

SYNAGOGUE SOFTBALL LEAGUE OFFICIAL RULES – 2019 SEASON

OPENING DAY, FIELD LOCATIONS

The 2019 Synagogue Softball League season begins January 20, 2019.

Playing fields for the 2019 season are:

Sepulveda Basin Sports Complex, Diamonds #1-4, 6201 Balboa Blvd., just south of Victory Blvd.

Cheviot Hills Rec Center, Diamond #3, 2551 Motor Ave., just south of Pico Blvd.

Poinsettia Rec Center, Diamond #1, 7341 Willoughby Ave., at Fuller Ave.

DIVISIONS; PLAYOFFS

There are five Divisions: A, B, C, D, and E; there is no inter-division play.

There are championship playoffs in each Division, with the top four teams in each Division at the end of the regular season making the playoffs. In the semi-finals, the first-place teams host the fourth-place teams and the second-place teams host the third-place teams. The winners of those two semi-final games meet in the finals, with the higher remaining seed being the home team. To be playoff-eligible, a player must have played in at least four regular season games. All playoff games will be played a minimum of seven innings with no time limit, and extra innings played only if necessary to determine a winner because the game is tied after seven full innings.

If two or more teams finish the regular season in a tie, their respective final standings are based on the following tie-breakers, in order: (1) head-to-head record during the regular season; (2) head-to-head margin of victory during the regular season; (3) total run differential in all games during the regular season, (4) total runs scored in all games during the regular season; and (5) coin toss.

For competitive balance, the top regular season teams or playoff champion in a lower Division may be moved to a higher division the next season and the bottom regular season teams in a higher Division may be moved to a lower division the next season. The Executive Committee will review roster changes, teams joining and leaving the League, and other relevant factors in determining the final Division alignments for each season.

ROSTERS

A team may have up to 30 players on its roster. Each manager must submit a printed roster listing each player's first and last name, birth date, age as of 1/20/19, home address, cell phone number, and email address, plus a waiver signed by each player accompanied by a copy of their government-issued photo ID to their Division Representative no later than January 10, 2019. A player may be on only one team's roster.

After the season has begun, a team may adjust its roster by adding eligible players and dropping other players due to season-ending injury or if necessary to meet the 30-player limit, at any time prior to 5:00 p.m. on the Thursday immediately preceding the **eighth** regular season game played (i.e., rain-outs or other postponements will delay the deadline). However, a player who is already on one team's roster may switch to another team's roster no later than the Thursday immediately preceding the **fourth** regular season game played, provided they are otherwise eligible to play for their new team and provided they have not yet played for the team whose roster they were originally on. A revised roster, game day sign-in sheet, and original signed waivers and copies of government-issued photo IDs for any new players must be submitted to the Division Representative no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Thursday prior to the game in which a new player, including a player switching teams, first appears.

ELIGIBILITY

As a general rule, every player must be a member of their team's temple. A temple member is a current dues-paying member in good standing or their immediate family member (defined as their spouse, parent, child, or sibling). A dues-paying member in good standing is anyone who pays a regularly established membership fee for that temple. Each manager must verify the bona fide eligibility of every player on their roster. A manager who submits a roster with an ineligible player is subject to a \$100 fine (payable with the next season's league fee) and may be suspended for not more than two games, and all games in which an ineligible player participated will be forfeited. Any issues regarding eligibility must be discussed with the respective Division Representative before submitting the team's roster. The Executive Committee has final approval of all rosters.

If an eligible player has played at least two seasons on a team and is no longer a dues-paying member in good standing of that temple, they are "grandfathered" and may continue playing with that team in perpetuity. In addition, any player who was "grandfathered" into the league as of 1/31/14 also may continue playing. If a player joins another temple with a team in the League, they can either continue playing for their old team or may join their new temple's team.

