



NEENAH PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT  
**LOCAL SOFTBALL RULES**  
2016

**RULE 1 - REGISTRATION**

**Section 1**

- A. All team entry fees must be in the Parks & Recreation office by the deadline. Teams whose fees are not paid by this date will not be included in the league -NO EXCEPTIONS AND NO PARTIAL PAYMENTS.
- B. Fees are not refundable.

**Section 2**

- A. Each team must submit a roster/player list - of not less than 12 players. Along with fee.

Players may be added to your roster throughout the season. Please provide name to our office at [parkrec@ci.neenah.wi.us](mailto:parkrec@ci.neenah.wi.us) or fax: 920.886.6069. This must be done no later than 24-hr before your game date.

**RULE 2 - ELIGIBILITY**

**Section 1**

A player who is 16 years of age or over are eligible to play.

**Section 2**

For a player to be eligible to play in the championship game (Play-off game/tie for first place) he/she must have played in at least 4 of the 14 league games. The Softball Commission, for unique situations, may give special consideration.

**Section 3**

After playing one game, a player cannot switch teams.

**Section 4**

A player may only play on one team per night.

**RULE 3 - POSTPONEMENTS, FORFEITS & PROTESTS**

**Section 1-POSTPONEMENTS**

Postponed games will be played as rescheduled by the Parks & Recreation Department. Games that are called off due to weather or safety reasons, after they have begun, will be rescheduled and will be played from the top of the 1<sup>st</sup> inning. Games will not be picked up where it ended e.g. No need for same line up and/or players on base(s). See RULE 8 – SECTION 1-E for additional information.

**Section 2-FORFEITS**

A team's failure to field a team within 10 minutes after the scheduled game time will result in a forfeit. Teams that do not have enough players to start will be granted a 10-minute grace period. The game clock will begin running (60 minutes) at game time. If the player(s) arrive during this period, the game will start (minus the time off the clock) with opponent winning 5-0.

**Section 3-FORFEITS**

Any team forfeiting two games for non-appearance will be dropped from the league. If this occurs at the end of the season, penalties may be carried into the next season. Further, any team with more than one (1) forfeit will not be eligible to participate in the end of season league tournament, if scheduled.

## Section 4-FORFEITS

All teams must have a full line-up (if possible), but in case of shortage, will be allowed to play with eight players, no less. A team appearing with less than eight players must forfeit. A team must also have eight players to complete the game or it will be a forfeit.

*A game scheduled AFTER a forfeit shall not start until scheduled time, unless BOTH managers agree their teams are ready.*

## Section 5-PROTESTS

- A. Only managers of teams in the league can file a protest.
- B. Managers, who intend to protest, must do so prior to or during the game in which their team is playing the team in question.
- C. The protesting manager must inform the plate umpire, who must immediately inform the manager of the team protested.
- D. A \$20.00 protest fee must accompany a written protest, with 48 hours of the game, submitted to the Parks and Recreation office at City Hall. Fee is refunded if protest is sustained.

Protests of Eligibility Parks & Recreation Department staff have the prerogative to question and act on eligibility at any time.

- A. If protesting the eligibility of a player (A player is believed not to be on the team roster), the above RULE 4, Section 5, A, B & C must be followed.
- B. If the player in question is not listed on the official roster, located in the scorebook, the player in question will not be allowed to continue to play. If the player in question is on base or at the plate, at the time of the eligibility protest, the player is to leave the field of play and the team is given an "out". If the team is on defense, they will be given an one-time out on their next time up to bat.
- C. If the player in question is not listed on the official roster and they have batted or played the field, no penalty will be assessed to the taking away of runs made or batted in or plays made in the defense.

## RULE 4 - UMPIRES

### Section 1

Umpires chosen by the Parks and Recreation Department shall be in full authority of the game. The umpire's right to disqualify players or to remove non-players for objecting to decisions or displaying unsportsmanlike conduct, is absolute.

