

SLO-PITCH

League Rules



EDMONTON SPORT & SOCIAL CLUB

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1. FIELD REQUIREMENTS

| League | Total # of Players Required on the Court | Minimum # of F Players Required on the Court | Maximum # of M/X Players Allowed on the Court |
|--------|--|--|---|
| All | 10 | 3 | 7 |

The ESSC welcomes people of all gender identity or expression. Minimum female player requirements are inclusive of anyone who identifies as a female (i.e. players who identify themselves as M and X will not count towards female player minimums).

Masters Roster Requirements:

- Most players on the roster must be at least 40 years of age, however teams are permitted up to **three** players that are 30-39 years of age at the start of the current season.
- Players that are 18-29 years of age are not permitted to play in the Masters league.

2. DEFAULT MINIMUMS & SCORES

| League | Minimum Players to Avoid Default | Default Score |
|--------|----------------------------------|---------------|
| All | 7 (2 Female Players) | 0-20 |

3. FORMAT & EQUIPMENT

GAME FORMAT

- Players should arrive 15 minutes prior to the scheduled game time
- Teams will play one 90-minute game per night:
 - Maximum of 7-innings in length
 - Most diamonds have two rotations of games per night, ***if playing in the early slot on a diamond, teams may not start a new inning with less than 10 minutes remaining in the timeslot***
 - If a game is called due to darkness, the final score will stand as of the last completed inning
- **Regular Season:** Ties are allowed
- **Playoffs:** Ties are not allowed
 - If a game is tied at the end of 7-innings, an extra-inning will be played
 - If the score remains tied after the extra-inning, additional extra-inning(s) will be played using the ***'International Scoring Rule'***
 - Teams will start each half-inning with a runner on 2nd base
 - The runner will be the player who was the final out in the previous inning

EQUIPMENT

- **Cleats** are permitted, as long as they do not have metal spikes
- Players are required to bring their own bats and gloves

- Please view the **illegal bat list** for further information on softball bat restrictions in ESSC Leagues
- Teams are only permitted to use the softballs provided by the ESSC

4. GAME PLAY

STARTING THE GAME

FIELD SET-UP

- Teams should set-up the field using the **ESSC Field Set-up Diagram**
 - The first team listed on the schedule (home) will be responsible for diamond base set-up.
 - Most fields will be lined, but if lines are absent, teams should mark the following:
 - Foul Lines, Respect Line, Commitment Line, Home-plate line, Home-run line
 - Bases will be placed at the **65 feet** from home plate
 - Some fields will have the distance marked by an in-ground whisker

KEEPING SCORE

- **Regular Season:** Teams may use any suitable means to determine who is the home team; receiving the choice to field or bat to start the first-inning
- **Playoffs:** The higher seed is the home team, choosing to field or bat to start the first-inning
- Teams will track individual batter results each inning for their own team, as well as total runs scored by the opposing team
- **A team can score a maximum of 7-runs in a single-inning**, with the exception of the final inning where a team can score an unlimited number of runs
- **Mercy** is called and the score freezes if a team is up by **20 or more runs** as the conclusion of a full-inning
 - In this case, teams are encouraged to continue to play for fun, or to mix up the teams for practice, but it is not a requirement and teams may leave the game following a mercy
 - **Recreational Plus and Intermediate Divisions Only:** In Playoff games, Mercy will not be called. Scores can be higher than a 20-point differential.
- A team does not bat the bottom of the 7th inning if already leading the game
- If the go-ahead / winning run is scored in the bottom of the 7th inning, the game ends immediately
- **The score should be confirmed at the end of each half-inning to avoid any discrepancies**

BATTING ORDER

- All players playing in the game must be listed in the batting order
 - A player cannot play in the field during the game if they are not part of the batting order
 - A player can be part of the batting order, but not play in the field during the game
- Any additions or changes to the batting order after the start of the game (due to players arriving late, etc) must be approved by the opposing team
 - Teams are allowed to sub or replace a player mid-way through a game, but once a player is removed from their spot in the batting order they cannot return to the game
- 3 females must appear within the first 10 players in the batting order
 - If only 2 females are present at the game, every 3rd female spot will result in an automatic out

- There is no limit to the length of the batting order
 - If a team only has the minimum female requirement, they may construct the batting order repeating the present females as needed to ensure the batting order rules above can be followed.
- Three players of the same gender can only bat in a row one-time in the batting order, including the carry-over from the bottom of the order to the top – view the chart below for some batting order examples

