

**CITY OF STERLING HEIGHTS
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**



of Metro Detroit

**2025
SOFTBALL
RULES & REGULATIONS**

Dear Manager,

We have revised this document to give you important information in regards to participating in our league. The information, in conjunction with the USA Softball rulebook, should serve as a guide for your season. As always, I am open for communication on any topic. Please do not hesitate to call or email as needed. I will also be around at many of the games and would enjoy talking to you then. Please keep this rulebook with you and use it as a reference as the season progresses. I hope that you enjoy the season with your friends and some good competition. Good Luck!

Troy Nowotny

STERLING HEIGHTS PARKS & RECREATION STAFF

Troy Nowotny

Recreation Supervisor

586-446-2701

tnowotny@sterlingheights.gov

Kirby Rochester

Recreation Supervisor

586-446-2706

krochester@sterlingheights.gov

JOHN DIMAMBRO, On Site Coordinator

Chet Stefankiewicz, On Site Coordinator

Community center, 40250 Dodge Park Road.

Sterling Heights, MI 48312

Phone: 586-446-2701 (Cell) 989-286-6067

Business Hours: Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

General Rules

ADDRESS CHANGES

Change of address or phone number must be immediately filed with the Parks and Recreation Department office or its duly appointed representative. Failure to comply will result in this player becoming illegal.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Alcoholic beverages are allowed **at L. W. BAUMGARTNER PARK ONLY**, never at **Delia Park** or any school diamond.

Drinking is not allowed before, during or between the games in which you are participating. This includes split double-headers!!!

Any player guilty of this infraction will be subject to one of the following actions, depending on the circumstances:

1. Not permitted to play the upcoming game (if found prior to game)
2. Ejection from current game and Three Week Suspension
3. Expulsion from the league

APPEAL PLAY

Appeals must be made (1) before the next pitch legal or illegal or (2) before all infielders have left their normal positions (crossed the foul lines). In a live ball appeal, runners may advance with the risk of being tagged out. In a dead ball appeal runners may NOT advance.

USA Softball

All teams in the league will be registered with USA Softball automatically. Your registration fee is included in your entry fee.

AWARDS

Regular season and playoff champions will receive a team and individual awards.

BATTING

We will be using a 3-2 count. In the event the second strike is a foul ball, the batter will be awarded one additional strike. Any subsequent foul ball will constitute an out.

A batter must enter the batter's box within 20 seconds of when the umpire signals the resumption of play. For a batter to be called out because of illegal position in the batter's box, he must (1) Have his complete foot out of the batter's box when he makes contact with the ball, whether fair or foul, or (2) Step on the plate when making contact with the ball. The batter shall not have his entire foot touching the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box or touching home plate when the ball is hit." Feet may touch batter's box lines except prior to release of the ball by the pitcher the batter's foot may not touch the batter's box lines nearest home plate.

CONDUCT

Parks and Recreation have adopted a **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY** that focuses on improper behavior and speech of players, coaches and spectators. Accordingly, players, coaches, and the managers on and off the playing area, before, during or after a game, shall conduct themselves in an orderly and acceptable manner. Any player, manager, or coach striking, threatening, or verbally abusing an official, spectator, fellow teammate, member of the opposing team, or Department staff member, found guilty of inciting a disturbance or riot shall be suspended indefinitely from league play pending review by the Recreation Supervisor. Any spectator, player, coach or manager using profane language will be ejected. The penalty for players, coaches and managers will be a minimum one-game suspension. Any player removed by "ejection" will be suspended from their next scheduled game (or more depending upon the nature of the infraction). Penalties shall apply whether the offense occurs before, during or after a game. Further infractions may result in lengthier penalties.

CUT-OFF DATE FOR SIGNING NEW PLAYERS

Deadline for adding players shall be 4th week in the Spring, 2nd week in the Fall for all leagues.

COURTESY RUNNER

There shall be two runners allowed per inning. The runner must be the last out or the least likely to bat that inning (in the event that there is not a "last out"). THERE ARE NO COURTESY RUNNERS FOR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES.

