

Acton



Adult Softball League

Official League Rules

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ASA Member  Since 2013

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<http://www.actonasl.org>

***** The AASL 2016 Rulebook is under modification – Check back soon *****

A

League Overview

The Acton Adult Softball League (AASL) was formed in 2000 to offer participation among men and women from Acton, its businesses, and surrounding communities. While team records and standings are kept throughout the season, **the league is considered "recreational" -- mostly social yet semi-competitive.** To that end, rules have been assembled and designed with the goals of promoting safe and fair play, built upon a foundation of **good sportsmanship** and **safety.** This means exercising respect, fairness, civility, honesty, responsibility, and most importantly a positive behavior.

Remember to use common sense on the field!

B

Competitive Balancing and League Standings

Beginning in 2015, a formal set of structural changes has been initiated to address a competitive rebalancing of the league. In addition to general safety and fairness, AASL's primary objective with these changes was to introduce appropriately competitive regular season games based on *team strength*. This has been accomplished with a weighted schedule for the regular season based on team performance last year, and new "points-based" system to calculate regular season standings.

1. **Team Groupings** - Three (3) groups of all AASL teams (A/B/C) will be formed prior to each season based on each team's historical performance. Groups are used for weighted schedules as well as awarding "league points" to represent wins against teams in specific groups. Team groupings could change each season based on performance.
2. **Weighted Schedule** - A regular season schedule that is weighted such that the five-team "A" and "C" groups play each other twice and "B" teams once (and a single "A/C" crossover game), while the 6-team "B" group plays all teams once. The weighted schedule will provide for more appropriately competitive regular-season games for the "A" teams and "C" teams in the league.
3. **Playoffs** - As in previous years, the Playoffs bracket will consist of all 16 teams. Furthermore, seeds will be based on the regular season Standings, which is now based on *League Points*. In order to be eligible participate in Playoffs games, all players must have played in at least 5 games during the regular season, regardless of total number of games played. The outcome of the Playoffs will continue to yield a single AASL champion team.
4. **League Points (LPs)** - A new procedure to replace regular season standings away from the traditional Win/Loss record to a system commensurate with the difficulty of each game played. The following balanced algorithm works as follows: Logging a win against an "A" team awards 2LPs; against a "B" team awards 1.5LPs, and against a "C" team awards 1LP. Additional LPs are granted for games played, and LP penalties are imposed for forfeits.

These rules are further described and detailed throughout this rulebook.

C

ASA and AASL

AASL is a registered member of the Amateur Softball Association of America (ASA) (<http://www.asasoftball.com>). ASA rules apply, with the understanding that AASL-specific rules listed below supersede any ASA rule. These rules below should be followed for all game play. Anything not specifically mentioned should be played out according to common sense and safety, and then reported to league officials for clarification in this rulebook.

Umpires - AASL uses patched umpires to officiate games from the Greater Lowell Softball Umpires Association – GLSUA, under contract for one umpire for regular season games, and two umpires for playoffs. GLSUA commits to providing the best umpiring possible for our league, with an expectation that umpires are courteous, professional, and competent. If any problems are encountered with umpires, we would like to know about it immediately so we can reach out to our umpire coordinator accordingly.

D

Sportsmanship and Code of Conduct

1. **Code of Conduct** – All members of AASL should be advised that their personal behavior reflects on AASL as a whole. Members must exercise respect to fellow players, umpires, residents, and park users where games are played – both on the field and off. Using profanity is unacceptable, and creating excess noise is inappropriate. A fundamental attribute of AASL's code of conduct is good sportsmanship.
2. **Good Sportsmanship** – All players on all teams are required to exercise good sportsmanship in this league. This means showing respect, fairness, civility, honesty, responsibility, and most importantly a positive behavior. Repeated (and qualified) complaints regarding poor sportsmanship against any player or team will result in appropriate warnings to ensure poor sportsmanship doesn't continue. This doesn't mean complaints are inappropriate, it just means to act like adults and be courteous to fellow league participants.
3. **Safety** – Underpinning every aspect of AASL is the goal of promoting a safe environment to play a semi-competitively game of softball. Nobody registers for AASL to get hurt, or to hurt anyone. But accidents happen. Bat restrictions are put in place to ensure emerging technology does not heighten the probability of getting hurt. Flight-restricted softballs also help in this regard. The most dangerous aspect affecting safe play is player is overly-aggressive play, and rules and penalties about this kind of playing is also in effect.
4. **No Alcohol** - Alcoholic beverages are prohibited at all times on all AASL fields per posted signs and Town laws. Past complaints have led to AASL's zero-tolerance policy towards alcohol on or near fields. Failure to comply may result in police action, and such events could lead to suspensions or expulsion of players from the league.
5. **Curfew** – AASL receives permits to use Elm Street and NARA Park from the Town of Acton Recreation Department. These permits allow us to use these facilities for softball-related activities. At Elm Street, once the lights are out, everybody must exit the park. Loitering may be considered trespassing by Acton Police.

E

Safety / Overly Aggressive Play

A player involved in overly aggressive play that results in substantial injury to another player may be immediately ejected from the current game by the umpire (under ASA rule 8.7 Q). Note that a player ejected from a game will be suspended automatically for at least one future game.

