

**Holden Recreation
2024 ADULT SLOW PITCH SOFTBALL
RULE CHANGES & REMINDERS**

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

- Players must be 18 years of age prior to the start of the season to be eligible to play. Each team must consist of one player over the age of 20 years old.
- Players must live in the Wachusett District to be eligible to play.
- If a team needs players, a free agent list is available upon request.
- All players must be registered on a Holden Recreation team roster OR a participant added on a waiver card. Player information must be completed before the player can play in the league.
- Everyone will be required to fill out a roster for the 2024 season. Rosters are due by June 10, 2024. If your team gets rained out/canceled/forfeited before the deadline – you will have an extra week extension.
 - **Player Additions:** After rosters have been turned in, players can complete add on cards or make additions to their roster. The add on cards or updated rosters must be turned in prior to game time. These can be emailed to Allie (aconnell@holdenma.gov) or dropped off to the office.
- Team rosters and participant waiver cards MUST be filled out completely and clearly before being accepted. If any falsified information appears on either document, the player, manager and team will be subject to possible suspension or removal from the program.
- Players may play on more than one team in the Holden Recreation Softball program.
- Players may be added to the roster, via add on form, until the post season tournament. No add-on will be accepted after the tournament brackets have been sent out. Any player that is found to be illegally playing for a team will result in a forfeit.
- NO alcohol will be allowed in any Holden Recreation areas including the parking lots. It is a Town ordinance. Any individual under the influence of alcohol or drinking alcoholic beverages on the premises (park property) WILL be prohibited from participation or ejected from the game.

EQUIPMENT

- Softballs – Softballs will be provided by the Recreation Department. One new ball and one good back up ball will be used per game.
- Bats –For a bat to be legal in Holden Recreation Slow Pitch Softball leagues, "The official bat, made up of the knob, handle, grip, taper, barrel and end cap shall be free of burs, dents cracks, sharp edges, rattles and show no signs of excessive wear. The official bat may be marked OFFICIAL SOFTBALL by the manufacturer, and shall be no more than 34 inches long nor exceed 38 ounces in weight. The official bat shall not be

more than 2.250 inches in diameter at its largest part, including any tolerance for expansion. The official bat must bear either the 2000 Certification Mark, 2004 Certification Mark, or 2013 Certification Mark (Slow Pitch, Men's Adult Fast Pitch, Junior Olympic Boy's Fast Pitch and Men's Modified only), as shown below and must not be listed on the USA Softball Non-Approved Bat List with 2000 or 2004 Certification Mark."

- "USA Softball has begun transitioning to the new USA Softball Certification Marks for the 2020 calendar year. On behalf of equipment manufacturers, the USA Softball Equipment Testing and Certification Committee requested that the new certification marks be approved for the 2019 calendar year and the USA Softball Board of Directors approved the new marks (seen here) for 2019 USA Softball Championship Play. The Official Rules of Softball, Rule 3, Sections 1 and 3 will be updated for 2020 to identify the new Certification Marks for Championship Play."
- The Recreation Department reserves the right to not allow any other bat judged to compromise the safety of any player or the integrity of the program. (Bats with dents or bats that rattle are not legal.) When a batter uses an illegal bat and reaches base safely and it is discovered before the next legal pitch is thrown the batter-runner will be called out.
- PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING LINK FOR MORE INFORMATION ON BATS:
<https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Softball/Certified-Equipment/Equipment-Bats>
- Jewelry – Exposed jewelry, which is judged by the umpire to be dangerous, must be removed and may not be worn during the game. This is for the safety of everyone involved. A team warning will be issued for the first violation. If the person is not abiding by the rule, they will be considered an out and will not be allowed on the field. Medical alert bracelets or necklaces are not considered jewelry. If worn they must be taped to the body so the medical alert information remains visible. All players play at their own risk.
- Shoes must be worn at all times. NO metal cleats will be allowed. If metal cleats are worn, the player will be asked to change.
- Music is only acceptable during warmups and walkups, but it must be family-friendly and must be played at an appropriate volume.

