

Texas Hill Country Senior Softball League

June 6, 2022

The Texas Hill Country Senior Softball League will use the 2019-2020 Official Senior Softball-USA Rulebook, including the following 2020, 2021 and 2022 SSUSA Rule Changes:

- All batters will start with a one ball and one strike count. A batter with two strikes is allowed one foul ball, but is out after another foul.
- Current base-path definition redefined as a “base line” definition: “A line directly between a base and the runner’s position at the time a defensive player is attempting to tag that runner.”
- Unreported substitution no longer results in an ejection. Illegal substitution remains intact.
- A mercy rule of 15 runs after five innings or 20 runs after four innings is in effect.
- Defenders no longer can block a base legally while waiting on a throw to arrive.
- The umpire shall prevent the entry of a courtesy runner after the first pitch to a batter.

with the following exceptions:

Playing Rules

1. A 12-inch ball with a COR of .52 and a Compression Rating of no more than 275 pounds shall be furnished by the league.
2. Players are encouraged to wear the numbered shirt furnished by the league, but there is no penalty for not doing so.
3. Ten (10) players constitute a team. However, a team may start or continue a game with no fewer than nine (9) players. No out will be declared when the tenth position comes to bat. If a team is batting more than 10 players, and a player leaves the batting order, no out will be declared when that position comes to bat.
4. Any player on the team’s roster may be substituted into the game without penalty, whether listed as a sub or not. Any late arriving players must be added at the end of the batting order (unless they are replacing a fill in player).
5. All players on a team’s roster in attendance and able to play must be in the batting order and must play at least two (2) defensive innings.
6. A team must have a minimum of six roster players for an official game. A team must draw players from registered league players until they reach the number of players constituting a team. Fill In Players will be selected by a drawing and must bat in the order selected at the end of the batting order. If both teams are short, the team with the fewest players draws first, or if both teams have an equal number of players, the home team draws first. The teams alternate drawing until both teams have a full team. A team may draw only one Fill In Player that is rated as an Impact Player by the Player Evaluation Committee. Unassigned players will have priority as Fill In Players. If more than one Unassigned Player is available, a

drawing will determine order of selection. Any Unassigned Players not drawn will have priority in subsequent games during that session. If more players are needed by a team than are available to fill in, and the opposing team has more players than needed for a full team, players from the opposing team may volunteer to play with the shorthanded team. If a team picked up Fill In Player(s), any roster player arriving late must replace the last Fill In Player selected that is still in the game.

7. Fill In Players will be limited to advancing to first base during their at bat. There is no limit on advancement of baserunners (which includes Fill In Players already on base). The ball remains live with all runners in jeopardy to be put out until the umpire calls time. This rule does not apply to new players which play as preferred fill-ins until placed on a team.
8. A forfeit will be declared if a team does not have a legal team ready to play at the scheduled game time or is unable to maintain a legal team during the game.
9. If a player leaves for any other reason than ejection, and it causes the team to drop below 10 players in the batting order, a Fill In Player must be selected for replacement by drawing.
10. Official game time begins when the umpire declares "play ball" prior to the first pitch.
11. The regulation time limit shall be 55 (or 65 if there are fewer than three games per session) minutes, plus the open inning.
12. Home team will be designated by the schedule.
13. Games tied after seven (7) innings or time limit will continue, with the International Tie-Breaker Rule and each batter is allowed only one pitch, until one team is ahead after the completion of any subsequent inning
14. Fair territory includes only the image of home plate on the strike mat.
15. There is a limit of two "over the fence" home runs for each team. Each home run over the limit is a walk and the base runners advance only if forced by the batter being awarded the walk.
16. Protests will be considered by a committee appointed by the league President.
17. The Strike Zone Mat shall be 21 inches by 35 inches.
18. Pitchers must wear a protective facemask and helmet while pitching in accordance with the manufacturer's intended use of the product.
19. Texas Hill Country Senior Softball League Board of Directors will have the same authority vested in the SSUSA board to consider penalties for unsportsmanlike conduct.
20. Postponements prior to the start of an evening's play shall be the responsibility of the league President. Once play has begun, the umpire-in-chief shall have the responsibility to suspend the game in progress and postpone any remaining game on that night's schedule. The THCSSL BOD will determine the make-up schedule for postponed or suspended games. Any suspended game that is not considered regulation shall be replayed from the beginning.
21. While anyone is batting, four fielders (three if playing with nine defensive players) must remain behind the encroachment line until the pitched ball is hit, and may not make a direct throw to first base in an attempt to put out the batter-

