

# SUN CITY SENIOR SOFTBALL CLUB

## CENTRAL LEAGUE RULES 01-02-2024

**General** – The Central League will be governed by SSUSA rules except as modified.

**Organization** – The Central League will be composed of players from the Sun City Senior Softball Club who have a rating of 4, 5, or 6.

**Uniforms** – The club furnishes pants, shorts, jerseys, caps and visors. Articles of uniforms are for league and club play only. Alterations are not permitted except for temporary “tucks” for fit. Caps, visors, shorts, pants will be replaced on an exchange basis only if worn out or damaged by play. All articles of uniform are the property of the Club. Any player who resigns from his/her membership must return jerseys, pants unless purchased by the player.

In support of our sponsors a full league issued uniform must be worn so the sponsor’s name is clearly visible and shirts tucked in. With the exception of the umpires, all players, coaches, and managers must wear their league issued uniforms. In case of cold or inclement weather, additional clothing will be allowed.

Players not wearing the appropriate uniform will be given one warning by the umpire to immediately fix the uniform problem or be removed from the game. The team will be charged with an out each time that player would have batted. The team will continue to play short of one player. Repeated offenses will be handled by the CL Committee. This rule is for the sponsors and to maintain a consistent tone of professionalism.

**Game Rules** – Each game will be seven innings or a time limit created by the CL Committee. If time runs out, the current inning will be completed and one more will be played. The “Open inning” will be played regardless of inning number and will be completed. Frost delays will be as follows (1) 30 minute delay reduces the game to 6 innings (2) 60 minute delay reduces game to 5 innings.

**Flip-Flop Rule** – Games will be 7 innings or the time limit, whichever comes first. If the visiting team is ahead by 5 or more runs, the unlimited will be reversed – the home team bats first and the visiting team bats if needed.

**Mercy Rule** – (1) if a team is ahead by 12 runs after 5 innings, the game will be over (2) if a team is ahead by 10 runs after 6 innings, the game will be over.

**Cancelled or Delayed Games** – when any game is cancelled due to inclement weather, succeeding games at the field will be cancelled. The person cancelling the game (umpire, Team Managers, CL Committee member, or Club Board Member) must contact all managers of subsequent games of the cancellation so all players can be notified. Games completed (5 innings or the home team is ahead at the end of 4.5 innings) prior to the cancellation will count for the record.

**Playing Rules** – prior to the start of each CL season team managers shall gather to conduct a team draft. If a previously six rated player is not drafted he/she may be placed on the CL substitute list or choose to be placed in the NL draft. Any player absent from league play for one year or more will be required to go through the Green Team to be re-rated for draft eligibility. Each team will consist of 11 players (fewer if there are an insufficient number of players) with a predetermined equal number of 4, 5, and 6 rated players. Any club member may become a non-playing manager. If a player voluntarily quits a team, he/she will be out of the CL for the remainder of the session.

Both line-ups are official after the first pitch of the game is thrown. If a player is late for a game, the team manager has two choices (1) choose an available and legal substitute who is officially in the line-up after the first pitch is thrown – if the late player arrives after the first pitch, he/she may NOT enter the game. (2) Play initially with 10 players and wait for the player to arrive. The late player may enter the game upon arrival. If the late player has not arrived by his/her time at bat, an out will be declared.

After the initial pitch of the game, there can only be a substitute for an injured player. Teams must have a minimum of 9 players in order to avoid a forfeit.

**Substitutions** – During the game should the pitcher become sick or injured, a replacement pitcher can be obtained from the stands. A player of any rating can sub as a pitcher only – however only (2) 4-rated players may occupy the line-up at any time.

The penalty for an illegal substitution is removal from the game and that team will play with one less player. No substitute will be allowed for the illegal sub – each time the illegal sub comes to bat, an out will be declared. If the illegal sub is detected after the game is completed, there will be no penalty.

**Courtesy Runners** – A modified SSUSA rule on courtesy runners will be used. A player may courtesy run from 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> an unlimited number of times per game and only run once per inning. Once the courtesy runner touches the base, he/she becomes legal and may not be replaced. A courtesy runner whose turn at bat arrives will be called out and, if fewer than three outs, will be required to bat. A second courtesy runner will not be allowed. If a courtesy runner is injured, he/she may be replaced by another courtesy runner. If the pitcher is on base with two outs he/she MAY be replaced with a courtesy runner.

**Batter's Box** - The batter must have at least some portion of both feet on or inside the lines of the batter's box at the start of the pitch. A batter who steps out of the batter's box and contacts the ball will be called out.

**Catcher's Box** - The catcher's box is an 8.5 ft X 10 ft area directly behind home plate. At least some portion of both feet of the catcher must be within the catcher's box.

**Base Running** - When a play is being made on the batter/runner, the runner must touch the orange bag. - touching the white bag is an automatic out called by the umpire. The defensive

player must touch the white bag to record an out. If the defensive player at 1<sup>st</sup> base is pulled into foul territory because of an errant throw, the BATTER/RUNNER AND THE 1<sup>ST</sup> BASEMAN MAY USE EITHER THE ORANGE OR WHITE BAG.

A runner on first or third base after notifying the umpire, may step off the base in foul territory as a safety measure. The runner must retouch the base as they advance to the next base. While off the base, they may not be put out on any caught ball.

A runner must make every effort to avoid colliding with defensive players while running the bases. If, in the umpire's judgment, a runner misses a base to avoid a collision with a defensive player, the runner will not be called out. If the runner touches the base and continues on past the base, he/she will be called out if tagged by the defensive player. In the interest of safety, runners coming into a base must avoid unnecessary contact with a defensive player who is receiving the ball. A defensive player must not block a runner when they are not fielding the ball.

