

SYNAGOGUE SOFTBALL LEAGUE OFFICIAL RULES - 2024 SEASON

OPENING DAY, FIELD LOCATIONS

The 2024 Synagogue Softball League season begins January 28, 2024.

FIELDS:

Baldwin Hills Recreation Center Field #1: 5401 Highlight Place, Los Angeles

Baldwin Hills Recreation Center Field #2: 5401 Highlight Place, Los Angeles

Cheviot Hills Recreation Center Field #1: 2501 Motor Avenue, Los Angeles (NE Corner)

Cheviot Hills Recreation Center Field #3: 2501 Motor Avenue, Los Angeles (SW Corner)

Hjelte Sports Center Field #2: 16200 Burbank Blvd., Encino (SW Corner)

Hjelte Sports Center Field #3: 16200 Burbank Blvd., Encino (SE Corner)

REGULAR SEASON DIVISIONS & PLAYOFFS

There are currently four Divisions. There may be some inter-divisional play during the regular season.

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 three regular season games. All playoff games that lead to the championship 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 Board 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 1/21/24, 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. Managers must keep a copy of this information and must forward a copy to the Board for new players only. Copies of driver's licenses for new players must be sent on or before January 16, 2024. A player may be on only one team's roster, even if the synagogue they play on has two or more teams.

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 March 30, 2024. A team may request an extension but that must be approved by the Board and may be denied. Rain-outs or other postponements may or may not 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 fifth 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 they had already played a game for their original team. A revised roster, 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 or "connected" to a temple member. 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 the manager may be suspended for up to two games. 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 on a team for at least two seasons as part of Synagogue Softball LLC 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. Once they choose to switch to a different, they can only switch back with the permission of the Board.

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 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) unless they are high school seniors who become eligible starting on their 17th birthday. There are no other age restrictions on who may play in the League.

GAME DAY SIGN-IN SHEETS & LINE-UP CARDS

Game day sign-in sheets and an exchange of line-up cards are only required during play-off games that can lead to a championship. 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 play-off game. A copy of the completed sign-in sheet along with a line-up card should be given to the opposing manager prior to the start of a play-off game. 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 9 players to start and to continue a game. During the regular season, the manager of a team that expects fewer than 9 players may contact the League and/or any manager of another team in the league other than their opponent requesting to “borrow” enough players so that they can field 10 players. Pool Players and Borrowed Players from any League team other than their opponent will be placed in the batting order and will also play in the field. If at game time, a team still finds itself short of 9 players, the short-handed team will be “lent players” by their opponent to play in the field only. Those “lent players” may also play in the field and be in the batting order for their “regular team” as their manager sees fit.

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.

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Should players arrive later from the team that had fewer than nine players, the players who were “lent” will return to their “original” team for the remainder of the game at the discretion of their manager. If the “lent” players were not already in the batting order of their “original” team they will join the batting order at the end of the line-up of their original team.

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.

Our league has a “designated fielder” rule for the regular season and for play-off games that do not lead a championship game only. Players will be allowed to play in the field even if they are no longer in the line-up or have never entered 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. There is no minimum number of innings that anyone must play. All players during the play-offs 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 in the play-offs).

BATTING ORDER

During the regular season, a manager will be responsible for their line-up. As a courtesy, each manager may elect to announce batting order changes and defensive changes to the other team and/or the Umpire but this is not required during the regular season. Managers who have more than 10 players at a game may choose not to place all players in the batting order at the start of the game. Each manager can choose their substitute pattern during the regular season. Managers may choose to split a position in the batting order with, for example, one player playing 3 or 4 innings and being replaced in 4 or 5th inning. Managers may choose any substitution pattern they want including alternating innings between players. As a courtesy, we recommend that the substitution pattern be announced to the opposing manager and the Umpire prior to the game but this not necessary during the regular season. During the regular season, should a manager feel that the substitution pattern was violated in law and/or spirit, that manager should take notes and send an email to the Board. We do not want managers to stop the game or even interject a comment regarding substitution pattern issues. Do not involve the Umpire. Just play the game and we can deal with the issue via email after the game is finished.

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 legitimate reason (i.e. injury or previous time commitment) 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.

