

**GSSA**

## **USA Softball Sacramento**

### **RULES INFORMATION**

#### **Rusch/Antelope/Azevedo Parks**

**For updated softball scores, schedules,  
standings and rainout information**

*please visit:*

**[www.usasoftballsacramento.org](http://www.usasoftballsacramento.org)**

## **GREATER SACRAMENTO SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION**

6380 TUPELO DRIVE, SUITE 3 – CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA 95621

revised 03/01/2024

*Softball League Policy, Procedures and Playing Rules*

## ADULT SOFTBALL MANAGER'S INFORMATION

1. All games shall be governed by the current USA softball rules and the specific league rules and regulations of the GSSA softball leagues. Managers are required to be aware of all rules and regulations pertaining to this league. GSSA league rules will supersede the current USA softball rules.
2. 11:00pm is official park closing time at Rusch/Antelope Parks. Azevedo Park is closed after the completion of the last game.
3. GSSA has a no-alcohol policy while participating. Any player caught consuming alcohol during a game can be ejected with or without warning
4. During **inclement weather** conditions, managers can visit the league website after **3:00 P.M.** for any possible postponement information. Any game postponed will be added to the end of the regular league schedule.
5. Any player on a team must personally sign a Team Waiver/Roster. Players are to sign before their first game. Individuals who register and play with more than one team must submit a signature for each team. **A player cannot play for more than one team in the same league. Teams cannot add players after their 5<sup>th</sup> league game.** All team managers and coaches who are to be present in the dugout or on the field must also read and sign a waiver. All of these individuals must adhere to all league and code of conduct rules.
6. **Emergency Adds:** Team managers may call the league office by 3:00 p.m. and inform the GSSA of intent to add a player. That player must sign the Team Roster/Waiver before playing in a game. Added player's competitive ability must represent that of the division. Approval of emergency additions is at the discretion of GSSA league director.
7. **Time & Inning Limits** for league games are:  
**Men's/Coed**– No new inning after **55** minutes, or 7 innings (except for ties).  
**15 Run Rule**-If one team is ahead by 15 runs or more after **55** minutes has expired, the game will be over regardless of which team is at bat.  
\*The game clock will start with the first pitch of the game or when the umpire signals game time will begin. A game cannot begin prior to the scheduled start time unless both team managers agree.
8. **Tie games:** If game time has expired or after the 7<sup>th</sup> inning the game is a tie score, there will be **ONE extra inning** to break the tie. The tie-breaker rule will be utilized with a runner placed on 2<sup>nd</sup> base to start the inning. The runner starting at second base shall be the last batter from the previous inning. If the extra inning results in a tie score, then the game will be recorded as a tie.
9. **Line-ups** shall be submitted to the scorekeeper 10 minutes before scheduled game time, with both **first AND last** names. A team can add players up to the 10th spot in the lineup even after the team has completed a turn through the line-up.
10. **Forfeit Procedure:** Teams must have at least eight (**8**) players to begin a game. A forfeit situation exists when a team cannot field 8 players at their defensive position to start the game. The team with less than 8 players shall be the visitor and bat first. The visiting team shall forfeit when all present players have batted, or the team has reached 3 outs and the 8<sup>th</sup> player has not shown up and entered into the line-up. If neither team has the minimum number of players at game time, a double-forfeit will result in losses for both teams.

