

The 2022 Greater Madison Senior Softball League Slow-Pitch Rules

(A) GENERAL

1. A.S.A. rules are the general guidelines for GMSS Rules, but there are differences, with exceptions, emphasized rules, and clarifications shown below.
2. Ground Rules -Regular ground rules apply.
3. Regulation Game -is 9 innings but no new innings may start after 70 minutes unless score is tied.
4. **Tiebreaker** - If the game is tied after 9 innings or at the 70 minute regular time limit (plus finish the inning), then the last **eligible batter** from the previous inning starts out at second base. No C.R. can be used until the runner has reached third base. **But, if last batter required a C.R from home, then he is ineligible to start at second and next to last batter would start on second. Additional innings may be played for another 10 minutes, if needed, to try to determine a winner. Once the game has been going for 80 minutes (plus time from an early start - see (K) 1.) then you finish only that inning to determine a winner or it gets recorded as a tie.**
5. Legal Game -6 ½ innings if the home team is ahead; 7 innings if the visiting team is ahead.
6. 9-Inning Game -If a team is behind by 15 or more runs after 7 innings, the game ends.
7. Maximum Number of Runs Allowed Per Inning is 5 except for the last inning and any extra innings when each team can score an unlimited number of runs, but also see Catch-Up Rule 8 below.
8. Catch-Up Rule -The team that is behind may score as many runs per inning as needed to tie the score plus up to 5 more runs ('tie plus 5') that inning., but see Rule 7 above.
9. **Rainouts - If game is rained out with at least two innings played, it will be rescheduled and continued from the point it was rained out. If less than two innings played, then it will just start over on the reschedule date.**
10. Courtesy Runner (C.R.) - Is used for a player with a medical reason for not running. **In the name of good sportsmanship it is not proper to replace a runner only because he is a slow runner. The runner must ask for a C.R. on base or be on a pre-game list as needing C.R. from home.**
11. Only managers may discuss disputed calls by the umpire. If a player argues with an umpire more than a minute, the umpire will stop play and will tell that player's manager that if his player continues to argue, that player will be ejected from the game. In severe cases, the umpire will stop play, summon managers from both teams, and inform them that the player has been ejected. If the ejected player continues to argue and cause problems, he will be asked to leave the park and that player is barred from the league for the rest of the season. If the ejected player refuses to leave the park, his team loses the game on a forfeit. If a player is ejected from two games in a season, he will be barred from the league for the rest of the season.
12. Code of Ethics-
 - Accept the decision of the umpire and team manager
 - Show good **sportsmanship** always and never taunt or degrade an opponent
 - Avoid bodily contact that may cause injury to others or yourself
 - Never direct abusive or profane language at officials or opponents

(B) TEAMS

1. Teams may field a maximum of 11 players on defense. Less than 8 rostered players present at game-time is a forfeit. Any player listed on the scorecard/batting lineup may be interchanged anywhere on defense at any time. If a game is forfeited, teams may pick up additional players from other teams and the game may be played by mutual agreement of both managers, with results being shown as a forfeit loss for the team with less than 8 rostered players.

(B) TEAMS (cont)

2. Teams must have registered at least 12 players for their roster to be considered a viable team. There is no upper limit for number of players on the roster, and they may add players at any time during the season.
3. If a team has at least 8 rostered players, that Manager may add up to three additional Registered players as Substitutes (**See (I) 5. 6. 7.)** to enable his team to play up to 11 players on defense. Once selected per Section I guidelines for each tier, Substitutes are not under any special rules and may be used by the Manager any way he sees fit during the game. **Substitutes must bat at the end of the batting order.**
4. Everyone listed on the scorecard/batting lineup bats. All players must be listed in the batting order in order to play defense and must go up to bat the first time through the order. If they are too sick/injured, then after that they may skip their remaining turns at bat with no penalty, per current rules.
5. An injured player may be skipped over when it is his turn to bat, & no out is given (see B. 4). An ejected player is skipped over when it is his turn to bat, and his team is given an out. A player already in the batting order may take ejected player's field position, but not his batting position.

(C) PLAYERS

1. To be eligible, a player must be at least 55 years old by December 31st of the current year and has filled out a current Registration/Liability Form and paid his fees. Using an ineligible player results in a forfeit.
2. If a player wishes to change teams, his manager must supply written release to the league office.

