



RSPA 2016 Rules of Play

Revised Date: May 1, 2016

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Section 1. GENERAL:

- 1-1 All rules and/or principals not specifically addressed in the following league rules and amendments will be specified in the current Slo-Pitch National rulebook.
- 1-2 Any rule, situation or incident not covered will be reviewed and decided by the League Executive.
- 1-3 Appeals and protests will be reviewed by the League Executive for further actions.
- 1-4 Rules will not be revised during the course of the season unless absolutely necessary.
- 1-5 Recommendations for rule changes may be submitted to the League Executive for consideration.
- 1-6 All rules must be strictly adhered to. Umpires or team reps do not have the right to waive or change these rules.
- 1-7 Rules that are RSPA specific and are different from SPN rules will be indicated by "****RSPA****".
- 1-8 Rules that are new or changed for 2016 will be indicated by "****NEW 2016".

NEW FOR 2016 - Each team will be permitted a maximum of seven (7) courtesy runners, during each game. *****RSPA rule 2016*****

Section 2. THE GAME:

- 2-1 All games will be seven (7) innings. Home team does not bat in the bottom of the 7th inning if ahead.
Exception: In playoff series where it is a best of two games, total run series, then an equal number of innings must be played.
- 2-2 Once an inning starts, it must be completed (exception: safety).
- 2-3 A game may be called in the middle of an inning for safety reasons only (darkness, weather, possible injury, etc.). The score will revert back to the last completed inning. If the outcome of the game is in question and if the outcome of the game is significant in the standings, the League Executive may (at their determination) reschedule the game to be continued from where it was left off.
- 2-4 FOUR (4) complete innings required for a complete game, 3-1/2 innings if home team is ahead. *****RSPA*****
- 2-5 TIE SCORE: Game will be played until a winner is determined, unless the game is called because of time (during regular season), darkness, weather, safety, possible injury, etc. No ties in playoffs.
- 2-6 International Tie Breaker Rule will be used with tie score in extra innings or any inning past the time limit.
The inning will be started with the last batter as a baserunner on second base.
The inning will be started with one (1) out. (as per SPN rules).
- 2-7 Incomplete games will be replayed from the start. The League reserves the right to continue a game from the point where it was left off. Suspended games or protested games will be played from the point of interruption.
- 2-8 The umpire will decide if the game can be played. **PLAY RAIN OR SHINE.**
- 2-9 **RSPA Rain-Out Policy:** Unless otherwise informed, all teams must show up "rain or shine".
Only the umpire can call the game at the diamond. **DO NOT CALL** to see if the game will be played!
In extreme situations, teams will be e-mailed by 3:00 pm to cancel games and info will be posted on the web site.
- 2-10 Game start time will be as per the League schedule. Standard game start times will normally be 6:30 pm, 8:00 pm and/or 9:30 pm. League Executive retains the right to adjust game start times if necessary.
Game start time is "game start time". Home team must have bases placed by game start time, or risk default.
- 2-11 A GRACE PERIOD of ten (10) minutes (umpire's time and discretion) will be allowed from the official game start time. If a time limit is in effect, the grace time will be deducted from the game time.
- 2-12 TIME LIMIT: There are no time limits on games on unlit diamonds (exceptions*).
Doubleheaders will be scheduled on unlit diamonds from Monday, June 13 to Thursday, July 7. Time limit will be in effect.
On lit diamonds and in playoff games, if a time limit is in effect, 1-1/2 hour game slot,
no new inning will start after ONE (1) HOUR AND TWENTY (20) MINUTES.