11. The batter starts with a **1 ball & 1 strike count**. One extra foul ball is allowed after 2 strikes. The next foul ball is an out.
12. **Pitching rule:** **6-foot minimum** height required and the **maximum** height is 12 feet.
13. **Strike Zone:** A “Strike Mat” placed behind home plate is used for the strike zone. A legally pitched ball hitting *any part of the mat* (and not home plate) will be a strike.
14. **Rusch Park Outfield Fence Netting: HOME RUN** –Any ball that goes over the fence; top of the netting; or to the left or the right of the outside poles that secures the netting, including the section of netting in left field on field 2 that is affixed to field 1 and the netting in left field on field 1 that is affixed to field 2. **GROUND RULE DOUBLE**-Any ball that hits the netting and drops over the fence or is caught in the netting; includes any ball that goes through any part of the netting that is torn or not properly affixed to the poles. Note: If the umpire cannot see the ball go through the netting or between the netting and poles, then the call shall be a home run. **LIVE BALL**-Any ball that hits the netting and drops into the field of play is a live ball and play shall continue.
15. **Extended Line-up Rule: Teams may extend their batting line-up to a maximum of 15 players (coed 16 players) “only” at the start of a game.** No players may be added to the line-up beyond 10 batters after a game has begun. A team must finish a game with the same number of batters the game started with, except for legal substitutions. The batting order cannot be changed once a game has started. If a player in the line-up is removed because of an ejection, there will be an automatic out recorded each time that spot in the batting order comes up; **unless** a substitute is available. If a player has to leave for any reason other than an ejection, **NO** out will be recorded and the vacated spot in the batting order will be skipped. (Please see Coed –Rule Amendments below for specific rules pertaining to the extended line-up rule for coed leagues).
16. **Courtesy Runners:** A team may have one courtesy runner per inning. **The courtesy runner may be any player.** If a team bats through the line-up, a courtesy runner may be used for the same player more than once in an inning. **Note:** In coed leagues, a team may have one male and one female courtesy runner per inning. The courtesy runner must be of the same gender as the original runner.
17. **Re-touch Rule:** A baserunner at 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base may stand in foul territory during a pitch. After the ball is hit in play, the baserunner must re-touch the base before advancing to the next base. Failure to re-touch base may result in an out as a result of an appeal play made to the umpire. The re-touch rule may only be used for runners on 3<sup>rd</sup> for right-handed hitters and 1<sup>st</sup> base for left-handed hitters.
18. Players under 18 may play with the approval of the League Director. Conditions include:
  - A parent or legal guardian must be participating on the roster of the team.
  - A parent or legal guardian must sign the waiver form in addition to the player’s signature.
  - If the parent or legal guardian is not present, the minor cannot participate.
  - If the parent or legal guardian is ejected at any time, the minor must leave with them.
  - Players under 16 years of age cannot participate.
19. **Protest Procedure:** Protests will be lodged with the Home Plate Umpire. To protest a rule interpretation the team manager is required to notify the Home Plate Umpire of the point of the protest before the next pitch. The Home Plate Umpire will instruct the Scorekeeper to enter the time and condition of the protest (i.e. 3<sup>rd</sup> inning, runner on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2 outs) and notify

the opposing manager of the protest. Five dollars (\$5.00) must accompany the protest. The actual submitting of the \$5.00 and completion of the protest form can take place immediately following the game. **If a team wishes to protest an ineligible player, they must do so prior to the first pitch to the batter directly after the suspected ineligible player's first time at bat.** The umpire will immediately check the player's picture ID. (League rules state that all players must have a valid picture ID with them at the field while playing). The protested player's name will be entered in the scorebook and **the game continues.** The League Director will rule on the player's eligibility within 24 Hours. \$5 is required for EACH player protested.

**NOTE:** If a non-approved **underage** (under 18) ballplayer is protested, and his or her ID shows that they are underage, the game will be called at that point. The team that fields the non-approved underage player shall forfeit the game.

**Remember:** Only rule interpretations, illegal equipment, or illegal players can be protested. Umpire judgment cannot be protested.

20. Managers must report any **injury** to a ball player sustained during the game to the scorekeeper and an accident report shall be filled out prior to departure.
21. Team managers are responsible for the actions of their players and **spectators**. Unsporting behavior of players and/or spectators may result in forfeit. **Abusive language** will not be tolerated from players or spectators.
22. **Complaints:** Official complaints concerning such things as league direction, umpires, field conditions, spectators, etc. should be presented to the GSSA League Director in writing.
23. Managers are requested to report any hazardous field conditions or acts of vandalism to the GSSA office.
24. Any team that needs additional ball players should fill out the free agent form located on the Team Sideline website.
25. No regulation league game will start after 10:15 P.M. All league activities that occur at **Rush/Antelope Community Parks & Azevedo Park** will have a strict **11:00 P.M. curfew**. Games postponed due to curfew will be made up later in the season.
26. **EQUIPMENT:**
  - A. **Shoes and shirts** are required on all players and coaches. **No metal cleats** (spikes) will be allowed in League Play. Players wearing metal cleats after being warned by the umpire not to do so shall be ejected. (Matching uniforms are not required).
  - B. **Softballs** will be provided by GSSA. 12" balls will be used for male batters, and 11" balls for female batters in women's and Co-Ed leagues.
  - C. **Bats:** Be sure to check the USA website for certified equipment: <http://www.usasoftball.com> for the latest up-to-date bat information. The umpires will check the bats for proper grip, taping, knobs, weight, dents, etc., prior to game time, umpire's decision is final. Bat rings, donuts, propellers, etc. are not allowed. If you have any questions concerning bats, please ask the umpire.

