**Town of Onondaga Parks & Recreation**

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**2025 CO-ED SOFTBALL LEAGUE RULES**

The league or the Town of Onondaga or any other affiliates will not be responsible for injuries or property damage to all teams, players, coaches, and or other participants in the Town of Onondaga Recreation Leagues. There is no accident or injury insurance provided through the league. It is up to the team or individual participants to provide their own medical or property insurance.

**The USSSA 2025 Softball Rulebook will apply in any situation not covered in these rules.**

**General Park Rules and Rainouts**

1. Park rules are posted. Teams failing to follow these rules will receive a warning.
   1. If a problem recurs, the team may be expelled without a refund.
2. Teams are responsible for the conduct of their players, children and their fans in the park.
   1. There is to be no arguing with umpires’ rulings. All calls are final, and play should be respectful of officials at all times.
3. **No alcohol is allowed in town parks per posted rules.**
4. **Dogs are prohibited in all our parks.**
5. In the case of severe rain or unplayable fields:
   1. If the games are canceled *before* 4:30 pm, captains will be notified by the Parks & Rec Staff via email.
   2. If the fields are prepared for play and it rains *after* 4:30 pm, the call is made by officials on the field.  There will be no notice from the Parks & Rec Staff. The first game teams must show up the required number of players or risk a forfeit no matter how hard it’s raining or how muddy the fields.
      1. At the game site, the umpire will decide as to the fitness of the grounds. Once the game begins, it is the decision of the umpires.
      2. If the first game is canceled, no matter what the weather is thereafter, the following games are canceled.
      3. Do not attempt to fix the fields once they are soaked.  Do not make trenches or throw/rake ball mix out of the infield onto the grass to try and get rid of puddles. Doing so will only create more work for our Parks crew to fix.
6. Rained-out or rescheduled games will be made up by;
   1. Arranging cancelled games using any open field times.
      1. *This may cause previously scheduled games to move to fit scheduling.*
   2. If needed, games will be made-up by extending the season.
      1. *Season will be extended no later than the first week in September*
   3. Revisions to the schedule will be emailed to captains following cancellations.

**Procedural Rules**

1. Field Configuration is as follows: (*umpires will set up bases at the start of each game*)
   1. Home plate to pitching “mound”: Fifty (50) feet
   2. Bases are placed sixty-five (65) feet apart
2. Homeruns:
   1. Any fair, batted ball that lands in the wooded area, pavilion or play area surrounding the park beyond the field of play, **without first being touched by a player, striking a tree in foul/out of play territory, or striking the playing field in fair territory,** will be deemed a home-run.
3. All-you-can-get:
   1. Any fair, batted ball that lands in the wooded area, pavilion or play area surrounding the park beyond the field of play, **after being touched by a fielding player, whether it has touched the field of play or not, is considered “all you can get”**, and the play continues.
   2. Additional “all-you-can-get” scenarios applied to untouched batted balls:
      1. Enters the woods **right** of the red flag on **field 1** at Howlett Hill.
      2. Enters the woods **left** of the red flag on **field 2** at Howlett Hill.
      3. Enters the pavilion behind left field at **field 1** at King Park.
4. Ground-rule double:
   1. A ground-rule double will be called when any **“untouched”,** fair, batted ball that lands in the wooded area, pavilion or play area surrounding the park beyond the field of play, after striking the ground in fair territory in the field of play;
      1. **To the left** of the red flag marker on **field one (1)** at Howlett Hill.
      2. **To the right** of the red flag marker on **field two (2)** at Howlett Hill.
   2. A ground-rule double **“MAY”** be called when any **“touched”,** fair, batted ball that lands in the wooded area, pavilion or play area surrounding the park beyond the field of play, after striking the ground in fair territory in the field of play. **This is at the sole discretion of the umpire to determine if the defensive player intentionally helps the ball into the woods to create a ground-rule double that otherwise would not have reached into the woods on its own volition. If the umpire determines that the defensive players helped the ball into the woods, then it is all the batter and any other runners can get;**
      1. **To the left** of the red flag marker on **field one (1)** at Howlett Hill.
      2. **To the right** of the red flag marker on **field two (2)** at Howlett Hill.
5. All games will be seven (7) innings.
   1. In case of inclement weather, darkness or other unforeseen circumstances, four (4) innings will constitute a completed game (*3.5 innings if the home team is ahead*).
6. Any Official Game (*4 innings or 3 ½ if the home team is ahead*) that is called in the middle of an inning will have the final score as that of the last completed full inning. If it is a tie, it will stay a tie and be reflected as such in the standings, and the game will not be replayed.
   1. Tie games will count as a half-a-win and half-a-loss for each team.
7. All playoff games must consist of seven (7) full innings unless the 12-run mercy rule is invoked in order for the game to be complete.
   1. Any playoff game which is called because of darkness or other unforeseen circumstance before four (4) innings are completed will replay the game from the beginning. After four (4) completed innings, the game will be continued from the point that play was suspended.
8. Grace time (*to allow players to arrive*) is five (5) minutes for the first game only. There is no grace period for the second game.
9. There is a **one hour and ten-minute time limit for the first game** of the evening. The time begins at the scheduled game time and includes the grace period.
   1. There is no time limit for the second game of the evening.
10. Batting order (including last names and positions), game ball, and umpire’s fees must be turned in to the umpires before the game starts.
11. Both teams must keep their own score and **the home team’s book is the official score book.**
    1. *Visitors should check scores between innings.*
12. At the end of each game you win, your book must be signed by one umpire.
13. Winning team must call or email the score in by 9:00 AM on the Thursday directly following the game.
    1. Failure to call in your score could result in a loss even though you may have won the game on the field. Please make sure you phone in the accurate score.
14. The four teams with the best season records make the playoffs.
    1. Ties in the standings at the end of the regular season will be broken by the following procedure;
       1. leader in head-to-head results of the teams in question, then,
       2. by total number of runs scored by the teams in question then,
       3. by a simple coin toss, conducted by the League Director, with one witness from each team present.
          1. *The decision of the League Director will be final*.
15. The twelve (12) run “mercy” rule is in effect for all games (including playoffs).
    1. If a team is ahead by twelve (12) or more runs from the fifth inning on, or four-and-a-half if the home team is ahead, the game is over.
16. If a protest arises during the game, the captain or manager of the protesting team should immediately notify the umpire and their opponents that the game is under protest, and a note made at that point in the official score book signed by the umpire. Protests may be made on matters involving interpretation of the playing rules or on eligibility of players -never on judgment calls.
    1. All protests must be in the recreation office in writing by noon on the Friday immediately following the protested game, with a $25.00 protest fee. If the protest is lost the money is not returned, if the protest is valid the fee is returned.
    2. A formal protest should contain the following information:
       1. The date, time, and place of the game.
       2. The names of the umpires and score keepers.
       3. The score books.
       4. The rule under which the protest is being filed.
       5. The decision and/or conditions surrounding the cause of protest.
       6. All necessary facts involved in the matter of the protest.
17. Any unsportsmanlike actions or conduct by a team or its members may result in ejection from the game at the discretion of the umpire(s) or even suspension or removal from the league pending investigation by the League Director. Such behavior could include, but not be limited to foul language, incessant arguing, verbal or physical abuse directed at another player, fan, and/or official, and fighting. An ejected player will be suspended from the next scheduled game. A second ejection will result in permanent suspension.

