

I. LANCO SENIOR SOFTBALL

II. 2024 RULES



I. League Alignment

A. There will be 3 divisions:

1. Red Division is defined as the upper division with 4 teams.
2. White is defined as the middle division with 4 teams.
3. Blue is defined as the lower division with 4 teams.

B. Division alignment

1. Alignment of the teams within the 3 divisions will remain the same year over year except as follows:
 - a. The Red Division team (upper) with the fewest points in the prior year will move to the White Division, at the completion of all league games.
 - b. The White Division team (middle) with the most points in the prior year will move to the Red Division, at the completion of all league games.
 - c. The White Division team (middle) with the fewest points in the prior year will move to the Blue Division, at the completion of all league games.
 - d. The Blue Division team (lower) with the most points in the prior year will move to the White Division, at the completion of all league games.

The executive board can determine the alignment of the 3 divisions.

2. New teams will be placed in the lower division, unless determined otherwise by the board.

II. Team Roster

A. There can be no more than twenty-five (25) players on an active roster. Managers will keep the roster updated during the season. All rosters must have complete addresses for all players.

1. All players must be 59-years old or reach age 59 during the calendar year.
2. Exception as follows:
 - a. Each White and Blue division team may have 1 player who is 58-years old during the calendar year.
3. All completed rosters must be submitted to the league president prior to the first game.
4. In season new roster players must be reported to the league president before they are permitted to play.

B. Players must reside within 100 miles of the Lancaster City square. The executive committee shall have the sole discretion to wave the above rule to prevent a team from folding prior to the season.~~3. The executive committee shall have the sole discretion to wave the above rule to prevent a team from folding prior to the season.~~

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- C. Players must play in six (6) of their team's games prior to the playoff tournament to be eligible for the playoffs. Managers and assistant Managers are excluded from this rule. An injured player who attends a game, is acknowledged as having participated in that game.

III. Field

- A. There will be a double-wide 1st base.
- B. A minimum 3-foot long line must be placed on both sides of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.
- C. A secondary chalk line extends from 3rd base 60' in length and positioned approximately 3 feet from the back corner of the right-hand batter's box. An additional 3' chalk line is positioned perpendicular to the secondary plate line at the end of the line. A secondary home plate is not used
- D. Check field diagram for field details.

IV. Game Rules: (any rule not covered here will follow the current USA Softball rules)

A. Lineup

1. Games will be played with 10 players. Teams whose average age is 70 may use 11 players. Age is determined as of May 1.
 - a. Teams must have 9 players to start. If 10 players are present at game time the game must start. Players that arrive after the start of the game may be added to the end of the lineup, without penalty, as long as the team has not batted through the original lineup.
 - b. A Blue Division team may use an extra fielder when playing a Red Division team. The extra fielder is not required to bat.
 - c. If a player becomes injured during the game, and there is no available substitute, the existing batting position is skipped and no automatic out occurs at that spot. This provision does not apply to players that are ejected for unsportsmanlike activity.
2. Per USA Softball rules. - The teams may bat extra players if desired. Extra players are defined as batting only. When extra players are used any 10 players may play defense except as described in paragraph A 1.
3. A designated player may be used for any number of fielders. On the lineup the DP is listed in the batting lineup and the fielder he is batting for is listed to **the right of the batter's name**. If the connected fielder bats in place of the DP or the DP takes the field for the connected player that is considered a substitution and the DP for that position is eliminated for the game.

See USA RULEBOOK, Rule 4, Section 3.

4. All players and substitutes may re-enter the game only once. They must stay in the same batting slot.
5. Managers must report all changes to the other team scorekeeper.

B. Cancellations

1. Games cancelled due to weather or mutual agreement must be made up as soon as possible to avoid scheduling issues at the end of the regular season.

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2. Game cancellations must be reported to the umpire scheduler no later than 5:00. Late cancellations will result in fees payable to the umpire.
3. The umpire's fee for the rescheduled game will be shared by both teams.

C. Game length

1. A game will consist of 7 innings unless shortened by inclement weather/darkness as per USA rules (5 innings or when the home team is ahead after four and a half innings).
2. The first 6 innings are governed by a maximum of 3 outs or 5 runs scored.
3. Exception: A team that is behind by 6 runs or more may score as many runs as necessary to tie the score. This only pertains to games played outside of a team's division. It does not pertain to the playoffs.
4. There will be a 15-run rule after 5 innings. The game is over if a team is ahead by 15 or more runs by the end of the 5th inning. Note: If the home team is ahead by 15 or more runs, they will not bat in the bottom of the 5th. Note: After the 5th inning the game is over if either team is ahead by 15 runs.
5. The 7th inning and any subsequent innings have no run limits.

D. Pitching: (USA Softball rules ... 10-Man pitching rule)

1. Preliminaries

- a. When taking the pitching position in contact with the pitcher's plate, the pitcher must have their hands separated and must have the ball in either the glove or the pitching hand.
- b. The pitcher shall take a position with both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate within the 24" length of the pitcher's plate. The shoulders shall in line with first and third base.