## Halo Rule

In an effort to provide some protection for the pitchers in the program, the Rusch/Antelope Park Leagues and the Azevedo Park Leagues will be enforcing a “Halo Rule” for all male batters.

A pitcher’s box will be created (chalked) behind the pitcher’s plate. This box will measure 2 feet by 5 feet and the pitcher may pitch from anywhere within the pitcher’s box. The pitcher must be completely in the box unless starting from the pitching plate. If starting from the pitcher’s plate, the pitcher may start with one foot in front or off to the side, but must have one foot on the plate (USA book rule regarding touching the plate).

Any ball hit by a male player that strikes a “defenseless” pitcher on a fly while having at least one foot in the box will be an automatic dead ball. The batter will be declared out and all runners must return to their bases at the time of the pitch. In addition, any ball hit on a fly through the pitcher’s box thereby placing a “defenseless” pitcher in danger while having 1 foot in the box will also be declared a dead ball out and all runners will return to their bases. **Note:** The rule is intended for a “defenseless” pitcher; if a pitcher can field a batted ball with reasonable and ordinary effort, then the play shall continue with no declared automatic out being called by the umpire. **This is a judgment call by the umpire.**

In addition, if the batted ball strikes the pitcher on a fly, the bat from that batter will be confiscated. The bat will be taken to the GSSA office and compression tested. If the bat fails the compression test it will not be allowed in any USA play. If the bat is found to be altered in any way, the bat will be taken by GSSA and sent to be officially tested by the USA bat testing office in St. Louis. If the test confirms that the bat has been altered, the player will be suspended from GSSA play to the maximum allowed by the rules.

## HOME RUN RULE

All balls hit over the fence by a team in excess of the following limitations per game will be ruled an OUT. (Unless the Equalizer Rule is in effect.) \*

### The Number of Home Runs allowed per Division is as follows:

C DIVISION            4 HR + up to 2 \*Equalizer HR = 6 HR limit per game  
CD DIVISION           2 HR + up to 2 \*Equalizer HR = 4 HR limit per game  
D/E/Rec DIVISION    **2 HR + up to 1 \*Equalizer HR = 3 HR limit per game**

**Note:** Home Run Walk Off- The batter and runners on base do not need to run the bases on a home run over the fence. The hitting team is responsible for immediately retrieving home runs and foul balls that leave the field of play.

**\*THE HOME RUN EQUALIZER RULE:** Teams may hit home runs past the allowed number if:

- A) The opposing team has also reached the number allowed.
- B) Teams may only hit one more home run than the opposition when past the allowed number for the Division. All “untouched” fair balls hit over the fence by a team that has already reached its allowed number of Equalizer home runs will be ruled an OUT.

## COED - RULE AMENDMENTS

Current USA playing rules with the aforementioned league rules contained in the rules in the Manager's Information Booklet, shall govern all league games.

- Line-up:** Teams shall consist of **10** players on the field, 5 men and 5 women. Teams may begin or end a game with a minimum of eight (8) players, and at least four (4) must be women. The Co-Ed batting order must alternate; players arriving late are added to the bottom of the batting order, the line-up may not exceed 10 players. Men cannot outnumber the women without a penalty of an out in the batting order; if teams are starting a game batting less than 10 players, women can outnumber the men with no penalty.  
**EXCEPTION:** Co-Ed, if a female leaves the batting order due to injury, etc., and drops down to 9 players in the batting order, an out will be recorded in the vacated line-up spot, however, the team may play defensively with 5 men and 4 women (this situation is the only exception when a team can play with more men than women on the field defensively). There are no penalties for females hitting back-to-back.
- Extended Batting Order:** Teams may bat up to 16 players consisting of alternating female/male batting order in the lineup at the start of the game. (Exception Teams may have more females in the batting order than males.).  
The **Extra Player Rule** will be used with the following conditions:
  - Extra players may be used for a maximum total batting order of 16 players.  
When using extra players, you should have an even number of **male and female players** (11-16 players) in the line-up. If you drop below your original line-up, an automatic out will be recorded for each female vacancy in the lineup.
  - Teams cannot have more than 5 men on defense (exception dropping down to only 9 players (4 female, 5 male)).
- USA Softball Walk rule:** If a male walks w/ a female to follow; the male advances to 2<sup>nd</sup> base. With less than 2 outs, the female has to bat; with two outs, the female has the option to walk, and **must** declare prior to the first pitch, If a male is following another male (a female who had to depart the line-up), the advancement is only one base and no option is available.
- Softballs:** The 12" softballs will be used for the male batters, and the 11" balls will be used for the female batters. GSSA will use the optic yellow balls.
- Defensive positioning** of men and women is "random" and there is no "minimum line" for outfield players and NO defensive requirements for the number of men or women in the infield or outfield.
- Courtesy Runners:** a team may have one male and one female courtesy runner per inning. The courtesy runner must be of the same gender as the original runner.
- No contact at home plate: (Coed Leagues only)** All runners attempting to score at home will cross over a chalked line (scoring line) instead of touching home plate. **All plays at home plate will be force outs with no tag plays.** The fielder must have their feet on home plate to record an out before the runner crosses over the scoring line. Another chalked line (commit line) will be placed approximately two-thirds down from third base and once a runner crosses the commit line they must continue running to the scoring line. If a runner crosses over the commit line and then runs back to third base, that runner can be called out by the umpire once the fielder touches home plate.