### Section 2

Only team managers and coaches can question a decision of the umpire, and then only in case of rules interpretation and not in cases of judgment.

### Section 3

An official scorer will be provided. Team managers must submit their starting line-up to the scorer **AT LEAST FIVE MINUTES** before scheduled time of the game. Roster must be listed on provided forms and printed clearly, using first initial and full last name.

## RULE 5 - CONDUCT OF PLAYERS

### Section 1

A player guilty of unsportsmanlike conduct in connection with any game of decision may be suspended from the league, the balance of the season, or any part thereof. Recommendations for suspension shall come from the umpire in writing.

### Section 2

The Parks & Recreation Department, in its transactions with a team, will recognize that team's manager. Make certain that the Parks & Recreation Department has the name, EMAIL, phone number, and address of the current manager. Inform the department of any changes.

### Section 3

DRINKING - The rules of the Neenah Parks & Recreation Commission prohibits **ANY** consumption of alcoholic beverages in any park where these leagues play.

- A. Any player from any Parks & Recreation Department league found guilty of drinking alcoholic beverages while participating in a league function (whether as a spectator or a player) will be dropped immediately from the league for a minimum of one calendar year. If a majority of the team is found guilty, the team will be dropped immediately.
- B. If spectators break the rules, they will be removed from the park.
- C. No smoking is allowed on the playing field, which includes the player's bench.

### Section 4

FOUL LANGUAGE - Upon hearing foul language by a player or coach from a team, the umpire will warn the team. On the second foul language offense, the team will be assessed an "out". The "out" will be enforced at that time if batting. If the second offense occurs while on defense, the "out" will be assessed when at next bat.

### Section 5

Only players will be allowed in the dugout areas. If a bat boy/girl is used, **ONLY ONE** is allowed. **THE INDIVIDUAL MUST BE OLD ENOUGH TO HANDLE THE JOB AND KNOW THE RULES.**

## RULE 6 - BOARD OF APPEALS - SOFTBALL COMMISSION

### Section 1

The Softball Commission will act as the final authority on all matters concerning the leagues, whether expressed in these rules or not and shall consist of a representative from the men's and co-ed leagues, two umpires and a Parks & Recreation Department administrative staff member.

## RULE 7 - SPECIAL RULES FOR CO-ED

### Section 1 – CO-ED

- A. ON THE FIELD-5 males and 5 females is ideal. However, teams may have a minimum of 4 males and 4 females - additional females OR one extra male on the field is allowed, to total 10.
- B. BATTING ORDER shall be arranged to alternate male-female-male-female, etc. When teams have an uneven number of players, they may have one extra man or an unlimited number of women in the batting order. The extra player(s) shall be at the end of the batting order. Extra women can be anywhere within the line-up, as long as it does not cause two men to be back-to-back.
- C. There will be no intentional walks. The pitcher must pitch to every batter. In the umpire's opinion, if the pitcher intentionally walks a player, the next batter has the option to walk or bat, regardless of gender.

## RULE 8 - PLAYING RULES

### Section 1

The Official Rules for Slow Pitch Softball as written by the National Federation of High School Associations shall be used as the Official Rules of Play for this league except as indicated by the rules listed below. In case of apparent contradiction, these local rules shall have precedence.

- A. Base runners will be allowed to advance one base on an overthrow that goes out of play.
- B. At game time, a team must start and continue a game with not less than eight (8) players. A team with less than 8 players either at the start of the game or subsequently during the game must forfeit.
- C. A GAME WILL LAST ONE HOUR. A new inning will not start after 60 minutes has lapsed. An inning ends at the time the 3<sup>rd</sup> out is called. At the first pitch, the scorer will start the clock on the scoreboard.
- D. 15 RUN RULE - A game will be called if one team, at the end of the 5th inning, is ahead by 15 or more runs. If there is considerable time remaining in the 1-hour time limit, teams may continue to play on the diamond (as practice) until 5 minutes before the scheduled start of the next game.
- E. ENDING A REGULATION GAME - If weather or darkness interferes with play so that the game is called (ended) by the umpire, it is a regulation game if five innings have been played, or if the home

team has scored a greater number of runs than the visiting team in four ½ innings or play has gone beyond five full innings. SEE RULE 3 – SECTION 1 for additional information.

