monster! We appreciate your business very much. Please let us know what we are doing well that you like and what we can do to improve for next season because as a fellow Sports Monster, this is your league and we want to see a lot more of you in the future. Please call or e-mail us with any questions, comments or suggestions. Enjoy your season with us!

E-mail us at info@sportsmonster.net – be sure to include your name and league location with any feedback.