



2024 LEAGUE RULES

TRI-CITY SLO-PITCH

34th SEASON

LEAGUE EXECUTIVES:

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A. TEAM ROSTERS AND ELIGIBLE PLAYERS

1. **Team rosters** must not exceed 25 players; rosters must be entered in the SPO Website prior to the first game of the season. Players are responsible individually to pay the fee directly to SPO to register. Captains must use their access code to get on the website and make changes to their roster.

Players not registered to your team will not be permitted to play in any games. Please have your final roster complete by August 1st. This change can include the addition of a player(s) and/or the deletion of a player(s) to ensure the maximum roster limit is maintained. Only players on the official roster are covered by insurance and will be allowed to play in the league. There are no exceptions!! If a team is going to be short on players they may use a player who is registered with the league but from a different team.

2. There is no minimum number of games required for a player to be eligible to play in the **yearend tournament**, however, they must be a registered member on your team with Slo-Pitch Ontario as per the rule above. If any team is having difficulty fielding a full team for the yearend tournament, contact a member of the League Executive within one or two weeks prior to the tournament to discuss options. The League Executive will try to assist with options that will allow all teams to participate in the yearend tournament, while keeping in mind fun, recreational spirit of the league.
3. Pregnancy:
 - a) Ladies who are **pregnant** are not permitted to play during pregnancy.
 - b) Ladies who wish to resume seasonal play or play in the final year end tournament said female must be on the roster and have slo-pitch insurance coverage. Notification must be given to the Executive that such a player exists on your roster.
4. **Minimum age** for players will be 16 on or before first scheduled game.

B. GAME SHEETS, LINEUPS, DEFAULTS, AND CANCELED GAMES

1. Any conflict not covered in the rules or differences in **interpretation** must be resolved between the two captains.
2. A team can field a maximum of 10 players or a canceled minimum of 8 players. If there are 7 or less, the game will be defaulted.
3. A team must field a minimum of 4 of either gender to a maximum of 6. If a team only has the minimum 8 members, the opposing team **MUST** supply a catcher strictly to return the ball to the pitcher and cannot participate in the defensive play. A team may play with only 3 of one gender but will take an automatic out when the vacant 4th spot is scheduled to bat. That team may also only play 9 players on defense and will not use a rover.
4. A player **arriving late** may be added to the lineup at any point during the game and must be inserted at the bottom of the lineup in the batting order.
5. The **batting order** must alternate between males and females



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6. If a team cannot field the minimum number of players required, it will result in a **default loss** of 7-0, unless both captains agree to re-schedule the game at their own cost. If the postponed game cannot be played, no points will be awarded to either team. If one team does not attend a postponed game, then it's their "default" of the game and the opposing team will be given the win and a score of 7-0.
7. If it is known that a game will be a **default**, the defaulting team's captain must let the opposing team's captain know by noon the day of the game; otherwise the defaulting team will lose 2 points in the standings.
8. **NEW 2024:** Due to limited diamond availability, all games cancelled due to **inclement weather** will NOT be rescheduled and will result in a 7-7 tie. It will only be at the league's discretion to reschedule any postponed games due to weather. Both teams will be notified of the new date and time and if either team cannot make the new date and time, Rules 6 and 7 will apply.
9. Each team is permitted 1 default during the regular season without incurring a fine. Each default after the first one will result in a fine of \$25.00 to be paid to the League before playing their next game or it will be a forfeit. In addition, any team defaulting 3 or more games during the regular season will be subject to review by the League Executive regarding entry into the league the following year.
10. The League Executive must be advised by email within 1 week after any defaulted or rescheduled games. Failure to do so will result in a loss of two (2) points in the standings.

