

CLEVELAND HEIGHTS PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
2023 ADULT SOFTBALL MEN'S SLOW PITCH LEAGUE RULES

SECTION I. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

1. Players shall be at least eighteen (18) years of age to play in any Cleveland Heights adult league. No men may play in the women's league and no women may play in any men's league.
2. USA Softball (formally ASA) eligibility rules shall apply. The League Commissioner reserves the right to deny eligibility to any player or team deemed to be inappropriate for the ability level of a league.
3. Any player under Cleveland Heights League suspension, USA Softball suspension, USSSA or other Association conduct related suspension shall be ineligible to participate in any league. Cases involving non-USA Softball association's eligibility rule suspensions and suspensions involving individual leagues shall be reviewed by the League Commissioner to determine eligibility for Cleveland Heights leagues.
4. Any player may play in as many Cleveland Heights leagues as he/she qualifies for. No player may play in more than one Coed League Division.

SECTION II. ROSTERS AND CONTRACT CARDS

1. Teams may have a maximum of twenty (20) players rostered and under contract at any time.
2. Team rosters should be turned in to the league office at least one week prior to the first regular season game.
3. All players participating in any Cleveland Heights league must have approved contract cards in to the league office before they are eligible to play. A team cannot play until its contract cards have been turned into and approved by the League Commissioner or his/her designated assistant.
4. Two contract cards must be submitted for each player. They must be properly filled out and signed, including the liability release. Properly completed cards will be stamped by the League Commissioner - one set will be kept by the league, and one set will be returned to the team manager.
5. Photos will not be required for contract cards. A player whose eligibility is challenged must produce a valid driver's license or I.D. card. Work and school I.D.'s are permissible if they contain a photo.
6. It is mandatory that I.D.'s and contract cards be present at the field site for all games. Failure to comply may result in a protest by the opposing team and/or a forfeit by the League Commissioner.
7. The deadline for signing new players is Monday, June 29, 2023. No player may be signed after the deadline, except in cases of undue hardship, which shall be the sole determination of the League Commissioner.

8. A player may make an intra league or inter league team move, if he/she is dropped or released by his/her original team. No player may sign with another team after the signing deadline (contract cards must be approved by the League Commissioner prior to the deadline). A player who signs with a new team must sit out the next actual game (one-night leagues) or two games (two-night leagues) played by that team. Only the games played for the new team will count toward playoff eligibility. No player may switch teams more than once. No team may unreasonably refuse to release a player - final determination, in the event of a dispute, will be made by the League Commissioner.

SECTION III. FEES AND RESIDENCY

1. Team entry fees shall be as follows:
 - \$650: Resident Team
 - \$725: Non-Resident Team
2. To qualify as a resident team, at least 60% of a team's players under contract must be residents of Cleveland Heights.
3. Teams with a majority of Cleveland Heights residents shall be encouraged and given preference to the extent possible without compromising competitive balance and player safety and enjoyment.
4. Teams which were in the Cleveland Heights leagues and in good standing at the close of the 2022 season will be given priority in 2023.
5. Entry fees are payable to "The City of Cleveland Heights". The following is the fee payment schedule:
 - ½ entry fee and forfeit fee due Wednesday, April 26, 2023
 - Remaining balance due by Wednesday, June 7, 2023
6. Umpire and scorer fees shall be \$35.00 per team per game and shall be paid in cash only, to the scorer prior to game time. This includes two umpires (\$27.00 per game) and one scorekeeper (\$16.00 per game). In the unlikely event only one umpire shows up, the solo umpire will receive \$35.00, the umpire will work the game from behind home plate, and \$6.00 will be returned to each team. If the scorer does not show, a representative of each team will serve as scorer, and the scorer's fee will not have to be paid. In the event of a rainout -- if the game does not begin, teams get their full game fees back. If the game begins, but is halted before it becomes official, the game will be picked up at the point left off- fees paid will be held and applied to the make-up game.
7. Teams must have a \$70.00 forfeit fee on deposit with the City at all times. Teams forfeiting games are responsible for both teams' game fees. If the forfeiting team pays on the field, the deposit will not be affected. If the deposit must be used, the forfeiting team must replenish the deposit before it will be permitted to play again.
8. Teams forfeiting on the field due to conduct or ineligibility after a game has begun will be responsible only for their own game fee.

