



In this document, please find the rules for the B Conference for the 2003 Congressional Softball League. This page and the following page are a quick, handy guide that should be used by captains to better understand the league and in the pre-game conference on the field..

Captains, *please see that all members of your team are familiar with the rules*, some have changed from last year.

Note that the ASA recently moved the pitcher's mound four (4) feet farther away from the plate Rule (1.1).

Rule (1.4) changes the sanctions that deal with the prohibition of the use of metal cleats.

Rule (2.6) spells out the grace period a team must wait on game day.

Rule (3.1) is extremely specific regarding player eligibility for the year-end tournament. It also requires that the battery (pitcher and catcher) be one male and one female at all times.

Team composition is limited so that each B Conference team may have *no more than three (3) players (two of whom are the same sex) who play on another Congressional Softball League or Senate team* (see Rule 3.1 b).

Rule (3.2) defines when the lineup is official. Rule (3.5) clarifies the Extra Hitter requirements.

Rule (4.3) encourages the use of umpires prior to tournament play.

Rule (6.4) explains the tournament rule regarding encroachment of fielders on female batters.

Rule (7.1) clearly outlines sportsmanlike responsibilities of teams and the ejection policy of the league. Also Rule (7.5) provides for a reporting procedure for serious unsportsmanlike conduct and player ejections.

Note the umpire guidelines in Rule (7.3) for calling plays.

Remember, a foul ball hit after two strikes are on the batter will result in that batter being called out on strikes (see Rule 5.2).

AS ALWAYS, EACH TEAM IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SETTING ITS OWN SCHEDULE AND FOR FINDING ITS OWN FIELDS.

Sportsmanship and enjoyment have first priority in the league.

☆☆☆☆ B CONFERENCE SCHEDULING ☆☆☆☆

Each team is responsible for finding fields and scheduling and playing as many games as desired with other teams, within or out of the conference. No minimum number of games is required during the season.

☆☆☆☆ B CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT ☆☆☆☆

Captains of teams wishing to be considered for the B Conference year-end invitational tournament must complete their rosters (30 person maximum roster—only 3 of whom may be on another league team or Senate team players, no more than 2 of the same sex) on their team web page by July 1st.

Please indicate those players who play for another league team or Senate team next to the last name of the player. *Players may only play for one team during the tournament.* Please also indicate any Members of Congress (Hill teams) or organizational chief officers (Off Hill teams) who may participate on your team. Note: They do not count in the 30 person roster limit.

The B Conference year-end tournament is scheduled to begin on Saturday, August 16th and played on Saturdays through September with Saturday, October 4th as the rain makeup day. Each team will play on either August 16th or August 23rd, the tournament committee will accommodate teams as best possible on those days.

For further league information, e-mail the Commissioner at Congsftbl@aol.com.



2003 Review List for Captains

The National Park Service and this league **DO NOT** recognize unattended cones as reservations of fields. Teams should have a person present with the cones to guarantee that they have secured a field on a first-come, first-serve basis.

A forfeit shall be declared if a team cancels after 1 PM on the day of a game...unless a work-related requirement prevents the majority of the team from playing that evening.

Teams should give their originally scheduled opponent only 15 minutes grace period to field a team if another team is present and offers to play. If a third team is not available to substitute for the original team, then a 30 minute grace period should be given before a forfeit can be called. The minimum number of players is 8, of which 3 must be female to start a game. If an injury causes a team to have less than 3 females, the game shall be forfeited.

If **BOTH** captains agree, any rule can be altered in the pregame conference and used in the game. Rules not altered before the game begins **CANNOT** be changed during the game. Teams are encouraged to play a game or two using tournament rules (balls and strikes, encroachment restrictions) to prepare for the tournament.

Discuss the out of play areas and special ground rules. The base coaches serve as umpires. If no coach is in the coaches' box serving as an umpire during a play, call the play against the batting team.

