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SOFTBALL LEAGUES RULES AND REGULATIONS

The following rules govern teams and players participating in all Escondido Community Services Department-sponsored recreational softball leagues. The leagues will use the rules of play as adopted by the Southern California Municipal Athletic Federation (S.C.M.A.F.) with certain exceptions as noted herein. The Community Services Department shall have the power to make decisions on any points in the rules or to revise any rule as they deem necessary. Final decisions shall be made by the Community Services Department.

Note: The term **PLAYER**, as used herein, shall refer to all teams' personnel, such as managers, coaches, batboys, scorekeepers, sponsors, spectators, etc. The term **OFFICIAL**, as used herein, shall apply to all Community Services personnel, such as field supervisors, umpires, scorekeepers, maintenance crews, office staff, etc.

1. Insurance

- a. The City of Escondido does not carry sports insurance to cover any players involved in the adult softball recreation leagues. Teams or players must carry their own insurance if they wish to be covered.

2. Playing Dates and Times

- a. Schedules of dates and times of games will be supplied to the team managers and it is their responsibility to inform the rest of their team. Any updates to the schedules will be noted on the adult softball website. All managers will also be notified via email of any updates to softball schedules. Calling the Community Services Department is allowed but will only be considered as a courtesy and will not be determined as an official notification. Only the Community Services Department can change the playing dates or times of games.
- b. Games must start promptly as scheduled. Forfeit time is game time. Options for 6:20pm games only: At game time, if a forfeit situation exists, the team present has two options. They can either a) start the game clock for a maximum of ten minutes or b) accept the forfeited game. If (a) is chosen, the game will begin if the other team gets 8 players on the playing field during the ten minute time period. No time will be made up. If ten minutes expire and the game is still unable to be played a forfeit will be declared by

the umpire. If neither team has the 8 players needed to start a game the option does not apply and a double forfeit will occur.

- c. Time limit on all softball games is 1 hour and 5 minutes. This time may be adjusted during post-season play. The scorekeeper is responsible for keeping the official time on all games.
- d. A team must have at least 8 players on the playing field to begin a game, and at all times during a game. A team may begin or play a game with 8 players on their official roster present.

3. Rosters and Eligibility

- a. Rosters may not exceed 18 players. No players may be added or dropped after half of the regular season has been played (5th game for Spring/Summer, 4th game for Winter season). A fee of \$2 per add/drop card must be paid for all players added or dropped to the roster after it has been turned in. Add/drop cards are available and accepted at the adult softball complex office.
- b. Each player must sign the sports league liability waiver form. This form must be submitted to the Community Services Department prior to any player participation in the City leagues. Any person participating without having submitted their signed liability waiver form will be declared ineligible. Penalty for the above is forfeiture of all games in which the ineligible player participated. Ineligible players and managers accepting ineligible players are subject to suspension.
- c. Any player playing under an assumed name or age will jeopardize the team for which he/she plays and can be suspended. Penalty for the above is forfeiture of all games in which the ineligible player participated. Managers accepting ineligible players are subject to suspension. Softball supervisors, upon notification or observation of a team using an illegal player, can automatically forfeit said game.
- d. Medical – No player shall play in a cast. Any woman who is pregnant must obtain a physician's release and concurrence that they can participate in this activity. This release must be submitted to the Community Services Department prior to playing any games.
- e. The softball supervisor, umpire, or scorekeeper may ask for identification from any player. Identification must be presented at that time. Refusals to comply by any player or team may cause the game to be forfeited.
- f. **A team may request prior to the start of the game approval from the adult softball staff to use a substitution player from another team within the division when short players. Substitute players are permitted only to prevent a forfeit, and both the adult softball staff and the opposing manager must be notified and give approval. Substitutes may fill in as the 8th or 9th player, but never as a 10th. If a rostered player arrives late, the substitute must leave unless both managers agree to allow the sub to remain as the 9th player. Substitute players are subject to the following restrictions: may play only catcher, first base, or outfield, and if a substitute hits a home run, it is ruled a dead-**

ball, out. The substitution rule is not permitted during playoff and final games.

