

2026 PLAY RULES

The Emerald City Softball Association (ECSA) follows USA Softball rules with the following exceptions:

- **No base stealing**
- **Pitch arc minimum of 6' and maximum of 12'** - The ball must be delivered with a perceptible arc and reach a height of at least 6 feet from the ground while not exceeding a maximum height of 12 feet from the ground.
- **No metal cleats shall be worn by any player, manager, coach, or umpire.**
- **Time Limit** - Except in the case of a tie game, no inning shall start after 55 minutes.
The clock for each game will start after the first pitch of the game.
- **Home Team** - Home team will be determined via the schedule. If the home team is not determined via the schedule, a coin toss by the umpire will determine which team selects home or away.
- **Official Scorebook** - The official scorebook will be that of the home team.
- **Game Time** - Forfeit time is five (5) minutes after the scheduled game time, except when a team is moving from one field to another for consecutively played games or when games are behind schedule. In these cases, the umpire will give the teams at least five (5) minutes after they arrive in their dugout to settle and prepare a lineup.
- **Short-Handed Rule** - A team must have at least 8 players in the dugout or team area to start or continue a game. If a team starts a game with fewer than 10 players, then the vacant position(s) must be listed last in the batting order and an out will be assessed upon the vacant position(s) turn to bat. If playing short-handed and a player arrives, they must be inserted immediately into a vacant spot.
- **Extra Players on Offense**
 - E Division Only: Teams playing within the E Division are allowed an unlimited number of players in their batting lineup. A team beginning a game with more than 11 players in the batting lineup may remove any player(s) from their line up without penalty of an out as long as at least 11 players remain in the lineup.
 - A/B/C/D Divisions: Teams playing within the A, B, C, and D Divisions are allowed up to 12 players in a batting lineup. These teams must start and end the game with the same number of batters in the lineup.
- **Home Run Limit** - A limit of over-the-fence home runs will be used in all divisions. The following limitations are per team per game: A Division: (5); B Division (3); C & Legends-C Divisions: (1); D, Legends-D, & E Divisions (0). Inter-division games will follow the limitation associated with the higher division. Any over the fence home runs in excess of the above limitations will result in an inning-ending out.
- **Ejections & Intentional Harm**
 - Ejections: Any player or participant ejected from a game shall automatically serve an additional one-game suspension from their team's next scheduled game. Under penalty of forfeit, a suspended or ejected player or participant may neither be present nor in the vicinity of the field for a game from which they are suspended or ejected. (They cannot be in the dugout and must leave the softball complex.) Any coach may appeal to the umpire for a ruling on whether an action leading to ejection constitutes intentional harm.
 - Ejections for Intentional Harm: Any participant who, in the judgment of the umpire, intentionally puts another participant at risk of harm will be suspended for the remainder of that play-day plus the next play-day on which the participant's respective team plays. Any participant that has a second violation for intentional harm within a season, as determined by an umpire, shall be ineligible for the remainder of the season.
 - Additional Penalties: With respect to any situation involving ejections (with or without intentional harm), the Executive Board may use its discretion in applying other sanctions, up to and including permanent suspension from the ECSA Open Division.
- **Courtesy Runner Rule** - A courtesy runner may be used once per inning. Any eligible player on the official lineup, including available substitutes, may be used as a courtesy runner. A courtesy runner is in the game only when reported to and acknowledged by the plate umpire. A courtesy runner whose turn at bat comes while on base will be called out, removed from the base, & take their turn at bat. A second courtesy runner is not permitted at this time. A player may be a courtesy runner only once an inning.
- **ADA (PIP) Runner Rule** - For players that receive an ADA (PIP) Runner accommodation from the ECSA, the designated runner will be the following, in this order: 1) The last out, 2) If there has not yet been an out, the last available batter. If the last out or the last available batter also has an ADA accommodation, the runner will be the following, in this order: 1) The next last out, 2) The next last available batter. If the runner comes up to bat in the lineup, they can be replaced without penalty with the following, in this order: 1) The last out, 2) If there has not yet been an out, the last available batter. A runner can be used after the batter safely reaches base and the ball is called dead. A runner cannot be used after the next pitch. Anyone listed as ADA cannot be utilized as a courtesy or substitution while on base. An ADA (PIP) Runner is in the game only when reported to and acknowledged by the plate umpire.

