



# RULES & REGULATIONS

Crystal Lake Park District  
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[crystallakeparks.org](http://crystallakeparks.org)



# GENERAL LIPPOLD PARK SOFTBALL RULES

## COMPLEX RULES

- **NO GUM, SEEDS IN THE ENTIRE COMPLEX**
- No metal spikes are allowed. If reported, player will be ejected.
- No smoking or vaping in dugouts or on fields.
- Never touch scoreboard controls.
- Music played in a dugout must be of a volume that the umpire can still be heard. Additionally, music must be appropriate (in terms of language) for the surroundings. There are often children around the fields and/or rentals on unused fields. If you are asked to turn down the music or change it due to content, please comply.

## GENERAL LEAGUE RULES

- Refunds will not be given for any league after the first week of play.

## GENERAL GAME PLAY/MANAGEMENT RULES

- Team Managers are responsible for their team and spectators actions. ONLY team managers may confer with umpires and league officials.
- Players may participate on more than one team provided those teams are in different leagues (upper/lower).
- Co-Rec may sub 2 players if needed at discretion of opposing captain.
- Players are forewarned that inherent risks exist in all sports and they are participating at their own risk.
- A team must have 8 players listed on the roster to start a game, and may continue and finish with 8 players. If the game begins with more than 8 players, it may finish with 8 only if the other player(s) were not ejected. No OUT will be called for the unoccupied spot in the line-up if game begins with only 8 players. If after 3 innings a game that begins with 8 players is down by 15 runs, the game will be called unless a 9th player has arrived.
- If a team does not have 8 players to start a game, at the discretion of the supervisor on duty and opposing captain, said team can utilize a rostered league player to play.
- Home teams will keep the "Official Scorebook". Teams should verify the score after each half inning. The visiting team can be considered the "official book" if both teams agree before the game begins and the umpire is made aware. Teams provide their own scorekeepers. It is not the umpire's responsibility to act as scorekeeper for the teams. If one team has a book and the other does not, the umpire will side with the scorebook on any scoring disagreement.
- Only the batter, on deck batter and player(s) occupying the coaching boxes will be allowed on the playing field when a team is on offense.

- All player equipment (bats, mitts, balls etc) should be kept inside or behind the dugout, not on the playing field.
- Players come to bat with one ball, one strike count. An out will be called when batter is up to bat with two strikes and hits a foul ball.
- **GAME TIME IS FORFEIT TIME FOR ALL GAMES.**
- Game times will be 6:30, 7:30, 8:30 & 9:30 PM. If games are running late, teams waiting should have their scorebook filled out, and be warmed up to begin as soon as the previous game is completed. (A10-minute grace period for the 6:30 PM game only. 65-minute clock starts at 6:30 PM if the grace period is granted.)
- The second double-header will begin when the umpire signals play to start. (i.e. a 7:30 pm game may start at 7:20 pm if the first game ended early.)
- The second double-header will begin at the scheduled time, unless the first game is running long. The game will then begin as soon as possible. If both teams are present and ready to play prior to game time, the game may start early with the agreement of both team captains.
- The home team will be listed last on the schedule unless otherwise designated.
- No innings may start after 60 minutes.
- It is permissible for lower division teams (B & C) to have up to 3 upper division players on their roster. An upper division player is ANY player on an upper division roster, or is known or found out to be an impact player. Crystal Lake Park District staff decision is final.
- A Division - No team may have more than 1 player active in the game at any time ranked B or higher, or having been ranked as such in the past 5 years, by any sanctioned body.
- **Sportsmanship:** Sportsmanship is key for a safe and enjoyable recreational athletic leagues. Any player who is, in the view of an umpire or league official, playing in an out-of-control or dangerous manner may be ejected from a game. **Players or teams who act in a derogatory manner towards another team or player (behavior including, but not limited to, excessive cursing, taunting, show boating, chirping, or any racial, sexual, ethnic slur) run the risk of having the offending player(s) and/or manager ejected. If it is determined the behavior is a team-wide issue, a game may be forfeited and potential suspensions issued.**
- **Flip Flop Rule:** If the visiting team is up in a game by the slaughter number + 5 runs, the Flip Flop Rule will be invoked. This rule allows the home team to bat twice to stave off the slaughter. For example: the visiting team is up by 17 runs going into the top of the 5<sup>th</sup> inning. Instead of the visiting team batting and potentially adding to their lead, the home team is permitted to bat twice (bottom of the 4<sup>th</sup> inning and the top of 5<sup>th</sup> inning) to avoid a slaughter rule situation. The home team would need to score 6 runs to stay in the game. If they score less than that the game is over.

