

Softball Leinster Bye-Laws 2022

Published 01/03/2022

Softball Leinster leagues follow rules set out by the WBSC and within the Softball Ireland guidelines for slow pitch softball except for these amendments.

These rules must be issued prior to the start of the season but can be revised during the season in line with the SL Constitution.

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Section I: Softball Leinster Leagues

Made up of Prem, Divisions 1, 2, and 3. Played Monday to Weds nights usually.

Section II: Team fees and Umpire Fees

1. There is no team fee for any new team. A new team must be made up of at least 50% players that have not been registered with SI or SL within the past 3 years.
2. Annual team fees and all associated costs are decided by the incumbent SL committee and notified to all teams at least 4 weeks before start of season.
3. Umpire fees are set each year by SL and are 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) to SL then the forfeiting team pays the entire fee. If notified, Softball Leinster will notify the opposing team and scheduled umpire at least 90mins before the game. If SL allocates two umpires at a game, SL will occasionally pay the 2nd umpire.

Section III: The Rules of Play

The rules of play are those of the WBSC (World Baseball Softball Confederation) as contained in the current (2018-2021) WBSC rulebook specific to co-ed slow pitch 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.
 - **“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.
 - **“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.
 - **“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.

- SL 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.
 - 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.
 - 1..2. 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.
 - 1..3. When not playing with an even number of men and women, 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.

 - 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.
 - Any substitute must be of the same gender as the substituted player.
 - If a team is playing under the shorthanded rule, then the missing player becomes an automatic out (AO) in the last position for that gender in the batting order. If both teams are playing shorthanded, and only with the same number of starting players, they can choose to play with no automatic out.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 1..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).
 - A team must complete the game with the same gender split it started with.
2. Team rosters, digital or paper versions, must be given to the umpire prior to game start. These are available to be downloaded on the softballleinster.ie website.
 3. Umpires must 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 upload to the WhatsApp umpire group.
 4. 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.
 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
 - 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.
 - 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 at the discretion of the umpire who may also choose to consult/agree with both captains.
 - 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 An injured player who requests a courtesy runner at their first at-bat must take a courtesy runner for all subsequent at-bats in that game.
 - 8.3 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.
 - 8.4 The courtesy runner must be the last batter of the same sex **to have been out** or, if there have been no outs in the whole game, the last batter of the same sex due up at the time.
 - 8.5 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.

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. 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. 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.
4. A full First Aid Kit.
5. 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.
 - 5.1. Players may wear outer garments due to adverse weather conditions.
6. Bats marked "WBSC", "ISF" or "ASA" approved are permitted for use in the SL region. The bats should have one of these logos clearly visible.
7. In addition, the bats used should not be included on the ASA non-approved bat list. Visit http://usa.asasoftball.com/e/build_batlist_w_pics_2000.asp to see a full list of banned bats.
8. An umpire has the right to stop a player or team from using a specific bat that he/she feels is an altered or banned bat. 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.
9. The responsibility for determining whether the quality of a ball is of a suitably high standard for use remains with the umpires.

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 (SI) player registration fee is designated annually by SI.
 - 1.1. 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.
 - 1.2. 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 4.3 or applying for and being granted a transfer of registration under the conditions listed below.
 - 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.
 - 4.2.3. No fees are owed to the club the player is leaving.

4.3. EXEMPTIONS.

- 1..1. Max exemptions per game is either 2 females, or 1 male and 1 female.
- 1..2. An exempted male player can only play catcher, right field or pitcher – an exempted female can play any position.
- 1..3. Players may play DOWN 5 times ONLY.
- 1..4. Players may play UP 5 times ONLY.
- 1..5. Males can play UP in the PREM Division 3 times. On the 3rd occasion they are designated as PREM players.
- 1..6. PREM registered males cannot play in Division 3.

- **In line with the SL Exemptions Strategy, PREM teams will be exempted from clauses 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 for the 2022 season.**

- No exemptions are needed to play on a SL designated All Star Team.
- Exemptions cannot be obtained to play with the WBSC extra player rules. Maximum number of starting players when using exemptions is 10.
- Exemptions must be notified to SL info@softballeinster.ie before game starts.
- Exemptions **MUST** be noted on teamsheet handed to umpire before the game starts.
- 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.
- 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. No club may rearrange a fixture without the express consent of SL. This may be 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 will need to be scheduled.
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/Adverse Weather Conditions

1. A forfeit is awarded against any team that does not have enough registered players available to begin within 20 minutes of the designated start time. A double forfeit applies if both teams are short of players.
 - 1.1. If both teams have at least nine registered and eligible players to commence the game under the shorthanded rule before 20 minutes have elapsed from the designated start time, then the game should begin.
 - 1.2. It is the responsibility solely of the umpire to call a game off due to adverse weather conditions. The umpire will make this decision at the field of play. The only exception is where the ranger or park/pitch keeper has called off the venue. The sequence is; **Park Ranger – Umpires – Team Captains** (in absence of umpire).
 - 1.3. If one team does not have a legal team, and the game is called off by the umpire due to numbers and/or weather conditions, the game is forfeited and the win is awarded to the team with the legal requirement present.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. In the event of a forfeit, SL will determine who will pay any applicable fees.
5. A club found to play a player from another team within their club without an exemption will be in breach of rule Section VI 4.3 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 2 weeks before commencement of each season.
2. Softball Leinster leagues 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.
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. 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. At completion of the league season, the team last in each division is deemed relegated, and the team top of each division is deemed promoted for the next season ahead. If teams wish to agree a variance to this, they must approach SL for a decision in advance of the new season.
3. The TLS and seeding are the joint property of the majority of registered players on the team from the seeding season.
4. Any team registered before the last day of registration will be offered a league position in accordance with their TLS.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. Resolution of any circumstances with regard to Team League Standing not foreseen here will be decided by the Softball Leinster Committee.