USA Softball Rules – some of the main rules that everyone should be aware of. (Not all-inclusive – consult the most recent USA softball rule book for the full list of all USA softball rules.)

- **Ball-Strike Count**

Games are played with a 1-1 count for each batter and one courtesy foul is allowed after 2 strikes. Any additional foul balls hit after the courtesy foul will be an out and recorded as a strikeout.

- Running the bases for over the Fence Homerun - Hit and Sit

- **Run-Ahead Rule** (all divisions):

20 runs after 3 innings; or

15 runs after 4 innings; or

10 runs after 5 innings.

Complete innings must be played unless the home team scores the run-ahead limit while at bat. When the visiting team reaches the limit in the top half of the inning, the home team must have their opportunity to bat in the bottom half of the inning.

- **Tie-Breaker Rule (*International Tie-Breaker*)**

No regular season game may end in a tie. If the score is tied after the completion of 7 innings of play or the completion of an inning after the time limit has expired, the next inning will begin with zero outs and the offensive team will place the player who is scheduled to bat last in that respective half inning on second base. A substitute may be inserted for the runner in accordance with the USA softball substitution rule.

Each team will have an offensive opportunity each inning until the tie is broken. If the short handed rule is in effect, an out is not declared if the absent player is the one who should begin the half inning at second base. In this case the player who precedes the absent player in the lineup will be placed on 2nd base.

- **Approved Bats Rule**

Only USA or ASA-approved bats will be allowed for play in all divisions. The bat should have the association stamp and not be listed on the disapproved bat list.

The USA disapproved bat list can be found at <https://www.usasoftball.com/certified-equipment/>

- **Uniform Rule**

Teams are not required to have like-colored uniforms. However, an Arabic whole number (0-99) of contrasting color at least 6 inches high must be worn and visible on the back of all uniform shirts. No players on the same team may wear identical numbers (numbers 0 and 00 or 3 and 03 are examples of identical numbers). Players without numbers will not be permitted to play. Any deviation from this rule should be discussed and approved by each team and the umpire.

- **Games Suspended Due to Weather**

If a game is suspended due to weather, it is resumed at the point it was suspended. The teams' rosters for the resumption of play may include only those players present prior to the suspension of play. The home team's book will designate at which point the game was halted. Coaches from both teams must review and sign the home team's scorebook before leaving the field to indicate agreement on the game situation and time remaining when the game was suspended.

- **Lineup Cards**

Lineup cards should only include players present at the softball complex wearing a team jersey at the start of a game. All players present need to be listed in the batting line up or as a substitute. Regular roster players can be added to the lineup card if they arrive after the game has started. Teams will exchange line up cards before the beginning of each game and give the original (top) copy to the Umpire. Teams with players present at the softball complex but not present in the dugout at the beginning of a game need to notify the opposing team for the player to be counted as present.

- **Substitution Rule**

Starters and substitutes can re-enter a game once during any game. They must always re-enter at the same place in the batting line up they enter the game. Once they are removed from the game for the 2nd time, they cannot re-enter the game again. If an attempt to re-enter a player is made more than once, an out will be recorded if appealed by the opposing team. If a player is re-entered into the game at a different place in the line up, an out will be recorded if appealed by the opposing team and before the next batter. The player will also be ejected from the game. After the next batter has completed their at bat, you can appeal the illegal substitution.

- **Pitching Rubber** – 50' – at NST that is the last rubber from home plate.

- **Distance between Bases** - 70'