PLAYING RULES

- Game start times will be 5:30 pm and 6:45 pm.
- Time Limit – There will be 6 innings in a game. No new inning shall start after the 60-minute time limit has been reached.
- The game clock will start at game time, or as soon as the home team takes the field.
- **Mercy Rule** – 20 runs after 3 innings, 15 runs after 4 innings, and 10 runs after 5 innings.
- There will be a 20-run cap per inning.
- **Pinch Runners** – There will be one pinch runner allowed per inning. The same batter may have more than one pinch runner per game. Pinch runners will be any player from the batting line-up chosen by the hitting team. A pinch runner whose turn at bat comes up while on base will be called out. The pinch runner will be removed from the base and take their turn at bat.

- On a fair batted ball hit by any batter into the outfield (green grass) fielded by an outfielder, NO throw shall be made by any outfielder in an attempt to retire the batter-runner at first base.
 - **Effect:** Immediate Dead Ball: All runners are awarded 2 bases from the position of the runners at the time the ball left the outfielder's hand.
 - Can an infielder field a ball beyond the skin of the infield and make a play?
 - An infielder who fields a fair batted ball in the outfield is exempt. The rule only applies to outfielders who field the ball.
 - Can an outfielder throw to first to retire a runner trying to return to 1B in a tag up situation? Outfielder may throw to first base in an attempt to double up a runner on 1B. The rule only applies to plays made on the batter runner.
 - Can an outfielder field a ball to an infielder to make the throw to first? No throws in an attempt to retire the batter-runner at 1B are allowed once the batted ball is fielded by an outfielder.
- Defensive positioning – players on coed teams may play in any position. If teams have 10 players, they need to have 4 outfielders.
- Encroachment Line – An encroachment line will be used in the outfield. If an outfielder passes in front of this line before the batter hits a fair batted ball, the batter will receive a single base or the result of the play, and the base runners will advance accordingly. The line will be 175 ft from home plate.
- Batters – All batters will start with a 1 ball and 1 strike count. One grace foul after two strikes will be allowed.
- Any ball that comes in contact with the backstop netting is considered a dead ball.
- A foul ball/foul tipped ball that is caught is an out regardless of the height on the ball and strike count.
- Any batter that steps a foot outside of the box upon making contact with the ball will be an immediate out. After lines fade away through the night, this will be up to the best judgment of your umpires.
- Double First Base-
 - A batted ball hitting the white portion is declared fair and a batted ball hitting the color portion is declared foul.
 - Whenever a play is being made on the batter-runner on the fair side of first base, the defense must use the white portion and the batter-runner must use the colored portion.
 - On extra base hits, balls hit to the outfield, or tagging up on a fly ball when there is no play being made at the double base, the batter-runner may touch the white or colored portion.
 - On any force out attempt to the foul side of first base, the defense and the batter-runner can use either the white or colored portion. (NOTE: This includes overthrows.

- **Pitching** – The arch must stay within 6-14 feet. Any pitch hitting home plate will be considered a ball.
- **Tie Breaker** - The international tiebreaker rule will be enforced if a game is tied after 6 complete innings, or the beginning of the next inning after time runs out, whichever comes first.
 - Teams will start the next full inning with the last batter of the previous inning on 2nd base.
 - There will be 0 outs and each team will get a chance to score.
 - If the game is still tied after the extra inning, the game will go into as many innings as it takes to determine a winner with the international tiebreaker in effect.
- **Collisions:** Umpires have been instructed to watch for collisions, particularly at home plate and second base. Base runners must make every effort to avoid collisions with fielders.
 - Anyone intentionally colliding with a fielder may result in an ejection.
- **Fake Tags:** Any player using a fake tag without injury could result in obstruction and ejection from the game. Any player using a fake tag that results in an injury will be ejected from the game. This is considered your warning.
- **Late Arriving Players:** Any player arriving late can take the field (defense) immediately upon arrival. Any player arriving late after the batting lineup has been through once, must be added to the bottom of the lineup. If the lineup has not been gone through, the player can be added to the remaining portion that hasn't batted yet.
 - EX: You are batting 10 players, you've been through your 5th hitter, the arriving player can be added anywhere in the 6-10 spots.