- g. Age limits for each division and leagues are as follows:
 - i. Men's – open to any male 18 years of age or older;
 - ii. Men's 35+ - open to any male 35 years of age or older; each Men's 35+ team may carry two players under the age of 35 but at least 18 years of age, Players turning 35 during the regular season will be counted as a 35+ player, **Any player under the age of 35 that is deemed by the softball staff, umpires, or scorekeeper as tournament level or professional level experience will be ineligible to play in Men's 35+. All players under the age of 35 must have a star indicated next to their name on the roster submitted to the scorekeeper.**
 - iii. Co-Ed – open to any player 18 years of age or older.
 - iv. **Women's – Open to any player 18 years of age or older; each Women's team may carry two players under the age of 18 but at least 16 years of age, Players turning 18 during the regular season will be counted as an 18+ player. All players under the age of 18 must have a star indicated next to their name on the roster submitted to the scorekeeper.**
- h. Players may play in more than one division but may only play on one team within that division.
- i. Players transferring from one team to another must obtain approval from the Community Services Department and sit out one game. No transfers are allowed after 50% of the season has been played.
- j. If a team is removed from the league or forfeits out of the league, the players on that team will not be allowed to join another team without the written permission from the Community Services Department.

4. Playing Field

- a. The official diamond shall have 65-foot baselines and a pitching distance of 50 feet for all leagues.
- b. A double base will be used at first base as described in the S.C.M.A.F. Rule Book. See Rule 2 "A Double Base." If a play can be made on the batter/runner at first base the batter/runner must use the outside base. If the runner touches any part of the inside base said runner shall be declared out. Ball is alive. Only if the batter/runner has a reasonable chance to advance to second base and is making the turn attempting to advance may the inside bag be used without penalty. In the case that the defensive player is required to touch the inside base and touches any part of the outside base, said defensive player will be considered to have missed the base.
- c. Pitcher's Box – A Pitcher's Box will be in use for all divisions. A box is drawn extending from the pitcher's rubber for 6 feet. Thus the dimensions of Pitcher's Box are 48 inches wide by 6 feet long. The pitcher may deliver the pitch from any point inside the Pitcher's Box without penalty.

- d. Line Drive Rule – Upon the discretion of the umpire, any line drive hit by the batter that enters or passes through the Pitcher's Box no higher than the pitcher's head will be declared an OUT, dead ball. Hit balls that in the discretion of the umpire are over the head of the pitcher at full height regardless if it passes through the Pitcher's Box will be declared a fair ball and in play. If the pitcher has one or more feet in the box including on the line and is struck by a batted ball that has not hit the ground an OUT will be declared, and the ball will be dead.
- e. In Co-Ed/Men's 35+/**Women's** a scoring plate will be used. All plays at home plate shall be by force out only, provided the runner from third base has crossed the commitment line. To score, the runner must touch the scoring plate before the defensive player touches home plate with the ball in possession. The defensive team may not tag the runner going home. The runner will be declared out, and the ball declared dead if they enter the batter's box area in an attempt to score. This includes any runner forced to advance by rule.

