Neighborhood Division 4 Rules

INTRODUCTION

- The Villages District Recreation Department's (VDRD) softball program is designed to offer recreational play in an organized and structured format to residents of The Villages. The VDRD regulations govern the playing conditions and competitive activities at the softball complexes.
- The Villages Neighborhood Division 4 (D4) Softball Rules are based on the current edition of the Senior Softball- USA Rulebook (SSUSA). The D4 rules are amended by the D4 Board of Directors (Board) and govern seasonal play. Rather than reproduce the entire SSUSA rules and insert the Division 4 changes, we have instead opted to cite those sections of the SSUSA rules where we provide our rules to supersede the SSUSA rules of that section.
- All participants are required to abide by the Division 4 rules.
- Participants are reminded that softball is a game to be enjoyed. Exercise, fellowship, and friendly competition are the goals. Negative comments about fellow players, opponents, or umpires are not in keeping with the spirit of the sport. Disagreements between managers and players should be expressed with respect and consideration by both parties and no one should be disparaged or criticized from public view.
- Participants can access online copies of the D4 Rules and Procedures, and the SSUSA rules via the Neighborhood Division 4 webpage link: https://www.N4softball.com
- Please have fun, be safe and healthy, and enjoy your time on the field with your friends and teammates.

Game Issues Specific to The Villages Softball Play

I. GAME CANELLATIONS

A. By the Recreation Department

1. Prior to commencement of play for the day, the VDRD reserves the right to cancel or delay the game any time the field conditions, or weather conditions are deemed unsafe. The VDRD will notify a D4 Board Representative when these cancellations occur. The Villages radio station (WVLG: 640 AM; 102.7 and 104.5 FM) will announce game cancellations or delays after the 7:00 AM news. Managers/players should not call the Saddlebrook Recreation Center or the radio station for cancellation or playing updates.

B. By the Umpires

a) Once a game has started, umpires are empowered to suspend or stop playing due to inclement weather conditions such as rain, thunderstorms, fog, darkness, wind, or for on-field injuries. If suspended play exceeds or is expected to exceed 30 minutes, the game will be stopped. The Board will decide if games that were not regulation and

stopped will be replayed.

b) Umpires must suspend game play once they hear thunder or see lightning. Participants will immediately evacuate to universally acceptable safe locations. Games may resume once 20 minutes have passed since the game was suspended. If there is a second occurrence of lightning or thunder during the delay, the game shall be terminated.
c) Any game scheduled to start after a terminated game shall also be terminated.

d) A terminated game shall be official if the losing team has completed its turn at bat in the fifth inning. Otherwise, the game, and the players' individual statistics, shall not be recorded

C. By the Managers

a) If at any time both managers agree that continued play is unsafe, they have the authority to suspend or stop game play without penalty.

D. By the Division 4 Board

a) Board members shall use a Wet Globe Measuring Thermometer to determine safe playing conditions by measuring temperature, humidity, wind speed, and sun intensity to determine whether shade/rest breaks are required during play or play must be canceled for the day.

II. Ejections

A. Players or Managers may be ejected from the game for, but not limited to, the following reasons.

a) Verbally abusive language (including profanity).
b) Throwing equipment in anger.
c) Threats or acts of physical aggression.
d) After being warned to stop, a continued expression of displeasure with an umpire ruling.
e) Using or attempting to use an altered bat.

B. The ejected player or manager must leave the softball complex for the remainder of the game. An ejected player discovered returning to the grounds before the game he was ejected from is complete, will result in a forfeit.

C. The ejected player will not be replaced with a sub. Every time he is due to bat, an out will be recorded.

D. Umpires will complete and submit a Recreation Department Incident / Ejection Report to a member of the Board or VDRD on the same day as the incident.

E. VDRD mandates a two-game suspension for a player or manager who is ejected or, in the case of physical contact, the minimum suspension is one month. VDRD will sol will solely determine if additional disciplinary action is warranted.