In addition, that player will also be subject to:

- **First offense**
 - Possible suspension for 1-3 additional games, and
 - Possible suspension for the remainder of the AASL regular season and/or playoffs.
- **Second offense**
 - Suspension for the remainder of the AASL season and/or playoffs.
- **Third offense**
 - Ejection from the league for current and all future years.

All incidents will be evaluated by the AASL Board and based on the situation, sportsmanship, and parties involved these rules will be administered accordingly. Our umpires are also on high alert in regards to our tolerance for unsafe play, and will help to enforce these rules while officiating games. To address some common collision-prone situations, consider these AASL-defined clarifications:

1. **Pickles** – When runners are in a defensive pickle, colliding with defenders is a real possibility. It is ok to bump into defenders blocking the base path (and thus get awarded the base because interfering with runners in a pickle is illegal). However, it is **not** ok to barrel into defenders in an aggressive manner in this league. Umpires take notice.
2. **Defensive Positioning** – Players should learn where to position themselves when waiting for throws for force plays and tag situations. For example, the catcher should be actually standing just in front of the plate to accept a throw (so once caught he/she can swipe tag the runner without being in the way), and **not** be positioned in the base path, and **not** anywhere near the green mat or the runner's path to the green mat. Similar positioning at 2B and 3B will prevent collisions and increase safety. Players should review their positions with captains to ensure they are playing positions properly.
3. **Base Running** – The "safety base" at 1B is used to separate runners from fielders where collisions can occur, and use of the green mat for runners to extend home plate also helps.
4. **Sliding** – Sliding is encouraged (though not required) for all runners in order to avoid collision situations (see Sliding rule below). However, hard sliding or takeout sliding is aggressive, unsafe, and illegal in AASL. Umpires take notice.

We understand that nobody wishes to cause injury to players. But we also believe players can and should regulate their level of aggressiveness, recognizing that avoiding serious injury is more important than the outcome of any particular play. While rules don't prevent injuries, we are hopeful the zero-tolerance rules described above will act as a deterrent to counteract unnecessary aggressiveness in the heat of the moment. It's simply not worth it. Please stay in control and enjoy safe softball, or face possible dismissal from AASL.

F Team Groups / Regular Season Schedule

AASL's 16-team league is comprised of three separate team groups, based on team strength, with an objective to maintain appropriately competitive regular season games. These groups are solely used to build the regular season "weighted" schedule.

1. **Team Placement into Groups** – All teams are placed in groups each year based on their performance last season. New teams (joining AASL) are automatically placed in Group C.
2. **Group A** – A group of **5 teams** – the strongest teams. Teams in this group face off twice in the regular season, play everyone in Group B one time in the regular season, and have a single game against a single team in group C during the regular season.
3. **Group B** – A group of **6 teams** with moderate performance records. Teams in this group face off once against all other teams in the league (Group B does not play a weighted schedule).
4. **Group C** – A group of **5 teams** with lower performance statistics. Teams in this group face off twice in the regular season, play everyone in Group B one time in the regular season, and have a single game against a single team in group A during the regular season.
5. **Regular Season Standings** – With a weighted schedule, regular season standings are not based on win%, but rather "league points" (LPs). See below for more information on "League Points."
6. **Future Year Team Groups** – Placing teams in groups next season is based on current year performance designated by League Points (LPs). New teams will automatically be placed in Group C. This season's AASL league champion (regardless of what Group they were in this year), will have the option to remain in their current Group or move to a higher group for next season.

G League Points (LPs)

League Points (LPs) represent team performance by replacing traditional win% in determining regular season standings. This modified standings approach provides seed values for the AASL post-season playoffs bracket. Teams are awarded LPs based on regular season performance.

The LP *bounty* awarded by winning against higher grouped teams is slightly higher between the groups, which will keep the balance of the league in check and ensure future years don't inappropriately place teams in improper groups. That said, if a given team performs well and has a strong season, the odds it will move to a higher group is high.

When Group	Wins against A	Wins against B	Wins against C	Ties	Plays Complete Game	Forfeits	Wins by Forfeit
A	+2	+1 ½	+1	50% of win	+1	-2	+1
B							
C							

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1. **Simply Playing a Game** – All complete (non-forfeited) games logged during the regular season give both teams an LP bonus - playing in a complete game will award both teams 1 LP. Attendance has its privileges. Show up and play, help your standings. Don't make up a game: hurt your standings.
2. **Winning a Game** – Any time a team wins a game, they are awarded LPs based on who they beat. Winning against a higher-grouped team is worth more LPs.
3. **Tying a Game** – Tie games shall award each team half of the LPs they were each playing for.
4. **Forfeiting a Game** – Teams that forfeit are penalized by losing 2 LPs. Teams that are forfeited against are awarded 1 LP (show up or not). Teams that forfeit have other penalties, described later.
5. **Maximum LPs by Group** – Based on the weighted schedule described above, and the LP point value awards laid out here.
 - a. **Group A** can win **26** LPs for winning, plus **15** for playing.....41 max points.
 - b. **Group B** can win **22½** LPs for winning, plus **15** for playing.....37½ max points.
 - c. **Group C** can win **19** LPs for winning, plus **15** for playing.....34 max points.
6. **Regular Season Standings** – at any time, the league website will show standings based on league points which are used for seeding the post-season bracket, but also for determining next season's team groups.
7. **Team Results** – at any time, the league website will show team results (by game) summarizing LP changes based on game results.