While the foregoing are the basic rules regarding player eligibility, over the years some teams have lost players or folded. In the spirit of being a temple-based league and so that players who have established themselves in the League can continue playing, teams that no longer have enough players to field a team of their own may be permitted to merge with other teams that also no longer have enough players to field a team of their own, or to add players from teams that are no longer active. All such team mergers and player acquisitions are subject to the prior express approval of the Executive Committee. There is no unregulated or unapproved "free agency" under which any player can unilaterally play on the team of their choosing or any team can unilaterally add players.

In addition, temple members and their immediate family members whose temple does not have its own team in the League may be permitted to join another team in the League by approval of the Executive Committee, which will take team needs and best player-team fit into consideration in making such decisions.

All players must be at least 18 years old (players are eligible effective on their 18th birthday). There are no other restrictions on who may play in the League.

GAME DAY SIGN-IN SHEETS

All players must sign in on their team's official game day sign-in sheet. Each player must sign their own name in the space provided alongside their printed name. Managers are responsible for bringing their team sign-in sheet to each game. The completed sign-in sheet must be given to the Umpire before the start of the 2nd inning; later arriving players must sign-in as soon as possible following their arrival. An improper signature will be penalized like the use of an ineligible player.

GAME DAY; GAME TIMES; GAME DURATION

All games are played on Sundays at 8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. Any team that wants to take infield is guaranteed five minutes for on-field warm-ups before their game begins regardless of the end time of the prior game. The visiting team takes infield first and the home team takes it last so they are then in position for the game to begin.

A regulation game is seven innings, time permitting. Due to the time limit, a game may last four, five, six, or seven innings. No new inning may begin more than one hour and forty minutes (1:40) after the game's official start time, which is determined by the umpire's watch and will be announced to both managers when the game officially begins. Teams are responsible for keeping track of the game's running time; the Umpire is not required to announce it at any point but will inform a team manager how much time remains upon inquiry.

There is no mercy rule in Divisions A and B; in Divisions C, D, and E, a game will be called if one team is leading by 20 or more runs after the 5th or 6th inning (home team after the top of the inning, visiting team after the bottom of the inning; i.e., the home team will not bat in the bottom of the 5th or 6th if it is already ahead by at least 20 runs; furthermore, if the home team is batting in the bottom of the 5th or 6th inning, the game will be immediately called if it takes a 20 run lead).

A regular season game cannot exceed seven innings, regardless of the score or time remaining after seven innings are completed.

A game interrupted by rain or other weather event or another unexpected element or emergency will be considered complete if at least four full innings have been played, or if the home team is leading when the game is interrupted in the bottom of the 4th inning. If a game is interrupted for one of these reasons and more than four innings have been completed, then the score at the end of the last complete inning will be the final result. If the visiting team has scored to take the lead in the top of the inning and the home team does not get a chance to bat in the bottom of that inning for one of these reason, this rule applies and the game result will be based on the score at the end of the last prior full inning completed. Any game that is interrupted before the completion of the 4th inning or when the home team is trailing in the bottom of the 4th inning will be suspended and play will be resumed where it left off, including the then-elapsed game time, at a later date and time to be determined.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS; LINE-UP CHANGES

A team must have at least eight players but not more than fifteen players in its starting line-up. If a team has less than eight players present at its game's official start time, the Umpire will permit a five-minute grace period (during which no play will occur, but which counts as part of the game's playing time) for an eighth player to arrive. If a team does not have at least eight players present on the field or in its dugout at the expiration of the grace period, then it immediately forfeits the game.

In addition to a team with seven players adding an eighth player before the grace period expires, a team with only eight or nine players can add a ninth or tenth player at any time; in addition, a team can add more players up to the starting line-up limit (15) until the second inning begins, at which time the starting line-ups are locked if the team then has at least ten players present (an eleventh or more player who arrives after the start of the second inning can only play as a substitute for someone in the starting line-up). All players who arrive late and are added to the starting line-up after the game's official start time must bat at the bottom of the batting order regardless of whether everyone else in the starting line-up has already batted at least once before they arrived.

A player who was not in the starting line-up can substitute in at any time; the player they replace cannot return to the game. A pitcher who is removed from the mound but not from the game may return to pitching. There is no minimum number of innings that anyone must play. All players who appear in the game must have a designated spot in the batting order but are not required to play in the field (i.e., there is no designated fielder who does not hit, except via full substitution).

