

RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE SAMSPA OPEN DIVISION

SAMSPA follows Softball Canada Rules whenever possible.

The following notes summarize the exceptions to the standard rule book for the Open Division.

SAMSPA 2026 OPEN DIVISION -- Rule Book Exceptions

1. *Rule Exception – Starting Number of Players & Grace Period for Start of Play:*

This SAMSPA rule book exception allows for a 10-minute “grace” period from the scheduled start time of a game to field a team before a forfeit is declared. The exception also states that teams are allowed to start a game with eight (8) players that are on the team’s roster. The team that is “short” players may choose to “pick-up” players from the same or a lower division (A is highest, B is higher than C and so on) to create a team of 10. If the team that is “short” players’ elects to play the game with fewer than 10 but not less than 8, the team may bat the number of players they have, and **NO** automatic out will apply to the missing batting order spot(s).

******In the event a team at any point reduces to 7 players due to injury or ejection with no available substitutes, the game is immediately forfeited.

******Should any team lose a player due to injury or ejection during the game and is unable to substitute that batting position, that batting position will be ruled an AUTOMATIC OUT for the remainder of the game.

If a team only has seven (7) players from their roster present at game time, the team has the option to “pick-up” three (3) players from the same or lower divisions, but only with consent of the opposing team’s manager. When consent is given, the game becomes official, the umpire will have the game played out, and it will not be deemed a forfeit. When consent is not granted by the opposing team, the game will be “forfeited” by the team that is missing players, and the umpires may leave the diamond. If players on their roster arrive after the lineup has been submitted, the team that has picked up players may choose to replace the picked-up players with the late arriving players or may add the late arriving players to the bottom of the batting order. Players may not be added to the bottom of the batting order once that team has gone through the batting order one or more times unless consent is received from the opposing manager.

** ALL players in all divisions, whether they are full time, part time or a one-time player must sign the insurance waiver, which is on the SAMSPA website, located under the Teams tab – Player -Player Waiver.

**No substitute players are allowed during any of the playoff rounds for any team.

2. Rule Exception – Strike Zone VS Mat Zone:

For 2026, the OPEN DIVISION is ruled strictly by a “mat zone” as determined and enforced by the game umpire. The mat will be made of “wood” or other material that is audible when it is hit by the ball. The dimensions of the mat will be 22 inches wide, 40 inches long and will extend from the front of home plate.

3. Rule Exception – Maximum Number of Roster Players:

SAMSPA allows for a maximum of 25 roster players per team. No substitute players are allowed during the entire rounds of the playoffs. Players must be 18 years of age or older by December 31, 2026 to be eligible for play in the Open Division. No player is allowed to be registered on more than one team in the same division. Open, Plus 40, Plus 50, Plus 60 & Plus 70 are all considered separate divisions. Rosters must be in place by May 1st but may be changed until June 1st. After June 1st, NO roster changes are permitted without the approval of the SAMSPA President. Non-rostered players may be used after June 1st to assist teams in fielding a team for competition. Non-rostered players are ineligible during the entire rounds of the playoffs.

4. Rule Exception – Courtesy Runners:

SAMSPA will allow unlimited courtesy runners per game; however, no runner may run more than once per inning.

5. Rule Exception – Uniform Policy:

The uniform policy now adopted states that at a minimum of 7 players in the lineup must have matching jerseys. Otherwise, the opposing team, prior to the start of the third inning, may declare to the umpire that they are playing the game under protest. If the protest is upheld, the game will be considered a forfeit. All players on the field at the time of play are encouraged to have matching jerseys, pants and hats, but only the jersey rule will be enforced. All teams will have until June 1st to comply with this rule unless an exception is granted by the SAMSPA President.

All hats or caps will be worn with brims facing forward while play is happening on the diamonds. At the umpire's discretion, individuals may be asked to remove headwear or may eject the player from the game.

6. Rule Exception – Scoring of Runs:

The innings are limited to seven (7) runs per team, per inning OR until three outs are recorded. Only the final inning (7th or last inning as declared by the umpire) shall be considered "open" with unlimited runs until three outs are recorded.

All runs will be scored by players crossing (i.e., any part of the player's body touching the ground) a "scoring line" or a "home safe line". The home plate is not live. Runners will be called out if they touch any part of the home plate or mat.

Baserunners cannot be tagged between the "commitment line" and the "scoring line". Once the baserunner crosses the "commitment line", it becomes a "force play". For the baserunner to be called out, the catcher must be touching the mat with the ball before the baserunner crosses the "scoring line".

7. Rule Exception – Plays at the Plate:

Safety line rule in effect. If the runner touches home plate, the umpire will declare the runner "**out**" regardless of the actual outcome of the play at the plate.

8. Rule Exception – Mercy Rule:

There is no mercy rule in any of the open division games. Games are played out until 7 innings are completed or until the length of the game has exceeded the allotted time.

9. Rule Exception – Homerun Rule:

There is a maximum of seven (7) homeruns allowed per team per game. Any homerun batted after a team has exceeded their allotted number of seven will be considered an "OUT".

10. Rule Exception – Foul Tip:

Any tip ball caught by the catcher will be an out regardless of the height of tipped ball or number of strikes on the batter. The play will be treated like any other ball caught in foul territory.

11. Rule Exception – Time Limit:

All SAMSPA League games have scheduled start times of 3:30pm for the Plus 70 Division, 5:00 pm for the Plus 60 Division games and 6:30 pm, 8:00 pm and 9:30 pm for all other Divisions. Players are expected to be ready to play at their scheduled start time. All games are 7 innings long; however, no new inning should start more than 1 hour and 20 minutes after the scheduled start time. At the umpire's discretion (the game is proceeding at a slow pace), the last inning may be called any time after 1 hour and 10 minutes have elapsed from the scheduled start time.

12. Rule Exception – Use of Helmets:

Use of helmets for 2026 will not be mandatory however, SAMSPA very strongly recommends that all players wear an approved (Canadian Standards Association (CSA) or National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE)) batting helmet with two ear flaps while batting, base running and in the on-deck circle."

13. Rule Exception – Flip Flop

If the home team is behind by 7 or more runs at the start of the last inning and managers of both teams' consent, the home team will bat first in the final inning. If the visiting team is ahead by 10 or more runs at the start of the last inning, the flip flop is mandatory.

14. Rule Exception – Use of Metal Cleats:

Use of metal cleats is NOT allowed in any SAMSPA Divisions effective January 1st, 2024.

15. Rule Exception – Playoff Tie after 7 innings (extra innings):

Extra innings will begin with 1 out and last batter from the previous inning at 2nd base.

16. Rule Exception – Game Balls:

All teams will be required to mark their game balls with their team's name. While at bat, teams will hit their own marked balls. Teams will continue to be responsible for collecting their own homerun and foul balls.

17. Rule Book Exceptions - Pitching Distance:

SAMSPA pitching distance remains status quo and a pitching distance of 50 – 60ft is acceptable.