Batting Order Examples:

| # of Players in Batting Order | # of Female Player Spots Needed | Suggested Legal Batting Order |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| 10 | 3 | P1-F-P2-P3-P4-F-P5-P6-F-P7 |
| | | P1-P2-F-P3-P4-P5-F-P6-P7-F |
| | | P1-P2-P3-F-P4-P5-F-P6-P7-F |
| 11 | 4 | P1-F-P2-P3-F-P4-P5-F-P6-P7-F |
| | | P1-P2-F-P3-P4-F-P5-P6-F-P7-F |
| 12 | 4 | P1-P2-F-P3-P4-F-P5-P6-F-P7-P8-F |
| 13 | 4 | P1-P2-F-P3-P4-P5-F-P6-P7-F-P8-P9-F |
| | | P1-P2-P3-F-P4-P5-F-P6-P7-F-P8-P9-F |
| 14 | 5 | P1-P2-F-P3-P4-F-P5-P6-F-P7-P8-F-P9-F |
| 15 | 5 | P1-P2-F-P3-P4-F-P5-P6-F-P7-P8-F-P9-P10-F |

PITCHING

- The pitching mound should be 50 feet from home plate

- Teams are discouraged from moving closer to pitch to the opposition
- Due to safety considerations, the batting team can refuse to hit if the pitcher is moving closer than the 50-foot mark
- Teams will pitch to their opponents:
 - Each batter will receive up to 3 strikes and/or 4 balls
 - The pitch must be an underhand toss, between 6 and 12 feet high, or it will be deemed 'illegal'
 - The umpire must call 'illegal' before the batter makes a play on the ball
 - An 'illegal' pitch results in a 'ball' in terms of the batter's count
 - If the batter makes an attempt on the ball, the result of the play cannot be over-turned
 - A strike occurs:
 - On a swing and a miss, or on a foul ball
 - If the batter takes the pitch and the ball contacts any part of the strike mat
 - If the ball does not contact any part of the strike mat, but contacts home plate, it is deemed a 'ball'
 - If a batter is walked with four straight balls (no strikes) that batter proceeds to second base, and the next batter on-deck may choose between batting or taking an automatic walk to first-base.
 - Previous base-runners will only advance if the walk(s) force them to the next base

BATTING

- There is no bunting allowed in any ESSC Slo-Pitch division
 - A half-swing or bunt attempt will result in a strike
- When a player makes contact with the ball, it does not have to pass the pitcher to be live, as long as the batter took a full-swing or attempt at the ball
 - A half-swing or bunt attempt will result in a strike
- A batter who hits a foul tip or ball with two strikes is 'out'
- If a batter steps across, or onto home plate or the strike mat to attempt to hit the ball, they are out
- If the batter touches the ball in fair territory while running to 1st base after making contact, the batter is out

FOUL BALLS

- A foul ball exceeding the height of the batter and caught by the catcher is an out
- If the batter makes contact with the ball and it touches the strike mat, it is a foul-tip (strike)
- If the batter makes contact with the ball and it touches home plate and rolls into fair territory, the ball is live
- If the batter makes contact with the ball and it touches any part of their body (including clothing) the ball is a foul-tip (dead ball) and is considered a strike
- A ball can travel over the foul line and return into play before it passes 1st or 3rd base as long as it has not been touched by a defender in foul territory

OUT OF PLAY

- Is designated by drawing an imaginary line straight out from the corner / ends of the backstop, parallel to the first or third base line
- A fielder may not travel past the 'out of play' lines to make a play on the ball or to record an out

- If playing on a fully-fenced diamond that has a fence extending from the corner of the backstop (designating the out-of-play line), the ball is:
 - Live off the fence (remains inside the area of play)
 - Out-of-play if it travels over the fence or under the fence

INFIELD FLY RULE

- Applies if there are less than 2 outs, and;
 - Runners on 1st and 2nd base
 - Runners on 1st, 2nd and 3rd base
- `Infield Fly' should be called by the umpire while the ball is in the air
- On a routine pop-fly to the infield the batter is automatically declared out
 - The infielders do not have to make an attempt to catch the ball
 - This prevents the fielder from dropping the ball in an attempt to force multiple runners out
- The rule does not apply for line drives, or balls that leave the shale infield playing area
- On an infield fly play, a player who is already on base may choose to try to tag-up and advance

HOME RUNS

- Each team is allowed **five (5)** out of the park home-runs per game:
 - Any additional home-runs over 5 are deemed an **out**
 - **Plus-1 Rule:** If both teams reach the 5 home-run limit;
 - Either team may hit additional home runs; however, no team may ever go more than one home run up on the other team, or the home-run results in an out
 - Only balls that travel over the home run line while in the air will count towards the limit
 - An inside-the-park home run, or home run resulting from a defensive error will not count
 - If a ball passes the home run line in the air, it automatically becomes a dead ball and cannot be fielded