SECTION IV. FIELD USE & PRACTICE PROCEDURES

1. Use of Cleveland Heights Parks and Recreation Softball/Hardball fields, shall be subject to the following priorities in order of preference:
2. Cleveland Heights Parks and Recreation leagues, programs, and teams;
3. Cleveland Heights High School team games and practices, and unpaid, unstructured use by Cleveland Heights residents;
4. Other Cleveland Heights - University Heights School System scholastic games and practices;
5. Field rental by other public and private schools and organizations for organized activity and league play;
6. Field rental by individual teams or groups for one- time activity sessions.
7. Charges for use of Cleveland Heights Parks and Recreation fields shall be as follows (do not apply to practice fields for Cleveland Heights Leagues):
 - a. Forest Hill fenced in fields - and Denison Lower Field
 - o \$40 per hour without lights
 - o \$50 per hour with lights
 - o All other fields - \$30 per hour
8. All rental charges are payable in advance. Payments will be refunded if the field is unplayable due to weather conditions, field conditions, etc.
9. The City of Cleveland Heights may negotiate lump sum field rental charges for structured organizational use, which may differ from per hour rental charges. The City of Cleveland Heights may also provide such fields at a nominal cost or at no cost to organizations deemed to be charitable or non-profit in nature. Fees may be waived for good cause as determined by the Division of Parks and Recreation.
10. Fields are available for practices, weather and field conditions permitting. Fields will be given out weekly in two-hour increments, on a first-come, first serve basis each Monday beginning at 8:00 a.m.
11. Teams are permitted to reserve only one field per week. To make a field reservation please contact Mike Discenzo at 216-691-7383 or mdiscenzo@clvhts.com

SECTION V. SCHEDULES AND PLAYOFFS

1. League schedules, based on full team enrollment, shall be as follows: (Note: League fees are based on a per season rate, not on any specific number of games): Men's Slow Pitch League: Based on an 8-team league. Teams play 28 games on Wednesday & Friday nights. **Teams will play a home and home double-header one night per week beginning Wednesday, April 27, 2022.**

2. Once the league schedule is finalized and distributed they will be considered FINAL. There will be NO alterations to the schedule except in the event of extraordinary, unforeseen circumstances.
3. Upon completion of the regular season, all eight teams qualify for the playoffs and will be seeded 1 through 8 based on the final regular season standings. The quarter-final and semi-final rounds will play a best of three series. The finals will play a best-of-five championship game series.

4. Tie-breakers

All ties for playoff spots or playoff seeding will be determined by the following tie-breakers:

- a. Head on head record between the teams.
 - b. Run differential in head on head games.
 - c. Division record, if applicable.
 - d. Second half record if applicable.
 - e. Second half division record, if applicable.
 - f. Run differential in all games
 - g. Playoff game.
5. In the event of multiple team ties, the tie-breakers will be used only once, to determine the number of teams to fill the playoff spots at issue.
 6. If tie-breaker playoff games are necessary, the league reserves the right to schedule them at other than the normally scheduled days and times, if deemed necessary.
 7. The run spread rule will apply in all playoff games.
 8. Home team in the playoffs will be determined by seeding. The top seeded team gets its choice in games 1 and 3; the lower seeded team gets the choice in game 2.
 9. Players must appear on the official game score sheet, in at least one third (1/3) of their team's regular season games in order to be eligible for the playoffs.

SECTION VI. PLAYING RULES

1. All Cleveland Heights leagues and teams are registered with USA Softball and official USA Softball rules shall apply in all situations not specifically covered by the Cleveland Heights league rules. USA Softball and/or the City of Cleveland Heights reserve the right to withhold or withdraw approval of any equipment which, in their sole determination, significantly changes the character of the game; affects

the safety of participants or spectators; or renders a player's performance more a product of his/her equipment than his/her individual skill.