- **2-2 count at 50 minutes:** after 50 minutes of game play, if the game is not going into the 7<sup>th</sup> inning or at slaughter rule, the umpire will invoke a 2-2 count. At the start of the next inning all batters will have 2-2 count when they start their at bat. This count will continue until the game is over, time limit is reached, or the game goes into the 8<sup>th</sup> inning. For example, if the clock has reached 50 minutes at the start of the 6<sup>th</sup> inning, the umpire will invoke a 2-2 count for the remainder of the game (except for any extra inning).
- Only Crystal Lake Park District supplied softballs may be used for league play. Ensure that your team has an appropriate number of the softballs available for your games. All softballs must be in good repair, meaning no cuts, open seams, or obvious 'doctoring'. A ball may be removed from play at the umpire's discretion.

**12" only: Each team will hit their own softballs. This means that at the beginning of the game each team should exchange a softball with the other team, this will be the ball that will be pitched to your team. Anytime a ball leaves play (foul ball, home run, etc.) it is the batting team's responsibility to provide a ball to the other team's pitcher. If the ball is not league approved, or it is damaged, the pitcher will throw the ball to the umpire and request a new ball from the batting team. If the pitcher rejects a ball that the umpire deems legitimate, a ball will be assessed to the current batter.**

## **SPECIFIC GAME PLAY RULES**

- **Double First Base:** On any hit ball, infield or outfield, if there is going to be a play at first base, the runner must run through or stop on the orange base. On a play where the runner has stepped on the white base, the runner shall be declared out regardless of the result of the play. On a play where the runner is rounding first base towards second base, the runner should use the white base. Once the runner has reached first base safely he/she should only use the white base.
- If the umpire decides any contact on the bases was intentional and/or flagrant, the runner shall immediately be removed from the game. Base runners and fielders must avoid contact. Running over a fielder will result in an immediate ejection.
- **Vicinity Rule:** If, in the umpire's discretion, the bases have become slippery or otherwise hazardous, the vicinity rule may be invoked. This allows players to step near, not on the base when running the bases. This rule is invoked and applied at the sole discretion of the umpire on the field.
- ALL PLAYERS PRESENT MAY BAT.

- In the event of injury where a player cannot continue playing, no penalty will incur. If a player leaves to play in another game or leaves the field without valid reason, that spot in the line-up will become an out unless a valid substitution is made with a player that was present before the start of the 3rd inning. Any teammate who is assisting an injured player is also exempt from any penalties.
- **Courtesy Runner Rule:** Each team will be allowed the pitcher plus one courtesy runner per inning to be used for a single player. Meaning that if Player A leads off an inning and takes a courtesy runner, and his team bats around to the point where he comes up again, the same courtesy runner is used.
  - A. The goal of the pitcher courtesy runner is to allow pitchers the time to put on equipment and be ready to take the mound once the inning ends.
  - B. The pitcher does not have to take the courtesy runner, however, this runner may not be used for any player other than the pitcher.
  - C. If a courtesy runner is on base at the time his spot comes up in the batting order, the team will be forced to take an out. This player cannot be substituted for in this situation to avoid the out.
  - D. In the event of an injury after a team has used their courtesy runner, a second courtesy runner may be granted at the umpire's discretion; however, that runner may only advance one base at a time. If that runner advances beyond the next base to which they are entitled to advance, they put themselves in jeopardy of being tagged out, even if they make it to the subsequent base safely.
  - E. When a game reaches International Tie Breaker Rules, the last batted out must occupy 2<sup>nd</sup> base to start the extra inning, however, if that player would be the pitcher, a courtesy runner may be used.
- All pitches will be delivered within 5 seconds of the umpire making his/her signal to play.
- No piece of equipment may be used for deceptive purposes. i.e. if a pitcher takes his/her mask off during a pitch in an attempt to distract the batter, a ball will be called. Determining and declaring an action to be "deceptive" will be at the discretion of the umpire(s) on the field.
- Foul ball is judged by the position of the ball in reference to the foul line/foul pole.
- Second foul strike is a live ball; runners may advance on a catch.
- No free second foul ball.