5. Equipment

- a. Ball – The Community Services Department will provide the game ball and a backup ball in good condition, not necessarily new. All leagues primary ball will play with a 12-inch softball. Females that play in Co-Ed leagues will have the option to use an 11-inch softball if requested to the umpire prior to stepping into the batter's box. If the wrong ball is used and appealed properly prior to the ball being put into play, the correct ball will be switched into the game and the count on the batter shall not change. If the wrong ball is put into play, a proper appeal made by either the offense or defense must be requested prior to the first pitch to the next batter. When appealed, the umpire will return all base runners to the original bases which were occupied before the incorrect ball was put into play. If the batter is female, the batter has the option of keeping the at bat or taking the at bat over. The batter will then be pitched the proper ball, assuming the same ball/strike count that existed prior to the wrong ball being put into play.
- b. Bat – All bats to be used in the softball leagues must meet all the requirements set by ASA and Escondido Recreation. All bats must bear an Escondido Approved seal available for purchase for \$1 at the softball complex office. Without this seal, a bat will be declared ineligible for play until an Escondido approved seal is purchased. Only official softball bats shall be used, and must fit the diameter ring and be taped or sure-gripped. Baseball bats, weighted bats, or other illegal bats will not be allowed. Bats shall have a Bat Performance Factor (BPF Rating) not exceeding 1.20. If a bat cannot be identified by the umpire or other staff, it will be considered illegal. A list of ASA banned bats is available in the softball office, or on the ASA website at: <http://www.asasoftball.com/>. Umpires or staff are authorized to remove from play any bat which shows wear, including worn off or cracked graphics or damaged barrels, handles, tapers, plugs, caps,

or knobs. If any bat is suspected to be altered league representatives will have the authority to suspend the player using the bat and/or the owner of the bat for up to one year of play. In addition, the manager of the team will receive a two game suspension. Altered bats are bats which have:

- i. Had the surface of the barrel or the tape changed in any way, including by sandpapering or applying a solvent to the surface such as fingernail polish remover;
 - ii. Had the plug or knob removed/replaced or changed in any way;
 - iii. Had anything removed or added to the inside or outside of the bat other than tape at the handle, or the Escondido Approved sticker.
 - iv. Had heat or pressure applied to the barrel portion of the bat.
- c. Proof is not necessary to impose suspensions for illegal bats. If in the discretion of the league representatives the bat has been altered, the bat will be determined altered and the suspensions will be implemented. The fact that any individual did not know that the bat was altered is not a factor in imposing the suspensions. If for any reason a seal is removed or comes off a bat, the bat becomes illegal. It must be inspected again by Recreation staff in order to be eligible for use again. The \$1 fee will apply. Bats may be inspected at the adult softball complex during league play Monday-Friday 6-9:30pm.
- d. Metal cleats are not allowed in any divisions or leagues.

6. Reclassification and Playoffs

- a. At the halfway point of each season, teams may be reclassified and moved to a new league within their division. Generally speaking, the team with the best record in each league at the halfway point of the season will move up one league and the team with the worst record at the halfway point of the season will move down one league. All managers will be notified via email about any reclassifications and schedule updates.
- b. Teams that win the first half of the regular season and move up a league for the second half of the regular season automatically qualify for the playoffs.
- c. Teams that win the second half of the regular season following reclassification automatically qualify for the playoffs.
- d. It is the teams' responsibility to find out if they have made the playoffs. In some circumstances wild card teams also qualify for playoffs. Managers will be notified via email when playoff brackets and schedules are established and posted on the Adult Softball webpage.
- e. If a playoff qualifying team is unable to make the playoff game said team will be charged the appropriate forfeit fees.
- f. Only players that have participated in 3 regular season games are eligible to participate in the playoffs. Preseason play is not taken into account.
- g. In addition to the minimum game rule, in order to be eligible to participate in a playoff game a picture ID must be presented to the scorekeeper just prior to game time. Verification will be made that said player is on the roster and is eligible. This will not be done randomly; all teams will be checked. If a

player does not have a valid picture ID, they will not be allowed to participate.

- h. If at the end of the regular season two or more teams in the same league finish with identical records, the following steps will be taken to determine the champion and which team will be invited to participate in playoffs:
 - i. Head-to-head (best win-loss-tied percentage in games between the teams);
 - ii. Best net runs in head-to-head competition;
 - iii. Best net runs in all league games;
 - iv. Coin toss.
- i. Net runs are determined by subtracting the runs scored against a team from the runs the team scored. The team with the highest plus total will be the winner. A maximum of 12 net runs for any game can be accumulated.
- j. During the playoffs, the tiebreaker rule (#3 S.C.M.A.F. Tournament Rules) will be used for all divisions.
- k. Playoff games will follow the standard 1 hour 5 minute time limit set during the regular season. Championship games will not have a time limit set; teams will play a full 7 inning game.
- l. The highest remaining seed will be the home team in the finals. In semi-final play, the highest seeded team will always be the "Home" team.
- m. The reclassification process and creation of playoff brackets and schedules following the regular season is ultimately at the discretion of the City of Escondido and its representatives. Special considerations may be given on a case by case basis in order to create a fair and competitive playoff bracket for each division and league.

