



Downingtown Area Recreation Consortium

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DARC Mens Softball League Rules

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General League Rules

1. We will use A.S.A. Rules-exceptions to follow. Umpires will carry a copy of the league rule sheets and a copy of the current A.S.A. Rulebook.

Equipment

2. All necessary equipment (bats, gloves, etc.) must be provided by teams playing. DARC will supply the bases, lineup cards, and the game balls.

3. Metal cleats will be permitted; however, we recommend not wearing metal cleats. We discourage the use of metal cleats as they damage the bases and strike zone mat – this drives up league costs for everyone. Anyone who appears to in any way ‘spike’ a player intentionally will be ejected and suspended indefinitely.

4. BATS: All bats must be Amateur Softball Association of America (A.S.A.) approved or meet current A.S.A. guidelines. Approved bat list is available at the A.S.A. web site www.asasoftball.com. The bat shall be free of burrs, dents and visible cracks.

Locations

5. Games are scheduled to be played at Kerr Park (Wallace & Pennsylvania Aves. in Downingtown) and Shamona Creek Park (1101 Dowlin Forge Rd. in Downingtown, PA 19335). Other fields may also be utilized. Makeup games may be rescheduled on an as needed basis anywhere within the Downingtown Area School District (DASD).

Field Rules/Weather Cancellations

6. **RAIN CANCELLATIONS:** Please call the DARC Weather Line at 610-269-6540. Decisions on rainy days will be made by 3:30 pm on weekdays and 8 am on weekends by the recreation office. Our new registration website (downingtowntpa.myrec.com) allows text message and e-mail blasts. This will be utilized during rain outs and notifications will be sent to the team manager and assistant manager

Please call for possible cancellations regardless of the present weather conditions (i.e.-if it rained the previous day; the field may not be in playable condition). It is your responsibility to call, we will not always be able call you!

****RED FLAG RULE:** If the “Red Flag” is displayed on the fence post along the first base line at Kerr Park or Shamona Creek Park, the field has been deemed “not playable.” Please keep off of the field.

7. All games will be rescheduled by the DARC office (when possible) and team captains' will be contacted regarding any rescheduled games.
8. Only players are permitted to be in the playing field area. Coaches are allowed to coach bases. Physical interference will not be permitted. Children must remain off of the playing field during the game as well as the tennis courts and fences.
9. No drugs or alcoholic beverages are permitted on the fields or at the park at any time. If we suspect that any players come to the field intoxicated we will not permit them to play. We will stop a game if necessary. The entire team will be suspended...you are responsible for the actions of the players on your team. If you are caught the proper authorities will be notified and you will be suspended from the league without refund. **Please read and abide by the enclosed player conduct code. By registering your team in the league, you and your team are ensuring that you have read this and will abide by these guidelines.**
10. Dugout Conduct: Participants may not smoke inside the dugout areas. Children should remain outside of the dugout area whenever possible. If we suspect that any players come to the field intoxicated we will not permit them to play. We will stop a game if necessary. The entire team will be suspended...you are responsible for the actions of the players on your team.
11. It is the responsibility of both teams to ensure that the fields are left in a clean condition and to assist with setting up the field &/or returning equipment to appropriate storage areas. The home team for the last scheduled game of the day is responsible for pulling the bases and returning them to the designated storage location.

Players, Teams & Fees

12. Registration is on a first come first served basis. Registration will be done electronically at downingtwnpa.myrec.com. Final Payments on league fees are due one week before the beginning of the season. Rosters are due at registration, but can be changed prior to your first game. You need a minimum of 10 players to register. Teams can drop/add players to their roster up until the point that there are 5 regular season games remaining for their team. After this point all rosters are final because players must play in at least 4 regular season games to be eligible to play in the playoffs.

Please WRITE THE FINAL SCORE ON TOP OF EVERY CARD at the end of each game* AND date. Place in white mailbox @ Kerr and @Shamona in a Ziploc bag or plastic box on site. We are working on a web version of score reporting and rostering for each game – this may be implemented during the season.

13. Teams will be limited to a maximum of 24 players on the roster.
 - a.) Players may not play on more than one team per League (Exception - A male player can play on one team in the Men's League and one Team in the Co-Ed League). Even if the original team folds during the season. Players cannot play on a team in the "more competitive division" and a team in the "more recreational division." It is one league with two divisions; you cannot play on more than one team.
 - b.) Players must be at least 18 years of age (as of the first game of the season)
 - c.) By being placed on a roster and registering a team all players acknowledge the team roster/waiver/release of liability form. A player must be on the team roster in order to play in a game.

14. Each team must pay half of the umpire fee (\$40; \$20 per team, per game) prior to the start of each regular season and the first 2 games of the playoffs. Umpires must be paid in cash.

Penalties/Warnings

15. Forfeits will be called if a team does not have a combination of at least nine players ready to play within ten minutes of the scheduled game time. In the event that the game prior to yours runs into more than ten minutes of your game time, your team must be ready to play as soon as it ends. Forfeiting teams will be required to pay the entire umpire fee unless DARC is notified at least 2 hours prior to the scheduled game time. Three forfeits will terminate your team from the league; no refunds will be given. If you forfeit a playoff game, you are required to pay all umpire fees for that game.

