



# City of Deer Park Softball Rules

(Revised June 2025)

Rainout line: (281) 478-2099



The City of Deer Park Parks and Recreation Department coordinates and provides Softball Leagues for the enjoyment and recreation of its citizens. We are members of the Texas Amateur Athletic Federation (TAAF), which is an organization of municipalities and sports organizations. The City of Deer Park Softball league rules consist of Deer Park guidelines and USA Softball rules.

## **GENERAL RULES OF PLAY**

1. Rules: USA Softball rules shall govern play with the exception of City of Deer Park provisions.
2. Age: Participants in the City's adult softball leagues must be 18 years of age when playing in a game. Any players 16 or 17 years of age will be required to fill out a waiver form.
3. Game Time: Game time is forfeit time. The first game will have a 10-minute grace, but clock will start. **At 6:40pm the game will be called if the scorekeeper does not see the player.** The minimum number of players a team can begin with is nine (9). If you elect the grace period you can not skip without taking an out first time at bat. (See rule 25 F)
  - a. Any game following an extra inning game, the 50-minute time limit starts when the game begins.
  - b. Home Team will be determined by a coin toss.
  - c. See #25 for required number of players.
  - d. See #37 and #38 for additional player information for each league.
  - e. Game time may start early ONLY if both teams are ready and confirmation of this has be given by team managers.
4. Game Length: 50 minutes or seven (7) full innings, whichever comes first on all games. No inning may start after the 50-minute time limit.
5. Officials: Officials have supreme authority; their decision is final. The manager may register complaints only.
  - a. Umpires for the City of Deer Park will be sanctioned ASA umpires.
6. Run Rule: 15 after 3                    12 after 4                    10 after 5
7. Five Run/Inning Rule: If either manager wants to use this rule, the manager must notify both the umpire and scorekeeper before the start of the game.



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BOTH teams will have to agree on the rule before it is put in place. If used, when a team batting scores five (5) runs in their at bat, that half of the inning is over and they take the field regardless of the amount of outs that have been made. This rule can only take effect for 4 innings. After 4 innings, the game reverts to regular softball.

8. Home Run Rule: Co-Recreation League allows four (4) home runs plus 1 up rule per game per team only. Recreation League allows four (4) home runs plus 1 up rule per game per team only.
9. Hit and Sit Rule: When a player hits a home run, they do not have to run the bases. They may go directly to the dugout. Runners on base may also go directly to the dugout.
10. Tie Ball Games: If the game is tied at the end of seven (7) full innings, or at the conclusion of a full inning once time has expired, the game will go the a “on-pitch” format.
  - a. The last **completed** batter that batted will go to Second Base.
  - b. Each batter gets only one pitch to put the ball into play.
  - c. If the pitch is a strike and the player does not swing or misses, Batter is out.
  - d. If the pitch is a ball and the player does not swing, Batter walks.
11. Pitching Arc: 10' maximum arc above the ground and at least a 6' minimum arc above the ground. Anything more than 10-feet will automatically be called a ball. Anything more than 10-feet or less than 6-feet will be called an illegal pitch by the Umpire. Should the batter swing at an illegal pitch, the ball is live if contact is made and ruled on accordingly.
12. The pitcher may take a position from the front of the front edge of the pitcher's plate to 6 feet behind the pitcher's plate within the 24-inch width of the pitcher's plate with both feet firmly on the ground.
13. Game Ball: Each team is responsible for bringing a new or otherwise acceptable ball to each game. Only USA approved, controlled or restricted softballs will be permitted.
  - a. All balls must be optic yellow.
  - b. Men will hit with the 12" ball, women 11"



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- c. Men's Ball must have ASA or USA stamp, core 52, red stitched and 300 compressions.
- d. Women's Ball must have core 52 and 300 compression.

14. Legal Bats: Any bat that is not on the banned bat list of ASA, USSSA OR NSA. Umpires reserve the right to not allow any type of bat to be used that they deem to be illegal and/or altered for any game played at the City of Deer Park fields.

15. Line-Up Cards: Teams must submit line-up card to scorekeepers before the game begins.

- a. First and Last name must be provided.
- b. Line-ups are required for each game played at each field.
- c. No one can be added or taken out of the lineup after the game begins.

