

HDSE SLO-PITCH RULES FOR THE 2012 SEASON (BASED ON THE SLO-PITCH ONTARIO ASSOCIATION PLAYING PROCEDURES WITH EXCEPTIONS)

The playing rules for all slo-pitch games in the HDSE shall be the 2011/2012 Softball Canada Rules with the exceptions as designated (**highlighted**) in these procedures. Changes for 2012 are **highlighted** . The following procedures do not constitute the Rules of the game but simply list the special HDSE rule differences as well as some of the basic concepts of the game of slo-pitch.

Playing Field

Bases are 70 feet apart.

Pitching distance is 50 - 60 feet

Pitching Box - 2 feet wide by 10 feet long. The front edge of this box shall be centered on a direct line from home plate to second base and 50 feet from the rear corner of home plate.

Batters' box is 7 feet by 3 feet

Double base shall be used at first base.

Strike Mat/ Home Plate: A 2' by 3' board.

A safe line at home plate and a commitment line 21 feet from home plate shall be used.

The field shall be prepared for play by the scheduled Home Team at least 5 minutes prior to the scheduled starting time.

Equipment

Shoes may not have metal cleats

Bats: Must be approved by SPO. Approved bats must comply with the current USSSA Bat Certification Policy.

Balls: Mens: 12 in. Worth Super Gold Dot SPO approved SPO12EY provided by HDSE.

Colour may be white or optic yellow

Helmets: Approved helmets may be worn by any player. They must match in colour any caps worn

Team

The batting order shall consist of a minimum of 10 players (exception, when using the "short-handed rule")

To be a legally rostered player, you must be registered with the HDSE registration database. A temporary roster player is a player registered with the HDSE and may only play a maximum of 5 games with one team. A permanent roster player is a player registered with the HDSE and has played in at least 6 games and is either; drafted officially during the 2012 HDSE draft, or traded legally with approval from all team managers and the league executive, or is a player added to replace a player that drops out permanently and is selected in priority of registration. Only permanent rostered players that meet the above criteria can play in Playoff Games.

Extra Players : The total number of regular players (10) and extra players may not exceed the number of players on the team's legal roster (maximum 13). If more than 10 players are on the batting order, any 10 may play defense.

a. If a player is unable to continue in the game when he is due up to bat, he is declared out and play continues with the next batter in the batting order. If, with 2 out, the batter before the missing player is walked (intentional or unintentional), the automatic out is waived and the next batter will bat. **(This does not apply if the player is declared unable to continue just prior to the team's offensive half of the inning)**

b. The manager of the player unable to bat is responsible for notifying the plate umpire of this situation. Failure to do this will result with the manager being ejected

c. A team must have a minimum of ten (10) players to start and to continue the game. If a team has less than ten (10) players the game is forfeited. **(Playoffs only, Regular Season may use the “short-handed rule”)**

Short-Handed Rule (Regular Season Only): Teams may start a game with a minimum of eight (8) players. A member of the other team may offer a player to cover the home plate position for the purpose of returning the pitched balls back to the pitcher. A player may be added any time before the end of the game at the end of the batting order. Any team that starts a game with ten or more players may drop to the minimum of eight players to finish the game.

d. Any player that leaves the game for any reason may not return to the game. Exception: A player, who has left the game under the blood rule, may return.

Substitutions: No substitutions will be allowed. All players will be expected to be given the opportunity to play.

Blood Rule

Any participant (player, coach or umpire) who is bleeding or has blood on his uniform may not participate until the bleeding is controlled and his soiled uniform changed. The replacement uniform need not conform to the official team uniform. If the cleanup and/or uniform change can be accomplished quickly, play would be suspended until the participant is ready to play. If this cannot be done quickly, the player is removed from the game and replaced by a Replacement Player (may be any eligible roster player not already in the line-up.) who may act for the removed player for the remainder of the inning in progress and the following complete inning. When the player has had the bleeding controlled and the soiled uniform replaced, he **must** resume his place in the game. Should he not be able to return to the game within the time described, an official substitution must be made. The use of a replacement player is not counted as an official substitution, meaning, the player may leave the game again and be re-entered (if a starting player) and also the player that was used as the replacement for him is still a legal substitute and may be used later in the game. If a player is removed due to blood and the team does not have a legal substitute/replacement available when needed, **his place in the batting order is simply missed and there is no penalty.**

