



Softball Leinster League Rules for the 2021 Season

The general rules Softball Leinster leagues follow set out by the WBSC and within the Softball Ireland guidelines for slow pitch softball except where they are contradicted below. The WBSC rules can be found online [here](#)

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Section I: Softball Leinster Leagues

Premier League: Games normally played on Tuesday Nights

Recreational League: Games normally played on Monday and Wednesday Nights

Section II: Team fees and charges

1. Team entry fee for all teams in all leagues for the 2021 Season is **€175**.
2. Early team registration is **€150** as long as team registration is received before the 24th of May by email to info@softballleinster.ie and payment is received before May 31st, 2021.
3. There is no team fee for any new team. A new team must have at least 7 players that have not been registered with SI or SL within the past 3 years.
4. The Umpire fee for the 2021 season is €40 and is split by both teams, unless a team forfeits without notifying Softball Leinster at least 2 hours before the game. If they do not provide the appropriate notification (2 hours) then the forfeiting team pays the entire fee. Softball Leinster will notify the opposing team and scheduled umpire at least 90mins before the game, if Softball Leinster do not provide the appropriate notification (90mins) then Softball Leinster pays the entire fee. If there are two umpires at a game, SL will pay the 2nd umpire. See SL Byelaw Section 5.2 on forfeits.
5. There is an Appeal Fee of €100 for Softball Leinster to review a team appeal. The appeal fee must be paid in advance of an appeal but will be refunded if the appeal proves successful.

Section III: The Rules of Play

The rules of play are those of the WBSC (World Baseball Softball Confederation) as contained in the current WBSC rulebook specific to co-ed slowpitch softball and SI regulations with the following adjustments.

1. Where there is a contradiction between the WBSC rules or these rules, these byelaws have precedence. SI Regulations supersede the WBSC rules, and do not contradict these rules. Some SL rules that counter the WBSC rules are:
 - 1.1. **“The Shorthanded Rule”** - Teams can begin and complete games shorthanded with 9 players. If an additional player arrives after the start of the game they can enter the game as long as they conform to the necessary, gender split as indicated below.
 - 1.2. **“Continued Play Rule”** – If gameplay is suspended, a game is considered complete once 5 full innings have been played, or 4 ½ innings if the home team has the lead. If a game is stopped prior to the fifth inning being completed by the umpire due to inclement weather or another valid reason, the game will resume from the point which the game was stopped and continue as normal through the completion of 7 innings or more if extra innings are necessary. No penalty will be given to teams for substitutions but returning players should bat in the same order they appeared previously. The same gender split should also be maintained.
 - 1.3. **“Run Ahead Rule”** – While in the WBSC a “run ahead” rule exists we have extended its application to begin in the 5th inning rather than the 4th. After 5 innings, a team ahead by 20 runs will be declared the winner, and after 6 innings a team ahead by 15 runs will be declared the winner. Teams may continue to play on as a friendly if they choose but the win should be logged by the umpire if either of those run ahead scores are achieved.
2. The required gender split in Softball Leinster can differ between the Premier League, Recreation League or any other SL League. There are no gender requirements for the Men’s League and both men and women are free to play without any gender advantages or disadvantages. The below rules apply only to the Premier and Recreation Leagues with regards to gender split.
 - 2.1. Premier and Recreation League teams can play 5 & 5 or 6 & 4 (or 6 & 6 or 7 & 5 if applying the WBSC extra player rule), This allows 6 men and 4 Women or 6 Women and 4 Men, under the conditions as listed below.
 - 2.1.1. When playing equal ratio of Men and Women or with more men, Women must alternate through the batting order. For example, playing 5 men and 5 women batting at either: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 or 1, 3, 5, 7, 9.
 - 2.1.2. In the Premier and Recreation League, when playing with 6 men and 4 women, the women must play in the spots 2, 4, 6, 8 or 1, 3, 5, 7. When playing with 6 women and 4 men, men must alternate through the batting order in the spots 2, 4, 6, 8 or 1, 3, 5, 7.
 - 2.1.3. In the Premier and Recreation League, when not playing with an even number of men and woman and playing the extra player rule, players must continue to alternate in similar manner as described in the above rule in this section 2.1.2.