(D) PITCHER

1. A strike is a legal pitch that touches the mat or home plate.
2. Intentional Walk - Notify the umpire and batter goes to first immediately with no pitches thrown.
3. He must pause one second while facing the batter. A quick pitch is a ball.
4. With one foot on the rubber, he must deliver the ball on the first forward motion.
5. To be legal, the ball must have an arc between 6 and 12 feet from the ground. If there is a high wind, the managers may agree to allow a flatter pitch. A ball will be called by the umpire if the arc of the pitch falls outside the 6-12' of height guidelines. If the batter swings, then the results of his swing will override the called (illegal pitch) ball.

(E) FIELDER

1. He has a right to a base only if making a play. **If not, he must avoid obstructing a runner.** Fake tags are considered an obstruction. Obstruction results in 'Delayed Dead Ball' signal.
2. If a fielder obstructs a runner, the umpire determines the base or bases awarded.
3. The Force-out - Can be used on a runner advancing to any base or returning to a base after a fly out.
 - First Base - The fielder must use the white part of the bag. But, see exception in (G) 1.
 - Home Plate - He must touch home plate/mat for any runner between the Commitment Line and the second home plate. He can't tag a runner trying to score once he has crossed the Commitment Line.
4. When a runner is voluntarily returning to a base after an attempt at the next base, a normal tag-out is required. The runner must achieve and hold the base before the tag to be safe. (See G.2 & 3).
5. Infield Fly Rule - When **called out loud** by the umpire (umpire's judgment call), the batter is immediately out, **DELAYED DEAD BALL IS IN FORCE** (umpire raises his arm). The fielder is not required to catch the fly to ensure that the batter is out. Runners must tag up if ball is caught. However, if not caught, runners may advance without having to tag up before advancing. Whether the ball is caught or not, the ball is live after the infielder touches it or it hits the ground, and runners can advance at their own risk.

(E) FIELDER (cont.)

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6. If a fielder INTENTIONALLY (umpires judgment call) drops a line drive to create a double or triple-play situation, the ball becomes dead, the batter is called out, and runners return to their original base(s).
7. A fielder may tag a runner out at any time or position except between home and the commitment line.
8. A fielder may not block or deny a runner access to a base (obstruction called) to which he is returning.
9. **An open grassy outfield area will be set up whereby no fielder may be in that area until the ball is hit. All fielders must be behind that line or on the dirt of the infield. That line is an arc with the two endpoints being 80 feet down the foul lines from 1st and 3rd.**
10. **The outfielders may not throw a batter-runner out at first on a hit ball that touches the grass. An infielder who runs into the grass once the ball is hit may catch it on the fly for an out or may pick up a grounder or bouncing ball and throw for an out at first. Only the outfielder is affected by the fielder-free-zone rule allowing batter free access to first base.**

(F) BATTER

1. Bunting, chopping down, or hitting the ball twice are outs, except if during the follow-through swing.
2. Strikeout - 2 strikes (swinging, ball hits mat or foul balls) Walk - 3 balls.
3. If batter swings at an illegal pitch (bad arc), results of his swing will override the umpire called 'Ball'.
4. Batter is out if he runs past white line 30 ft from home plate while using C.R. from home.
5. All players must be listed in the batting order to allow them to play defense and must go up to bat the first time through the order. If they are too sick or injured, then after that they may skip their remaining turns at bat and still play defense or as a C.R. if needed, with no penalty.

(G) RUNNER

1. If a play is made at first base, the runner must tag the extension. Exception: If the 1st baseman is in foul territory, both he and the runner may use either part of the base. If the runner has time to see the potential collision and can run wide of first base, he will not be called out for missing the bag. Runner and 1st baseman must both do whatever is necessary to avoid a collision and runner will not be penalized for missing first base if he thinks it will help avoid a potential collision.
2. When **advancing**, a runner may over-run second & third base. He may touch the base, or if he expects to be played on, **must run by either side of the base (GMSS version of the Utley Rule) to be in his legal base path.** If he makes any movement to advance and then decides to return to the previously acquired base, he is subject to a normal tag-out play (see E.4). He does not have to return to the bag to advance.
3. Diving head-first will only be allowed when **returning** to a base but not when initially attaining that base which must be done by running by either side of it or, if no play is imminent, to it. If runner falls down, crawling and/or lunging to the base shall be legal from either direction. Runner may also stay upright and reach with their foot for the base to which they are returning. Sliding feet first shall not be permitted. Fielder may not obstruct or block runner's path or base when he is returning to the base.
4. When advancing with no possibility of a play, the runner must tag all bases. Missing a base is an appeal play. The exception to having to touch the bases would be Rule G. 2 and the runner's home plate rule.
5. It is an automatic out if runner touches fielder's home plate while trying to score. He must touch the second (runner's) home plate to score.
6. Passing a runner is an automatic out. Only a base runner may assist another base runner.
7. A batter-runner or runner is out if hit off the base in fair territory by a playable batted fair ball that has not yet gone by a fielder (other than pitcher) or that has not been touched by a fielder. **Effect: 'Dead Ball' is called, batter is awarded 1st base (unless batter was the one who got hit by his own batted ball while not within the batter's box), and the other runners advance only if forced to by batter being awarded 1st.**

