

# WEST VALLEY SENIOR SOFTBALL BY-LAWS & RULES of PLAY

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Acting League Commissioner: SCF Softball Club Board

## **Introduction**

The West Valley Senior Softball League (WVSSL) plays under the rules of Senior Softball USA with changes and additions as contained herein.

The league is made up of teams organized in three tiers

- Tier 1: Players exhibiting very strong skills, above average and/or exceptional in all areas. Players are capable of playing SSUSA tournament level softball.
- Tier 2: Players exhibiting good skills, above average in most areas. Plays are capable of playing at a competitive level.
- Tier 3: Players exhibit average to below average skill levels.

**The primary organization sponsoring the WVSSL is the Sun City Festival Softball Club.**

# WVSSL By-Laws

## Changes

Changes to by laws may be recommended by players, team managers, the WVSSL Commissioner(s) and SCF Softball Club Board members. Changes to the by-laws will be approved by the SCF Softball Club Board and only the SCF Softball Club Board.

## Code of Conduct

### Definitions

1. "Individual" means a Coach, Manager, Player or Spectator.
2. "Official" means an Umpire or Board member.
3. "Ejection from the game" and "Suspension" means ejection from and suspension from using any area of the softball complex.
4. "Probation" means that a Club Member is under scrutiny and can have his penalty increased to the maximum or beyond if another incident takes place.

### Conduct - No individual shall

1. At any time lay a hand upon, strike or threaten an individual or official:
  - Minimum Penalty: Removal from the game, plus five additional game suspensions and one year probation.
  - Maximum Penalty: Suspension from all Sun City Festival Softball activities for one year.
2. Be guilty of objectionable demonstration of dissent by throwing gloves, balls, bats, caps, or any other object.
  - Minimum Penalty: Warning by an official.
  - Maximum Penalty: Ejection from the game plus one additional game suspension.
3. Be guilty of using unnecessary rough tactics in the play of the game.
  - Minimum Penalty: Ejection from the game plus one additional game suspension.
  - Maximum Penalty: Suspension from all Sun City Festival Softball activities for one year.
4. Be guilty of an abusive verbal attack upon any individual or official on or off the field of play:
  - Minimum Penalty: Ejection from the game plus one additional game suspension.
  - Maximum Penalty: Suspension from all Sun City Festival Softball activities for one year.
5. Be guilty of any demonstration of unsportsmanlike conduct not specifically referred to elsewhere in these rules.
  - Minimum Penalty: Warning by an official
  - Maximum Penalty: Ejection from the game plus one additional game suspension

### Ejections

If a player is ejected

1. Umpires should submit a written report to the Commissioner within 24 hours. The ejected player must leave the field within one (1) minute, or the game will be forfeited to the opposing team. If the offender continues improper behavior after leaving the field/complex the matter will be referred to the league board.
2. The Commissioner will review the umpires' written statement on the ejection and after investigating the matter may take additional corrective action against the ejected player to include one game suspension up to ejection from the league. The Commissioner's findings will be sent in writing to the Community Leader and team manager of the ejected player's team.

## Uniforms

1. It is recommended that for team appearance and unity,
2. Team shirts and a cap should be worn.
3. Neck chains, if worn, should be under the shirt at all times.

## Equipment

1. Balls
  - 12-inch balls with a 44 core 375 compression will be used.
2. Bats
  - All bats with a SSUSA or ASA stamp are approved.
  - Any attempt to use a non-approved bat or altered bat will result in the batter being called out and ejected from the game. Base runners will be instructed to return to the base(s) occupied at time the illegal bat was used, providing there are fewer than three (3) outs.

## Game Cancellations

As early as possible prior to the first scheduled game, the designated West Valley League Commissioner along with a Festival Field Prep Management Team member will be responsible for calling a game (or games) because of inclement weather or unsafe field conditions. The designated West Valley Commissioner will then be responsible for contacting the appropriate Team Managers, Umpires, and Scorekeepers. Additional notification for game cancellations will be posted on the SCF Softball Club web site ([www.scfsoftballclub](http://www.scfsoftballclub)) in a timely manner.