Courtesy Runner

a. A team may use a maximum of three (3) courtesy runners per game.

b. The courtesy runner must be a legal rostered player

c. The courtesy runner must be announced to the home plate umpire before he takes his place on the base

d. If the courtesy runner is due up to bat, the team must use another courtesy runner;

OR,

the batter is ruled out but remains on base as the courtesy runner and the next batter in the lineup comes to bat.

Duration

A game consists of **nine innings and shall conclude within 110 minutes of the scheduled start time.**

A tied game will continue with extra innings until one side has scored more runs at the end of a completed inning, or until the team batting second scores more in their half inning before their third out.

A game stopped by the umpire will be considered complete if five innings (four and one half innings if the second batting team is leading) have been completed.

Mercy Rule:

A team shall be declared winner if they are 15 or more runs ahead of the opposition after five innings if the visiting team or after four and one half, five and one half if the home team. The mercy rule will not be

applied if the game reaches the 9th inning. A team may voluntarily withdraw from the game if they are losing by 15 or more runs any time after 3 innings (2 1/2 innings if home team)
A maximum of 6 runs per inning may be scored. (Exception: 9th inning is no limit)

Forfeits

A game shall be declared a forfeit if a team fails to field the required number of players prior to or during the game, refuses to continue the game after a suspension of play, intentionally tries to delay or hasten the game, or intentionally violates a rule of the game after being warned by the umpire. A forfeit shall be declared if a player, ejected from the game by an umpire, does not leave the park when directed to do so. When a player is ejected and must leave the ball park, that player must move far enough away so that they may not be seen or heard by the participants of the game and may not participate with the game in any manner.

Player Conduct

The HDSE is a recreational league. Abusive conduct towards umpires, players, and city property will not be tolerated.

In the event Player Misconduct is identified, either team manager or the umpire shall call a timeout to discuss conduct of a player or players with the team managers and umpires. The umpire will issue a formal warning to the offending player or players. After this point, the umpire will be allowed to eject ANY player, as the warning will apply to all players. Ejection from a game will result in a disciplinary review meeting with the executive members of HDSE, the team captains, and the players involved. **If at any point the safety of any one is at risk because of the conduct of others, the umpire has the right to immediately eject any player he/she sees fit without warning.**

Jewellery

NOTE: It is strongly recommended that any type of jewellery not be worn in any SPO play. If worn, each player is solely responsible for any injury/damage that may be caused by this jewellery. The umpire may have any player removed any jewellery or equipment that he deems dangerous.

Scoring

A run is scored when a player safely touches, in order first base, second base, third base and crosses the "SAFE LINE". A runner may not score ahead of a preceding runner who has not been retired. A run may not score if the last out of an inning is a force out or a preceding runner declared out. The score of a forfeited game shall be 7-0 in favour of the team not at fault.

Home Run Rule

A limit of over the fence home runs will be used. A batter hitting a ball over the fence in a game in excess of the limit shall be ruled out. Any ball touched by a defensive player which then goes over the fence in fair territory shall be a four base award and not considered a home run. If a player hits an over the fence home run but then misses a base and/or does not score it will count towards the team home run total. If a batter is ruled out because of the excessive home run rule, the ball is dead, no runs may score and all runners must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. When a 6 run per inning Mercy Rule is used and a player hits a home run and the resulting inning total is more than 6 runs, the home run does not count as a team home run.

Limit: 2 home runs per team.

Extended Limit: If both teams have their maximum allowed home runs (including extended limits), the limit will be extended for both teams by one.

Pitching

Before each pitch, the pitcher must stand with one foot (pivot) within the pitcher's, facing the batter with the ball held in one hand. This position must be maintained for 1 - 5 seconds.

The pitcher is responsible that the correct ball is in play.

The delivery starts when the pitcher makes any motion of his windup after the required pause. A step may be taken in any direction simultaneous with the release of the pitch provided the pivot foot remains in contact with the box until the pitch is released.

