BAYTOWN AREA SENIOR SOFTBALL A-LEAGUE RULES

Revised January 2026

I. COURTESY PLAYERS

A. Regular season games and tournaments require a team to have more than 50% of its roster players present and playing in order to avoid a forfeit. If a team is short of players, courtesy players will be added in order to field a team of 10 or 11 players.

B. Courtesy players will be drawn randomly. For playing purposes, first priority goes to regular SUBSTITUTE players (players who have paid their dues but have not been assigned to a roster), second priority goes to PICKUP players from teams that are not playing that day, and third priority goes to PICKUP players from another team's roster. The following guidelines will be used to ensure that no team gains an excessive advantage as a result of drawing players.

1. A member of the board will be in charge of the drawing and placement of courtesy players. The board member should not be playing in the game for which the drawing is taking place.

2. Any players who are picked up must play with the team to which they have been temporarily assigned. If a player is drawn and he refuses to play for the team selected, he will no longer be allowed to draw again for the remainder of the season.

3. The selection and assignment of pickup players shall be as follows: (1) If a pitcher is needed, an initial drawing will be done to determine the assignment of pitcher(s). (2) A drawing will be done based on the total number of players needed without regard to team assignment. Substitute players are automatically included in the selected group. (3) Pick-up players will be determined by random draw. Colored poker chips corresponding to each team will be placed in a bag. Each pick-up player will pull a poker chip and play for the team the color represents.

C. Substitute players are guaranteed playing time on any day that they are present.

D. Pickup players cannot hit for more than a single. Runners on base when the pickup player bats cannot advance more than 1 base. This restriction does not apply to substitute players.

II. ROSTER RULES

A. Players will not be allowed to start league play if the registration form is not submitted and/or the liability waiver is not signed. The team manager is responsible for securing payment from his players and forwarding the payment to the BASS treasurer.

B. All non-injured team members present for a game must be included in the batting order.

C. Free substitution is allowed in the field at any time.

III. GAME PARAMETERS

A. A regulation game shall be 7 innings unless shortened by the time limit imposed in part B and must include a buffet inning.

B. 50 minutes after the start of the game, the umpire will announce to both managers that the next inning will be the game's last inning.

C. In regulation play, batters will start with a 1-ball, 1-strike count.

D. In the event of a tie at the end of regulation play, there will be no extra innings.

E. A hit ball that strikes the protective pitcher's screen is treated as a foul ball.

F. If the batter fouls off a 2-strike pitch, he is 'out'. Exception: If the foul ball call with 2 strikes is the result of hitting the pitcher's protective screen, the batter will be allowed to continue the at-bat, but any further foul ball call will result in the batter being called 'out'.

G. A scoring limit of 5 runs applies to every inning except the last inning.

H. If a thrown ball strikes the pitcher's protective screen, the ball is 'live' and remains in play.

I. Home Runs are limited to a total of three per team per game. All others will be considered a double (all home runs hit in excess of three will count toward the home run trophy).

J. Should the visiting team be leading by 7 runs starting the buffet inning they will defer their at-bat.

K. The clock for the first game slot will start at 6:30. The start of the second and third game (if needed) slot will be one minute after both teams are available.

L. On a ball caught in foul territory with less than 2 outs regardless of the count on the batter, a runner may tag and advance at his own risk.

IV. BASERUNNING

A. After hitting the ball, a batter/base runner going to first base must step on the outside (orange) base if a play is being made at that base. If no play is being made at first base, the runner can touch either base. A violation may result in the runner being called out by the umpire.

B. Players attempting to score must run across the home plate line or step on the alternate home plate. Any runner who touches the regular home plate or runs through the batter's box will be called 'out'.

C. It is the base runner's responsibility to avoid the relay throw on an attempted double play. If the relay throw hits the runner, interference may be called.

D. Base runners cannot leave a base until the ball reaches home plate. A runner who leaves early will be called 'out' and the ball is dead.

E. A base runner shall avoid all unnecessary contact with a defensive player. Blatantly unnecessary contact (as determined by the umpire) will result in the runner being called 'out' and may result in dismissal from the league. The ball is dead, and runners must return to their bases.

F. A “line of no return” between third base and home plate is marked along the third baseline. Once a runner passes this line he must continue to the home plate line and cannot return to third base.

