



Big Sky Co-ed Softball League Handbook

Introduction

The Big Sky Softball League is committed to providing softball as a recreational opportunity for persons who live and work in the community. The Big Sky Softball League is operated under the jurisdiction of the Big Sky Community Organization (BSCO) and the Big Sky Softball League Board of Directors. The joint efforts of these groups allow the community to participate in our league. The purpose of this handbook is to provide teams with information and rules the Big Sky Softball League has adopted. We follow the ASA (American Softball Association) rulebook unless otherwise noted. **Team managers are required to read the handbook, know the rules and inform your players accordingly.**

Note from the Commissioner: Mission statement

Our league is operated mainly by volunteers and the work of the BSCO. We are trying to provide an enjoyable community gathering place centered on a fun team sport for all abilities. Many of us live in Big Sky so we can enjoy the Mountain and the many outdoor activities. We ski and snowboard during the winter months in order to challenge ourselves, spend time with friends and family, and enjoy the place where we live and work: Not necessarily to prove who is number ONE on the slopes. We enjoy each and every moment we get to spend on the slopes. We would like to run the Big Sky co-ed softball league along these lines. Yes, there are trophies available at the end of the season, and we want you to put your best foot forward. But it is not a 'winner take- all', or 'win-at-all- costs' league. We want to have fun, meet and greet new people, and spend time with old friends- all while challenging ourselves on the field and having a great time with our community members. Please keep that in mind when the competition gets a little heated. Let's keep it fun, safe and enjoyable for all players, fans and volunteers. Keep the rough language out of our parks; there are children as well as visitors of all ages present. Enjoy every moment that we get to play outside at the ballpark! Help keep our park clean and have a great season!

Team Rosters and Requirements

The board of directors requires the team managers to recruit players from within the community. Team members are required to live or work in Big Sky in the same calendar year.

- Team fees are \$600 per team. The fee must be paid before a team can play.
- Teams may consist of up to 25 players in any combination of male and female players. All players must be 18 years or older.
- The initial team rosters are due BEFORE the first game is played. Teams may add players to the roster through June 30. No player may be added after June 30. The league will provide team managers a complete roster for all teams thereafter.

- All players must sign the league required insurance form. Players who have not signed the waiver may not participate in games and are considered non-roster players.
- A player may only be a roster player on one team.
- Team players are encouraged to have identification at the games in the event roster eligibility is questioned. A player unable to provide identification is disqualified from the game. A team may substitute for this player without penalty. If the player is subsequently found to be a non-roster player, the team is subject to the non-roster rules below including forfeiture of the game.
- Teams must provide two or more players to umpire regular season games and participate in league sponsored umpire training.

Non-Roster Rules

A non-roster player is any person who (1) is not recorded as a roster player at time of play, or by June 30, (2) has not signed the insurance waiver and/or (3) been otherwise disqualified from play by the league. Any of these situations deem a player as a non-roster player.

Team captains are responsible for playing only roster players on their team and knowing the roster of their opponent. Team rosters will be provided by the league to each team. Eligibility issues must be addressed during a game, before the completion of the game. A determination will be made as soon as possible. If a game is completed, a team manager may not question eligibility or request a forfeit. The player in question must provide a form of picture identification and must be on the roster. Umpires will make the final determination of eligibility and must follow the procedure below. Post- game rulings will be made by the board if necessary.

Regular Season Non-Roster Players:

A team using a non-roster player during the regular season will be subject to the following:

- First Violation: The team will forfeit the game in progress.
- Second Violation: Forfeit of the game in progress AND the player will be ineligible for the remainder of the season and post season for the entire league. The player cannot join any team thereafter.
- Third team violation: Forfeit of remainder of regular season and post season play

Post Season Non-Roster Players:

A team using a non-roster player during the post season will be subject to the following:

- First Violation: Forfeit of game in progress and remainder of post season play.