BATTING ORDER

A manager must inform the opposing manager and the Umpire prior to a substitute player batting or taking the field of all changes in the batting order or defense involving players who were not in the starting line-up. Managers do not need to report defensive changes that involve only players who are all in the starting line-up.

If a player in the starting line-up is not substituted for and misses their turn at-bat for any reason other than being ejected from the game, then an automatic out will be recorded when the player was scheduled to take their at bat. If the player does not return to the game, no further penalty will be assessed. However, that a player may return to the game prior to their next at-bat, in which case they will occupy their same place in the batting order. In the alternative, that player can thereafter be substituted for and the substituting player will instead occupy their place in the batting order.

If a player in the starting line-up misses their turn at-bat because they were ejected from the game, an automatic out will be recorded each time their erstwhile turn to bat comes up. Substitution in the batting order for a player who was ejected is not permitted under any circumstances.

GAME PLAY

Teams may have a maximum of four infielders (excluding the pitcher and catcher) and a maximum of four outfielders positioned before each pitch. All four outfielders must play on the outfield grass and may not come into the infield until the pitched ball has crossed home plate. Conversely, all four infielders must play on the infield dirt and may not go into the outfield until the pitched ball has crossed home plate.

There is no bunting. If the Umpire rules a batted ball was intentionally bunted, the ball is dead, the batter is called out, and all runners must return to their previous bases.

The following three rules applies to all playing fields, except as inapplicable at Sepulveda Basin.

If a player catches a ball in play (whether in fair or foul territory) and subsequently carries it into the dugout or out-of-play (as indicated by the Umpire before the game, but which is normally an area demarcated by an imaginary line extending from the end of each fence), it will be ruled a dead ball at that moment and all runners will be awarded the base they were going to at the time the ball was ruled dead plus one additional base.

If a thrown ball goes into the dugout or out-of-play, it will be ruled a dead ball at that moment and all runners will be awarded the base they were going at the time the ball was ruled dead plus one additional base.

A ball that is caught out-of-play is a dead ball, no out is recorded, it is treated as a foul ball.

A batter hit by a pitch will be awarded first base; the batter does not have the option of declining and must take the base. However, the batter must have made a reasonable attempt to avoid being hit by the pitch. If the Umpire determines the batter reasonably could have avoided being hit by the pitch but failed to do so, then the Umpire may decline to award the batter first base and instead will call the pitch a ball or a strike, as applicable.

There is no base stealing. A runner cannot lead off until the pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand. If any runner leaves the base prior to a pitched ball leaving the pitcher's hand, the pitch will be called a dead ball and all base runners who left early will be called out.

If the catcher throws to a base following a pitch, it is a force play and the runner will be called out if the fielder either tags the base or the runner before the runner returns to the base. At first base, only the white base counts; the orange base is not in play for either the fielder or the runner. If the catcher throws to any base following a pitch, it is a live ball and all base runners may advance once they have tagged up. However, if the catcher is attempting to return the ball to the pitcher rather than throwing to a base, it is a dead ball and the runners may not advance even if the catcher errantly throws the ball back to the pitcher.

Slide or avoid rule: double-plays

If (i) a base runner is advancing on a ground ball force play with (ii) the lead runner heading to second or third base and (iii) the defense is going to attempt a double-play, then the runner **MUST** either slide directly into the base or clearly get out of the fielder's way (e.g., by peeling off into the outfield). If the runner is close to the base and does neither, thereby potentially interfering with the fielder, the Umpire will call a dead ball and award the defensive team a double-play. In this situation, the Umpire must conclude that the fielder was going to attempt a double-play even if the fielder did not actually make a throw (e.g., because it might have hit the runner). A base runner who legally slides straight into the base will not be called for interference even if the fielder is affected by their slide. Roll blocks, not sliding straight into the base, sliding into a fielder with arms or legs raised, intentionally cleating a fielder, and any other illegal or dangerous slides will result in an automatic double-play being called (and possible ejection or other discipline).