- 2-13 **DEFAULT:** In the event of a default, the score will be recorded as 7-0 (one run per inning).
- 2-14 **DEFAULT FINE:**
1. A team will be fined \$25 for the first game default; \$50 for the 2nd game default; \$100 for the 3rd game default and may be brought before the League Executive for further action.
 2. The default fine will be reduced by \$25.00 if the League is notified 24 hours in advance.
 3. A default fine may be waived by the League Executive in exceptional circumstances.
 4. All default fines and late payment fines will be strictly enforced.
- 2-15 **MERCY RULE:** Mercy rule of 12 runs after 5 complete innings, or 4-1/2 innings if the home team is ahead.
- 2-16 **POINT STRUCTURE:** A win is worth 1 point, a tie is worth 1/2 point and a loss is worth zero points. Standings may use a weighted point system in order to rank teams for the playoffs.
- 2-17 Home team for regular season games will be decided by the schedule. For playoff games, the team with the higher standings will have choice of first home or away, with all other games in the series alternating home and away.
- 2-18 **BALLS AND STRIKES:** The umpire will be responsible for determining BALLS and STRIKES. *****RSPA*****
A strike-zone mat will be used with the home plate area cut out. A legally pitched ball that hits the home plate will be a ball. A legally pitched ball that hits the mat before it hits the ground or plate, will be called a strike.
- 2-19 **THIRD STRIKE FOUL RULE** is in effect.
The batter is declared out if he/she hits a foul ball or foul tip with two (2) strikes (as per SPN rules).
- 2-20 **HOME RUN RULE “MATCH PLUS TWO”** is in effect in all fenced parks or parks with a designated out of play area. At no time during a game will the number of home runs (over the fence or out of play) hit by one team be more than two (2) more than the number of home runs hit by the opposing team. When a home run is hit, that is in excess of the number allowed, the batter will be declared OUT. (see also “Ground Rules”) *****RSPA*****
- 2-21 **INNING MERCY RULE:** 6 run maximum runs per inning mercy rule (unless more than 6 runs are required to avoid a mercy), even if a home run is hit that would put the max over 6 runs. The last inning is open (as per SPN rules).

Section 3. THE PLAYING FIELD:

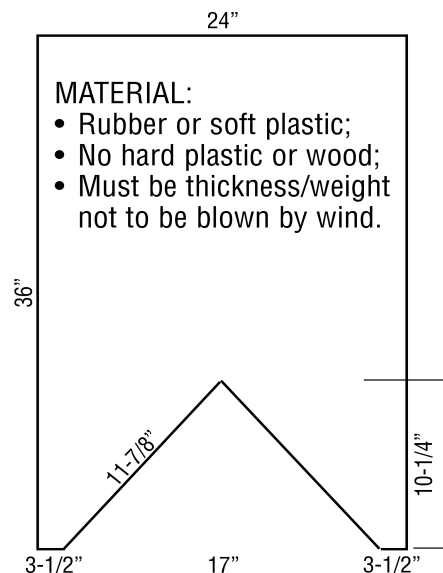
- 3-1 Bases will be set at sixty-five (65) feet from the back of homeplate to the outside of the base (as per SPN rules).
- 3-2 **PITCHING ZONE:** The "Pitching Zone" is 24 inches wide by 15 feet long, running 50 feet from home plate to 65 feet from home plate. The pitch must be delivered with the pivot foot within the pitching zone. (as per SPN rules)
- 3-3 **COMMITMENT LINE:** Twenty (20) feet from home plate. Base runner must continue once any part of his body is over (and on the ground) past the commitment line. (as per SPN rules)
- 3-4 **SCORING LINE** at home plate must be crossed with a portion of the foot on or over the line and on the ground. Force out at home plate. (as per SPN rules)
- 3-5 **150/175 Foot Rule** will NOT be used. Fielders may be positioned anywhere in fair territory. *****RSPA*****
Normal SPN encroachment rule applies.
- 3-6 No outfielder may make a force out on the batter-base runner at first base, nor may an outfielder relay the ball in order to make a force out on the batter-base runner at first base. There is no penalty for attempting to throw the batter-baserunner out.
- 3-7 **FIVE MAN INFIELD:** A team may play with a 5 player (or more) infield by moving in an outfielder. *****RSPA*****
A player will be deemed an “outfielder” if they are playing a defensive position that would be on the grass on a normal softball diamond. The umpire should be informed when a team elects to play a 5 player (or more) infield.
- 3-8 **ENCROACHMENT RULE:** No defensive player can stand any closer than 50 feet in fair territory as each pitch is delivered. (as per SPN rules)
- 3-9 **SPECIAL GROUND RULES:** Ground rules for specific parks / diamonds should be reviewed before each game by the umpire and the team representatives. All ground rules are subject to change. Additional ground rules may be applied as a result of temporary field conditions, weather, etc. Recommended ground rules for each park are appended to the Rules of Play.