F. A suspended player or manager is allowed to be at the softball complex, but may not, in any manner, participate in any team activity or become

G. involved in harassment or verbal abuse of an umpire.

III. Teams

Each team must provide umpire(s) when a team roster player has been assigned duties on the umpire schedule. Each team must provide a team member to scorer when their team is assigned the duty. If a team who is scheduled for the duties described above, fails to complete the duty; the team will forfeit their next game that is a win. All forfeited games will be recorded as 7 to o score.

Exceptions to SSUSA Rules
Sections Noted Correspond Directly to Those Sections of the SSUSA Rules.

1.5 Batters Box

A. The batter's box shall be the entire green mat surrounding the strike plate
B. At least some portion of both feet of the batter must be on the green mat or metal edge of the batter's box
C. When striking a ball, fair or foul, and at least one foot is outside the batter's box or touching any part of the strike mat, the batter is out.

1.30 Headwear

A-D. Wearing of ball caps is optional for all players, coaches and bench personnel.

1.41 Infield Fly – There is no infield fly rule

2.3 B A Strike mat is used versus the home plate described in this section of the rules (see section 1.62)

2.4 BASE DISTANCE

Bases shall be set 65' (21.32 m) apart for all divisions.

3.4 Official Bats

A-H. Bat Warmers are permitted
Bats are provided by the Neighborhood Division 4 league and are the only bats that may be used during a game

3.4 (6 and 7) Any player using an illegal bat will be called out

3.5 OFFICIAL SOFTBALL

A. Shall be supplied by the Villages Recreation Department
B. A yellow optic ball is preferred for both men's and women's play.
C. A 12-inch ball with a COR of .44 and a compression rating of no more than 375 psi shall be used when male players are at bat.
D. An 11-inch ball with a COR of .47 and a compression rating of no more than 525 shall be used when women players are at bat.
E. Penalty for use of an illegal softball:
    a) As soon as it is discovered that the incorrect or illegal softball has been used, it will be replaced by the umpire.
    b) If the discovery occurs after a play is completed and <u>before</u> the next pitch is thrown (legal or illegal) then the at bat shall be repeated with the correct ball.
    c) If the discovery occurs after the play is completed but <u>after</u> the next pitch (illegal or legal pitch) is thrown then the play stands.

NOTE: An illegal softball is deemed to be in play when the ball is in the possession of the pitcher and a batter is in the batter's box.

4.2 ROSTER RESTRICTIONS

Each team will have a minimum of 11 players (no maximum limit).
A team may have more than one (1) Designated Hitter (DH). However, there can be no designated hitter(s) if there are less than the 11 players for field positions

A. Official lineup cards are to be completed and submitted to the opposing team manager or umpire at the start of each game. The lineup shall contain at least the last name and position of each player.

B. All eligible players that arrive to play shall be listed in the lineup card
C. Each player will play at least 3 innings per game, unless:
   a) The player is a designated DH
   b) The player is injured and cannot take a field position
   c) The player has decided to coach only that game
   d) The player has decided to play less than 3 innings

> Note: A Manager may not ask a player to play less than three innings nor can a manager request a player not show up for a game.

5.4 REGULATION GAME

A. Games have a time limit of 75 minutes. If a game is delayed due to an injury, the timer is stopped and only after the sub player is assigned, will the timer be restarted. (Official Game Playing Time is 75 minutes)
B. A regulation game shall consist of seven innings. If the time limit is up the game may continue until the end of the current inning, unless the visitors have been retired and the home team is ahead.
C. If a game is tied at the end of the seventh inning and there is more than 10 minutes on the clock, one last inning may be played. The international tie breaker rules for placement of players will apply.

5.5(1) FIVE-RUN LIMIT PER INNING

A team that is behind by more than five runs may score enough runs so that they can achieve the score of the other team. The half-inning will then terminate regardless of the number of outs.