C. EQUIPMENT AND DIAMOND SETUP

1. The home team is to supply and set up home plate, 1st base (safety bag), 2nd, and 3rd base, mark the suicide line, scoring line and pitching "rubber". Home team is to also supply a new league supplied ball. All bases are to be properly secured with two base spikes and in good order. Bases not secured will result in a warning and, if not attended to, then a default will be issued.
2. **Home plate** shall be a wooden board measuring 2 feet by 3 feet and in good condition without any signs of major damage or significant chips. Holes cut for transportation should not be any bigger than a 12 in standard ball.
3. **Distances** between the bases must be 65 feet. Distance from Home to 2nd Base is 91'11" (or 92').
4. A **suicide line**, if not already provided, must be drawn approximately 2/3 of the way between 3rd base and home plate. Once a runner has crossed this line, he/she is committed to go home, creating a force play at home. Tags are not permitted between home plate and the suicide line; otherwise the base runner is safe.
5. A line will be drawn from the back of home plate to the edge of the backstop, a continuation of the 1st base line. The run will be scored when any part of **the foot** of the baserunner makes contact with the ground past the plane of the scoring line. The runner will be OUT if they touch home plate
6. There is no batter's box in our league.
7. The pitcher must pitch from a distance of 50-55 feet. The home team must determine, as part of the diamond setup which **pitching rubber** will be used. If there is no pitching rubber at or close to the 50-55 foot distance



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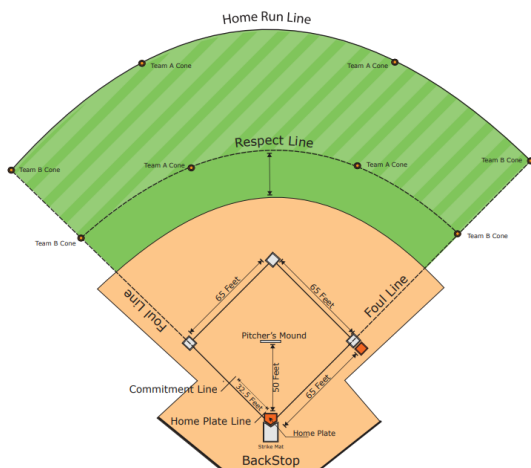
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then a 'pitching rubber' must be marked out in the gravel in a direct line between home plate and 2nd base. The home team must inform the visitors as to the location of the pitching rubber and both teams pitchers must pitch from that point. The only time a pitcher will be permitted to pitch from a spot other than the established mound will be if both captains agree that it can be moved due to the inability of the pitcher to see because of the sun. For the safety of the pitcher, they will not be permitted to pitch any closer than 50 feet from home plate.

8. Gloves may be worn by any player. The catcher, pitcher and first baseman may wear trappers only.
9. Shoes cannot have **metal cleats**.
10. All bats must be **approved softball bats** with a BPF of 1.20 or less (please refer to the Slo-Pitch Ontario web site (www.spo.org) for a list of approved bats). Please double check your UPC codes and, if possible, keep them with you as some bats are allowed based on UPC codes.
11. **Outfielders** may not enter the infield gravel until after a ball is hit into play.
12. **NEW 2024: Infielder shifts** are not permitted. Prior to a ball being hit, an infielder may not cross to the other side of the field.
13. **NEW 2024:** Pitchers are encouraged to wear **facemasks** while pitching, but the decision is left to their own discretion.
14. **NEW 2024:** As a trial for 2024, an imaginary '**respect line**' will be in play in the outfield. No outfielder will be permitted within the respect line until the ball has been hit by the batter. The respect line will be 140 feet from home plate, or ~47 paces.





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D. RULES OF GAME PLAY

1. All games are 7 innings long. Tie games will not be broken.
2. Game times are 6:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. A 10-minute grace period is allowed to meet minimum roster requirements. 6:00 games must be completed by 7:30 and 7:30 games must be completed by 9:00, otherwise the last completed inning before 7:30 (or 9:00) will be considered to be the final score. No innings should start after 7:15pm.
3. The last inning of play may be called prior to the 7th inning **due to darkness** and must be agreed upon by both captains prior to its play. Teams should only play in SAFE conditions!!!!
4. In order to keep pace of the game at an acceptable level, there will be no infield warm-up permitted, except for the 1st inning. Practice pitches will be permitted while the fielders are getting into position but will not be permitted once the batter is ready to hit.
5. There is a **5 run limit** per inning, with the exception of the last inning where there is no limit.
6. There is a **game mercy** of 13 runs difference after the 5th inning.
7. **Strategy runners** are allowed to a maximum of 3 per game after the batter has safely reached base and can be any runner of the same sex. However, should that runner come up to bat while running for someone else, the team must use another strategy runner. If none are available, it will result in an automatic out.
8. **Runners from the screen** will be permitted due to injuries. You must inform the opposing captain of all injured runners that will use a runner from the screen. This rule is only in effect to allow for teams to be able to field a team acknowledging that injuries do occur. This rule is NOT intended to allow for the use of strategic (faster) runners from the plate.
9. **Sliding** is permitted with the exception of home plate and first base.
10. There will be a maximum of 3 **strikes** or 4 **balls** for each batter. A foul ball on the 3rd strike is an automatic strikeout.
11. If a batter (male or female) is walked on **4 balls** and no strikes, the batter (male or female) will go to 2nd base automatically, with any existing base runners only moving if forced to advance. The next batter must go to the plate.
12. **Pitches** must be between 6 feet and 12 feet high, otherwise the umpire must loudly call 'No Pitch' as soon as it is determined. The batter still has the option to hit a ball called 'No Pitch', otherwise it will be called a ball.
13. There are to be **no intentional walks**. The pitcher has to show intent to pitch the ball between 6 and 12 feet and land in the vicinity of the plate. You have to give every player a fair chance to hit the ball. If, at the umpire's discretion, the pitcher is intentionally not allowing the batter to hit the ball (i.e., not in the vicinity of the plate), the umpire can call it an 'illegal pitch' after the ball has passed the batter and no ball or strike will be recorded.