7. Postponement of games

- a. If there is a possibility of rain, wet fields, or other environmental factors which may impact scheduled games, team managers will be notified via email whether or not games will be played if timing permits. If a team notifies the staff they are forfeiting the game because of questionable weather, the forfeit will stand regardless if a rainout occurred or not.

8. Protests

- a. Managers may only protest a perceived misinterpretation of the rules and/or a players' eligibility. Player eligibility protests must be made prior to the last out of the game and is limited to 3 players only.
- b. Managers should be thoroughly familiar with Rule 9, Appendix A in the S.C.M.A.F. Rule Book. At the time of the incident, the manager of the protesting team must immediately (before the next pitch) notify the umpire, scorekeeper, and the opposing team manager of the protest. The protesting manager must submit a detailed statement of facts, including rules misinterpreted, and a \$20 deposit to the Community Services Department within 48 hours after the scheduled game time. Protests that arise from games on Fridays shall be turned in no later than 5pm on the following Monday. The deposit will be returned if the protest is upheld.

9. Umpire and Scorekeeper

- a. The plate umpire shall be the head umpire. He/she shall be in complete charge of the game, including the scorekeeper. His/her authority and the exercise of the powers granted to him/her by the rules of the game commence as soon as he/she arrives in the park and continue for as long as he/she is in the park.
- b. Umpires have the authority to remove any participant from the game for violation of the rules, player's code of conduct, or due to physical limitations or conditions resulting from injury that may place themselves or others in harm.
- c. In the event that the assigned umpire or scorekeeper fails to appear for a game, the manager shall agree on a volunteer to assume the duties until the assigned umpire or scorekeeper appears, or until the game is completed.
- d. One umpire and one scorekeeper will be scheduled for all games. Teams will be required to pay the umpire (\$16) and scorekeeper (\$9) fees before each game begins (cash only, exact change).

10. Team Dismissal and Forfeit

- a. If a team forfeits a game they must pay: a) \$50 in cash on the field at time of forfeit if team members are present but do not have enough to field a team for the game.; b) \$50 in cash at the field on the next scheduled game day prior to your start time if the team was a no show for the forfeited game. If team does not pay their forfeit fees they will be forced to forfeit their next game and pay additional forfeit fees.
- b. If a team forfeits 3 games or fails to pay the forfeit fee they may be removed from the league.
- c. If a double forfeit occurs, both teams involved will receive a full game loss in the league standings. Each team must pay the forfeit fee that applies.
- d. Any team that demonstrates unsportsmanlike conduct during any game or from game to game, and causes the opponent and/or fans to cease to receive recreational satisfaction from the game, will be removed from the league. Any player who exhibits unsportsmanlike behavior will be ejected immediately and is subject to suspension.
- e. If in the umpire's judgment a team is stalling for time, they will issue them a warning. Continued violation may result in forfeiting the game to the opposing team.
- f. If in the umpire's judgment a team is purposely trying to lose a game, they will issue them a warning. Continued violation may result in the manager being suspended from that game and the following game.

11. Courtesy Runners

- a. One courtesy runner per inning (no approval necessary) will be allowed. Any team found abusing this rule may lose the privilege. If a batter reaches base safely more than once in the same inning and received a courtesy runner, the additional times the runner reaches base they may continue to have a courtesy runner.
- b. Co-Ed will be allowed 1 male and 1 female courtesy runner per inning.

