

The Villages Recreation Softball League
RULES & REGULATIONS
DIVISION #3
Revised January 1, 2022

The Villages Recreation Softball League is designed to offer recreational play in an organized and structured format to residents of The Villages. The Recreation Department regulations, the Official Softball SSUSA Rules, and The Villages Division 3 Softball Rules govern play for all players, managers, and umpires to abide.

Participants are reminded that softball is only a game to be enjoyed. Exercise, fellowship, and friendly competition are our 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, preferably in private. No one should be disparaged or criticized in front of teammates and/or spectators.

If the Manager deems it necessary to remove a player from the field, after warning him about his behavior (language or actions), he shall tell the Umpire of his intentions and ask for a replacement player if the team only has 11 players to start with. If the player was at bat when this occurred the replacement player would inherit the players count at the plate. The Manager would file an incident report at the board table immediately following his game. The use of vulgar language does not require or deserve a warning. The removal of a player will follow the same rules as ejection. (Definitions #11)

The Division 3 Board Member In-Charge, in conjunction with Recreation Department Personnel will determine if games are to be cancelled due to weather conditions that would impact the safety and well being of participants. When the temperatures are at or above 104 degree Heat Index or below 40 degrees as of game time, the Board Member In-Charge will consult the managers of each team and ask them if they want to play the game. If one managers says “NO,” then the game is cancelled and is recorded as a cancelled game. (No Forfeit). If one player does not want to play, then the team may get a sub. The game that player didn’t play in will be charged against him as a missed game.

Also when the temperature reaches 104 heat index all umpires will mandatorily have both teams take a 5 minute break after the bottom of the fourth inning. All players must listen to WVLG 640 AM for notification of cancellations. Players, managers and umpires must not call the radio station or the Recreation Department to find out if games have been cancelled.

Prior to the start of the games, if weather conditions (i.e. rain, high heat index, cold temperature, excessive wind, lightning, etc.) are approaching an unsafe situation (or if there is an umpire-called “rain delay”), the Board Member In-Charge, with input from the groundskeeper, fellow Board members, and umpires at the fields, will make the decision of whether the games should be played or cancelled. Only games on the unplayable fields will be cancelled—all other games will restart after a rain delay. If lightning is seen by an umpire or Board Member, all games MUST stop for 20 minutes. If no lightning is seen during the 20 minute delay, all games will resume as scheduled. If lightning is seen again within the initial 20 minute delay, the umpire(s), with input from Board Members present, may either cancel ALL games or choose to restart a subsequent 20 minute delay – sound judgment must prevail. When the Board Member In-Charge makes the decision to play the games, any team who decides not to play will incur a forfeit.

I. EQUIPMENT

Only the following are allowed: rubber spikes or sneakers; regulation-sized gloves; and bats that have been approved by Senior Softball-USA. Team shirts and hats that build team spirit, unity, and fun are encouraged. Any player may wear gloves, but only the catcher and the first baseman may use mitts. Pitchers are not allowed to wear gloves of ANY sort on their pitching hand. Players are permitted to wear any protective equipment they feel necessary. It is mandatory that Pitchers wear a NOCSAE-approved protective face mask while pitching and to wear the mask consistent with the manufacture’s intended usage of their product. Pitchers may also use

pitching screens, if available. It is not mandatory that both pitchers must use a screen if only one pitcher elects to do so. (also see “IV DEFINITIONS”)

II. PLAYERS

A. QUALIFICATIONS

1. Players must be residents or certified renters of The Villages and must sign an Application (release form) before being eligible to participate.
2. New players must attend three official evaluation practices before becoming eligible to play. The Player Evaluation Committee determines division placement. The division board determines player rating (A, B, or C).
3. A newly evaluated player may sign up for their evaluated division. If a season is already in progress, the newly evaluated player is eligible (providing application has been made) to declare that he wishes to join a team. A previous roster player who has not been drafted at the beginning of the season is eligible and may also declare that they wish to be on a team.
4. New players who indicate that they are Pitchers in D-3 must be evaluated by the Board. If pitchers are coming from a higher division or cross division that are certified in their division they will be added to the Certification list for R3. Pitchers coming from R4 will be evaluated.

The Pitcher Evaluation Process is as follows:

Step 1: Players who want to pitch in D-3 must first go through a preliminary tryout which consists of pitching a simulated game from the mound to a catcher with a player standing in the batter’s box while a board member (or certified umpire) acts as the umpire. The simulated game will be three innings in which the pitcher moves on to the next inning after recording three strike outs. The pitcher’s base on balls (walks) will be recorded as well. The board members observing this process will decide if the applicant meets this test satisfactorily. If so, the applicant will be allowed to pitch either as a roster player or sub for the remainder of that season.

