

**Golden Seniors Softball Club
of Sacramento**



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GOVERNING RULES
(Revised March 2024)

Club Information Number
(916) 491-1721

Golden Seniors Softball Club

Governing Rules

March 2024

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SECTION 1.0: RULES OF PLAY

1.1 DEFINITIONS

- A. **Plate:** The strike mat or the strike zone which will be 23 inches by 42.5 inches.
- B. **Base or Bag:** Interchangeable for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd bases.
- C. **Batboy:** Persons to aid play as allowed by the concurrence of all managers.
- D. **Batter:** Offensive player at home plate.
- E. **Board:** The Club's Board of Directors, elected by the Club members.
- F. **Club:** The Golden Seniors Softball Club of Sacramento (GSSCS).
- G. **Club Officials:** Playing or non-playing elected/appointed/ hired officials, e.g. the Board, Commissioners, team managers, Safety Chairperson, umpires, etc.
- H. **Club Rules:** By-Laws, Standing Rules and Playing Rules.
- I. **Rating:** Measure of ability/performance and/or draft history, determined by Club officials.
- J. **Runner:** Offensive player on or advancing between bases.
- K. **Courtesy Runner:** A player replacing a base runner on base.

1.2 THE PLAYING FIELD

- A. **Batter/Runner running toward 1st base:** Once reaching the halfway point between home and 1st, the batter must remain in foul territory until touching 1st base. **PENALTY:** Batter is OUT for interference if there is a play and the ball passes 1st ahead of the batter.
- B. **Double 1st base:** Defensive players must touch the white section of the base which is in fair territory. **PENALTY:** If, in the umpire's judgment, the defensive player obstructs the batter/runner by touching the orange bag, the runner will be called SAFE.
- C. **Home Plate Safety Zone:** A diagonal line drawn from the 30-foot commitment line on the 3rd base line to a point 8 feet from home plate along the scoring line. **PENALTY:** If the runner steps within the safety zone or on home plate the runner will be called out.
- D. **Batter's Box:** There are no defined lines for the batter's box. A batter is OUT for touching home plate or the mat at the same time he is hitting the ball. SSUSA Batter's box rules shall apply.
- E. **Outfield Limits:** Outfielders must be standing no closer to home plate than 150-feet until the ball is hit. Landmarks, such as light poles, may be identified as marking the 150-foot line. A manager may appeal to the home plate umpire to request the call either before the pitch or after the play or the umpire may make the call without an appeal. **PENALTY:** Violation by any player on the team will result in the batter being awarded 1st base and runners advance on base if forced. Before the base is awarded and the runners advance, the manager of the team batting will be given the option to refuse the award of the base. This would allow the batter to continue the "at bat".

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1.3 OFFENSE/DEFENSE

- A. **Force Plays:** Initial attempts of runners reaching 2nd and 3rd bases are force play outs. Tags are permitted but not required.
- B. **Overrunning a Base:** Legally rounding a base with the intention of advancing OR running past and losing contact with a base when returning to it is considered overrunning. A defensive player must tag a runner not in contact with the base to record an out. **NOTE:** Runners are permitted to SLIDE, DIVE, ROLL or CRAWL back to an over-run base, but not purposely when advancing to a base.
- C. **Running through a base:** If running through, runners MUST run wide and avoid the fielder(s). As much as possible, runners should run to the OPPOSITE side from the throw. Runners are safe when touching ground, even with or beyond the base, before a fielder either contacts the base with the ball or tags the runner.
- D. Runners running-through must return and re-touch the base before advancing. **EXCEPTION:** Runners over-running 1st base may advance without re-touching the base. **NOTE:** Umpires judge whether a runner has over-run (rounded) or run-through a base. Failure to re-touch is an appeal play.
- E. **Runner interference:** Runners MUST avoid colliding with a defensive player, especially at bases. (See previous rule). If interference prevents an out, the umpire may call one or more advancing runners out.
- F. **Fielder Obstruction:** Fielders must avoid blocking a runner unless they are in the process of fielding a ball. **PENALTY:** Runner is awarded extra base(s).
- G. **Tag at home plate:** After a runner has passed the commitment line with both feet down (on-line or across), defenders may not tag the runner. **PENALTY:** The run scores and the ball remain live.
- H. **BATTER/RUNNER** will be called out for failing to advance to first base and/or enters the dugout area after ball batted fair or when awarded first base by the umpire. **EFFECT:** Ball is dead, batter/runner is out and base runners, if any, may not advance.

