

Sydney Outfielders Softball Association

2017/18 Season Rules

ELIGIBILITY

All players must register before playing. All players must fill out a registration form on our website prior to playing – even if it is their first game – for insurance purposes. Playing with unregistered players may result in a forfeit for your team.

New players (who were not registered players last year) are allowed a complimentary game before purchasing season membership. Players can play one game free-of-charge (but must still fill out a registration form). If after this game a player decides to join the league, they must pay their \$95 registration fee (or \$47.50, see Concession memberships, below), prior to their second game.

Concession memberships: Players who are aged 25 or younger as of 4/10/16, or who hold a valid student concession card can register for the entire season for \$47.50 (50% off). Captains may ask for proof of age, or to see the concession card.

Final: Only season players (both regular and concession) can play in the league's final, and players can only play on the team that they have registered with.

GENERAL

Final inning: The final inning is either the 7th inning, or an earlier inning if both captains agree to designate an earlier inning as the last inning if they agree there will not be enough sunlight to continue to 7 innings. This declaration must be made at the beginning of a full inning (i.e. not between an inning). Teams can score an unlimited number of runs in the final inning.

Home team batting during final inning: If the Home team is ahead after the Away team has batted in the final inning, then the game is over and the Home team does not have a final at bat.

Game length: Games start at 6:30pm and end at 8:00pm or earlier. A regulation game is a maximum of 7 innings, but captains can agree to designate an earlier inning as the last inning if they agree there will not be enough sunlight to continue to 7 innings.

Mercy rule: A team can score a maximum of 6 runs in each inning except for the final inning. There is no run limit during the final inning. The final inning is either the 7th inning, or an earlier inning if called by both captains prior to starting the inning (e.g., if it is becoming too dark to play).

Points: Standings are determined on a points and runs for and against system. Each team receives 3 points for a win, 2 for a draw, and 1 for a loss. In the event of a forfeit, the forfeiting team receives 0 points (while the other team receives 3 points), and the score is counted as 0-5 against the forfeiting team.

Rain cancellations: In the event of rain, players can call the Centennial Park Wet Weather line at 9339 6670 to hear a recorded message stating whether the parks have been closed. If the fields have been closed, we are legally not allowed to play. If the fields have not been closed, but the weather would not allow safe play, the committee will alert captains by 4pm if they decide to cancel games. If the committee has not called the game by 4pm, games are on. Games may be called at the field in the event of lightning and/or heavy rain.

ROSTERS/LINEUPS

Batting lineup: There is no limit to how many players may be in a team's batting lineup. However, two male players may not bat consecutively. There is no restriction on the number of female players that can bat consecutively. If a team has a greater or equal number of females than males, a single batting lineup can be used. If a team has more males than females, then separate male and female batting orders should be made and cycled through, alternating between genders. If two males do bat consecutively, there will be an automatic out in between the two male batters. If a team has three or fewer females who are all at bat when the next female is due to bat, the team may substitute a male runner for the next female due to bat.

Casual Players: There is no longer an option for casual payments, though players are welcome to speak to their captain to arrange a payment plan with him or her at the captain's discretion.

Fielding roster: Each team has a max of 10 players on the field at one time. There's no min number of players needed for a game, though a team can choose to forfeit if they feel they do not have enough players (it is recommended teams play with at least 6 players). There may be no more than 3 males in the infield and 2 males in the outfield.

Helmets: All players must wear batting helmets when batting.

Pitcher/Catcher: The pitchers in the 1st and 2nd inning must be different players, and cannot both be male. Likewise, the catchers in the 1st and 2nd inning must be different players, and cannot both be male.

Scoresheets: When filling in the batting order, captains should use players' first names as indicated on their registration form. If more than one player has the same first name, captains should also include players' last name or initial. The batting team is responsible for keeping track of runs and outs on the scoresheet. At the end of the game, both captains should nominate one player from the game (rather than from each team) for each award, and sign the scoresheet. It is the responsibility of the winning team's captain to deliver the scoresheet to a committee member by 5pm the following day. In the event of a draw, the captain of the designated home team is responsible. The easiest way is to hand a committee member the physical score sheet after the game, but otherwise the scoresheet can be scanned and emailed, or captains can text a photograph of the scoresheet to a committee member, but must ensure that the score and players' names are legible. Failure to deliver the scoresheet in time will result in the responsible team being penalised 1 point (i.e., the winning team will be awarded 2 points rather than 3).

Substitutions: Substitutes coming into the game must play at least one complete inning (i.e., they must bat and field). Late players can be incorporated into the game as they arrive, and players that must leave early can be substituted without penalty. Injured players can be substituted without penalty, and injured players can have a substitute runner once the player has reached first base.

Umpiring: The batting team is responsible for designating a player to umpire the pitches and plays. The designated umpire can change within the inning, for example if the current umpire is due to bat. It is important that team members be familiar with the rules so that they can provide clear and fair umpiring. Teams are expected to respect the call of the umpire. In the case that a disagreement does occur, team members should speak to their own captain who in turn can choose to speak to the opposing team captain in a respectful manner.

