

**STANISLAUS SENIOR  
SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION  
(SSSA)**

**OFFICIAL RULES**

**2026**

# **STANISLAUS SENIOR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION**

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Participation in the Stanislaus Senior Softball Association (SSSA) as a player, coach, or spectator is a privilege earned by meeting the standards of good sportsmanship and the display of appropriate conduct. All athletes, Managers, and other team participants on the field of play are responsible for knowing, understanding, and abiding by the rules of the Association.

The Stanislaus Senior Softball Association Board of Directors reserves the right to penalize any player, manager, or spectator for inappropriate conduct or failure to comply with the rules of the Association. Expulsion from the organization may result from the flagrant disregard of acceptable behavior or Association rules. Examples of flagrant behavior include but are not limited to the following:

- Physical or verbal assaults or threats
- Unsportsmanlike or disorderly behavior
- Improper use of alcohol and/or drugs
- Destruction of property
- False representation of age or eligibility
- Excessive profanity

## **RELEASE OF LIABILITY**

All athletes, Managers, and other on-field team participants shall acknowledge by signature on the SSSA Registration Form that they have read and understood the release of SSSA liability for injury or death before participating in a SSSA-sanctioned event.

# CONTENTS

Introduction to Rules	Pg 4
<b>1. SECTION 1 — DEFINITIONS</b>	
1.1 Defensive team	5
1.2 Ejection	5
1.3 Medical cards	5
1.4 Outfielders limit line	6
1.5 Questioning an umpire’s decision	6
1.6 Rule changes	6
1.7 Trading of players	6
1.8 League age requirements	6
<b>2. SECTION 2 —EQUIPMENT</b>	
2.1 Bats and balls	7
2.2 Uniforms	7
<b>3. SECTION 3 — STARTING AND ENDING THE GAME</b>	
3.1 Scoring	7
3.2 Flip Flop rule	7
3.3 Game times	7
<b>4. SECTION 4 — BATTING</b>	
4.1 Batting Lineup	8
<b>5. SECTION 5 — BASE RUNNING</b>	
5.1 Avoiding collisions	8
5.2 Commit line	8
5.3 Courtesy runners	9
5.4 Double first base	9
5.5 Scoring line	9
5.6 Grass Hitters ( <b>Golden League</b> )	9
5.7 IN PLAY HITTER ( <b>LOTO only</b> )	10
<b>6. SECTION 6 — PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES</b>	
6.1 Game-day player “Pickup Procedures”	10
6.2 Permanent placement of new players on teams	11
<b>7. SECTION 7 — PITCHING RULES</b>	
7.1 Pitcher mandated safety equipment	12

## INTRODUCTION TO RULES

**Senior Softball–USA** rules apply to all SSSA leagues, except where superseded by rules listed in this document.

EXCEPTIONS: SSSA does *not* use the Senior Softball–USA Middle No Hit Zone Rule or the Northern California Senior Softball Association (NCSSA) One-up home run rule. The Senior Softball–USA rulebook is available at [seniorsoftball.com](http://seniorsoftball.com), and NCSSA playing rules are at [ncssa.club](http://ncssa.club).

Rules that apply specifically to players in select SSSA leagues are labeled accordingly in this document.

# SSSA SPECIAL PLAYING RULES

Note: Whenever “he” or “him” or “their” related pronouns may appear in this rule book either as words or as parts of words, they have been used in their generic sense to include both male and female players.

## 1. SECTION 1 – DEFINITIONS

### 1.1. DEFENSIVE TEAM

A defensive team shall consist of ten (10) players. All players on a team’s roster shall have an opportunity to play some defense unless they are injured. Unlimited changing of defensive players may be permitted but shall not delay the game.

**EXCEPTION:** Platinum League teams normally consist of eleven (11) players and Golden League teams normally consist of twelve (12) players. If the number of players a Platinum or Golden team can field is less than 11 or 12 respectively, their opponents shall field an equal amount of players.

### 1.1. EJECTION

- A. Any player, manager, or team ejected from a game shall, at a minimum, be ineligible to participate or attend the next scheduled game. Complaints by an athlete, manager, or official shall be made to the appropriate league’s Commissioner.
- B. A decision made by the league Commissioner may be appealed to the SSSA Board of Directors. A decision made by the SSSA Board of Directors is final.

### 1.2. MEDICAL CARDS

All players who have not completed a Medical Card must do so. Players who have a medical card on file with **SSSA** must provide updated information if there are any changes to their medical condition.

### 1.3. OUTFIELDERS LIMIT LINE

**[Golden League only.]** An arc will be placed on the outfield grass from one foul line to the other. At least three outfielders must be beyond this line until after the ball is hit.  
**[LOTO League only.]** All outfielders must be beyond the arc until the ball is hit.