baserunner. The encroachment line is drawn as an arc 150 feet from the tip of home plate from the left field line to the right field line. Effect: The team at bat has the option of taking the results of the play, or the batter is awarded first base and any base runners are awarded one base from their position at the start of the play.

22. The distance between bases will be 65 feet.
23. There is no "Foul Tip". Any pitched ball that contacts the bat and is caught by the catcher results in the batter being out.
24. If the visiting team goes ahead by 15 or more runs during the "open inning", the Flip-Flop rule will be invoked.

Players and Teams

1. Player Eligibility – All men (50+) and women (45+) are eligible to play provided they attain the minimum age anytime during the calendar year of the current season. When required, proof of age must be furnished (Driver's License, Passport, or other recognized picture ID). Former players which have been suspended in any previous season, for any reason, must request reinstatement from the THCSSL Board of Directors. All players must complete applicable registration forms prior to participating in any THCSSL activity.
2. Annual Team Formation (Draft) – Teams will be formed each season via a drafting procedure in the attempt to promote competitive equality. The draft will be held on a date to be determined each year using the previous season ratings for returning players and after the scheduled skill assessment session for new players. The drafting protocol will be determined each season by the number of teams to be formed. Once selected, each player must play the current season for the drafting team, unless officially released by the team manager and approved by the THCSSL BOD. The released player may not join another team during the current season unless approved by the BOD.
3. Team Rosters/Participation – Maximum active team rosters will be 12 players. Should all active team rosters reach the maximum roster size, the THCSSL reserves the right to form an additional team and adjust the playing schedule accordingly for the remainder of the season.
4. In-Season Player Additions –New or returning players registering after the team formation draft will be assigned to teams as determined by the Player Evaluation Committee of non-manager players appointed by the BOD, based on team roster needs and competitive balance. Undrafted players cannot be assigned to a team that has 12 players. Each new player must complete a skill assessment protocol prior to permanent team assignment. The skill assessment protocol will be determined by the Player Evaluation Committee and may include observation of the new player in practice, in games, and a skill assessment session as described in ¶ 6 below.
5. Injured/Inactive Players - In order to be placed on "Inactive/Injured" status, both player and manager must sign the appropriate paperwork and submit same to the BOD for approval. Only after the necessary paperwork is completed shall the injured/inactive player's team be eligible to replace subject player. If subject player wishes to be reinstated during the current season, he/she may request reinstatement. Once

reinstated, subject player will be reassigned by the Player Evaluation Committee based on teams' roster needs and competitive balance. Team managers who return from the injured/inactive status may return to their original team.

6. Player Skill Assessment – Players joining the league for the first time must complete a skill assessment prior to the annual draft, or prior to team assignment if joining in-season at the discretion of the Player Evaluation Committee. The skill assessment will consist of batting (5 swings), fielding & throwing (5 chances at position of player's choice), and base running. Each skill will be rated on scale of 1 to 5 by the team managers and BOD present at the session.
7. End-Of-Season Player Ratings – At the end of each season, team managers will rate all players on all teams in his/her division. These ratings will be submitted to the BOD President who will compile average ratings for use in the next season's draft.
8. Player Fees – Player fees for each playing season shall be based on anticipated costs (caps & jerseys, playing & practice fields rental, umpire & scorekeeper fees, administrative & operating, etc.). Individual player fees will be due & payable before the Annual Team Formation Draft. Team managers will not issue player uniforms until the fee is paid. If a player opts to withdraw before the first game of the season, a full refund will be given. Thereafter, a player refund will be given only in the event of a season-ending injury, according to the following schedule, if & when the jersey & cap are returned in useable condition: 100% - before game two, 50% - before game 5, 0 – after game 5.