

SYNAGOGUE SOFTBALL LEAGUE OFFICIAL RULES – 2022 SEASON

OPENING DAY, FIELD LOCATIONS

The 2022 Synagogue Softball League season begins January 30, 2022.

Playing fields for the 2020 season are:

Cheviot Hills Recreation Center, Diamond #3, 2551 Motor Avenue, LA 90064

Baldwin Hills Recreation Center, Diamonds #1 & #2, 5401 Highlight Place, LA 90016

Poinsettia Recreation Center, Diamond #1, 7341 Willoughby Avenue, LA 90046

DIVISIONS; PLAYOFFS

There are two Divisions: Blue and White; there is no inter-division play.

All teams make the play-offs. The format of the play-offs will be set by the Board prior to the end of the regular season. To be eligible to play in the play-offs, a player must have played in at least four regular season games. All playoff games will be a minimum of seven innings with no time limit. If the game is tied at the completion of the 7th inning extra innings will be played to determine a winner.

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 35 players on its roster. Each manager must submit a printed roster listing each player's first and last name, birth date, age as of 1/30/22, 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 and a copy of their vaccine card. All players must be vaccinated (at least 2 shots). Managers must keep a copy of this information and must forward a copy to the Board. Copies of vaccine cards and driver's licenses must be sent on or before January 27, 2022. A player may be on only one team's roster.

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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 35-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. With the permission of the Board, a player may move to another team even if he/she/they had already played a game for their original team. A revised roster, game day sign-in sheet, and original signed waivers, copies of government-issued photo IDs, vaccine card for any new players must be submitted to the Board no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Thursday prior to the game in which a new player, including a player switching teams, can play.

ELIGIBILITY

As a general rule, every player should 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 for each ineligible player (payable with the next season's league fee) and may be suspended for no 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 Board before submitting the team's roster. The Board 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. 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 Board. 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

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the Board, 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 should 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.

GAME DAY; GAME TIMES; GAME DURATION

All games are played on Sundays at 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 1:00 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. The Umpire determines the number of warm-up pitches that can be taken as well as the amount of time a team takes for warm-up between innings.

There is a "mercy rule" during the regular season. 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 and complete its half of the inning for one of the above

reasons, 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

Each team must have at least nine players to start a game. During the regular season, the manager of a team that expects fewer than nine players may contact any manager of another team in the league, including their opponent, requesting to “borrow” enough players to reach 9 players and those “borrowed” will play in the field and bat for the team they were lent to. If at game time, a team finds itself short of 9 players, there are two remedies. One option is for the short-handed team to “borrow” players from their opponent for the sole purpose of having them play in the field only. The “borrowed” players will remain as eligible players with their “original team” for the purposes of both playing in the field and for batting. Upon agreement of both managers, there is a second option, the team with fewer than 9 players may “borrow” players from their opponent to have nine players and the “borrowed” players will both play in the field and bat only for the team that they were lent to for that game.

If a team has less than nine players present at the 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 additional players to arrive if the manager of the short-handed team is expecting others to arrive. If a team does not have at least nine players present on the field or in its dugout at the expiration of the grace period, the team without nine players will accept the players offered by the opposing manager to make a team of nine players using one of the two options listed above. The results of the game will count in the regular season standings.

Should players arrive later from the team that had fewer than nine players, the players who were lent will return to their “original” team and be permitted to field and join the batting order at the end of the line-up of their original team at the discretion of their own manager.

The League strongly encourages managers to make every effort to have all their players in attendance participate in the game. There is no limit to the number of eligible players who can rotate in and out of the field. There is also no limit to the number of eligible players who can be in the batting order.

During the regular season, a player who is not in the starting line-up can substitute in at any time. If any player is removed from the field but remains in the batting order they may return to the field at any time as long as they remain in the batting order. 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

During the regular season, a manager will be responsible for their line-up. During the play-offs, 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 in the line-up. There is no limit to the number of eligible players in the batting order.

If a player is ejected from the game, an automatic out will be recorded every time that person would come up to bat at the time of ejection (if at bat) and all subsequent at-bats.

If a player in the starting line-up is not substituted due to a lack of eligible substitutes and misses their turn at-bat for any reason except for ejection, the batting order will be collapsed. A team will not have to take an automatic out. If a substitute player is eligible and available the substitute must enter the batting order in place of the player who cannot continue playing.

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. Defensive shifts that place three infielders on one side of the infield dirt is prohibited. If the infield dirt is exceedingly large, the Umpire will determine the area in the infield that the outfielders cannot stand prior to the release of a pitch.

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 rules apply to all of our playing fields in the 2022 season:

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

If a player catches a ball in play (whether in fair or foul territory) and subsequently carries the ball into an area designated as “out of play,” the Umpire will stop play, call “dead ball” and all runners will be awarded one 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 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.

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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 on route to second base on a double, triple or home run.

A player who touches the orange bag and then continues running “up the line” and makes no attempt at running to second is not obligated to “turn right” nor has to remain completely in foul territory. If there is an attempt to tag the player out as he/she returns to first base, the Umpire will be the sole arbiter in determining if the player was making an attempt to run to second base. It is highly recommended that a player who has no intention of running to second to “turn right” and/or remain in foul territory. Any player who performs both will deliver a clear indication to the Umpire that he/she had no intention of taking second and therefore cannot be called out on their way back to first base.