Step 2: After the initial season is complete the applicant’s performance will be evaluated by the board and a decision will be made whether or not the applicant is certified as a pitcher in D-3. If so, no further evaluation is necessary. If not, the applicant will be notified he is not eligible to pitch in D-3 either as a roster player or sub

5. To provide fairness in the division, for a team, and for players who wish to join a team, a roster player must agree to play at least four and one half innings (with the Home team ahead or five innings with the Visitor team ahead) in at least 70% of the regularly scheduled games in a given season. A player who does not play at least 70% of the regularly scheduled games in a given season will become ineligible, removed from a team’s roster, and replaced by a player wishing to join a team. When a player is placed on a team from the Replacement List, he will be governed by the 70% rule for the remainder of the games for that season. Ex. 10 games left he could only miss 3 games, 4th game out.

For example:

With 22-23 scheduled games, a player may miss 7 games, 8th game out.
With 19-21 scheduled games, a player may miss 6 games, 7th game out.
With 16-18 scheduled games, a player may miss 5 games, 6th game out.

With 14-15 scheduled games, a player may miss 4 games, 5th game out.

It is each manager's duty to promptly inform the Division Board Commissioner when a player misses too many games and must be replaced or if a team member sustains an injury and informs his manager that he cannot finish the season. See Notes (1) (2) and (3) below.

Note (1): The penalty for failing to inform the Board is as follows:

** Warning Issued for 1st Offense

** Suspended from managing the remainder of the season and all of the next season (if he is appointed manager again) for 2nd Offense.

** Permanently removed as a manager in D-3 for 3rd Offense.

Note (2): When a player (who was removed from a roster due to injury or illness) returns, he will be added to a sub list of players. That player cannot sub for or against his former team and may NOT sub for any team until he misses the minimum required amount of games using the table above.

B. DRAFT:

1. The division Board will assign managers at the start each season. They will be chosen from a list of volunteers from the Application (sign-up) forms and must meet all manager qualifications and the manager selection process set forth in the Division 3 Bylaws. Player information will be presented to the managers prior to the draft. Managers will randomly draw for draft position. All playing managers will draft 11 players. All non playing managers will draft 12 players.

2. Players when signing up for the draft will put down their preferred position on the draft form. They will put down what position they want to play but cannot put down "Any, IF or Rover". Players refusing to play on a team or players refusing to play where their manager assigns them, with the exception of "Pitcher", will be barred from playing or substituting for the remainder of that season. If such an event occurs after the fourteenth (14th) game of the season, they will be barred from playing or substituting for the remainder of that season plus the amount of games of the next season in which they wish to play to equal 14 games. Players returning to the league in mid season under these circumstances shall be placed at the end of the Replacement Player List. Players signing up and NOT designating the position of "Pitcher" as one of their choices may not be named the designated pitcher. Players may also refuse to play the position of "Pitcher" for their current team manager without consequence. Players refusing to pitch for their team will not be permitted to pitch for any other team for the remainder of that season.

C. LINEUPS:

1. Each team shall field a minimum of ten (10) players. A team with more than eleven (11) players will have one extra player. No one may volunteer to be the extra player as all players must rotate on the field. No player will sit out more than one inning. Failure to adhere to this rule will result in a forfeit of the game. The game's pitcher is excluded from rotation.

2. Players who know they will not be able to participate in a game must notify their manager of the reason for their absence.

3. Players should notify their manager of their presence 40 minutes prior to their own game time. Managers must submit two copies of their lineup, with the players requiring runners, 30 minutes prior to scheduled game time to the Board Member on duty, or note the number of subs needed on the appropriate substitution sheet located outside the snack bar. ANY TEAM MEMBER NOT IN THE LINEUP ARRIVING AFTER THE SUBMISSION OF THAT LINE UP, WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PLAY IN THAT GAME. A team

member that IS in the lineup, and does not show, will be an out each time at bat. The Board Member In-Charge will, prior to the start of the game, have Team Managers provide “updated” line-up sheets for the score keepers and opposing manager.

4. A team with fewer than seven (7) players will not be allowed to select substitutes and MUST forfeit the game. If a team has seven (7) roster players present, the manager may receive a maximum of three (3) substitutes, and then play with ten (10) players. No more than three (3) substitutes will be allowed on any team for any game, seasonal or playoffs. Players should not start a game if they know they will not be able to complete it. Unless there has been an injury, an ejection or an emergency, a team losing a player will be charged with an out when it is the missing player’s turn to bat. Decisions regarding the batting order and defensive assignments are the exclusive responsibility of team managers. If a lineup has 12 players, no substitute will be chosen if one player (with exception of the designated Pitcher) leaves for any reason.

D. SUBSTITUTES:

1. Substitute players will be selected to play when teams have between seven (7) and ten (10) roster players. A team having only seven (7) players can only select a maximum of three (3) subs. A team having eleven (11) players cannot select a sub.