12. Manager's Responsibility

- a. Team managers are responsible for controlling the actions of their players and fans. Managers should be sure that each player on his roster knows and understands the Players' Code of Conduct (see below).
- b. Managers must ensure that the children of their players are being supervised. Failure to supervise children could result in the parent/guardian being ineligible to play.

13. Rules and Clarifications

- a. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted in City parks. Teams are responsible to see that their players and spectators do not consume alcoholic beverages in the park before, during, or after the games. Teams or players who violate this rule may be removed from the league. Players caught drinking during the game will be removed from the game.
- b. No smoking or vaping is allowed inside City-owned buildings, or within 20 feet of City-owned property per state code. It shall be unlawful to possess a lighted or burning tobacco product or tobacco-related, including vaping, product at any time within the boundaries of any park, public open space or trail, including designated parking areas of any such City recreational area.
- c. Unsportsmanlike conduct which includes, but is not limited to, rough tactics against an opposing team; the heckling of officials, members of an opposing team, City representatives, or fans; the use of obscene language; and the failure to follow directions of an official or City representative will not be tolerated. Players judged to have exhibited unsportsmanlike conduct will be, at a minimum, ejected from the game and suspended from the next game.
- d. Any player ejected from any game for any violation is automatically suspended from the next game in which his team participates and may face further suspension after review by the Community Services Department. If a player or manager is ejected two times during a season, he may not be permitted to continue to play in the league. Any player ejected from any playoff game for any violation is automatically suspended from the next two games (whether they be playoff or future season games) in which his or her team participates and may face further suspension after review by the Community Services Department.
- e. The base runner/batter will be out and ejected from the game if they attempt to avoid the fielder by going over the top of the fielder when the fielder has the ball and is waiting to make a tag.
- f. Lineup cards, including all substitutes, must be turned in 10 minutes before game time. If a lineup card has not been turned in, the game will not be started but the time limit will begin. Players listed on the lineup card at game time but not physically at the game will be an out the first time up and will not play the rest of the game.
- g. Batting order – teams will have the option of batting up to 16 players or any number of players between 8 and 16. The batting order must be established before the game starts. The starting batting order must be followed, but defensive changes may be made at any time.
- h. Late arriving players may be added to the end of the batting order when they arrive and may take their turn at bat.

- i. All players present at the beginning of the game may be either put in the original batting order and bat throughout the game or may enter the game at a later time as a substitute only. When substituting, the new player must take the place of an existing player in the batting order, making the existing player no longer eligible to play. This applies even if a team is playing with less than 10 players.
- j. The scorekeeper need not be notified of any defensive changes, but must be told of any substitution changes. In addition, if a player leaves the batting order for any reason, the scorekeeper must be notified or the game will be forfeited. Any batter failing to bat for any reason, regardless of number of batters in the batting order from 8 to 16, shall be automatically out if no legal substitute is available. The first time a batter fails to bat, said player shall not participate any further in the game. This space shall be skipped for the remainder of the game with no further penalty.
- k. Co-Ed – A batting order must be submitted prior to the game and followed during the game. The batting order may not exceed 16 players and must list men and women separately and followed alternatively, such that 2 batters of the same gender may never bat consecutively.
- l. For Co-Ed play, a game may be played without forfeit with 8 players listed on the official roster: 4 men and 4 women. Normal defensive teams shall consist of 10 players: 5 women and 5 men. Maximum number of defensive fielders shall be 5 of either gender. There will be no restriction on a player as to which defensive position he or she may play except for the rover position. When a female is at bat the rover position must be a female.
- m. The pitched ball must arc higher than the batter's head but may not exceed 12 feet.
- n. All batters in slow pitch divisions will start with a 1-1 count.
- o. At the beginning of each game or when a pitcher relieves another, no more than 3 balls may be delivered to the catcher or other teammates. At no time may an existing pitcher deliver balls during the half inning.
- p. During regular season play and playoffs, when a team is 15 runs ahead after 5 innings, the game will be called. During preseason and playoffs, when a team is 20 runs ahead after 4 innings, the game will be called.
- q. The official score book shall be the only official score. The flip charts and scoreboards are used to help inform the players but are not the official score. The clocks on the scoreboard will be used as the official time. For purposes of keeping batting averages, teams should keep their own scorebook. Each team manager should confirm the score at the end of every half inning with the official scorekeeper. A team manager who believes there is an error in the official score must notify the umpire prior to the first pitch of the next half inning.
- r. The team listed as home team on the schedule must be home and utilize the third base dugout. No exceptions.
- s. Only players on a team roster are allowed on the players' bench. A maximum of 2 nonplaying managers and/or coaches will be allowed on a team's roster.

