

**Howard County**  
**50 and Over Men's Softball League**

**GAME RULES**

**A. USA Softball –**

USA Softball rules shall apply except as modified herein.

**B. Participation Requirements**

Age: Players must be at least 50 years old during the calendar year of participation (e.g., if a 50<sup>th</sup> birthday falls on or before Dec. 31, he is considered to have met the minimum age requirement for that entire calendar year). Proof-of-age documentation must be provided if requested. Use of an under-aged player will result in a forfeit. Each team may carry two players between the ages of 48-49 years of age.

**C. Field Layout**

1.) Distances: Pitching rubber to home plate 50 feet. Between bases: 65 feet.

2.) Pitching Mat: The pitching or strike mat shall be 17 inches wide by 24 inches long, with a "V" cut in one width to fit snugly against the back of home plate.

3 Extra Home Plate: An extra home plate for scoring purposes shall be placed on the rearward extension of the 1<sup>st</sup> base foul line at a distance of 8 feet from the rearmost corner of the regular home plate (see Rule H-5).

5.) Commit Line: A line 3 feet long shall be marked perpendicular to the foul line halfway between 3<sup>rd</sup> base and home plate (see Rule H-4).

**D. Games**

1.) Starting Time: Games shall start as scheduled. Early doubleheaders will start at 6:15/7:15 PM. Late doubleheaders will start at 8:15/9:15 PM. There will be no grace period. Game time is forfeit time.

2.) Time Limit

Games will consist of 7 innings. **There is a 55 minute time limit on games.** As soon as the 55 minute time has expired the umpire will announce clearly to both teams that they will

complete the inning in progress and play one more, open inning. The open inning must be announced before the 1<sup>st</sup> pitch of an inning.

**E. Teams**

1.) Substitutions: There is unlimited defensive substitutions at anytime.

2.) A game may start and/or be played with a minimum of 9 players. There will be no automatic out for the vacant spot in the line-up. If a 10th player arrives after the start of a game, he shall bat in the 10th position. A team forfeits a game when it fails to have the minimum number of players to start a game or maintain the minimum number of players to continue playing. Teams participating in a double header with the same team will forfeit each game separately. Teams that forfeit their first game of the day due to insufficient number of players, must begin the second game of the double header as soon as they have the minimum number of eligible players present but no later than the scheduled starting time of the second game.

Teams starting with 10 or 11 players and having to drop to 9 or 10 players with no substitutes available:

- a. If there is an eligible substitute at the game, or if an eligible substitute arrives before the game is over, the substitute must enter the game.
- b. A team can drop from 11 to 9 players without a forfeit being declared. An ejected player may be replaced in the line-up with an eligible substitute.

**F. Pitching**

a.) A legal pitch is a ball delivered with a perceptible arc that reaches a height of at least 6 feet from the ground, while not exceeding a maximum height of 12 feet from the ground. A legal pitch striking any portion of home plate or the pitching mat is a strike.

b.) The pitchers no longer needs to be on the pitching rubber. Pitchers must be within the 24" of the rubber, but are allowed to deliver the pitch from up to 10' behind the rubber.

**G. Batting**

1.) Ball-Strike Count: When the batter comes to the plate, there is a one-ball and one-strike count.

2.) Fouls: There is no Extra ( Courtesy ) Foul. When a batter has two strikes the next foul ball will be strike three and the batter is out.

3.) Home Run Rule:

a. The One – up rule will be in effect for the 50 + league. Once each team reaches their home run limit (1) the teams are allowed one additional home run. As long as both teams keep matching the limit or equal number of home runs teams may continue to hit additional home run(s). If one team reaches the limit and goes over the limit before another team reaches their limit the home run becomes an out. The one up rule is in effect for all innings except the home team can tie, but cannot go 1-up in the bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup> or in extra innings. Any over the fence home run hit by the home team in the bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning or any extra inning that puts that team 1-up will be considered an out. Any runners on base will not advance.

b. A team with an available home run: If the 5<sup>th</sup> run in an inning is scored by a runner on base during an over the fence home run, all succeeding runners and the batter runner do not score; the team will be assessed an over the fence home run.

5.) Bats: The USA bat rule will be followed for the 50 + league, No Senior bats are allowed.

## H. Baserunning

1.) Sliding: Sliding is allowed

2.) Overrunning Bases: No over running of bases is allowed.

3.) Avoiding Collisions: Any runner who *deliberately attempts* to run into the fielder who is covering a base or home plate or attempting to field a ball shall automatically be declared out.

*At first base*: Any play on the batter-runner at first base, the batter-runner must run to the portion of the double bag or mat located in foul territory. Failure to observe this rule results in the batter-runner being declared out and all other baserunners restricted to advance one

base. This rule does not apply when the ball is hit to the outfield. Having safely touched the portion of the bag or mat in foul territory, the batter-runner need not return and tag the base to advance in the event of an overthrow, etc.

4.) Commit Line: If a runner advancing toward home plate touches the commit line or the ground beyond it, *he cannot return to 3<sup>rd</sup> base*. A runner who re-crosses the commit line shall be called out automatically. A runner who left the base before an outfielder touches a fly ball, crossed the commit line, and touched alternate home plate can be declared out on appeal.

5.) Scoring: The play at home is always a force play regardless of the number of runners on base. To score, a runner must touch the extra home plate before the catcher touches the regular home plate while in possession of the ball. *Under no circumstances shall the catcher tag or attempt to tag the runner with the ball* (violation shall result in the runner being declared safe.) A runner who touches or jumps over any portion of the regular home plate or pitching mat shall be declared out. In the event of an errant throw the runner attempting to score must avoid collision with the catcher attempting to field the ball.

## I. Courtesy Runners

1.) For a Base runner: Courtesy runners are permitted for base runners. A player may only be used as a courtesy runner once per inning. A courtesy runner whose turn at bat comes while on base will be out. The courtesy runner will be removed from the base and come to bat. A second courtesy runner cannot be substituted at this time. A courtesy runner can be anyone on the team's roster. They do not need to be in the line-up at the time they are being used as a courtesy runner.

2.) For a Batter: There are no courtesy runners for batters. A batter must reach base before a courtesy runner is used.

## **J. Maximum Runs Rule**

### **1.) Maximum Run Rule**

Teams are limited to five runs per inning, except for the final inning of the game in which each team may score an unlimited number of runs. The umpire must announce the last inning unless it is the seventh inning.

- 3.) Slaughter Rule: If, after 4 inning, a team is losing by a margin of 15 or more runs, the game is declared over. If, after 5 innings a team is losing by 10 runs or more the game is declared over.

EXCEPTION: Allow the team that is behind by more than 15 in the 4<sup>th</sup> inning or by more than 10 in the 5<sup>th</sup> inning to use their unlimited run inning during the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> inning in an effort to extend the game. If the game is extended the team using their unlimited scoring inning will lose their unlimited inning for the remainder of the game.

## **K. Team Responsibility**

1.) Equipment: Each team shall bring to the game new softballs (as supplied by the county), the pitching mat (home plate extension, with team name), and extra home plate.

## **L. Rosters**

The roster/waiver form must be submitted to the Howard County Dept. of Recreation and Parks prior to the first game of the season.

## **M. Game Scores and Standings**

The manager or representative of the team that *wins the second game of the doubleheader* shall report the score by email at [mpendleton@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:mpendleton@howardcountymd.gov) no later than *the day after the game*.