- Fake tags are NOT allowed at any time. This action can result in injury. If the umpire determines that a player attempted a fake tag, they may issue a warning. The second instance will be an ejection. If the fake tag is egregious or results in injury, the umpire may eject the offending player without first issuing a warning.
- **Tie-Breaker:** At the start of the 8<sup>th</sup> inning, a runner will start at second base, and the batter will have a 3–2 count. The runner starting on 2<sup>nd</sup> base will be the last batted out from the previous inning, unless that runner is the pitcher, who may receive a courtesy runner. A courtesy may not be used for any non-pitcher last batted out, except if the last batted out was injured and can no longer play.
- **Blood Rule:** Any blood present during a game must be attended to immediately. Any clothing soiled by blood must be removed. Please have extra clothes available.
- **No children in dugouts.** No batboys or batgirls are allowed. This rule is for their safety.
- There should be no non-participants in the dugout. The exception to this rule is a team manager and/or scorekeeper who have signed the participation waiver. All others should remain in the bleachers. If it is necessary to have another person in the dugout, that will be at the discretion of the supervisor on site.
- On nights with a beer garden, no beer is allowed in dugouts or outside the complex.
- Keep our park clean, please pickup after yourself, your team, and your spectators. This includes the fields, dugouts, bleachers areas and parking lot.
- Please supervise your children when they are in the park, foul balls can cause serious injury to children. Our supervisors cannot watch your children while you play.
- **Ejections:**
  - A. If a player is ejected from the game due to a rules violation during the first game of a double-header, it will be the supervisor on-site and the ejecting umpire's discretion as to if that player can participate in the second game. For example, if a player is ejected for not having a bat sticker in the 6:30 game, they will be out for that game only. They may participate in the 7:30, 8:30 and/or 9:30 game(s).
  - B. If a player is ejected for behavior or conduct, they will be required to leave the park and may not participate in any further games that night. Meaning, if a player is ejected for behavior during the 6:30 game, they may not participate in an 8:30 game.
  - C. If an ejected player does not immediately leave the dugout/field area and go to the parking lot, the umpire may declare a forfeit.

- D. If a player is ejected, they may be replaced in the lineup if the team has a substitute available. The substitute must be a rostered player for that team and must have arrived prior to the 3rd inning. If no substitute is available, that spot in the line-up will be an out each subsequent time they are due up.

## 11" & 12" RULES

- 1 + 1 count to start.
- Arc Limits: 5 feet to 10 feet
- Mat will be used.
- Official slow-pitch softball bats only. Bats must be tested and have a valid CLPD sticker. Bats must be a material that is capable of being tested (meaning wood bats are not allowed.)
- 12" pitching mound is the 3rd line on the field. The pitcher can pitch from up to 6 feet behind the line. The pitcher can pitch from the left or right side of the line as long as one foot is touching the line upon the release of the pitch.
- 11" pitching mound is the 2nd line on the field. The pitcher can pitch from up to 6 feet behind the line. The pitcher can pitch from the left or right side of the line as long as one foot is touching the line upon the release of the pitch. NOTE: The first pitching line may be used if, in the umpire's discretion, it will improve game play.
- Pitchers may wear protective equipment, including, but not limited to, a helmet/mask, shin guards and chest protector. It is highly encouraged that all pitchers wear a mask for their own safety.
- If a pitcher chooses not to remove his/her shin guards before coming to bat, they are not permitted to slide and must give themselves up on a close play at a base.
- ALL PRESENT MAY BAT.
- ROSTERS ARE CLOSED AFTER 3 INNINGS (substitutions are allowed for players present by 3rd inning deadline) 5th inning for 6:30 PM game only.
- NO stealing bases.
- Any player who announces his/her intention to "shoot box" (hit at the opposing pitcher), or injure any other player on the field will be immediately ejected.