BASE RUNNING

- Leadoffs or stealing bases are never permitted in ESSC Slo-Pitch Leagues
 - The runner is `out' if they leave the bag before the batter makes contact with the ball
- A runner is out when they fail to re-touch their base after a fair or foul ball is caught, before the runner or the runner's base is tagged by a fielder in possession of the ball
 - Tagging up and running (after the catch is made) on fair or foul a fly ball is permitted
- When running to 1st base:
 - The runner may only contact the orange safety base beside 1st base
 - If the runner touches any part of the white 1st base then they are out
 - The fielder may only contact the white 1st base
 - If the fielder touches any part of the orange safety base, the runner is safe
 - The exception is if the runner is rounding 1st base on a multi-base hit:
 - In this case the fielder must move out of the base path and allow the runner to round the base unobstructed and the runner can make contact with the white 1st base
- A runner may not run out of the baseline to avoid a tag, or they will be called `out'

- *Exception:* When running from 3rd base towards home plate the runner is to keep outside of the baseline and is considered safe if they pass the home-plate line (one foot on the ground past the line) before the catcher has the ball while touching home plate
 - If the base runner touches the home plate while attempting to score it is an automatic out
- A commitment line will be drawn halfway between 3rd base and home plate
 - Once a runner passes this line, they must proceed home (cannot run back to 3rd base)
- Sliding into 2nd or 3rd base is permitted
- Sliding into home is never permitted
- Sliding into 1st base is only allowed if the runner is returning to 1st base after rounding the base
- If the third out occurs on a fly-ball the inning is over; any runs that scored on the play do not count
- If a runner scores before a non-forced third out is made, the run will count
- **Pinch Running:**
 - Pinch runners are allowed only for injured players
 - The pinch runner must be the last out of the same gender as the player that they are running for
 - The pinch runner must start from behind the plane of home plate

FIELDING

- A full team on the field consists of 10 players: *a pitcher, a catcher, 4 infielders, 3 outfielders, and a rover*
- The defense may tag a base runner on their way to 1st base, or between the other bases
 - Tagging of a runner is not required on 'force' plays
 - In a force situation, with a runner having to advance to the next base, a fielder may tag either the base in which the runner is being forced to, or the runner
 - Tagging of a runner is required on all non-force plays
 - Tagging must occur with the hand that the ball is securely placed in (glove, or non-glove hand)
 - Tagging is not permitted between the commitment line and home plate
 - To record an out at home, the catcher cannot tag the runner, instead they must touch home plate (not the strike mat) while in complete possession of the ball
- The **respect line** applies in all divisions:
 - **Infielders** cannot pinch in, they must stay along or behind the base line until contact is made
 - **Outfielders** must remain behind the marked outfield respect line until contact has been made

OVERTHROWS

- If an overthrow occurs on a play and the ball remain in play, it is live
- If an overthrow occurs on a play and the ball rolls out of play:
 - **All runners can advance one base beyond the base they were travelling towards**
 - If the runner had rounded 1st base or was travelling towards 2nd base at the time, they will be awarded 3rd base
 - If the runner had rounded 2nd base or was travelling towards 3rd base at the time, they will proceed home

INTERFERENCE

- There are two kinds of interference:
 - **Offensive interference:**
 - A base runner will be called 'out' if they make contact with a fielder, yell at a fielder to distract them, or screen them from making a clear play
 - If interference from a base runner clearly prevented an out from being made on another base runner, both runners will be called out
 - **Defensive interference:**
 - A fielder may not block the base with their foot or body
 - A fielder may not stand in the base path unless they are making a play on the ball
 - In a case where defensive interference occurs, the runner will be considered safe, or will be awarded the base that they were travelling towards
- Interference is difficult to call and players are expected to avoid interference or body contact at all costs
- If the sides are not in agreement on the call, there is an option to re-play the at-bat
 - Base runners will return to the bases they were at prior to the hit, and the batter will resume the count from where it was prior to making contact

UMPIRING

- All ESSC games are self-officiated
- The batting team will supply the umpires
 - A home-plate umpire is mandatory and will call balls, strikes, and outs
 - The umpire should be a player with a high level of rule knowledge
 - 1st and 3rd base umpires are not mandatory, but are highly encouraged
- If an umpire makes the wrong call, the two captains should quickly agree on a resolution

VIOLATIONS AND FOULS

- Captains are encouraged to bring the rulebook or handbook to games
 - It is unsportsmanlike for teams or players to not know the rules, or claim ignorance towards the rules
 - While a team may be 'just out to have fun', they can ruin the experience for the opposing team if they are constantly violating rules
- Captains are expected to control the actions of their teammates
 - Captains must honor the zero-tolerance policy and remove players from the game who participate in unsportsmanlike conduct or threatening behavior

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

- The first offense (if non-malicious) should result in a **warning** from the team captain
- A malicious first offense, or a second offense will result in a **game misconduct**

- Examples of unsportsmanlike conduct:
 - Players making calls from the bench
 - Players yelling at fielders to `drop the ball' or make a mistake from the bench
 - Throwing equipment
 - Arguing calls with the umpire

THREATENING BEHAVIOR

- The first offense will result in a **game misconduct**
- Examples of threatening behavior:
 - Swearing or verbal abuse
 - Physical threats or contact
 - Fighting, Instigating, Retaliation,
 - Intent to injure