Code of Conduct

Language: Use of inappropriate language will not be tolerated. The board of directors has specifically instructed umpires to follow the procedures below if inappropriate language by any player is audible to the umpires, players, spectators or children:

- Warn the team on the first offense
- Call an out on the team for the second offense

- Forfeit on the team for the third offense

Physical Confrontations: Fighting, threatening behavior and any physical contact with the intent of injury will not be tolerated. The board of directors has specifically instructed umpires, score keepers, and any board members to follow the procedures below if a physical confrontation arises:

- All players involved will be immediately ejected from the game
- All players involved will be indefinitely suspended from the league
- The board of directors will review the facts to determine the eligibility to players involved to continue in the league

Pets: Leashed pets are welcome in certain areas of the park. Pets are not allowed in the bleacher or concessions area. **All pets must be on a leash.** Pets are allowed in the areas beyond the bleachers towards the outfield. We encourage you to keep pets beyond the dugouts. Please clean up after your pet immediately. Players with pets at the game must follow the pet rules. The board of directors has specifically instructed umpires, scorekeepers and authorities present to follow the procedures below if players with pets violate this rule:

- Warn the team on the first offense
- Call an out on the team for the second offense
- Forfeit on the team for the third offense

Alcohol: Please consume alcohol responsibly. Alcohol is allowed in cans and plastic containers. **Glass bottles and containers are not allowed.** Players are allowed to consume alcohol in the dugouts. Players may not consume alcohol on the field.

An umpire or board member present may remove any player considered to be intoxicated. The team will be allowed to substitute another player into the batting lineup and in the field without penalty if a player is ejected due to intoxication.

Tobacco: Smoking is NOT allowed in the bleacher or concession area. Cigarette/cigar use is to be as far from the crowds and teams as possible. Please use tobacco products while being courteous and mindful of those around you.

Note: As a league and Board we have been asked once again to **keep the dogs under control at ALL times.** The park is intended for use by all community members. Children and adults alike who are frightened or made uncomfortable by dogs, especially unruly and or off-leash, are not enjoying themselves. Please follow all of the pet rules and clean up after your pet immediately. If we fail to comply with this request, the next step is to ban all pets from the park!

Player Substitution Rules

Regular Season Substitution Rules:

The league is committed to playing all regular season games without forfeits. The league has adopted the following rules regarding substitutions for regular season play. THESE RULES DO NOT APPLY TO THE LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME OR THE POST SEASON TOURNAMENT.

- Teams MUST play all available roster players (including all female players) BEFORE adding substitution players from another team.
- Teams may add 3 substitute players as long as one is a female, to get up to 10 players (8 players is the minimum requirement for a complete team). A team can compete with 8 or 9 players as long as there are 3 females in the line-up. You may not add 3 male subs.
- The team short of players has the right to select any roster player from another team as a substitute without approval from the opposing team.
- A team player who arrives after the game has started MUST be inserted into the lineup in place of a substitute player.
- Substituted players must be included at the end of the batting lineup.

Post Season Substitution Rules:

The post season consists of the league championship game and post season tournament. Substitutions are not allowed during the post season. A team using substitutions during post season play will be disqualified from post season play.

Rules of Play

The Big Sky Softball league has adopted American Softball Association (ASA) rules for play unless otherwise stated. These rules can be found at asa.org. The team manager has the responsibility to read, understand and inform players of the rules. Team captains are encouraged to attend league sponsored umpire training.

Big Sky Rules Exceptions

The Big Sky Softball League has adopted several rules which are exceptions from the ASA Rules of Play. These rules are explained below:

Male/Female Ratio: The ASA rules require 5 male and 5 female players to be on the field and in the batting lineup at all times. The Big Sky Softball League requires a minimum of 3 girls to be on the field at all times and in the batting lineup.