(G) RUNNER (cont.)

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8. If runner is in contact with a base in fair territory and gets hit by a batted ball, runner is not out and ball is live and in play.
9. If a batted ball hits a base it is considered a live, fair ball, even if it subsequently settles in foul territory.
10. The runner is responsible for avoiding a collision if fielder is realistically trying to field a batted ball or catch a thrown ball. **Fielder will bear shared responsibility in preventing collisions** if the thrown ball is off target and he makes a sudden move to catch it which puts him into the path (see rule 2 above) of the runner's legal base path (may be called obstruction). Running into a fielder otherwise is an automatic out.
11. Leaving a base before either the **batter starts his swing** or the pitched ball touches home plate or the ground is an out. (umpire calls "No pitch, dead ball" and batter resumes with prior count).
12. A runner may tag and leave base as soon as a fly ball is touched, whether caught or not.
13. Interfering during a putout is an out. If a runner prevents a double play by his improper running positioning (see rule 2 above) in first attaining a base, he is out and so is the runner behind the offender. If the interference is after the putout, the runner closest to home plate may also be called out.
14. If a runner touches or crosses the Commitment Line, he must go home. Re-crossing it is an automatic out. The ball continues to be live until the umpire calls time.
15. If using a C.R and the batter also runs, he will be called out if he crosses the white line 30 ft from home.

(H) COURTESY RUNNER (C.R.)

0. Due to alleged issues of abuse of Rule (A) 10 allowing Courtesy Runners, each participant is now required to answer the question on the Registration Form as to whether he or she will require a Courtesy Runner this year. Per GMSS policy and rules, Courtesy Runners are allowed for medical reasons only, such as heart issues or joint replacements or the likelihood of joint or bone damage from hard running.

1. A base runner or batter injured during the game or who is on the pre-game injury list may have another player run for him as a Courtesy Runner. This C.R. may be any player or runner in the batting order and of the Manager's choosing. He will be selected to run for the injured player. But note that each individual C.R. may be used only once per inning. Be aware of Courtesy Runner Rule 4 below. C.R. should be at least four batting spots from the batter if two outs and six spots if no outs.
2. He must report prior to the first pitch to the next batter.
3. If he is on base and is scheduled to bat, his team is charged with an out and he remains on the base and the next person bats. **He may not be replaced on base at that time in order to allow him to bat.**
4. As a general rule and under normal circumstances, all batters must run for themselves from home plate to first base. **As a rare exception and due to significant physical disability**, a courtesy runner is allowed from home per ASA rules. Any known player(s) who will always need a courtesy runner from home plate or once on base must be stated to the umpire prior to the start of the game. A player who is too sick or injured to swing a bat or run may use a C.R. or he may skip his turn at bat (but see B.4.)
5. The C.R.'s starting point shall be 3 feet or more (umpires discretion) behind an extension of the third base line and **he may not make any move towards 1st base until the batter has contacted the ball.** Moving out as the batter starts to swing or swings and misses is a rules violation and gives the courtesy runner an unfair advantage. They are not to lean forward or take a step until the **batter makes contact** (foul or fair) with the ball. Any infractions will result in the CR being called out immediately.

(I) 'TIER' DEFINITION, GUIDELINES, & RESTRICTIONS for 2021

1. There will be four leagues (called Tiers) this year, but only three Tiers will play each day. Tiers 1, 3, & 4 will play on Wednesday and Tiers 2, 3, & 4 will play on Thursday.