2. **Equipment***:

- A. Bats – USA Softball rules, guidelines, and lists of illegal bats will be in effect. The City of Cleveland Heights reserves the right to do any of the following:
- Withhold or withdraw approval, and declare illegal, any additional bats which in its sole determination, significantly changes the character of the game; jeopardizes the safety of participants or spectators; or renders a player's performance more a product of his/her equipment than his/her individual skill.
 - Limit approved bats to a specific list determined solely by the City, based on the standards indicated in (A) above.
 - Limit bat usage to specific bats selected by and provided by the City, based on the standards indicated in (A) above.
 - Test bats with an USA Softball approved bat testing machine and declare illegal any bat that fails to pass such a test.
- B. Balls - Balls will be provided by the City. The brand, COR level, and compression level will be determined by the City, through the League Commissioner. Choices will be limited to USA Softball approved balls, under current USA Softball standards.

****The city of Cleveland Heights reserves the right to forfeit any game or playoff series determined by use of illegal or altered equipment.***

3. **Game Start Times:**

Grace period - Schedule time for all games is the time listed on the game schedules distributed to all managers. **THERE WILL BE A 15-MINUTE GRACE PERIOD FOR THE FIRST GAME OF THE NIGHT ONLY IF A TEAM HAS LESS THAN NINE PLAYERS.** Umpires will decide when games are to be forfeited after the 15-minute grace period. **Double-headers will start at 6:45 p.m.** Should a team forfeit the first game of the scheduled double-header the second game will start no later than 7:45 p.m., however, the game may start earlier provided that both managers agree. **Time Limit on Games** - No new inning will start after one hour and twenty minutes of playing time in all games. Tie games will be counted as ½ win and ½ loss. A game halted by time limit shall be regulation if five or more complete innings have been played, or if the home team has scored more runs in four or more innings than the visiting team has scored in five or more innings.

4. Official league lineup cards are to be turned in to the scorer, along with payment of game fees, at least ten minutes prior to game time. **All players on the lineup card MUST BE PRESENT.** Lineup cards should include the players' first and last names, positions, and numbers. Once the scorer writes in the lineup, it is official - any changes are considered substitutions, as per USA Softball rules.

5. Determination of field conditions and playability, prior to the first game of a session, will be the sole determination of the League Commissioner and the City of Cleveland Heights Department of Parks and Recreation.

****WHEN WEATHER AND PLAYING CONDITIONS ARE QUESTIONABLE, PLEASE CALL THE FOREST HILL PARK HOTLINE AT (216) 691-7385 FOR UPDATED INFORMATION ON THE STATUS OF GAMES.**

6. Once a game has started, the home plate umpire will make determinations concerning playability, stoppage of play, and postponement due to weather and field conditions. Such decisions are final and are not subject to protest. Playability of each field will be determined independently of the other fields.

7. Each team will be required to have matching jerseys or T-shirts with numbers (six inch minimum - no duplicates) on the back. Numbers can be on the front of the jerseys, if the sponsor's logo precludes putting them on the back. Numbers must be printed - no tape, crayons, magic markers, etc. will be permitted. Numbers are limited to two digits - no decimal points or negative numbers are permitted.

Metal baseball cleats are permitted. Golf shoes and football cleats are not permitted.

Players' jerseys and T-shirts are governed by the Uniform Shirt Rule. Players may also not play in work clothing, jeans, cutoff shorts, tank tops, or non-sports shoes. Shirts or jerseys must not leave an exposed mid-riff.

Players and coaches must be properly attired at all times on the field, including pre-game.

8. Smoking is NOT permitted on the field or in the dugout area.
9. The Recreation Department will provide two new softballs for each game.
10. The league will continue to use the following run spread rule this season:
 - o 22 runs after three innings
 - o 18 runs after four innings
 - o 12 runs after five innings
11. All batters will begin with a 1 and 1 count. This rule applies in both the Coed and Men's leagues.
12. The batter will be allowed one free foul ball after two strikes -- upon the second foul ball he will be out.
13. Pitchers will be allowed five (5) warm up pitches prior to the game and three (3) between innings. Relief pitchers will also be allowed five (5) warm up pitches. The umpires have the authority to reduce the number allowed and to reduce or eliminate between inning practice, when they deem it necessary due to weather or field conditions or otherwise. Their decision is final and is not subject to protest.
14. Home Run Limits (over the fence, untouched) are as follows:
 - o Division III, Five (5)