DRESS CODE

No uniform dress code is in effect. However, players are expected to dress suitably. Shirts and shoes must be worn. Hats or visors may be worn forward or backward. Bandanas are permitted; however, players may be required to take the bandana off if it becomes a safety concern during the game.

EQUIPMENT

Metal spikes (including metal tipped cleats) are **NOT** legal in any of Sterling Heights' adult softball leagues. Any person found wearing metal spikes will be ejected from the current game and an out will be taken in the spot if no person is available to substitute. See also the section on ejections for further action.

- If the words "Official Softball" are worn off the bat it is considered an illegal bat.
- To be a legal bat, there must be a knob that extends at least 1/4" at a 90 degree angle from the barrel.
- The Parnell 528, Oval handled Bauxite bat is a legal bat.
- The on-deck batter may not warm up with anything other than one or more ASA approved bats. All donuts, sleeves or devices that fit on a bat are illegal. No pipes or other implements may be swung. The Worth ASA approved WARM-UP bat is legal.
- The pitcher and catcher both MAY wear helmets.
- The pitcher, as well as the catcher, MAY wear a face mask.
- A nose brace is illegal and may not be worn.
- Metal finger splints are illegal and a player wearing one may not play.
- Any one wearing a brace with exposed metal parts must cover the metal surface with tape, elastic bandage, etc.
- Jewelry may be worn as long as it is not loose hanging or a safety hazard to the player or players around them.
- A player with a rigid cast may not play.

****Any person found using an altered bat will be out and immediately ejected from the game and will be expelled for the remainder of the season (minimum).****

EXTRA HITTER RULE

Please learn this rule as improper use will result in ejection of illegal player and manager. EACH TEAM MAY USE A MAXIMUM OF FOUR EXTRA HITTERS. Use of an extra hitter/hitters remains optional. Extra Hitters may be added to the lineup at any time during the game without penalty if they are just arriving. Extra hitters cannot be present at the start of the game and decide to join while the game is in progress. This rule is for players that are running late to the field. Abuse of this rule as deemed so by the Recreation Department will be grounds for disciplinary action including withdrawing the rule. The extra hitter may become a defensive player. He may remain in the game but switch positions with a defensive player. Example: In starting lineup Jones is extra hitter. Smith is right fielder, Jones goes to right field and Smith becomes extra hitter.

If you begin the game using extra hitters (eleven or more players), and an injury does occur, you may finish the game penalty free with one less player. If a player is injured and

cannot physically continue playing, his spot in the line-up will be skipped and will not constitute an out. The extra hitter may appear anywhere in the line-up, so if he does replace a defensive player and you finish with ten, your line-up would be the same with the injured player deleted and no extra hitter. In the event that two or more people must leave the game due to injury, ejection, or any other circumstance, the player's team will have to forfeit the game and a win will be awarded to the opposing team.

FORFEITS

A team must have a **minimum of 8 players to start and finish a game.**

As a courtesy to the Recreation Department and the opposing team, if you know you are unable to field a team, please call and notify the office as soon as possible. This will allow us to cancel the umpire and notify the other team not to appear.

A forfeiting team has three options in regards to forfeits and umpire fees:

1. Contact the Parks and Recreation Department 48 hours or more in advance- No penalties for umpire or forfeit fees will be levied.
2. Contact the Parks and Recreation Department less than 48 hours in advance or forfeit at the field- Forfeiting team is responsible for paying umpire fees for both teams at the scheduled game time.
3. No call/no show- \$75 forfeit fee is kept by the Parks and Recreation Department and an additional \$75 must be put on file before participating in the next scheduled game.

Any team forfeiting two games in succession or three games during the season, may be suspended from the league. In such cases, forfeits (wins) shall be awarded to the opposing teams in all previously played games and games remaining on the schedule. The schedule may then be revised.

If a rain-out occurs when you have called 48 hours or more in advance, you may have the opportunity to make that game up. You will not be penalized for your courtesy.