BATTING

Balls: If the batter does not swing at a pitch, and the pitch does not hit the strike board, the batter receives a BALL. If the batter does not swing, and the ball first hits the ground and subsequently hits the strike board, this also counts as a BALL. If the batter receives four balls, they advance to 1st base.

Bunting: Bunting is not allowed. If a batter intentionally bunts a ball, they will be called OUT.

Strikes: If the batter does not swing at a pitch, it must hit the strike board to be called a STRIKE. If the batter does not swing and the ball first hits the ground and then bounces onto the strike board, this counts as a BALL rather than a strike. If a batter does swing at a pitch and does not make contact, it is counted as a STRIKE regardless of whether the ball hit the strike board. A batter is OUT on the third strike regardless of whether it is caught by the catcher.

Foul balls: A batter is OUT if the third strike hit is a foul, regardless of whether it is caught. If a batter has less than two strikes and hits a ball in foul territory and the ball is not caught, they receive another STRIKE. If the ball is caught in bounds (within the boundary lines that run 10 feet to the left of third base and 10 feet to the right of first base), the batter is OUT (even if the player carries the ball out of bounds after catching it). If the ball is caught out of bounds, the batter is not out, but receives a STRIKE. If the batter hits the ball into the home plate, it is counted as a STRIKE.

Hit by pitch: If the batter is hit by a pitched ball, a BALL is called on the batter. The batter should make an effort to get out of the way of the ball.

Stance: The batter must stand within the marked batter's box and must have at least one foot within that batter's box, and must not step on home plate when they hit the ball. Failing to do so will result in the batter being called OUT.

FIELDING/BASERUNNING

Commitment lines: There is an unmarked commitment line between 3rd base and home plate only. There are no other commitment lines between the other bases. Once a base runner passes the halfway line, it is a force play at home plate. This is because tagging is not allowed at home plate.

Extra bases on overthrows: When a ball is overthrown beyond the boundary line, base runners are awarded a maximum of two bases - the base they were running to at the moment the ball crossed the boundary line, and an additional base. If a base runner was standing on a base at the moment the ball crossed the boundary line, they receive one base. Bases are not automatically awarded for throws that go beyond the foul line but not the boundary line.

First base: Runners must run to the orange base at first base, while the fielder must go to the white base. An exception is if the ball is hit to the outfield and there is no play at first, in which case the base runner may hit either base and the fielder must get out of the way.

Home plate: To prevent collisions at home plate, there is a scoring line marked near home plate. If the line is not drawn, it is the extension of the first base line. The runner must cross this line without touching home plate. The runner will be called OUT if they touch home plate, and the run will not count. The fielder must play anywhere on the home plate board, and not the scoring line. There is no tagging at home plate, and so once a runner has crossed halfway between third base and home plate, it is a force play at home, and the fielder can get the runner OUT by touching home plate while in possession of the ball before the fielder has touched or crossed the scoring line.

Infield fly: If there are fewer than two outs and a force play at third base (i.e., runners on first and second, or runners on all bases), and a ball is hit high and should be expected to be caught by an infielder, the umpire should call the infield fly rule, meaning that the batter is OUT, and base runners should tag up. This is to prevent situations in which the ball is purposely dropped, leading to an easy double or triple play.

Interference by base runner: A base runner player cannot impede a fielder who is trying to make a play, and should avoid making contact. If a base runner is hit by the ball while between bases before an infielder has had a chance to field it, the runner will be called OUT, even if the base runner was in the basepath. If the ball hits a runner after a fielder has already had a chance to field it, the batter is not out.

Interference by fielder: A fielder should move out of the path of a base runner when not making a play. Failure to do so will result in the base runner being called SAFE at the base they were heading toward. Fielders should also be sure to play the corners of bases rather than the middle of a base to prevent contact with runners.

Safety circles: In past seasons we have had safety circles around bases where a runner is safe if they are within the circle. We no longer use safety circles as we have instead re-introduced tagging.

Scoring during the third out: No run can be scored during the same continuous playing action as a force out for the third out, even if a runner reaches home plate before the third out is recorded. If the third out was not during a force play, then the run is counted provided the base runner reached home before the third out occurred.

Sliding/Diving: There is no sliding or diving into a base. Runners will be called OUT if they intentionally slide or dive into a base.

Stealing/Leading: A runner is not permitted to leave a base until the ball is hit. There is no leading and no stealing of bases. If a runner does leave the base before the ball is hit, they will be called OUT.

Tagging a runner: Tagging is allowed, except at home plate.

Tagging up: When a ball is hit in the air, base runners must tag up after the ball is caught by either returning to the base, or remaining on the base. After tagging up, base runners can advance to the next base after the ball is caught. A base runner is OUT if they are tagged before tagging up, or if the ball reaches the runner's base of origin before the runner.

Touching bases: A base runner must touch all bases (excluding home in which they must cross the scoring line) for a run to be counted. If a runner does not touch every base, they will be called OUT upon crossing home, and the run will not count.

PITCHING

The ball must be pitched in an arc that at its highest point reaches a height of at least 6 feet (2 meters) and no more than 12 feet (3 meters). Pitches that are too flat or too high are considered a ball and should be called a BALL by the umpire before the pitch reaches the plate. The play is considered dead at this point (i.e., the batter cannot hit the ball).

— SYDNEY —
OUTFIELDERS