

**SOFTBALL RULES  
THE CITY OF KALAMAZOO  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

**I. CONDUCT AND PENALTIES**

- A. General: All participants in the softball program are expected to act in a courteous and sportsmanlike manner. This applies to all persons on the roster, whether they are on the field or not.
- B. Gross Misconduct: The following offenses are deemed to constitute gross misconduct. On written report from an umpire, the Parks and Recreation designee shall, if it is determined that such an offense was in fact committed; suspend participant(s) from the program for a minimum of one (1) game to a maximum of the entire season.
1. Physical contact with an umpire.
  2. Assaulting an umpire.
  3. Fighting.
  4. Abusive or profane language directed toward participants, umpires or spectators.
- Penalties for gross misconduct shall begin following the conclusion of the game in which the offense occurred and shall, if the offense shall warrant it, carry over to subsequent year(s). Said penalties shall be in addition to any penalties levied by an umpire on the playing field during a game. **Any ejection from a game will result in a \$10.00 fine for the player, payable in the recreation office prior to the next game.**
- C. Spectators: Non-participant spectators shall not interfere with officials or games at any time. A spectator may be ejected from the ballpark by an umpire and shall thereafter be trespassing. The Department of Public Safety may be called to remove trespasser(s).
- D. Managers: Team managers are responsible for the conduct of their players and other team participants, and any change in managers must be reported to the Parks and Recreation Department and noted on the roster. A manager may be suspended for participating in, or failing to reasonably control, unsportsmanlike conduct by her/his team.
- E. Alcohol: Is not allowed at the Park, except by City Commission/State Permit for special events. Any person seen with Alcohol at the Park will be **subject to penalties including forfeit, suspension or both.**
- F. Music – There is to be no music played during the game from either dugout or areas around the dugout. An umpire can give one warning to have it turned off, 2<sup>nd</sup> warning is manager is kicked out of the game, 3<sup>rd</sup> warning the offending team forfeits that game and a win for the other team.
- NOTE: After the game, music can be played in the bleachers. However, at the Umpire or UIC discretion it can be asked to be turned down or turned off.
- G. Smoking: Smoking is prohibited on playing fields, dugouts and/or coaches' box.
- H. Authority: The Parks and Recreation Department may reasonably regulate the conduct of the softball program and interpret and apply these rules in any situation not specifically covered herein; and may apply penalties reasonably related to verified offenses, up to and including indefinite suspension from the program.

## II. ROSTERS, WAIVERS, ELIGIBILITY AND FEES

- A. **Rosters and Waivers:** Player rosters and waiver forms must be done online. If assistance is needed, please look at the Important Dates on our website, [www.kzoo.org](http://www.kzoo.org), when you can come to the office for assistance. You may also come in Monday – Friday between 8am – 4:30 pm for assistance with setting up your account or registering.
- B. **Waivers** – City of Kalamazoo staff will help with online registration. Because of liability reasons, they cannot “sign” the waiver for a player. Each player must create their own account and “sign” THEIR OWN waiver.
- C. **Team Forfeit Rules:** If you have not paid, you will not be put on the schedule. EACH TEAM GETS 3 FORFEITS BEFORE BEING REMOVED FROM THE LEAGUE. Utilize the Free Agent list to get subs or players from your division that play before or after you. If a sub is needed, they must be from the same division and be Okayed by the opposing manager.
- D. **Roster/ Roster Changes:** Twenty – five (25) players are the maximum players per roster. After the roster submission deadline each year, all changes on the team roster will be made by the team manager. Additions/deletions may be made by contacting the Softball Coordinator (email or calling) After the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the season, no players may be added to the roster. Any emergency changes to the roster after the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half must be okayed by the Softball Coordinator.
- E. **Player Eligibility:** No player shall play for or appear in the lineup of any team unless his name is legally affixed to the team roster in compliance with the rules.
- F. **Transfer:** Players on a team roster shall remain the property of that team until properly released by the manager of that team and added to another roster by the manager of the other team. Once play starts, a player may transfer only once. Once a player is released from a team after play has begun, she/he is no longer eligible to play again with that team during the current season.
- G. **Deadlines:** Players may only be added to a team roster up to 5:00 p.m. the day that team’s second half of play begins, according to the league schedule. If a player to be added to the roster is coming from another team, that player must have been dropped from the other roster by 5:00 p.m. the day of the game and must have been added to the new team’s roster in compliance with these rules prior to 5:00 p.m. of the day of the game. **ROSTERS ARE FROZEN AFTER START OF SECOND HALF OF PLAY.**
- H. **Eligibility Protests:** *If it is brought to the attention of the Department through formal protest that a team used an ineligible player, and the protest is upheld, the offending team will forfeit the protested game. More than one game may be protested by a complainant, who need not be the manager of an opposing team.*
- I. **Dispute Over Players:** In any dispute over rights to players, the team to whose roster a player’s name was first affixed with his consent shall initially be considered to have title to said player. In any eligibility protest or other dispute over a player’s request to change teams in compliance with these rules, the player’s preference shall be given primary consideration. A manager shall not unreasonably refuse to release a player, and must be notified by the player of his desire to be released to another team. The Parks and Recreation designee will decide such cases.
- J. **Special Roster Additions:** Following the deadline for adding players to rosters, team managers may lose players for reasons beyond their control: for example, illness, moving from the area, changes of job schedule, responsibilities in the home, etc. A manager who needs to add players to field a team may apply to the Parks and Recreation designee (337-8191) for special permission. The Parks and Recreation designee may, at his/her discretion, allow or disallow the addition of any specific player to such a team roster, so as to provide for continued play but prevent “loading” of a roster with talented players.