## Organization and Procedures

### Team Organization

The goal of the WVSSL is that all teams are “community based”. Prior to 2015 this has been considered a rule, not a goal. Due to numerous reasons the implementation of this goal is limiting play and potentially stifling competition at the Tier 1 level.

### Rosters

- Roster will consist of a minimum of 11 players and a maximum of 15 players. If need be due to community requirements the number of players can be increased with approval from the Commissioner.
- Managers will provide Team Roster to the WVSSL Commissioner prior to the start of season. Additions/changes must be approved prior to any player participation.
- The Roster shall include the player’s name, address, age, and signature.

### Team Organization: Tier 1

Tier I teams are open to use any rated player, any level that resides in any one of the following “Over 55 Communities”

- SCF, (see appendix under “Rules of Play” for rules specific for SCF Club members)
  - SCW,
  - SCG,
  - Vistancia,
  - Pebble Creek,
  - Arizona Traditions/Happy Trails
  - Pueblo el Mirage.
- Players that are over 50 years old living in communities attached (“adjoining”) to the Over 55 Communities listed above may play on a West Valley Tier 1 team. These communities are:

- Festival Foothills (SCF)
- Trilogy (Vistancia)
- A player who is younger than 50 years old (and older than 45) who lives in an Over 55 Communities listed above may play on a West Valley Tier 1.
  - All such players will be reviewed by the WVSSL Commissioner and, as required, the SCF Executive Board prior to play.
  - The maximum number of these players per team is three (3).

### ***Team Organization: Tier 2 and 3***

At these Tiers all teams are “community based”.

1. There may be one or more teams from each community.
2. Players must reside or rent from the community team in which they are playing. These playing levels remain community based unless agreed to by the WVSSL Commissioner and the SCF Softball Club Board.
3. The Commissioner will review all rosters to ensure all players are playing within their correct level.
4. Tier II teams can be made up of “B” and/or “C” rated players. No “A” rated players.
5. Tier III teams can be made up of only “C” or lower rated players. No “A” or “B” rated players, unless a “B” rated player has reached the age of at least 70 years anytime during the calendar year of the West Valley season in question.
6. Players may play on more than one team but not in the same tier. Players cannot play down a level.

### **Challenges**

Should a manager wish to challenge another team’s player possibly playing lower than his/her player rating that manager must submit a written challenge to the League Commissioner. The Commissioner will then evaluate that player along with the SCF Rating Committee members. Only if it is clearly obvious that the player in question is indeed playing in a Tier that is below his/her rating then that player will either have to move up to the next Tier or no longer play in the WVSSL.

## WVSSL Rules of Play

Unless otherwise specified, SSUSA rules as found in the current *Official Senior Softball – USA Rule Book* published by SSUSA apply to WVSSL play. The web site for Senior Softball - USA Rules is: [www.seniorsoftball.com](http://www.seniorsoftball.com).

### **Changes to the Rules of Play**

Changes to the Rules of Play may be recommended by players, team managers, the WVSSL Commissioner(s) and SCF Softball Club Board members. Changes to the Rules of Play will be approved by the WVSSL Advisory Teams (made up from team managers). In the event of a tied vote, the WVSSL Commissioner' vote will be used to break the tie.

### **Protests and Appeals**

- Only a manager may appeal a call.
- Judgment calls such as balls and strikes are not grounds for appeals.
- Rule interpretation will be the only grounds for a protest, and should be resolved on the field between the two managers and the two umpires and the two umpires. If a protest absolutely cannot be resolved, the League Board with both managers and both umpires will meet to come to resolution.

### **Players on the Field**

#### **Tier 1**

- Teams will play with ten (10) defensive positions. Minimum number to start play is eight (8).

#### **Tier 2 and 3**

- Teams will play with eleven (11) defensive positions including a rover. Minimum number to start play is nine (9).

### **Roster Integrity**

A team must use all available players on their roster before substitution.

In the event substitution players are required to play/meet the “Players on the Field” rules, the team manager may obtain players from an approved substitution list. In the case of SCF teams, this is a shared list at all levels of play.

