

Clean and Sober Softball Association 2026 RULES OF PLAY
ANY RULES NOT COVERED IN THE CSSA CODE OR BY-LAWS WILL REVERT TO THE SANCTIONING BODY
Rule Changes

1. **TIME LIMITS: LEAGUE PLAY:** No new inning after 65 (sixty-five) minutes. (passed 12.4.21) Tie breakers will consist of no more than two innings. If a tie still exists at the end of the second tie breaker inning, the USSSA umpire will deem the game a tie.
2. **TOURNAMENT PLAY:** Podding games - No new inning after 60 (sixty) minutes. (passed 12.6.25) Bracket games – No new inning after 65 (sixty-five) minutes. (passed 12.6.25) International tie breaker will be in effect until there is a winner in all games. No time limit for Championship and "IF" games.
3. **INTERNATIONAL TIE BREAKER:** The runner placed on second base will be the last completed batter. The home team will start their turn at bat in the same manner. The inning will be played under all other CSSA rules.
4. **GAME BALLS:** Males will receive a 12" .44/MAX375cor ball. Females will receive an 11" 44/400cor ball. (USSSA APPROVED ONLY). Usage of illegal balls will result as follows - offensive team violation (illegal ball thrown in and hit by batter): Batter is out. First offense: warning issued to the coach. Second offense: coach is ejected. For CSSA purposes, "coach" is defined as the manager listed on the roster. Defensive team violation (illegal ball thrown in): First offense: warning issued to the coach. Second offense: coach is ejected. Ejection for this violation is current game plus one.
5. **STANDARD PITCH COUNT:** Count starts with 1 ball and 1 strike, with one courtesy foul. Once a batter has acquired a two and a half strike count any subsequent foul ball caught will be considered a third strike dead ball out.
6. **PITCHING RULE:** Pitchers may pitch between 50' and 56' while staying in line with the 50' rubber. They do have the option to change distances during an at bat. There will be no pump-faking, and if it happens the umpire will call a no pitch. (passed 03.03.18)
7. **HOME RUN:** C = 4 home runs progressive, D = 3 home runs progressive. E = 2 Home runs progressive. Trailing team must equal HR's before additional HR's are counted. Otherwise, each fence clearing HR will result in a dead ball out. (passed 12.8.18/12.7.19)
Rec = 1 home run progressive. Trailing team must equal HR's before additional HR's are counted. Otherwise, each fence clearing HR will result in a dead ball single, runners advancing when forced.
Women's homeruns do not count towards the progressive in any classification (passed 12.03.22)
8. **ENCROACHMENT:** Outfielders may not encroach a 200' radius from home plate prior to a batted ball from a female, 5 person infield allowed on male batters. When a female is up to bat, all the infielders must start with their feet in the dirt until the ball is hit (passed 12.8.18) Encroachment will result in all players being ruled safe at the base to which they were headed.
9. **OVER PLAY:** No male player may take a play away from any female on a batted fly ball in the outfield (passed 12.8.18). Overplay will result in all players being ruled safe at the base to which they were headed.
10. **FEMALE BALL OPTION:** A female may make the choice to hit a male ball. The choice must be made at her first at bat and she must hit the male ball for the entire game. (passed 12.4.21)
11. **OUTFIELD PLAY:** On a batted ball, no play can be made to 1st base on a batter/runner from the outfield when the ball is thrown from a position left of 2nd base. All runners advance one additional base. Once the batter/runner obtains 1st base, they are now just a runner and can be throw out from the left side of 2nd base going back to 1st base either on leaving early on a fly ball, or if they took a long rounding of 1st base and does not get back to 1st in time (back door play)
12. **COURTESY RUNNERS:** A Courtesy Runner of the same sex may be used once per inning for a total of two (2) courtesy runners per inning, one (1) male and one (1) female. If a team "bats around", the same individuals that received a courtesy runner previously in that inning may receive a courtesy runner for a second time (not a third) (passed 2.23.19). Pitchers will have the option to have a universal pinch runner that does not count against the teams 1 courtesy runner per inning. (passed 3.14.21) The courtesy runner must be of the same sex. The Courtesy Runner can be any player on the team roster. If a courtesy runner is on base when his/her turn in the order is up, the runner will be recorded as an out on the base in which they stand, removed from the base, and be required to bat. If a courtesy runner is to be the on deck batter they are not considered to be on deck.
13. **WALK RULE:** With less than two outs any male walked with a female behind him and the female is on deck for all pitches; then the male shall take second base and the female will hit. The on deck batter must be the next person in the lineup with two (2) outs, the female has the choice to walk or bat. If the female is not on deck for all pitches the male will be awarded first base only and the female must bat.
14. **GENDER/ORDER:** Teams may bat 11 players, with a minimum of 3 females in the first 10 batting positions. All additional batting positions must alternate gender starting from the 11th position. Note: Opposite gender substitution is permitted, if it does not violate the gender/order rule. (passed 12.8.18)
15. **SUBSTITUTION:** Opposite gender substitution is permitted, if it does not violate the gender/order rule. (passed 12.8.18)
16. **RUN RULE:** Follow the USSSA run rule (20 after 3, 15 after 4 and 10 after 5 in all games) if home team is being run ruled then flip flop will take effect. (passed 12.03.16) If a team is spotted runs and they are winning by the run rule, they must win by the run rule PLUS the spot. (passed 12.8.18)
17. **SHORTHANDED:** A team may play with nine players without penalty if they have 3 women. Teams may play with 7 men and 2 women while taking an out in the 10th spot. If a walk is assessed, the out created by the absentee player will be skipped, and the person next in the order will continue. (and hit an EH when out is taken) If you start with 9 in your lineup, you end with 9 in your line up.
18. **PLAYER DROP:** If a substitute is not available when a player is dropped from the lineup, an out will be assessed in the batting order where the player was. When a team is left with a vacant spot in the lineup, for any reason, the opposing team may not with two (2) out intentionally or unintentionally walk the previous batter, in order to get to the automatic out create by the vacant spot in the batting order. If a walk is assessed, the out created by the dropped player will be skipped, and the person next in the order will continue.
19. **LEAGUE DROPPED PLAYER:** A team may be allowed to "PICK-UP" CSSA rostered players to field a legal nine-player team to avoid a forfeit. Player must be a CSSA eligible player. This is to avoid a forfeit only. Once electing to participate in division play on a team registered in a division, the player may not play in any other division during the current year unless the player qualifies under Player Transfer.
20. **FLAGRANT CONTACT:** Any player intentionally causing unnecessary or flagrant contact, as determined by the umpire, shall be ejected from the current game and suspended from the team's next game. A review will be made by committee for possible further penalty.