FOUL BALL RULE

In the event the second strike is a foul ball, the batter will be awarded one additional strike. A subsequent foul ball will result in an out, but the play will be live and runners may advance at their own risk.

GRACE PERIOD

Each game will have a ten-minute grace period, effective from the regularly scheduled game time. Time used will be subtracted from the total minutes allowed for game play. The umpire's ruling will be final.

Any team not ready to start after the grace period shall be subject to loss of the game by forfeiture. The grace period starts at the scheduled game time.

GROUND RULES

Pitching rubber will be at 50'. There will also be a pitching rubber set at 54' that may be used instead of the standard rubber. Pitching from any other distances is not permitted.

A batted ball that goes over the fence in fair territory without first touching the ground will result in a home run. A batted ball that goes under, through or gets lodged in the fence will result in a ground rule triple.

Bases will be set at 70'.

HOME TEAM

For position rounds, all tie breakers, and all play-off games, the higher seeded team will be home team. On the schedule the team listed second will be the home team.

ILLEGAL PLAYER

An illegal player is:

- Anyone who falsifies the roster in any way.
- Anyone who has been officially released/suspended from the league.
- Anyone who cannot produce identification or produces false identification.
- Anyone not on the team roster or with incomplete information by the cut-off date.

INFIELD PRACTICE

Infield practice will be allowed ONLY if ample time is available between games - for both teams. This policy will be in effect as long as the previous game does not run late. There must be at least 20 minutes before the next scheduled game time or no infield practice will be allowed. Infield practice may be taken during the first inning only. After that, no balls should be brought out of the dugout.

INTERFERENCE BY CRASHING INTO DEFENSIVE PLAYERS AND OBSTRUCTION

An offensive team may be charged with interference; while in the case of an infraction by the defensive team, it shall be obstruction.

It is the offensive player's responsibility to avoid contact with any defensive player when running the bases. When a base runner runs into a defensive player with or without the intent of dislodging the ball or preventing the defensive player from completing the play,

he shall be called out. If it is a deliberate or flagrant act, the runner will be ejected from the game. This is a judgment call on the part of the official. If you slide, always go for the bag, never at the defensive player as that would also be interference and be subject to the above penalties. If you give yourself up, get out of the way or again you may be charged with interference.

Obstruction by the catcher may be called at any time from when the pitcher begins his delivery.

LEAGUE ADMINISTRATION

The Sterling Heights Parks and Recreation Department and its duly appointed representatives shall be responsible for the administration of this program.

LEAGUE RULES

USA Softball rules will be in effect for all games played. However, Sterling Heights league rules will take precedence over USA Softball when there is a deviation.

MANAGERS - CHANGE OF

Any change in manager ship of a team must be filed with the Parks and Recreation office the next business day, listing the new manager's name, address and telephone number.

MANAGERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

A manager is responsible for the conduct of his team and coaches before, during, and after a game.

Any manager not making a genuine and sincere effort to restrain an unruly player, who is subsequently ejected from the game, may also suffer ejection and a minimum one game suspension.

Managers are not required to keep a roster copy with them at all times. Official rosters will be kept in the Softball Office at L.W. Baumgartner Park. This roster will be accessible in the event of a roster challenge. A manager may be challenged at any time during a game, but not after a game. See rules on ineligible players.

Each individual team is required to keep a record of the team line-up and scores. Please be sure to check with the opposing team after each half inning to verify the score.

Managers shall be responsible for the eligibility of their players and for the validity of their contracts/rosters. An illegal contract/roster makes an illegal player. (See penalty for illegal player.)

In case of inquiry concerning any member or members of his team, the manager shall be liable for producing any evidence of records requested by Parks and Recreation.

REMINDER - Managers make sure your players are aware of the "NO DRINKING BEFORE / DURING GAME" rule and that your players observe this rule.

MEETINGS

Meetings shall be called at the discretion of the Parks and Recreation Department.

All teams must have a representative (manager or otherwise appointed) at the Manager's Meeting or any other scheduled meeting.