16. Rosters: The first week you must turn in your partial roster to an scorekeeper. Then all rosters must be turned into the office of the Parks and Recreation Department or the scorekeepers no later than the second week of league play by 11:59pm to be considered for playoff tournament. No player may be added to the roster after the second week of play. Twenty (20) player roster limit. Rosters will be verified during playoff game with a photo ID. Rosters must have name that is on photo ID. Then put nickname on the side.

- a. Rosters must be filled out completely!!!!
- b. If the roster is not filled out, the first two weeks of line ups will be used as the roster.
- c. Changes to rosters due to uncontrollable circumstances (injuries, work, and others) must be turned in by week 4 and up to the discretion of the league operator whether changes will be approved.

17. Forfeit: In the event of a forfeit, the team with enough players may have exclusive use of the field until fifteen minutes prior to the next game unless it is the first or last hour of games schedule. If it is the last hour, lights will be turned off and that field will be closed.

- a. Score of a forfeited game is 7-0.
- b. Double forfeit: Both teams receive a loss.
- c. A forfeited game shall be declared by the umpire in favor of the team not at fault in the following cases:



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- i. An ejection of a player (without a legal sub) or players from the game results as a forfeit.
- d. Any team that forfeits three (3) games will be dropped from the schedule/league.

18. Protests: The only type of valid protest is one that deals with a specific rule. Judgment calls will not constitute a protest. To file a protest, payment of \$50.00 must be paid to the City of Deer Park along with the written protest. Protests must be submitted no later than 5:00pm of the following day after the game played. Any roster protest must be made by the end of the game.

- a. The payment of \$50.00 is refunded only if the protest is upheld.

19. Unsportsmanlike Conduct: Unsportsmanlike conduct and unnecessary roughness will not be tolerated and the offender is subject to immediate ejection from the game. Umpires are instructed to look upon any form of unnecessary roughness as grounds for ejection.

- a. Unsportsmanlike conduct will result in a suspension from the league for one (1) schedule game on the first offense and suspension from the season with a second offense.
- b. Using profanity or abusive language, threats or any verbal abuse towards a player or City of Deer Park employee will be suspended for at least two games.
- c. **Batters must drop their bat prior to touching first base. Failure to do so, associated team will receive a warning, and if continued next occurrence will be an out.**

20. Field Conditions: Determination of field condition will not be made until two (2) hours prior to the game start time. Teams may call (281) 478-2099 for information regarding rainouts.

- a. Teams will be notified via email, text or phone call if games are cancelled before 4:30pm.
- b. Game cancelled after 6:30pm will be up to the Umpire in Charge (UIC)

21. NO INFIELD PRACTICE. You may warm up before the game in the outfield grass and outside the foul lines. We want to reduce the wear on the infields and preserve the chalk lines.



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**22. NO DIG RULE:** Under no circumstance may a batter dig with any part of his/her body or other objects, move or disrupt any solid material within the confines of the batter's box [loose material may be moved, but creating new loose material from packed ag-lime is a violation]. Penalty: There will be a team warning given on the first violation. Any further violations will result in an out for each occurrence.

23. Orange Safety Bag: This bag at first base is used for players' safety. Once a runner is on first base, that base will become one single bag for that runner to use as well as the defensive team to use. When running to first, players must use the orange part of the bag unless a hit occurs where the runner is intending on rounding first or going to second. Defensive team must use white side of the bag unless the runner is rounding the bag or returning to first.

**24. Alcohol is strictly prohibited inside the park and parking lot. Teams or individuals caught with alcohol inside the park can be subject to forfeit or ejection from the game.**

25. Metal spikes, football cleats and track spikes are NOT allowed. Only molded rubber cleated are allowed. Players may not play barefoot.

26. Number of players required to start game: Minimum number of players to play an official game is NINE. You must start and finish the game with the same number of players.

- If a player has to leave the game due to injury or an emergency, the team may play with an absence. (Co-Ed: if a girl is injured and no subs are on the line-up, and girl that is on the roster is available, she can take her place. If the girl that was injured is out, the team WILL take an out due to guys batting back to back.) NOTE: Only due to injury to a guy will the team NOT take an out.
- Ejected players must have a legal substitute otherwise; the game will constitute a forfeit.
- League Play: 9 minimum, 10 normal, 11 Extra player, 12 as extra hitter. (See rule 37)
- Co-Recreation League: 9 minimum with one spot as an out, 10 normal, 11 extra players with one spot in batting order as an out unless extra is a female, 12 as extra hitter. (See rule 38)
- Scorekeeper will assume your number of players "Normal" unless you declare otherwise before the game begins.



