



SYDNEY OUTFIELDERS SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION INC. 2024/2025 COMPETITION RULES

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1. GENERAL

- 1.1 The competition will be conducted under the [2022-2025 WBSC Official Rules of Softball – Slow Pitch](#), as adopted by Softball Australia, unless otherwise provided for in these rules. These rules shall prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.
- 1.2 The Sydney Outfielders Softball Association Committee ('the Committee') reserves the right to vary any of the competition rules if special circumstances arise. The Committee will notify team captains and association members of any substantive variation to the rules.

2. REGISTRATION, ELIGIBILITY AND MEMBERSHIP

Team entries:

- 2.1 Before the commencement of each new season, the Committee will invite entries from teams that participated in the previous season and any new teams.
- 2.2 Team entries must be completed in the manner and by the deadline set down by the Committee.
- 2.3 Any team entry not received by the nominated deadline may not be accepted.
- 2.4 The Committee reserves the right to refuse the entry of any team.

Player registration:

- 2.5 All players must register for a new season in the manner determined by the Committee. An application for registration must be accompanied by the appropriate membership fee.
- 2.6 The fee payable by applicants, including full fees and concession fees, will be determined and published by the Committee prior to the commencement of each new season.
- 2.7 Concession membership: players who are aged 25 or younger at the time of registration, or who hold a valid concession card, may register for the entire season for half-price. The Committee may ask for proof of age or concession card.
- 2.8 The Committee retains a discretion to waive, reduce or arrange a payment plan in respect of an applicant's registration fee in the event an applicant is experiencing financial hardship.
- 2.9 When registering for a new season, players may indicate a team preference. To the extent practicable, the Committee will endeavour to honour a player's team preference in consultation with the team's captains.
- 2.10 All players must be at least 16 years of age as at the competition commencement date.
- 2.11 The Committee reserves the right to refuse the registration of any person.

Players and captains:

- 2.12 Each team must nominate at least one member to be captain of the team.
- 2.13 All players and captains who participate in the competition must be registered before playing.
- 2.14 Unregistered players are not permitted to play. In the event a team participates in a game with an unregistered player, the game will result in a forfeit for the team.
- 2.15 Each team must comprise a minimum of 50 per cent non-male identifying players at registration.
- 2.16 Players from one team may fill in for another team during the regular season if the other team does not have a sufficient number of players to participate in a game.
- 2.17 Only players who have played in at least 3 games throughout a season may participate in the final series of that season.

2.18 Players may only play for their registered team in the final series.

3. COMPETITION STRUCTURE

3.1 The competition will be conducted on Tuesdays from October to March, unless otherwise determined by the Committee.

3.2 The competition structure, including the final series, and season draw will be settled and published by the Committee before the commencement of each new season.

3.3 Games shall be played at the time and place set down in the season draw unless otherwise directed by the Committee.

3.4 The Committee will maintain and update a competition standings table during the season.

3.5 The standings will be determined by ranking teams in descending order by cumulative points (that is, game points earned during the season).

3.6 Where teams are equal on cumulative game points, their standings shall be determined by runs differential (that is, runs for minus runs against).

3.7 Game points will be awarded as follows:

3.7.1 Win = 4 points

3.7.2 Draw = 2 points

3.7.3 Loss = 1 point

3.7.4 Bye = 2 points

3.7.5 Forfeit = 0 points for the forfeiting team, 4 points for the opposing team

3.8 For games that are cancelled or abandoned, game points will be awarded in accordance with Rules 10.4, 10.8 or 10.9 as applicable.

3.9 Teams wishing to forfeit must notify the Secretary of the Association and the opposing team captain at least 2 hours before the scheduled start time of a game. Failure to do so will result in an unnotified forfeit. Teams that fail to provide notice of a forfeit in accordance with this rule more than once in a season may be subject to disciplinary action, which could include the loss of points, subject to the discretion of the Committee.