If the game is called, after five innings, and the teams have not had an equal number of completed terms at bat, the score shall be the same as it was at the end of the last completed inning. Games are not to end in a tie. Play continues until a winner is determined.

- F. TIE BREAKING PROCEDURE. If a score is tied after 7 complete innings, or if a score is tied and the time limit has expired before 7 complete innings have been played, teams will play until a team at the end of the following inning(s) has scored more runs than the other team.

### Section 2 - Strikes and Balls

- A. Each batter will be allowed two strikes only, whether they are called, swung or fouled.
- A. Three balls are required for a "walk" except if a manager requests a batter is "Walked" without a pitch. (Not allowed in co-ed leagues.)
- B. A will be placed behind Home Plate and any ball hitting home plate or the mat is a strike.  
(Strike Zone: 17" W X 43.5" L)  
(Mat Size: 17" W X 35" L)
- D. The mat designates part of the strike zone only. It is not a part of home plate. A base runner must touch home plate to score.
- E. The maximum height of the pitch shall be unrestricted. The minimum arc shall be defined as: The ball must, somewhere in flight, reach a height at which the entire ball is at a level higher than the pitcher's head.

### Section 3 - Ground Rules

- A. Two (2) game balls will be provided. The Home Team may keep both balls at the end of the game.
- B. The "Home Team" of the first game may have the field until 15 minutes before game time. The Visiting Team" may have the field for 10 minutes.
- C. Designation of Home Team is established on schedules for each league.
- D. Benches and equipment must be out of play. The only offensive players on the playing field will be:
  - 1. First & Third Base Coaches
  - 2. Runners
  - 3. One Batter
  - 4. One "on deck" Batter
- E. The ball will be "live" or "in play" from the end of the fence past first base around the back of home plate to the end of the fence past third base.
- D. The ball will be "dead" or "out of play" if it goes through an opening in the fences, over or under the fences mentioned in the previous paragraph.
- E. A fair ball that sticks in, goes under, hits the ground and bounces over the outfield fence is a "ground rule double."
- F. When a fair hit ball bounces or rolls past the end of the outfield fence, in a direction away from home plate, along either the first base or third base line, whether touched by a defensive player or not, the hitter will be given a "ground rule double."
- I. After hitting an over the fence HOME RUN, batter is asked to run to 1<sup>st</sup> base and then immediately go fetch their hit ball. If there are any runners on the bases, they should run through the bases – to ensure the scorer is able to record the correct number of runs batted in.

**Double first base** will be utilized at all diamonds. A batted ball hitting the white portion is fair and a batted ball hitting the orange portion is foul. Whenever a **play** (ball must be thrown to first base in an attempt to record an out) is being made on the batter-runner, the defense must use the white portion and the batter-runner must use the orange portion. If a play is made at first base, but the ball is overthrown or the fielder is pulled off the base by an errant or missed throw, the batter-runner is

allowed to use the white base **it trying to advance to second base**. (Clarification-Exception) On a **play attempt** on the batter-runner **from the foul side of first base, or by an errant throw** pulling the fielder off the base into foul ground, the batter-runner and the fielder can use either white or orange portions of the base.

On extra base hits or balls hit to the outfield when there is **no play** being made at the double base, the batter-runner may touch the white or orange portion. When tagging up on a fly ball, either the white or orange base may be used.

The batter-runner is allowed to legally return to either color base after he or she has touched or missed first base.