SECTION 2.0: PLAYERS & SUBSTITUTES

2.1 Maximum/Minimum: The full complement of fielders is ten (10). Teams must field a minimum of nine (9). At least seven (7) players must be team members. **PENALTY:** Forfeit loss of game.

2.2 Batting Order: All team members available to play must be on the line-up card and remain in the batting order. Once the game starts, the batting order may not be changed. **X-REF:** Players leaving the game rule **2.5** below.

2.3 Minimum Playing Time: All team members, including managers, must be in the line-up and must play defense at least three (3) innings. See exceptions below. **PENALTY:** Upon protest, forfeiture loss of game.

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EXCEPTIONS:

- A. Late arriving player entering the game after the 3rd inning and players leaving the game for any reason. **NOTE:** *Late-arriving player(s) shall be inserted into the game and line-up as soon as available.*
- B. In games in which a team does not play a full seven innings on defense, the manager will not be in violation if the player could have played the required minimum innings on defense had they played the full seven innings.
- C. The manager and any injured player may elect not to bat or play defense but may manage, coach bases or may be added to the bottom of the lineup and serve as a courtesy runner.
- D. In games where more than 11 players on a team are available to play on defense, the team manager may elect to play less than three innings on defense to allow additional playing time for other players. When this happens, the team manager may bat in the lineup.

2.4 Managers will NOT encourage or direct a player to miss or not participate in a game.
Penalty: Illegal substitution and forfeiture loss of the game.

2.5 Players leaving the game: Regular team members may leave a game for a legitimate unexpected reason (e.g., injury, illness, personal/family emergency) and they will be bypassed in the batting order with NO penalty. Once bypassed in the batting order, they may not re-enter the game. They may be replaced by substitutes. **X-REF:** *Substitutes Rule 2.7 below.*

2.6 Playing Sponsors: Sponsors, who play, should be members of the team they sponsor, if possible.

2.7 Substitutes: Teams fielding less than a full complement of players may use substitutes. The maximum number of substitutes assigned to any team is three (3). Substitutes may play **any** defensive position, bat last in the line-up and are limited to a single. If a team starts game with less than a full complement of players (10 or 11 players based on league), late arriving player(s) are to be added at the bottom of the rostered players in the batting order. If this causes the batting order to exceed the maximum defensive positions for the league and substitutes are being used, the last substitute player listed on line-up shall be dropped. Any runners on base are limited to one (1) base advance. **EXCEPTION:** New Club members, playing their first year in the Club, who are on the waiting list, are exempt from the above restrictions unless they had previously refused to play for a specific team.

2.8 Regular Season Substitutes: Potential substitutes must register with the scorekeeper before each game and be assigned by the scorekeeper through a random draw. A waiting list player signed up for any League **always** has priority over a rostered player from that League or another League within the Club. **EXCEPTION:** *The managers scheduled for the 1st game may prearrange for a league player substitute if LC confirms there are no waiting list players available.*
X-FER: 2.7 - Substitutes

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2.9 Substitutes from other Leagues: Leagues may interchange substitutes provided LC confirms there are no waiting list players or substitutes available within that league and the league's age requirements are met. **X-FER:** 2.7 - *Substitutes*

2.10 Post Season Substitutes: Players on the league waiting list or team members of eliminated teams have first priority to substitute in post-season play. If none are available, members of other leagues may substitute provided league's age requirement are met. The LC or Club Commissioner **must** approve such substitute assignments, assuring the substitute(s) are rated lower than the missing team member(s). **X-FER:** 2.7 - *Substitutes*.

2.11 Replacement of players; temporary and permanent: As soon as it is known to the manager that a player will miss or has missed two (2) or more consecutive games, the manager is required to request a replacement player. **PENALTY:** If the manager fails to request a replacement player, the League Commissioner, through the Player Agent, is authorized to assign a temporary replacement player, from the waiting list in chronological order, without the manager's concurrence.

2.12 Games missed without notifying manager: If a player misses two (2) or more games without notifying the manager in advance, the manager should take action to determine the reason, and may request a replacement player if the player fails to honor this commitment.

2.13 Waitlist Player Assignment: The League Commissioner, through the Player Agent, is authorized to assign replacement players from the waiting list on a chronological basis. Initial assignments must be temporary so as to evaluate the waiting list players' ability before a permanent assignment is made.