## **LEAGUE SCHEDULE FORMATS, PLAYOFFS, & TIE-BREAKERS**

**FORMATS:** All leagues will play a schedule of 7 weeks plus playoffs. The top four (4) teams will advance to playoffs, #1 seed will play # 4 seed, # 2 seed will play # 3 seed and the winners will play in the championship game on the same day.

- All players will be required to have picture ID on playoff night to participate.
- Players participating in playoffs must be listed on the roster and have played in at least TWO games during the current season.
- Semi-final playoff games will be a 55 minute time limit with no new inning after 55 minutes; **A 15 run rule after 5 innings is in effect;**
- Tie-breaker rule will be used for all games.
- Championship Game, **75 minute time limit or 7 innings**, **A 15 run rule after 5 innings is in effect.**

**LEAGUE TIE-BREAKERS:** If two or more teams finish the regular season with identical records, the following tie-breaker system will be used to determine the seeding for the playoffs.

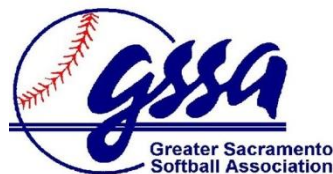
1. Head-to-head.
2. **Least amount of runs allowed** between the tied teams during the regular season.
3. **Most runs scored** between the tied teams during the regular season.
4. Coin Flip.

### **CHAMPIONSHIP AWARDS**

Championship Awards will be provided for each league winner. The team has the following options:

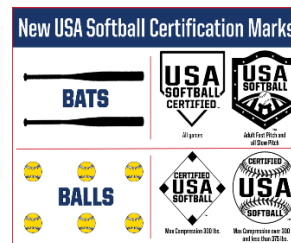
1. 15 Individual Championship Awards
2. \$ 100.00 Team Discount for future League Entry Fee

**GOOD LUCK AND HAVE A GREAT SOFTBALL SEASON!**



## BAT TESTING & CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

The official bat to be used in the GSSA/USA Softball Sacramento league play must meet all of the requirements of Rule 3, Section 1, and must bear **either** the ASA 2000, ASA 2004, ASA 2013 or the new approved USA Softball certification mark and must not be listed on an USA non approved list, **or**

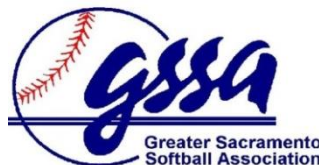


1. must be included on a list of approved bat models published by the USA National Office; or
2. must, in the sole opinion and discretion of the umpire, have been manufactured prior to 2000 and if tested, would comply with the USA bat performance standards then in effect.

*All bats in USA Championship Play or GSSA League must pass the USA bat standard. Bats that have the 2000 or 2004, 2013 or the new approved USA Softball certification mark will not be allowed in Rush/Antelope and Azevedo Park League Play unless they are listed on the approved bat list on the USA website. For convenience, the USA website has an updated listing of bats that do not pass the USA bat standard.*

*GSSA reserves the right to test any and all bats used in any GSSA league using one of the USA approved Bat Testing Machines.*

For a complete listing of **bats** that are approved for USA play; visit the certified equipment section of [www.usasoftball.com](http://www.usasoftball.com) Certified Equipment/Bats.



*Softball League Policy, Procedures and Playing Rules*



## **PLAYER EJECTIONS/APPEALS**

Any player ejected from a game must immediately leave the playing field/facility/premises. Failure to do so can result in a forfeiture of the game by the ejected player's team and suspension of additional games. If the ejected player refuses to leave the premises, the police will be called and the ejected player's team will suffer an automatic team forfeiture of the game.