Slide or avoid rule: plays at the plate

If there is a **close play** at home plate, the base runner **MUST** slide (or stop running and let the catcher or other fielder at home easily tag them out). If a close play occurs at home plate and the base runner does not slide, they will be called out and the ball will be ruled dead at that moment. **It is the Umpire's sole determination whether a play at home plate is close enough to require the runner to slide.** If there is not a close play at the plate, the runner need not slide.

The catcher is not allowed to block the plate or go up the base line to impede a runner heading home unless they already have the ball in their mitt. A catcher who moves into the baseline to catch a throw that is offline does not violate this rule and the runner must make every effort to avoid making contact with the catcher. If the catcher does not have the ball and impedes a runner who stops to avoid contact, the Umpire will call that runner safe at home.

If any runner causes a collision at any base that the Umpire determines was intentional, blatant, or unsafe, the runner may be ejected from the game and subject to discipline. Conversely, no fielder may fake that there is a play on a runner for the purpose of inducing them to slide unnecessarily. For example, if a runner is heading to third on a ball hit to right field, the throw is cut off and the cut-off man is not throwing to third base, then the third baseman may not fake that a throw is coming and thereby cause the runner to slide unnecessarily. This rule does not preclude a fielder from being in position to receive a throw even if it is not actually made (e.g., in the previous example, where it was anticipated that the cut-off man would throw to third base even if they ultimately do not). The intent is to prevent inducing unnecessary sliding because of the injury risk.

All fields are equipped with an orange extended safety base at first base. When a batter hits a ball and a play will be made at first base, the batter is only allowed to touch the orange safety base and the fielder is only allowed to touch the white base. The orange base is not a legal base and not in play for any other purpose. For example, a fielder stepping on or tagging the orange base will not be credited with recording an out and a runner tagging up must tag the white base. However, a batter may legally touch either the white base or the orange base as they round first base on a single or en route to second base on a double, triple or home run.

There is no limit on the number of foul balls a batter may hit.

TYPE OF PITCHING

The League is a modified fast-pitch softball league. High-arc pitching is illegal; no pitch may be more than seven feet above the ground at any time on its path to the plate.

There is no side-arm, three-quarters arm, or windmill pitching; no complete revolution can be made in the delivery. Delivery of a pitch will be a simple straight “bowling” style. A bowling style requires the pitcher to bring the ball straight up, behind their back, at no more than a 90-degree angle from the shoulder. The ball must not be outside the pitcher’s wrist at any time during the back swing, at the top of the back swing the elbow must be locked, and the arm cannot be bent during the complete forward delivery through the point of release. The release must have a complete smooth follow-through, with no abrupt stop of the arm near the hip. The driving hip must be basically square to home plate when the ball is released. The pitcher must start their wind-up with at least one foot on the rubber. The pitcher can step back to begin their wind-up.

If the Umpire determines a pitch violates any of the foregoing rules, it will be ruled an illegal pitch. The first illegal pitch by a pitcher will be called a dead ball and an automatic ball to the batter. The second illegal pitch by a pitcher will be called a dead ball, an automatic ball to the batter, and all base runners will advance one base. The third illegal pitch by a pitcher will be called a dead ball, an automatic ball to the batter, all base runners will advance one base, and that pitcher must be immediately removed from the mound (but not the game) and may not pitch again in that game.

There are no balks.