2.14 No Waiting List Players: When there are no members on the waiting list and a team has lost a player permanently who was a 1st or 2nd round draft selection, the team manager may recruit a new player who will be permanently assigned to that team. If a team loses a player permanently, who was selected in the 3rd round or lower, the manager may recruit a new player to be a temporary assignment so as to evaluate the ability of that player before a permanent assignment is made.

2.15 Permanent Replacements Players: The main objective of the LC in making permanent assignments is to maintain balance and parity among the teams throughout the league as much as possible. Before making a permanent assignment, the LC should obtain the concurrence of the assignment from a majority of the team managers in that League. This concurrence should not unreasonably be withheld.

2.16 A replacement player must have been assigned to that same team for three or more regular season league games to become eligible for post-season assignment as a team member. **NOTE:** Substitute requirements are more liberal.

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SECTION 3.0: THE GAME

3.1 Regulation games consist of seven (7) innings (time permitting); or if called by the umpire shall be regulation if five (5) or more complete innings have been played, or if the home team has scored more runs after the completion of at least four and one-half (4-1/2) innings.

- A. **Pitch Count:** All batters will start with a 1-1 ball/strike count. One courtesy foul ball will be allowed. Note: Courtesy foul hit backward must clear batter's head to be caught for an out.
- B. **10-Run Flip Flop Rule:** Will be mandatory in games with a 10-run differential in favor of the visiting team at the start of the "open-inning".
- C. **Open-Inning 15-Run Flip-Flop:** Once the visiting team is ahead by 15-runs, teams will flip-flop. The number of outs, if any, and runners on-base will be noted. The home team will then bat until 3 outs are made. If the home team does not tie the score or take the lead, the game is over. If the home team assumes the lead or ties the score, visiting team will then be able to resume their at-bats from the point prior to flip-flop.

3.2 Time Limits:

- A. Game time limits for each league will be approved by Board of Directors each year prior to the beginning of season. Approved game time limits will also identify when no new inning may begin.
- B. Post-season games will continue until a winner is declared.
- C. There NO time limit for league championship games.
- D. Forfeiture occurs five (5) minutes after the scheduled start time or completion of the previous games, whichever is later.

3.3 The Club and League Commissioners will make every effort to re-schedule cancelled games or makeup dates.

3.4 Scoring Restrictions: No more than five (5) runs may be scored in any inning except the final "open" inning. All games will start extra innings (time permitting) with a runner on second. This designated runner is the player with the last completed at-bat, *or if injured, preceding batter*. This designated runner may not be replaced by a courtesy runner until reaching 3rd base.

3.5 Tie-Breakers: If any teams have the same record at the conclusion of league play, the following criteria will be used to break all ties to determine seeding in playoffs:

- A. Head to Head results between tied teams;
- B. Aggregate least runs scored against between tied teams;
- C. Aggregate run differential;
- D. Coin Toss

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3.6 Pitching:

- A. **Pitcher's Safety Screen:** To maximize pitcher's safety, a Pitcher's Safety Screen (referred to "screen" or "PSS") will be used in all GSSCS leagues.
1. Pitchers must wear a facemask and are encouraged to wear other protective gear such as shin guards.
 2. Pitching screen will be placed approximately 40-feet from the back of home plate, between the pitcher's rubber and home plate.
 3. Pitchers must pitch from the side of the screen. The pitch height is 6-ft to 12-ft from the ground.
 4. Once pitcher releases ball, they must retreat behind the screen until the batter makes contact with the ball. **Failure of pitcher to remain behind the screen after the first warning will be removed from the pitching position for the remainder of the game.**
 5. If the Pitcher is outside the framework of the screen prior to the batter hitting the pitch the umpire shall call the pitch illegal. If batter hits the called illegal pitch, the results of the at-bat will stand.
- B. **Batted ball Hitting Pitcher's Safety Screen:**
1. Any batter that hits the pitching screen twice is out regardless of pitch count.
 2. Batted balls hitting the screen is considered a dead ball foul and treated as any other foul ball. **Exception:** Refer to B.1.
 3. Infield fly-ball hitting any portion of the pitcher's screen, will be called a "Dead Ball Out". Base runners cannot advance.
 4. If a thrown ball by the defensive player hits the screen during live play, the ball remains LIVE.
 5. A "Dead Ball" will be declared if a thrown ball becomes lodged in the pitching screen. Runner beyond 3rd base commit line will be awarded home. All other baserunners will return to last bag touched at the time the ball became lodged.
- C. Starting and relief pitchers are allowed a maximum of five (5) warm-ups in their first respective innings only. Pitchers are allowed (time permitting) a maximum of three (3) warmup pitches in subsequent innings. Infielders are allowed a maximum of one (1) warmup throw during permitted pitcher warm-ups. No infielder warm-ups after first inning.
- D. The strike zone is the mat and home plate (23-inches wide by 42.5-inches long). The pitched ball must travel a minimum height of six (6) feet and a maximum height of twelve (12) feet from the ground and strike, on initial impact, any part of the home plate or mat. NO argument is allowed on the judgment ball/strike calls. **PENALTY:** Warning is made for the 1st offense. Ejection for the 2nd offense.