Only in the event the team manager cannot obtain the minimum number of players needed to play from his roster and players from an approved substitution list may the use players from another team's roster. **To do this the manager must obtain approval from the WVSSL Commissioner and the opposing team manager prior to play. If the manager does not obtain approval the game is forfeited.**

If substitution from another roster is a game day issue due to injury, emergency, etc. the team manager needing player(s) must notify the umpire, presenting the needed player(s) name. The

umpire will require approval from the opposing manager before play starts. If there is no approval, the team needing players will forfeit the game.

Players from another team's roster may only be added if the team is about to forfeit. Players from another team's roster will not be added to improve a team's performance, chance to win, etc.

Players substituting may only do so for one team per day.

### **Foul Tips**

- Any foul tip caught on the fly by the catcher is an out.

### **Minimum Number of Players**

- The minimum number of players to start a Tier I game is eight (8) players.
- The minimum number of players to start a Tier II or Tier III game is nine (9) players.
- If a team starts with less, a forfeited game will be declared by the umpire. The score of a forfeited game shall be seven to zero in favor of the team not at fault.

### **Substitutions**

- If less than eleven (11) players are eligible to play for a Tier I Team or twelve (12) players for a Tier II or Tier III Team, the Manager will contact a "comparable" player from within the specific club as agreed to prior to the start of the game by the opposing manager.

### **Courtesy Runners**

- A player is limited to being a courtesy runner once per inning.
- Only one courtesy runner may be used per batter.
- Courtesy runners may be used at any time during the game regardless of what base they are on.
- For Tier I and Tier II games only, each batter must reach first base without the aid of a courtesy runner.

### **Game Time**

- Games will last seven (7) innings if completed within time limits, unless the Mercy rule applies (see below).
- The game clock will be maintained for all Tiers. Clock time play limit will be a 60 minute running clock.
- The game clock will only be stopped if there is a significant delay of game (player injury on the field, discussion of rules or an umpires' call)
- If the game is still being played when the clock time play limit per game expires, the inning in progress will finish and both teams will play one extra inning.
- 15 minutes maximum will be scheduled between games.

### **Run Limit Per Inning**

- Tier I teams will be limited to five (5) runs per inning.
- Tier II and Tier III teams will be limited to four (4) runs per inning.

- Teams will be limited to these runs except for the final inning of the game in which each team may score an unlimited number of runs. The umpire must announce the last inning unless it is the seventh inning.

### **Mercy Rule**

- If a team trails by 12 runs after 5 complete innings, the game will be considered over.
- If a team trails by 10 runs after 6 complete innings, the game will be considered over.

### **Home Runs: All Tiers**

- The home run batter may return directly to the dugout and all other runners may return directly to the dugout (SSUSA "Hit and Sit").
- If a fly ball bounces off an outfielder or the fielder's glove and goes over the fence, the batter will be awarded a four (4) base error and does not count against the 5 home run limit.
- Balls hit over the fence on the fly do count against the home run limit even if the team's runs are limited due to five runs per inning limit.
- After a team has reached their home run limit, the next home run the team hits is considered a walk, base runners advance only if forced.

### **Home Run Limits: All Tiers**

- The WVSSL will follow local SCF Club rules here. Each team is allowed five (5) home runs.

### **General**

- SSUSA "one-up" rules apply if a team meets their home run limit.
- Home runs hit above the limit are recorded as a walk.
- Prior to the beginning of each season the WVSSL Commissioner will gain agreement on home run limits and rules prior to the season start.

### **Open Inning & Flip Flop**

- The last inning allowed is considered an 'open' inning for scoring. The team leading off the 'open' inning is allowed to score enough runs to build a maximum lead of 15 runs.
- If the home team in the open inning trails by 5-11 runs, the home and visiting team may 'flip flop', if both team managers agree.

### **Tie Game**

- If a game is tied after the last inning allowed is played, the game will extend one extra inning.
- The 5 run limit for Tier I, or the 4 run limit for Tier II and Tier III, will apply in the extra inning.
- The last batter to make an out in the previous inning will start on 2B in the extra inning.

### **Base Paths and Fielders on the Field**

- All Tiers will use 70' base paths.