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14. There are no **leadoffs** permitted before the batter hits the ball. One warning will be given per team per game and any leadoffs after the warning will then be an automatic out.
15. **Throws** to first base are not permitted from the outfield. However, if a runner rounds 1st base and begins to return, a throw may be made from the outfield.
16. If a ball is in play and subsequently thrown '**out of bounds**', all baserunners will be awarded 2 bases from the point they were at when the ball left the fielder's hand (i.e., last base touched plus 2). The boundary line, if not marked, will be the continuation of the backstop parallel to the bases lines. The direction of the runner or the location of the thrower has no bearing on the outcome of the overthrow. Any ball that ends up out of bounds will result in the play being dead. Note: If multiple runners are in play, the amount of bases will be determined by the lead runner's position.

Examples:
 - If you are in between 1st and 2nd when the ball leaves the fielder's hand, you would be awarded 2 bases placing you on 3rd base.
 - If you have already passed 2nd at the time of the fielder's throw, you are entitled to score home.
 - If two runners are stuck between 1st and 2nd at the time of the fielder's throw, the lead runner would get 3rd and the following runner would only get 2nd.
17. **Obstructions** in fair play will result in a ground rule double. Assists from non-team members will result in the same.
18. **Bunting** or chopping down on a pitch is not allowed. Batters must make a full swing. If a player attempts to bunt or chops down on the pitch the batter will be called out and any base runners will return to the bag they were occupying at the start of the at bat.
19. **Foul tips** caught by the catcher will be considered an out, regardless of height.
20. The **rover** can play anywhere in the outfield, but cannot enter the infield until the hitter makes contact with the ball. The Rover is considered an outfielder all outfielder rules apply to the rover.
21. A batter cannot **touch home plate** while in the process of batting, if this happens the batter will be called out. However, once the ball is hit, the batter can touch home plate while running to 1st base without penalty.
22. The **base path** is defined as being three (3) feet to either side of the direct line between the bases. This base path becomes established when the defensive player receives the ball and begins his/her attempt to tag the runner. Any base runner that runs outside this established base path to avoid a tag must be called out by the umpire.
23. Any **interference** by a defensive player (who does not have the ball, or is not attempting to catch a thrown or batted ball) and a base runner will be deemed to be obstruction. The obstructed base runner shall be awarded the base(s) they would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there been no obstruction.



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24. If a base runner **deliberately runs into a fielder** who has the ball and is waiting to tag him/her, the base runner will be out and the ball is dead. Therefore, in the interest of recreational play and maintaining safety, when a defensive player is in possession of the ball, the base runner must either attempt to go around the defensive player, while staying within the base path, or attempt to return to the previous base, if a force play is not in effect. Aggressive body contact by a base runner in an attempt to get to the base will not be tolerated. Repeated offences of this rule will result in that player being suspended and/or ejected from the league.
25. If a **base runner interferes with a defensive player's** attempt to field a ball or catch a thrown ball, the base runner will be out (and the ball is dead).
26. Base runners may be **tagged out** between home plate and first base. The only time a base runner may not be tagged out is between the suicide line and home plate.
27. The use of the **orange safety bag** by the batter shall only be mandatory when the play includes a throw to 1st base. Use of the orange safety bag by the 1st basemen is prohibited at all times. Any violation by the 1st basemen results in the batter being safe and a violation by the batter results in the batter being out.
28. **NEW 2024:** A runner is out, and the ball is dead if, while off the base, they are **hit by a fair-batted ball** before it has passed an infielder who has a chance to field the ball.
 - A runner is not out if:
 - i. They are unintentionally hit by a batted ball while on a base.
 - ii. They are unintentionally hit by a batted ball while off a base, if no fielder has a chance to field the ball.
29. Any participant (player, coach or umpire) who is bleeding or has **blood** on his/her uniform may not participate until the bleeding is controlled and his/her soiled uniform changed. If the cleanup and/or uniform change can be accomplished quickly, play would be suspended until the participant is ready to play. If this cannot be done quickly, the player is removed from the game and replaced by a replacement player. When the player has had the bleeding controlled and the soiled uniform replaced, he/she must resume his/her place in the game. Should he/she not be able to return to the game within the time described, an official substitution must be made. If a player is removed due to blood and the team does not have a legal substitute/replacement available when needed, his/her place in the batting order is simply missed and there is no penalty.

