



AASL OFFICIAL LEAGUE RULES

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AASL Board

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1.0 League Overview

- 1.1 *Charter*: The Acton Adult Softball League (AASL) is a recreational, semi-competitive softball league. Rules have been designed to promote good sportsmanship and safety.
- 1.2 *Oversight*: AASL is a registered member of USA Softball (previously ASA), and follows all rules of USA Softball, unless specifically referenced in this document.
- 1.3 *Code of Conduct/Sportsmanship*: All registered players must agree to following the AASL code of conduct rules, which includes exercising respect to other players, umpires, and residents of the surrounding area. Poor sportsmanship will not be tolerated.
- 1.4 *Safety*: Player safety is of upmost importance. Overly aggressive play may result in disciplinary actions by the league. All registered players must also agree to follow the AASL Bat rules, which help to ensure safety of players. Overly aggressive play can result in game suspensions, depending on the seriousness of the offense. Multiple offenses can result in permanent expulsion from the league.
- 1.5 *Alcohol*: Alcoholic beverages are prohibited at all times on all AASL fields per posted signs and town laws. Failure to comply may result in police action, and could lead to suspensions or expulsion of players from the league.
- 1.6 *Curfew*: AASL usage of fields is granted based on permits from the Town of Acton Recreation Department. Permits are for softball related activities, and once games are completed players are encouraged to leave the park. Loitering may be considered trespassing by police.

2.0 League Structure

- 2.1 *Teams*: The league is made up of 16 teams, with no roster size restrictions.
- 2.2 *Team grouping/Schedule*: Each team will play 15 games, one game against each of the other teams in the league
- 2.3 *Playoffs*: All teams make the playoffs. Teams are seeded based on regular season results (see 7.1.1 for playoff eligibility)
 - 2.3.1 *Tie Breaker*: Head to head record will determine seeding in the case of teams with identical records in the regular season. If the head to head matchup resulted in a tie, then a coin flip will determine seeding.

3.0 Game Makeup Policy

- 3.1 The goal of AASL is to have all scheduled games played when scheduled. Games not played as scheduled without proper notification can lead to unused field permits, umpire payments, and administrative burdens on the league. All games should be played as scheduled unless approved by commissioner.
 - 3.1.1 *Rainouts*: League officials are responsible for communicating via website or email rainouts due to weather. Captains should assume that all games are scheduled unless they hear otherwise. Captains are responsible for

making sure their team is aware of the game status. In the event that weather changes and field conditions dictate a cancellation, that decision can only be made down at the field between both captains and the umpire. If a team has a legal lineup and opponent does not and field conditions allow game to be played, opponent is charged with a forfeit.

- 3.1.2 *Rescheduling*: It is the responsibility of the team captains to mutually agree on a rescheduled date based on available field slots. All cancelled games should be rescheduled within 48 hours or the league will automatically reschedule you to an available slot in the next week of play.
- 3.1.3 *Mutual Rescheduling*: If either or both teams cannot field a team, they can agree to a rescheduled date and petition the commissioner for approval. Approval of request will be based on whether there is sufficient time given for request. If there is sufficient time, commissioner will grant approval. If not, teams should be expected to show up and play. Failure to do so by one or both teams will result in a game forfeit.

3.2 Every effort should be made to play scheduled or rescheduled games. The penalties for a team to forfeit are as follows:

- 1st Offense – Result is a loss and a warning issued
- 2nd Offense – Result is a loss and team is no longer playoff eligible
- 3rd Offense – Result is a loss and team can be replaced next season.
- 4th Offense – Team is immediately expelled from the league. There will be no refund of league fee if team is expelled.

4.0 Game Play

4.1 *Field Use*: Use of town fields is by permit only. Available times are listed on website

4.2 *Lights*: Lights at Elm St. field are scheduled to turn on 30 minutes prior to sunset and turn off at 9:30. To extend lights to 9:45 captains have number and assigned password available. Lights cannot be turned back on once they have been turned off.

4.3 *Safety*: As stated player safety is extremely important in AASL game play

- 4.3.1 *Bat rules*: only bats approved by the commissioner can be used in games. Approved bats must be single-wall, single piece construction of steel or steel alloy. No multi-wall, multi-shell, or composite bats are allowed. Every approved bat must have an AASL approved sticker on the bat. Any new bat must have sticker before being used in a game.

- 4.3.1.1.1 If there is a question on the legality of a bat, captain should bring to attention of umpire. If umpire is unsure, questioned bat will be removed from game and then brought to the attention of the commissioner.