5.5(3) MERCY RULE FOR 40+ THRU 70+ MAJOR-PLUS (ONLY)

If a team is ahead by 12 or more runs after five innings have been completed, the game will be concluded.

A. FLIP FLOP RULE - When the Home team is losing by 10 or more runs after 6 innings the Home Team shall flip flop and become the visiting team.

5.7 SCORING OF RUNS PLAYING RULES

A. The runner shall be called out, and no run shall be scored if he first touches any portion of the green mat before touching the scoring plate. The ball remains live.

5.9 Conferences- not applicable

6.17 PITCHER'S MANDATED MINIMUM SAFETY EQUIPMENT

A. Pitcher's Safety Screen (The Board highly recommends the use of the screen for safety purposes)
   a) The team utilizing the screen is responsible for its placement and removal. When in use, the screen shall be placed parallel to and not more than 36" in front of the pitching rubber so that a portion of the screen is not more than 2" from a line directly between home plate and the edge of the pitching rubber.
   b) A batted ball hitting the screen is a dead ball
   c) A thrown ball hitting the screen is a live ball, the batter runner and base runner(s) may advance at their own risk.
   d) The umpires shall determine where the screen is stored between innings when only one team uses the screen. If the screen is stored in foul territory on the playing field, any thrown ball striking it will remain live.

e) A pitcher choosing to use a safety screen shall immediately move their **torso** behind the screen after delivering the pitch. Failure to move behind the screen will result in an illegal pitch.

f) Once the pitcher gets their **torso** completely behind the screen, he is considered a fielder and may come out from behind the screen to field the ball.

g) Any batted ball that is fielded by the pitcher without having their **torso** fully retreated behind the screen is a dead ball hit for the batter. All forced runners on base will advance forward one base.

8.3 Batter-Runner is out (and section 1.41 Infield Fly)

I. There is no infield fly rule.

8.5(1) Courtesy Runners

A courtesy runner may run for another player three (#) times during a game and only one time per inning. The runner must agree to be replaced by a courtesy runner.

8.5(4) Courtesy Runner coming to Bat while on Base

If a courtesy runner is on base and it is his/her time to bat, they may be replaced by another courtesy runner without penalty.

8.6 WHEN SLIDING IS OPTIONAL - AVOIDING COLLISIONS

A. A runner is out when he slides or dives *going to* any base or the scoring plate. Exception: A Players may slide or dive when *returning* to any base. Any over-run at first with an attempt to advance to second base, or third base shall place that runner in jeopardy of being put out when returning to the base. No tag of the runner is necessary; the runner is out if the fielder is holding the ball in his glove or hand(s) while in contact with the bag.

B. No Contact rule is enforced by either interference on the runner or obstruction on the fielder. Any significant contact between players (not minor incidental contact) the umpire shall make a determination and make the appropriate call. This rule is designed to protect any player from colliding with another player. If Interference is called the runner who collided with the fielder is out and so is the runner closest to home.

C. If a runner going to second base overruns the base to avoid contact and remains within one step of the base before the fielder makes contact with the base with ball in hand, the runner is safe.

16.3 BATTING RULES

A. See C.

B. See C.

C. Teams with both male and female players may bat them in any order.

16.4 WALKS

A and B. A player who receives a base on balls or an intentional walk shall be awarded first base. The batter doe NOT have to touch first base if he is being replaced by a courtesy runner

16.5 WARM UP PITCHES

At the start of the game both pitches will be allowed 3 warm up pitches. Beginning with f the 2nd inning no warm up pitches will be allowed. The purpose of thos rule is to keep the game moving. If the defensive team is on the field and the offensive team is not ready to bat, the umpire may allow a warm up pitch BUT it must not delay the game. If the Defensive team is in the field but their pitcher is putting on safety equipment, the infield may keep loose by throwing the ball to each other UNTIL the Pitcher steps out of the dug out and onto the field. Both situations are the umpires decision and common sense should prevail.