The home team provides the bases, a clean ball and if the weather is questionable, decides if a game should start. The ball should be either a 44 or 47 core ball. Only ASA certified bats as listed on the ASA web site are legal, and baseball bats are **NEVER** legal. See site: www.softball.org.

Designate 3 "Female" positions in the batting order and 3 females must be in the field defensively at all times.

Extra Hitter is 11th batter in the lineup and is a starting position...may move defensively in the game, but **NEVER** is allowed in another spot in the batting order.

Starters may reenter the game only once *as per ASA Rules* and **MUST BAT IN THE ORIGINAL SPOT IN THE BATTING ORDER** when reentered. Substitutes who are removed are **NOT** eligible to reenter the game.

Pitcher/catcher must be one male and one female.

As per ASA Rules, the pitcher must pitch from a stopped position in the pitcher's area or **ON THE RUBBER** and **MAY** use a backhanded delivery.

A foul after two strikes is **A STRIKE OUT**, and **ONE** courtesy foul may be given prior to the strike out.

The losing team must bat **four** times. Teams **MAY** elect to enforce a ten (10) run slaughter rule...after 4 innings and at the end of a complete inning, the game is ended if one team has a ten (10) run difference..

Baserunners must avoid fielders fielding batted or thrown balls at all times. If a fielder blocks a base, a **RUNNER MAY COLLIDE WITH OPEN PALMS OR BODY ONLY...NO HEAD, SHOULDER, OR FORE-ARMS.**

No overthrow is automatic unless it goes out of play. **AS LONG AS THE BALL IS WITHIN THE PLAYING AREA, THE BALL IS LIVE AND PLAYERS MAY ADVANCE AT THEIR OWN RISK.**



2003

RULES OF THE CONGRESSIONAL SOFTBALL LEAGUE

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Unless otherwise stated in these rules, the league rules shall be the official rules of softball, written by the International Joint Rules Committee on Softball and published by the Amateur Softball Association.

New Rules are marked with an arrow (➡).

1.0 FIELD AND EQUIPMENT

1.1 The distance from base to base shall be 65 feet. The distance from the point at which the pitcher releases a pitch to home plate shall be no less than 40 feet. The pitching “mound” need not be the same for both teams, but the “area” must not exceed 50 feet.

➡ **NOTE: ASA rules require that the pitcher's rubber be 50 feet from the plate.. Expect tournament play to use a 50 foot distance for the pitchers.**

1.2 Twelve inch restricted flight softballs either core 44 or core 47 shall be used unless agreed upon by both teams’ captains prior to the game. The home team provides a “clean” ball. *The team that hits a ball out of play shall provide a replacement game ball.*

➡ 1.3 Only ASA approved softball bats may be used (Go to www.softball.org for a list.). Baseball bats or altered bats may not be used. Taping of handles is permitted. A batter using an illegal bat shall be deemed disqualified, called out, and only allowed to be a coach or sit in the dugout for the remainder of the game.

➡ 1.4 Metal cleats or spikes of any kind may not be used, including metal-tipped cleats. Players wearing such cleats (whether or not in the game) shall be **removed from the playing area (dugout, field, coaches boxes) while wearing the illegal spikes. The offending player shall be deemed disqualified, but may not reenter the game as a player, but may coach or occupy the dugout area once the spikes have been removed.**

2.0 SCHEDULING AND COMPLETION OF GAMES

➡ 2.1 Seven innings shall constitute a complete game. The starting time will be scheduled by team captains. If a game is called due to weather conditions, the losing team must have batted at least four (4) innings for the game to be official. *Teams may elect to enforce a ten-run (10) slaughter rule after four complete innings.*

2.2 A game shall be postponed when agreed upon by the captains of both teams. Players should be warned that just because it is raining in their part of town, it may not necessarily be raining at the ball field; or it may be dry at the field by game time.

2.3 Whichever team arranges for the field shall be the home team and shall provide bases for the game. If field conditions prior to the start of the game make the possibility of playing the game uncertain, the home team shall decide if the game begins.