## Base Runners

- Runners **MUST** avoid interfering with the fielder at 2B or 3B during a double play. If the runner will be out, he/she must move out of the baseline allowing the fielder to complete the throw for the double play.
- Runners must not try to make contact with the fielder involved with the double play through sliding.
- Sliding is allowed at 2B and 3B,
- If in the umpire's judgment the runner initiates contact for the sole purpose of upending the fielder or physically taking the fielder out, the umpire shall call the runner out. In a double play situation, the double play will be awarded.
- Diving back to a base is allowed at 1B, 2B, and 3B.
- Sliding is not allowed at 1B and at the scoring line behind home.
- Runners can tag up on fly balls and advance at their own risk once the ball has touched a fielders' glove.
- Baserunners must avoid home plate and the batter's box area when trying to score. The scoring line is to the base runners far right of home plate.
- Runners crossing the diagonal line, or, touching the batter's box or home plate will be called out.
- A base runner on first or third base may step to the right (3B) or left (1B) of the base to avoid being hit by a batted ball. Once the ball is hit the runner must tag the base upon entry to the field to proceed to the next base, or he/she is out. **The runner must notify the umpire that he/she is doing this.** If he/she does not they are out when the ball is hit in play.

## Dugouts

- Only a team Manager, players and an official scorekeeper will be allowed in the dugout.

## Balls and Strikes

- Once the count reaches 3 balls, 2 strikes, a subsequent foul ball is considered the third strike and the batter is out.

## Pitcher Protection

### Mandated Equipment

- Pitchers must wear a protective face mask while pitching and must wear the mask consistent with the manufacturer's intended usage of their product.
- Pitchers are recommended to wear additional protective safety equipment, comprised of head gear (NOCSAE-approved), heart/chest protection and shin guards.
- Pitchers are not required to wear the recommended safety equipment. However, the WVSSL makes **NO** warranty as to the protective qualities of any mandated or recommended safety equipment when used in softball, which may have inherent risks as an impact sport.
- The WVSSL does not make any specific claims as to any safety equipment's performance and will not accept any liability for personal injury.

### Pitcher Protection Screen

- Use of this device is optional at any level.
- If a pitching screen is used, the pitcher must move 100% behind the screen after tossing the ball to home plate. If the pitcher does not this the pitch will be automatically called a

ball. This is not a dead ball situation; a) if the batter swings and misses it is a strike and b) if the ball is hit into play the game goes on.

- Batted balls that hit the pitcher screen will be considered (during an “at bat”):
  - dead and will not count on the first time he/she hits the screen
  - foul ball on the second time
  - out if the batter hits the screen for a third time during his/her at bat.
- Balls thrown by players in the field that hit the pitching screen will be considered live balls and are still in play.
- The side of the pitcher screen needs to line up with a side of the pitching rubber and must be within 3 feet of the closest pitching rubber.

## **Appendixes**

### **Appendix. Specific Rules for SCF Teams Only**

- Players are required to call the Manager or contact him in person within 48 hours of a scheduled game if they are unable to play. The only exception is for an emergency situation.
- Players who do not inform their Team Manager that they cannot play may be suspended for the next scheduled game.
- Absences: A player that has four (4) unexcused absences may be released to the sub pool and replaced on the roster by a player of the sub pool.
- Neglect of duties: A player that does not fulfill a non-game duty of Umpiring, Scorekeeping, and Field Prep will be suspended one game day. It will be the responsibility of the player to find a replacement Club member if he/she is unable to meet their scheduled assigned duty.
- Player Tardiness: If a player shows up after the start of the game, the player shall not play.
- Resignations: If a player quits a team, he will be out of the league for the rest of the season.
- All players in the lineup will play at least three innings defensively and be part of the batting rotation.
- If in the determination of the SCF Softball Club Board there are not sufficient number of Tier I Club members to field a West Valley Tier I team on a consistent basis, then the Manager of this Tier I team is authorized to draft a number of Tier II SCF Club members to adequately staff this team for the season in question. The selection of these Tier II players will take priority over them playing on any other West Valley Tier I team. These Tier II players will be considered “full time” members of the SCF West Valley Tier I team, and yet still be allowed to play on a Festival West Valley Tier II team, if they desire.