21. **EJECTION RULE:** An ejected player will be suspended for their team's next two (2) complete games. If an amends has been made, the suspension will be reduced to one (1) game. The game in which the player was ejected from does **not** count toward suspension. (passed 3.1.25)
22. **TURN OUT or GET DOWN** Clarification: For all players safety; both base runners and fielders must make A VISIBLE ATTEMPT to avoid contact with other players. Runners must get out of the way (turn out) or slide (get down). Failure to do so will result in base runners being called safe / or out (depending on the offender) and possible umpire discipline.
23. **EQUALIZER:** When a team plays a game against a team that is a higher classification, the higher classified team will spot the lower classified team 4 runs PER level (2 if there is a + team involved) to start the game and play by the upper home run rule. At this point both teams are equal and then there will be a coin flip to determine who is home team passed 12/5/15. (except championship game – undefeated team gets choice).
24. **FLIP FLOP:** The Flip-Flop rule will be in effect in all games. The flip-flop rule is designed to prevent very large victory/loss margins and prevent long, extended games. RULE: At the end of any inning after the 2nd, if the home team is losing by the next inning's run rule or more runs, the home team will remain in the dugout (the visiting team will remain on the field). All base runners, if any, will be removed from the bases and the team will bat again as the visiting team in the top of the 5th inning. If they score enough runs to remove the run rule, the game will continue with the new home team (previously visiting team) now at bat. If the new home team scores enough runs to once again bring a run rule, the game will be over. If they do not, the game will continue until a run rule occurs or the game ends. The flip flop rule can be used only once per game. (Passed 3/16/14) (Passed 12.03.16 See rule #14)
25. **TOURNAMENT PLAYER PICK -UPS:** Teams are allowed three CSSA rostered exemptions per tournament (not of the same gender). Teams are only allowed one casual exemption player from any classification higher. CSSA eligibility and abstinence apply at all times. Exemption players can only play with their roster team when qualifying person is not present and can only be picked up on another team if qualifying person is also picked up. (12.7.19)
26. **SITUATIONAL TOURNAMENT PICK-UPS:** Situational pick-ups are allowed in order to avoid forfeits (except in the case of ejection). A team is allowed to pick-up a maximum of two CSSA sanctioned players not to exceed a team of nine (9). Player must be on a current tournament roster in which their team has been eliminated from competition. If three (3) or more players must be picked up to field a team, a forfeit will be granted unless waived by the opposing coach.
27. **NORTHWEST CHAMPIONSHIP PICK-UPS:** Teams are only allowed 3 pickups if it gets their team to a total of 12 players. This roster will need to be on file with CSSA RULES AND ETHICS prior to first game at Northwest Championships (passed 12/6/14)
28. **ILLEGAL BATS:** 240-Compression standard bats (new stamp) are the only bats permitted in the CSSA. If a player swings and hits with an illegal bat: Player is out and ejected from the game. USSSA banned bat list is also considered an illegal bat. Ejection for this violation is current game plus one.

NO DOGS AT CSSA EVENTS!!!!