During the regular season only, upon mutual agreement by both managers, the batting order substitution rules may be amended as the managers see fit.

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 been released by the pitcher. Conversely, all four infielders must play on the infield dirt and may not go into the outfield until the pitched ball has been released by the pitcher. 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.

A ball that is caught out-of-play (as determined by the umpire) 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 (equivalent to tagging up 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 (as determined by the umpire) 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 (meaning they must first touch the base they had been on before taking another base or bases). 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 a base runner is advancing on a force play with the lead runner heading to second, third base or home plate and the defense is attempting a play to get a runner out at either second base, third base or at home plate, 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 or out of the base path). If the runner is close to second base, third base or home plate and does neither, the Umpire will call a dead ball and award the defensive team a double-play if the defense is making a play on the runner. The player who did not slide nor did not get out of the way will be called out and the double play will conclude with the batter being called out as well. A dead ball will be called by the Umpire and all other runners will return to the base they were on prior to the ball being batted that led to the double-play.

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, jumping over a fielder, intentionally cleating a fielder, and any other illegal or dangerous slides will result in an immediate dead ball and 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 "toe tap" (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 or "toe tap", 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 or "toe tap".** If there is not a close play at the plate, the runner need not slide. A runner that is coming into home plate at full speed is an indication that the runner is expecting a close play. If there is any attempt by the defense that is "close enough," as determined by the Umpire, the runner must slide or "toe tap." If not, they will be called out.

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When a player is running at full speed around the base path, it is incumbent upon the team's base coaches, the manager and the on-deck batter to help the runner make the right decision when coming into a base and especially at home plate. We want to avoid injury to both the runner and defensive players. If there even a remote chance of a play, the runner should be told to "slide." If there is no play, the runner should be told to "stand up" and/or "slow down."

For the 2024 season, we are introducing the "toe-tap into home" rule during the regular season but it may be extended into the play-offs. Should a player come into home plate slowly approximately the last 5 to 10 feet before home plate (as determined by the umpire) and makes no contact with catcher either by crossing the plate first or by half-sliding or by extending a leg forward with completely crossing the plate to get under the tag of the catcher which we are calling a "toe tap" (essentially making every attempt to avoid contact with the catcher, the Umpire may conclude that the runner did not violate the League's rules regarding sliding at home on a close play. Further, the team at-bat is responsible for clearing the bat away after the hitter drops it on plays that may involve a runner coming home.

A move made by a batter or a runner that is deemed dangerous by the umpire will result in a dead ball. The player who made the dangerous action will be called out and all other players will return to the base they occupied just prior to the dead ball. The Umpire may choose to eject the player who then may face additional sanctions.

Should a player on the defense make a dangerous move/play, the Umpire will call dead ball at a time that gives the team on offense the best opportunity to score or put players in scoring position. The player on defense who makes a dangerous move/play will be warned or ejected by the umpire at an appropriate time prior to the next at-bat.

The catcher is not allowed to block the plate or go up the baseline to obstruct a runner heading home unless they 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. 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 hit 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. The intent is to prevent inducing unnecessary sliding because of the injury risk. The Umpire will report this type of action to the Board and the Board through the Dispute Resolution Committee may take action against that player.

All fields are equipped with an orange extended safety base at first base. When a batter hits a ball and a play is 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 if they round first base on a single (when a play at first base is not attempted) or on route to second base on a double, triple or home run. A batter who touches any part of the white bag in which a play at first is being attempted will be warned by the Umpire and may be called out if the batter going to first base put the safety of a defensive player at risk. It will be the sole discretion of the Umpire to make this call.

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 runner out upon returning to first base, the Umpire will be the sole arbiter in determining if the player was making an attempt to run to second base. A 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 in a simple straight “bowling” that 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

There is no pinch-running for a slow runner. In the spirit of “we want everyone to play,” during the regular season, each team will be awarded three pinch-runners, per inning, permitted at any base. During the regular season, an unlimited number of pinch-runners may be permitted if both managers agree. 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. 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. If a catcher already has their equipment on they may be skipped as the courtesy runner during the regular season. During the regular season, by mutual agreement of the managers, the courtesy runner rule may be amended as they see fit.