## 11" & 12" RULES cont'd

- DHH (Designated Homerun Hitter) is the player who, without penalty, may hit a homerun every time at bat. The team manager must designate the DHH to the umpire prior to the first pitch of the game. Failure to designate a DHH before the first pitch will result in the loss of a DHH for that game. Should the DHH be walked, whether intentional or not, the next person to hit a homerun may do so without penalty until the DHH's spot comes back up in the line-up. If the DHH leaves the game due to injury, the team loses the DHH spot for that game only. A new DHH can be declared for the second game of a double header.
- All other members of the team may hit up to three (total) home runs without penalty. The fourth homerun and any subsequent homeruns during the game NOT hit by the DHH will result in the end of the current inning.

### 11" SLAUGHTER RULE

**15 AFTER 4**

**10 AFTER 5**

**8 AFTER 6**

### 12" SLAUGHTER RULE

**20 AFTER 4**

**12 AFTER 5**

**10 AFTER 6**

## ADDING PLAYERS

- If a team starts a game with 8 or 9 players, they may only add additional players to fill their roster. Defensive players may only be added at the half inning and must be inserted into the line-up at the bottom of the batting order. The 11th player may never be added as an AH, but may be used as a substitute as long as he/she arrived before the end of the 3rd inning deadline (5th inning for the 6:30 game).
- If a team starts with at least 10 players, they may add the 11th or more player(s) AH at the end of the line-up, as long as their team has not gone through its entire batting order. If the batting order has been completed once, the player(s) may only be added as a substitute if the player arrived before the inning deadlines.

## EQUALIZER RULES

- In order to ensure competitive leagues, the Crystal Lake Park District may institute an Equalizer Rule for specific leagues. The Equalizer Rule for each league (typically upper leagues) will be based on the level of the teams in the league. For example, when a 'C' ranked 12" team is playing a 'rec' level 12" team, the 'C' team will give the 'rec' team 15 runs to start the game.
- Even if a team is not ranked, meaning they do not play tournaments together, a decision may still be made to assess an equalizer based on the known talent of the team.
- Generally, for each level of rank disparity between teams, 5 runs will be given. The team who would receive the runs may opt not to take the runs at the start of the doubleheader, this decision stands as final for both games.

## 11" & 12" RULES cont'd

- In an equalizer situation, both teams will be allowed to use a pitching net. The decision to use the net must be made at the beginning of the game, if a team decides to remove the net at any point during a game it may not be used again for the rest of that game.
- **Pitching net rules:**
  - A. The first ball during an at-bat that hits any part of the net, or net structure, will be called a strike. The second ball that hits any part of the net, or net structure, will be called an out.
  - B. The net must be placed within the 'pitching box', and the net must cover no less than 50% of the mound. The net may be shifted to the right or left side of the pitching mound based on whether the pitcher is right or left-handed.
  - C. The pitcher may not be the first person to play any batted ball. If a pitcher is the first person to touch a batted ball the result will be a dead ball ground rule double. Any runner at 2nd or 3rd base would score, a runner at first would be awarded 3rd base. The pitcher may cover a base, field a cut off, or make any other play on defense so long as they are not the first player to touch a ball.
  - D. If a team is "giving" runs (the higher ranked team) they will always be the home team, regardless of league record. This means that in a double-header where a team is giving runs, they will be home team in both games.
- **Equalizer Slaughter Rule:**  
20 runs after 4 innings / 15 runs after 5 innings / 12 runs after 6 innings  
In an equalizer situation, all other league rules apply.

## CO-REC RULES

- ALL PRESENT MAY BAT.
  - A. The batting order must alternate between male and female.
  - B. Two women may bat back-to-back if there are more female players.
  - C. Two men may NEVER bat back-to-back.
- Co-Rec bats DO NOT need to be tested, bats must be slow-pitch softball bats in good repair of metal, alloy or composite material. WOOD BATS ARE NOT ALLOWED.
- The pitcher and catcher must be of a different gender.
- The infielders and outfielders must be two women and two men. They do not need to alternate positions.