H

Game Makeup Policy

In efforts to use all available field space and increase the number of games played, the following makeup policy will help teams reschedule. These policy rules reduce administrative burden, and increase the use of prepaid field space, and ensure all field permits are properly allocated and used. Late cancellations that leave fields unused impact AASL cash flow (field space is limited – field permits are pre-paid, and umpires are paid if they are not given sufficient warning and/or show up to empty fields) and also introduce administrative burdens on the league.

1. **Reasons for Makeups** – Games may need to be made up for several reasons (a) rainouts, (b) forfeits, (c) incomplete games (weather / time limits), and (d) mutual rescheduling requests.
2. **Rainout Makeup Policy** – A rainout is a weather-related cancelation of a game, such that the game does not start, or is called prior to game being declared a *complete* game.

After a Rainout	Rescheduling
Within 48 hours of game start.	Captains may agree on a future reschedule date
After 48 hours of game start	League will automatically reschedule to next available slot

- a. Captains may access the league website ("Games to Make Up" link) to identify open makeup slots to jointly agree on a mutually acceptable makeup date.
- b. No LPs are awarded to either team for a rainout, regardless if teams are at the field.

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3. **Mutual Rescheduling Requests** – A mutual rescheduling is a request where both teams agree that a scheduled game cannot be played, and they both agree to reschedule the game. Assuming there is time for AASL officials to make use of the vacated game slot, there are no penalties, but this needs to be judged on a case-by-case basis.

Sufficient Time for AASL to Repurpose the Field	Penalties / Outcome
YES	No Penalty
NO*	-1 LP (both teams)

- a. In both cases, captains will follow the makeup policy described earlier.
- b. *Second offense without sufficient time will result in **forfeit** ruling.

I Field Use

1. **Field Permits** – AASL obtains field permits from the Acton Recreation Department. AASL is only permitted to hold league events (e.g., practices, games, playoffs, pick-up events) during permitted times on permitted dates. Permitted times are listed on the league website.
2. **Lights** – AASL schedules the lights for Elm Street field for late games. Lights are scheduled to come on 30 minutes prior to sunset and are scheduled to turn off at 9:30 PM or at a time listed on the schedule on the league website. If games end earlier, captains **must** contact Musco to have the lights turned off when the field is vacated. League officials and captains have authority to override the default end time to 9:45 PM for a game by calling Musco at (877) 347-3319. However, once the lights are off, they cannot be turned back on via Musco.
3. **Parking** – Everybody should park in the parking lots associated with the fields. Cars parked on the grass at NARA may be ticketed. Cars parked along Elm Street may be ticketed.

J Bat Rules

AASL regulates the bats used during game play to minimize the potential for any serious injury to pitchers and infielders from a batted ball. AASL's intent is to maintain a high level of on-field safety in our game, making games more enjoyable for all.

The league provides a selection of bats at each field for players on both teams to use during the season. These are marked with colored tape for easy identification, and have "AASL" marked on their barrels or grinded into their knobs. Be advised that new bats are introduced into the league each year. Players may bring their own bats but rules apply to their use. Please do not purchase a new bat without consulting these rules.

1. **Legal Bats** – Only bats listed on the AASL Approved Bat List (kept current on the AASL website) will be allowed. This list is a subset of the ASA approved bat list but excludes all bats that are not single-walled construction. No double or multi-wall, multi-shell, or titanium bats are allowed. **Questionable bats are not allowed until approved.**
2. **Legal Bat Stickers** – All league bats (and approved player bats) will be given an "AASL legal bat sticker." If a bat does not have this sticker visible on its handle, it may not be used. Period. New player bats must be brought to AASL officials to be inspected, and given a sticker. Naturally, stickers are not removable and also not transferrable.

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3. **Inspection** – All bats should be inspected by the opposing team’s captain prior to (or during) each game and bats that do not have a legal bat sticker may not be used. If a team believes its bat conforms to the definition of single wall, then they must first contact league officials to declare it, get it approved, and get a sticker before it may be used.
4. **Penalties** – If a team brings an illegal bat to the plate, the batter will be called out and the bat will be disqualified from further play. If a play resulted in *offensive benefit* by using the bat and the violation is identified before the next batter is pitched to, the game situation will revert to what it was prior to the at bat, and then the batter who used the illegal bat will be called out. Multiple offenses should be reported to AASL officials.
5. **Ejection/Expulsion** – Players who knowingly or ignorantly use an illegal bat while at the plate will be suspended from the game without exception, and league officials must be contacted by the opposing captain. Any second offense will result in the player being dismissed from the league for the remainder of the regular season and playoffs, without refund. This rule has been put in place to focus on a zero-tolerance policy associated with player safety. There are no exceptions.