- 2.2. When fielding there must be at least two female players in the outfield and two female players in the infield, unless a team plays under the short hand rule and the missing player is female. In this case the team must play with two females in the infield, one female in the outfield and one vacant position in the outfield.
- 2.3. Any substitute must be of the same gender as the substituted player.
- 2.4. If a team is playing under the shorthanded rule, then the missing player becomes an automatic out in the last position for that gender in the batting order. If both teams are playing shorthanded they can choose to play with no automatic out.
- 2.5. In the Premier and Recreation League, when playing 6 Men and 4 Women the catcher must be male but there is no requirement that the pitcher must be female. A pitcher counts as an infield position.
- 2.6. A male batter who is walked will be awarded 2 bases if the next batter is a female player, but only 1 base if another male follows him in the batting order.
 - 2.6.1. When playing under the short hand rule, a male batter who is walked will be awarded only 1 base if he is followed by an automatic out (even if the automatic out should have been a female player).
- 2.7. A team must complete the game with the same gender split it started with.
3. A digital team roster must be completed and sent via text to the umpire and opposing team captain before the game. Captains can take a photo of a written team roster or it is also available to be downloaded in the SL Links section of softballleinster.ie website
4. Umpires can take a photo of a written match report or complete a digital copy, available to be downloaded in the SL Links section of softballleinster.ie website, and send to umpires@softballleinster.ie or upload it to the WhatsApp umpire group.
5. Bases do not need to be spiked.
6. The distance between bases shall be sixty-five feet.
7. The standard softball for all Softball Leinster Premier League, Recreation League and Men's League games, as well as SL official tournaments, is of any brand that has a legible stamp showing it is approved by the ASA and
 - 7.1. For male batters and all players in the Men's League the balls should be 12" in size and a COR .52 with a compression of .300.
 - 7.2. For female batters in the Premier and Recreation League it should be an 11" in size and a COR .52 with a compression of .300.
8. A courtesy runner is allowed for an injured batter-runner or runner under the below two conditions. It is the discretion of the umpire who may consult with both captains as to whether a courtesy runner is warranted.
 - 8.1. A courtesy runner of the same sex is allowed on any base, if the batter-runner or runner is injured in that play

- 8.2. If the batter-runner is already injured then a courtesy runner of the same sex is only allowed on 1st base, unless the runner is awarded 2nd base with a walk or a ground rule double.
- 8.3. In cases where there is any doubt about the applicability or interpretation of any SL rule, the decision shall ultimately rest with the umpire. Where no umpire is present, the two captains will record any disputed interpretation on the match report and record the position of play (i.e. position of runners, next batting position, outs runs and score) at the time of the dispute. Where possible games should be completed but should an appeal be forthcoming no prejudice shall exist on any side.
9. SL will adopt the USA Softball banned bat list and USA Softball approved bat list. The current USA Softball Bat list can be found here:
http://usa.asasoftball.com/e/build_batlist_one_page.asp.
- 9.1. An umpire has the right, on the grounds of safety, to stop a player or team from using a specific bat that he/she feels is an altered or banned bat. In such a case, the bat shall be removed from play by the umpire and returned to the player after the game. The player or team can appeal this decision to SL. SL will then determine if the bat is banned or has been tampered with. If the bat is banned or has been tampered with, then the bat will not be allowed to be used in any SL organised event. The team will not be allowed to appeal the result of the game.
10. The batter will enter the batter's box with a strike count of zero balls and zero strikes in all SL league matches.
11. The maximum pitching arc will be 12 foot and a minimum arc of 6 foot for all SL games and tournaments.
12. The responsibility for determining whether the quality of a ball is of a suitably high standard for use remains with the umpires.

Section IV: The Field of Play

1. Every team must ensure that their home ground is suitable, safe and that they have all the necessary permits to play there. If there is any doubt about suitability and safety, the club representative should request an inspection by SL or the SL umpiring chief.
2. Ground rules will be set by the umpire, after consultation with both team captains. The ground rules should be recorded in the match report and forwarded to SL.
3. If a team's home ground is continually unavailable, SL can instruct them to make alternative arrangements. The team in question may be instructed to play games away at an alternate venue for their home field if alternative arrangements cannot be made.

Section V: Equipment and Safety

1. Each home team is required to have the minimum following list of equipment for each SL competition game. Failure to have the below equipment will result in a forfeit.