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- f. If the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and the 12<sup>th</sup> player are not present at the start of the game. The names of the player must be on the line up at start of game. The first at bat the team can go to the next player, skipping the player that is not there, without an out. The second time at bat is an out if the player is not there.

**27. Picking up Extra Players:** Teams are allowed to pick up players during the regular season only and allowed a maximum of three (3) per game and only to accommodate your team up to ten (10) players. Co-ed, see rule #42

- a. Team Managers must declare their pick-up players prior to the start of the game.
- b. Teams will not be allowed to pick up players if a "rostered player" is present and able to play.
- c. Pick-up players will need to bat at the end of the batting order.
- d. If you play more than three (3) pick-up players, you must ask the other team manager to do so. If you do not, your game could be an automatic forfeit. It is up to the opposing team manager to questioning the number of pick-up players.
- e. Pick-up players are NOT allowed for tournaments.
- f. The key to using the extra pick-up player is the batting order. As long as there are no changes in the batting order, any player may play defense. If a player comes out of the batting order, they are out of the game.
- g. The penalty for misuse of the extra player is forfeiture of that complete inning, including any runs that may have been scored.
- h. If the team at fault detects the violation before being detected by someone else, the situation may be corrected with no penalty.

**28. Roster Protests:** Only the opposing team captain or manager may protest illegal or ineligible players. Protest of illegal player(s) must be done during the game while the player in question is in the game. If protested, players must be able to produce proper ID when requested. (See Rule 17)

**29. Substitution (subs):** Any player may be substituted for or replaced and re-entered twice, provided the players occupy their same batting order. The intent is once you are replaced and leave the game a second time you are out of the game and can no longer participate.



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- a. Subs must be on your line-up prior to the start of the game.
- 30. Participants are limited to playing on one team per division per league.
- 31. Base Stealing: Base runners can advance once the pitched ball reached the front edge of the plate.
  - a. Exceptions: When the ball does not reach the front of the plate and/or hits the plate. In either scenario, it will be ruled a dead ball and all runners return to the last base occupied.
  - b. Runners leaving their base before the ball reaches home plate, umpire shall declare, "dead ball" and runner(s) will be declared out. No pitch will be declared on the batter.
- 32. Refund Policy: The City of Deer Park has a no-refund policy once the season has effectively begun.
- 33. Rainout (Makeup) Days: In the event of a cancellation, whether due to rain or other circumstances, games will be pushed back to the end of the season for make-up purposes
  - a. No more than three (3) rainout days issued for an entire season.
  - b. Tournaments will not be held if more than three (3) rainout days are issued.
  - c. A game called by the umpire shall be regulation if three or more complete innings have been played, or if the team second at bat has scored more runs in two or more innings than the other team has scored in three or more innings.
- 34. League Winners: Will be determined by best win/loss percentage, if no tournament is played. In the case of identical records, the team having the best win/loss percentage involving tied teams will be the winner. If teams are still tied, Head-to-Head differentials will then follow. If still tied, the tiebreaker goes to totals runs for and then total runs against.
- 35. Awards: The team in first place for the regular season will receive a guaranteed spot towards next season at a discounted rate (If the tournament is NOT played at the end of the season). The Tournament champion will receive a trophy and the next season at a discounted rate.



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36. Assumption of Risk: Individuals are encouraged to have a physical examination and obtain adequate health and accident insurance prior to participation in City of Deer Park athletic activities. Individuals who participate in City of Deer Park athletic events will be doing so at their own risk. The City of Deer Park Parks and Recreation is not responsible for any injury that may occur to an individual participating in any athletic activity. Participation in City of Deer Park Parks and Recreation athletic events is on a voluntary basis.
37. The City of Deer Park reserve the right to change or amend these rules to facility league play. Questions may be directed to the Parks and Recreation Assistant Director at 281-478-2050.

## **Specific League Rules**

38. League Player Options:
  - a. When playing with nine (9) players in League play, there is no automatic out. However, a 10<sup>th</sup> player may not be added during the game.
  - b. When starting a game with nine (9) players (10<sup>th</sup> added upon arrival), the 10<sup>th</sup> player has until second time at bat then is an automatic out until the player arrives.
  - c. When starting the game with nine (9) players (10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> added upon arrival) the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> player has until second time at bat then is an automatic out until the player arrives.
  - d. When starting a game with ten (10) players (11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> added upon arrival), the 11th and 12th player has until second time at bat then is an automatic out until the player arrives.