COURTESY RUNNERS

There is no pinch-running for a slow runner. Teams in Divisions A and B get one courtesy runner each inning due to injury, injury recovery or prevention, illness, or chronic condition; a second courtesy runner per inning is permitted in the opposing manager’s discretion. Teams in Divisions C, D, and E get two courtesy runners per inning. Additional courtesy runners are permitted in the opposing manager’s discretion. The courtesy runner must be the player who made the last out prior to the play for which a runner is needed, unless no outs have yet been recorded, in which case it will be the player who made the last out in the previous inning; if a player needs a courtesy runner in the first inning and no outs have yet been recorded, the last player in the batting order will serve as the courtesy runner. If the designated courtesy runner cannot run, then the player immediately before them in the batting order will instead serve as the courtesy runner; however, the defensive team manager must consent to that person or someone else serving as the courtesy runner so the offensive team cannot “cherry pick” a fast runner. If a player uses a courtesy runner in an inning and bats for a second time in that same inning, they can use a courtesy runner again. **The request for a courtesy runner must be made prior to the first pitch to the next batter.** If it is not, then that player is not allowed a courtesy runner. The only exceptions are (i) a player who is injured while running the bases is entitled to a courtesy runner before the first pitch to the next batter after they are injured and (ii) the player who is catching the next inning is allowed a courtesy

runner in the opposing manager's discretion if the second out is recorded while they are on base (this is so they can put on their catching gear, thus speeding game play).

EQUIPMENT

Teams must furnish all their own personal equipment (e.g., bats, gloves). Only softball cleats are allowed; no baseball spikes, metal, or hard plastic (e.g., football) cleats are permitted. Given their inherent danger, any player wearing metal spikes will be given one chance to change footwear, and if they do not, will be disqualified from playing. Catchers must wear a mask; any other equipment (e.g., chest protector, shin guards), is optional. The League supplies all game balls and bases.

BAT RULES

No bat may be more than 36 inches long or more than 2¼ inches in diameter at its largest part. A bat must have a safety grip of cork, tape, or composite material. The safety grip may not be less than 10 inches long and may not extend more than 15 inches from the small end of the bat. The handle/neck of the bat may be made of a separate piece from the barrel of the bat. A "Bad Bat List" will be provided to each manager prior to the start of the season. No composite or alloy barrels are permitted (composite handles are); all bats must be single wall aluminum. Any player using an illegal bat will be called out and the play ruled dead.

UNIFORMS

Players should wear a team jersey; a player who does not have a jersey should either obtain one or wear a matching color shirt. Teams should not have players wearing mismatched jerseys or shirts, their appearance should be consistent. Teams that have numerous players without matching jerseys or shirts may be asked to obtain them. Additional uniform pieces, such as baseball pants and caps, are optional.

FORFEITS

There is no monetary penalty for the first forfeit in a season. The penalty for the second forfeit is \$100, escalating by an additional \$50 for each subsequent forfeit (i.e., \$150 for the second, \$200 for the third, and so on). The monetary penalties for forfeits will be added to the team's League fee for the following season.

PROTESTS

ALL Umpire calls – both judgment calls and rule interpretations – are FINAL and not subject to protest. The League will address any performance issues directly with the subject Umpire. A protest regarding a player eligibility violation can be made at any time until the game ends. The protesting manager must inform the opposing manager of their intention to file a protest and must contact their Division Representative by phone, text or email by 6:00 p.m. on the Monday following the game.

EJECTIONS/SUSPENSIONS

Any player who is ejected from a game must leave the field immediately and may not remain near the field or speak to the Umpire or any opposing player. If an ejected player does not immediately leave the field or remains in its vicinity after being ejected or speaks to the Umpire or any opposing player after being ejected the Umpire may declare the game a forfeit in favor of the opposing team, regardless of the score or inning, or may recommend a longer suspension to the Executive Committee. A player who is ejected from a game will be automatically suspended from playing in their team's next scheduled game, which they may not attend. A manager must report any player ejected from a game to their Division Representative within 48 hours after the game ends. Based on the facts and circumstances regarding an ejection, the Executive Committee will determine whether the player will be suspended for more than just their team's next game. Serious or repeat offenders (players with prior discipline in the same or previous seasons), will be subject to greater disciplinary consequences, up to and including permanent expulsion from the League. If a manager is ejected from a game, in addition to their suspension, they may be asked to meet with the Executive Committee prior to the next game in which they can play to discuss their conduct.

If a suspended player plays in or attends a game during their suspension, that game will be forfeited and the Executive Committee will determine the supplemental discipline, if any, the ejected player may receive and the suspension or other discipline, if any, their manager also may receive.