K

Equipment

1. **Game Balls** – AASL uses 375 lb compression, .44 COR, 12” circumference, yellow leather softballs. AASL supplies each team with game balls for regular-season games. The HOME team is responsible for providing a new game ball for regular season games and having a good condition "used" softball available as well.
 - i. During game play, if the ball being used does not meet these specifications, replace the ball with one meeting these specifications.
 - ii. Game balls for the playoffs will be supplied by the league at each game.
2. **Safety First Base** – A “safety” first base is comprised of two adjoining bases. One traditional (white) base in the usual spot for the fielder (inside base) and a second (orange) one (outside base) next to it in foul ground, for the batter.
 - i. The batter is the only person that uses the orange side (when trying to beat out a grounder). Once the batter has reached safely, or if rounding first, the batter/runner would use the traditional "white" side of the base.
 - ii. However, when overrunning first base to beat out a throw and secure a single, the runner must step on the safety base (and not the normal base), otherwise the batter is out.
 - iii. A batted ball hitting the white portion is declared fair, and a batted ball hitting the outside (orange) portion is declared foul. Once the runner has reached first base and attempts to go beyond first base, the inside base (white) is the only playable portion of the base.

L

Game Progress

1. **Pre-Game Umpire Conference** – Before any AASL game, a captain or other representative from each team will meet with the umpire to:
 - a. Provide a new game ball from the home team and a suitable used ball from the visiting team (the used ball must meet AASL ball specifications);
 - b. Pay umpires (each team pays half of the umpire fee); and
 - c. Review ground rules and ASA rules.
2. **Game Start Time** – Games start at times listed in the online schedule. There is a grace period of 10 minutes after those times to have the first pitch. After the grace period the game may be considered a forfeit if one team cannot field a team. This is at the discretion of the “prepared” captain. However, the schedule does not leave a lot of room for later start times given that there are back-to-back games on some days.
3. **Game Length / Game End Time** – Games will consist of seven (7) innings. Game time should run less than 90 minutes. When no game follows on the same field, the game may continue until dusk (at NARA) or lights-out curfew (at Elm Street). In the event another team is waiting to take the field to start a subsequent game, the game must be stopped no later than 5 minutes prior to the start time of the next scheduled game. However, on discussion with current-game captains and next-game captains, the game can continue to complete an inning. Agreement is at the discretion of next-game captains with umpire consultation to resolve any disagreements.
4. **Run-Ahead Rule (Mercy Rule) (Slaughter Rule)** – In regular-season games, a team leading by **20+ runs after** four complete innings, or by **12+ after five complete** innings, is declared the winner. 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. Once the run-ahead rule is invoked, the leading team is the official winner and the current score counts. However, during the regular season, both teams should continue to play out the game for fun if the trailing team wishes to continue. Paid umpires must stay for all game play.
5. **Tie Games** – Tie scores at the end of 7 innings are allowed to continue into extra innings assuming time/daylight allows. The game continues until the tie is broken at the end of a complete inning, otherwise a tie will be entered in as the official score. During playoffs, there is no time limit; these games must be completed.
6. **Rainouts, Bad Weather, and Unplayable Fields** – *Captains* are responsible for monitoring the weather and league-provided communications throughout the afternoon and keeping their team informed. In the event of possible rain, the following hierarchy has been setup to determine if games are on:
 - a. **First** – check the AASL website for news postings about the status of the day's game. A posting will be made (on the top of the home page) whether the games are ON or not.
 - b. **Second** – if the web page has not been updated, please contact a league official for the latest update.

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- In general, all players should assume that if games are not explicitly canceled they are still on. League officials will try to always post a “daily update” on the website to remove any uncertainty. However, if field conditions are bad at *any* time, players *must not* play (and risk injury or damaging the fields). Games called due to weather should be rescheduled at a later date (as field space permits). Captains are responsible for notifying league officials for rescheduling and game reporting purposes.
7. **Incomplete Games** – In the event that inclement weather, the Elm Street curfew, or dusk at NARA interrupts game play, a game may be deemed incomplete. A game is considered an *officially complete* (regulation game) if **5 full innings** have been played (or **4½** if the home team is winning). In the event of game stoppage in the middle of an inning, the official ending score is that of the last complete inning or the current score if the home team is winning. This ensures that both home and visiting teams get the same number of at-bats before the untimely end-of-game situation occurs. Incomplete games should be scheduled at a later date (as field space permits), see "Game Continuation" below.
 8. **Game Continuation** – Incomplete games that are made up shall continue from where they left off (i.e., same team at bat, same batter at bat, same batting count, same runners on base, same number of outs, same batting lineups, and same score). Players who are not available at the continuation will be removed from the lineup and any new players now available will be added to the end of the existing batting lineup in the scorebook (e.g., if the lineup had 15 people previously, the new batters begin at position 16). Prior to the continuation, AASL will assist with any questions of how to continue the game. At the field, if any disputes or questions remain on how to continue the game, ASA umpires will arbitrate. Note that ASA umpires receive \$5.00 per inning in the continued game – please pay the umpire and AASL will reimburse the individual(s) who paid.
 9. **Rescheduling Postponed & Incomplete Games** – If a game is rained out or otherwise incomplete, AASL will contact both captains with information about available dates for a make-up (though "Game to Make Up" link on the league website can be accessed beforehand). Per the makeup policy described above, captains have 48 hours from the original game time to coordinate a make-up date from the dates available. If no date is selected, AASL will automatically assign a date for the make-up game based on the next available game slot. Any team who does not accept AASL's automatically selected date must forfeit. If neither team accepts AASL's chosen date, both teams must forfeit.
 10. **Forfeits** - The goal for AASL is to eliminate all forfeits and we do so by providing tools on the league website to help captains manage team attendance and provide easier access to players on the wait list. With ample players on our teams' rosters and some basic proactive team management, captains should easily be positioned to avoid a forfeit situation. To avoid the inconveniences forfeits pose to other league members who pay to play, and the cost that goes with abandoning pre-paid field space, the AASL forfeit policies are as follows:

Offense	Forfeit Penalty*
1 st Offense	Lose 2 LPs, and follow the makeup policy (described above).
2 nd Offense	Lose another 2 LPs, and lose eligibility for post season playoffs.
3 rd Offense	Lose another 2 LPs, and get waitlisted as a team for next season.
4 th Offense	Team is immediately removed from AASL.

* **Umpire Costs** – Teams that forfeit "last minute" due to poor planning will be responsible for covering full costs of umpires for the game. By contract, the cutoff for alerting umpires is 8pm the night before.

M

Player Rules

1. **Minimum Player Age** – All players must be 21 years old or older to play in AASL. A player who turns 21 during the regular season can register and begin to play once the player turns 21. Any player under 21 is an "ineligible player" and Ineligible Player rules apply.
2. **Eligible Players** – For liability purposes, all softball players must be registered and waived with AASL. Only players that are registered are eligible to play. If a player is not registered, he/she may not play (for insurance reasons, no exceptions) and is an ineligible player. Team rosters are available to opposing captains online via the league website for confirmation that opposing players are properly registered before those players play in AASL games. There is no restriction on the date of registration to participate in regular season games.
3. **Ineligible Players** – If a player is ineligible based on any rules stated in AASL rules (e.g., not 21 years old or older, not registered, attempting to play during a suspension or ejection), the player is considered an "ineligible player" and this rule applies. During the regular season, teams who field ineligible player(s) may be charged a forfeit loss.
 - a. If the issue is identified during a regular-season game, the ineligible player must exit the game immediately and may not return until that player has registered and therefore becomes eligible. Assuming the issue can be resolved during the game (allowing the player to return) his or her slot in the batting order becomes an automatic out. Otherwise an automatic out remains for the rest of the game as a penalty. Another player can field for the ineligible player, but all gender rules still apply.
 - b. If the opposing team cares to file a protest about a team using an ineligible player, this must be brought to AASL's attention via email within 24 hours after the start of the game. AASL will review the situation and may assess a forfeit loss to the team using ineligible player(s).
 - c. During playoffs, an ineligible player is one who has not registered or one who has not met the minimum game requirements during the regular season or has not received a waiver from AASL to play.
 - d. If a team fields an ineligible player, the game is paused, and the issue may be brought to AASL management's attention immediately via phone (or in-person if an AASL board member is available at the field) for resolution. If the player has not yet been on the field defensively during at least one plate appearance, and if the player has not had a plate appearance offensively, then the ineligible player is still removed from the lineup but without the "automatic out" penalty described above.
 - e. The AASL Board (or board members present) will determine, using sole discretion, whether the violation is grounds for a forfeit loss or (if during the game) whether the player is removed from the game.

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4. **Ejection** - If a player is ejected from an AASL game by an on-field ASA umpire, the player must follow the umpire's direction as to whether the player can remain at the field or must leave the premises. Ejections may occur as a result of unsportsmanlike conduct, language, fighting, or overly aggressive play that threatens or harms other players. More details surrounding ejections based on overly aggressive play are described above.
 - a. If the player is ejected during a regular season game, the player is also suspended for the following game (1 additional game).
 - b. If the player ejected during a playoff game, the player is suspended for the remainder of the playoffs (the remainder of the post-season).
 - c. If the player is ejected from a second game in the regular, the player is suspended for the remainder of that season AND post-season.
 - d. The AASL Board reserves the right to review all cases, and may choose to deny the player participation in any future AASL events in the current season or future seasons and/or adjust penalties described above – all depending on circumstances of the incident that led to the ejection.

5. **Playoffs - Player Eligibility** – In order for a player to play in a playoff game, he/she must be on the official roster and have played at least five (5) regular season games for that team, regardless of the total number games the team has played in during the regular season. Opposing captains may seek proof that a player meets these requirements and if this is not met, the player may not participate in post-season playoffs. AASL league officials should be contacted should this occur. Note – females that sub for other teams during the regular season may count substitute appearances as *games played* to meet this eligibility requirement.

6. **Game-Day Rosters** – A minimum of eight (8) players are required to avoid forfeiture. Having ten (10) players is considered a complete team. More than ten (10) players may show up and play, but only ten (10) players may be in the field at any one time (captains should adjust fielding positions throughout the game to accommodate all players). Note: there are gender restrictions which could reduce the number of players a team is allowed to have in the field – see “Gender Mix” below.