2. Players may sign up as only a “Non Pitcher” substitute or “Pitcher Only” substitute. Players who sign up as anything other than a “Non Pitcher” or “Pitcher Only” substitute will not be considered as potential substitutes for that game, Players who sign up as a “Non Pitcher” substitute and picked to substitute as a “Non Pitcher” will NOT be allowed to pitch that game.

3. Any team needing a “Pitcher Only” sub, and none are available, may pick a “non Pitcher” sub (or a roster player) to pitch until a “Pitcher Only” sub is available. If a “Pitcher Only” sub becomes available, the team manager has the one time option of (a) selecting the “Pitcher Only” sub who will pitch the remainder of the game (the previously selected “non Pitcher sub will leave the game) or (b) not selecting the “Pitcher Only” sub and therefore keep the “non Pitcher” sub (or his roster player) as his pitcher. In all cases, the sub will bat last in the lineup.

4. Substitutes need to be signed up 30 minutes prior to game time for the game in which they wish to substitute. (No subs will be allowed on the sub list after this time unless there are not enough to satisfy the number required). If the Board member on duty has the chance to put a sub (not a late arriving team member) in the game to bring that team up to 11 players after the game has started. He shall ask the manager if he wants to continue with 10 players or use a late arriving sub player. (not divulging who the sub is until he has made his choice.)

5. Players who have not subbed on any given day will have priority over those who have subbed.

6. If a roster player wishes to substitute prior to or immediately after their game, they MUST sign up to play only on their scheduled field. Umpires may sign up to sub on any field.

7. Substitutes will be drawn 30 minutes prior to game time by the Board Member In-Charge (or other Board Member). Managers from all teams must be present at the designated area when substitutes are drawn for their game or for the opposing team requiring players. The Board Member In-Charge will then notify managers and scorekeepers of the substitute players.

Division 3 softball does not condone consumption by a player prior to the game that he will play in. This includes a game day sub or injury sub. Team managers have the right to refuse to accept an injury sub or game day sub if he has consumed alcohol prior to the game.

8. Substitutes will be assigned to teams by a random drawing of numbered pills based on their category as follows:

P1: A newly evaluated player who has never played before, is not in the current season's draft and has subbed in at least 4 games or less if re-rated.

see note 3 below

P2: A player who is not assigned to a team. A player can only sign up as a P2 sub for 2 straight seasons. After the 2nd season, the player will be designated a P3 sub.

P3: A player who is assigned to a team and wishes to sub in a game his team is not involved in.

P4: A player who has already subbed that day.

Note 1: In the event a team is not scheduled to play or his game has been cancelled on any regular season game day (and does not have Announcing duty) roster payers on that team will be classified as P2's for subbing purposes.

Note 2: A player who indicated "Pitcher" as one of his two position choices on his application form and/or has been evaluated by one or more Board Members, may sign up to sub as "Pitcher Only". If he is chosen to sub as a Pitcher, he MUST pitch the entire game unless he is removed due to an injury or ejection, or must leave due to an emergency. He CANNOT play any other position during that game.

Note 3: A P-1 sub after 4 games played or less will be reclassified as a P-2. Also, the sub will be rated on his ability by the manager whose team he is playing for and the opposing manager as well. He will then either remain a "C" player or be moved up to a higher rating.

9. Board Duty members will verify the level of players missing from each team and the level and priority of each sub using lists provided by the Board. At least two players must be missing for a team to get a sub. The lowest level missing player is not replaced.

1. Draw a pill for each team that needs subs. Sub assignment starts in the dugout of the team with the lowest number.
2. Draw a pill for each sub player where there are more than one at the same level and priority.
3. Allocate P1 subs to open C roster spots in the above dugout order according to the pill draw for P1 subs. If P1 players remain, then allocate them to open B and A roster spots until all open roster spots are filled or there are no remaining P1 subs.
4. Allocate A subs in pill draw order to remaining open A roster spots in the above dugout order for P2, P3 and P4 subs in that order (A for A).
5. Allocate B subs to any remaining open A roster spots in the same order as 3 (B for A).
6. Allocate C subs to any remaining open A roster spots in the same order as 3 (C for A).
7. Allocate remaining B subs to remaining B roster spots in the same order as 3 (B for B).
8. Allocate remaining subs to remaining B roster spots in the same order as 3 (A, C for B).
9. Allocate C subs to remaining open C roster spots in the same order as 3 (C for C).
10. Allocate remaining B subs to remaining open C roster spots in the same order as 3 (B for C).
11. Allocate any remaining subs to any open roster spots in the same order as 3 (A for C).

10. A player may only substitute once a day unless there are not enough substitutes to fill needs. A player who requires a courtesy runner is not eligible to be a substitute. Substitutes must bat after roster members of the team, in the order picked (Exception: A substitute Pitcher will bat before any other substitute players on that

team). Players that have previously taken a runner but do not take a runner in their game are allowed to sub in a later game but cannot take a runner in that game.