16. In the event of a forfeiture, teams not having enough money to pay the umpire at the time of forfeit will have their forfeit deposit taken by the DARC Office. They then have until the close of business the last business day before their next game to replenish their forfeit fee to the DARC Office. Failure to pay the forfeit fee will result in the forfeiture of all games until the fee is paid. Umpires will not umpire forfeited scrimmage games.

17. Fake Tags: A form of obstruction by a fielder who attempts to tag a runner without the ball and thereby impedes a runner advancing or returning to a base. If a fielder is caught attempting to deceive a runner they will be ejected, given a 1 game suspension, and the runner will be awarded the next base.

18. Crashing Into A Fielder With the Ball (Interference): In an effort to prevent injury and protect a defensive player attempting to make a play on a runner, a runner must be called out when they remain on their feet and crash into a defensive player who is holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag. To prevent the out ruling, the runner may slide, jump over the defender holding the ball, go around the defender or return to the previous base touched. If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender shall be ejected. A runner may slide into the fielder.

- a.) When a runner is called out for crashing into a fielder holding the ball, the ball becomes dead. Each runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the crash as this constitutes interference.
- b.) When the runner crashes into a fielder holding the ball before being put out and, in the judgment of the umpire, it was an attempt to break up an obvious double play, the immediate succeeding runner is also called out.
- c.) When a crash occurs after the runner is called out, the runner closest to home plate is also out.
- d.) When a runner runs outside the three-foot lane to avoid a crash with a defender holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag, the runner should be called out.
- e.) When a defensive player is fielding a thrown ball and the flight of the ball carries or draws them into the path of the base runner, it is not a crash.
- f.) When the ball, runner, and the defensive player arrive at the same time and place, and contact is made, the umpire should not invoke the crash rule, interference, or obstruction. This is merely incidental contact, or what some persons commonly call a “wreck.”
- g.) The strike zone mat is considered to be “part of home plate” on scoring plays. So when a base runner scores a run they can make contact with home plate, or the strike zone mat, and be safe.
- h.) **BOTTOM LINE:** Try to avoid contact if at all possible.

19. Out of Play Boundaries will be marked at the playing fields: **Catch & Carry Rule:** If a “live” ball is caught in play and “unintentionally” carried out of play, then it is automatically a dead ball. Runners will be awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the fielder left live ball territory. If, in the judgment of the umpire, a fielder “intentionally” carries, kicks, pushes, or throws a live ball from live ball territory out of play it is automatically a dead ball. All runners are awarded two bases from the last base touched at the time the fielder left or the ball was kicked, pushed, or thrown from live ball territory.

20. Dugout Conduct: Participants may not smoke inside the dugout areas. Children should remain outside of the dugout area whenever possible. If we suspect that any players come to the field intoxicated we will not permit them to play. We will stop a game if necessary. The entire team may be suspended pending a decision by the League Director or Board of Representatives. You are responsible for the actions of all the other the players on your team.

21. No Bunting! The batter may not bunt or “chop” the ball.

22. Cheating will not be tolerated; any player caught cheating will be ejected from the game by the umpire(s), League Director or League Coordinator and may be subject to further disciplinary action by the League Director or Board of Representatives.

Starting/Playing/Ending the Game

23. Team captains must meet with the umpire before the start of the game to review any and all rules.

24. A regulation game shall consist of 7 innings. A full seven innings need not be played if the team second at bat scores more runs in six and one-half innings and/or before the third out in the last of the seventh inning, or the run-ahead rule is applied. A game that is tied at the end of seven innings shall be continued by playing additional innings until one side has scored more runs than the other at the end of a complete inning, or until the team second at bat has scored more runs in their half of the inning before the third out is made.

The umpire is empowered to call a game at any time because of darkness, rain, fire, panic, or any other cause that places the patrons or players in peril. A game called by the umpire shall be regulation if five or more complete innings have been played, or if the team second at bat has scored more runs in four or more innings than the other team has scored in five or more innings. Games that are not considered regulation shall be resumed at the exact point where they were stopped. Games that are regulation tie games shall be resumed at the exact point where they were stopped.

****TIME LIMIT:** We will allow no more than a maximum of 1 hour and 30 minutes per game. Time begins with the first pitch. A new inning will not begin after 1 hour and 30 minutes from the start of the game. The only time a game will be permitted to go longer is if a game is still tied after 1 hour and 30 minutes-it will be continued until a winner is determined.

25. All at bats will begin with a 1 ball, 1 strike count. No “courtesy fouls” will be given.

26. A legal pitch must be a six to twelve foot arc. (Umpire's judgment). Batter may swing at an "illegal pitch"; however, his actions will be counted. The strike zone mat will be utilized. A pitch, of legal height, that hits any part of home plate or the strike zone mat will be a strike.

27. Games are played 10 v. 10 format. There must be at least nine players to start the game. The empty position(s) in the batting lineup will not result in outs once they are reached. Teams will be given three outs unless the mercy rule comes into play.