2.4 Once a game has begun, it may be interrupted or terminated due to darkness or weather conditions only by mutual agreement of the two captains. (*Safety considerations should be the top priority for making such a decision.*) If the teams are tied or have not completed the requisite number of innings to make the game official, the game shall be postponed and resumed from the point at which the game was suspended (at the earliest mutually convenient date). *Player eligibility regarding disqualified, ejections or substitutions shall carry over from previous play to the resumed play (Rules 1.3, 1.4, 3.3 & 3.4 & 5.10).*

➡ 2.5 A forfeit will occur only when the opposing team fails to field the minimum number of players after the grace period or **with no prior notification (by 1 PM of the game day), unless a work-related requirement prevents the majority of the team from playing that evening.**

2.6 **Teams arriving late to a game should be given a minimum of fifteen (15) minutes grace period. If after fifteen minutes another team (not originally scheduled) asks the waiting team to play, the waiting team is not obligated to play the late team. However, if no other team is available, the waiting team should give the late team thirty (30) minutes grace period before a forfeit can be called.**

2.7 **Teams may register two wins in one day if they win by forfeit and play another game. The forfeits may be registered as provided in rule 2.6.**

3.0 TEAM COMPOSITION AND LINE-UP

3.1 Each team shall be composed of 11 or less players, of which three or more shall at all times be females (3 females on the field at all times as well as 3 females in the batting order). A team must begin a game with 8 or more players (3 of which females), must at all times defensively field at least 3 females, and, when beginning a game with less than 10 players, must add players to the line-up as players arrive in order to reach the 10-player line-up. The 11th player (extra hitter) may not be used if a team begins a game with less than 11 players.

a.) The B Conference permits the pitcher to be either a male or female, but the battery (catcher/pitcher) must at all times be one male and one female.

b.) The B Conference rosters may include no more than either three (3) players from another league or Senate team or a combination of both which total three, only two (2) of the same sex—and will be strictly enforced during the year-end B Conference tournament. B Conference tournament participants may play for only one team and must also play in two-thirds of that team's regular season games. All players may be required to provide a picture ID in the B Conference Tournament.

NOTE: If a player is listed on more than one team roster (whether or not that player ever plays in any games), that player is considered a member of that team and falls under the limitations set forth in the B Conference. Teams will forfeit their status in the year-end tournament due to players/coaches errors. THIS RULE WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED.

3.2 Teams shall exchange batting orders prior to the beginning of the game.

a.) Three positions in each batting order shall be designated as the “female positions” in the order; only females may be substituted for the females who bat in these positions.

b.) The home team book is the official book.

c.) The lineup becomes official after the pregame conference. If players are not present at the conclusion of the pregame conference, they cannot be considered a "starter" (unless the team is beginning with less than the minimum number of players -10). If the EH is not present by the conclusion of the captains' pregame conference, that team may not use an EH throughout the entire course of that game.

3.3 Subject to Rule 3.4 —

a.) A female may substitute for another female or for a male at any time; and

b.) A male may substitute for another male at any time, and for a female if the female for whom he is substituting is not occupying one of the three designated “female positions” in the batting order.

3.4 Once a player has left the game, that player may re-enter only once and only if that player was a starter, as provided for in the ASA rules.. Any player re-entering the game must bat in that player's original batting order line-up position, and the substitute in that batting order position must be removed for the duration of that game.

a.) If an injury prevents a team from fielding three female players, the game shall be forfeited at that point.

b.) If an injury prevents a team from fielding ten (or 11 if an EH is being used) players, but that team meets the minimum requirements for fielding a team (eight total and at least three being females), the game shall continue. However, when any injured player's position in the batting order is up, it shall be passed over with no penalty and the next batter shall then bat.

3.5 **Extra Hitter.** Teams may choose to utilize an extra hitter (EH) by adding an additional (11th) position to the batting line-up. The EH is an additional position which may be initially inserted anywhere in the batting order lineup, but may NOT be moved to another batting order position once the game has begun. The EH is a “starting position.”