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- E. Pitchers may give one intentional walk per batter per game without penalty. An umpire may declare a walk intentional if, in his judgement, the pitcher's intent is not to throw a strike. **PENALTY:** Batter awarded 2nd base and all runners advance 2 bases regardless if forced situation or not.
- F. Pitcher has 10 seconds to release the next pitch after receiving the ball or umpire indicates "play ball". **PENALTY:** Ball called on batter.

3.7 Batting:

- A. A team may not exceed one (1) over-the-fence home run MORE than the opposing team. Subsequent over-the-fence home runs are ruled singles and *base runner(s)* advance only if forced.
- B. Batters must take position within ten (10) seconds after the umpire calls "play ball". Batters, touching any part of home plate with the body while hitting a pitch, are called OUT.
- C. Players in position to hit are not allowed to have a non-approved bat. **PENALTY:** The batter will be called out and ejected from the game.

3.8 On-Base Situations:

- A. Courtesy Runners (CR) are limited to running once per inning. A CR may run every inning if needed. Any player, including substitutes, may be used as a CR.
- B. Any runner, except a courtesy runner, may be replaced by another at any time on any base, except for the international tie-breaker runner, who starts at 2nd base. **X-REF:** Injury rule overrides.
- C. Managers are authorized to designate courtesy runners, but only when requested to do so by a runner.

SECTION 4.0: UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

4.1 Flip Card Scoreboard: Umpires are responsible for using an alternate (Flip Card) scoreboard if the scorer is not able to use the electronic board.

4.2 Safety Equipment: All safety equipment, including AED and CPR gear, is required to be placed adjacent to and accessible to the field(s) during play. The game may not proceed without the equipment being present and in working order. The first game, home team bring out the AED and after the last game, home team will return AED to storage location.

4.3 Bats: Only current approved SSUSA or USA Softball bats are allowed for use in GSSCS games. Bats manufactured prior to 2014 marked "1.21 BPF" or less which include bats having an ASA 2000 or 2004 stamp are approved for use. **Note:** *The Grey colored MIKEN Ultra and any bat displaying the label "Exceeds 1.21 BPF" are not approved.* Player's are responsible to know the bats they are using comply with Senior Softball USA or USA Softball bat rules.

Refer to: www.seniorsoftball.com, RuleBook / Players' Equipment / Approved Bats
USA Softball: <https://www.usasoftball.com/certified-equipment/>

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4.4 Official Softballs:

- A. Men shall use a 12-inch ball approved for use by SSUSA.
- B. Women shall use a 11-inch ball approved for use by SSUSA.

4.5 During play, all players **must** properly wear official club approved jerseys. Club issued baseball caps, bucket hats or visors are no longer required to be worn. **Exception:** Waiting list players serving as substitutes are allowed to wear an alternate jersey.

4.6 Pitchers are required to use protective face masks (per SSUSA rules) and are encouraged to wear other protective gear. **Note:** It is recommended pitchers wear additional protective safety gear.

4.7 Red caps are issued to certified safety officials. Yellow caps are issued to umpires. Umpires may also wear ASA/SSUSA garb. White caps are issued to managers. Managers are responsible to designate the (acting) manager not wearing a white cap to the umpire.

SECTION 5.0: APPEALS, PROTESTS, DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

5.1 Only a team manager may file an appeal or a protest.

5.2 Appeals and protests must relate to one or more specific rule violations. Umpire judgment calls are not subject to appeal or protest.

5.3 The manager must formally announce to the umpire and scorekeeper (if assigned) that a game is under protest as soon as the incident occurs or is discovered prior to the end of the game. The manager must file a written protest to the league commissioner within 48 hours of the end of the game.

5.4 The league commissioner will render a decision on a written protest within 7 days.

5.5 League commissioners having a conflict of interest (i.e. member of affected team) must immediately refer the protest to the Club Commissioner for a ruling.