- t. Any regulation game which ends in a tie will be recorded as a tie for each team.
 - u. The City of Escondido reserves the right to change team names or wording on uniforms that are not in good taste.
14. **Home Run Rule** – This rule applies for a batted ball that goes over the fence or net regardless if it is touched by a defensive player. All softballs must be retrieved by the team who hit the ball over the fence or net. A new ball will not be put into play until a player attempts to locate the softball.
- a. All Leagues and Divisions: Any team may hit a maximum of 3 home runs at any time during a game. This is regardless of the number of home runs the opposing team has hit. All home runs hit after the 3 legal home runs have been hit will be declared as one OUT and the ball will be dead.
 - b. Any netting on the outfield fence between the foul lines shall be in play. Any batted ball hanging up in the net will be awarded a ground double. Any ball hit over the net shall be declared a home run.
15. **Miscellaneous**
- a. All registration fees are nonrefundable unless a division or league will not be formed due to low enrollment.
 - b. Teams may be reclassified one or more league after 50% of the regular season games are played to ensure integrity of the leagues. All reclassifications are done at the director's discretion and will be done within a team's normal league day or night. Teams that are moved up a league after reclassification automatically qualify for the playoffs. Teams are only eligible to earn one playoff spot. Wild card teams may fill any open playoff slots.
 - c. **5-Run Rule:** The 5-Run Rule may be implemented in any league at any time at the director's discretion. Teams will only be allowed to score five (5) runs per half inning, with unlimited runs allowed in the seventh or final inning. When a team scores five (5) runs, the half inning ends. The only exception would be if more than five (5) runs score as a result of an out of the park home run. In that case, all runs count and the half inning ends.
16. **Players' Code of Conduct**
- a. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** At any time lay a hand upon, push, shove, strike, or threaten to strike an official.
 - b. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Refuse to abide by an officials' decision.
 - c. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Be guilty of objectionable demonstrations by throwing gloves, bats, balls, or any other forceful action.
 - d. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Be guilty of heaping personal, verbal abuse upon any official for any real or imaginary wrong decision or judgment.
 - e. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Discuss with an official in any manner the decision reached by such official except the manager or captain.
 - f. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Be guilty of using unnecessarily rough tactics in the play of the game against the body and person of any opposing player.
 - g. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Be guilty of physical attack as an aggressor upon any player, official, or spectator.

- h. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Be guilty of abusive verbal attack upon any player, official, or spectator.
- i. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Use profane, obscene, or vulgar language in any manner, or at any time.
- j. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Appear on the field of play at any time in an intoxicated condition.
- k. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Be guilty of gambling upon any play or the outcome of the game with any spectator, player, or opponent.
- l. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Smoke or vape while going on or coming off the field of play, or while on the field of play, or while in the dugout.
- m. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Be guilty of discussing publicly with spectators in a derogatory or abusive manner any play, decision, or personal opinion of other players or officials during the game.
- n. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Permit anyone to remain in the dugout or on the players' bench during the game who is not a playing member of the team.
- o. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Be guilty of intentionally throwing his/her bat.
- p. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Mingle or fraternize with the spectators during the course of the game, but shall remain in the dugout or on the field of play.