Limitations to the Extra Hitter Rule

- a.) An EH cannot hit in place of any other starting batter since the EH is also a starting position; and,
- ➡ b.) If the initial line-up does not contain an EH *at the end of the captains' pregame conference, one may not be added once the game begins (the EH must be present by the conclusion of the pregame conference and the EH's name must be entered in the official book to be eligible to play);*
- c.) If the EH is included in the initial line-up, the position may not be dropped from the line-up once the game begins; and,
- d.) If only three females are in the batting order, the EH cannot be a female since three females would not be on the field defensively as required in Rule 3.1. (Note: a female may only be the EH if four or more females are in the batting line-up. If four or more women are in the line-up, and one in the designated "female" position is injured, and no other females are eligible to substitute for the injured female; then the EH shall become the third "female" position, but no new EH may be entered in the line-up. When the vacant injured position in the line-up is up to bat, it shall be passed over with no penalty, and the next batter shall bat as applied in Rule 3.4 (b).)

4.0 PITCHING

- 4.1 All games shall be slow pitch softball as defined by ASA rules.
- 4.2 The minimum arc shall be above the pitcher's head after the release of the ball. The maximum height shall be 12 feet.
- 4.3 Balls and strikes are not called throughout the season, but only during the year-end tournament for the B Conference.
- ➡ **NOTE:** *Since the tournament rules differ from league rules, teams are encouraged to call balls and strikes for a few games during the season to ready themselves for the year-end tournament.*
- 4.4 The pitcher's motion must begin from the rubber while the pitcher is at a complete stop and NOT as part of any motion that begins from behind or in front of the rubber.
- 4.4 ➡ **The pitcher must remain within the width of the rubber, i.e., may not have one foot on the rubber and the other beyond the edge of the rubber — both feet must be within the width of the rubber.**

5.0 HITTING AND BASE RUNNING

- 5.1 Bunting or attempting to bunt shall be called an out on the batter.
- 5.2 A batter hitting a foul ball after having a two-strike count shall be called out. The out shall be recorded as a strike out.
- 5.3 A runner shall not leave the base until the ball crosses the plate. Any runner who leaves the base before the ball crosses the plate shall be called out and the play declared dead. Leaving the base is defined as movement away from the base area toward the next base.
- 5.4 A runner may not advance on a "wild pitch" or "passed ball." Stealing bases shall be called an out on the runner.
- 5.5 The ball is dead if a pitch hits the ground before reaching the plate, or after the pitch crosses the plate, until the pitcher is ready to deliver the next pitch. Baserunners may not advance if the catcher makes an errant return throw to the pitcher. On legal appeal plays, the ball remains dead and runners may not advance during the appeal. The pitcher, any infielder, or any player involved in the infield during the play in question, need only announce the appeal play to the umpire, and need not throw to a base nor tag a player.
- 5.6 Sliding is permitted, and encouraged to avoid collisions.
- 5.7 **Infield Fly.** Whenever runners are on first and second bases or first, second, and third bases, with less than two outs, and a batter hits a pop-up in fair territory and within the range of an infielder, the batter shall be declared out, and the runners may advance at their own peril.

5.8 On an Overthrow on a field without fences:

- a.) that goes “out of play,” the ball is dead and all runners will be awarded the base they were advancing toward when the throw was released, plus one base;
- b.) that goes into “foul territory,” all runners may advance, at their own peril, but no further than one base beyond the base they were advancing toward when the fielder moving the errant throw released the ball. *This section also applies to overthrows that bounce back into “fair territory;”* and,
- c.) that remains in “fair territory,” the runners may advance, at their own peril, as many bases as possible.

5.9 A runner shall be called out for interference and the play dead, if:

- a.) the runner interferes with a fielder who is attempting to field a batted or thrown ball, or
- b.) the runner intentionally interferes with a thrown ball, or a fielder throwing a ball. If the interference is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the runner moving closest to home plate shall also be called out and the ball is dead.