11. Prior to the start of the season, each manager will designate one (1) player as their pitcher for the season. If during the season the designated pitcher is not present at a game, refer to paragraph D.3. above for options regarding obtaining substitutes. If more than one team needs a pitcher, the assignments will be made by a random drawing of numbered pills. Only board evaluated pitchers may participate in this drawing.

12. If a player becomes ill or injured, is ejected, or must leave due to an emergency, a substitute will be chosen from the injury substitute list. Once the manager of the team needing the substitute notifies the Home Plate Umpire that a substitute is needed, it becomes official and the next player from the injury substitute list is in the lineup. If this injury substitute is picked to play the following game, he will do so under the guidelines listed below (see paragraph 15). If no one on the substitute list is available, a substitute will be chosen from players available. The substitute player inherits the courtesy running stats from the replaced player. If the replaced player required a courtesy runner, this will have no effect on the substitute player as the substitute player can be utilized as a courtesy runner. The substitution will be made by the on-duty Board member.

13. After substitutes have been drawn and assigned to a team, the manager will not be able to remove the substitute to add a player that has shown up late.

14. No substitute will be allowed for a player who leaves the game for reasons other than an emergency, injury or ejection. When that player's turn to bat comes up, the team will be charged with an out.

15. If there are not enough available substitutes (see paragraph 9. above), an announcement will be made over the PA soliciting additional substitutes to fill the same level of the injured or missing player. If a player of the same level is not found, the Board member will go up or down one level first then another level after that until the position is filled. (Ex. If a C player is needed then the board would go C first then B then A to get a sub. If an A player was needed it would be the opposite.)

These substitutes (roster player or injury sub) may play on any field. However, they will be removed and replaced by the Board Member In-Charge (or acting Board Member) when their scheduled game is to begin. The replacement is final and will take place when the substitute player is in the dugout. Managers must be aware of this stipulation prior to the substitute player being assigned their game. Managers MUST refrain from asking players to sign up to substitute for their team. If a manager is found recruiting players, he will be warned for the 1st offense, suspended for the 2nd offense from managing the remainder of that season and all of the next season (if he is appointed manager again). And if there is a 3rd offense the manager shall be removed from managing in D-3.

An exception would be in the case of a shortage of needed substitute pitchers. Managers may approach Board certified pitchers of the same or lesser rating as the pitcher they are replacing to sign up as pitching substitutes only. (both roster pitchers and sub pitchers). If a manager has contacted all roster pitchers and sub pitchers and had no success recruiting a pitcher at the same rating, he must contact the Board member in charge of pitcher recruitment. The Board member will then allow him to go up one level in rating to secure a pitcher. This is done on a game by game basis. Recruited pitchers are exempt from the runner rule. If they normally get a runner they will be able to get one in the game they are subbing in. If the pitcher that has agreed to pitch for a team does not show up prior to the selection of subs (30 minutes before game time) he will be governed by Rule C; Lineups, paragraph #3.

16. During the division tournament, substitutions will be on a skill level basis. Players chosen first as substitutes will be roster players during the current season. If enough roster players are not available, sub-only and players evaluated during the current season by the Board based on their play during the season will be eligible to be subs for tournament play. Substitutes will be at the same player ranking as the replaced player.

Note* A sub or player that has already subbed or will be playing in the second game will only be allowed to play in one game, unless there aren't enough subs of the same ranking on the list. They may still sign up for the game but will only play if there is a lack of subs of their ranking.

Rankings to be used are from the beginning of the current season (unless P-1 'C' players have been reevaluated) for roster players and the replacement list. Players ranked as 'A players' will only be substituted for 'A players'. When both teams playing need more than one player at the same evaluated level, the placement of players will be on an alternating basis beginning with the Visiting team.

During the tournament, if a manager has only seven (7) players, he may only obtain a maximum of 3 subs equal rank of any three of his missing roster players (He MUST play with ten (10) total players). If a manager has 8 players he may only obtain the max 3 sub players to bring his team to 11 total.

If a manager has between 9, 10, or 11 players, he must obtain only that number of subs required to bring his team total to twelve (12) and the subs must be equal to the skill level of his missing roster players. Exception: if a manager has 10 players and one of his missing players is his designated Pitcher, he may obtain 2 subs (one Pitcher-only sub of the same rating as his pitcher and one non-pitcher sub of the same rating). If a manager has 8 or 9 players and is missing his designated Pitcher, one of his subs can be a Pitcher-only sub.

If a manager has 11 players, he will obtain a 12th player equal to the skill level as his missing roster player.

If possible, all tournament teams will compete with 12 players unless circumstances say otherwise.