MEMBERSHIP

Any player who has attained the age of 18 years and/or has graduated from high school, on or before September 1st of the given season, and has a validated contract on file, is eligible for membership in the Sterling Heights Softball League.

Teams and individual players may register and participate in any and all leagues sponsored by the Sterling Heights Parks and Recreation Department as long as all applicable rules are observed.

PARKING

USE ONLY DESIGNATED AREAS FOR PARKING. DO NOT PARK ON GRASS AREAS.

PARK REGULATIONS - L.W. BAUMGARTNER PARK

1. Please drive slowly and carefully in the parking lot. Watch for children.
2. No alcoholic beverages in immediate dugout area.
3. No drinking of alcoholic beverages before or during a game in which you are a participant.
4. Only the manager, players, coaches and scorekeepers are permitted in the dugout. No children!
5. Bikes must be walked through the park.
6. No dogs in park without being on a leash, six foot maximum. Dogs must not be unattended at any point.
7. Warm up in designated area only.

PENALTY FOR USE OF ILLEGAL PLAYERS

Any team using a suspended, ineligible, or released player shall be penalized in the following manner:

- A. The current game will be forfeited.
- B. Player will be suspended for three weeks.

C. Manager may also be suspended.

PLAYERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Players must have their driver's license/state ID with them at all times. Players cannot go to the car to get their wallet. If a player is challenged and cannot produce identification on the spot, the player is considered illegal (see penalty for illegal player).

Players must notify the Parks and Recreation Department and manager of any change in address.

Players must observe the Rules and Regulations of the City of Sterling Heights, Parks and Recreation Department and the League. Players must conduct themselves in a gentlemanly and sportsmanlike manner.

Each player is responsible for his personal conduct and must refrain from drinking during his game, whether he is playing or not.

Each player shall refrain from using language unsuitable for a public place. Continued usage will result in ejection and a two game suspension.

PLAYOFFS

Single Elimination Playoffs will begin at the end of the regular season and the Parks and Recreation Department will determine the schedule. Brackets will be determined according to regular season record.

POSTPONEMENT OF GAMES

The softball hotline is available to disseminate information on postponed games. No games are cancelled before 5:00 p.m. **Beginning at 5:00 p.m., players may call 586-446-2693 to receive the latest status of that night's games.** IN CASE OF POSTPONEMENT: MANAGER WILL NOT BE CALLED. The hotline will be updated as soon as weather conditions dictate.

Please do not call the main Parks and Recreation office. Please advise your players not to call the office. This only ties up the office lines of communication.

PROTESTS

If games are to be put under protest because of a misinterpretation of a rule or rules, these steps must be taken before Parks and Recreation will honor the protest. A judgment call cannot be protested. Roster challenges are not carried out under this rule.

1. The notification of intent to protest must be made immediately--before the next pitch.

2. The captain or manager of the protesting team must immediately notify the umpires and the opponent that the game is being continued under protest.
3. Both scorekeepers must be notified that the game is under protest so it can be appropriately marked on the score sheet.
4. Protest of any game shall be made in writing and filed with Parks and Recreation no later than two working days after the game in which the alleged violation occurred. The letter of protest must include the date, team playing, location, time, name of umpires, and all matters pertaining to the alleged violation, citing which rule or rules were allegedly violated.
5. Protest shall not be received or considered if they are based solely on a decision involving the accuracy of judgment on the part of the umpire.
6. There is a \$25.00 fee, which must be submitted with the formal protest. Fee will only be refunded if protest is upheld.
7. All protests shall be acted upon by the Parks and Recreation Director or duly appointed representative.

RE-ENTRY RULE

Any player may be substituted or replaced, and re-entered once, providing players occupy the same batting positions whenever in the lineup.

The starting player and their substitute may not be in the lineup at the same time.

If a player re-enters the game a second time or a player re-enters the game in a position in the batting order other than their original starting or substitute position, it is considered an illegal re-entry and the player will be disqualified.

