

Blue Ash League Rules



Slow-Pitch Softball

USSSA.com



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Section One – League Organization

Rule 1.1 – Manager’s Responsibilities

The manager is the primary communication link between his/her team and the Blue Ash Recreation Department. It is the manager’s responsibility to take the initiative to clarify information about the operation of the league. In addition, the manager must:

- A. Be familiar and with the United States Specialty Sports Association (U.S.S.S.A.) rules and Blue Ash Sports Center Procedures prior to the first league game and throughout the entire season.
- B. Obtain updated league information from the web site including revised schedules and rain out make-up games.
- C. Obtain league information (deadlines, rainouts, etc.) and disseminate it to team members.
- D. Submit scorecards accurately, by 10:00 a.m. the following day, to the league manager. (2.7-B.)
- E. Keep your team and spectators in control at all times (before, during and after games).
- F. Inform the league manager of changes in his/her contact information.
- G. Pay umpire fees (\$11 CASH) to the umpire **prior** to the start of every game scheduled.
- H. Maintain a legal roster at all times, as per USSSA and Blue Ash sanctioning rules.
- I. Be ready to play at the official game time as indicated on the schedules.

Rule 1.2 – Roster

- A. All players must be 18 years old or out of high school to be eligible. Those graduating in May or June of the scheduled year are eligible.
- B. NO PLAYER MAY PARTICIPATE IN A GAME UNTIL ALL INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR THAT PLAYER IS OFFICIALLY ON FILE IN THE RECREATION OFFICE.
- C. There is no maximum amount of players on a roster. Captains can add players throughout the regular season by contacting the league manager before the scheduled match that the new players are to participate and provide the player’s full name, address and phone number. Postmarked emails and voicemails are acceptable and will be considered official if they are sent before the game in question.
- D. Rosters are limited to a minimum of 10 players at all times.
- E. Teams may make no roster additions after the regular season.

Rule 1.3 – Players Changing Teams

- A. Once a player participates for a team, they are officially listed on that team as their “primary” team for that particular season. Players are locked into a team and may not participate for another in the same division after they have played any portion of a contest for their primary team. Players may play for different teams in separate leagues within the same season.

Rule 1.4 – Rescheduled Games

- A. Rainouts will be made up at the end of regular season play. The updated web-based schedule will post rainout dates. Captains are responsible for checking the site after a rainout to receive make-up information. (www.blueash.com)
- B. We will do our best to reschedule games; due to schedule conflicts, tournaments may begin without a complete regular season or be cancelled if necessary.

Rule 1.5 – Awards

- A. The first place team in each league for the regular season will be awarded league T-shirts.
- B. The second place team in each league for the regular season will also be awarded T-shirts.
- C. A maximum of eighteen (18) individual awards will be presented.
- D. Ties for seeds will be determined first by the results of head to head wins/losses between teams in their regular season match ups followed by the point difference in those regular season match-ups. If this still results in a tie, then the team with the highest run scored versus runs allowed (point differential) for the entire season will decipher the seeds.

Rule 1.6 – Forfeitures

- A. Teams forfeiting a game are obligated to pay the full umpire fee of \$22. The opposing team is not obligated to pay their half of the umpire fee for that game.
- B. Teams forfeiting two or more games will be dropped from the league, without any refund of entry fee, and may be obligated to pay umpire fees for the remainder of the season.
- C. All teams prior to the season will pay a deposit of \$22 cash. If a team does not forfeit any games, this deposit will be refunded.
- D. If a team is not able to pay the umpire, the game will still be played. The team will be billed \$20 and it's due within one week to the league manager. This \$20 payment will be then sent to the umpire that did not receive their payment for the game in question.

Section Two –Game and League Rules

Rule 2.1 – Governing Rules

The Blue Ash Recreation Softball Leagues are governed under the USSSA rulebook. For the adoption of the rules, the men's and co-rec leagues will be referred as class "D" level. Please become familiar with your USSSA rulebooks. The USSSA rules will be followed in all situations unless noted otherwise as stated below.

Rule 2.2 – Team Responsibilities

- A. The home team must:
 - 1. Provide the official game ball. Failure to do so will result in forfeiting the right to be the "home team".
 - 2. Keep the official scorebook. The first and last name of each player should be written on the scorebook.
- B. The visiting team must:
 - 1. Provide a second ball if needed.
 - 2. Check the official scorebook at the end of each inning.
 - 3. Bring to the attention of the umpire, all the differences between the official scorebook and the home team's scorebook.
- C. Differences between the official scorebook and the visitor's scorebook must be brought to the attention of the umpire during the inning in which they arise and should be settled immediately by the umpire.
- D. Failure to bring these differences to the attention of the umpire during the inning in which they arise shall be deemed as an acceptance of the original scorebook.