Examples:

1. If there are a lack of subs for each team and one team needs a "C" sub but there are none, then that team will play with only 11 players even if the opposing team has 12 players. The team with 12 players will then use a rotation.
2. If there are 2 teams on the same field that need a "C" sub to fill out their teams, but there is only 1 "C" sub signed up, then neither team will get a sub and the teams will play with 11 players. This would also apply if the two teams needed like ranked players.
Ex. B for B, A for A.
3. If one team needs an A and the opposing team needs a B player and there is only a B player signed up, then the team that needed a B will get the B player. The opposing team will play with the 11 players they have not getting a player of the same ranking.

Note: Players who have not subbed on any given day will have priority over those who have subbed.

E. REPLACEMENT PLAYERS:

1. When a substitute player wishes to become a roster player, he will declare such to the current Board Member in charge of Replacement Players. The Board Member in charge of Replacement Players will keep track of all such declarations by name, skill category (A/B/C), Pitcher Only/Non-Pitcher positions, and date of declaration.
2. The Board Member in charge of Replacement Players will not divulge the names of players on the Replacement List (except as stated below)
3. When a team needs a player to replace one that can no longer play prior to the start of the season ending tournament, the Manager will contact the Board Member in Charge of Replacement Players and state his requirement(s). For skill categories A and B (excluding Pitchers) the player(s) who has been on the Replacement List the longest (by date) will be offered to, and MUST be accepted by, the Manager. Note: if no replacement player is available and the original player returns and can play, he may rejoin his team until a

replacement player is available. When the replacement player is available, the original player is removed from the team immediately and the replacement player is added to the roster. The Board Member in Charge of Replacement Players will NOT answer any questions from Managers. Managers MUST refrain from asking players to add their names to the Replacement List.

4. When an A or B Pitcher is required by a Manager, an available Pitcher on the Replacement List (who selected Pitcher as their first or second choice on their application) will be placed on that team from the Replacement List in that skill category (A or B list) and in the order they reside on the list. If there are no Pitchers available in the skill category required, the Manager can go down “one level” to obtain a pitcher. **When an A or B Player is required by a Manager and no player is available in that skill category (A or B list), the Manager can go down “one level” to obtain a player.**

5. When a Manager requires a C Player (Pitcher or non-Pitcher), ALL available C players on the Replacement List will be offered to the Manager. The Manager will choose the C player that he wants within 48 hours of receipt of the C player replacement list. If the Manager fails to make a selection within the allotted time period, he will be assigned the player who has been on the Replacement List the longest.

Accordingly, the replacement player chosen or assigned to a team will have a time period of 2 play dates to join that team. If this doesn't occur, said player will be removed from the list. The Manager will then be given a choice of the remaining players and repeat the process again.

6. When a Manager requires a “Non-Pitcher” Replacement player, he will only be offered “non-pitchers” (of the skill category required) from the Replacement List.

7. When a replacement player has been assigned to a team, the name of the replacement player will be provided to all board members and managers by e-mail in a timely manner.

III GAME RULES

1. Double Bag rule - BATTER-RUNNER REACHING FIRST BASE. Each batter must reach first base without the aid of a courtesy runner. A double bag shall be used at first base, the double portion of the bag being in foul territory abutting first base. If there is a play on a batter-runner going to first base, the batter-runner must touch only the Orange Bag extending into foul territory. His touch of the White Bag or BOTH Bags will result in being called out, except in the umpire's judgment, the batter-runner is avoiding a collision. This is NOT an appeal play. Important: The defending player has only the white base, in fair territory, to make the putout; his touch of only the bag in foul territory, or both bags simultaneously (umpire judgment), during the put-out at first base, will not result in an out. After making the put-out at first base, any subsequent touch of the Orange bag by the defensive player will NOT result in the batter-runner being called safe. After the batter-runner becomes a base runner, the defensive player may use either portion of the double base to record a put out. The base runner is allowed to utilize either the white bag OR the orange bag, or both, while on 1st base. The practical effect is that the two bases are ‘merged’ for both offensive and defensive purposes once the batter runner becomes solely a base runner.

2. A runner will be called out if he touches or crosses over any portion of the batting platform.

3. A runner may leave his base only when a pitched ball is batted, the batter swings or the ball crosses the plate. A runner leaving the base too soon can be called out.

4. 4. There are no rundowns for the sake of safety. A rundown is started when the ball is fielded ahead of a runner (“Fielded” is either a batted ball or a ball thrown by a defensive player making a play on a base runner). **A runner is only allowed to reverse his direction one time when a play is being made on him**

while advancing to the next base. The runner does not have to go back and re-touch the base that he was returning to if the ball is overthrown on a subsequent play, he may turn and proceed to the next base.

5. Each team is responsible for keeping its dugout gates closed during play. If the team at bat leaves its dugout gate open and a live ball goes into the dugout, there will be no runner advancement awarded.

6. Sliding or diving into any base or scoring plate is not permitted and such players will be called out. Players may slide or dive when returning to any base including the scoring plate.