SPORTSMANSHIP and PLAYER CONDUCT

The great majority of players display good sportsmanship and are courteous, civil, and respectful towards their opponents and the Umpires. The small minority who do not will not be tolerated or their behavior excused or accepted. The first rule of sportsmanship is simply be a mensch. Treat all other participants how you wish to be treated. Treat older players how you would like younger players to treat your parent. Treat younger players how you would like older players to treat your child. Bear in mind that games are played in public parks and players are representatives of their temple and the League. Treat spectators and passers-by with respect. A player's conduct should not be an embarrassment to themselves, their family, or the groups they represent. Verbal abuse of Umpires is an especially persistent problem that will not be tolerated.

The League will not tolerate any violence or threats of violence, or abusive language or behavior, whether directed at an opposing player or an Umpire. Any player who engages in any such conduct will be ejected from the game, suspended at least three games in the case of threatened violence (which includes challenging another player to fight) and at least one year in the case of attempted or actual violence (e.g., throwing a punch, regardless of whether it connects), and will be further dealt with on a case-by-case basis by the Executive Committee.

Manager are required to control their team and their players, to deescalate situations by intervening and taking a leadership role. If a manager has a player they cannot control, then they should seriously consider whether that player should be allowed to participate in the League. If a player repeatedly exhibits poor sportsmanship or violates the player code of conduct, that player and their manager may be asked to meet with the Executive Committee to discuss the issue and what

supplemental discipline, if any, will be imposed. A player may be banned from the League for life if the circumstances warrant that punishment.

Only the team manager may question a call or rule interpretation by the Umpire. The discussion should involve the other team's manager but no other players, who are required to keep their distance and may not speak directly to the Umpire or opposing manager regarding the play. Batters and fielders may not argue balls and strikes. The pitcher or catcher, only, may inquire regarding the location of a specific pitch that is called a ball, but the Umpire is not required to answer; persistent questioning regarding pitch location will be deemed arguing balls and strikes. Snide comments by any player, repeated or persistent complaining regarding a prior call, and arguing balls and strikes will result in a single verbal warning; if that or other impermissible behavior thereafter continues or recurs, the offending player will be ejected without further warning.

Each team member is required to individually attest they know and agree to abide by these rules governing sportsmanship and player conduct.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee consists of the Commissioner, the Division Representatives, and any at-large members. Executive Committee members serve one-year terms. Committee members may serve more than one consecutive term. The Executive Committee will discuss and vote on League business and activities, including the governing rules and regulations. The teams in each Division may determine specific rules for their Division. The Division Representative is responsible for coordinating their Division's activities.

LEAGUE FEE

The total cost for each team for the 2019 Season is \$1,500. The League fee is due and payable in full by December 31, 2018.

The fee covers all costs to run the League, including but not limited to field fees, game balls, Umpire fees, scorebooks, trophies, L.A. City Department of Parks and Rec. administration costs, bond and insurance premiums, and League administrative and miscellaneous expenses.

INJURIES/INSURANCE

Everyone wants to avoid injuries. The League is not responsible for any injury that occurs before, during, or after a game. The League does not carry a liability insurance policy; the insurance policy mandated by the City does not cover any type of injury, damage, loss, or death that may occur from participating in the League.

Each team member is required to sign a waiver prior to the start of the season releasing the League, its officers and agents, the City of Los Angeles, its officers and agents, the temple their team is associated with, and any other player from liability for any injury, damage, loss, or death that may occur arising out of or relating to playing in the League.

MISCELLANEOUS

The home team is listed in the right-hand column on the schedule and uses the third base dugout.

A player cannot participate in a game if they are wearing a cast of any type or an exposed metal hand, ankle, or knee brace (which may further injure the player or harm another player). Players are discouraged from wearing watches or other jewelry due to the risk of injury to themselves or others that entails.

Except as expressly addressed in these League rules, game play is governed by ASA Rules. In the event of a conflict between ASA rules and the League rules, the League rules control.