FIRST AID PROCEDURES

- If an injury is serious, contact the Town of Holden Police Department (911). The injured person should not be moved.
- Basic First Aid kits will be provided by Holden Recreation.
- Each team is responsible for administering basic first aid, if necessary, for their own team.
- If the injury involves body fluids (blood, pus, mucus, etc.) please follow the Bloodborne Pathogen Procedures:
 - The game will be stopped by the umpires at the time a bodily fluid exposure is recognized. The game clock will also stop at the same time until the situation has been adequately addressed.
 - The player cannot return to the game until, in the umpire's judgment, the bodily fluid flow is stopped or sufficiently protected.
 - If a garment is soiled with a bodily fluid, the player cannot return to the game unless a clean (unsoiled with a bodily fluid) garment is used. The injury should be recorded on a Parks and Recreation Department injury form.

HOME RUN RULE

- The team hitting the home runs must retrieve the ball immediately.

- Batter is not required to run out any over the fence home runs. Batter is not required to touch 1st base.
- If a defensive player touches the ball and it goes over the fence it will be considered a home run.

SCORE KEEPING

- Both teams will be responsible for keeping score for their team. Both team scorekeepers need to be accessible to both teams. In the event of a discrepancy, the umpires will need the score sheet from both teams. Home team will be the official scorekeeper. No score sheet, no protest. It is recommended team scorekeepers confirm the score each inning.

START OF THE GAME & FORFEITS

- Game time is forfeit time. If a team does not have the appropriate number of players to start the game (8) they will receive a forfeit.
 - If you must forfeit a game, please let Allie know immediately, she will notify the other team.
 - If your opponent forfeits and you are notified, you are more than welcome to use your game time as batting practice or fielding practice. Please just be respectful of the time and make sure you are off the field by the next game time.
 - If a forfeit is made at the field, a scrimmage will be offered. Feel free to play your players however you want and have fun.
- If a team forfeits two games during a season they will be dropped from the league and every attempt will be made to make a new schedule for that league, if time allows.
- All teams have the option of starting with 10 players in all slow pitch leagues. If additional players arrive after the game has started, they may be added to the bottom of the lineup. You must let the umpire and the opposing team know when you add anyone to the lineup.
- All teams have the option of starting the game with (no less than) 8 players. If teams start with 8 or 9 players, the 9th or 10th spot in the lineup will be left vacant without penalty. If the 9th or 10th player arrives after the game has started, those players may be added to the bottom of the line up without penalty. Teams cannot choose to start the game with 8 or 9 players if 10 are available.
- All teams have the option of starting the game with up to 20 players. Ten players must play defense, then you may have up to 20 players on your batting line up.
- If a player is **ejected** from a game for any reason their spot in the lineup will be considered an out. If a player leaves the game for any reason other than ejection, their spot in the lineup will be **left vacant without penalty**.
 - If you drop below 8 players due to an ejection, the game will be considered a forfeit. But if both teams would like, they can resume the game as a scrimmage.
 - If a player leaves the game due to an injury the game may resume with no less than 7 players.

SUSPENSIONS AND EJECTIONS

- Any player found illegal (not on the roster) will be suspended for at least one game. That player must then complete the roster, or add-on form, in order to play.
- Any individual ejected from a game for any reason MUST leave the ball field area. An umpire has the right to request that the ejected participant leave the park as deemed necessary. (NOTE: An umpire has the right to forfeit a game if a player, manager, individual, or team does not comply with the rules and regulations – this includes our alcohol rule)
- Any individual ejected from a game is automatically suspended for a minimum of one game (the team's next scheduled game), even if that game is a playoff game.
 - The suspension will depend on the severity of the ejection. Any individual on suspension cannot be in the team or bench area during his/her suspension.
- Any individual suspended for a second time in a season will risk suspension from the program.
- The Recreation Department's definition of fighting is any threatening action, even in retaliation!
 - Any violation WILL result in an indefinite and likely a permanent suspension from all programs.
- **Profanity directed at another player or umpire, unsportsmanlike conduct, and verbal or physical abuse will not be tolerated.**
- Physical contact of any kind with an umpire or other player WILL result in an indefinite suspension from the program.