The pitch shall be delivered with an underhand motion and at a moderate speed within the height limits of 6 to 12 feet. A pitch lower or higher than this limit will be declared during the pitch by the umpire as "Illegal".

Any type of windup is legal provided the ball is pitched immediately after the pitching motion, there is no stoppage or reversal of motion, there is not more than one revolution in a "windmill" pitch, and the windup does not continue after the delivery of the ball.

Any infraction of these rules shall constitute an illegal pitch.

No pitch is declared if the pitcher pitches; during a dead ball, before the batter and/or umpire are ready, or when a runner is out for leaving a base too soon.

The ball is dead after a strike or ball is called. (Runners may not advance)

Batting

Players must bat in the order listed on the batting order. If a player's turn at bat has not ended when his team's half-inning ends, he is the first to bat in the next half-inning. The batter must take his position within the batter's box within 10 seconds.

A strike is a legally pitched ball that makes contact with the mat, any pitched ball swung at and missed by the batter, or a batted ball that is ruled foul.

A ball is a legally pitched ball that lands outside the strike mat and not swung at by the batter or an illegally pitched ball that the batter does not swing at.

A batted ball may be classified as one of the following:

fly ball - a batted ball that has not yet touched the ground or any object other than a fielder.

line drive - a fly ball that is batted sharply and directly into the playing field.

bunt - a tapped ball not swung at but met with the bat

chopped ball - a batted ball intentionally directed downward so that the ball bounces high into the air.

ground ball - a batted ball that touches the ground, an umpire (in fair territory), or a runner (after a fielder has had a chance to make a play on it).

infield fly - a fair fly ball that can be caught by an infielder with a normal effort.

foul tip - a batted ball that goes directly to the catcher's glove and does not go above the batter's head.

Batted balls are ruled fair (batter and runners may advance) or foul (a strike) by the umpire.

An illegally batted ball occurs when the batter steps on the **mat** or **has his foot on the ground completely in front or behind the mat** when the bat contacts the ball.

A batter shall be ejected from the game if he is discovered to be using an altered bat or a non-approved bat after entering the batter's box. The ejected player is suspended until a review by the Disciplinary Committee appointed by the HDSE executive. A second offence will result in a minimum of one year suspension.

Note: An altered bat is one that has had its physical structure changed, including, but not limited to

1. The bat has had the surface of the barrel or the taper changed in any way such as by sandpapering or applying a solvent to the surface such as fingernail polish remover or by any other means,
2. The bat has had the plug or the knob removed/replaced or changed in any way,
3. The bat has had anything removed or added or inserted to the inside or outside of the bat other than tape at the handle or knob.
4. The bat has been repainted.

Other examples of an altered bat would be changing or replacing manufacturers' markings or replacing the handle of the metal bat with a wooden handle.

Cracked, worn, or damaged bats are not altered bats, but will be removed from play. Such cracked, worn, or damaged bats will not result in a player suspension unless the player returned the offending bat into play after it has been removed.

Running

The batter may proceed around the bases:

- when he hits a fair ball
- after four balls or an intentional walk
- after interference by the catcher
- When the batter runs to first, he may overrun first base and safely return to the base provided he does not try to advance to second base.
- On the batter's first attempt at first base on and play is made a first, he must use the orange portion of the Double Base. Once the batter has safely reached first base, he must now use the white portion. The defensive player always uses the white portion.

A runner may run the bases:

- when a fair ball is hit
- when a caught fly ball is first touched
- when the ball is overthrown and remains in play.

A runner is advanced:

- when a fair batted ball goes out of play (2 bases awarded from the time of the pitch)
- when a thrown (2 bases) or batted ball (3 bases) is contacted by a thrown glove (awarded from the time of the pitch)
- if forced when the batter is awarded a base on balls.
- when a live ball is carried or dropped out of play (1 base awarded from the time the ball became dead.)
- when the ball is overthrown and goes out of play (two bases awarded from the time of the throw/).
- when a defensive player obstructs the runner as he progresses around the base path. The umpire will award the placement he felt the runner would have made had there been no obstruction.