3.10 In the event two teams scheduled to play each other both seek to forfeit, the game will be declared a double forfeit, resulting in 0 game points to each team. Teams are not permitted to agree to a draw in such circumstances.

4. GAME DAY RULES

Start and end of games:

- 4.1 All games start at 6.30pm unless otherwise specified in the season draw.
- 4.2 A 10-minute grace period is allowed beyond the official start time of a game. If the required number of players arrive within the grace period, the game will be played and recorded as an official game.
- 4.3 The team designated as the home team under the season draw is to field first. The away team is to bat first.
- 4.4 Games end at or before last light (even if they commence late) or after seven innings, whichever occurs first. Last light should be mutually agreed in good faith by team captains.
- 4.5 In the event team captains are not able to reach an agreement on when to end a game:
 - 4.5.1 In the case of bad or last light, the game is to end within 10 minutes of the time of sunset published by the Bureau of Meteorology; or
 - 4.5.2 In the case of poor weather and/or ground conditions, Rule 10.7 applies.
- 4.6 Team captains must mutually decide when the last inning will be held prior to its commencement.
- 4.7 Once the final inning of a game has commenced it should be completed. Exceptions include:
 - 4.7.1 The bottom half of the inning need not be played if the home team is already ahead;
 - 4.7.2 The game ends by default if the home team scores the winning run in the bottom half of the inning (e.g., if the score is 5-5 going into the bottom half of the inning and the home team scores, the game is over);
 - 4.7.3 The team captains agree that the game cannot be continued on account of bad light, in which case the score will revert to the previous inning;
 - 4.7.4 The game is abandoned due to poor weather and/or ground conditions, in which case the score will revert to the previous inning.
- 4.8 A team can score a maximum of 6 runs per inning except for the final inning. There is no run limit in the final inning.

Interference with play:

- 4.9 Games are held on open (non-enclosed) fields. If the ball becomes 'blocked' (that is, a batted or thrown ball is lodged in fencing; or stopped, handled, or touched by a person not engaged in the game; or touches an object not part of the playing territory), then the ball becomes 'dead'.
- 4.10 Team captains are to mutually decide which base the batter/runner(s) would have reached had the ball not been blocked. In the event team captains are not able to agree, the play is to be replayed.

- 4.11 A fielder must move out of the path of the base runner when not making a play. Failure to do so will result in the base runner being called 'safe' at the base they were heading toward.

Batting and base running:

- 4.12 Batters are not permitted to 'bunt'. Any player who bunts the ball will be called 'out'.
- 4.13 Sliding into any base is prohibited. Any batter/runner caught sliding should be called 'out' by the umpire.
- 4.14 A base runner must not run more than one metre outside of either side of the baseline. If they do, they must be called 'out'.
- 4.15 The batter/runner should run home between the 3rd base line and the dead ball line to prevent collisions with any fielders. 'Home' is the extension of the first base line behind the home plate. The catcher/fielder may play anywhere on the home plate. Any play at home is deemed to be a force play (that is, there is no tagging at home).
- 4.16 The batter/runner must not touch the home plate when running home. If the batter/runner does so, they must be called 'out' by the umpire.
- 4.17 Once the batter/runner passes the halfway point between 3rd base and home ('the commitment line'), they must commit to running home. If the batter/runner returns to 3rd base after passing the commitment line, they must be called 'out'.
- 4.18 If a base runner is hit by a batted ball in foul ball territory or while standing on a base, the ball should be called 'dead' and the base runner is not out.
- 4.19 If a base runner is hit by a batted ball while running between bases, the runner is out and the ball remains live such that fielders may make plays and other base runners may attempt to run to the next base.
- 4.20 If a base runner is hit by a thrown ball, the base runner is not out, play is to continue, and the ball remains live.