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 where the release of the ball has the ball facing the batter and not covered by the fingers in an attempt to deliver a “drop” ball. 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. Only at the point of release can a pitcher “twist” their wrist to create “ball movement.” 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 an individual pitcher will be called a dead ball and the pitch will be retaken with no other consequences. The second illegal pitch will be called a dead ball and an automatic “called ball” to the batter. The third illegal pitch will be called a dead ball, an automatic ball to the batter, and all base runners will advance one base. The fourth illegal by an individual pitcher will be called a dead ball, an automatic ball to the batter, all base runners will advance one base and the 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

Although there is no pinch-running for a slow runner, in the spirit of “we want everyone to play” each team will be awarded three pinch-runners, per inning, permitted at any base. Unlimited pinch-runners may be permitted if both managers agree and inform the Umpire prior to the start of the game. During the regular season, managers will be trusted to comport with the intention of the courtesy runner rule that is intended to prevent or further exacerbate injury to follow the procedure for replacing a runner at a base. The courtesy runner rule requires the player who made the last out prior to the play for which the courtesy runner is needed. If no outs have been recorded in that half of the inning, the player who recorded the last out in the previous inning will become the courtesy runner. If a courtesy runner is needed in the first inning and no outs have been recorded the courtesy runner will be the player who is listed at the bottom of the batting order. If the designated courtesy runner cannot run, then the player who made an out before them in the batting order will serve as the courtesy runner; and so on until an appropriate courtesy runner is found.

EQUIPMENT

Teams furnish their own personal equipment (e.g., bats, gloves). Softball cleats are allowed. Any footwear with spikes, be it metal or hard plastic, are not permitted. Any player wearing metal spikes must change footwear, a refusal to change will lead to a disqualification from playing in that game. Catchers must wear a mask; while chest protectors and shin guards are highly recommended, they remain 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 “Banned 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

We strongly encourage players to wear a team uniform, a jersey, and/or cap.

FORFEITS

There is no monetary penalty for the first forfeit during the regular season. The penalty for all subsequent forfeits in the regular season is \$150 for each forfeit. The monetary penalty for forfeits will be added to the team's League fees for the following season or be deducted if any refunds are due. Due to the regular season rule allowing a team with less than 9 players to borrow players, we do not expect many forfeits during the regular season.

PROTESTS

ALL Umpire calls – both judgment calls and rule interpretations – are FINAL and not subject to protest. The Umpire determines 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 the Board 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 Board. 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 the Board, via email, within 48 hours after the game ends. Based on the facts and circumstances regarding an ejection, the Board will convene a Dispute Resolution Committee to determine whether the player will be suspended for more than just their team's next game. The committee will evaluate written and oral statements and determine the length of suspension and/or additional punishment. 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 Board prior to the next game in which they can play to discuss their conduct.

A player has the right to request that the Board review the adjudication of the Dispute Resolution Committee. This request must be made to the Board, via email, within 48 hours of the player being made aware of the decision of the Disputes Resolution Committee. Should a player request a review, the Board will convene a committee made up of at least three Board members who will then review the judgement of the Dispute Resolution Committee. The Board appointed committee will have the right to confirm the judgement or alter the decision by decreasing or increasing punishment. That decision will be final and the punishment, if any, will be in effect. If the player does not dispute the judgement of the Dispute Resolution Committee the suspension and/or punishment will be in effect.

If a suspended player plays in or even attends a League game during their suspension, that game will be forfeited. The Board will meet to determine supplemental discipline that could lead to, but not be limited to, a longer suspension. The Board will also review the actions and/or inactions of the manager to determine, if any, disciplinary action should be taken.

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 nor their behavior excused or accepted. The first rule of sportsmanship is simply to 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 Board.

Managers 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 Board 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.

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Only the manager may question a call or rule interpretation by the Umpire. The discussion should be brief and only involve the Umpire and the managers but no other players, who are required to keep their distance and not speak directly to the Umpire or any of the opposing players regarding the play. Batters and fielders may not argue balls and strikes. The pitcher and catcher may inquire regarding the location of a specific pitch, but the Umpire is not required to answer. Snide comments, repeated or persistent complaints regarding a call, and persistent questioning of pitch location may be reported to the Board for disciplinary action. Umpires will issue a single verbal warning but if impermissible behavior continues or recurs, the offending player will be ejected without further warning. If the initial misbehavior is egregious, the Umpire is not required to issue a first warning and may immediately eject a player. Every player is required to abide by the rules governing good sportsmanship and player conduct. We have a “zero tolerance” policy toward disrespectful behavior. Reported misbehavior will lead to a review by the Dispute Resolution Committee which could result in disciplinary action that may lead to a suspension.

LEAGUE FEE

The total cost for each team for the 2022 Season is \$1,850. The fee covers all costs to run the League, including but not limited to field fees, game balls, Umpire fees, trophies, City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Park administration costs, bond and insurance premiums, and League administrative and miscellaneous expenses.

INJURIES/INSURANCE

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 for player injury. 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. All players must be vaccinated (at least 2 shots) to play in the League’s 2022 season.

MISCELLANEOUS

The Home team is listed in the right-hand column on the schedule. During the regular season, the Home team will take the dugout on the 1st base side.

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 highly discouraged from wearing watches or other jewelry due to the risk of injury.

The Board reserves the right to change the rules as it sees fit at any time.