#### **1.4. QUESTIONING A UMPIRE'S DECISION**

- A. Only the Manager or the Assistant Manager is allowed to question an umpire's decision and *only* when it comes to a possible rule violation. (*Not* on a judgement call.)
- B. Name-calling, swearing, threats, or any disrespect toward an umpire will result in ejection from the game.
- C. After an umpire warning for unsportsmanlike conduct, the umpire may remove the individual(s) from the game. If the individual(s) refuse to leave the game or dugout area, the umpire has been instructed to forfeit the game.

#### **1.5. RULE CHANGES**

There shall be **NO** rule changes except with prior approval by the SSSA Board of Directors. Please direct any suggestions for changes to any Board member.

#### **1.6. TRADING OF PLAYERS**

Trading of players between managers is allowed only at the draft, or for special circumstances providing the league Commissioner and all league Managers agree.

#### **1.7. LEAGUE AGE REQUIREMENTS**

The age a player will attain during the calendar year they participate will determine what league(s) are available for play in their age group. A player may play in a league(s) in his age group or lower but cannot play in a higher age group without prior SSSA board approval.

The league age requirements are:

- ROOKIES league: Men 40 yrs. & older;
- LEGENDS league: Men 52 yrs. & older;
- PLATINUM league: Men 63 yrs. & older;
- GOLDEN LEAGUE: Men 69 yrs. & older;
- A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN: Women 40 yrs. and older.

## **2. SECTION 2 — EQUIPMENT**

### **2.1 BATS AND BALLS**

All bats must bear an official stamp that the rating is not above 1.21. The league will provide the ball to be used in league play.

### **2.2 UNIFORMS**

Team sponsor's shirts must be worn at all times while playing. Ball caps are optional; however if a ball cap is worn, it shall be a current SSSA cap. **Note:** SSSA does not provide League of Their Own players with ball caps. Therefore, women are exempt from the current SSSA ball cap rule.

Sponsor's shirts and SSSA caps shall not be altered in any way.

## **3. SECTION 3 — STARTING AND ENDING THE GAME**

### **3.1 SCORING**

Each team is limited to five runs each inning until the final inning. The final inning is declared an "Open" inning and teams may score as many runs as needed. However, the visiting team can only go up by 15 runs in the Open inning. Once that has been reached, the flip-flop rule will come into play.

### **3.2 FLIP-FLOP RULE**

When the visiting team is ahead by ten (10) or more runs going into the Open inning, the visiting team shall become the home team. If the original home team ties or takes the lead in the Open inning, then the original visiting team will bat in the bottom of the inning.

### **3.3 GAME TIMES**

Game time for the first game will start at the scheduled game time. After 60 minutes has expired, that inning will be completed and one final inning played.

## 4. SECTION 4 — BATTING

### 4.1 BATTING

All players on a team's roster shall bat unless a player is injured. Team players arriving after all team players have batted once shall be placed at the bottom of the batting order.

**Exception:** The Golden League may have players who only play occasionally and are exempt from batting if they choose.

## 5. SECTION 5 — BASE RUNNING

### 5.1 AVOIDING COLLISIONS

Base runners shall avoid collisions with defensive players attempting to make a play. A base runner is not required to touch a base while attempting to avoid a collision. A runner will be called out if he fails to try to avoid contact with a defensive player. If avoidable contact is made by a runner trying to prevent a double play, the batter-runner shall also be called out.

A runner in the process of avoiding a collision at any base shall be declared out if in the umpire's judgment the runner would have been forced or tagged out under normal base running rules.

**[LOTO and Golden League]** Runners may overrun second and third base without being tagged out. If they choose to attempt to run to the next base, they must return to the base they overran, tag the base, and proceed to the next base.

### 5.2 COMMIT LINE

An eight foot commit line perpendicular to the third base foul line will be added twenty feet from home plate. A runner touching or passing the commit line must continue toward the scoring line. A runner returning to third base after touching or crossing the commit line will be declared out.

### 5.3 COURTESY RUNNERS

Unlimited courtesy runners can be used each inning, but any courtesy runner can only run once per inning. If a team runs out of eligible courtesy runners or an injury has occurred, a runner who has already run once during the inning can run again.

### 5.4 DOUBLE FIRST BASE

First base shall have a white fair base and an orange extra base aligned next to it outside the first base foul line. If a play on a batted ball is being made at first base the batter/runner shall tag the orange base or be called out. The defensive player shall use the white fair base to retire the batter/runner. If no play on a batted ball is being made at first base, the batter/runner may use either base. All plays after the initial play at first base shall use the fair base only.

### 5.5 SCORING LINE

A ten foot line perpendicular to the third base foul line will be added at the front of home plate and extended through the right-handed batters box. For a runner to be safe at home, he must have a foot down on or across the scoring line before a defensive player with the ball touches the strike mat or home plate. A runner touching or crossing home plate or the strike mat shall be called out. A defensive player cannot tag a runner out between the commit line and the scoring line.