5.6 The Club Commissioner will render a decision within 7 days of the referral.

5.7 Should a protesting manager wish to appeal the Commissioner's ruling, the manager may then file a written appeal with the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will conduct an investigation, hold a hearing and render a decision by the end of the next scheduled Board meeting. The ruling of the Board of Directors is final; there is no further appeal.

5.8 Players subject to disciplinary action may request a hearing to be conducted by league officials. Appeals may then be referred to the Club Commissioner and the Board for action.

5.9 Any player may request an umpire call "time out", but only an umpire may call "time out".

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5.10 Only team managers may dispute calls and disputes must be based on rules, not judgments. **PENALTY:** Umpires may warn a player or manager who is ruled to be improperly continuing a dispute. Failure to heed such a warning may result in ejection.

5.11 Umpires must notify the LC and Club Commissioner of all ejections and the actions which led to the ejection, as soon as possible. The umpire may voice an opinion as to whether further disciplinary action should be taken.

5.12 The scorekeeper is required to keep the official record of the schedules, lineups, plate appearances and team scores. The scorekeeper may provide information on these matters only if asked. NOTE: Rules are under the authority of the umpires and league commissioners.

SECTION 6.0: SPECIFIC RULES FOR LEAGUES 1, 7 AND 8

6.1 Courtesy Runners: A courtesy runner (CR) may substitute for a *base runner* if the player is not able to run the bases. Any player, including substitutes, may be used as a CR and may only run once per inning and can be used as many times as needed during a game.

- A. NON-RUNNING PLAYER (NRP): Managers may list on the line-up cards no more than three (3) non-running players who may have a CR from home plate. A NRP may be any player. Once a game begins, no change in the designation of NRP's is allowed. Exception will be made for an injury to another player after the game begins. CR starts 6-feet behind the extended third base line through the batter's box as designated by the umpire.
- B. When NRPs bat, the CR for the NRP may advance to first base only. All other runners on base may advance more than one base at their discretion.
- C. Courtesy runners from home, or on base, may only run once per inning, may be replaced at any time (including on 2nd base during tie-breaker).
- D. Courtesy runners on base, when it's their turn to bat, may be replaced by another CR without penalty.

6.2 Maximum/Minimum Players: The full complement of team fielders is eleven (11) players. Teams must field a minimum of ten (10) players. At least seven (7) players must be rostered team members. **X-FER:** 2.7 – *Substitutes*. **PENALTY:** Forfeit loss of game.

6.3 Eligible Substitutes:

- A. Managers should first contact the league commissioner/player representative for the availability of substitutes. Players on the waitlist shall be assigned first without consideration of their skill level. (See Standing Rule 13.6A)
- B. If a substitute is not available from the waiting list to play in L1, L7 or L8, a player from a bye team in the same league may be assigned. Those substitutes must be from an equal or lower draft round than the absent player. Substitutes to play in L1 from L7 must be at

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least one draft round lower than the player they will be replacing. Substitutes from another league with a lower league number, must be at least two draft rounds lower than the player they will be replacing. League age restrictions will apply to substitutes. The LC or Club Commissioner must approve such substitute assignments.

6.4 Post Season Substitutes:

- A. Managers should first contact the league commissioner/player representative for the availability of substitutes. Players on the waitlist shall be assigned first without consideration of their skill level. Players from an eliminated team have second priority. (See Standing Rule 13.6A)
- B. If a substitute is not available from the wait list to play in L1, L7 or L8, a player from a bye team or eliminated team in the same league may be assigned. Those substitutes must be from an equal or lower draft round than the absent player. Substitutes to play in L1 from L7 must be at least one draft round lower than the player they will be replacing. Substitutes from another league with a lower league number, must be at least two draft rounds lower than the player they will be replacing. League age restrictions will apply to substitutes. The LC or Club Commissioner must approve such substitute assignments.
- C. If the regular starting pitcher is not available, a “substitute” pitcher may be used with the agreement of the opposing team’s manager. Batting restrictions for substitutes will apply.

6.5 Minimum Playing Time: NRP's may play as little as one (1) inning on defense if they request. Managers may choose NOT to be in the lineup and may play less than three (3) innings on defense.

6.6 Designated Hitter. Each team may have one Designated Hitter (DH) who is listed in the batting order but does not play any innings on defense. The DH will not count toward the minimum number of players on defense. Once designated as a DH that player may not become a regular defensive player in that game. A player may not be designated a DH without that player’s permission. EXCEPTION: This Rule does not apply in L7.

6.7 Base Paths: L1, L7 and L8 will use 65-foot base paths.