



# **RSPA**

## **2012 Rules of Play**

Revised Date: **May 1, 2012**

Page 1 of 6

### **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 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 2012 will be indicated by **“\*\*\*NEW 2012”**.

### **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.
- 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, 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 darkness, weather, safety, possible injury, etc.
- 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 will 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.** Rainouts will only be called at the park. (Exceptions)
- 2-9 Game 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.
- 2-10 A **GRACE PERIOD** of ten (10) minutes (umpire's time) 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.
- 2-11 **TIME LIMIT:** On lit diamonds, and in playoff games, when the Time Limit is in effect, 1-1/2 hour game slot; no new inning will start after **ONE (1) HOUR AND TWENTY (20) MINUTES.**

2-12 DEFAULT SCORE is 7-0 (one run per inning).

2-13 DEFAULT FINE:

- 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.
- The default fine will be reduced by \$25.00 if the League is notified 24 hours in advance.
- A default fine may be waived by the League Executive in exceptional circumstances.

2-14 MERCY RULE: 12 runs after 5 complete innings, or 4-1/2 innings if the home team is ahead. **\*\*\*new 2012\*\*\***

2-15 POINT STRUCTURE: Wins, losses and ties are rated on a graduated point system with a win over a higher ranked team worth more points.

2-16 Home Team is decided by the Schedule.

2-17 BALLS AND STRIKES: The Umpire will be responsible for determining BALLS and STRIKES.

A mat will be used. **\*\*\*RSPA\*\*\***

2-18 THIRD STRIKE FOUL RULE is in effect. The Batter is declared out (as per SPN Rules).

2-19 HOME RUN RULE: "MATCH PLUS TWO" is in effect in all fenced parks (see "Ground Rules").

At no time will the number of (over the fence) home runs hit by one team be more than two (2) above the number of home runs hit by opposing team. **\*\*\*RSPA\*\*\***

For any home run in excess of the two allowed, the batter will be declared out. **\*\*\*RSPA\*\*\***

2-20 INNING MERCY RULE: 6 run maximum per inning mercy rule (as per SPN rules).

### **3. THE PLAYING FIELD:**

3-1 Bases will be set at sixty-five (65) feet. Fifty (50) feet to the pitchers plate. (as per SPN Rules)

3-2 COMMITMENT LINE: Twenty (20) feet from home plate. Base runner must continue once any part of his body is over, on or past the Commitment Line (and on the ground). (as per SPN Rules)

3-3 SAFE 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)

3-4 SPECIAL GROUND RULES: Ground rules for specific parks / diamonds will be reviewed before each game by the Umpire and the Team Representatives.

Recommended ground rules for each park are appended to the Rules of Play.

3-5 Pitching Zone is a zone 24" wide and 15 feet long, starting 50 feet from home plate. The pitcher must have his/her pivot foot in the pitching zone during the pitch. (as per SPN rules)

3-6 Encroachment Rule: No defensive player can stand any closer than 50 feet in fair territory as each pitch is delivered. (as per SPN Rules)

3-7 **150/175 Foot Rule** will NOT be used. Fielders may be positioned anywhere in fair territory. **\*\*\*RSPA\*\*\***

3-8 The batter-baserunner may **NOT** be thrown out at first base from any position on any ball that is hit to an outfielder or a rover. **\*\*\*RSPA\*\*\***

3-9 GROUND RULES: should be reviewed by the umpire and team reps before the start of the game. All ground rules are subject to change. Additional ground rules may be applied as a result of temporary field conditions, weather, etc.

### **4. EQUIPMENT:**

4-1 Home Team must supply bases complete with pegs, and including a safe-base.

4-2 Home Team must place and peg down bases before scheduled game start time.

4-3 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.

4-4 If neither team has bases complete with pegs, including a safe-base, a **DOUBLE DEFAULT** will be declared and **DEFAULT** fines will be assessed against **BOTH** teams.

4-5 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. OR bases will be placed as stated on the league schedule.

4-6 Home Team must supply and place a League approved pitching mat. **\*\*\*RSPA\*\*\***

- If Home Team does not have a pitching mat available, 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.

- Pitching mat must be 30” 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 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.

- The League will supply the balls to the Teams.

- Used balls are returned to the team at the end of the game. Suitability of balls will be in the Umpires discretion. Failure to supply game balls will result in home team assessed an “equipment fine” of \$10.00 for failing to supply necessary equipment.

4-8 The official League ball is the Worth Hot Dot **\*\*\*new for 2012\*\*\***

The Worth Super Grey Dot (0.40 C.O.R.) will be accepted for use for 2012 only. All other balls are illegal.

4-9 Both teams must have and must complete League approved game score books. Game score books are supplied by the League to the Teams. Scoresheets must be completed and must include both teams batting orders, include full names (first and last names) including substitutions. **\*\*\*RSPA\*\*\***

4-10 Scoresheets must be signed by the Umpire.

4-11 Completed game scoresheets must be maintained by the Team Rep and must be made available to be submitted to the League Executive at any time upon request. Scorebooks will be collected and reviewed the week before the playoffs. **\*\*\*RSPA\*\*\***

4-12 No METAL SPIKES are allowed. (as per SPN)

- Player is automatically ejected from the game.

- A second occurrence will result in player suspension.

4-13 BATS: All legal bats must be on the SPN approved bat list. Any bat that does not comply with this list is not approved and is illegal. Slo-Pitch National announced that for 2012 they will be recognizing and accepting the USSSA bat testing methods for use in the SPN program. All USSSA approved bats must carry the "NEW" USSSA stamp on the taper of the bat, for use in the SPN Program. SPN will continue the ASA and ISF Approved Bat List. SPN WILL NOT BE GRANDFATHERING USSSA BATS WITHOUT THE NEW STAMP ON THE TAPER OF THE BAT. *Which means that old banned bats - Synergy II, Freak, etc, will NOT be allowed.*



- Titanium bats are illegal.