Section 4. EQUIPMENT:

- 4-1 **BATS:** RSPA and Slo-Pitch National recognizes the USSSA & ASA bat testing methods. All RSPA/SPN approved bats must carry the "NEW" USSSA stamp or the ASA logo.
- See also the non-approved bat list which will be appended to the RSPA Rules.
 - Titanium bats are illegal. Hardball bats are illegal.
 - See also bat section on website.
- 4-2 **ILLEGAL BAT:** Any player stepping into the batters box with a non-approved bat will be declared out and will be ejected from the game, and the manager will be ejected from the game (as per SPN rules).
- 4-3 **BALL:** The official League ball is the SPN yellow Worth Hot Dot 12" (0.52 C.O.R./275-compression).
- All other balls are illegal. Worth Grey Dots will NOT be allowed. Balls are supplied by the League.
 - If balls are not picked up by June 12, the team will forfeit their supply of balls. ***RSPA***
- 4-4 Home team must supply one NEW (unused) League approved ball plus one used ball in good condition for a spare.
- If both game balls are lost, the home team must supply alternate balls.
 - Used balls are returned to the team at the end of the game.
 - Suitability of balls will be in the umpire's discretion.
 - Failure to supply game balls will result in home team assessed an "equipment fine" of \$10.00 for failing to supply necessary equipment.
 - The League will supply the balls to the teams.
 - If balls are not picked up by June 12, the team will forfeit their supply of balls. ***RSPA***
- 4-5 Home team must supply bases complete with pegs, and including a safe-base.
- a. Bases MUST be of regulation size, and in good condition, or not damaged, complete with pegs.
 - b. Double base (safe-base) for use at first base must be one piece only; no split/folding bases allowed.
 - c. Home team must place and peg down bases before scheduled game start time.
 - d. Bases are to be measured and secured at the proper distance, by game time (up to and including grace time).
 - e. If home team does not supply and place base in the allocated time, the visiting team must supply and place bases complete with pegs, and a safe-base. If visiting team is required to supply and place bases, they will have the option of home field advantage, and the home team will be assessed an "equipment fine" of \$10.00 per incident.
 - f. If neither team has bases complete with pegs, and including a safe-base, a **DOUBLE DEFAULT** will be declared and DEFAULT fines will be assessed against **BOTH** teams.
 - g. For a double-header, the home team for the first game of the double-header, must place and leave the bags, for both games if they are staying at that diamond, unless stated otherwise on the league schedule.

4-6 **PITCHING MAT:**

- Home team must supply and place a League approved pitching mat. ***RSPA***
 - The official pitching mat is the Worth WO-WSPM orange pitching mat.
- DIMENSIONS:** 24" x 36", with the vee cut out to fit around the homeplate.
- MATERIAL:** Must be rubber or soft plastic. No hard plastic or wood.
- WEIGHT:** Must be weight/thickness not to be blown by the wind.
- If home team does not have a pitching mat available, the visiting team must supply one. If no pitching mat is available, BOTH teams will be assessed an "equipment fine" of \$10.00 for failing to supply necessary equipment. The game will proceed, with the umpire calling balls and strikes without the aid of a mat.
 - The pitching mat must be 24" wide by 36" long, cut out around the home plate, made of material rubber or soft plastic (no hard plastic or wood) and must be thickness/weight not to be blown by the wind.



4-7 SCOREBOOKS: ***RSPA***

1. Both teams must have and must complete League approved game score books.
2. Game score books are supplied by the League to the teams.
3. Scoresheets must be completed and must include both teams batting orders, including substitutions. Batting orders must include full names (first and last names). ***RSPA***
4. Scoresheets must be signed by the umpire.
5. Game scoresheets must be maintained by the team and must be made available to be submitted to the League Executive at any time upon request. Scorebooks may be collected and reviewed before the playoffs.

4-8 SHOES: NO METAL SPIKES are allowed. (as per SPN)

- Player is automatically ejected from the game. A second occurrence will result in player suspension.