E. GENERAL COMMENTS

1. The league does not condone any actions by teams or individuals deemed to be in the **disinterest of fair play** and/or in conflict with the basis of the foundation of the league as a recreational vehicle for the playing of organized slo-pitch. Players, coaches, managers or other team members shall not make disparaging or insulting remarks to or about opposing players, officials or spectators, or commit other acts that could be considered unsportsmanlike conduct. The penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct will be determined by the league executive (with ejection from the league as a possibility).
2. **NEW 2024:** In order to maximize the safety of the base runner(s) who are running home, umpires are encouraged to warn the base runner if a throw home is appearing that it may hit the baserunner very vocally. The catcher is encouraged to make their first priority to catch the ball, without interfering with the base runner, for the sake of safety. Base runners also need to ensure they don't interfere with the catcher. Outfielders are



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encouraged to not throw the ball home if there is no legitimate opportunity to make the base runner out. Team captains are expected to speak to their respective teams and adjust their behaviours as needed.

3. In accordance with the City of Kitchener bylaws, **smoking** is prohibited in and around the bench and bleacher areas.
4. **Alcohol** at the diamonds or in the parking lot is prohibited. The first offence will be a written warning. The second offence will be a \$250.00 fine payable to the league. The third offence will result in the team (or violating players) being removed from the league.
5. Both teams must bring a **copy of the rules** to all games. Failure to do so, if a rule clarification is required, will result in a warning upon a team's first offence, and a loss of two (2) points for each infraction thereafter.
6. Any team member openly using **profanity** during a game shall be ejected from further participation in that game.
7. **Jewelry** is permitted, however it must be small and not a danger to others. You are permitted to wear it should your captain allow it. If the other team's captain feels it is a danger to his players, they may ask you to remove it and you must cooperate. Should you be wearing jewelry and an injury does occur you are **SOLELY** liable, not the other players and not the league.
8. The league executive reserves the right to review a teams conduct and overall commitment to the league and can excuse teams from the league.
9. Any **complaints** must be submitted in writing to the league convener.

F. UMPIRING

1. The batting team will be responsible for providing two (2) **umpires** each inning.
2. One umpire will be the home plate umpire and will be responsible for calling balls and strikes as well as making the calls on plays at home plate, at third base, and backing up field calls.
3. The second umpire will be in the field; that umpire is responsible for making calls on plays at first base and second base, and field calls. They may assist the home plate umpire as necessary.

Note: First and third base coaches as well as players on the bench are not to be doing any umpiring. Similarly the hitter is not the judge of an illegal pitch and should only rely on the umpire to call **NO PITCH** before the ball reaches the batter.

A batter is out. The ball is dead and no runners may advance if:

- He has three strikes.
- He illegally bats the ball
- He bunts or chops downward on a pitch.
- He enters the batter's box with an illegal or altered bat.
- The batter before reaching first base, retreats towards home plate to avoid a tag.



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A batter is out. The ball is live and runners may advance if:

- Their fly ball (fair or foul) is legally caught.
- On a fair ball not caught on the fly, the ball is held by a fielder while touching first base before the batter touches first base.

A runner is out, and the ball is dead if:

- On a pitched ball, they leave the base before the ball has reached the plate, hits the ground or is swung at by the batter.
- They fail to return to their base following a halt in play.
- While off the base, they are hit by a fair-batted ball before it has passed an infielder who has a chance to field the ball.
- They deliberately runs into a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to tag them.
- They interfere with an attempt to field a ball or with a thrown ball.

