

FREEDOM MEN'S SOFTBALL LEAGUE LOCAL RULES AND PROCEDURES (2026)

Note: The current edition of the A.S.A. Official Rules of Softball will be the official rulebook for this program. Local rules and procedures will supersede where applicable. Two competing teams or managers may not agree to alter any rules, except for the use of additional courtesy runners in the case of an injury. Everything in this document is in addition to the official rules or supersedes them.

I. Facility Policies:

- a. Participants and spectators may not carry-in alcoholic beverages at any time.
 - i. The umpires and/or the Freedom Men's Softball League Director will enforce this policy.
 - ii. If participants violate Policy I-A, they may be suspended from participation, or their team may be removed from the league.
- b. Music will be allowed in the dugout and at the facility.
 - i. The volume of the music played must be reasonable and subject to change depending on the discretion of the Freedom Men's Softball League Director and/or the umpires.
 - ii. The music must be in good taste and appropriate for a park setting with children and families in attendance.
 - iii. If the opposing team objects to the music in the dugout, the team captain must inform the umpires, and the umpires will require the music to be turned off.

II. Equipment:

- a. Metal spikes are not allowed.
 - i. The player must remove the cleats to continue participation; refusal will result in disqualification from game.
 1. No questions asked, this is a player safety rule.
- b. Only official softball bats as outlined by the ASA Rule will be allowed. See <https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Softball/Certified-Equipment/Equipment-Bats>. Bats cannot have any sort of composite material in the barrel.
 - i. An umpire or the opposing team may challenge whether a bat is approved.
 - ii. Ask the Freedom Men's Softball League Director before purchasing or using a bat in question.

III. Players and Substitutes:

- a. Batting Order:
 - i. **League players may only play on one team per night unless there is a team that has only 7 or 8 players.**
 1. **That team may then have 1 or 2 players from other teams in the league substitute to make 8 or 9.**
 2. **Cannot have a league player substitute to make ten for a team.**
 - ii. **The substitute / substitutes must bat last.**
 1. **The substitute cannot be a pitcher from our league that is going to pitch as a sub, unless the opposing team allows it.**
 - iii. Teams may begin and play a game with a minimum of eight players.

1. If a team playing with eight players has a player ejected or if a player leaves the game for any reason, that team will forfeit the game unless the opposing team allows an additional substitute for that player.
 - a. Can't get a sub for an ejected player.
 - iv. The eight players must occupy the first eight spots in the batting order.
 - v. If additional players arrive late, they will be added to the bottom of the lineup.
 - vi. If a player is injured or must leave the game with no eligible substitute available, their position in the batting order is left vacant and no penalty is assessed.
 1. A substitute can be made for an injured player during the game the injury happened, but it can't be a league player.
 - a. The opposing team must approve the substitute.
 - vii. If a player is ejected, an out will be assessed each time that player was to bat after the ejection.
 - viii. **End of year playoff: once a team is eliminated, any player from that team can no longer substitute for any other team.**
- b. Courtesy Runner:
- i. Teams will be awarded one courtesy runner per inning unless the opposing team agrees to allow another.
 1. If the same player comes up twice in the same inning, they will be permitted a second courtesy runner.
 - ii. The courtesy runner must be in the batting order and will be the player who made the last out.
 - iii. If a courtesy runner situation arises in the first inning and no outs have been recorded, the courtesy runner must be the last batter listed in the batting order.
 - iv. A courtesy runner may be used at any base.
- c. Fielding Positions:
- i. There will be total free substitution of players in the field on defense. However, there can never be more than ten players playing in the field at any one time.
- d. Conduct:
- i. Any player, manager, coach, or spectator resorting to unsportsmanlike conduct may result in ejection and suspension from league play.
 1. Unsportsmanlike conduct includes but is not limited to threatening or physically assaulting another person; vulgar, demeaning, or disrespectful behavior toward an umpire, player, manager, coach, or spectator; excessive profanity; and throwing bats.
 - ii. **Any player, manager, or coach ejected from a game under any circumstances is automatically suspended for at least the next game played by their team.**
 1. The Freedom Men's Softball League Director will make the final decision.