15. Home teams shall occupy the bench corresponding with the home side of the scoreboard, with the visiting team occupying the bench corresponding with the visitor side of the scoreboard.
16. Player substitutions must be made by the manager or coach and not the player. The move must be communicated to the scorer or plate umpire and to the opposing manager. Violations are covered by USA Softball rules.
17. **City of Cleveland Heights Ordinance prohibits alcohol and drugs in city parks and facilities. Any player, coach or manager felt by the umpire, program supervisor or league commissioner to be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs will NOT be permitted to participate and will NOT be allowed on the field of play or in the player bench area. Any alcohol or drugs found on the player bench will result in an immediate forfeit and the responsible player(s) will be suspended. Furthermore, if found at any time during the playoffs the offending team will forfeit the series.**
18. Teams are responsible for their fans, as well as their players. Abusive fans can and will be disciplined and removed from the park and, in extreme cases, can result in forfeiture of a game.
19. Computerized league standings and statistics will be provided weekly, through a contractual arrangement with the Benander Games Company/Sports Data. Statistics will be updated weekly and posted on www.bgsd.com.
20. In the event that a team enters a tournament, the league office must be notified at least one week in advance, or scheduled game(s) will be forfeited. **League schedules take priority** -- the City of Cleveland Heights reserves the right to refuse to reschedule a game if it will create a hardship or inconvenience for the league or the opposing team.
21. If multiple forfeits occur by a team, it is subject to ejection from the league. The determination will be the decision solely of the League Commissioner based on all circumstances known to him/her.
22. Teams are expected to play all of their scheduled games, even if they are eliminated from playoff contention. Teams forfeiting late season games will face severe penalties, including possible ejection from the league and loss of franchise rights for the following season.
23. ALL OF THE SOFTBALL LEAGUES ARE PROGRAMS OF THE CITY OF CLEVELAND HEIGHTS DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION AND ARE SUBJECT TO THE DEPARTMENT'S RULES AND POLICIES, AS WELL AS ALL CITY OF CLEVELAND HEIGHTS ORDINANCES AND REGULATIONS.
24. Any matter not specifically covered in these league rules will be ruled upon and determined by the League Commissioner in his/her capacity as an employee of the City of Cleveland Heights and the Department of Parks and Recreation.

SECTION VII. PLAYING RULES - EXTRA PLAYER RULE AND REENTRY RULE

1. EXTRA PLAYER RULE

- a. Each team will have the option to field ten players and use up to two (2) extra player's (EP's) in their lineup. If a team starts the game with twelve players it **MUST** end the game with twelve players. If a team starts the game with eleven players it **MUST** end the game with eleven players.
- b. A team **MUST** start the game with an EP in order to use one. A team cannot insert an EP into the lineup once the game has started.
- c. If a team begins the game with the EP, it **MUST** use the EP the entire game unless it is reduced to less than eleven/twelve available players due to injury or disqualification. The umpires will be the sole judges of the validity of injuries and their decisions will not be subject to protest. If a team is reduced to less than eleven/twelve players due to ejection, a forfeit will result.
- d. The EP may rotate among any of the eleven/twelve players in the game. At any point, ten players will be designated with defensive positions and one or two will be designated as the EP. The designations can be changed as often as desired, but the umpires can stop further changes if they feel a travesty is being made of the game.
- e. EPs may reenter the game once after being replaced.

2. RE-ENTRY RULE

- a. Each player in the starting lineup, including the EP, may be withdrawn from the lineup and re-enter once. The rule applies whether the player is withdrawn for a pinch-hitter, a pinch runner, a defensive replacement, etc. When a starting player is withdrawn for a second time, he is out for the rest of the game. A player cannot be withdrawn from a lineup unless there is an available substitute to take his place. A USA Softball rule change, effective in the 2002 season, allows re-entry for substitutes also.
- b. When a player re-enters the game, he/she must re-enter in the same position in the batting order he/she had originally. He/she may assume a different defensive position, however.
- c. A player may re-enter as a pinch-hitter or pinch-runner and then be withdrawn again immediately.
- d. Violation of the re-entry rule results in the use of an illegal player. The offended team may protest the violation at any time until the end of the game. The penalty, under proper protest, is disqualification of the illegal player and the manager - it is not an ejection or forfeit.
- e. Umpires and scorers will be instructed to warn managers of prospective violations of the re-entry and EP rules, if they notice them. However, the final responsibility is on the manager and he/she cannot rely on a failure to warn as a defense for a rule violation.