A runner is out, and the ball is live if:

- They run more than 1m. outside the established base path to avoid a tag.
- On a force out, the fielder, while holding the ball, touches the base before the runner.
- While off his base, they are touched with the ball held by a fielder.
- They overtakes a preceding runner.
- A coach physically assists them.

A runner is not out if:

- They are touched by a fielder who does not have or does not maintain control of the ball.
- They run outside the baseline to avoid interfering with a fielder fielding a ball.
- They are unintentionally hit by a batted ball while on a base.
- They are unintentionally hit by a batted ball while off a base, if no fielder has a chance to field the ball.
- The fielder making a play on him uses an illegal glove.

These rules are close to the Slo-Pitch Ontario Standards and are in place to limit any additional liability the league may sustain during the season in the event of an injury to a player. The roster, pregnant player, blood, and jewellery rules should be and will be strictly enforced. These rules will be very close to the rules the hired carded umpires use during the tournament, so there should be very little change to the overall format of the rules for the tournament.

Captains are asked to remember and to remind their team that this league is a co-ed “NON-DIVISIONAL” recreational slo-pitch league designed to be FUN. The league was originally formed around a number of engineering firms; while the teams have spread out of this field the majority of the teams are still company based. Not every team in the league has the same talent and your intensity on the diamond should reflect the team you are competing against. This league will not tolerate any verbal or physical abuse of any player or team, please respect the rules and respect each other.

Play fair, know the rules, and have fun!



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G. DEFINITIONS:

Base path - An imaginary line from the runner to the base to which he is advancing.

Catch - A catch is not completed until the fielder securely holds the ball in his hand or his glove (which is properly worn on his hand) long enough to prove he has control of the ball and any release of the ball is voluntary or intentional. If the ball has hit anything other than the fielder or another fielder, it cannot be a caught fly ball.

Commitment Line - A line in foul territory drawn 21 ft from the back of home plate and perpendicular to the third base line. When a runner crosses this line by touching the ground beyond the line but does not reach home plate, he shall be called out when the ball is legally held by a defensive player in contact with home plate. Runners, who have not crossed the line or who cross the line but must tag up on a caught fly ball, may return to third base.

Fair Ball - A batted ball that is touched while on or above fair ground, stops on fair territory within the infield, contacts a base, bounces over first or third base, or first lands on fair ground beyond the infield.

Foul Ball - a batted ball that is not fair.

Inbounds - The ball or a player is in bounds until they touch the ground or an object that is outside the designated playing area.

Interference - An offensive team player may not do anything to confuse, distract or hinder a fielder making a play.

Obstruction - A defensive player may not hinder or restrict a runner from progressing from base to base unless fielding a batted ball, holding the ball, or about to catch the ball.

Safe Line - A line drawn in foul territory starting at the top left-hand corner of home plate perpendicular to the third base line. A runner attempting to reach home must do so by having any part of their foot touch the ground passed the safe line in said foul territory. Sliding into home plate is not allowed. The runner is out if he touches home plate whether or not a play is being made. A runner is not out if the plate is touched in an attempt to avoid a collision.



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H. TIE BREAKING RULES:

Two Teams

- a) Head to head, if applicable
- b) Best won/lost record in common games involving common opponents
- c) Best run differential involving common opponents
- d) Least runs against between all common opponents
- e) Most runs for between all common opponents
- f) Least runs against between common opponents excluding highest and lowest
- g) Most runs for between all common opponents excluding highest and lowest
- h) Playoff between teams

Three of More Teams

- a) Best won/lost record between tied teams
- b) Best run differential between tied teams
- c) Best run differential between all common opponents
- d) Best run differential between all common opponents excluding the highest and lowest differential
- e) Least runs against between tied teams only
- f) Most runs for between tied teams only
- g) Least runs against between all common opponents
- h) Most runs for between all common opponents
- i) E, f, g, h excluding highest and lowest
- j) Sum of the square root of the absolute value of run differential between all common opponents
- k) Playoff between tied teams

Note:

- The above tie breaking criteria will cover an unbalanced schedule. I.e: If teams do not play every team. If the teams play a full round robin, ignore the "common opponent" criteria.
- When after applying the above criteria, two teams are still tied; these teams will revert to the Two Team criteria.