Rule 2.3 – Game Time is Penalty Time

- A. The umpire will be the official timekeeper. ***The official game time will begin at the scheduled start time as indicated on the schedules. It is the manager's responsibility to have the team ready and the official line-up turned into the umpire PRIOR to the official start time.***
- B. If the situation arises where Team A is present and officially ready to begin at game time and the opposing team (Team B) is not officially ready to begin at game time in accordance with the USSSA rule book, the penalty process will begin.
- C. Penalty Time: The umpire will begin the game at game time. The official clock for the game will begin at the scheduled game time. At no time will the clock stop (i.e. if the team shows up, the clock will not stop in order for them to turn in their line-up, to warm up, etc.). At fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled game time, if team B team does have the correct number of players to begin the game, the game will be forfeited. If Team B arrives before the fifteen (15) minute forfeit time, the game will be played with the remaining time left on the clock. A forfeited game will be scored 7-0 for record purposes.

- D. Forfeit Time: After fifteen minutes of penalty time (see above), the game will be deemed a forfeit. Team A is not obligated to pay the umpire fee, however, Team B will be charged \$22 as a forfeit fee. (See rule 1.6)

Rule 2.4 – Official Game

If a game has met one of the following criteria, it shall be considered an “official game” and will not be rescheduled.

- A. If, at the end of five (5) or more complete innings, one team is winning by 12 or more runs.
- B. At the sole discretion of the umpire, rain, darkness, or another uncontrollable circumstance limits the game to continue and five (5) or more innings, or four and one-half (4-1/2) innings with the home team scoring more runs than the visiting team, has been played.
- C. Game Length: No new inning will begin after 1 hour and 15 minutes of play. If the game has continued for one (1) hour and fifteen (15) minutes, the home team, if losing, must have the last at bat.
- D. Ties: If the score is tied after (1) hour and fifteen (15) minutes and the home team has had the last at bat, the game will result in a tie. Exception: Playoff games.

Rule 2.5 – Unofficial Game

A scheduled game that has begun but is stopped by the umpire before meeting the criteria for an “official game” is considered an “unofficial game”. In the event of an “unofficial game”, the following must take place:

- A. The game will be rescheduled and replayed from the beginning, unless time prohibits, as deemed by the umpire and/or league manager. Teams will be obligated to pay the umpire fees.
- B. Original line-ups may be changed when an unofficial game is re-played.

Rule 2.6 – Rainouts

- A. In case of doubtful weather conditions, managers should call the Sport Center at **230-5162 for the latest field conditions. As a rule of thumb, the hotline will begin to get updates at 3:00 p.m.** on the day in question.
- B. If the game is canceled, teams must play the next week’s games as scheduled. Canceled games will be rescheduled during the week(s) following regular season play.
- C. If the umpire cancels or stops a game because of rain, unplayable field conditions or other circumstance, the game may or may not be rescheduled based on Rule 2.4, 2.5 or schedule conflicts.
- D. Please note that due to the standards of the Sports Center fields, that “saturated conditions” from previous rain may cause unplayable conditions. It does not have to be raining on the day in question to be deemed unplayable. When in doubt, call the rain hotline.

Rule 2.7 – Game Results

- A. The winning team manager must give the field supervisor the game results on an official scorecard (provided at captains meeting) at the conclusion of the game. The scorecard must be filled out completely with necessary information and initialed by the umpire.
- B. Managers also have the option of emailing or faxing scores to bkruise@blueash.com or 745-8527 by 10:00am the following day.

Rule 2.8 – Umpires

- A. If the umpire is not present at the scheduled game time, teams have the option to play their scheduled game un-officiated. ***If teams choose to play the game un-officiated, the result of that game will NOT be considered official and the Blue Ash Recreation Department will not be responsible for incidents or injuries occurring during this time.*** The official game will be re-scheduled to play at the end of regular season play if time and field availability allow.

Rule 2.9 – Equipment

- A. USSSA approved equipment including twelve (12) inch softballs and bats shall be used in all men's and co-rec leagues as listed by USSSA
- B. (6) Official softballs will be provided at the Captains Meeting for each team.
- C. Balls are to be limited to USSSA's "Distance" standards.
- C. Metal spikes are **NOT** permitted in any Blue Ash Recreation softball league.

Rule 2.10 – Conduct

Managers are responsible for the conduct of the team players and spectators. The league manager retains the right to determine an appropriate penalty for teams who do not abide by the following conditions:

- A. Any person, spectator, players or person affiliated with that team who does not follow the USSSA rules for conduct and/or the Blue Ash Sports Center Procedures
- B. Any person who physically assaults an umpire or any other person on city property before, during or after a game will be expelled from participation in Blue Ash Recreation leagues and could face law enforcement charges.