4-9 UNIFORMS:

1. ALL players MUST wear matching tops after the RSPA uniform deadline (June 15) comes in effect.
2. It is recommended that uniform tops have numbers (at least 4" high) visible.
3. It is also recommended that teams adopt a uniform pants/shorts colour.
4. Coaches must also have matching tops as a minimum.
5. MATCHING will be interpreted as “having the same body colour and shade and the same sleeve colour and shade”. The BODY COLOUR and SLEEVE COLOUR do NOT have to be the SAME.
Stripes will NOT be interpreted as a colour and should be ignored when determining if the uniform matches.
6. Uniforms may be as simple as matching colour t-shirts.
7. UNIFORM DEADLINE: Uniform deadline is June 15th.
8. UNIFORM FINE:

For any player participating (offensively or defensively) in a game that is not wearing a uniform top (after the deadline), the team will be assessed a \$10 (ten dollar) fine per player to a maximum of \$100 per night per team.

9. RECOMMENDATION: Carry extra uniform tops.

4-10 PITCHER'S GLOVE: The pitcher has a choice of gloves to use, including a trapper if he wishes. The webbing cannot form any type of “net” or “tray”. The old rule restricted all players, with the exception of catchers and first basemen, to three or four finger type gloves.

Section 5. PLAYERS & SUBSTITUTES:

5-1 The “standard” line-up shall be regarded as ten (10) players, consisting of 7 males and 3 females (7M-3F).

5-2 Additional players may be added to this line-up by adding one male and one female.
ie: 8M-4F, 9M-5F or 10M-6F, etc.5-3 A line-up may always add more females. ie: 6M-5F, 4M-6F, 3M-7F, etc.
The line-up may contain an odd number of batters.
You may add an automatic out in the batting order to bat an extra male.

5-4 The line-up may not contain more than four (4) more males than females. Exception: see 5-5 below.

5-5 AUTOMATIC OUT:

- A team may play with only two (2) females (ie: 7M-2F or 6M-2F) with a maximum of 7 males.
- The batting order position for the missing third female will be declared an “Automatic Out”.
- If the third female shows up anytime during the game, she may be inserted in that spot in the batting order, replacing the “Automatic Out”.
- A team may add an “Automatic Out” in order to bat an extra male batter.
- An additional batter (male or female) may be added to the batting order, replacing an “Automatic Out”, at any point in the game, as long as the batting order remains legal with the proper male-female ratio.

5-6 A team must field a minimum of eight (8) players to start or continue a game.

A team can start batting with less, but if required to take the field must have the minimum of eight (8) players.