SECTION VIII. CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

1. Players, coaches, or managers ejected from a game will draw the following automatic suspensions from their teams' next actual game(s):
 - First ejection, one game
 - Second ejection, two games
 - Third ejection, penalty to be determined by a hearing as per the USA Softball procedural code

The team whose player was ejected may continue playing one man short, if they have no substitute, as long as they have at least nine players. The team will be charged with an out each time the ejected player's spot in the batting order comes up.

2. Players, coaches, or managers ejected from a game for fighting or for deliberately and intentionally injuring, or attempting to injure, an opponent, will draw the following automatic suspension from their teams' next actual games:
 - First ejection, five games
 - Second ejection, penalty determined by a hearing as per the USA Softball procedural code
3. In any fight involving more than two individuals, or in any situation involving bench personnel coming onto the field, the game will be ended. The League Commissioner will get reports and determine the game result and suspensions.
4. Any physical action, attempted physical action, or threat against a league official (including, but not limited to, umpires and scorers) by any player, coach, or manager will result in severe penalties, to be determined by a hearing conducted as per the A.S.A. procedural code. Criminal prosecution will also be recommended and encouraged.
5. Anyone who throws a bat in anger or disgust will be immediately ejected from the game and will be penalized according to "Rule 1" of this section. The team whose player was ejected may continue playing one man short, if they have no substitute, as long as they have at least nine players.
6. Ejected, disqualified or suspended players, managers, or coaches MUST leave the park and are not permitted back in the park for the duration of their ejection or suspension. Failure to comply with this rule will result in the following penalties:
 - Additional suspension of the individual involved, as per "Rule 1" of this section
 - Suspension of the team manager, as per "Rule 1" of this section
 - Possible forfeiture of the game
7. Any manager who inserts a player in the lineup who is ineligible to play will be suspended as per "Rule 1" of this section, and the game will be forfeited, without necessity of protest.

8. Umpires have the power, hereby conferred by the Cleveland Heights Department of Parks and Recreation, to order a player, coach, manager, or fan to leave the park premises, if such is deemed

necessary for safety or game control reasons. Failure to leave promptly will result in forfeiture of the game plus suspension, if applicable, under "Rule 1" of this section.

9. No player, manager, or coach shall receive any compensation or remuneration for his/her participation with any team. Violation of this rule will be punished by means of a hearing held under the provisions of the USA Softball procedural code.
10. Team franchises are not a property right and are recognized as belonging to individual persons only for purposes of league organization and continuity. Determination of who holds team franchises is made solely by the Cleveland Heights Division of Parks and Recreation, through the League Commissioner, and team franchises are transferrable only by said Division and Commissioner. Any attempted transfer between individuals or organizations will not be recognized --if any compensation or remuneration, in cash or in kind, is involved, penalties will be imposed after a hearing under the provisions of the USA Softball procedural code.
11. Players, coaches, managers, or teams suspended from the league will be reported to the USA Softball of Ohio and will be prevented from participating in any USA Softball league in the Cleveland metro area. In addition, notice will also be given to the USSSA and to any other softball organization as deemed necessary to enforce the intended effect of the suspension.
12. The Cleveland Heights Department of Parks and Recreation, and any of its League Commissioners, has the authority to impose suspensions from all Cleveland Heights Parks and Recreation programs, activities, and facilities.

SECTION IX. PROTESTS

1. Protests of player eligibility must be made before the final out of a game. If it involves a contract card question, determination will be made immediately by the plate umpire (or by the League Commissioner, if he is present at the field site). If it involves a matter of suspension, the determination will be made by the League Commissioner at the earliest possible time.
2. Protests involving rule interpretations or rule applications must be made prior to the next pitch. Notification must be given to the plate umpire and the scorer, and the protest must be noted on the score sheet. Determination will be made by the League Commissioner.
3. A written protest, accompanied by a \$50.00 fee (payable to the "City of Cleveland Heights") must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. the next business day to the Department of Parks and Recreation at the Cleveland Heights Community Center, in order for the protest to be considered.
4. Following an investigation by the League Commissioner, all parties involved will be notified of the decision. If the protest is upheld, the fee shall be refunded.
5. No protest shall be permitted or accepted where an umpire's judgment is the basis of the protest.