7. Runners shall be called out for contact with a defensive player if, in the umpire's judgment, the contact was deliberate or if the runner could have reasonably avoided contact and failed to do so. If a runner interferes with a defensive player making a subsequent play, the runner closest to home will be called out. If the umpire rules deliberate contact on the part of the defensive player, the runner shall be called safe. **Defenders no longer can block a base legally while waiting on a throw to arrive. Now, to avoid being called for obstruction for impeding a runner legally running the bases, a defender must have possession of the ball or be in the act of fielding a batted ball.**

8. Players are not permitted to over-run second and third base without being in jeopardy of being called out. A player may over-run first base unless the base runner attempts to advance to second base. A runner who overruns any base when returning to it is liable to be put out. **(No tag of the runner is necessary. The runner is out if the fielder is in contact with the bag.)** A base runner may slide or dive when returning to any base.

9. Once a runner's foot touches the ground on or past the commitment line, the runner is committed to advancing to the scoring plate. A runner will be called out if he re-crosses the commitment line and the ball remains live.

10. A tag of the runner by a defensive player is not allowed between the commitment line and the scoring plate. The runner will be called safe and the ball remains live.

11. Courtesy Runner Rule: Only players (not managers) can declare that they require a courtesy runner and they must do so prior to the start of the game. A player, designated as requiring a courtesy runner, has the following options EACH time at bat:

a) A player may stop at first, and after the umpire declares the play dead, the player **MUST** get a runner before the first pitch is thrown to the next batter. If a player does not get a runner before the following batter completes his turn at bat and the opposing team manager alerts the umpires of this infraction, the runner is to be declared out and all runners and batters are to be returned to their status before the infraction was discovered. Completing a turn at bat is to be interpreted as before the 2nd batter following the player who needs a runner receives the first pitch.

Example: A player needing a runner gets a hit with a player already on first base creating a first and third situation. The player fails to get a runner. The following batter hits a triple, two runs score. Before the next batter receives the first pitch the opposing manager alerts the umpires of the infraction. The player who failed to get a runner is declared out, all runners are returned to the bases they occupied and the hitter who followed the player needing a runner must bat again with the same ball/strike count prior to getting the hit. If the player who needed a runner is the third out the inning ends and the following batter is first up in the next inning with a 0-0 count.

b) A player may advance to any base beyond first base, however once the play has been ruled dead, the player **MUST** remain on the base he has occupied and may **NOT** get a runner.

c) If a player reaches a base beyond first and then feels he cannot continue, he will be allowed to get a runner with the following conditions:

(d) The newly injured player MUST leave the game at that point and if his team then has less than 11 players the team will get an injury sub who would then be the runner.

(d) If the team has 12 players, the newly injured player MUST leave the game and gets a runner from the team roster in accordance with our current rules.

(e) A player who declares he needs a runner before the game is now governed by all the same rules as a player who does not require a runner. Example: the player will NOT be declared automatically out by making a turn toward second base. He is treated as a regular runner and if he makes a turn, he is in jeopardy of being thrown out as is the case with every runner. He cannot declare he will take a runner until the umpire rules the play dead. While the ball is live, he may choose to advance at his own risk as any other runner would.

(f) Division 3 players who need a courtesy runner must be designated when the line-up is submitted. This is the manager's responsibility. If the manager has not designated the player as needing a runner, then the player may not receive a runner. The player is requested to notify the umpire upon approaching the batter's box that he requires a runner. However, there will be NO penalty for this failure to do so. No other courtesy runners will be allowed except in cases of injury. A player so injured as to need a runner may be allowed to have a courtesy runner when agreed to by both managers. If this occurs in the 6th or subsequent innings, the newly injured player MUST receive a courtesy runner for the next entire game he plays in. The umpire will notify the board member on duty that a runner was taken in or after the 6th inning and that board member will document on the next week's game sheet that the player gets a runner. Any manager who fails to get a courtesy runner for that newly injured player in the next game will be suspended (cannot play nor manage) in the next scheduled game that he would normally be expected to attend. Because this managerial suspension was not for disciplinary reasons, this will not carry over to the following season.

If the managers do not agree to allow a courtesy runner, the injured player will be immediately replaced by the next available substitute on the sub list. All players are required to run to first base, including batters that are walked and batters who need a courtesy runner.

(g) All players who do not require a courtesy runner MUST be designated as a courtesy runner by their team manager. Once a player has been used as a courtesy runner twice, they cannot be used again until all players, not requiring courtesy runners, have also run twice. A courtesy runner may only run once per inning. This is whether the courtesy runner is running for a player that requires a runner or if it is for a pitcher that wears equipment, more than a face mask, and there are two outs. ONCE and ONLY ONCE PER INNING.