All awarded bases are from the last base legally touched and must be touched in the proper order.

A runner must return to the base:

- when the pitcher is ready to pitch (If he is not in contact with the base, he is declared out for a leadoff).
- when a foul ball is hit
- when the batter or another runner interferes with the defensive team (unless forced by the batter being awarded first base).
- when the ball is batted illegally.
- when a fly ball is caught. He may advance when the ball is first touched by a fielder.
- during a live ball, a runner may return to touch a base unless he has left the field of play or a succeeding
- runner has scored. He must proceed in reverse order touching all intervening bases.
- during a dead ball, a runner may return to touch a base.

Dismissals

A batter is out. The ball is dead and no runners may advance if:

- he has three strikes.
- he illegally bats the ball
- he bunts or chops downward on a pitch.
- a fielder deliberately drops a fly ball with at least a runner on first base and less than two out.
- he enters the batter's box with an illegal or altered bat.
- the batter before reaching first base, retreats towards home plate to avoid a tag.
- the batter hits an over the fence homerun in excess of the team limit.

A batter is out. The ball is alive and runners may advance if:

- his fly ball (fair or foul) is legally caught.
- his foul tip is legally caught.

- on a fair ball not caught on the fly, the ball is held by a fielder while touching first base before the batter touches first base.
- he hits an infield fly with less than two out and runners on first and second or first, second and third.

A runner is out, and the ball is dead if:

- on a pitched ball, he leaves the base before the ball has made contact with the bat on pitch. (strict no leadoff rule)
- he fails to return to his base following a halt in play.
- while off the base, he is hit by a fair batted ball before it has passed an infielder and no other fielder is in a position to make a play.
- he deliberately runs into a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to tag him.
- he interferes with an attempt to field a ball or with a thrown ball.

A runner is out, and the ball is alive if:

- he runs more than 1m. outside the established basepath to avoid a tag.
- on a force out, the fielder, while holding the ball, touches the base before the runner.
- while off his base, he is touched with the ball held by a fielder
- he overtakes a preceding runner
- a coach physically assists him.

A runner is not out if:

- he is touched by a fielder who does not have or does not maintain control of the ball.
- he runs outside the baseline to avoid interfering with a fielder fielding a ball.
- he is unintentionally hit by a batted ball while on a base.
- he is unintentionally hit by a batted ball while off a base, if no fielder has a chance to field the ball.

Note: A batter or runner is not out, if the fielder making a play on him uses an illegal glove

Explanations:

Basepath - An imaginary line from the runner to the base to which he is advancing.

Catch - A catch is not completed until the fielder securely holds the ball in his hand or his glove (which is properly worn on his hand) long enough to prove he has control of the ball and any release of the ball is voluntary or intentional. If the ball has hit anything other than the fielder or another fielder, it cannot be a caught fly ball.

Commitment Line - A line in foul territory, drawn 21 ft from the back of home plate and perpendicular to the third base line. When a runner crosses this line by touching the ground beyond the line but does not reach home plate, he shall be called out when the ball is legally held by a defensive player in contact with home plate. Runners, who have not crossed the line or who cross the line but must tag up on a caught fly ball, may return to third base.

Fair Ball - A batted ball that is touched while on or above fair ground, stops on fair territory within the infield, contacts a base, bounces over first or third base, or first lands on fair ground beyond the infield.

Foul Ball - a batted ball that is not fair.

Inbounds - The ball or a player is in bounds until they touch the ground or an object that is outside the designated playing area.

Interference - An offensive team player may not do anything to confuse, distract or hinder a fielder making a play.

Obstruction - A defensive player may not hinder or restrict a runner from progressing from base to base unless fielding a batted ball, holding the ball, or about to catch the ball.

Safe Line - A line drawn in foul territory starting at the top left-hand corner of home plate perpendicular to the third base line. A runner attempting to reach home must do so by touching the ground in foul territory on or beyond the SAFE line. Sliding into home plate is not allowed. The runner is out if he touches home plate **whether or not a play is being made**. A runner is not out if the plate is touched in an attempt to avoid a collision.