Any player ejected from a game may receive an automatic one game suspension from all league play. This means the player is ineligible to participate in the next scheduled game and from any other Rusch and Antelope leagues that they may be participating in during that seven day period. Any player suspended will automatically be placed on probation for the remainder of the season or a minimum of four weeks.

Any player who violates the "Code of Conduct" while on probation will be suspended for the remainder of the season or a minimum of four weeks. A player who has been suspended from play cannot attend any game(s) even as a spectator from which he/she has been suspended. Any player ejected during the playoffs will be suspended from the first league game the next season that the player is a participant

Appeals may only be made on suspensions greater than two weeks. Any appeal must be in writing to the league director within 7 calendar days of being notified of the suspension. Any appeals must accompany any and all documentation as to why the suspension should be adjusted. The GSSA staff does not have the resources to investigate any and all appeals therefore it is critical that the appeal include all necessary reasons and evidence as to why the penalty should be adjusted

## **PLAYER CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Code of Conduct is established by the Greater Sacramento Softball Association to serve as a guideline for adult softball leagues on matters pertaining to the conduct of players, managers, and coaches. The Code outlines unacceptable behavior and suggests the minimum and maximum penalties for violations. **Players, coaches and managers shall abide by the Code of Conduct. Violation of the code, as outlined below, will result in disciplinary action.**

1. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Be physically aggressive toward any player (teammate or opponent), official (umpire or scorekeeper), league director, agency representative, or spectator. This includes any unwanted physical contact including, but not limited to, shoving, or striking a person before, during or after a game. If during a game, the player will be immediately ejected.

**MINIMUM PENALTY:** Immediate ejection and eight games probation.

**MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Suspension for ten years and probation for ten calendar years.

2. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Be verbally abusive toward any player (teammate or opponent), official (umpire or scorekeeper), league director, tournament director, agency, representative or spectator. This includes but is not limited to, use of profanity and/or racial slurs, harassment, threats, or intimidation before, during or after a game. If during a game the player will be immediately ejected.

**MINIMUM PENALTY:** Immediate ejection and eight games probation.

**MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Suspension for five calendar years.

3. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Refuse to abide by an official's decision.

**MINIMUM PENALTY:** Immediate ejection and probation for eight games.

**MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Suspension for one calendar year.

4. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Appear on the field of play under the influence of alcohol/drugs.

**MINIMUM PENALTY:** Immediate ejection and probation for eight games.

**MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Suspension for eight games.

5. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Use unnecessary roughness to an opposing player.

**MINIMUM PENALTY:** Immediate ejection and probation for eight games.

**MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Suspension for five calendar years.

6. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Demonstrate dissension at an official's decision.

**MINIMUM PENALTY:** Warning by the official.

**MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Immediate ejection, suspension for one game, and probation for eight games.

7. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Discuss with an official any decision reached by that official, unless the player is the manager or captain.

**MINIMUM PENALTY:** Warning by the official.

**MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Immediate ejection.

8. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Be found utilizing or bringing to the ballpark any altered equipment.

**MINIMUM PENALTY:** Suspension for two (2) years from all GSSA softball activities.

**MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Suspension for four (4) years from all GSSA softball activities.

Note: Team and Players from the team utilizing the altered equipment may be placed on probation

9. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Be guilty of gambling upon any play or the outcome of games with any spectator, player, or opponent. Officials are required to report violation of this rule to the League Director.

**MINIMUM PENALTY:** Placed on probation for remainder of season.

**MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Suspension for the remainder of the season.

10. **NO PLAYER SHALL:** Smoke while coming off or going on the field of play, or while on the field of play or in the dug-out.

**MINIMUM PENALTY:** Warning from official.

**MAXIMUM PENALTY:** Removal from the game.

### **SPECIAL NOTES**

- A player/coach/manager that is on probation for a Code of Conduct violation, and is reported for another violation of the Code of Conduct, will face double the normal penalty for the new violation. Any probation or suspension included in the penalty for the new violation will run consecutively with the former penalty.
- Any ejected player/coach/manager/official must leave the bench/dugout area immediately. Failure to do so may result in a maximum penalty for the violation. Any further action or disruption may result in the official ejecting the player or manager from the park or facility.
- For safety reasons, children and patrons viewing the game are not allowed in the dugout during the game.
- Rules subject to be amended at any time for the good of the game, health & safety reasons, such as changes to local County Health Department guidelines relating to COVID-19.