- 4.3.1.1.2 A player caught using a known illegal bat will be called out, and subsequently ejected from that game. A second offense will result in expulsion from the league for the season.
- 4.3.2 *Safety Base:* AASL utilizes a safety base at first base. Fielders are required to use the white portion of the base, while batters are to use the orange portion of the base when running through the base. Batter should only use white portion if taking turn towards second base. Failure to use the orange base can result in the batter being called out.
- 4.3.3 *Home Plate/Green Mat:* AASL utilizes a green mat at home plate. For the purposes of baserunning, fielders are required to utilize home plate, while runners are to use the green mat when trying to score.
- 4.3.4 *Collisions:* In order to avoid dangerous collisions, defensive players should be aware of where they are standing to make a play at any base. Runners also should do their part to avoid contact by giving themselves up in cases where they are forced out, or slide to prevent collision in close plays at a given base. Hard sliding, or taking out a defensive player in proper position, is not allowed and can lead to possible disciplinary actions by the league.
- 4.3.5 *Games:* AASL games are 7 innings long, and should not run for more than 90 minutes.
- 4.3.6 There is a grace period of 10 minutes at the start of each game if needed for teams to have a legal roster. After 10 minutes if team has enough players to legally start game, game must begin, or forfeit can be considered by opposing captain.
- 4.3.7 For first game scheduled at a field, no inning should start 5 minutes before next game's start time, unless mutual approval is given by both captains from the next game. If game is official at that time (5 full innings), then the results as they are stand.
- 4.3.8 *Ties:* Tie games can continue into extra innings as long as time permits. If time expires and another inning cannot be started, a tie is declared.
- 4.3.9 Once a game has started, the umpire is solely responsible for determining whether game conditions require a stoppage in play (either rain or darkness), based on safety of players.
- 4.3.10 *Completed games:* A game is considered official if 5 full innings have been played (or 4 ½ if home team is winning). Incomplete games should be rescheduled at a later date. Games would be continued from where they left off with the same lineup, score, etc. In case where player is not available for continuation they will be taken out of the lineup. Any new players will be added to the end of the batting lineup. Umpires receive \$5/inning of continued game which should be paid by the home team and reimbursed by the league.

- 4.3.11 **Mercy Rule:** A team leading by 15+ runs after 4 innings, or 12+ runs after 5 innings, is declared winner (home team must have opportunity to bat in bottom of inning if losing). Once game is called, teams can continue to play until all 7 innings are complete but game results are official after the Mercy Rule is applied.

5.0 Player Rules

5.1 **Eligible Players:** All players must be registered with AASL, and must complete waivers online before playing in a game. Players can register at any time prior to start of game.

5.1.1 **Age Restrictions:** All male players must be 21 years or older to play. All female players must be 18 years or older to play

5.1.2 **Substitutions:** A male player on a team's official roster can only play for that team. They are not allowed to substitute or play for another team under any circumstances. The league does allow for female players to substitute for any team.

5.1.3 **Ineligible Players:** Teams may not field ineligible players. If situation is brought to league attention and can be verified, team that fields an ineligible player will be charged with a forfeit loss.

5.2 **Ejection:** Any player ejected from an AASL game by umpire due to unsportsmanlike conduct, foul language, fighting, or overly aggressive play must leave the field immediately. That player is automatically suspended for one additional game. A second offense will result in suspension for the balance of regular season and playoffs. AASL board reserves right to review all cases and/or adjust penalties assessed.

5.3 **Game Day Rosters:** A complete team for a game is 10 players (with at least 3 females). A minimum of 8 players are required to avoid forfeiture, with at least one player being female.

- In the case of 8 players, a non-defensive catcher can be requested of the other team.
- In the case of 9 players, team must supply their own catcher.

5.3.1 **Fielding Requirements:** no more than 10 players can be in the field at once. Of the 10 players, no more than 7 can be male. If team is playing with 1 or 2 females, only 9 total fielders are allowed.

- Captains are encouraged to give fair playing time to all players that show up. Any player that is in the lineup should play at least one inning in the field, unless injury prevents it.

5.3.2 **Lineup Requirements:** Everyone who shows up must be placed in the batting order.

- In the case of only 2 females, an automatic out is assessed in the 8th slot in the lineup.