Pitching, catching and fielding:

- 4.21 The pitched ball must hit the strike plate for a strike to be awarded.
- 4.22 The ball must arc between 6ft and 12ft from the ground to be counted as a strike. Balls pitched lower or higher must be called a 'ball' and not a 'strike' by the umpire.
- 4.23 If a batter is hit by a pitched ball, a 'ball' must be called. The batter should make an effort to get out of the way of the ball.
- 4.24 A team's pitcher in the first and second inning of each game cannot be the same player. One player not identifying as male must pitch in the first or second inning.
- 4.25 A team's catcher in the first and second inning of each game cannot be the same player.
- 4.26 In any given innings, the pitcher and the catcher must not both be male identifying.

- 4.27 When a ball is overthrown by a fielder and ends up out-of-bounds (that is, over the second line indicating foul ball territory), the base runner may advance an extra base.

5. TEAM COMPOSITION

- 5.1 No team may take the field with fewer than 7 registered players.
- 5.2 A team may have a maximum of 10 players on the field at one time.
- 5.3 There may be no more than 3 male-identifying players in the infield and no more than 2 male-identifying players in the outfield.
- 5.4 Two male-identifying players may not bat consecutively. An 'out' must be declared before a male-identifying player bats immediately after another male-identifying player. There is no restriction on the number of female-identifying or gender diverse players who can bat consecutively.
- 5.5 Any team that fails to comply with Rules 5.3 and/or 5.4 at a game, without reasonable excuse, on more than one occasion may be subject to disciplinary action by the Committee, including but not limited to the game being declared a forfeit on the part of the offending team.
- 5.6 Players are free to self-identify their gender in good faith.

6. UMPIRING

- 6.1 The batting team is responsible for designating a person to umpire the game during the team's turn at batting.
- 6.2 The designated umpire may change within the inning (for example, if the current umpire is due to bat).
- 6.3 The umpire is not permitted to base coach while they are the designated umpire.
- 6.4 Players should be familiar with the rules so that they can provide clear and fair umpiring.

Disputes during games:

- 6.5 A team captain may challenge a call made by the umpire. Any such challenges must be made in good faith and by reference to the Competition Rules.
- 6.6 Players other than team captains must not approach the umpire or opposing team captains or players to protest a call. Any dispute about an umpiring call must only be conducted between team captains and the umpire.
- 6.7 An umpire's final decision in respect of a judgment call is binding and cannot be subject to further challenge.
- 6.8 If a dispute involves the technical interpretation or application of the rules (that is, a non-judgment call), the team captains and umpire may resolve the dispute by agreeing:
- 6.8.1 Upon an outcome as to the play or dispute; or

- 6.8.2 To re-play the play, including by re-setting the hit, runs scored and bases advanced during the play that is the subject of the dispute.
- 6.9 If the team captains and umpire cannot agree on the outcome of a dispute, the game will come to an end. An outcome of “game ended due to dispute” is required to be recorded on the scoresheet. Team captains must report the outcome and provide the scoresheet to the Committee. The Committee will seek information from both teams about the dispute and will decide whether the game will be recorded as a “tie” or a “loss-loss”. No re-play of games will be permitted, and no runs will be recorded to either team's standing.
- 6.10 Any claims of bad faith on the part of a team captain or umpire that are substantiated by the Committee may result in disciplinary action.

7. FINALS

- 7.1 The structure of the final series will be determined and published by the Committee before the start of each season.
- 7.2 If the Committee determines that the structure of the final series should be altered in any way before the final series begins, any such alterations will only be imposed by the Committee after attaining the agreement of a majority of team captains.
- 7.3 Final series games will follow the same game rules as played during the round robin competition, except that a win-loss result must be obtained for the grand final.
- 7.4 If any game in the final series is abandoned, then the team placed higher after the preliminary rounds (that is, at the conclusion of the round robin series) is declared the winner of the game.
- 7.5 If any grand final game is abandoned, the game will be rescheduled if possible. If it is not possible to reschedule the game(s), Rule 7.4 applies.