If during the game a player decides he cannot be a courtesy runner he will be designated as requiring a runner for the remainder of that game. If this occurs in the 6th or subsequent innings, he MUST also receive a courtesy runner for the next entire game he plays in. After consulting with the scorekeepers, the player in the batting order prior to the runner getting a sub, not on base, will be the designated runner. If that runner needed a runner you would go to the next courtesy runner in front of him. This will not be a "Charged Time" to the courtesy runner but the courtesy runner cannot run more than once per inning. The wrong runner stepping on the base does not constitute an OUT. The inning in which the player that requires a runner comes to bat, dictates whether it was the 6th or later inning.

If a courtesy runner is on base when it is his turn at bat, he will be out on the base and bat in his normal place if he is not the third out. If he is the third out, he will bat in the lead-off position the following inning. An exception to this rule is that if the courtesy runner is the "last available" runner on the roster, and he is on base, and it is his turn to bat, he is NOT out. The manager may

replace him with a legal substitute and he may bat. Managers may be required to produce their line-up cards showing that their substitute runners were utilized correctly. Announcers will mark the appropriate box on the score sheet (next to a player's name) when a player is used as a courtesy runner.

(h) A courtesy runner is in the game when he touches the base. If the wrong courtesy runner touches the base and the opposing manager appeals to the umpire prior to the next legal pitch the runner is out.

(i) A courtesy runner may not receive a courtesy runner, except for injury. That injured courtesy runner may remain in the game and must take a courtesy runner for the remainder of the game. If this occurs in the 6th or subsequent innings, he must also receive a courtesy runner for the next entire game he plays in. If the injured courtesy runner is a sub, he must come out of the game immediately. The injured sub would then be replaced by the next player on the injured sub list.

(j) All pitchers utilizing protective equipment that is removed before batting and/or base running other than a mask will be required to take a mandatory "courtesy runner" while on base with two (2) outs. Since this will NOT count as a "Runner Time" against the player, a touch of the bag by an incorrect runner will NOT result in an "OUT". If a courtesy runner has already run that inning he may not run for a pitcher after two outs and utilizing protective equipment. If however, the Pitcher was designated to need a courtesy runner at the beginning of the game, that "courtesy runner" would count as a "Runner Time" if he replaced the Pitcher at 1st Base with two (2) outs. If the Pitcher was on any base other than 1st Base and there were or came to be two (2) outs, that Pitcher would receive a mandatory "courtesy runner" which would not count as a "Runner Time" against the player. Pitchers who don't take a courtesy runner but wear more than a mask, may be used as a courtesy runner at any time in the game. (with less than two outs). If they are still on base when the second out of the inning is recorded they shall be replaced with any available runner and this will not count as a "Runner Time" against the new runner.

(12) Infield warm-ups are allowed while the pitcher is warming up. Once the umpire calls "ball in" all warm-ups must stop.

(13) Teams are limited to five (5) runs per inning except in the 7th or later innings of the game, in which a team can score an unlimited number of runs. A team behind by more than five runs in any inning prior to the 7th inning, can score "Five runs Plus 1" run in an effort to catch up.

(14) All runners on base that are forced to the next base as a result of the hit or walk that enabled the fifth, plus 1 or tying run, must reach the next base. Then time may be called and the run counted.

(15) When the score is tied after seven innings, teams start each inning with a runner on second base. That base runner is the last player at bat from the previous inning, not requiring a courtesy runner.

(16) If a team is leading by 15 or more runs after the 5th inning (4 and a half innings if the home team is ahead), the game will be considered complete. If the Visiting team is ahead by 15 or more runs after the 5th inning, the Home Team must bat in the bottom of the inning.

IV. DEFINITIONS:

1. LEGAL PITCH: The height of a legal pitch must be from six feet to twelve feet above the playing surface.

2. LEGAL STRIKE: Legal pitches striking any part of the home plate or the strike zone mat shall be strikes.

3. **INFIELD** The infield is that portion of the field in fair territory that includes areas normally covered by infielders.

4. **INFIELD FLY** A fair fly ball (not including a line drive) that can be caught by any fielder with ordinary effort when first and second bases or first, second and third bases are occupied with less than two outs. Any fielder can catch an infield fly. **NOTE:** When it becomes apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire shall immediately declare, "infield fly - batter is out", to aid the runners. If the ball is near the foul lines, the umpire shall declare, "infield fly - if fair". The ball is live and runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught, or re-touch and advance after a fielder touches the ball. If the hit ball becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any other foul ball. Failure of the umpire to call "infield fly," does not negate the infield fly. If the error is discovered prior to the next pitch, the infield fly rule may still be called.