2. Legal delivery

- a. The pitcher shall not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball.
- b. The pitcher shall not take a stop or reversal of the forward motion.
- c. The pitcher may take the ball behind the back on the back swing.
- d. The pitcher shall not use a windmill or slingshot -type pitch or make a complete revolution in the delivery.
- e. The ball must not be outside the pitcher's wrist on the back swing, at the top of the back swing, on the downward motion, or during the complete delivery.
- f. The delivery shall be an underhand motion with the hand below the hip.
- g. On the forward swing of the pitching arm the elbow must be locked at the point of release, and the shoulders and driving hip must be squared to the plate when the ball is released.
- h. The release of the ball must have a complete smooth follow-through with no abrupt stop of the arm near the hip.
- i. In the act of delivering the ball, the pitcher must take one step simultaneous with the release of the ball. The step must be forward and within the 24" length of the pitcher's plate.
- j. The pivot foot must drag and not lose contact with the ground. The stepping foot must be pointed toward home plate and must not touch the ground in front of, or cross over a straight line between the pivot foot and home plate. It is not a step if the pitcher slides the pivot foot across the pitcher's plate provided contact is maintained. Raising the foot of the pitcher's plate and returning it to the plate creates a rocking motion and is illegal.

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3. Illegal Pitch - Any infraction of the rules is an illegal pitch, which the umpire calls out and indicates with the left arm extended. If the batter hits the ball and all runners advance one base safely the play stands and the illegal pitch is nullified. Otherwise the opposing coach has the option of taking the results of the play or and illegal pitch is enforced, and a ball is called, and all runners advance one base.

a. Exception a high arc pitch that exceeds a height of 10' shall be called a ball and runners will not be advanced one base unless the pitch is ball four (4).

4. It is recommended, but not required, the pitcher wear protective equipment

5. An optional pitching screen may be used by either pitcher. The pitching screen is positioned 3'-6' in front of the pitching rubber in line with the edge of the pitching rubber on the pitcher's non-throwing side. The Pitcher must stand entirely behind the screen when the ball is hit. After the ball is hit the pitcher may make a defensive play. If the umpire deems the pitcher is outside the screen when the ball is hit and fields the ball, a dead-ball is called, and the runner is awarded 1st base. Runners will move up a base, only if forced. The screen may not be moved during a "live play".

E. Ball

1. The Ball shall be a .52 COR / 275 compression ball that the league will purchase and sell to the teams.

2. The home team shall supply one new and one used ball per game.

F. Catcher:

1. A catcher must touch home plate for the runner to be out. He cannot tag out a runner.

2. A pitched ball that passes the catcher is considered a dead ball.

32. A catcher can make a play, when the ball is live, and may throw directly to any base to retire a baserunner.

G. Batter:

1. Per USA Softball rules - The strike zone is between the batter's armpits and the top of the knees.

2. No bunting.

3. Per USA Softball rules. - Prior to the pitch the batters must have both feet completely inside the lines of the batter's box

4. If an optional pitching screen is used a batted ball that hits the screen is considered a non-pitch. Runners may not advance and neither a strike nor ball is called. A thrown ball that hits the screen is a live ball and runners may advance with liability to be put out.

5. If the batter touches a pitched ball on the ground it is considered a dead ball.

H. Bats: (*Per USA Softball rules*)

1. The official bat made up of the knob, handle, grip, taper, barrel, and end cap shall be free of burs, dents, cracks, sharp edges, rattles, and show no signs of excessive wear. The official bat may be marked OFFICIAL SOFTBALL by the manufacturer and shall be no more than 34 inches long nor exceed 38 ounces in weight. The official bat shall not be more than 2.250 inches in diameter at its largest part, including any tolerance for expansion. The official bat must bear the appropriate certification mark as shown below and must not be listed on the USA Softball Non-Approved Bat List with Certification Marks.

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2. Altered Bat – USA Softball Official Bat's characteristics shall remain fixed at the time of manufacture and may not be altered in anyway other than covered in USA Softball Rules, Rule 3 Section 1. Approved bats shall be considered altered if they are rolled, shaved, repainted, weighted, or modified to change their characteristics from that produced by the manufacturer.

3. League rule - The penalty for the use of an illegal bat is a forfeit for that game. Use is defined as coming to the plate.

I. Runner

1. Runners may leave the base when the ball reaches home plate or is hit.
2. Runners are liable to be picked off by the catcher or pitcher after a pitch.
 - a. The runner must return to the base. He is allowed to advance if an error occurs.
3. A runner must touch a base before proceeding to the next base. If a runner over runs a base and an error occurs, he may advance without retouching the base crossed.
4. The runner may over run any base. When over running a base, the runner is deemed to have touched the base when a foot contacts the ground at or beyond the edge of the base.
5. No stealing.
6. Sliding is permitted. Sliding into a base must be done feet-first either to the base or the 3-foot line. Head-first sliding/diving is allowed going back to a base. A head-first slide will result in a warning to the violating team for the first infraction. Further infractions will result in the runner being called out. The result of any contact with a fielder is the decision of the umpire.
7. No run downs. If a runner decides to not proceed to the next base, he must return to the previous base. He cannot advance a second time unless an error occurs.
8. To score a run the runner's foot must touch the ground on or beyond the end line of the secondary line at home. The runner is out if he touches the normal home plate.

