

# Goddard Slow-Pitch Softball Association

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

### I. MODIFICATIONS TO ASA RULES

Rules for play shall be in accordance with current Amateur Softball Association (ASA) rules except as modified below:

- a. **Re-entry:** A player that was removed from the game for a substitute may re-enter the game after being out of the game for at least one full inning (6 outs) and must re-enter in the defensive part of his/her team's inning. The re-entering player must go into the batting position of the player he/she is replacing, which could include the DH position if there is one. The replaced player must leave the game and may re-enter subject to the requirements above. In the event of injury to a player with no eligible substitute available, the provision requiring a one inning wait and return on defense is waived, but the injured player will be considered ineligible for the remainder of the game. If no substitutes are available, the injured player's turn at bat shall result in an automatic out if they are unable to bat or continue after they have reached base.
- b. **Official Lineup:** A team must always have at least 7 legal and eligible roster players in the lineup during the course of the game. A team must always bat the number of players appearing in the official lineup. If a team starts (or plays) a game with fewer than 9 players, an automatic out will be charged for each player fewer than 9 at any time, and the 15 run mercy rule will be in effect at any time and will remain in effect for the remainder of the game for the team that started with fewer than 9 players. During the course of a game, a team may increase the official lineup up to 12 players by adding the players to the end of the current lineup. Players 8, 9, and 10 may be added at any time during the game. An 11th and 12<sup>th</sup> player may only be added until the player(s) batting in the leadoff spot receives a pitch for the 2nd at bat in the game. The official lineup may not, for any reason, be reduced during the course of the game. Teams reducing the number of players in their lineup during a game will be charged with an out each time a missing player's batting position comes up.
- c. **Designated Hitter:** All teams may use an 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> player by employing the "Designated Hitter" (DH) option. Each team on a game-to-game basis may use the DH(s). To use the DH option, a team will bat 11 or 12 players in a fixed order and use 10 players on defense in any combinations (i.e., the DH may play any defensive position). The defensive player that has been replaced by the DH is still considered to be a player and will bat in their respective batting position and may re-enter on defense at any time during the course of the game. The DH refers to the specific batting position only and not any defensive position that the DH may play. If a substitution for the DH takes place, the original DH may return to the game in accordance with the regular re-entry rules as defined in Section 1a above. In the event

that the returning DH is only to be initially used on offense, announcement of his return must be made after 6 outs and during the defensive inning prior to his batting. If a team elects to use a DH(s), that fact shall be made known to the umpire and the opposing team prior to the start of the game. The DH's name shall be indicated in the official lineup and must be present at the start of the game.

- d. **Courtesy Runner** – Each team is allowed one courtesy runner per inning at the Team Captain's discretion. The courtesy runner shall generally be the last player to make an out. In the event that the batting team has yet to make an out in the game or inning, the courtesy runner shall be the player in the lineup farthest from coming to bat in the inning, who is not currently on base. **Example #1:** if the #4 hitter reaches base safely, driving in batters #1 and #2, with the #3 batter still on base. The #2 batter is eligible to be the courtesy runner. **Example #2:** if the #3 hitter reaches base safely and batters #1 and #2 are left on base, the last batter in the lineup is eligible to be the courtesy runner.
- e. **Regulation Tie:** A regulation tie game will be continued at a later date if the outcome of the game **could affect the final** ~~affects the~~ league standings. This rule neither requires nor prohibits the continuation of a regulation tie game whose outcome does not affect the league standings. The league scheduler and both team coaches must agree to the scheduling of the continuance of any regulation tie game (**continuation games should be scheduled as soon as is feasible**). The coaches will be responsible for ensuring a proper continuation (i.e. keeping track of runners on base, batting order, legal substitutes, etc.) If the game is not continued **by the scheduled start of the first playoff game**, then the game shall be recorded as a regulation tie game.
- f. **Initial Count:** A batter will begin an at-bat with a 1 ball, 1 strike count. After the batter reaches a 2-strike count, the first foul ball is the foul to give, but the second foul ball will be considered a strikeout. A foul ball that does not go higher than the batters head and is caught by the catcher with 2 strikes on the batter and a foul to give shall be considered a foul ball (the batter is not out but now has 2 strikes with no fouls to waste) i.e. the next batted ball must be fair. See ASA rules for definition of foul ball and tip.
- g. **Games Stopped Prior to Becoming Regulation:** Games that are stopped prior to becoming regulation (as defined by ASA Rule Book) shall be made-up from the point of interruption at a later scheduled date. The lineups from the original game shall be used as a reference for continuing play. Each team must field the same number or more (if started with less than 10 players) players for the continuation game as the original game at the time of stoppage, otherwise, the rule for penalizing teams with less players than they started a game with takes effect (i.e. started with 11 players but only continue with 10 players, therefore automatic out for the missing player's turn at bat). Team members that were playing in the original game at the time of stoppage, that start in the continuation game, must bat in the same place in the batting order as the lineup from the original game at the time of

stoppage. Substitute players may be used for any of the players from the original game at the time of stoppage according to the rules for player substitution. However, only team members that were on the team roster at the time the original game was played are eligible to play in the continuation game. If a team cannot make the reschedule date, the game will be considered a forfeit and the win will be awarded to the opposing team. If both teams cannot make the reschedule date, then the game will be considered void and will not be reflected in the standings.