- ➔ This rule is separate from the extra hitter rule and players may not be used in both ways at the same time.
- ➔ Defensive positions may be changed, but the batting order must remain the same. Any player used defensively must appear in the batting order.
- ➔ No defensive substitutions may be made during an inning unless it is on an emergency basis.

Upon observation of an illegal re-entry, the player who commits the offense and his manager will be expelled from the game.

REGULATIONS FOR PITCHING

The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate until the pitched ball leaves the hand. It is not necessary to step, but if a step is taken, it may be forward, or backward and simultaneous with the release of the ball.

The ball must be delivered with a perceptible arc of at least 6 feet from the ground. The pitched ball must not reach a height of more than 10 feet at its highest point from the ground.

The pitcher may use any wind-up desired providing his wind-up is continuous motion and the ball is released on the first forward swing of the arm past the hip and provided all other aspects of the rule are followed. Pitching with the palm above or below the ball is LEGAL.

HOME RUN LIMIT

A limit of 3 home runs will be in place for all games played at Baumgartner Park. In the event that a 4th home run is hit no runs will be awarded and the batter will be considered out.

REPLACING PLAYERS - Injured or Armed Forces

In the event a player is lost to a team at any time during the season because of a serious injury or sickness, said team shall be allowed to replace the injured or sick player. The players shall go on a voluntary retired list and shall not be eligible to play with any team in the program for the remainder of the season.

A doctor's certificate certifying that the player has suffered a serious injury or sickness may be required before a player replacing the injured or sick player can be used. Dr.'s Certificate and new player's contract may be turned in the same day the new player is to play rather than the day before.

Any team losing a player to the Armed Forces shall be allowed to replace this player at any time. Only a player who has not played in the program during the present season may replace the vacated player's roster spot. This player is eligible for all playoffs.

ROSTERS

We encourage teams to have as many players as possible. As long as rosters are completed in full they will be considered a legal member of the team.

No player shall appear in the line-up of any team in the League unless his name is legally affixed to a completed and validated roster, which must be on file in the Parks and Recreation office. Players can only be on one roster per night. A player to that is listed on multiple rosters will be considered illegal for all teams they are on.

ROSTER CHALLENGES

A player's eligibility may be challenged at any point before or during a game in progress. Roster challenges should be specific to a person, not the entire team. There is no financial penalty for a roster challenge.

Once a roster challenge is called, the player in question must produce identification on the spot (cannot go to the car). This will be checked against the official roster kept in the Softball Office at L.W. Baumgartner Park. Any player not able to produce identification or not on the roster is an ineligible/illegal player (please see penalties under use of illegal player).

If the player is accurately stated on the roster and you believe they have been playing on multiple teams you can ask that we match it up with a roster from another team to see if a player is listed on both teams. If the player is listed on both teams he/she is then considered an illegal player and the team will forfeit the game. We can then work with the player to get them on the correct team if they so choose with a minimum of a one game suspension. It is the responsibility of the manager to send the rulebook to all players and make sure they know this when they sign the roster.

RUN AHEAD RULE (FORMERLY MERCY RULE)

The Mercy Rule of 12 runs after five innings or 15 runs after 4 innings will be in effect for all Sterling Heights Parks and Recreation softball leagues.

Example: Home team is leading by 12 runs or more after 4 1/2 innings of play or any following inning----they would be the winner of the game. Visitors are leading by 12 or more runs after five or more complete innings have been played they would be the winner of the game. **This rule will be in effect for all games including playoffs/championships.**

SCHEDULES

In an effort to conclude a season in a timely manner, league games and/or makeup games shall be played on dates and times designated by Parks and Recreation and may deviate from the normal days played on.

SCOREBOARD USAGE

The electronic scoreboards at L.W. Baumgartner Park are provided for your convenience. The home team is responsible for updating the scoreboard on LWB #1. The visiting team is responsible for updating the scoreboard on LWB #2.