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 steel or 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. At the very least, a player should wear team colors. During the 2024 play-off games that can lead to a championship, players will need, at the very least, to wear some form of a team identifying color.

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.

Taunting an opponent, even if delivered without malice, should be avoided. Unwelcome comments are inappropriate and show a recklessness of behavior that can easily escalate. Taunting is detrimental to the League. Umpires may eject a player for "taunting" behavior. The League, upon review of the incident, may suspend a player, regardless of any action taken by the umpire.

"Bench clearing" offenses will not be tolerated and the excuse that "the other team started it first" will not be accepted and punishment will be levied. All parties involved in "bench clearing" will be subject to suspension, independent of any other punishment for other offenses. Managers may also be sanctioned and/or suspended for not keeping control of their players.

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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 both 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.

A team may have assistant managers and/or co-managers. However, during the game each team may have only one person serving as the spokesperson for their team and that person will be the only person who may interact with the Umpire and/or the opposing manager. For those teams with assistant managers and co-managers, the person who will be the spokesperson from the team must be made clear to the Umpire and to the opposing manager. Perhaps, the ideal time to do that is just prior to the start of the game when the Umpire may choose to have a meeting with the managers.

LEAGUE FEE

The total cost for each team for the 2024 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.

MISCELLANEOUS

The Home team is listed in the right-hand column on the schedule. 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.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION COMMITTEE PROCEDURE

Should the Board convene a Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) it will be made up of at least three individuals who have no connection to the dispute. The procedure for "hearing a dispute" will be, as follows:

1. Read the complaint
2. Interview the person(s) who has brought the complaint by email and/or telephone/zoom
3. Interview the player who is alleged to have conducted misbehavior by email and/or telephone/zoom
4. Interview any other pertinent witnesses, including but not limited to the umpire and players
5. Then determine "the facts: of the case based on your judgement of the evidence that is heard. There will likely be a "discrepancy of facts." The committee will use its best judgement to "determine the facts" based on the preponderance of the evidence available to the committee.
6. If the majority of the Committee determines that an action or actions by a player deserves a sanction, it will be the committee's responsibility to set the sanction.
7. If the committee determines that a sanction is warranted it can be in form that the committee chooses, including but not limited to a:
 - warning
 - suspension from playing a number of future games whose length is recommended by the DRC and

8. The DRC will produce a "Dispute Resolution" document articulating the charges against the offending player and that document will include the determined sanction, including the number of games, if any, that the player will be suspended. The document should include the results of any votes taken by the committee and indicating if the votes were by the majority or the vote was unanimous.

9. The DRC, by majority rule, will decide whether or not the "Dispute Resolution" document will include how each committee member voted on leveling sanctions or just indicate which votes were unanimous or by the majority.

10. The "Dispute Resolution" document will be emailed to the League using synagoguesoftball2022.com.

The three-member Dispute Resolution Committee may decide to appoint a chairperson or constitute itself in any way that facilitates the process. All decisions made by the DRC must have the support of the majority of the committee that has been appointed to the case. The hope is that unanimous decisions can be reached but it is not necessary.

The guidelines for what constitutes a sanctionable offense is the solely determined by the DRC. As members of the DRC you are tasked with identifying behavior that is "detrimental to the principles of Synagogue Softball."

Should a sanctioned player disagree with the severity of the sanction an appeal to the Board can be made in writing within 48 hours of the DRC decision. The Board will not rehear the case. The DRC has heard the case and has established cause for sanction. The Board has three options after hearing the appeal, it may:

- determine that the sanction levied by the DRC is appropriate
- decrease the severity of the sanction
- increase the severity of the sanction

In all appeals, "the facts of the case" remain determined by the assessment of the DRC in their "Dispute Resolution" document.