- 5-7 Maximum ten (10) players on the field at any one time. Maximum seven (7) males on the field at any one time.
- 5-8 **ADDITIONAL PLAYERS:** No maximum number of players in the batting order.
- The team must finish the game with the same number of players.
 - If a player is removed from the batting order due to injury, there is no penalty, and no automatic out as long as the batting order remains legal with the proper male-female ratio. The removed player will become an automatic out if necessary to maintain the proper male-female ratio.
 - If a player is removed from the batting order for any reason other than injury, and if there is no substitute available, or if the batting order becomes illegal when the player is removed, an automatic out will be declared in that spot each time the player is due to bat.
- 5-9 Players cannot be added to the batting order after the lead off batter has completed his second at bat. Additional players may be added to the bottom of the batting order until the leadoff batter completes his second at bat. If the leadoff batter is at bat at the time of the lineup addition, the new player may take over the at bat, assuming the count. The male/female ratio must remain legal.
- 5-10 **SUBSTITUTION:** (As per SPN Rules)
- Starting player may be pulled from the line-up and re-entered once back in the same spot in the batting order.
 - Substitutes may take the place of a starting player.
 - Once a substitute has been pulled from the line-up, he/she may not re-enter the game.
 - All substitutions must be reported to the umpire and the opposing team rep or scorekeeper.
- 5-11 If batting more than ten (10) players, there is unlimited substitution, in and out of the defensive positions, from the players listed on the batting order as long as there is a maximum of 7 males defensively at any one time. Only players in the batting order may field.
- 5-12 No restrictions on the batting order. May bat males and females in any sequence. May bat as many males in a row as you wish.
- 5-13 **ILLEGAL BATTING ORDER/LINE-UP:** ***RSPA rule***
 If a team is discovered with an illegal line-up, with more than four more males than females in the batting order, the following penalty will be applied:
1. An automatic out will added to the bottom of the batting order for every illegal male batter.
 2. If a male batter has just batted, and got on base, at the time of the discovery, that batter will be declared out.
 3. If a male batter is at bat or coming to bat at the time of the discovery, that batter will be declared out.
 4. The umpire may bring any illegal batting order to the attention of the opposing team, and apply the penalty.
 5. The umpire will report all instances of illegal batting orders to the League Executive and further penalties will occur for second and third offences.
 6. A second offence will result in a one game suspension for the team rep or team coach.
 7. A third offence will result in game default, plus a three game suspension for the coach.
- RECOMMENDATION:** Check the other team's line-up before the game starts.
- 5-14
- If a male batter is walked with a male batter following, he will be awarded first base only.
 - If a male batter is walked with a female batter following (or an automatic out for a female batter), the male batter will be awarded first and second base and the female batter following has to bat.
 - If the male batter is walked on a 4-0 count (four balls and no strikes), he will be awarded first and second base and the female batter following has the option to take her turn at bat or to take a free walk. ***RSPA rule***
- 5-15 **COURTESY RUNNERS:** (As per SPN guidelines) **NEW FOR 2016*****RSPA rule***
1. Each team will be permitted a maximum of **seven (7) courtesy runners**, during each game. ***RSPA rule new 2016***
 2. The courtesy runner can be used at any time and must be reported to the umpire.
 3. Any rostered player (in uniform) from the line-up, bench, etc. may be a courtesy runner.
 4. Courtesy runner must be male for male, female for female or female for male.
 5. You **MAY** use the same courtesy runner more than once. ***RSPA rule***
 6. A courtesy runner is **NOT** charged as one of **THREE**, if a player is injured, on the play requiring a **SUBSTITUTE** runner (last out in the batting order) (umpire's discretion) ***RSPA rule***

- 5-16 The MINIMUM AGE to participate is EIGHTEEN (18) as of December 31 of that year, or SIXTEEN-SEVENTEEN (16-17) with signed approval of parent or guardian. (see “Parental Consent Form”)
- For safety reasons, no player under the age of SIXTEEN (16) will be considered.
- 5-17 Players may NOT play for more than one team in the same division.
- 5-18 ROSTER:
1. RSPA requires all teams to complete the SPN on-line roster.
This will require all players to complete their information on-line. This will require all players to have an active email address. Players MUST complete full name (first and last), sex, date of birth, postal code and a valid email address. Players without a valid email, or wishing not to provide email, MUST complete an individual “Player Release Form”. Teams must indicate which players are league players, and players on the roster that only plays tournaments with the team. Tournament roster may be different from league roster.
 2. Any player that does not have or wishes to not enter his/her email address MUST complete an individual “Player Release Form” and submit it to the League. *****NEW 2015*****
Any team that has a history of roster problems or if designated by the League, MUST complete individual “Player Release Form” for ALL players and submit to the League. *****NEW 2015*****
 3. All teams must submit a playoff roster before the playoffs listing eligible players. *****NEW 2016*****
 4. The team rep must have a copy of their team roster with them at all games, and must produce them on demand to a League Official or League Umpire.
 5. Roster checks will be done at the first games of all playoff series, and for all final championship games.
Roster checks will be performed by umpires, League Executives and/or their representatives.
Roster checks may require photo proof of identification.
 6. Teams must maintain scorebooks if required to prove that a player is playoff eligible with a minimum of 5 regular season games.
- 5-19 ROSTER DEADLINE:
Deadline for SPN on-line roster is Monday, May 16, 2016. League roster changes and additions will be allowed up to July 1. After July 1, league approval is required for all league roster changes. Changes will still be allowed for tournament rosters.
- 5-20 ROSTER MAXIMUM: A maximum of TWENTY (20) players may be registered on the roster.
- The roster maximum may be increased by applying in writing or by email to the League Executive.
- 5-21 AWARDS MAXIMUM: Awards will be limited to a maximum of sixteen (16) awards per team.
- 5-22 PLAYER ELIGIBILITY FOR PLAYOFFS:
- A player must participate (be on the batting order) for a minimum of five (5) regular season games in order to qualify for the play-offs.
 - A player must be on the official scoresheet. The scoresheets must be available for verification, to be allowed to participate in the Play-offs.
 - If a player does not qualify with 5 regular season games, a request may be made for an exemption.
 - Teams are responsible for keeping scoresheets and must be available to the League Executive upon request.
- 5-23 BLOOD RULE: (as per SPN rules) A player who is bleeding must tend to his/her injury and clean up the wound. If they are unable to do so within a reasonable time, then they must be removed from the game.