- Hardball bats are illegal.

- A list of “Non-Approved Bats” will be issued and will be appended to the RSPA Rules.

- The “Non-Approved Bat List” is also available to be downloaded from the web site.

- Any player stepping into the batters box with a non-approved bats from the list will be declared out and will be ejected from the game, and the manager will be ejected from the game.

4-14 UNIFORMS: ALL players MUST wear matching tops after the RSPA uniform deadline (June 15) comes in effect. It is recommended that uniform tops have numbers (at least 4" high) visible. It is also recommended that teams adopt a uniform pants/shorts colour. Coaches must also have matching shirts as a minimum.

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. Uniforms may be as simple as matching t-shirts.

4-15 UNIFORM DEADLINE: is June 15th.

4-16 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. **RECOMMENDATION:** Carry extra uniform tops.

## **5. PLAYERS & SUBSTITUTES:**

5-1 The "standard" line-up shall be regarded as ten (10) players, consisting of 7 men & 3 women (7M + 3F).

5-2 Additional players may be added to this line-up by adding one man and one woman.  
ie: 8 M + 4 F; 9 M + 5 F or 10 M + 6 F.

5-3 A line-up may always add more women. ie: 6 M + 5 F, 4M + 6F, 3M + 7F, etc.

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

5-5 A Team may play with only two (2) women (ie: 7 M + 2 F or 6 M + 2 F) 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.

A team may add an "Automatic Out" in order to bat an extra male batter.

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

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: Maximum sixteen (16) players in the batting order.

The Team must finish the game with the same number of players or an "Automatic Out" will be declared for that spot in the batting order.

5-9 Players cannot be added to the batting order after the Team has been through the batting order once complete. Exception: Third female – see Rule 5-5.

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.

5-12 No restrictions on the batting order.

May bat men and women in any sequence.

May bat as many males in a row as you wish.

**5-13 Illegal batting order/line-up:**

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:

- an automatic out will added to the bottom of the batting order for every illegal male batter;
- if a male batter has just batted, and got on base, at the time of the discovery, that batter will be declared out;
- if a male batter is at bat or coming to bat at the time of of the discovery, that batter will be declared out;
- the umpire has the right to bring any illegal batting order to the attention of the opposing team, and apply the penalty;
- the umpire will report all instances of illegal batting orders to the league executive and further penalties will occur for second and third offences;
- a second offence will result in a one game suspension for the team rep or team coach;
- a third offence will result in game default, plus a three game suspension for the coach; **\*\*\*RSPA rule\*\*\***

**RECOMMENDATION:** Check the other team's line-up before the game starts.

5-14 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 second base and the female batter following has to bat.

- If the male batter is walked on a 4-0 count, he still gets 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) Each team will be permitted a maximum of three (3) courtesy runners, during each game.

5-16 The courtesy runner can be used at any time and must be reported to the Umpire.

5-17 Any rostered player from the line-up, bench, etc. (in uniform) may be a courtesy runner. Courtesy runner must be male for male, female for female or female for male.

5-18 You **MAY** use the same courtesy runner more than once. **\*\*\*RSPA rule\*\*\***

5-19 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\*\*\***

5-20 The MINIMUM AGE to participate is EIGHTEEN (18) as of December 31 of that year, or SIXTEEN (16) 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.

5-21 Players may **NOT** play for more than one team in the same division.

**5-22 ROSTER:**

- The team rep must submit the roster:
  - Official SPN roster, text version and individual player release forms.
- The team rep must have a copy of the team roster at each game.
- Team reps must submit a text copy of the roster to the league for posting on-line.
- Roster checks will be performed by umpires, League Executives and/or their representatives.

**5-23 ROSTER DEADLINE:**

- The SPN roster must be submitted by May 18th.
- No roster additions will be allowed after July 1st.
- Roster additions after that date may be made with League approval only.

**5-24 ROSTER MAXIMUM:**

- A roster maximum of TWENTY (20) players.
- The roster maximum may be increased by applying in writing to the League Executives.

**5-25 AWARDS MAXIMUM:**

- Awards will be limited to a maximum of sixteen (16) awards per team.

**5-26 PLAYER REGISTRATION/RELEASE FORM:**

- A signed copy of the “Player Registration & Release Form” (complete with signature) **MUST** be submitted to the League Executive before a player can participate in any RSPA game or activity.
- The “Player Registration & Release Form” may be handed in to the Umpire or League Executive before the game start.

**5-27 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.
- Teams are responsible for keeping scoresheets and must be made available to the League Executive upon request.

**5-28 JEWELLERY:**

- No **exposed** jewellery may be worn during a game, including neck chains, bracelets, earrings (including studs), watches, rings, belt buckles, etc. **\*\*\*RSPA rule - new for 2012\*\*\***
- **Exception:** Medical alert bracelet/necklace.

**PENALTY:** • If a Batter comes into the batters box with any **exposed** jewellery, that batter will be declared an out. A base-runner or defensive player with **exposed** jewellery will result in the next batter for that team being declared an out.

**5-29 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, then they must be removed from the game.

**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.
- These penalties are to be viewed as an automatic ruling and are the minimums.

**6-2** 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.

**6-3 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 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.**

**6-4 PLAY-OFFS:** 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.

**6-5 DIVISION STANDINGS:** will be set and may vary from division to division. Standard rankings will be based on win percentage. Comp division will be division record first.