- h. **15 Run Mercy Rule:** If a team is ahead in the score of a regulation game by fifteen 15 or more runs at the completion of an inning or if the home team scores 15 or more runs at the completion of an inning or if the home team scores the 15<sup>th</sup> go-ahead run of a regulation game while at bat, then the game shall be called by the umpire and the official score of the game is the score when the game is called. For any team that started with or has been reduced to fewer than 9 players in the team's official lineup, the 15 run mercy rule will be in effect at any time and will remain in effect for the remainder of the game for that team.
- i. **Home Run Rule:** The GSPSA Leagues will limit the number of home runs hit over the fence on a league-by-league basis as described below.

**On Tuesday and Wednesday nights,** homeruns will be limited to 5 per team per game. During the game, if another player hits a ball over the fence after the limit is reached, it will be scored as an OUT. The limit of 5 does not include those home runs that were assisted (touched/helped by a player) over the fence. These hits are not considered home runs, but four-base awards and not counted toward the limit, nor scored as an out if the limit has already been reached.

**On Monday night,** each team is initially allowed to hit 3 homeruns. As soon as both teams have hit 3 homeruns, each team will be allowed an additional homerun. From this point on, additional homeruns become available as soon as the teams have equal numbers of homeruns. The exception to this rule is when the home team is batting in the bottom of the last inning of the game. If the visitors have already hit 3 (or more) homeruns, the home team can only hit a total of 3 (or more) homeruns as well. There cannot be a situation where the home team is permitted to hit more home runs than the visiting team unless the visiting team has not hit 3 total homeruns, and in that case the home team is still limited to 3 total homeruns. Homeruns hit when a team is not eligible to hit one is an OUT. The limit does not include those home runs that were assisted (touched/helped by a player) over the fence. These hits are not considered home runs, but four-base awards and not counted toward the limit, nor scored as an out if the limit has already been reached.

The batter-runner and any base runners need not touch any of the bases following an over the fence home run. Batter-runners may not choose to decline an over the fence home run. A ball hit over the fence on the fly

automatically counts towards the team limit of homeruns and will be scored appropriately following the night specific rules above.

- j. **Illegal Bat Rule:** The immediate penalty for coming to the plate with an illegal bat is an automatic out and ejection from the game. Additionally, the bat will be confiscated and delivered to the GSPSA Executive Committee for examination. The player who used the illegal bat will be subject to a one year suspension from all club activities, pending a hearing with the EC. At said hearing, the player will be given the opportunity to explain the situation and the EC can either enforce the year-long suspension or modify the penalty as warranted by the circumstances. **NOTE: Players unable or unwilling to allow the bat to be confiscated will be suspended for one year with no opportunity for a hearing.**

A legal bat for GSPSA Play must meet all of the requirements of ASA Rule 3, Section 1 and:

1. must bear **either the ASA approved 2000 certification mark or the ASA 2004 certification mark** as shown below, , or the **ASA 2013 Certification Mark (Slow Pitch ONLY)** and must not be listed on an ASA non approved list, **and**



2. must be included on a list of approved bat models published by the ASA National Office; or
3. must, in the sole opinion and discretion of the umpire, have been manufactured prior to 2000 and if tested, would comply with the ASA bat performance standards then in effect.

**The GSPSA Official List of Banned Bats shall consist of the following:**

1. Any bat that appears on the ASA banned bat list.
2. All titanium bats.
3. Any bat altered from the manufacturers' stock standard. Examples of illegal alterations include, but are not limited to: weighting, shaving, accelerated break in techniques (e.g., rolling, hammering, or vising), and repainting. (Bats can have identification markings in the form of permanent ink bearing team name or initials, or some other method that doesn't alter the bat's performance).
4. Any bat deemed illegal by the GSPSA Executive Committee or their designee (umpires). This is generally accepted to be bats deemed unsafe for play.

k. **Illegal Bat Challenge Rule:**

This rule allows a team or an umpire to challenge the legality of a bat in the event the posted listings of illegal bats is unavailable or believed to be out of date or if there is a question about the bat having been altered.