J. Runner Interference/obstruction

1. No contact between runner and the defensive player should occur. If a defensive play is likely the runner not sliding is required to run by the bag on the side away from the defensive player to avoid contact as well as visual or physical interference. If contact or Interference by the runner occurs the runner is out. Contact or interference with a likely double play will cause both runners to be out. If the contact is deemed deliberate by the umpire the player is ejected.
 - a. If a defensive player moves to the opposite side of the base and contact occurs, the runner may not be out according to the umpire's discretion if the runner did what was required to avoid contact. Contact avoidance also applies to returning to a bag.

K. Courtesy Runners

1. Courtesy runners may be used for any batter-runner. The courtesy runner must enter the game for the batter-runner before the next pitch is thrown
 - a. Exception: a courtesy runner may be used at any base if an injury occurs while running the bases.

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2. A courtesy runner may only run two times per game. A runner caught on base at his turn at bat is an automatic out. A player can run a third time in an extra-inning game.
3. Batter must reach the base before being replaced. Batter does not need to wait at the base for the courtesy runner.
4. In case of a walk the batter, if being replaced by a courtesy runner, may go directly to the bench and does not need to touch first base.

L. Fielder:

1. The fielder cannot interfere with the runner at any base. This includes fake tags and occupying the base when no play is possible.

M. Outs

1. The infield fly-rule is in effect.
2. Outs at all bases are considered a force out and the fielder must touch the base in possession of the ball prior to the runner touching or overrunning to either side of the base.
3. Runners may be tagged out between bases.

V. Miscellaneous:

- A. Game time is **6:15 pm**, unless changed by agreement of the managers. A 15-minute grace period is allowed.
- B. No player may use foul language or be abusive to another player or umpire. Such a player can be ejected, at the umpire's discretion, and must leave the field of play or the game is forfeited.
- C. All shirts must have a number, but no duplications. This rule is to aid the scorekeepers.
- D. USA Umpires will be randomly assigned to games and the home team will pay the umpire before the game begins.
- E. Forfeits will be reported as a 7-0 win.
- F. Teams are awarded points as follows: 5 points for a win over a Red Division team, 3 points for a win over a White Division team, and 1 point for a win over a Blue Division team. The accumulated point totals will be utilized in the determination of playoff seeding and the divisional alignment for the next year.

VI. Playoffs

- A. There will be two separate playoff brackets comprised of the four teams of the Red Division and the top two teams of the White Division (based on point total) in one bracket and the four teams of the Blue Division and the bottom two teams of the White Division (based on point total) in the other bracket.
 - B. Playoffs will be double elimination including all teams that desire to participate.
 - C. Seeding will be determined by points. Incomplete regular season games, not made-up, will count as a loss.
1. In the case of ties, seeding determination will be by head-to-head record, and if necessary, head-to-head run differential.

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D. The home team throughout the playoffs will be the team with the better seed except the finals which will be a home and away series.

E. The playoff committee shall be responsible for determining the site of playoff games giving preference to the better seeded team for only the first game played by a team.1. Unless covered by board decision the participating teams shall be responsible for equally sharing any field rental/preparation costs.

1. The participating teams shall equally pay for the umpire.

F. There will be no Double-Header or Friday-Saturday-Sunday playoff games.

G. Each team will provide a new 2023 league issued softball. y playoff games.

2. ~~The participating teams shall equally pay for the umpire(s).~~ H. Catch-up run rule will not be in effect. See Sect IV, Section C Subsection 3.

VII. All-Star game

A. There will be two fielders selected by each team to play in the game.

B. The opposing teams will be selected by alternating the records at the time (Example 1,3,5 versus 2,4,6 etc.).

C. The game managers will be from the top two teams with the next two as assistants.

D. The managers will select a minimum two (2) pitchers and catchers from the teams in their grouping.

E. Each player gets a minimum of three innings in the field barring injury. Extra inning players are the Manager's choice.

F. All players on each team will bat in a one line-up order (Pitchers optional).

VIII. Player movement between teams

A. Maintaining league competitiveness is important to league longevity. Managers and players should refrain from recruiting players from other teams.

B. A new team can take no more than one player from an existing team without approval by the executive committee if issues are raised by any team. The new manager must inform the current manager.

C. No more than 2 players can go to any established team as part of the distribution of players from a disbanded team.

D. During the off-season a Red or White division team may only add one player from the rest of the league. See VIII. A. for guiding principle.

E. During the off-season, a Blue division team may only add two players from the rest of the league. See VIII. A. for guiding principle.

F. No player may move from one team to another team during the season.

G. No compensation of any kind should be provided to any player.

1. The penalty is forfeiture of every game in which such individual played.

H. The Board of Directors shall have the sole discretion to assist in directing Team/Player mediations where necessary, in the best interest of the good of the league.

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