## CO-REC RULES cont'd

- You must play with an equal, or greater, number of women.  
A team with more male than female team members present may bat all the males only if the following rotation is followed. 2 males can share a single spot in the batting order, a team cannot rotate players so a male bats in more than one spot in a single game. The rule requiring an equal or greater number of female players in the field still holds in this situation. As all present players are allowed to bat, every player does not need to play the field. Players batting beyond the 10 needed to play the field are considered "extra hitters".
- Rules 3 & 4 apply only when equal genders are represented.
- All players start with one and one count.
- If a male walks, he goes directly to second base. The female batter who follows him has the option of walking or batting as usual.
- The outfielders may never come into the infield area at any time.
  - A. Effect = delayed dead ball, batter base runner is awarded third base; all runners are awarded home plate without jeopardy of being called out.
  - B. For games on the green field only: the outfielder may come onto the turf to play a ball as long as they are in a place that would be on the outfield grass of one of the other fields. This is at the umpire's discretion.
- Free substitution for players in the field. Batting order must remain the same or follow a set substitution pattern. Male #1 and Male #2 would occupy one spot in the order and Alternate each time that spot was at bat. Male #1 or Male #2 cannot bat in any other spot in the line-up unless they are replacing an injured male. Male #1 and Male #2 may play defense at the same time as long as there is an equal number of females in the field.
- If a female is injured and cannot be replaced by a female:
  - A. The defense is allowed to play short one female (two males and one female in the infield or outfield).
  - B. The line-up would alternate with the two males that bat prior and after the injured female, taking turns who will miss their at bat each time.
- No fake pitches, present the ball—pitch the ball.
- Pitchers must pitch from the 1st line on the field.
- It is considered a "mockery" of the game for players to run recklessly around the bases.
  - A. Effect = Dead ball, base runner is out and may be removed from the game if the umpire deems it necessary.
- It is defensive interference when fielders stand in the base path or on a base when the ball is not in play.

## CO-REC RULES cont'd

- Up to three rostered players from other co-rec teams may be used in a game if a team is short female players. It is up to the discretion of the supervisor on site and the opposing manager whether to accept or deny this request. If denied, the game will result in a forfeit.
- Any inning beginning, at or after 50 minutes, regardless of the inning, will begin with a 3-2 count on each batter. This count will continue until time limit is reached, the slaughter rule is reached, or the game is completed. If the score is tied when the game reaches start of the 8<sup>th</sup> inning, the international tie breaker rule will be invoked.
- When a game is in extra innings and the international tie breaker is in effect (8th inning or later), when a male walks, he goes to first base, NOT immediately to 2nd base. The female batting next MUST hit, and CANNOT chose to walk. THIS CHANGE IS FOR EXTRA INNINGS ONLY!

### CO-REC SLAUGHTER RULE

**15 AFTER 4**

**10 AFTER 5**

**8 AFTER 6**

## REGULAR SEASON TIE BREAKERS FOR ALL LEAGUES

- If TWO teams are tied for any place in the regular season, the following procedures will be followed to determine the final league standings, in order until all ties are broken.
  - A. Team with the best record in head-to-head competition against the other team.
  - B. Team with the fewest runs allowed against the other team involved in the tie.
  - C. Team with the fewest runs allowed against all teams.
- In the case of THREE or more teams are tied for any positions in the regular season, the following procedures will be followed to determine final league standings, in order until all ties are broken.
  - A. Team with the best winning percentage in head-to-head competition against all other teams involved in the tie. A team MUST have at least one win against all the other teams tied in the standings.
  - B. Teams with the fewest average runs allowed against all other teams involved in the tie (all tied teams must have played at least once.)
  - C. Team with the fewest runs allowed against all teams.

# FINES & SUSPENSIONS

Below are the fines and suspensions for players, managers, spectators and coaches in all Crystal Lake Park District athletic programs. Each case will be judged individually. This guideline is the minimum penalties assessed. More severe or reduced penalties will be left of to the discretion of the Athletic Supervisor.