- 1.1. One full set of softball bases including one dual-coloured safety base at first base, two single bases, a home plate and a pitcher's plate.
- 1.2. At least two legal 12" softballs and at least two legal 11" softballs.
2. All Teams must have:
 - 2.1. At least one legal softball bat.
 - 2.2. At least ten softball gloves (nine if playing the Short hand rule).
3. In addition, Home Team must have where applicable, a letter from the local or government authority certifying authorisation to use the ground.
4. Any other gear as deemed necessary by Softball Ireland, the national governing body, including helmets that are National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) approved softball batting helmets.
5. A First Aid Kit with the minimal standard gear including:
 - 5.1. Assorted Plasters/Bandages
 - 5.2. Saline
 - 5.3. Two Instant Ice packs
6. Players must wear acceptable footwear which is in the opinion of the umpire does not create a danger to other players' safety. An umpire has the right, on the grounds of safety, to stop a player from wearing footwear, which in the umpire's opinion may threaten the safety of other players. Footwear which may be deemed unsafe for play includes:
 - 6.1. All metal studs.
 - 6.2. Metal baseball cleats.
 - 6.3. Screw on studs (screw in studs are acceptable, once they are rubber).
 - 6.4. Any plastic or rubber stud, which through wear and has become worn or sharp to the touch and in the opinion of the umpire, may cause injury to any other player.
7. If a team attends a fixture without a full uniform, then the minimum acceptable standard will be tops of similar colour. This will be based upon the judgement of the assigned umpire.
 - 7.1. Players may wear outer garments due to adverse weather conditions.

Section VI: Player Eligibility

1. Players must be registered with Softball Leinster by their team captain and designate a primary team playing within Softball Leinster. The Softball Ireland player registration fee for the 2021 is per team and is **€350** for the season no matter how many players are registered.
 - 1.1. Players can be registered to play on two different teams, if one team is in the Premier League and one team is in the Recreation league. They do not need an exemption as described in this Section VI 5
 - 1.2. An umpire or any other SL official is entitled to ask for proof of identity of any player. In the absence of satisfactory proof of identity, the player may

be asked for a signature, and allowed to play under caution. SL may require the team or player to substantiate this identification at a later date.

- 1.3. Impersonation of another member is a category 3 offence by the player and the team.
2. The lower age limit for participation in any SL competition is 18 years with the following exception listed below:
 - 2.1. A team may apply to SL or SI for a skills exception for players aged 16 and 17 years of age. An exception may be granted subject to agreement by the SL committee or the SI council. Under 18 players must conform to the SI underage player requirements.
 - 2.1.1. All players aged under 18 must wear an approved softball batting helmet when batting and running the bases.
 - 2.1.2. All players aged under 18 must use a mouth guard when playing the infield.
 - 2.1.3. The Club the player registers with must meet all Safeguarding requirements and comply with the Children First Legislation.
3. SL does not accept any liability in cases where the player's condition renders them excluded from SI's insurance policy.
4. A player may not play for more than one club in SL competitions in a season without applying for a cross team/club exemption as described in section VI 5 or applying for and being granted a transfer of registration under the conditions listed below. This does not exclude a player playing for more than one team in a multi-team club in a season as listed in section VI.1.7.
 - 4.1. SL will transfer a registration within seven days, provided:
 - 4.1.1. The player is not subject to any disciplinary penalties or proceedings at the time.
 - 4.1.2. There are at least three games (excluding playoffs) still to be played by the destination club.
 - 4.2. Players can transfer between teams within a club once during the season with these conditions:
 - 4.2.1. The player is not subject to any disciplinary penalties or proceedings at the time.
 - 4.2.2. Exemptions used previous to the transfer are carried over for that player.
 - 4.3. Within the Recreation League, male players can only request an exemption to play with each team outside of their club once. Female players can request an exemption to play with each team outside of their club twice.
5. Players should be registered to a primary team within a club and can be registered with multiple teams as long as they play in different leagues. Players can play for another team within their club by emailing a notification to exemptions@softballleinster.ie within 24 hours from the start of the game. No response is needed for approval but playing a player without marking the exemption on player lineup sheet or not sending an exemption email after 24 hours from the start of game may result in that team forfeiting the game as described in Section VIII.