Section 6. MISCELLANEOUS:

- 6-1 CONDUCT: Any player, coach, manager, team rep, etc. who initiates a fight, an incident, an altercation etc., will be ejected immediately from the game and will be suspended as follows:
- MINIMUM ONE (1) GAME SUSPENSION will be imposed the FIRST time.
 - MINIMUM THREE (3) GAME SUSPENSION will be imposed the SECOND time.
 - The League Executive will review the status of any individual who has been ejected for a SECOND TIME and will consider expulsion from the League.
 - The umpire will be required to write a report on any ejection and upon review of this report, further action/suspension may be imposed by the League Executive.
 - These penalties are to be viewed as an automatic ruling and are the minimums.

6-2 EJECTION:

1. Any player ejected from a game must immediately leave the park (not just the field). Failure to do so will result in the team forfeits the game and further player suspension may be imposed by the League Executive.
2. Any player ejected from the game for any reason will automatically be suspended for the next scheduled game.
3. Any player ejected from the game because of a confrontation and/or verbal abuse will be reported which may lead to possible further action/suspension to be imposed by the League Executive.

6-3 Any team using a SUSPENDED player, coach, manager, team representative etc., in any capacity related to the playing of a game will forfeit that game and further penalties may be assessed.

6-4 **PROTESTS:** A ONE-HUNDRED & FIFTY (\$150.00) dollar protest fee must accompany each protest.

- The protest fee will be refunded ONLY if the protest is upheld.
- If the protest is found to be invalid, the protest fee will NOT be refunded.
- Protests must be in writing and must be received by the League Executive within forty-eight (48) hours of the game completion (excluding Saturday, Sunday and holidays).
- The umpire and the opposing team must be notified at the time of the protest and both the umpire and the opposing team representative must sign the game score sheet.
- The protest must be made before the next legal pitch, intentional walk, or before all defensive players have left the field.
- Protest will be considered for the misinterpretation or misapplication of a rule, or for player eligibility.
- Protest will NOT be considered in which the umpire's judgement is questioned (ie: a safe call, ball or strike call, fair or foul call, etc.)
- **CLARIFICATION OF THE APPEAL CAN BE FOUND IN THE SPN RULE BOOK.**

6-5 **DIVISION STANDINGS:** will be set and may vary from division to division.

- Division standings may vary from division to division, depending on the level of ball, the number of teams, etc.
- Standard rankings will be based on win percentage. Comp division (and others) will be division record first.
- Division standings and ties may be determined by strength of schedule and/or a weighted point system.
- Ties in division standings will be decided by:
 1. Record against each other.
 2. Division record.
 3. Strength of schedule.

6-6 **PLAY-OFFS:**

- Playoff formats may vary from division to division, depending on the level of ball, the number of teams, etc.
- Playoff series will be a best of three game series whenever possible.
- Double knock-out series will use a best of two games, total run series.
In a best of two game series, an equal number of innings must be played.
- In all play-off series the team with the HIGHER league standing will have the choice of FIRST game HOME/VISITOR decision. Each subsequent game will alternate HOME/VISITOR decision.
If the team chooses to be home team, they must supply and place the bases.
- In playoff elimination series, teams will NOT be reranked, but will face the next team as per the playoff schedule.

7. GROUND RULES:

7-1 **GROUND RULES:**

1. Ground rules for specific parks / diamonds should be reviewed before each game by the umpire and the team representatives.
2. All ground rules are subject to change.
3. Additional ground rules may be applied as a result of temporary field conditions, weather, etc.
4. Recommended ground rules for each park are appended to the Rules of Play.
5. See the web site for further ground rules.