Secondary Home Plate: For safety, there is a secondary home plate rule designed to prevent collisions at home plate. The secondary home plate is located approximately 10 feet from home plate, closer to the backstop. All base runners during live play must run to the secondary home base to score and may not touch home plate. A base runner touching home plate during live play will be called out. The defender may not tag the base runner at the secondary home base or interference will be called and the base runner will score. The only play at home plate is a force play where the defender must possess the ball while standing on the primary home plate before the base runner touches the secondary home base.

Out of the park home runs are a dead ball play, and either plate can be touched without penalty.

Secondary Home Plate Line: In concert with the Secondary Home Plate rule, there is a chalked line extending from the third base foul line to the backstop approximately halfway between home plate and third base. After a base runner touches, crosses or otherwise breaks the plane of the secondary home plate line, the base runner must proceed to the secondary home plate and is committed to a force play.

At this point, the base runner may not return to third base or will be called out. The defender may not tag the base runner within this line. Any tags between the line and home plate during live play will be ruled interference.

Foul Out: The ASA rules state a batter will be called out if the batter hits a foul ball on the third strike. The Big Sky Softball League has adopted a rule whereby a batter will not be called out if the batter hits a foul ball on the third strike.

Courtesy Runners: The Big Sky Softball League has adopted the following rules:

- One courtesy runner is allowed per game for one player only.
- The courtesy runner must be the same gender of the runner being replaced.
- The courtesy runner must be the player of the same gender who made the last out.
- Exceptions can be made on the field in agreement with both managers and the umpire.

There will be no courtesy runners allowed in the post season. Injury exceptions must be agreed to by both managers and the umpire

Substitution Rules: The Big Sky Softball substitution rules are stated above.

Common Rules of Play

Below is a list of common ASA rules that occur in most games. These are not intended to be a substitution of ASA Rules of Play. This is to provide team managers a better understanding of common rules.

Infield Fly Rule: This rule is designed to prevent an infielder from intentionally dropping an infield fly ball to create a double play. The infield fly rule will be called if a fly ball can be caught with ordinary effort in fair territory with base runners on (1) first and second base or (2) first, second and third base, AND there are less than two outs. When the ball is in the air and the umpire signals he/she is invoking the rule, the batter is out (and all force plays removed) regardless of whether the ball is caught.

If 'Infield Fly' is called and the fly ball is caught, it is treated exactly as an ordinary fly ball; the batter is out, there is no force, and the runners must tag up. However, if the ball lands fair without being caught, the batter is still out, there is still no force, but the runners are not required to tag up. In either case, the ball is live, and the runners may advance on the play, at their own risk.

Home Run Rule: In the past, the Big Sky Softball League elected to not limit home runs. For 2016, a limit of three over the fence home runs and the one up home run rule will be in effect according to the following rules. The rule applies to over the fence home runs. Inside the park home runs do not count towards the home run rule. Batted balls that are touched by a defender and then go over the fence are not over the fence home runs.

A team will be limited to three over the fence home runs per game. Once a team has hit three home runs, the team may not hit another home run until the opposing team has also reached the three home run limit. If a team has reached its three home run limit and hits another home run before the opposing team reaches the limit, the home run will be called an out and no base runners may advance.

If both teams reach the three home runs limit, either team is allowed to hit an additional home run to go "one-up" on the opposing team, providing our time clock is above 12 minutes. For example, if the

home team hits three home runs in the bottom of the second inning, the visiting team can hit a total of four home runs in the top of the third inning to go “one up”. The home team may hit two home runs in the bottom of the third inning for a total of five to go “one up”. This can continue until the last inning, or our time clock is at 12 minutes or below. At this time however, the home team can only equal the number of home runs hit by the visiting team. The home team may not hit another home run(to go one-up) in the bottom of the last inning (or below 12 minutes) after it has equaled the visiting team because the visiting team no longer has the opportunity to go “one up”.

IF the one-up rule proves to be too confusing or unfair, we will revert to a flat 3 home run limit.