- iii. Two ejections in a season will result in the Freedom Men's Softball League Director making the decision on when or if the player can return that season.
- iv. The umpire and / or the Freedom Men's Softball League Director have the discretion to direct the ejected participant to exit the playing facility.
 - 1. The manager of the team affected shall be responsible for the removal of an ejected participant.
 - a. They are to direct the player to exit the playing facility.
 - i. The Freedom Men's Softball League Director will assist in this removal, if necessary.
 - ii. If the offender fails to leave within three minutes of being directed to exit the playing facility, the umpire will award a forfeit to the opposing team.
- v. It is the manager's responsibility to control this suspension and upon proven violation, both manager and player are subject to additional suspensions based on the Freedom Men's Softball League Director's discretion.

IV. The Game:

- a. Weather Cancellations:
 - i. The moment that the fields are deemed to be unplayable, the Freedom Men's Softball League Director will text all managers and post notice on the "Freedom Men's Softball League" Facebook page.
 - ii. Managers and players are encouraged to like and follow the "Freedom Men's Softball League" Facebook page to receive all league updates.
- b. Games will begin at the scheduled starting time.
 - i. Teams will warm up prior to the start of their game.
- c. A coin flip from the umpire at home plate will determine the home team before the game starts.
 - i. One player representative from each team will be present at home plate, next to the umpire during the coin flip.
 - ii. Once the game begins, teams may not "flip" who is home and away.
 - iii. During the coin flip is when teams will determine if they are playing for a case of beer.
 - 1. If one of the teams say "No" to playing for a case of beer, then there will be no playing for a case of beer.
 - 2. If no one says anything about playing for a case of beer, then it will be assumed that you're playing for a case of beer.
 - 3. If both teams say "Yes" to playing for a case of beer, then you will be playing for a case a beer.
 - a. The losing team buys a case of beer for the winning team by paying for a ticket at the concession stand.
- d. The games will be seven innings with no time limit.
 - i. The umpire shall engage the scoreboard by letting the third base team know the score as the runs happen and / or at the end of the inning.
 - ii. The run rules to end the game are as follows:
 - 1. Fifteen run deficit after 4 innings.
 - 2. Ten run deficit after 5 innings.

- e. Pitch arc will be a minimum of six feet with no maximum height.
 - i. For a pitch to be legal, the pitcher needs to be anywhere on the rubber or directly behind it.
 - 1. If the pitcher wants to pitch behind the rubber, they must stay within the rectangle rubber extended towards second base.
- f. Three balls will constitute a walk.
- g. A strike-out will consist of any combination of two strikes:
 - i. Two called.
 - ii. One called - one swing and miss.
 - iii. One called - one fouled.
 - iv. Two fouled balls.
 - v. One swing and a miss and one foul ball.
 - vi. Two swinging misses.
- h. Home plate and the mat will be used in determining balls and strikes.
 - i. If any part of the pitched ball lands on any part of the plate, including the black perimeter, and/or mat, it will be a strike.
- i. The ball will be dead, and the batter will be called out if at the time of contact with the ball, any part of either foot is on the plate or mat.
 - i. The batter is out, and the ball is dead if at the time of contact the batter's foot is past one bat length in front of home plate.
 - ii. The same goes for contacting the ball while either of the batter's feet are behind the back of the mat.
- j. Foul Ball / Foul Tip
 - i. The reference to the "height of the batter's head" as it relates to a Foul Ball and Foul Tip no longer applies.
 - ii. This change allows more opportunity for the catcher to obtain "outs" by catching foul batted balls.
- k. The home run limit will be two home runs per inning.
 - i. Home runs hit after the limit has been reached will be counted as outs.
 - ii. Over the fence home runs do not need to be run out; the batter and base runners may leave the field without establishing the next base.
- l. On a play at home plate, the runner may touch the white home plate or the mat, and the defensive player may touch the white home plate or the mat, on force outs.
 - i. Runners can be tagged out at plays at home plate.
 - 1. If there is no play on the plate or the runner is trying to avoid contact, the runner may touch either the mat or the white home plate.
 - ii. If the mat becomes displaced during a play (a preceding runner slides and the mat is kicked out into the left-handed batter's box), a runner must touch the white home plate on a force out or non-force out play.
- m. No Fake Tags.
 - i. Anyone who is caught fake tagging will be given one team warning.
 - ii. A second violation will result in an ejection.
- n. Collisions – deliberately crashing into a fielder with the ball:
 - i. When a defensive player has the ball and the runner deliberately crashes into the defensive player trying to apply the tag, the runner is out, the ball