- In the case of only 1 female, an automatic out is assessed after the 4th slot in the lineup and in the 8th batter in the lineup.
 - A player arriving late can be placed at the bottom of the batting order, upon notifying opposing captain.
- 5.3.2.1 Removal from batting lineup: Players can be removed from the lineup without penalty if need be for injury or for non-competitive reasons. Once a player is removed from lineup, they may not reenter the game.
- 5.3.3 *Defensive Alignment:* A team that has 10 fielders available must have pitcher, catcher, 4 infielders, and 4 outfielders, one of which may be a short fielder. A short fielder must be outside the infield dirt. A team that has only 9 fielders may choose to field 3 outfielders.
- 5.3.4 Female At bat: with a female at bat, all outfielders must play behind the arc (formed by the cones at 180' from home plate) until the ball is put into play. All infielders must play within the confines of the infield dirt until the ball is put into play.
- 5.4 Courtesy Runner: Courtesy runners will be allowed for injured players who have already reached first base and are not able to run safely.
- 5.4.1 Courtesy runner should be an eligible player of the same gender who made the last batted out.
- 5.4.2 If no such runner is available, player must remain in game to run.
- 5.4.3 Once a player is removed as a courtesy runner, they may not reenter as a runner in the same inning.
- 5.4.4 A courtesy runner can only run once per inning. In situations where another courtesy runner is required, the second to last batted out would be the designated runner.
- 5.5 Pitching: AASL utilizes a green mat that serves as the strike zone. Any legal pitch that touches any part of the green mat is considered a strike. Home plate is not considered part of the mat, and any pitch that hits the plate is considered a ball.
- 5.5.1 *Pitch arc:* a legal pitch is one that has an arc no less than 6 feet and no more than 12 feet, as ruled by the umpire. If the umpire determines the arc is outside that parameter, the pitch will be declared illegal. If batter chooses to swing, the results of the pitch stand. If not, pitch is declared a ball.
- 5.5.2 *Walks:* there is a maximum of 3 walks allowed by a pitcher in an inning. After the 3rd walk, batter can no longer reach first base on a walk. Likewise, batter cannot have a strike called on them. Swinging strikes or foul balls do count.

6.0 **Field Layout:**

- 6.1 Home team of first scheduled game is responsible for setting up field for game play, including placement of bases, cones, and pitcher's mound.

- Bases – Should be 65' apart, with 2B 92' from rear tip of home plate
- Pitcher's Mound – Should be 50' from rear tip of home plate
- Outfield Cones – Should be 180' from rear tip of home plate, placed on foul line

6.2 Ground rules: There are specific ground rules for both of the fields utilized for AASL

- 6.2.1 Outfield Obstructions at NARA - Obstructions such as soccer nets, etc should be moved prior to the game. If a ball hits an obstacle in the course of a play, outfielder should signal with a raised hand and umpire will award hitter with appropriate base.
- 6.2.2 Outfield Boundary at Elm St. – Batted ball into the woods (RF) or over the hill (LF) in the air are considered home runs. If a ball rolls into the woods (RF) in the course of play, outfielder should signal with a raised hand and umpire will award hitter with appropriate base (umpire discretion).
- 6.2.3 Addendum: Any ball hit over the temporary fence at Elm St. during school construction is a home run. If a ball rolls under the fence, outfielder should signal with a raised hand and umpire will award hitter with appropriate base (umpire discretion).

7.0 Playoffs:

7.1 At the conclusion of the regular season there is a single elimination playoff bracket (seedings are determined by final standings).

- 7.1.1 *Eligible teams:* all teams are eligible for playoffs. Only exception is if a team has 2 or more forfeits.
- 7.1.2 *Eligible players:* only male players with at least 5 games played in the regular season and female players with at least 3 games played in the regular season are eligible to play in the playoffs.
 - 7.1.2.1 *Forfeits:* every player on the roster of a team that was awarded a win via a forfeit will get credited for a game played (towards satisfying the playoff minimum of 5 games played)
 - 7.1.2.2 *Ejections:* any player ejected more than once in the regular season is not eligible to play in the playoffs. Any player ejected during a playoff game will be suspended for the remainder of the playoffs.
 - 7.1.2.3 *In Game Substitutions:* In game substitutions are not allowed. If a player is injured during a game and cannot continue the team must continue with remaining players.
- 7.1.3 *Female Substitutes:* Substitutes are not allowed for playoff games
- 7.1.4 *Ties:* Ties are not allowed. Games are played until one team wins.
- 7.1.5 *Umpires:* two USA Softball umpires will be used to oversee playoff games.