7. **Non-Defensive Catchers** - If a team only has 8 [eligible] fielders, a non-defensive catcher can be used or requested of the other team (to *only* return the ball to the pitcher). Non-defensive catchers can participate in minor, routine plays (such as popups to the catcher, and force plays at the plate), but shouldn't get involved in relays at the plate (or lightly batted balls) where the pitcher can otherwise cover. A team must supply their own catcher if they have 9 or more players. Note: there are gender restrictions which could reduce the number of players a team is allowed to have in the field – see “Gender Mix” below.

8. **Batting Lineup / Attendance** - Everyone who plays must be placed in the batting order before the game begins (i.e., if 15 people show up, they all bat even though only 10 may play in the field at a time). Batting lineups must be traded between teams prior to the game, and batting orders may not change once the game begins. Once a player is added to the batting lineup, he/she cannot be removed except for injury. Any player who is removed from batting order during the game (other than for injury, see below) will not be permitted to play (or bat) for the remainder of the game. Teams shall validate opposing team batting lineups when reporting game scores on the league website.

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9. **Fielding Lineup** – Each player must be allowed to play at least three (3) complete innings in the field. Captains may exercise unlimited substitutions during game play and between innings to accommodate this. Captains are strongly encouraged to give fair playing time to all players that show up.
10. **Gender Mix** –When fielding a team, at least three (3) females as well as three (3) males must be in the field each inning. Any shortage of either gender will result in automatic (and recurring) outs when the team is at bat as well as result in fielding penalties, as follows:

If this...	Or this...	Then this...	And this.
MALES In Field	FEMALES In Field	Penalty when in the field	Penalty when at bat*
3 through 7	3 through 7	None – may field <u>10 players</u>	None
only 2	only 2	Only <u>9 total fielders</u> allowed	<u>One</u> automatic and recurring out: 1, 2, 3, <u>OUT</u> , 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, etc.
only 1	only 1	Only <u>8 total fielders</u> allowed	<u>Two</u> automatic and recurring outs. 1, 2, 3, <u>OUT</u> , 4, 5, 6, <u>OUT</u> , 7, 8, 9, etc.
0	0	Game is forfeited	Game if forfeited

*Both captains must be aware of when the automatic outs are to take place before the game begins. This rule accommodates fair and appropriate coed play commensurate with the league's charter. These gender mix rulings are summarized as follows:

- The minimum fielder rule described above) requires that at least three (3) males and three (3) females be fielders each inning without penalty.
 - If one recurring out is required, it must occur after the third batter. If a second recurring out is required, it must occur after the sixth batter.
 - An automatic forfeit occurs when no females show up to play, regardless of how many male players show up (the reverse is also true). As described earlier, after the forfeit is declared the game may be played for fun if team captains agree. Paid umpires must stay for all game play.
 - All players who show up for a game should be given equal playing time in the field. Captains should please be fair allowing everyone equal playing time.
 - If a player arrives late and that player fills a team's gender requirement, the "automatic out" penalty is adjusted immediately.
11. **Injury** – Players may be removed from the field at any time due to injury, allowing the captain to substitute as necessary. An injured player may leave the game at any time, but once they officially drop out of the game (by notifying the opposing captain) they may not rejoin the game. If an injured player wishes to stay in the game, they must retain their place in the batting lineup and use a pinch runner as necessary. If a player's injuries prevent them from batting, they may skip their at-bat without penalty, but only one time. Captains must communicate this action to the other team. If an injured player cannot bat next time they are up, they must remove themselves from the game. Captains communicate; no penalty.
12. **Tardy Attendance** – Players may show up late and join a game in progress, but must be added to the end of the batting order if the team has already had one or more plate appearances. Captains shall alert opposing team of additions to batting order / attendance.

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13. **Outfielders / Short Fielders** – When in the field, a full team of 10 must play 4 outfielders. One of the four may play as a “short fielder.” If a team has only 9 players and elects to play only 3 outfielders (or 8 players and 2 outfielders), one may still be designated a “short fielder.” A *short fielder* may play anywhere in the outfield as long as he/she is not on the infield dirt. Other *outfielders* must position themselves behind the arc formed by the cones placed on the 1st base and 3rd base foul lines until the ball is put in play by the batter (see “AASL Field Layouts” for a pictorial view of the field). These other outfielders must not charge in until after the ball is hit.
- When a woman is at bat, there may be no short-fielder (all fielders must stand behind the outfield arc). See “Outfielders during a Female At Bat” rule below.
 - It is everybody's responsibility to ensure outfielders are positioned properly before the ball is pitched. Once the ball is hit, it is considered in play and shall be played.
14. **Outfielders during a Female At-Bat** - When a female batter is at the plate, all outfielders and short fielders must start behind the 170' line (marked by cones and/or a hashed line through the outfield) until the ball is contacted or put in play by the batter. For male batters, prior rules apply.
15. **Replacement “Pinch” Runners** – Pinch runners will be allowed for injured players who have already reached first base.
- Pinch runners must be of the same gender as who they are replacing.
 - The pinch runner must be an eligible player that is currently in the game, represented as the last batter to make an out.
 - The captain of the team with the pinch runner must inform the other captain before switching or declaring pinch runners.
 - With the exception of handicapped batters (who may have replacement runners from home plate after the ball is hit), pinch runners are not allowed from home plate (all batters must run to first base after they hit the ball before a pinch runner can be used).
16. **Substitute Female Players** – In past seasons, some teams have had a problem fielding enough female players throughout the season. AASL wishes to have full participation and to avoid any penalties for teams fielding too few female players, while still requiring teams to carry a sufficient roster of players.
- During any regular season game, a team may field *two* substitute female players from another AASL team to fill AASL's gender rules/requirements, but must file the request via the league's website, and its “I need a Sub” link.
 - No substitutes are allowed in playoff games.