### 5.6 GRASS HITTERS (Golden League only)

- A. A GRASS HITTER is defined as a player who has a physical disability or a leg, knee, or back injury that prevents the player from running normally.
- B. **Only a player** can declare he is a GRASS HITTER to the umpire and the opposing team before the player bats. Once a player has declared themselves as a GRASS HITTER they must remain a GRASS HITTER for the remainder of the season.
- C. A GRASS HITTER cannot be thrown out at first base on a ball that hits the outfield grass whether it was a clean hit or misplayed. [NOTE: A defensive player is considered to be on the outfield grass if one or both feet are on the grass at the time the ball is fielded even if a misplayed ball drops or stays on the infield dirt.]
- D. A GRASS HITTER can advance no further than first base. Runners on base in front of the GRASS HITTER can advance as many bases as possible.

- E. When runners are on 1st and 2nd base or the bases are loaded with less than two outs, a GRASS HITTER cannot be doubled up if a ground ball is hit to the pitcher or an infielder. A pitcher or infielder has the option of recording an out(s) on any other base runner.
- F. A GRASS HITTER may not run for himself or be a courtesy runner.

### **5.7. IN PLAY HITTER (LOTO only)**

- A. An IN PLAY HITTER is defined as a player who has a physical disability/limitation or a leg, knee, or back injury that prevents the player from running normally.
- B. Only a player can declare she is an IN PLAY HITTER to the umpire and the opposing team before the player bats. Once a player has declared themselves as an IN PLAY HITTER they must remain an IN PLAY HITTER for the REMAINDER OF THE SEASON. They may request that their status be changed back to an IN PLAY HITTER once per season.
- C. An IN PLAY HITTER cannot be thrown out at first base on a ball that hits in play whether it was a clean hit or misplayed.
- D. An IN PLAY HITTER can advance no further than first base. Runners on base in front of the IN PLAY HITTER can advance as many bases as possible.
- E. When runners are on 1st and 2nd base or the bases are loaded with less than two outs, an IN PLAY HITTER cannot be doubled up if a ground ball is hit to the pitcher or an infielder. A pitcher or infielder has the option of recording an out(s) on any other base runner.
- F. An IN PLAY HITTER may run for herself or be a courtesy runner.

## **6. SECTION 6 — PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES**

### **6.1 GAME DAY PLAYER PICKUP PROCEDURES**

The league Commissioner is solely responsible for administering this rule and assigning ball players to teams who are unable to field a full team on game day. The league Commissioner will administer and assign players to teams in accordance with the following:

- A. A manager who has less than a full team of players on game day shall notify the league Commissioner.

- B.** A player wishing to fill a vacancy on a team must sign his name on the sign-up sheet for the game time he wishes to play. The sign-up sheet has numbered lines 1, 2, 3, etc. If a team needs a player, a numbered token will be removed from a bag. The number of the first token picked will be assigned to the first line on the sign-up sheet and so on until a number has been assigned to all lines with a player's name on it. The player on the line with the lowest number picked for that specific game will be the first player assigned to a team. This procedure will continue until all needed players have been assigned to a team. Exception to the above is if a team is missing a pitcher. A pitcher may be substituted at the discretion of the league Commissioner.
- C.** A player who wishes to be a substitute must be at the location of the sign-up sheet when team assignments are made. If a potential substitute player is not at the sign-up sheet location, the commissioner may replace him by assigning the next eligible player.
- D.** If a player plays as a pickup player in a game and wishes to play in another game, players who have not yet played have precedence.
- E.** If a player's team has a bye, that player will have first preference for assignment to a team.
- F.** Players will be assigned according to a team's need. Example: one team has 8 players and another 9. The team with 8 players will get the first player assigned. If both teams need an equal number of players, the Home team will be assigned the first player.
- G.** If no players are available on the sign-up sheets, the league Commissioner may fill a team's vacancy from players at the ball park who normally play in that league.
- H.** A replacement player may play any defensive position but must bat at the bottom of the lineup.
- I.** If a game has already started when a team player is inserted into the line-up, a replacement player has the option of continuing to play for the team.

## **6.2 PERMANENT PLACEMENT OF NEW PLAYERS ON TEAMS**

When new ball players become available for a team assignment after the Draft, the league Commissioner shall assign them to a team in accordance with the following:

- A.** The teams who have the need for the next player are put into a hat for a drawing.
- B.** In an attempt to balance the amount of players on a team, team managers shall inform the league Commissioner when they have lost a player(s) for the season.

The league Commissioner shall then assign new ball players to those teams using the methodology in paragraph “A.”

## **7. SECTION 7 — PITCHING RULES**

### **7.1 PITCHER MANDATED SAFETY EQUIPMENT**

All Pitchers shall wear approved Baseball/Softball Mask and Shin Guards while pitching—**no exceptions**. If the pitcher has no equipment, the league provides Masks & Shin Guards.