**Roster & Player Rules**

1. Maximum number of players on the roster is twenty (20).
   1. Players must be at least 18 years of age and should be prepared to provide proof of identity (e.g., driver’s license) if necessary.
   2. Any individual may only be on one roster at any given time.
      1. An individual may choose to be removed from one team and play for another before the final roster deadline but may only do this once.
      2. To qualify as a player eligible for playoffs, they must play at least four (4) full games with the new team.
2. Additions to the roster must be submitted to the Recreation Department Office at the above address by the Monday before the scheduled game.
   1. No roster changes may be made after the first Friday in July.
   2. Only players on the final roster who have played in at least four (4) regular season games are eligible for playoffs.
3. Teams must have at least nine (9) players at game time, minimum of five (5) males and four (4) females. **Teams may bat a maximum of 12 players; (7) males’ maximum as long as there is (5) females.**
   1. A tenth player may enter the game at any time, but must bat tenth (10) in the lineup
      1. If a team begins a game with nine (9) players, and the ratio is five (5) males and four (4) females (*and a tenth male player is anticipated to arrive after the game has begun)* their starting lineup must not have a male player in the 1st and 9th batting position, as to allow for the arriving player to be placed in the 10th batting slot. The 10th player may enter the game at anytime during the game if the play is not “IN” and have been reported to the umpires and opposing team.
      2. A team may start a game with (9) players, and if the ratio is six (6) males and three (3) females (*and a tenth female player is anticipated to arrive after the game has begun), but the missing 4th female must be added at the start of the game to the bottom of the line up and any plate appearance of the missing female will be an automatic out until the 4th missing female arrives.*
   2. An 11th and/or 12th player may be added after the games starts as long as the number of males is never more than 2 females. The player/s must be entered at the bottom of the lineup. (but not entered in a way that 3 males hit consecutively) The added player/s may enter the game at any time during the game as long as play is not “IN” and have been reported to the umpires and opposing team.
4. You must finish the game with the same number of batters in your lineup as you began with. If a team loses a player due to any reason other than injury, and cannot replace him/her, that batter’s spot in the line-up becomes an automatic out and remains so for the remainder of the game\*, or until a substitute is inserted.
   1. \*If a player is injured during a game, the injured players place in the order will be “skipped”, not an out, as long as the number of males remains (2) or fewer than females.
      1. If a female is injured and cannot continue play and it creates a situation that there are 3 more males than females, the team may also drop any male from the line up and be considered “skipped” as well. The dropped female and male must not create a situation where 3 males’ bat consecutively. A team may not use section 27.a.i if the team were to fall below 9 total players to finish the game.
   2. If a team is unable to field at least 9 players after a game has begun, the game will be forfeited by the team unable to produce enough players.