N

Game Time Rules

- Umpires** – As described above, ASA patched umpires are used for all regular-season and all playoff games. During the regular season, one umpire is used per game. During playoffs, two umpires are used per game.
 - A single umpire shall stand behind home plate, and officiate the game from there.
 - A second umpire shall share duties with the home plate umpire and stand in the field based on where baserunners reside.

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- c. While all umpires must pay careful attention, any umpire can appeal to any other umpire in the case he/she did not see a play well enough to make the call. Players should not argue with umpires but should ask their captains to calmly discuss questionable calls with the umpire and opposing captain. If no alternative agreement is made, the umpire's ruling stands.
 - d. When no official ASA umpires are present, the batting team during each inning is responsible for umpiring duties, coordinated by the captain. The batting team must provide a home plate umpire, responsible for calling balls & strikes and plays at the plate and is the ultimate arbiter for calls at bases. A first base coach/umpire must be provided to call plays at 1st base, and a 3rd base coach/umpire must be provided to call plays at 3rd base. In the event of questionable calls, the above rulings in "c" still apply.
2. **Leading / Stealing** – Leading and stealing are not allowed. Base runners *may not leave the base* until the pitched ball has crossed home plate. If the runner leaves the base early, the umpire must declare a dead ball, call the runner out, and any activity at the plate (hit, strike, ball) is void.
 3. **Bunting** – Bunting is not allowed. Any intentional bunt made results in a dead ball and an automatic out for the batter.
 4. **Sliding** – AASL does not require sliding but recognizes that it is allowed and is encouraged where sliding can prevent a collision. Runners must SLIDE OR AVOID in force plays at bases and at home plate. Additionally, if you are a runner moving between bases and are put out by a force play (e.g., on your way to second base), you must get out of the way of the fielder attempting to throw to first base for a double play (i.e., duck, slide, or peel off). Failure to do so not only results in your original force out but also results in the runner who was next to be forced in this play to be out because of your interference.
 5. **Plays at Home Plate** – To limit the potential of collisions at home plate, AASL allows runners to use any part of the strike mat to be considered part of home plate. However, fielders must still use home plate for force outs, and/or tag runners out. Runners must approach home plate to avoid a collision and use the larger safe zone accordingly. Runners who intentionally cause collision will be called out and may be ejected from the game.
 6. **Dead Ball / Interference** – Any ball (thrown or batted) that goes behind the infield fences or backstop is declared a dead ball. Any ball contacting an object in the field of play that is not part of the play (e.g., bats leaning on the fence, player bags inside the fence, etc.) results in a dead ball. These and any other dead ball declarations result in the umpire awarding runners the bases they would have reached.
 7. **In Play / Out of Play** – Balls are in play and live when they hit the backstop or fencing near first and third base. When the ball goes out of play, the umpire will award runners appropriate bases, and the award will be governed by the positions of the runners when the ball left the fielder's hand. For a graphic depiction of the "out of bounds" areas for each field, please see "AASL Field Layouts."

8. **Infield Fly Rule** – When ASA umpires present, the ASA infield fly rule will be in effect.
 - a. The standard infield fly rule does not apply in AASL unless official ASA-qualified umpire(s) are present. Without these umpires, any pop-fly hit at any time is considered a live ball regardless of how many outs there are, and regardless of how many runners are on bases.
 - b. The infield fly rule was overruled by AASL to reduce complexity in a league without confident and knowledgeable umpires. It does, however, enable infielders to turn double plays by dropping the ball, accidentally or deliberately. While it might be perceived excessively competitive to do so (and not in the spirit of the league), there is no penalty for the fielding team.