- J. **Batters Box-** A batters box will be chalked in to begin the evening. After the chalking disappears, to assist umpires in making some type of a determination of a batter being out of the appropriate area, the ground rule for out of the area (box) will be if the batter steps beyond more than an approximate bat length from the middle of the plate toward the pitcher in an attempt to bat. Cannot step behind the strike mat. (Back of strike mat is back of batters box). This is a judgment call by the umpire.

**Strike Zone/Mat Size:** Mat Size: 17" W x 35" L  
Strike Zone (includes mat & plate): 17" W x 43.5"

- K. Balls hit out of play, whether fair or foul, are to be retrieved by the team at bat.  
*Homeruns-You hit it, you get it.* See RULE 8 –SECTION 3-I

In addition, after hitting an over the fence HOME RUN, batter is asked to run to 1<sup>st</sup> base (only) and then immediately go fetch their hit ball. If there are any runners on the bases, they should run through the bases – to ensure the scorer is able to record the correct number of runs batted in.

L. **SLIDE RULE**

*It is not mandatory to slide in close situations. It is an illegal slide if:*

- a. the runner uses a rolling or cross-body slide into the fielder;
- b. the runner's raised leg is higher than the fielder's knee when the fielder is in a standing position;
- c. the runner goes beyond the base and makes contact with or alters the play of the fielder;
- d. the runner slashes or kicks the fielder with either leg; or
- e. the runner tries to injure the fielder

The runner is out when;

- a. The runner does not legally slide and causes illegal contact and/or illegally alters the actions of the fielder in the immediate act of making a play on him/her. Runners are never required to slide but, if the runner elects to slide, the slide shall be legal. *See clarification of rules, for more explanation.*

**Section 4 - Line-Ups**

- A. A manager may choose just prior to the game to play "Bat the Roster" and bat in that order during the entire game-so if a manager has 10 players or 15 players they all bat in order but only 10-play defense. Also there is free substitution, i.e.; a manager can change players on defense as often as he wants.
- B. A manager may choose NOT to use the above method - only use 10 players and manager should report substitute batter to the scorer. Defense is free substitution.
- C. If a player shows up late 2nd, 3rd, etc., inning and the manager chooses "Bat the Roster" the player goes at the end of the order and takes his or her turn.
- D. A courtesy runner is allowed. The courtesy runner must be the last recorded out or, the player scheduled to bat last, if in the first inning with no outs. (In co-ed, the courtesy runner must be male for male, female for female.)
- E. Team managers must submit their starting line-up to the scorer **AT LEAST FIVE MINUTES** before scheduled time of the game. Roster must be listed on provided forms and printed clearly using first initial and full last name.

## Section 5 – Equipment

- A. The Neenah Parks & Recreation softball program will follow the ASA (American Softball Association) approved list of bats and banned bat list.

The Official bat must bear **either** the ASA approved 2000 certification mark , **the ASA 2004 certification mark** as shown below, or the **ASA 2013 Certification Mark (Slow Pitch ONLY)** as shown below and must not be listed on an ASA Non-Approved Bat List with Certification Marks, **and**



1. must be included on a list of approved bat models published by the ASA National Office; or
2. 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. This includes Wooden Bats

If ASA bans additional bats during the season, the Softball Commission may add the bat(s) to NPRD's list.

Bats in question, during a game, should be noted with the umpire. The bat(s) will be reported to NPRD and if determined to be illegal, the game will be forfeited.

A complete list of certified (legal) bats can be found on ASA's web site ([www.asasoftball.com](http://www.asasoftball.com)). List will be posted in each of the scoresheds.

**Also, must bear one of the following bat stickers: "Neenah Parks & Recreation Approved", "Appleton Parks & Rec Approved" or the "Menasha Parks & Rec Approved" bat sticker.**

White with RED print



White with BLUE print



White with BLUE print



- B. The official softball of the league is a Yellow Optic .44 compression 375 pqi (supplied by NPRD).
- A. Metal spikes/cleats are not allowed.
- B. A double first base is used at all diamonds. See Rule 8 – Section 3 – I
- E. Strike Zone (Mat & Plate): 17" W X 43.5" L

### ADDITIONAL RULE CLARIFICATIONS

1. A runner may leave the base when the pitched ball crosses the plate. In other words, a runner is not out if they jump off the base on a "swing and miss."
2. The runner has the right to the base. Fielders must give runners the base path and base when they do not have the ball. Runners must avoid excessive contact with fielders. It is the umpire's judgment, which will decide if a fielder has obstructed the base path or a runner is at fault for a collision.