5. **PITCHING SCREEN:** The following rules apply:

a. Pitchers may use a protective screen. The team using the screen is responsible for the placement and removal of the screen.

b. The screen will directly face home plate within one to three feet in front of the pitching box. If a pitcher chooses to use the full depth of the ten foot pitchers box, then the screen must be positioned in the one to three foot limits of where he chooses to pitch.

c. The screen may be positioned anywhere from the outer left side of the pitching rubber for a right-handed pitcher to the outer right side of the pitching rubber for a left-handed pitcher. These lines are extended to the rear of the pitchers box should the pitcher want to pitch further back in the pitchers box.

d. The screen must be placed to the left of a right-handed pitcher, and to the right of a left-handed pitcher to maximize the pitcher's safety.

e. Any batted ball striking any portion of the screen as observed by the umpire will be declared a dead ball, no pitch. All rules governing a dead ball no pitch will apply. All thrown balls hitting the screen are alive and play continues.

f. Any pitch delivered with the screen not in a legal position will be declared "Illegal Pitch" (Ball). If a pitcher refuses to place the screen in the correct position, the umpire will notify the player's manager and remove the pitcher from pitching.

g. If a pitcher chooses to use a screen then he **MUST** step "completely" behind the screen by the time each pitched ball reaches the plate. Failure to do so will result in the umpire calling each pitched ball an "Illegal Pitch" (Ball).

h. A pitcher is ineligible to field any hard driven ball that is hit up the middle (umpire judgment).

Penalty for doing so will be a "dead ball single" for the batter and all runners will advance one base. A pitcher will be allowed to field a slow rolling grounder or pop-up with no penalty (umpire judgment).

6. **ILLEGALLY BATTED BALL:** Conform to SSUSA rule.

7. **CATCH:** A catch is valid when the fielder holds the ball long enough to prove he has complete control of it and that his release of the ball is voluntary and intentional. If a player drops the ball after reaching into his glove to remove it or while in the act of throwing, it is a valid catch. It is **NOT** a catch if, immediately after fielding the ball, the player falls down, or collides with another player or fence, and drops the ball as a result of the fall or collision. A ball, which strikes anything other than a defensive player while it is in flight is ruled the same as if it had struck the ground.

8. **OBSTRUCTION:** A fielder, not in possession of the ball, not in the act of fielding a batted ball, or about to receive a thrown ball, who impedes the progress of a runner.

9. **INTERFERENCE:** Interference is when a player or manager interferes, impedes, or confuses a defensive player attempting to make a play. Interference may be physical or verbal. Violation of this rule will result in an "out" applied to the person the defensive player was attempting to make a play on.

10. **APPEAL PLAY:**

A. A play in which an umpire may not make a decision until requested.

The appeal must be made before the next pitch or before the defensive players have left fair territory. On the last play of the game, an appeal can be made until the umpires leave the field.

B. Types of appeals:

1. Missing a base
2. Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched.
3. Batting out of order.

11. EJECTION: The result of an incident requiring the removal of a player from the game by the umpire. The incident will require the player or coach to leave the grounds for the remainder of the game. Any ejected player discovered participating constitutes a forfeit. An ejection will result in the player being automatically suspended for the next game in Division 3 and will be subject to further review by the Division Board and/or the Recreation Department.

12. TIME OUT: "Time Out" is only called by the Umpire when the ball is held by a player in the infield area, and in the Umpire's judgment, ALL play has ceased. The umpire may call time out at anytime when there is an injury on the field, or for any reason deemed necessary to insure safety of the players. The umpire's decision to call time out is final, and play is considered dead once time out is called.

13. ANNOUNCERS: On the occasion when there is an odd number teams in a season schedule, teams will receive a "Bye Day". On the team's "Bye Day", that team will be required to announce all games. Each manager will provide their team's Announcer schedule to the duty desk one week prior to their team's bye day. If a player is scheduled, but refuses or does not show up for their duty to Announce, he will be considered absent, and will be given a One Game Suspension for their next scheduled game. This rule will also pertain when an even number of teams in the season schedule requires the Manager to assign individual team members to announce games. It is that team member's responsibility to announce his assigned game. The team member's failure to do so will result in a suspension of their next scheduled game. There will be no exceptions.

V. UMPIRES:

1. Umpires are responsible for maintaining a proper demeanor and treating players with respect.
2. Only the team manager may express disagreement with an umpire's decision. Players will not engage in disputes or, in any way, badger umpires. Verbal abuse, any threat or act of physical aggression toward an umpire will result in ejection of a player and possible suspension. A player's ejection will bring disciplinary action, as described above.
3. Use of profanity by a player may result in ejection from the game, and subsequent suspension. Use of profanity by an umpire may result in suspension of the umpire. Umpires must always act in a professional manner. Umpires are reminded that they must complete the Umpire Incident Report Form with copies to The Villages Recreation Department, the Division Board and player's manager.
4. Umpires may eject any player smoking on the playing field or in the dugout, and anyone who throws equipment in a display of anger. Umpires must order any pet to be removed from the dugouts during the game.

THERE ARE NO PROTESTS. All decisions by the umpires are final.