Double First Base: This rule is for safety to avoid collisions at first base. Whenever a play is being made by an infielder on the batter-runner at first base, the defense must use the white portion and the batter runner must use the colored portion. The batter runner is out when there is a play being made at first base and the batter runner touches only the white portion of the base PROVIDED the defense appeals prior to the next pitch.

Congruently, any defender who touches the colored part of the base while making a force play at first will cause the batter to be called safe.

Once a player has safely gained first base, play resumes as if there is one regular single base. Both teams use the white portion except for the routine force play of the next batter.

On extra base hits or balls hit to the outfield (where there is no play being made at first base), the batter runner may use either the white or colored portion of the double base.

Please instruct your players to clear off first base as a defender when there is no play at the base so the runner may advance without obstruction. When there is no play at a base, any base, the runner has the right to the base and the route between bases. The defender cannot block the base or the base line/runner’s route. There have been many collisions in the past that we are trying to eliminate.

Batter’s Box: A batter will be called out if (1) an entire foot is touching the ground completely outside the lines of the batter’s box when the ball makes contact with the bat or (2) when any part of the foot is touching home plate when the bat makes contact with the ball.

Overrunning First Base: A runner batter will be called out if the runner batter legally overruns first base and makes an attempt to reach second base and is tagged out while off the base. Please note the player must make an attempt to reach second base. A batter runner who overruns first base in fair ground and does not make an attempt to reach second base will be called safe if tagged off the base. Turning towards second does not constitute making an attempt to advance. Umpires discretion.

Base Stealing: No base stealing is allowed.

Leading off: Leading off any base is not allowed in slow pitch softball. The base runner must be in contact with the base until contact has been made with the pitched-ball by the batter with the bat. Any runner leaving the base early can be called out.

1 ball 1 Strike Count: The count at the beginning of each at bat will be 1 ball and 1 strike.

Walks: Slight change for 2016. When a male player is walked and a female is next up to bat, he walks to second base. The Female will then bat as usual. This rule is to prevent pitching around hitters and or to create a double-play situation. Note: it has never been a major issue in our league being that we are a participation league, but it may come into play. This rule may be re-visited at any time and will be reevaluated before post-season play.

Mercy Rule: A mercy rule of 15 runs after five innings of play can be invoked. We do allow the teams to play to the full time limit if agreed by both.

Equipment

Bats: For safety, all bats must be American Softball Association approved for slow-pitch and must bear an unaltered and clearly identified "ASA" stamp. A bat must be in good playing condition according to ASA rules (i.e.: no dents or cracks, solid end cap, safe handle, etc.) A bat not bearing the ASA stamp is considered an illegal bat. Teams are required to purchase their own bats and team managers are responsible for verifying the team bats are ASA approved. Umpires and managers are required to check bats prior to or during play. All bats intended for use must be out prior to the start of the game.

If a team manager suspects an illegal bat is being used, the team manager must call time during play and request the umpire to check the bat. If the umpire determines the bat is illegal, the umpire is not allowed to issue a warning. The umpire must (1) call an out for the player, (2) remove the illegal bat from play and (3) eject the player from the game. The ejected player may not be substituted for in the field or batting lineup. An out will be called each time the ejected player's position in the batting lineup comes up. The illegal bat will be given to the scorekeeper until the completion of the game. If a team uses a second illegal bat during a game, the game will be forfeited.

Footwear: Rubber cleats are allowed and preferred. Running shoes, tennis shoes and sandals are allowed but not recommended.

For safety, metal cleats are not allowed. Umpires, players and team managers may bring attention to the use of metal cleats at any time during play. If the umpire determines metal cleats are used, the umpire is not allowed to issue a warning. The umpire must (1) call an out for player if a batter or base runner and (2) eject the player from the game. The umpire must (1) eject the player from the game if in the field. The ejected player may not be substituted for in the field or batting lineup. An out will be called each time the ejected player's position in the batting order comes up.

Helmets: ASA approved helmets may be used by players at any time during the game. Teams/ players must provide their own helmets.

Have a safe and enjoyable season!