SOFTBALLS

Softballs will be provided by the Parks and Recreation department and supplied at each game. Managers are not responsible for bringing a new ball each week. We will be using an ASA certified 11" optic yellow softball.

SUSPENSIONS

Parks and Recreation or its appointed representatives will have the authority to suspend a player for infraction of rules which may or may not be in the jurisdiction of an official, and are noticed by the Department or its representatives. Such suspension will be in effect immediately. The penalty for players, coaches and managers will be a minimum one-game suspension. Any player removed by "ejection" will be suspended from their next scheduled game (or more depending upon the nature of the infraction). Penalties shall apply whether the offense occurs before, during or after a game. Further infractions may result in lengthier penalties. The player or players involved have the right to appeal the suspension in writing. This appeal will then be read and a decision made at the earliest possible date. A current list of suspended players is on file at the Parks and Recreation office.

Suspensions will carry-over to the following season for any player that is suspended towards the end of the season and still has games to be served.

TEAM CLASSIFICATION

Due to participation in state tournament programs, leagues will be classified according skill level. Classification will be based on previous year's performance to obtain the most equally balanced competitive divisions. You may always appeal your classification.

TIES

In the event two or more teams are tied for first place at the end of the season, a one game playoff will be held.

If the tie involves three teams, the team with the best win/loss record against the other two will draw a bye. The other two teams will play one game, with the winner of that game meeting the bye team for the championship. If none of the three teams has a clear-cut win/loss record advantage, the team with the least runs scored against, in the games

among the three will draw a bye. If all points, etc. shall be equal, a random draw shall be held to determine the bye.

All other ties for placement/seeding will be determined by head-to-head record, or runs against during the head-to-head games.

TIME LIMIT

Game times will be implemented at 70 minutes. The 7th inning is the final inning of all games regardless of score. Tie games can and will result in a tie if the score is tied upon the completion of this inning. If the time limit ends in the middle of an inning the inning will be played out in full but no new inning will start after the time limit is reached.

Unavoidable delays (injury, equipment failure) shall not be counted toward time limit. Intentional delays are not reason for extra time. If the game is tied at the end of the last completed inning it will result in a tie.

In the event of inclement weather, a game will be considered complete after 5 innings of play, or 4 ½ if the home team is winning. This includes the playoffs and championship game.

TRANSFERS FROM ONE LEAGUE TO ANOTHER

Teams desiring to transfer leagues will be placed on a list. Transfer priority will be based on previous year's regular season division finish. Transfer decision will be made after entry fee deadlines and you will be notified immediately of your status.

UMPIRES

The Parks and Recreation Department will contract with the officials. They have complete authority over the playing area and the conduct of the game. All umpire fees are the responsibility of the teams participating. In all leagues, one umpire will be assigned to all games. The City will not pay any umpire fees. Umpires shall be required to:

- A. Start game on time.
- B. Keep players hustling and game moving.
- C. Acquaint managers with ground rules and/or any other unique rules.
- D. Enforce rules and regulations governing the game.
- E. Warn players, managers and spectators who violate the rules and eject them from the game and/or facilities, if necessary.

Umpires are scheduled by an outside association, not by the Sterling Heights Recreation Department.

BANNED BAT LIST

The bats on the attached list will not be allowed in any of the Sterling Heights Softball Leagues. No player will be allowed to use any bat greater than double wall. A color copy is posted on the display board at the field and is also in the binder with the field coordinator. This rule is instituted for the safety of the players and may be updated as the season progresses. You will be notified of any changes.

Must have 2000, 2004 **OR** new ASA Approval Stamp **and** not be listed on the Non-Approved bat list.

Any player entering the batter's box or has been discovered using a non-approved bat will be called out **AND EJECTED** from the contest. Any future infraction may result in longer suspensions and or expulsion from the league.

Please go to www.metrodetroitasa.com to view the list in color. We will have color copies at the ball field to review as needed.

STERLING HEIGHTS PARKS AND RECREATION ALSO RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MAKE DECISIONS THAT ARE DEEMED TO BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE LEAGUE AND PROGRAM.