(I) 'TIER' DEFINITION, GUIDELINES, & RESTRICTIONS for 2021 (cont.)

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2. Teams will initially be ranked by means of a Tier numbering system based on last year's record and other pertinent data. Your initially assigned Tier **may** change in March if warranted or after any Round (of usually three games) if it is determined that your team is over- or under-matched in it's current Tier.
3. Tiers (Leagues) will be made up of teams per the following basic guidelines:
 - TIER 1** - is for skilled and capable players who want to play a very high grade of softball. They are generally very good batters, excellent fielders and good runners and have decades of experience.
 - TIER 2** - are generally former Tier 1 teams or other good teams who can't quite play at the Tier 1 level anymore.
 - TIER 3** - is for average players who are still good ball players and like a high grade of softball, but they may be older & may have some physical loss of capability, but do have a lot of softball experience in their background.
 - TIER 4** - is a fun league. Players in this league usually are more diminished in skills due to age related physical problems, younger or any players who may not have had much experience, the teams lost most of their games last year during intra-tier play, and exercise and fun in the sun are the main objectives of this Tier.
4. If a team is moved into another Tier (see 2 above), an uneven number of Tier teams **may** result. In this instance cross-tier games will be scheduled rather than incorporate byes. These games will be kept to a minimum number.
5. For 2022, team composition involving Tier 1 players will be subject to certain restrictions by Rule 6 below. The intent of this rule is to keep the teams in the lower Tiers from loading up on Tier 1 players and becoming super dominant. Many teams, based on their 2021 record, will have their 2021 Tier 1 players 'Grandfathered' in as regular members of their 2022 team and therefore not be required to drop any rostered Tier 1 players in order to meet the Tier 1 player limitation imposed by Rule 6 below. Those Tier 1 players will be taken into account, however, if and when the Manager is looking for Substitutes for any given game.
6. **Tier 2 teams may have up to six Tier 1 players as rostered or substitutes. Tier 3 teams may have up to three Tier 1 players as rostered or substitutes. Tier 4 teams may have no Tier 1 players except those that were 'Grandfathered' in from last year's losing team roster. Or the Tier 4 Manager may 'petition' the other Tier 4 Managers to be allowed to put a borderline 'Tier 1?' player on his roster or use as a substitute.**
7. After the first Round, if a team is moved to a lower Tier they may do so intact. They will not be required to drop any rostered players to meet the Tier 1 player limit (as they have a losing record).

(J) EQUIPMENT & PLAYING FIELD

1. Official Ball - The soft-core deBeer 12" Clincher #F12
2. Bats - Legal or Altered - Bats must be adult softball bats which are or once were legal per ASA standards. This includes old bats with no writing left but excludes all loaded bats and bats improperly manufactured where separation dangers to the fielders existed. No youth bats or baseball bats allowed.
3. Shoes - Metal cleats are not allowed.
4. Bases - 60 feet and pitching distance is 45-50 feet at the Verona parks.
5. Commitment Line - Between home and third base and home and first base, **30' from home plate.**
6. Runner's Home Plate - 8' to the left (umpires view) of 3rd base line (in foul territory) and even with the front corner of home plate.
7. Courtesy Runner's Start Line - 3 feet or more (umpires discretion) behind an extension of 3rd base line. If a batter, using a C.R. from home, runs past **a line 30' from home on 1st base line**, he is automatically out.
8. In drawing below, Runner's home plate is now located even with the front of Batter's home plate and 8' from the 3rd base line. Courtesy runner from Home is located 3' (**or more**) behind an imaginary extension of the 3rd base line and a reasonable but safe distance from the batter and umpire.
9. Runner is automatically out if he touches Fielder's home plate or mat while trying to score.
10. A pre-game manager/umpire meeting will be used to determine known C.R. needs and C.R.'s needed from home plate.

(J) EQUIPMENT & PLAYING FIELD (cont)

11. Team listed 1st is home team & sits on 3rd base side.

12. See items 6, 7, & 8 above for measurements not appearing on this drawing.

(K) Mid-season changes last year to 2021 rules and these are carried forward into 2022 Rules:

1. If a game starts early, then that extra time is added to the 70 minute time limit. This rule will affect the timing on (A) 3. and (A) 4. in a manner that the game will be longer than 70 minutes.

(L) DIAGRAMS & VISUAL AIDS