- K. Professionals: Any player who plays in a professional league or receives money for playing is ineligible.
- L. Participation Limitations: ***Players may play only on one team per night.*** Players on multiple rosters on a particular night are only eligible to play on the team that has the earliest registration date. They are considered a sub for any other team. The player must notify the Softball Coordinator of what ONE TEAM they are playing on for playoffs.

#### IV. SCHEDULES AND FIELD RESERVATIONS

- A. League Schedules: The Department will arrange all league schedules. Postponed games will be rescheduled at the discretion of the Department, as diamonds are available. If a game is rescheduled before Labor Day weekend, on the normal day of the week the league plays, the teams shall be required to play or forfeit. Player absences due to a longer league season than anticipated shall not be considered good cause for rescheduling at another time.
- B. League Assignments: The Department will assign teams to leagues, making reasonable efforts to comply with the requests for certain leagues or days of the week. The Department reserves the right to decline to assign teams to requested leagues to team skill and may move teams among leagues for this reason during the season, as long as the day of the week is not changed without the affected team's consent.
- C. Field Reservations: Fields are reserved prior to season start and are reserved only to teams registered in the City of Kalamazoo Softball leagues and the Wednesday Night USSSA Baseball league.
- D. Time Limits: **No new inning shall begin more than one hour and ten minutes following the scheduled starting time of a slow pitch game.** These limitations shall not apply to the last game scheduled on any field. Player safety due to limited daylight may decrease the time of the second game. If the game is on a lighted field, lights can be turned on to finish the game.
- E. Home Team: Designated on the schedule.
- F. Official Score: Both teams will be responsible for keeping a scorebook and the umpire will confer with both managers after each half inning.
- G. Official Game: A game called before seven (7) innings have been played shall be official if four (4) complete innings have been played, three and a half (3 ½) if the home team is ahead.
- H. Postponements Due to Weather: City of Kalamazoo will use A TEXT ALERT app called RAINED OUT. It is up to the managers and players to sign for the app. It is free and after the season is over you can stop receiving the messages. Text alerts will be sent out to inform teams of cancellations or any changes.
- I. League Playoffs: **Number of teams in the playoffs will vary based on night and division. All playoffs will be bracket style tournament to be played in one night at the conclusion of the regular season. Champions will receive either a trophy or shirts.**



## V. UMPIRES, OFFICIAL PROTESTS, CITY PROPERTY

- A. **General:** Umpires are the official representatives of the City of Kalamazoo, regulating the play of softball games, and have control of the fields to which they are assigned fifteen (15) minutes before and fifteen (15) minutes after each game. The umpire is the final authority on conduct of the game, including scorekeeping, and will decide when a game shall be stopped due to inadequate or unsafe playing conditions.
- B. **Physical Abuse of Official:** Physical contact with an official is considered cause for automatic ejection. Assault of an official is considered cause for automatic ejection from the game being played and will result in automatic suspension from the program as specified elsewhere in these rules. The City considers abuse of umpires a severe offense.
- C. **Complaints About Umpires:** Persons may make complaints about umpires through the Parks and Recreation Department Office, 337-8191. Complainants are asked to obtain the name of the umpire and be as specific as possible about the alleged deficiencies of the umpire.
- D. **Assignment:** The Department will contract with, assign and terminate the services of umpires through the Sports Park Supervisor.
- E. **Umpire Complaints:** Umpires are required to report in writing any incidents or gross misconduct provided elsewhere in these rules. Umpires are required to report to the UIC when they have reasonable cause to believe that a player violated the eligibility rules herein; such information shall be first-hand and specific and shall not be based on hearsay.
- F. **Identification of Umpires and Participants:** An umpire must, upon request by the manager or team representative, give his correct name. A team manager or representative must give the correct name of any member of his team on request by the umpire or other manager.
- G. **Team Representatives:** Prior to a game, each team shall inform the umpire of its manager or other designated representative(s). No team shall have more than two designated representatives. Team members other than designated representatives shall not argue decisions with umpires; if they attempt to do so, this shall be considered unsportsmanlike conduct.
- H. **Ground Rules:** The ground rules for each game shall be discussed by the umpire and team representatives before each game.
- I. **Protest Procedure:** Formal protests under these rules or established rules of softball must be submitted in writing to the Parks and Recreation Office not later than 5:00 p.m. the next day the office is open following the protested game. A \$10.00 protest fee, by money order or check made out to Kalamazoo City Treasurer, must be submitted with the protest and will be returned if the protest is upheld. The Department will rule on the protest within one calendar week. (Reminder: A protest related to play in a game must deal with application or interpretation of the rule, not solely with the umpire's judgment as to whether a ball was fair or foul, a pitch, a ball or strike, or a runner safe or out).
- J. **Game Balls:** Game balls are the responsibility of each team. Teams will hit their own ball and following an inning will be returned to each team. Balls must be NSA qualified:

Women and Co-Ed women : Optic Yellow .52 c.o.r/275 or .44/400 compression 11 inch for women.

Co-Ed Men : Optic Yellow .52 c.o.r/275 compression 12 inch for men.

Mens League : Optic Yellow 44 c.o.r/400 compression 12 inch for men.

: MUST have the word "ICON" stamped on the ball for .44/400.

## VI. PLAYING RULES

- A. **Start Forfeit Time:** The game will begin at scheduled time or when both teams have the minimum number of players, either (8), and whichever is sooner. If a team is not able to field a team **at GAME TIME** of the scheduled time a forfeit win will be awarded to the other team.
- B. **Equipment:** Go to <http://www.playnsa.com/> for the entire NSA approved equipment list.
1. **Shoes: Steel spikes are prohibited.** Rubber and plastic cleats not more than ¾ inch long is permitted.
  2. **Ball:** In women's slow pitch leagues, the 11-inch softball will be used. Male will use a 12" ball.
  3. **Bats:** All bats must come from the manufacturer list provided by this link and be stamped with the NSA approval. <http://www.playnsa.com/Uploads/Bat%20Companies%20Page%20001-14-2015.pdf>
- C. **Base Distance:** Due to the prohibitive cost of installing dual sets of pegs for bases, women's games may at times be played on 65 or 70 foot bases and all VerSluis fields will remain at 65 feet.
- D. **Pitching Distance:** In women's slow pitch leagues below the top league and in coed slow pitch, the pitcher must deliver the pitch from the 55-foot pitching plate, provided that in other respects the pitching rule is observed. If a pitcher would like to deliver the ball from the 50-foot, **and a pitching rubber is in place on that field**, they may request this variance from the umpire. Any pitcher judged to be abusing this rule shall be warned by the umpire, and if offending again shall be removed from the pitching position for the remainder of the game.
- i. Pitchers may pitch from 5 foot in front or behind the pitching rubber. They may NOT be off to either side of the rubber without having contact on the rubber with one foot.
- E. **Extended Lineup Option:** In slow pitch leagues the following optional lineup procedure may be used:
1. A manager may, on notification of the umpire(s) and opposing manager before the game, list eleven (11) or more players in the lineup and this batting order shall be followed thereafter.
  2. A team with an extended lineup must continue to bat the same number of persons throughout the game, in the same order. If it is unable to do so due to injury or departure of players, each vacant position in the lineup shall be declared an "out" when that turn at bat occurs.
  3. Substitutes may be used. When a player leaves the game for a substitute, the substitute's name must be entered in the same spot in the lineup. The player leaving the game for a substitute may not reenter the game.
  4. As long as the above rules are observed, the manager may send any ten (10) players properly listed in lineup to play the field in any inning. In addition, any of the other players properly in the lineup may replace such other players in the field at any time. If the umpire judges that the game is being unduly delayed by such defensive replacements, he shall warn the offending manager; thereafter, the offending manager and/or player(s) may be ejected from the game.
  5. When this option is used in coed slow pitch, it shall be in a manner which complies with the special rules of coed softball; specifically, male and female alternating in the batting order, except where women are more numerous or the manager agree to some other arrangement.
- F. **Number of Players:** A team must have (8) players to play an official game. If a team starts with eight players, but at any time drops below eight, the game is forfeit.
- i. **For Co-ed rules, it must be 4 guys and 4 girls.**
- G. **Player Subs -** A registered player may sub for any team during the regular season. During the playoffs, players may only play for their primary team. The player **cannot** sub for **any** team **at any time** during the playoffs **on a given night**.
- H. **Mercy Rule:** The Mercy Rule shall be as follows...20 runs after 4 innings, 15 runs after 5 innings and 10 runs after 6 innings.