## **COLLISIONS – DELIBERATELY CRASHING INTO FIELDER WITH THE BALL**

When a defensive player has the ball, and the runner remains on his/her feet and deliberately crashes into the defensive player waiting to apply the tag, the runner is out, the ball is dead and all other runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the collisions. Note: If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender shall be ejected. In order to prevent a deliberate crash ruling, the runner can give up, slide, go around the defender, or return to the previous base touched.

- Fielders should not block the base without possession of the ball (that is obstruction); they should stand to the side of the base, not in front of the base, catch the ball, and then apply the tag.
- If a defensive player is fielding a thrown ball and the flight of the ball draws the fielder into the path of the runner, this would not be a crash.
- If the ball, runner and the defensive player all arrive at the same time and contact is made, the umpire should not invoke the crash rule or obstruction-this is merely incidental contact.

## **INTERFERENCE**

Interference is defined as the act of an OFFENSIVE player or team member, which impedes, hinders or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play. Defensive players must be given the opportunity to field the ball ANYWHERE on the playing field. There are several different types of interference calls (i.e. batter, baserunner, on-deck batter, and coach). When one of these types of interference occurs, the ball becomes dead, someone must be called out (usually the player interfering or being played on), and all baserunners will return to the last base touched at the time of the interference. If the interference is done to prevent a double play, either the immediate succeeding runner or the runner closest to home plate will also be called out.

1. An intentional drop by an infielder is an automatic out (judgment call).
2. An **infield fly** is a fair fly ball (not including a line drive or an attempted bunt) that can be caught by an infielder, pitcher or catcher with ordinary effort when first and second or first, second and third bases are occupied with less than two outs. The pitcher, catcher or any outfielder that positions themselves in the infield area on the play shall be considered infielders for the purpose of this rule. The general rule of thumb to use in determining if it is an ordinary effort catch is “Could the fielder be facing forward on the catch?” If an infield fly is called by the umpire and it is caught while fair or settles in fair territory, the batter is out, the ball is alive and runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught or retouch and advance after the ball is touched, the same as on any fly ball. If the hit becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul ball.
3. An improper batter, discovered by either the offense or defense, can leave and the proper batter can replace him and assume whatever count the umpire has.
4. **Appeal Plays** - It is the team’s responsibility to appeal a play. The umpire may not make a call until a player or manager brings it to the umpire’s attention. Examples are: the base runner fails to touch a base (advancing or returning), fails to tag up after a fly ball, overrunning first base and attempting to run to second, and batting out of order. Defensive player making the appeal must be on the field, not from the dugout/bench.
5. If the runner gives up (heads for bench) and the fly is dropped or he misses the plate, he is out.
6. **Out-of-bounds or dead ball territory.** Ball carried into dead ball area: When a live ball is unintentionally carried by a fielder from playable territory into dead ball territory, the ball becomes dead and all base runners are awarded one base from the last base touched at the time he/she entered dead ball territory. If in the judgment of the umpire this act is ruled to be intentional, the award will be two bases. Catching ball in dead ball area: It is not a catch if either foot is entirely across the line on the ground when the catch is made. If one foot is on the ground inside the imaginary line, and/or touching the line, and the other is over the line but in the air (not touching the ground), the catch is good.
7. **Foul Ball/Foul Tip** – The reference to the “height of the batter’s head” as it relates to a Foul Ball and Foul Tip no longer applies. Allows the catcher more opportunity to obtain “outs” by catching foul-batted balls.