PROTESTS

- Protests DO NOT include an umpire's judgment call.
- A manager or coach wishing to make a formal protest on a rule interpretation should use the following procedure:
 - Notify the home plate umpire you are protesting the game before the next pitch.
 - All protests must be made in writing and turned into the Recreation Department by the end of the following day.
 - All protests must be accompanied by a \$25.00 fee, which is paid to the Recreation Department.
 - If the protest is supported by the department the \$25.00 fee will be returned to the team and the appropriate action will be taken. If the protest is not allowed, the fee will be deposited into the Recreation Department fund.
- Protests concerning player eligibility will be handled by the protested player signing the score card. The protest must be made at the time the player is suspected of being ineligible. Player eligibility protests cannot be made after the 3rd inning has concluded. If you are protesting a player you must tell the home plate umpire immediately. Any player that is found ineligible will be suspended and the team will receive a forfeit for that game.
 - If your team does not turn in a roster for the season and player eligibility is questioned, it will result in a forfeit as well.

POSTPONED AND RESCHEDULED GAMES

- If the weather is questionable the decision to cancel games will be determined at or after 4:30pm. If games are not canceled by 5:30pm it will be a game time decision made by the umpires. Allie will email managers immediately once a decision is made. DO NOT CALL THE OFFICE.
- Cancellations will be posted on the website, and/or to the Facebook page.
- Any game postponed by weather, before 4 innings are completed, will be replayed in their entirety if time allows. Any game postponed by weather after 4 innings are completed will be considered a complete game.
 - NOTE: The Recreation Department reserves the right to start a game during the inning the postponement occurred.
- Any postponed games that require to be rescheduled will be moved to the end of the league schedule or we will look to utilize other available time slots.
 - Every attempt will be made to reschedule games on the normal league night. If we experience a lot of rainouts, please be prepared to play make up games on whichever night is the next available.
- Team managers will be emailed a revised schedule after any canceled or postponed games.
- Game schedules and standings will always be posted on the website at holdenma.myrec.com

DETERMINING LEAGUE CHAMPIONS/TOURNAMENT BRACKET SEEDING

- The team with the best record in each league will win the regular season league championship. If there is a tie for any place in the standings, the league champion will be determined in the following order (unless noted otherwise when you receive your schedule):
 - Win/Loss record against team(s) tied
 - If a team(s) forfeited a game during the season and the team(s) tied with did not, then the team(s) with the forfeit loses the tie-breaker.
 - Fewest runs allowed in games against team(s) tied
 - Run differential in games against team(s) tied
 - Total runs in games against team(s) tied
 - Fewest runs allowed during the season.
 - Run differential during the season.
 - Total runs during the season.
 - Win/Loss record against the team with the next best record, continuing down the standings until the tie is broken.
- ****PLEASE NOTE THAT ONCE TOURNAMENT BRACKETS ARE RELEASED, WE WILL NOT CHANGE RECORDS.** It is your duty as manager to check the standings every week and report any score discrepancies right away.
- **Check standings at: holdenma.myrec.com**
- Email Allie (aconnell@holdenma.gov) with any score or record discrepancies.

SINGLE ELIMINATION TOURNAMENT

- Each team qualified for the post season will participate in a single elimination tournament after the regular season is complete. Seeding for the tournament will be determined by the regular season standings after 7 games are played.
- The time limit and the mercy rules will apply to all the tournament games.
- Home and Away will be determined by the highest seed.