## Coed Softball:

### I. The following rules shall apply specifically to coed slow pitch softball:

1. Women may hit the men's sized softball if they choose.
2. Teams may play with 5 men and 5 women, 6 men and 4 women or 7 men and 5 women.

- When on defense:
  - When teams have **FIVE WOMEN**, must have 2 women in the infield and 2 women in the outfield. The other girl is either pitching or doing the catching.
  - When teams have **FOUR WOMEN**, there can be only **FOUR MEN** in the field.
- **Note: If teams play 6/4**
  - 1. Girl catching/guy pitching/one girl in outfield/one girl in the infield/and last girl where ever the team wants her OR
  - 2. Girl pitching/guy catching/ one girl in outfield/one girl in the infield/and last girl where ever the team want
  - There can only be **FOUR GUYS ON DEFENSE WHEN YOUR TEAM HAS 6 GUYS AND 4 GIRLS.**
- 3. If playing 5/5 the batting order will alternate males and females.
  - i. If batting 6 males and 5 females or have **ONE MORE MALE THAN FEMALE IN THE BATTING LINE UP, YOU MUST BAT ONE MALE AT THE TOP OF THE LINEUP AND ONE MALE AT THE BOTTOM OF LINE UP.** That is the **ONLY** time where 2 male batters can bat back to back.
  - ii. If batting 6/4 or 7/5 **YOU MUST WEAVE.**
- 4. If a batter has walked, he/she shall have two options. **1.** The batter may go to first base. **2.** The batter may refuse the walk and start **HIS/HER** at bat again, **BUT THE STRIKES REMAIN.** For example, if a batter walks on a count of 4 balls and 2 strikes, and refuses the walk, he/she shall begin the new at bat with a count of 1 ball and 2 strikes.
- 5. **The pitcher shall always attempt to pitch the ball in the strike zone.** If the umpire judges that the pitcher is intentionally avoiding the strike zone, the pitcher shall be warned. On a subsequent offense, the pitcher shall be warned. On a subsequent offense, the pitcher shall be removed from the pitching position for the remainder of the game.
- 6. Deviations from rules (2), (3), and (4) will be tolerated if both managers agree on the specifics. The umpire shall be notified of the deviations, which will occur. If such a game is played, the score will be official.

### J. 1. If there are **NO OUTS OR 1 OUT AND:**

- a. a guy gets walked he goes to 1st only
- b. girl up to bat next **HAS TO BAT**

### 2. **WITH 2 OUTS -**

**A.** guy is walked, he goes to first base base and after touching first base then he goes to second base, the next girl batting has the option of hitting or walking.

**B.** If two guys are batting back to back, and GUY BATTER #1 is walked, then 2nd guy **HAS TO HIT.**

- Reasoning: Hopefully the pitcher will try and give BATTER #1 a pitch to hit knowing there is a guy up next.

**C.** IF GUY BATTER #1 & GUY BATTER # 2 get walked, the next batter is a girl, and she has the option of taking first or hitting.



- K. **Home Plate Extension Rule.** FOR CO-ED & WOMEN'S LEAGUES ONLY. When attempting to score, runners can only touch the home plate extension line. Defensive players must touch the original home plate on all plays at the plate (the white home plate). The runner may not touch home plate or he/she will be called out.
- L. **Commit Line Rule.** FOR CO-ED & WOMEN'S LEAGUES ONLY A "Commitment Line" will be drawn perpendicular to the third base line, 20 feet down the line from third base toward home plate. Once a runner has touched or crossed the "Commitment Line", he or she has committed to trying to score and may not return to third base. A force play will now be in effect at home plate. In the event that the runner returns to third base and does not try to score after having "committed", the runner will be called out once the play is over.
- M. **Under no circumstances** is a runner permitted to return to third base once they've crossed the commitment line, and that includes returning to tag up on a caught fly ball. Most smart baserunners will toe the line, and then cross it if the ball is dropped, or they'll return if it's caught.

If there is an attempt by the defensive team to tag the runner when she is between the commitment line and the scoring line, the runner is automatically safe. Once a runner has touched the commitment line or the ground past the commitment line, defensive players can only put the runner out by touching home plate while in possession of the ball.

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

- Please tell your players to enter and exit through the Douglas St. entrance, the Woodward gates will be locked throughout the season.
- The gates at Douglas will be locked 10 minutes after the last game is over.
- Restrooms are located near the concession stands by Dickinson fields 1 and 2 and near the VerSluis diamonds 2 and near VerSluis 1, 5, 6 and 9.
- The City of Kalamazoo recommends each team manager to consider putting together a small first-aid kit for minor injuries that may occur during a game. Managers are also asked to provide a safe playing environment for their players.
- The City of Kalamazoo Parks and Recreation Department wish each and every team a safe and enjoyable season.