Once a bat is challenged, if the umpire deems it illegal, it cannot be used. If the umpire deems the bat legal it will be allowed and play will continue. If the umpire isn't sure of the legality of the bat, it can be removed from the game at the umpire's discretion. In this case, the automatic out is waived, and the player is allowed to get another bat and continue his or her at-bat.

The challenged bat is then disqualified for the rest of the game, and must be cleared through the GSPSA Executive Committee before it can be used again in a game. It is the player's or Team Captain's responsibility to contact the GSPSA Executive Committee to have a bat declared legal for league play. Bringing an identified illegal bat to the plate will still result in an out being called, the bat being removed from the game, and the player ejected from the game, and the year-long suspension beginning at that time..

It is also the responsibility of the Team Captain to inform his or her team as to the GSPSA Rules and Regulations concerning bats. Team Captains may

contact the GSPSA Executive Committee with any questions regarding legal or illegal bats.

- l. **Stealing Bases Rule:** The GSPSA doesn't allow stealing of bases.
- m. **No Available Umpire Rule:** If there is not an umpire available then:
  1. An umpire will notify the captains at game time.
  2. If the captains can agree on the process, the game will be umpired by players involved in the game. If not, the game will be postponed and played at another time.
  3. The captains are to select a person or multiple persons to ump the game.
  4. Only 1 umpire on the field at a time.
  5. If any questions in a ruling during the game, then go to the nearest umpire at another field for the answers. Balls and Strikes will not be questioned.
  6. After the game, whoever were the umpires are to share in a credit at the beer shack in the amount of an umpire game fee. Report the score to an umpire at the Beer Shack, and to receive confirmation of credit.

n. **One-Pitch Rule**

In the event of impending darkness, an umpire may ask the teams if they wish to go to one pitch. If both team captains agree, play will resume under one pitch rules at the top of the agreed inning. If there is not unanimous consent, the game will continue under the standard rules until such time as the umpire determines the conditions constitute an unsafe playing condition and halt the game, to be made up at a later date.

One pitch play consists of the following set of rules:

1. One pitch play begins at the top of an inning, and the game continues in one pitch until it is concluded, or play is halted due to unsafe playing conditions.
  2. Each at-bat is played as though the batter begins his plate appearance with a 3-2 count, with no fouls to give.
  3. All the standard rules of play are then applied from the 3-2 with none to give, status.
- o. **Pitching:** The pitcher may take a position from the front edge of the pitcher's plate to six feet behind the pitcher's plate within the 24 inch width of the pitcher's plate with both feet firmly on the ground
  - p. **Pitching Arc:** The pitching arc height is now 6-12 feet.
  - q. **Technical Out Rule (TO):** In the event of unsportsmanlike conduct by a player, coach, or spectator, the umpire can charge a team with a "Technical Out". If the batting team is charged the "Technical Out", they are immediately assessed an out and play continues. If the fielding team is charged the "Technical Out", then they have one out charged against them

**when the first batter of their team at-bat takes place, thereby giving them only two outs for that inning. In the event that a fielding team is charged a “Technical Out” and they will not bat again, then the batting team will be awarded an extra (fourth) out for that inning. Two consecutive “Technical Outs” may not be assessed against the same team; at least one pitch must intervene. A “Technical Out” may be assessed instead of ejection of a player, coach, or spectator.**

- **Two consecutive “Technical Outs” may not be assessed against the same team; at least one pitch must intervene.**
- **A 'Technical Out' is not to be given simultaneously with an Ejection.**
- **An Ejection if warranted may be given following a Technical Out with no need for a pitch thrown between but must be the result of a 2nd unsportsmanlike conduct.**
- **A 'Technical Out' if warranted may be given following an Ejection with no need for a pitch thrown between but must be the result of a 2nd unsportsmanlike conduct.**
- **Multiple simultaneous or consecutive Ejections may occur if warranted (E.g. fighting).**