2024 PLAY-OFF RULES & CHANGES FROM THE REGULAR SEASON

1. No borrowing of players without the permission of the Board
2. No pool players, without permission of the Board, will be permitted to play and that includes players who may or may not have appeared on a team roster but essentially served in the role of a fill-in player
3. Players can only play for a team in which they appear on a team's final roster as of 5/3/24. If a player mistakenly appears on two rosters, the Board will determine which team they will play for.
4. Players must have appeared in 3 games during the regular season.
5. Both teams will be required to present their bats to their opponents prior to the start of the game.
6. Both teams will be required to present their line-up to their opponents prior to the start of the game.
7. A manager must announce to the umpire and their opposing manager all substitutions/changes made to the batting order prior to the substitution/change being made.
8. All play-off games during the first round of play-offs on May 5 (or an alternate date if the end of the regular season was delayed) will be played a full seven innings without a mercy rule and without a time limit. Games that are tied after 7 innings will go to into extra innings until a winner is determined.
9. All games in the championship bracket on May 19 (or an alternate date if the end of the regular season was delayed) will be played a full seven innings without a mercy rule and without a time limit. Games that are tied after 7 innings will go to into extra innings until a winner is determined.
10. All non-semi-final games played on May 19 will have a 1:50 time limit as well as a 20 run mercy rule. Should a game in the "consolation bracket" be tied after 7 innings or after exceeding the 1:50 time limit, whichever comes first, the subsequent innings will begin with a runner on second base (only in the consolation games). The runner on second will be the last batter in the previous inning. Should that player need courtesy runner it will be the next to the last batter who will be placed on second to start their half of the inning.
11. On June 2, the championship games will be played a full seven innings without a mercy rule and without a time limit.

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12. All other games non-championship on June 2 will have a 1:50 time limit as well as a 20-run mercy rule. Should a game in the “consolation bracket” be tied after 7 innings or after exceeding the 1:50 time limit, whichever comes first, the subsequent innings will begin with a runner on second base (only in the consolation games). The runner on second will be the last batter in the previous inning. Should that player need courtesy runner it will be the next to the last batter who will be placed on second to start their half of the inning.

13. In play-off games that lead to a championship game, teams will be limited to two courtesy runners per inning and will follow the standard league rule of the courtesy runner being the batter who made the last out unless that player is someone who would also require a courtesy runner and then it would be the batter who made the second to last out, and so on. In all other “consolation” games the regular season courtesy runner rules apply, including unlimited courtesy runners if both managers agree.

14. The “designated fielder” rule will not be in effect throughout the play-offs that can lead to a championship. In all other “consolation” games the regular season “designated fielder” rules apply.

15. During the play-off games that can lead to a championship, if a player has to leave for an injury or for any other reason except an ejection, that team has an option to replace the player with an available substitute or take an automatic out the next time that player is scheduled to bat. After that, if the team chooses the automatic out, the line-up will be collapsed with no further

16. During the play-offs, the rules regarding an ejection have not changed. Should a player be ejected, his/her team will be penalized with an “automatic out” every time the ejected player was scheduled to bat.

17. All changes in the batting order must be announced to the umpire and the opponent's manager prior to the substitution.

18. All teams must have at least 8 rostered players available to play for all three play-off games. Anything less may result in a fine of up to \$200 per game.

19. Should a team start the game with 8 players and then lose a player to injury, ejection or for any other reason and does not have a substitute available the game will be declared a forfeit against the team that lost the player, even if that team was leading at the time.

20. During the play-offs, a team must have at least 8 players to start the game. Should a team start a game with 8 or more players and then others from that team arrive after the start of the game, that team may add a player or players upon arrival to reach ten players or more. A late arriving player will be added to the end of the batting order.

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21. In all “consolation” games, the rules revert back to those applied during the regular season with the exception of using borrowed and pool players, which still requires Board permission. Only with the express agreement of the Board may a team in a “consolation” game request to use borrowed/pool players and/or be lent players to reach 9 players.

22. During the play-off games that can lead to the championship, players will need to wear some form of identifying team colors. A matching team jersey and a team cap is the preferred form of dress.

23. During the play-off games that can lead to the championship, each manager has the right to have an extended conversation with the Umpire following a call in which the manager questions the decision. Both managers will meet with the Umpire, preferably at home plate. Each manager will have the right to make one challenge per game. It is incumbent upon both managers to ensure that no one else be involved in the conversation. Managers may be subject to disciplinary action by the Board should they not be able to control their benches for any reason.