## **Recreation League**

- a. 4 home-runs per game plus 1 up rule
  - a. The Recreation League have a Homerun Limit of 4 plus the "1-up Rule." This rule allows any team that has reached its homerun limit to hit another homerun as long as they are not more than one homerun ahead of the opposing team. For example, If team "A" has hit their 4 homeruns and team "B" has not hit their 4 homeruns, team "A" is not allowed to hit anymore homeruns; but if team "B" has hit their 4 homeruns, team "A" would be allowed to hit a 4th homerun (and if they



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do so, team "B" would be allowed to hit their 4th and 5th homerun- then "A" would be able to hit their 5th and 6th, etc...) NOTE: The home team in their last at-bat (5th or 6th inning to cause a "Run Rule" game, or the 7th inning, or any following extra inning) may go "1-up" in homeruns over the visiting team. This means that the either team can "1-up" at any time, even to end the game. In all instances any additional home runs after reaching the maximum allowed at that time in the game, results in an "Out" for that batter.

- b. FLIP / FLOP RULE: If the visiting team is leading by the run rule for that inning, the home team will remain at bat and become the visiting team. If the team (new visiting team) does not score enough runs to reduce the run difference below the run rule the game is over. If they reduce the run difference to below the run rule then the new home team will bat. If the new home team subsequently scores enough runs to exceed the run rule the game will be over. If the situation reverses, the teams would flip/flop again.
- c. Hitting up the Middle: The umpire determines a ball is hit "up the middle", the umpire shall call the play dead and declare the out while making all runners return to their initial base. The batter will ALWAYS be declared out if the pitcher is hit on a line drive in the air; provided the pitcher is within 3 feet of the pitching rubber. The glove is NOT considered part of the body.

What is considered "up the middle": If the ball is hit up the middle (approx. 3 feet off each side of the pitching plate). The pitcher does not have to be on the pitching rubber (some pitchers move off as soon as the ball leaves their hand). This is not a gender bias out. A ball hit over the disk or any other object used to mark "up the middle" will be considered a dead ball out.

### **Specific Co-Recreation League Rules**

- 39. Co-Recreation Player Options:
  - a. When playing with nine (9) players (10<sup>th</sup> player to be used), the 10<sup>th</sup> spot is an automatic out to prevent no men from batting with these exceptions.
    - i. 5 men, 4 women = 10<sup>th</sup> spot is an automatic out
    - ii. 4 men, 5 women = there is no automatic out
    - iii. 3 men, 6 or more women = there is no automatic
  - b. When starting a game with nine (9) players (10<sup>th</sup> added upon arrival), there is an automatic out until the player arrives. The player's name must be on the line-up.
  - c. When starting a game with ten (10) (11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> added upon arrival), the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> player has until second time at bat then is an automatic out until the player arrives.



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d. When starting with eleven (11) (not adding 12<sup>th</sup> player), the 12<sup>th</sup> spot is an out unless the 11<sup>th</sup> player is a woman

## 40. Defensive Alignment

- a. Coed defensive positioning always shall include two males and two females in the infield, two males and two females in the outfield, and one male and one female in the pitcher - catcher positions. If a team elects to play with nine, their three outfielders must include at least one male and one female.
- b. Outfielders must have three (3) players behind the restraining line until ball is hit. The restraining line is a 160-foot arc from home plate.
  - i. Restraining Line rule: if a violation occurs, the batting team has the option of taking the results of the play or taking the penalty.
  - ii. Penalty: the batter is awarded first base and all runners advance one base.
- c. Other outfielders may play anywhere including the infield.
- d. Base on Balls: If a male batter is walked, whether intentionally or unintentionally, he goes to second base.
  - i. The manager of the batting team has the option only after two outs of having the next batter, if it is a woman, awarded 1<sup>st</sup> base or having her bat.
  - ii. Less than two (2) outs, she bats.
  - iii. If there are two (2) outs, the woman has the choice to bat or walk.
  - iv. If the team is short one woman and the next batter is male, there is no option. The male batter bats as if no walk has occurred.

41. Batting Order: Must alternate man, woman, man. Man at all times except when playing with more women than men. Any time men bat back-to-back, there is always an automatic out recorded in the women's spot.

42. Picking up Extra Players: Teams are allowed to pick up players during the regular season only and allowed a maximum of three (3) per game and only to accommodate your team up to twelve (12) players.