O

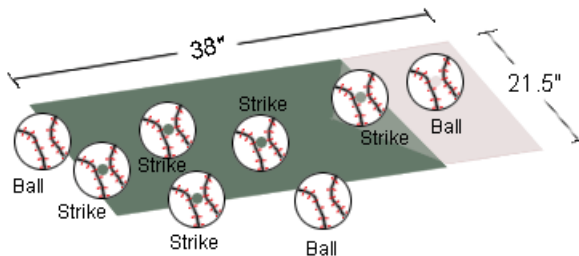
Field-Specific Ground Rules

1. **Outfield Obstructions at NARA Park** – At NARA Park, the outfield has no official boundary; however there are frequent obstructions such as soccer nets, players, and fans deep in the outfield. Captains should identify outfield obstructions and move them if possible before the game begins. If a ball hits an outfield obstacle making the ball unplayable, the outfielder shall signal so with a raised hand, and the runner shall be awarded appropriate bases by the ASA umpire. If no ASA umpire is officiating, the player is awarded a ground-rule double.
2. **Outfield Boundaries at Elm Street** – Batted balls that land in the woods on the fly are considered home runs. Balls hit onto or past the hill (left field and center field) are still in play, unless the ball encounters an obstacle during pursuit (bench, basketball game, etc.) at which point the fielder must signal immediately by raising his/her hand that the ball is unplayable, and therefore declared a dead ball. If an ASA umpire is officiating, the umpire will use his judgment to award appropriate bases. If an ASA umpire is not officiating, the player is awarded a ground-rule triple.
3. **Balls Entering the Woods at Elm Street** – If an outfielder decides to pursue the ball into the woods, then the ball is live and play continues. If an outfielder signals by raising his/her hand that the ball is unplayable, an ASA umpire will use judgment to award appropriate bases. If an ASA umpire is not officiating, the batter is awarded a ground-rule triple.
4. **Light Poles at Elm Street** – Outfield light poles at Elm Street are in the field of play, therefore balls hitting outfield light poles are considered “in play.”

P

Pitching Guide / The Strike Mat

1. **Strike Mat Placement** - The strike mat is placed as shown, and is used with or without ASA umpires. It must be placed over home plate and positioned to square off the back part of the plate. The unseen back portion of the plate is therefore considered a strike.
2. **Batters Boxes** - Batters may swing at anything as long as both feet remain in the batter's box or on the lines of the batter's box. If one or both of a batter's feet are outside of the batter's box or on home plate when contact is made, the ball is dead and the batter is out.



The mat may be placed over or under the plate

3. **Ball and Strike Basics** - If no swing is made, the ruling is simple: if the ball hits any part of the strike mat, it's a **strike**. If it does not, it's a **ball**. The umpire behind the plate calls balls and strikes with a visual hand signal and in a voice loud enough for outfielders to hear the call.
4. **Pitched Balls Hitting the Plate** - A pitched ball that hits the front of the plate (where no mat exists) is a ball.
5. **Let Ball Hit Ground** - Catchers are to let the ball hit the ground. If catcher catches ball before hitting ground for otherwise close calls, the ruling will be in favor of the batter (ball).
6. **Pitching Arc / Slow Pitch** – A legal pitch will be an arced pitch between 6 feet and 12 feet in height. For a pitch to be declared *illegal*, the umpire behind home plate must call "Illegal" while the ball is still in the air. Illegal pitches are not dead balls, but if they are not swung on they will be declared a "ball." If the ball is swung at, the batter accepts the result: a swinging strike, a foul ball, or the ball is put in play. If illegal pitches are repeated and frequent, the pitcher must be replaced. See "Declaring Illegal Pitches."
7. **Declaring "Illegal" Pitches** – Umpires are to call illegal pitches (too high or too low) after the ball reaches its apex on its way to the plate. The umpire declares "Illegal." The batter has the option of not swinging and having the pitch being declared a ball no matter where it lands, or the batter can swing at the ball. If the batter swings, the "Illegal" call is void and the batter takes the result of that swing: a swinging strike, a foul ball, or a ball put in play.
8. **Walks** – There is a max of **three (3) walks per team/inning**. After the first three walks (in any one inning), any batter who is pitched four balls does not walk, but is also now protected from striking out on called strikes. For the first two strikes, **only swinging strikes** and foul balls count towards strikes. That batter **cannot walk or strike out on called strikes** – but can strike out on foul balls and swings. This rule is designed to discourage good hitters from taking walks, and to encourage fielding teams to provide capable pitchers.
9. **Intentional Walks** – intentional walks are allowed, and may be called as such by the pitcher or catcher. If called, the pitcher does not have to needlessly pitch four balls to cause a walk. The batter then takes one base. Note that excessive intentional walks (for competitive reasons) do not meet the spirit of the league and should be avoided; all batters should have a chance to hit the ball.

Q AASL Field Layouts

1. **Field Setup** – Prior to each game, captains must set up the field. The HOME captain has this responsibility primarily, but both teams should help. This includes (1) raking and lining as necessary, (2) positioning 1B (safety base), 2B, 3B, the pitcher’s plate, and home plate, (3) setting up outfield cones, and (4) setting up scoreboard. For a graphic depiction of specifics of each AASL field, please see “AASL Field Layouts.”
2. **Bases** – All bases are 65’ apart, as measured from the rear tip of home plate to the back corner of the base. Second base should be 92’ from home plate, measured from the rear tip of home plate to the center of 2B.
3. **Safety Base** – First base should use a safety base, and be placed to straddle the baseline. See rules above for more information on the safety first base.
4. **Pitcher’s Mound** – Pitcher’s mound should be placed 50’ as measured from the back of home plate to the front edge of the rubber.
5. **Cones** – One cone is placed on each foul line in the outfield, placed 105’ back from its respective base (which is 170’ away from the back of home plate). Cones should be placed directly on the foul line. There will be an additional 2 cones at NARA to be used to demarcate the out-of-play area on the 1st and 3rd base lines.

