

Sherrills Ford Adult Co-Ed Softball League

Official 2026 Rule Book

SECTION A – LEAGUE ELIGIBILITY & PARTICIPATION

A1. League Purpose

The league is sponsored by the Sherrills Ford Optimist Club to promote fellowship, physical activity, community involvement, and positive sportsmanship in a safe, fun, and inclusive recreational environment.

A2. Player Eligibility

- Players must be **21 years or older** at the start of the season.
- **Max roster size:** 18 players
- Teams must maintain **at least 10 active players**, with **33% minimum female representation**.

A3. Co-Ed Requirements

- Minimum **3 female players** in **both** the batting lineup and defensive field.
- **Automatic out** applied for each missing female spot in lineup or field.
- **Catcher is a required defensive position** and counts as 1 of the 10 fielders.
- Teams may field up to 10 players, including **pitcher + catcher + max 4 outfielders**.
- Outfielders must start **behind the 200-ft line** until the ball is hit.
 - If an outfielder **leaves the 200-ft line early**, the play is immediately **declared dead**.
 - The batter is awarded **first base**, and all other runners advance **one base**.
 - This penalty is **automatic**; no warning is required.
- Minimum to start: 8 players with at least 2 females; missing third female → automatic out.

SECTION B — GAMEPLAY REGULATIONS

B1. Game Length

- 7 innings or 60 minutes, whichever comes first.
- No new inning begins after 55 minutes.
- 7th inning is open for runs; earlier innings capped at **10 runs per team**.
- Mercy rule:
 - 15-run lead after 4 innings
 - 10-run lead after 5 innings

B2. Pitching Rules

Pitching Screen

- Mandatory for all pitchers.
- Ball hitting any part of the screen = foul.
- After “good foul” used, screen contact = out.
- Screen placed **5 ft in front of rubber**, aligned to center line; can move left/right.

Pitching Box & Arc

- Pitcher must have **one foot inside pitching box** (Front: 45 ft, Back: 55 ft).
- Ball arc: 3–10 ft.
- One-second pause before release required.

B3. Batting

- Batters start **0–1 count**.
- Strike zone: **home plate + extended mat**.
- Good foul applies after 2 strikes.

B4. Walk Rules

1 Intentional Walks

- Only **2 intentional walks** allowed per batter before the full intentional walk rule applies.

2 Optional Team-Pitch

- On **4th ball**, batting team may **pitch 1 pitch to own batter**. Next strike will result in batter out.
- Good foul rule still in effect.

3 Walks Cannot Score Unless Bases Loaded

4 Hit-by-Pitch Walks are NOT ALLOWED

B5. Lineup & Co-Ed Rules

- Max 3 consecutive males per batting order.
- Automatic out if female missing in lineup or field.
- Lineup sheet submitted **5 minutes prior to game**.

B6. Home Run Rule

- Max **10 over-the-fence home runs per team**.
- Extra HR = out.

B7. Base Running

- No stealing.
- Leave base only after ball contact.
- Courtesy runners: 1 per inning, must be last recorded out of same gender.

SECTION C — FIELD & EQUIPMENT

C1. Defensive Alignment

- 10 players max: pitcher, catcher, 4 outfielders max, remaining infielders.
- Catcher position **mandatory**.
- Outfielders must **stay behind 200-ft line until ball contact**.

C2. Equipment

- Only USSSA-stamped bats allowed. **No senior bats.**
- Illegal bat: first offense → warning; second offense → automatic out.
- Closed-toe shoes required; no metal cleats.
- 12" Classic M balls provided by league.

SECTION D – MISCELLANEOUS GAME POLICIES

D1. Courtesy & Safety

- Blood/injury: player leaves game until treated.
- Helmet optional but encouraged.
- Lightning: minimum 20-min delay after last lightning strike.

D2. Conduct & Discipline

- Zero tolerance for fighting, threats, or abuse.
- Ejection → minimum **1-game suspension**.
- Umpire authority is final.

D3. Protests

- Allowed for **rule misinterpretation** or **use of ineligible player**.
- Must be declared before next pitch or legal substitution.

SECTION E – PLAYOFFS

E1. Eligibility

- Player must appear in at least 3 regular season games.

E2. Seeding & Tiebreakers

- 1 Head-to-head
- 2 Runs allowed
- 3 Runs scored
- 4 Coin toss

E3. Format

- Double elimination, unless announced otherwise.

- Higher seed = home team.
- Championship tiebreaker: **international rule** (last out starts at 2nd).

SECTION F — SUMMARY OF KEY RULES

- **Max roster:** 18
- **3 females required** (batting & field) → automatic outs if missing
- **Catcher required**
- **Outfielders 200-ft hard line**
- **0–1 count, strike zone = plate + mat**
- **Walk rules:** optional team-pitch, no HBP walks, cannot score unless bases loaded
- **Pitching screen, box, arc**
- **Mercy rule,** 7 innings, courtesy runners
- **Conduct, protests, administrative policies** fully enforced