- 5.1. Playing up: A player registered on a lower ranked team according to TLS is allowed play for a higher ranked team within their club 5 times during the season. Once this player has played 5 times for any higher ranked team they must return to their original team and will not be permitted to play for another higher ranked team.
- 5.2. Playing down: Players registered on a higher ranked team according to TLS can play for a lower ranked team within their club according to the following conditions.
 - 5.2.1. The number of players allowed to play down for each league game is either 2 females, or 1 male and 1 female.
 - 5.2.2. Each player can play 5 times per season for a lower ranked team within their club. Once the player plays for any lower ranked team in their club to a total of 5 times they are not permitted to play anymore games for any lower ranked team for the remainder of the season.
 - 5.2.3. An exempted male can only play catcher, right field or pitcher - An exempted female can avail of any position.
- 5.3. Teams can avail of an inter-club exemption of up to two players for each league game from any team or club in the league to reach 10 players.
 - 5.3.1.1. The number of players allowed to play down for each league game is either 2 females, or 1 male and 1 female.
 - 5.3.1.2. An exempted player can only play twice for that team during the season and their exemption does not count towards the 5 exemptions that players might use within their club.
 - 5.3.1.3. An exempted male can only play catcher, right field or pitcher - An exempted female can avail of any position.
- 5.3.2. No exemptions are needed to play on a SL designated All Star Team and do not count towards their overall club exemptions.
- 5.4. The maximum number of exempted players that may play for a team for any league game is 5 regardless of whether players are playing down, or up, from their own club or another club.
 - 5.4.1. This does not pertain to interleague games or All-Star teams.
- 5.5. Exemptions cannot be obtained to play with the WBSC extra player rules. Maximum number of starting players when using exemptions is 10.
- 5.6. It is not permitted to get an exemption for a player whose primary team is in the Premier league, to play for another team in the Premier league.
- 5.7. Exemptions used previous to the transfer are carried with the player to his new team regardless of whether the transfer is between teams in their own club or with a new club.

Section VII: Fixtures

1. All fixtures are the property of SL. No club may rearrange a fixture without the express consent of SL. This consent can be given by phone, email or text.
2. In exceptional circumstances a club may make a written request for postponement. SL has the complete discretion to grant or refuse a postponement and where granted, will reschedule the fixture. All written requests must be submitted to SL. Postponements will only be granted in extreme circumstances, with the following exceptions:
 - 2.1. SL will grant postponements or reschedule games upon written request prior to the 15th of May and no less than 30 days prior to the date the game is scheduled to take place if 2 or more members of the team have been selected to represent Ireland in a playing or coaching capacity and will be away during the time the scheduled game is set to take place. No more than 2 days travel time within Europe and 3 days travel time outside of Europe will be considered.
3. Where a field appears unsafe for play and in the absence of an umpire, either club captain can refuse to play and seek retrospective permission for a postponement without incurring a forfeit.
4. A game suspended for reason of light, safety or any other reason determined by an umpire (or agreed by the captains in absence of an umpire) will need to be completed. Both teams and umpire should notify SL, letting them know the game was not completed and the will need to be scheduled. Details of such a suspension must include the position of play (i.e. line-ups, position of runners, next batting position, outs, runs, strikes/balls and score) at the time of the suspension. The rescheduled game will resume from the exact point of the suspension of play of the original game and will continue to completion.
5. All postponed and suspended games must be concluded by the end of the nearest appropriate free week in the schedule, or two weeks, if there are no free weeks. If both clubs are unable to agree date, SL may set the date of the fixture at its discretion. Failure to play any re-arranged fixture by a date set by SL where reasonable notice was given may result in one or both teams forfeiting the game in accordance with rule VIII.1.

Section VIII: Forfeits

1. A forfeit is awarded against any team that does not have enough registered players available to begin within 15 minutes of the designated start time. A double forfeit applies if both teams are short of players.
 - 1.1. If both team have at least nine registered and eligible players to commence the game under the shorthanded rule before 15 minutes have elapsed from the designated start time, then the game must begin.
2. A forfeit is awarded against a team that is unable to continue due to the departure or ejection of players. The minimum number to start or continue is nine.
 - 2.1. In accordance with WBSC rules, if a player is ejected then the team must have a legal replacement available to continue and avoid a forfeit.