8. UNIFORMS

- 8.1 Teams are to make their best efforts to organise team uniforms, including playing shirts and caps.
- 8.2 Players without a team uniform should wear appropriate clothing similar to their team uniform colour.
- 8.3 Shoes with metal or screw-in studs, spikes, or metal cleats are not permitted. Players may wear plastic or moulded cleats.

9. EQUIPMENT AND PLAYING FIELD

- 9.1 All match balls will be provided by the Association.
- 9.2 All equipment, except for gloves, will be provided by the Association, and must be of an acceptable standard.
- 9.3 Any damaged equipment must be brought to the attention of the Committee for replacement to avoid injury.

- 9.4 Any ground issue which could be deemed dangerous must be reported to the Committee to ensure it can be investigated.

10. CANCELLATION AND ABANDONMENT OF GAMES

Cancellation before games commence:

- 10.1 Any decision about the cancellation of games before they commence due to adverse weather and/or unsafe playing conditions will be made by the Committee. Such a decision is final and binding on all teams. Adverse weather may include heavy rain, hail, lightning, temperatures above 36 degrees Celsius, wind speeds exceeding 40km per hour and other conditions described as “extreme weather” under the [Softball Australia Adverse Weather Policy](#).
- 10.2 Games cannot be played and will be cancelled if the playing fields are closed by Centennial Parklands.
- 10.3 The Committee will communicate any decision to cancel games to team captains directly and to the general membership by social media. The Committee will endeavour to communicate such decisions by no later than 4.30pm on the day of games.
- 10.4 Where a round of games is cancelled, all affected games will be declared a draw.

Abandonment of games during play:

- 10.5 Team captains may agree to suspend or abandon games during play if weather and/or ground conditions are deemed unsafe. This decision is binding on all players of the relevant game.
- 10.6 A team captain may not unilaterally suspend or abandon a game. Any purported decision to do so will result in a forfeit for the captain’s team.
- 10.7 In the event team captains are unable to agree as to whether a game should be suspended or abandoned, the team captains are to call upon the nearest committee member from a neutral team to make the decision.
- 10.8 In the event that a game is abandoned during play, the result will stand if 3 or more innings have been completed. Uncompleted innings will not count towards the final score.
- 10.9 If a game is abandoned during play, but before 3 full innings have been played, the game will be declared a draw.

11. BEHAVIOUR

- 11.1 All players are bound by the Sydney Outfielders Players' Code of Conduct. Captains are also bound by the Sydney Outfielders Captains' Code of Conduct.
- 11.2 Players must not use illicit substances and/or alcohol during games. Any violation of this rule should be reported to the Committee and may result in a forfeit.

Code of Conduct violations:

- 11.3 If, during a game, a player engages in behaviour which is alleged to be a violation of the [Players' Code of Conduct](#) or, where applicable, the [Captains' Code of](#)

Conduct (collectively, the 'Codes of Conduct'), a team captain may raise a complaint about the behaviour with the other team captain(s) and the umpire.

- 11.4 The team captains and umpire may agree to deal with the alleged violation by:
 - 11.4.1 Providing a verbal warning to the player; or
 - 11.4.2 For serious violations, or for subsequent infractions by the same player, ejecting the player from the game and fields.
- 11.5 If the team captains and umpire are unable to reach an agreement about how to deal with the alleged violation, the game will come to an end. An outcome of "game ended due to dispute" is required to be recorded on the scoresheet. Team captains must report the outcome and provide the scoresheet to the Committee. The Committee will seek information from both teams about the dispute and will decide whether the game will be recorded as a "tie" or a "loss-loss". No re-play of games will be permitted, and no runs will be recorded to either team's standing.
- 11.6 Any other alleged violations of a Code of Conduct may be reported to the Committee by email to info@sydneyoutfielders.org.au.
- 11.7 The Committee will investigate any complaints about violations of the Codes of Conduct it considers warrant investigation.
- 11.8 Any disciplinary action taken by the Committee in response to a complaint about a violation of a Code of Conduct will be dealt with in accordance with clauses 9, 10 and 11 of the Sydney Outfielders Softball Association Constitution.