- **FIGHTING ANYWHERE ON FACILITIES OR GROUNDS OF PARK DISTRICT SPONSORED EVENTS:** **Up to one year suspension**
- **UNDER THE INFLUENCE OR BRINGING OUTSIDE ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES INTO THE COMPLEX:** **One week suspension from all softball leagues**
- **INVOLVEMENT IN ROUGH PLAY:** **One week suspension**
- **SEEDS, GUM IN THE COMPLEX OR ALCOHOL IN DUGOUT:**  
**First Offense-One week suspension for player and manager**  
**Second Offense-Two week suspension for player and manager**
- **THREATENING AN OFFICIAL OR SUPERVISOR:**  
**One year suspension from all athletic leagues**
- **TOUCHING, PUSHING OR STRIKING AN OFFICIAL OR SUPERVISOR:**  
**Permanent suspension from all Park District Athletics**
- **USE OF PROFANITY:**  
**First Offense-Warning / Second Offense-One week suspension**
- **IMPROPERLY LISTED AS PARK DISTRICT RESIDENT, NOT LISTED ON ROSTER OR PLAYING WITHOUT HAVING SIGNED ROSTER:**  
**Two week suspension for both player and manager**
- **ROSTER VIOLATION (A DIVISION)**  
**First Offense – Forfeit & two-week suspension for player and manager (all games/all leagues for 14 days)**  
**Second Offense – Forfeit & one season suspension for player and manager**
- **EJECTION FROM GAME (PER SEASON):**  
**First Offense-Warning**  
**Second Offense-Two week suspension for player and manager (all games/all leagues for 14 days)**  
**Third Offense-One season suspension for player and two weeks for manager**
- **TEAM FORFEITING (per season):**  
**First Offense-\$25 due prior to start of next game**  
The fine is assessed if the team has not made the Athletic Supervisor aware of the forfeit with reasonable time (prior to noon on game day) to contact the opposing team and the umpire scheduled for the game.  
**Second Offense-\$40 due prior to start of next game**  
**Third Offense-Withdrawal from league and forfeiture of league fee**

FINES must be paid at the Park District Office, and a receipt must be shown to the league supervisor before the next game. Unpaid fines may result in suspensions of all team members.

## BAT TESTING POLICY

- All bats must be tested prior to being used during league play.
- All bats will be tested on a yearly basis. Bats that pass will have that year's sticker placed at the end of the barrel. Bats that pass the test will be legal for the season.
- **If a sticker falls off or becomes illegible, it is the player's responsibility to get the bat retested if it is to continue being used.**
- Testing will be done in the garage of the softball complex. Please see the supervisor on site to have your bat tested. CLPD will test any bat you plan to use at the complex and will retest as often as requested/necessary. Please limit bat testing to 2 bats if there is a line.
- Any player that steps into a batter's box without a sticker, the player will be declared out and ejected from the game. The bat in question will be taken to be tested. If the bat passes the test, the ejected player will be eligible to play in the second game of a double header, or their next scheduled game. If the bat does not pass the test, the player will be suspended a minimum of two additional games.
- If a player is injured by a batted ball, the bat will be immediately taken by the umpire to be tested. If the bat passes the test it will be immediately returned to the team/player to whom it belongs. If the bat fails testing it will remain in possession of the Crystal Lake Park District as per insurance requirements.
- The CLPD reserves the right to re-test any bat at any time.
- The CLPD the right to ban any bat at any time.

## BAT PROTEST

- Teams may protest a bat at any time. The fee is \$20, and must be paid in cash prior to a protest being heard.
- If the bat fails the test, the owner will receive a two week suspension (maximum 4 games). Protesting teams will lose their \$20 if the bat passes the tests.
- Any player and/or owner of a bat caught using a shaved, painted or altered bat will be suspended for a **minimum of 5 years. THIS RULE WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED.**

## POSTPONED GAMES

- The Park District reserves the right to postpone any and all games if conditions warrant such action.
- Postponed games will be played on available dates at the end of the season prior to replacement games. The Athletic Supervisor will contact managers of any changes.
- In the event of a rainout before four (4) full innings are played, the game will be replayed from the point where the delay or cancellation occurred. After four (or 3.5 with home team winning) innings have been played, the game is considered official.
- Keep up to date when adverse weather affects our programs or events. See below for directions on how to personalize your connections with the Crystal Lake Park District Rainout Line.

## RAINOUT APP

To download the app for the Crystal Lake Park District, simply go to the app store on your phone and search Rainout Line. Download the Rainout Line app and search for the Crystal Lake Park District. When it appears, click the star on the right side of the page. In order to view updates, you will have to open the Rainout app.





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