3. A Forfeit is not awarded against a team that is unable to continue with the minimum numbers of players due to an injury that happened during that game. However, a seven-nil loss will be awarded.
4. A team will forfeit any game where it is found that they have used a player who has not been registered prior to the start of that game.
5. In the event of a forfeit, SL will determine who will pay any applicable fees.
6. A club found to play a player from another team within their club without an exemption will be in breach of rule Section VI 5 and relevant subsections found within that rule, will forfeit all points for all games in which the player(s) breached the same byelaws. The opposing team will be awarded the win and the appropriate points for a win.

Section IX: League, Championship & Tournament Structures

1. The structure and any applicable playing rules for SL league matches will be issued to all competing clubs at least one week before commencement of each season.
 - 1.1. These rules must be issued prior to the start of the season but can be revised during the season and after the schedules are released. Separate notification of rule changes may come individually or incorporated in whole into this document.
2. Softball Leinster will have two or more leagues and will be scheduled based on the number of teams entering those leagues. Teams will play an equal number of home and away fixtures, or as close to equal as possible depending on whether there is an even or odd number of games played.
 - 2.1. The Premier League will consist of one division and the division will be named Premier (or Prem).
 - 2.2. The Recreation League will have two or more divisions starting with the 1st Division, 2nd, 3rd and so forth.
3. The home team will be designated according to the schedule as issued by SL and the home team will be listed first.
4. In the event of a gap developing in the league schedule due to the non-participation of a team, SL may fill the scheduling gap with interleague matches, All Star team or any other competition it sees fit.
5. In the event of a team withdrawing or being expelled from the league, all of their fixtures will be removed from the schedule and any league points gained in fixtures against them will be deducted from the other teams in the division.
6. Points for all league games will be 5 points for a win or walkover, 2 for a loss and 0 for a forfeit or conceding a walkover.
 - 6.1. For interleague or non-divisional games teams will not be awarded any points.
7. At the end of the 2019 season the two teams in Division 1 with the lowest amount of points in that division, regardless of conferences, will have a TLS lower than the team with the most points in Division 2.

8. **Relegation Matches:** The team that finishes with the third lowest amount of points in the 1st division's lower conference will play a relegation match with the team in the 2nd division who finishes with the highest amount of points in that lower division. If the team from the higher division wins the game, both teams will stay in their respective divisions. If the team from the lower division wins the game they will move up as many as 2 spots in the TLS, but still below any team which finished higher than them during the season. If the team that lost the relegation match was from the upper division, they will move as many as two TLS spots but still ahead of any team they finished higher than during the season.
 - 8.1. If there is only one division in a league there will be no relegation or promotion. New teams can enter at the lowest TLS for the League until enough teams warrant splitting the league into two or more divisions.
9. SL will nominate the highest ranked eligible team(s) in the Softball Leinster Premier Division at the completion of the full league season to represent Softball Leinster at the Softball Ireland National Club Championships (SINCC).

Section X: Tied League Standings

1. In the event of teams being tied on number of league points, the following criteria will be applied.
2. Tied teams will be ranked in the following order
 - 2.1. First teams will be ranked by the inverse number of walkovers.
 - 2.2. Second, by the results of games amongst the tied teams themselves. Maintaining the points designated for wins, losses and walkovers. (This is creating a new mini table with the tied teams)
 - 2.3. Lastly, if all or some teams are still tied then remaining tied teams will be ranked by their runs conceded record in the games amongst the tied teams; The teams with the lowest runs conceded will be placed ahead of the others.
3. Resolution of any circumstances with regard to a tied league standing not foreseen here will be decided by the Softball Leinster Committee.

Section XI: Team League Standings

1. A team's league standing (TLS) is based on its final league position at the end of the preceding season (after promotion and relegations and taking account of any relevant disciplinary penalties in force). Each team is given a seeding corresponding to its TLS, so that "1" represents the seeding of the highest placed team.
2. The TLS and seeding are the joint property of the majority of registered players on the team from the seeding season.
3. Any team registered before the last day of registration will be offered a league position in accordance with their TLS.
4. A newly merged team must choose the TLS of one of its 'parent' teams. A TLS may be assigned by SL based on the registered players from the player's previous season.
5. All other TLS's revert to SL for re-allocation and teams will move up within their division to leave any vacancies at the bottom.

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6. After the final closing date for team registration, any vacant league position may be filled by a team from the division below. The position will be first offered to the team with the highest TLS, then the next team and so on.
7. Resolution of any circumstances with regard to Team League Standing not foreseen here will be decided by the Softball Leinster Committee.