**Batting**

1. Teams must bat with alternating genders through the line-up when an equal number of males and females are present.
   1. If teams have an unequal number of males or females, the line-up shall not exceed six (6) males, making the male to female ratio 6:4.
   2. There shall be no more than two (2) males batting in succession in the line-up.
   3. Any variation on line-ups must be agreed to by both team captains at the ground rules before the game begins.
2. When teams use the Additional Hitters (AH), any ten (10) may come out on defense during any inning, as long as there are at least four (4) females on the field. The batting order does not change.
3. Male batters must bat “opposite-handed” from their natural hitting style. If a defensive team decides to “challenge” a male batter, he can be made to change to the other batter’s box.
   1. This may only be done ONCE to any given male batter during a game, and that batter will remain in the changed batting style for the remainder of that game. Only exception is in section 30.b below. **This rule is in the interest of safety.**
   2. **The defensive team may not elect to switch back (“turn”) the batter to the original hitters’ box, unless the batter agrees. This is also done in the interest of safety if the defensive teams figure out that the batter was originally hitting opposite handed.**
4. The “3-2” count: each batter starts with no balls and no strikes. Three (3) balls sanction a walk, and two (2) strikes incurs a strike-out.
   1. Male batters will not be given two bases on a walk, just first base, like any usual base on balls.
   2. A batter is out if they hit two foul balls AFTER the first strike. The umpire will usually remind a batter when the next hit must be fair.
5. The plate is “alive” - a pitched ball that hits home plate may be called a strike, but it is not automatic.
6. The batter is out for stepping on or across home plate while hitting a fair or foul ball. If this occurs, the ball is dead.
   1. Any base runners would remain where they were at the time of the pitch.

**Pitching**

1. The pitching distance is fifty (50) feet. A Pitcher may elect to go back up to six (6) feet from the “mound”, to get a walking start.
2. The pitching arc is “3’ to 10’” - three feet higher than the pitcher’s hand at release point and not higher than 10 feet from ground. This is completely within the umpire’s jurisdiction. As the rulebook states, there is to be no arguing of balls and strikes.
3. No pump fake while pitching; otherwise, the umpire can call a no-pitch or a ball.

**Baserunning**

1. Courtesy runners are allowed.
   1. Courtesy runners must be the last person out of the same gender.
   2. One courtesy runner is allowed per inning for each gender.
      1. Anytime the batter/runner that was pitch ran for reaches safely in the same inning, a courtesy runner is allowed again for that batter/runner.
   3. *This rule is a sportsmanlike tool to avoid causing or aggravating an injury.*
2. There is a “courtesy step”. Base runners may come off their bag when the pitch reaches the plate or hits the ground. (*It can be more than one step*).
3. All runners must either slide into second base when there is a play at the bag or run out of the way of the defense when the play at second is complete and a throw to first is attempted (*double play*).
   1. If a player runs into a defensive player who is standing up with the ball, it will be called interference and an automatic double play, with interfering player and the runner closest to home both called out.

**Equipment**

1. Usable bats will be listed as “Licensed Bats” by the U.S.S.S.A. web site (www.usssa.com).
   1. All bats must be USSSA must have this logo:
   2. *Changes on this list may occur during the season.*
2. Whichever team is “home” must provide bases. The safety bag at 1st is mandatory.
3. The Home team must supply a new ball for each game. A “12” softball will be used at all times in play.
   1. Visitors should supply a back-up ball that is acceptable to the umpires.
4. There is no uniform rule, but all players must have same color shirt. Shirts are to be worn at all times.
5. Any cleats that are used must be plastic. No metal cleats are allowed

**Umpire fees and Forfeits**

1. An umpire is to receive $35.00/game for a regulation game of at least 4 innings or 3-1/2 innings if the home team is ahead.
2. If a game is started but does not reach the point of being an official game, umpires receive half fee ($17.50 per game). If and when the game is rescheduled, the full fee must be paid by the teams.
3. If only one umpire reports to the game each team pays that umpire **$25.00** per game.
   1. *Please notify the League Director later if this ever happens.*
4. If both teams and umpires are present and the game is not started, each team pays the umpires a $5.00 show-up fee.
5. In the event a team forfeits a game, the forfeiting team will be responsible for the $70.00 forfeit fee.
   1. In case of a forfeit, do NOT pay the umpires at the field. The fee is paid by the Recreation Department through the forfeit fund.
   2. If a team forfeits, it must replenish the fee after the forfeit to remain in the league. This replenishment is due to the recreation department before the following weeks games begin.
   3. Any moneys designated as “forfeit fees” will be returned to the team captains after the conclusion of the season.
   4. **This forfeit fee can be easily avoided by notifying the recreation supervisor before Noon on gameday or sooner.**

Any additions or rule changes will be forwarded in writing to the listed Team Captain/Manager.