**Sliding or Diving** - sliding or diving when approaching a base is allowed. It will also be legal when returning after passing the base.

**Commitment Line** - Once a runner's foot or any other part of the body touches the ground on or past this line, the runner is committed to advancing toward home plate and may not be tagged out. If the runner attempts to return to 3<sup>rd</sup> base, it is an automatic out to be called by the umpire.

**Scoring Line** - a runner's foot or any other part of the body touching on or past the scoring line prior to the ball being received by the defensive player who is touching home plate results in scoring a run. The runner shall be called out if he/she touches or crosses over any portion of home plate or the batter's box. The ball remains live.

**Running to First Base** - The batter/runner is out if they are running inside the first base line and, in the umpire's judgment, they interfere with the fielder receiving the ball at 1<sup>st</sup> base.

**Pitcher's Box** - A pitcher's box consisting of area from the front of the pitcher's plate, extending back 10 ft and 24 inches wide will be used. The pitcher must release the ball after coming to a complete stop with one foot or both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate or within the pitcher's box. One foot must remain in contact with the plate/box when the pitch is released with an underhand motion. A step simultaneous with the release of the ball may be taken in any direction with the free foot. The pitcher must be facing the batter when releasing the pitch. Pitchers are not allowed to quick pitch. The penalty is no pitch.

**Pitcher's Facemask** - A pitcher is mandated to wear a protective face mask while pitching. They are recommended to wear additional equipment like a chest protector or shin guards.

**Challenges** - Challenges or protests of a rule interpretation will be settled on the field between the umpires and the two managers. Any player can request an umpire's conference to provide assistance on disputed/judgment calls. The request will be honored at the umpire's discretion.

**Ejections** - An umpire or a CL Committee member will eject a player who threatens or uses abusive language directed to an umpire, player, or spectator. A report to the CL Committee Chair must be submitted within 24 hours. If the ejection is deemed to be flagrant, the player must leave the softball complex. An ejected player is automatically suspended from playing in any games, from the time of their ejection until the conclusion of their next regularly scheduled game - the suspension includes activities such as playing in a game, scoring, announcing, spectating, special events, practice, etc.

If the player refuses to leave the field or complex, he/she will be suspended for 2 or more games and his/her team will forfeit the current game. If the ejection is due to a physical attack, the CL Committee will suspend the player indefinitely, pending a disciplinary action. The President of the SC Softball Club will be sent copies of the action taken. Should a player disagree with the decision of the CL Committee, they may appeal to the SC Softball Club.

**Warm-up Pitches** - At the start of the game each pitcher will be allowed 5 warm-up pitches and 3 warm-up pitches at the beginning of each inning. A substitute pitcher will be allowed 5 initial warm-up pitches. The umpire has the authority to limit or discontinue warm-up pitches.

**Equipment** - No banned bats will be allowed - see ASA/USA banned bat list. A pitcher's screen is not allowed in CL games.

**Batting Out of Order** - The violation may be brought to the attention of an umpire by the opposing manager or by any other individual involved in the game, including the scorekeeper. If the violation is discovered during the at-bat, the correct player will bat and assume the current ball & strike count. If discovered after the batter reaches a base, a dead ball will be called and runners will return to their previous bases. The player who should have batted will be declared OUT and the player who batted out of order will return to the plate with a new count.

**Homerun** - Any fair ball hit over the fence will count as a home-run. The batter and all runners need to run all the bases.

**Umpires, Scorekeepers and Clock Operators** - assignment of umpires, scorekeepers, and clock operators will be scheduled by their respective assignors.

**Field Maintenance** - the home team is responsible for preparing the field before the first game and securing the field after the last game.

**Bat Standards** - The CL uses bat standards approved by the Sun City Senior Softball Club. A bat is considered altered when the physical characteristics of a legal bat have been changed. Anything done to enhance the performance of a bat is illegal. Inserting materials inside the bat, shaving the bat, applying more than 2 layers of tape to the bat grip, or painting the bat other than at the

top or bottom for identification purposes are examples of altering a bat - exceptions - knob grips/cones, colored tape for identification, address labels are not altering a bat.

Any umpire, Club Board member, team manager or CL Committee member has the right to inspect any bat that they have "reason to suspect" has been altered. If an illegal bat is found prior to batting, it will be removed from the game. If the bat is found after the at-bat, the batter is out and all runners return to their previous bases. If there is probable cause the person must surrender the bat for inspection. If the bat is suspect, it may be digitally x-rayed for alterations. Any member refusing to surrender a bat will be suspended immediately until an inspection of the bat has been made. If it proves that the bat has been altered, the player must appear before the SC Softball Club for disciplinary action. Any player found to be using an illegal bat is subject for a suspension of up to one year.

**Alcohol** - alcoholic beverages may not be consumed while playing or umpiring a game.

**Replacement Pool** - This is for players who opt to be a sub, new players from the Green Team, and players arriving after the 4<sup>th</sup> game of the session. Managers may request players from the replacement pool as follows: If a team has a vacancy during the session, the manager will contact the CL Committee Chair to receive the next player available, consistent with player ranking and length of time he/she has been waiting.

**Safety Protocol** - All players must follow all safety protocols as mandated by the Sun City Senior Softball Club. Violation of safety rules may affect a player's ability to participate. In the interest of player safety, any player, except for those wearing a protective helmet, suffering from a head trauma either on offense or defense shall be removed from the game.

CL Committee Members      Tim Heenan, Chair  
   Larry Chapman, Vice chair  
   Jim Keinath  
   Tom Tripp  
   Dennis Johnson  
   Rickie Toland