## II. PLAYING CONDITIONS

- a. **Playing conditions of the fields on each day shall be assessed by 3:30 pm by that day's first game league commissioner, who will decide at that time whether to postpone all scheduled games for that day or to defer the decision. If the decision is deferred, the responsibility for determining the playability of each field shifts to the umpire assigned to the field, as described in Rule II.c.3. (Listed below).**
- b. **The first game is scheduled to begin play at 5:30pm. The second game is scheduled to begin play at 6:45pm or no later than 5 minutes after the completion of the first game, whichever is later. A game that starts on time is called an on-time game, and must follow these playing time restrictions:**
  - **No inning in a first game shall be permitted to start after 6:45pm**
  - **Play in a first game shall not be permitted after 6:55pm**
  - **NOTE: Both of the above rules may be waived if neither of the two teams involved, nor the field being used, are scheduled for a second game. In that case, specific time requirements are waived and play may continue until the game is stopped due to darkness.**
- c. **A scheduled game may be delayed on the day of play only for the following cases:**
  1. **At least one of the teams does not have the minimum number of players as stated in Rule I in which case a delay of no more than 15 minutes is permitted. If the game is able to begin officially, the game's time limitations are the same as those of an on-time game. If both teams are short of players, then both teams forfeit the game and receive a loss.**
  2. **An umpire has not shown up, in which case a delay of no more than 15 minutes is permitted. If an umpire does become available before the end of the time limit, then the game's time limitations are the same as those of an on-time game. If at the end of this time limit no umpire is available, at the agreement of the team captains the game can be self-umpired. If the captains cannot agree to self-umpiring, then the game shall be postponed. In this case, it is the responsibility of the captains of the teams involved to notify the league commissioner of the postponement.**



3. **Conditions have rendered the field unplayable in the umpire's opinion, and the umpire has determined that the game may be delayed in order to attempt to put the field in a playable condition. The length of the delay is at the umpire's discretion. If the umpire subsequently determines that play is to be postponed, it is the responsibility of the captains of the teams involved to notify the league commissioner of the postponement. If the umpire subsequently determines that a game shall be played and this is the first game scheduled, then the game's time limitations are as follows:**
  - **If the game starts between 5:30 pm and 5:45 pm., then the game's time limitations are the same as those of an on-time game.**
  - **If the game starts after 5:45 pm and no later than 6:15 pm., then no inning shall start after 7:00 pm, and play shall stop at 7:10 pm.**
  - **If the game starts after 6:15 pm., then play shall end at such time as the game becomes regulation or at 7:20 pm., whichever comes first.**
- d. **Lineups should be exchanged at least 5 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the game.**
- e. **The umpire assumes control of a game 5 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the game, and remains in control of the game until the game's termination.**
- f. **Shirts are to be worn during the game. Shoes with sharp cleats or metal cleats are not permitted.**
- g. **No drinks are to be allowed on the field of play alcoholic or otherwise. In this case, "field of play" is defined to be all areas of fair play including the infield and outfield, as well as within the batter's box area.**
- h. **Lightning – Because of the potential danger involved with lightning in open spaces such as the softball complex and the speed with which severe storms can move into the area, the GSPSA has decided to take a cautious stance toward softball activities when the possibility of lightning is present. Any umpire is charged to suspend play when he/she detects any lightning. The umpire should report to the home plate umpire on Field 5, who will suspend play for the entire complex. At this time a warning will sound (one blow of the siren) and players are encouraged to go to the safety of their automobiles. If the danger passes in a reasonable amount of time, an all-clear siren will sound (one blow of the siren) and the games will resume. If the potential of lightning persists, an announcement will be made postponing the games for that evening and the siren will sound (two consecutive blows of the siren) to inform all players on the softball complex of this decision.**

### III. PROTESTS

- a. All protests should be filed in accordance with the current ASA rules. A non-rule based protest (e.g. ineligible players) must be filed within two business days of the scheduled time of the contest. For rule-based protests, the intent to file a protest based on rule violations must be communicated to the umpire crew, the coach of the opposing team and entered into both scorebooks at the time of the dispute. Official protests should contain the following information:
  1. The Date, Time, and Field of the game.
  2. Names of the Umpire(s) and Team Captains.
  3. The Rule and Section of the Official ASA Rules or GSPSA Rules and Regulations under which the protest is made.
  4. The decision and conditions surrounding the making of the decision.
  5. All essential facts involved in the matter protested.
- b. All official protests are to be submitted to the Executive Committee through the League Commissioner with a \$50.00 fee. If the protest is upheld, the fee will be returned.

### IV. SELF-UMPIRING RULES AND GUIDELINES

- a. The 2023 season will be self-umpired. The batting team shall provide the umpire for each half-inning. The umpire may swap out with a teammate at any point (for instance, if the umpire is next-up to bat).
- b. **Self-umpires must have 3+ years of experience as a GSPSA player, umpire, or official and have sufficient understanding of ASA and GSPSA rules. Team captains are responsible for ensuring the umpires they provide meet these criteria.**
- c. A black mat will be placed behind home plate. It should be aligned such that the mat just covers the black stripe surrounding home plate. If a pitch is of legal height (6-12 feet at the top of its arc) and hits the mat (i.e., hits the black), it is to be called a strike.
- d. Players shall not dispute calls made by the self-umpires. Violators of this rule may be subject to discipline at the discretion of the GSPSA Executive Committee.