Subject to Rule 5.10, the runner shall at all times attempt to avoid the fielder who is attempting to field a batted or thrown ball.

5.10 A runner shall be called out and ejected from a game if that runner maliciously or recklessly runs into a fielder. A runner shall be deemed to have acted maliciously or recklessly unless:

- a.) the collision is accidental, or
- b.) the fielder is blocking the base path and is not involved in the play, or
- c.) the fielder moves after the runner has attempted to avoid a collision, or
- d.) the fielder is blocking the base to which the runner is trying to advance. In such situations, runners may NOT use their heads, shoulders, or forearms to initiate the collision. Open palms or the runner’s body are acceptable.

6.0 FIELDING

6.1 The pitcher must pitch from within the pitcher’s area as defined in Rule 1.1, within twenty (20) seconds after receiving the ball. *Time shall be declared automatically whenever any fielder takes possession of the ball in the infield and makes no further effort at runners.*

6.2 Any fielder not involved in play and who is blocking the path of a baserunner shall be called for obstructing the runner. The runner shall be awarded any additional bases at the end of the play if, in the umpire’s judgment, the runner would have attempted and safely advanced toward those bases.

6.3 *Any fielder decoying a runner into an unnecessary slide shall be ejected from that game without warning.*

6.4 *An encroachment restriction for the four outfielders is enforced during the tournament. It requires three of the four outfielders to remain back near their normal fielding positions (a distance twice that of the base paths from home plate—a cone on the first base and third base line would mark the distance) when a female becomes a batter. The fourth outfielder may choose to play within or beyond the cone, but must remain positioned at the chosen distance on the field for all batters.*

➡ **NOTE: This rule is in effect for the year-end tournament. Teams are encouraged to experiment with this rule during the season to prepare for tournament play.**

7.0 MISCELLANEOUS

7.1 All teams shall conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner. A player who acts in such a manner as to confuse the opposing team or gain an advantage through unsportsmanlike tactics shall be called out and/or ejected from the game. Teams will be responsible for the conduct of their fans as well as for their own conduct.

➡ **a.) Ejection from a game shall carry a one game suspension. If a player is ejected from a game, that player must vacate the field area so that that player’s presence is no longer within a visible or audible range.**

➡ **b.) Removal from a game shall carry no suspension. If a player is removed from a game, that player may not play, but may coach, remain in the dugout or stands, or keep the scorebook.**

- 7.2 The code of good sportsmanship should be followed at all times. Because we rely on players to umpire their own contests, we must count on everyone's good will in playing fair. If an umpire misses a play in which you know that your team was adversely affected, please call the play against yourselves.
- 7.3 Umpires will be provided by the team at bat (usually doubling as base coaches). They shall make calls for fair or foul hits, and safe and out plays. If an umpire misses a call, only the team captain (of the batting team) can make a call. If the captain of the batting team does not see the play either, or the batting team fails to provide umpires, all calls shall go against the team at bat.
- 7.4 Protests should be avoided if possible. If, however, one team feels seriously aggrieved, the captain must notify the captain of the opposing team before leaving the field, **must e-mail the commissioner at congsftbl@aol.com**, and must submit the protest via e-mail to the commissioner by 5 PM of the workday following the game.
- 7.5 Serious unsportsmanlike conduct or ejections should be reported by the end of the week in which the conduct occurred by the opposing coach to the Commissioner via e-mail at congsftbl@aol.com.
- 7.6 ***Reports of problems or official protests will be handled in a timely fashion by the Softball Commissioner after an investigation and determination of the facts of the case are completed.***
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- 7.7 ***Coaches may suspend or alter any of the ASA or Congressional League's rules for a game if BOTH coaches agree on the rules changes during the captains' pregame conference. Rules not addressed in the captains' pregame conference shall NOT be altered once the game has begun. See the check list at the beginning of this document for items that should be reviewed prior to the start of a game.***
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