Rule 2.11 – Co-Rec Division Structure

The following rule modifications will be followed:

A. Required Number and Position of Players

- 1. Teams will consist of 10 players. 5 women and 5 men.
- 2. Two (2) Additional Hitters (AH) may be played for a total of 12.
- 3. Batting order must alternate in gender.
- 4. A team may add a 10th, 11th or 12th player to the game provided they still alternate batters by gender.
- 5. A team may begin a game with 9 players and may consist of **only** 5 men and 4 women or 4 men and 5 women. An out will be given at the vacant batting order spot and that spot must be listed at the end of the batting order.
- 6. If playing with 5 men and 4 women, you may start your line up with a male. The vacant spot at the end of the line up will receive an out.
- 7. At no time may a game continue with 8 players
- 8. Defensive positions will be played as follows: Pitcher and catcher must be opposite gender; two (2) women and two (2) men must be in both the infield and the outfield. The infield and outfield positions do not have to alternate by gender. For example, a male could play third and short stop as long as a female occupies second and first.
- 9. The pitcher, no matter what gender may cover home plate on a throw to home.
- 10. A 12" ball will be used for all batters regardless of gender
- 11. If playing with 9 players, a team can have a maximum of 2 males in the outfield, and the pitcher and catcher must still remain opposite gender.

B. Option to Take Base or Bat

- 1. When a male batter receives a base on balls or intentional walk, he will be awarded first base and second base with the next female batter having the option to walk or bat. The female batter **MUST** notify the umpire of her choice.

C. Outfield/Infield Chalk Line

1. There will be a chalk arc (65' from the mound) that will designate the actual start of the outfield and end of the infield. This is the actual dimension of a regulation softball field. We will use this arc as the new boundary for infielders and outfielders.
2. If an outfielder or infielder crosses this line before contact, the batter gets the option to take a base (walk) or accept the outcome of the play. (The Same rules apply for taking the base as for taking walks in co-rec play. Ex. Men get two bases, next woman gets the option to bat or take the base, etc.

Rule 2.12 – Additional Rules

- A. Free Foul Rule: The batter, upon stepping up to the plate, will begin their at-bat with a 1-and-1 count. One free foul after the second strike will be given for each at bat. For example, if a batter is facing a 1-2 count, the next foul ball will be considered the free foul and any other fouls after that point will be considered the third strike.
- B. Stealing - There is no stealing in either the Men's or Co-Recreational Leagues.
- C. Home Run Rule- Co-Rec and Men's: Limit (3) home runs
- D. Field #8 – The trees located in right field are in play. See USSSA rule 7 Section 5.4

Section Three – Protests

Rule 3.1 – Player Protests

- A. Any protest involving the eligibility of a player must be filed in the following manner:
 1. The protest must be lodged prior to the start of the 4th inning.
 2. The protesting manager must inform the umpire who will then inform the opposing team's manager that a player protest has been lodged.
 3. A protest form must be completed in full with the umpire obtaining the signature and social security number of the player in question. The umpire should sign the form as witness.
 4. If the player refuses to sign, the umpire should so indicate on the protest form. Failure to sign the protest form will result in an automatic forfeiture for that team.
 5. The protest form must be filed in the Recreation Office by 4:30 PM on the next business day following the game. No fee required.
- B. If the protest is upheld, the appropriate penalty will be designated forfeiture of that game and any others where the ineligible player participated.
- C. If the protest is denied, the results of the game will stand.
- D. This rule applies to players challenged as ineligible because they are not listed on the roster.

Rule 3.2 – Game Protests

- A. Any protest involving the application of a specific Blue Ash League rule or U.S.S.S.A. rule must be filed in the following manner:
 - 1. The protesting manager must inform the umpire and the opposing team's manager at the time of the particular play or decision that is being protested. Any game protest made after a pitch has been made to the next batter shall not be considered.
 - 2. Prior to the last out of the game, the protesting manager must complete, in full, the appropriate protest form, including the signatures of the umpire and opposing manager.
 - 3. The protest form and a \$25 protest bond must be filed with the Recreation Office by 4:30 PM the next business day following the game. Checks should be made payable to "The City of Blue Ash". The opposing manager and the umpire are also encouraged to submit statements for review.
- B. If the protest is upheld, the \$25 protest bond will be returned, and the game will be replayed from the point of the protest. NOTE: The U.S.S.S.A. rule for resumption of the game will apply.
- C. If the protest is denied, the results of the game will stand, and the \$25 protest bond will be deposited in the softball treasury.
- D. Umpires calls are judgment calls and cannot be protested. Managers are advised to review the U.S.S.S.A. guidelines concerning non-protesting calls.
- E. Bring a copy of the league rules and the league schedule to every game. If a league rule is questioned, the umpire MUST be shown the rule or he/she will not be responsible for enforcing the rule. If, after being shown the rule, the umpire still refuses to enforce it, the manager should lodge a game protest and, in addition should file an official complaint to the league manager.