is dead, and all other runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the collision.

1. If the umpire(s) determines the act to be fragrant, the offender will be ejected.
 - ii. To prevent a deliberate crash ruling, the runner can give up or slide.
 1. Simply running and advancing to the base needed to be safe is not an act of interference.
 - iii. Fielders shall not block the base without possession of the ball (that is obstruction), they shall stand to the side of the base, catch the ball, then apply the tag.
 - iv. If a defensive player is fielding a thrown ball and the flight of the ball draws the fielder into the path of the runner, this would not be a deliberate crash.
 - v. If the ball, runner, and the defensive player all arrive at the same time and contact is made, the umpire should not invoke the crash rule or obstruction – this is merely incidental contact.
- o. Double First Base:
- i. A batted ball hitting the white portion is fair and a batted ball hitting the colored portion is foul.
 - ii. Whenever a play (ball must be thrown to first base to record an out) is being made on the batter-runner, the defense must use the white portion, and the batter-runner must touch the colored portion.
 1. If a play is made at first base, but the ball is overthrown or the fielder is pulled off the base by an errant or missed throw, the batter-runner is allowed to use the white base if trying to advance to second base or avoiding a collision.
 2. On a play attempt on the batter-runner from the foul side of first base, or by an errant throw pulling the fielder off the base into foul ground, the batter-runner can use either white or colored portions of the base.
 3. On extra base hits or balls hit to the outfield when there is no play being made at the double base, the batter-runner may touch the white or colored portion.
 4. The batter-runner is allowed to legally return to either color base after he has touched or missed first base.
 - iii. Once the batter-runner has established being safe at first base, they must use the white portion of the base:
 1. When taking their position prior to the next pitch.
 2. When tagging up on a fly ball.
- p. Overrunning a Base:
- i. The batter-runner is not out if they overrun first base and turn *either way* unless they try to advance to second base and are touched with the ball while off first base.
 - ii. All other runners are out if they over run a base and are tagged with the ball while off the base.
- q. Base Path:
- i. The base path is three feet to either side of a direct line from one base to another.

- ii. The runner does not need to run in the base path unless a play is being made on him.
 - iii. In running the bases, a runner establishes the base path (batter-runner rounds first base on the way to second, the base path is on an arc).
 - iv. The ball remains in play if a base runner is called out for running outside the base path to avoid a tag.
- r. Dead Ball Area:
- i. Ball Carried into Dead Ball Area
 - 1. When a live ball is unintentionally carried by a fielder from playable territory into dead ball territory, the ball becomes dead, and all base runners are awarded one base from the last base touched at the time he entered dead ball territory.
 - ii. Catching Ball in Dead Ball Area
 - 1. When an imaginary line is used for the dead ball area, it is not a catch if either foot is entirely across the line on the ground when the catch is made.

V. Umpires

- a. Umpires are representatives of the Freedom Men's Softball League and are officially in charge of each game.
- b. All calls can be appealed by either umpire to either umpire, pending the situation of the play and at their discretion.
 - i. Players cannot invoke an appeal.
- c. Umpires will discuss rule interpretations only with the managers of both teams.
- d. Umpires are empowered to eject players and managers from games for violations of official rules and regulations or unsportsmanlike conduct.
- e. **Any circumstances arising that are not covered by the rule book or local rules will be left to the discretion of the umpires and/or the Freedom Men's Softball League Director.**