- a.) If a shorthanded team's player arrives before they have batted thru the lineup the player can be immediately added to the lineup.
- b.) Players arriving after the team has batted thru the lineup may be substituted into the lineup at any time during the game. They cannot be added to the bottom of the batting order, however, they may enter into another player's position.

28. A team may have as many as twenty (20) players on their roster and batting order. However, the batting order must remain the same for the entire game. Teams may use substitutions instead of their full-team roster.

- a.) Should the number of players on a team fall below nine during the game due to injury or any other reason, the team captains will meet and decide if the missing person is an out or if the game will result in a forfeit.

29. Once the defense has taken the field, all players must maintain the same position throughout the inning. They cannot switch positions (i.e. shortstop & 2nd baseman or left fielder & right fielder) depending on who is up to bat. If playing with a short fielder, the short fielder may roam anywhere in the outfield, but must be a "noticeable" distance in front of the other outfielders.

- a.) A team may apply a shift and have 3 infielders on one side of second base; but fielders must maintain their defensive alignment.
- b.) A pitching change may be made at any time.

30. When a team is in the field the infielders may not cross the plain between the bases and outfielders must remain in the grass area of the outfield until the ball crosses the plate.

31. Third Strike Foul: If the batter fouls off the third strike they will be out. No "courtesy fouls."

32. No Leading & No Base Stealing: Runners must remain on base until the ball is hit. If no contact is made and the runner leaves the base they will be "out." Base stealing is not permitted.

33. One courtesy runner per inning is allowed; the courtesy runner must be last batted out. A second courtesy runner may be used ONLY in the event of a serious injury during the play and that player is removed from the game.

34. On an over the fence homerun, Batter may touch 1st base and walk off field. (ASA walk off rule)

35. Warm up Pitches. Pitcher will have three pitches between innings (in no more than 1 minute) unless there is a pitching change. Relief pitchers will get 7 pitches from the mound (in no more than 2 minutes).

36. EIGHT RUNS IS THE MAXIMUM RUNS PER INNING. The fielding team is automatically up to bat after the eighth run has scored. (Does not apply in the seventh inning, or if a team is trailing by

more than the run ahead mercy rule runs). In the seventh inning both teams can score as many runs as possible.

39. RUN-AHEAD RULE (“Mercy Rule”): If one team is ahead by 20 runs after 3 innings, 15 runs after 4 innings, or 10 runs after 5 innings the game is over. Complete innings must be played unless the home team scores the run-ahead limit while at bat. When the visiting team reaches the limit in the top half of an inning, the home team must have their opportunity to bat in the bottom half of the inning. Also applies for playoff games.

40. Once an inning has started it must be completed. Exception: when the home team is up to bat and is leading in runs after 6 ½ innings.

41. Protests Teams making protests must notify the other team captain and the umpire at the time of protest. Captain’s wishing to protest must notify DARC by the close of the next business day. There is a \$25 fee for all protests. Umpires judgment calls cannot be protested; only rules can be protested. All regular rules protests will be decided by either the League Director or the A.S.A. All League specific rules will be decided by the League Board (if any) or the League Director.

42. Discipline Disciplinary actions for violations in accordance with League Rules will be decided by either the League Director or the League Board (if any).

43. Score Reporting Please write final scores and date on line-up cards and place in mailbox @ Kerr or @ Shamona in a Ziploc bag or plastic container provided on site. A representative from both the home and away teams must report the final scores by noon of the following business day via email at darcsoftball@gmail.com OR call to report during office hours at 610-269-9260. Standings will be posted on the website and will be updated as often as possible. Upon the implementation of a new softball website, score and roster reporting requirements may change.

Post-Season

44. **TIE BREAKER:

- a.) Should any ties exist, head-to-head record is the first tie-breaker.
- b.) Head-to-head run differential, amongst those teams involved, will be used if the tie still exists.
- c.) If a tie cannot be broken by the above tie breaker rules, overall run differential for the entire season will be used as the third tie breaker.
- d.) If still tied, and the tie affects playoff status/seeding, it will be broken by a coin toss.

45. Playoffs: A double elimination tournament will be played for the Championship for each Division. Teams will be seeded based upon their regular season final standings. Once a team suffers their first playoff loss they will be seeded into the losers bracket. The highest advancing seeds will be the home teams. The final remaining teams in each bracket will play for the Championship. If the “Winners Bracket Team” suffers their first loss in the initial Championship game a second deciding game will be played with the teams switching home and away roles.

There will be two umpires paid for by DARC after the first 2 rounds of playoffs

46. All playoff games must complete a full 7 innings (6 ½ if the home team is winning) unless the Run Ahead Rule “Mercy Rule” applies. Playoff games that are not considered regulation shall be resumed

at the exact point where they were stopped. Playoff games that are regulation tie games shall be resumed at the exact point where they were stopped.

Please sign and date to verify that you and your team have read/understand/and will abide by the above rules. Return one to DARC & keep a copy for yourself & team.

_____ **Date:** _____

Team Name: _____