G. All plays at home plate will be force-outs (no tags allowed). In order for the runner to be called ‘out’ at home, the defensive player must have possession of the ball and be touching any part of home plate (black or white) before the base runner crosses the home plate line or touches the alternate home plate.

H. If a base runner passes another baserunner, the passed runner is ‘out’.

I. Courtesy Runners - A courtesy runner is a replacement runner for the batter. A courtesy runner is a replacement for a base runner.

1. Each team is allowed unlimited substitute runners per inning. Although a given player can be a courtesy runner only once per inning.

2. Batters that are unable to run and require a courtesy runner must be stipulated to the umpire prior to the player’s first at-bat. Runners necessitated due to injury during the game are excepted from this rule.

3. The courtesy runner for a batter can only run to first base from home plate. If the batter hits a home run, the at bat will count as a home run.

4. Courtesy runners for a batter must start from the line designated for that purpose and cannot leave until the ball is hit.

5. If the courtesy runner for a base runner or batter is on base when it is his turn to bat, he will be ‘out’. However, he does not forfeit his at-bat.

6. Protesting the illegal substitution of a courtesy runner must be done as an appeal play. The appeal must be made to the umpire after the first pitch thrown after the substitution and before the second pitch. If the appeal is upheld, the runner is out. If the appeal is upheld and the pitched ball was hit, other runners return to their original bases and the batter returns to his at-bat and starts with a fresh count.

V. PITCHING

A. To be called a strike, a pitch must:

1. Hit the plate or attached mat, and

2. Have an arc that is between a minimum height of 6 feet and a maximum height of 12 feet.

B. The pitcher may pitch from an area up to 6 feet directly behind the pitching rubber. A pitching screen will be mandatory when it is available. When a screen is not available, pitchers must wear a facemask.

1. The screen must touch the pitching rubber at all times and must be set up on the pitcher’s glove side. Once set in the half-inning, the screen cannot be repositioned. If not wearing a protective mask, the pitcher shall be behind the screen after the ball is released.

2. A pitcher not using the screen is required to wear a facemask. A chest protector and shin guards are recommended, but not required.

3. Pitchers wearing a mask can field the ball with or without a screen. Pitchers who choose to NOT wear a mask, must stay behind the screen and CAN NOT field the ball at all. If the pitcher touches a hit ball, the play is dead and the batter will be awarded first base and any baserunners will advance one base. Once another player touches the ball in play, the pitcher is then allowed to touch the ball.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS

A. CITY PARK RULES: Visitors to the park are expected to follow the rules posted by the City of Baytown.

B. ELIGIBLE PLAYERS: Men must be at least 50 years of age by December 31 of the calendar year. Women must be at least 45 years of age by December 31 of the calendar year.

C. MAKEUP GAMES: If a league game is rained out, efforts will be made to make up the game in the following weeks. If a league game is canceled due to unforeseen circumstances, the game may not be made up.

D. UNIFORM CODE: Players are expected to wear the team jersey of their sponsor in all scheduled games.

E. PLAYER SUSPENSION: Players are expected to conduct themselves at all times in accordance with the highest standards of courtesy, integrity, and sportsmanship. This includes using appropriate language (no cursing) and maintaining a family-friendly atmosphere at all times. Players who are ejected from a game or violate these standards of conduct at any time will leave the park at the time of the offense and will be suspended for the following week's games. In cases of excessive poor behavior, further consequences will be determined by the BASS board. Repeat offenses or egregious behavior can result in a player being banned from participation in BASS-sponsored events.

F. HOME PLATE VISITS: Any dispute over a call or a rule can only be addressed at home plate by the coaches of the teams involved. Players must not approach the umpire or speak on behalf of the coach if the coach is present. In the event that a coach will not present for a game, he should designate a player from his team to fill in on his behalf prior to game time.

G. PLAYOFF SEEDING: The team in first place and second place at the end of the regular season will receive a bye for the first games of the playoffs. All other teams will be seeded according to their rank at the end of regular season play. A coin flip will determine which team is home and visitor for all games until the championship game where the team from the winner's bracket will automatically be named the home team for the championship game. In the event of an "if" game, there will be a coin toss to determine home and visitor.

VII. SITUATIONS NOT COVERED BY BASS RULES

All situations not covered by the rules listed above will be governed by Senior Softball USA (SSUSA) rules.