

PORTOLA VALLEY SOFTBALL LEAGUE - 2018 RULES

1. **Teams.** Teams will field 10 defensive players. Teams may play with a minimum of 7 players, two of which must be women, before a forfeit is declared. Forfeit time is 10 minutes after game is scheduled to begin (usually 6:15 p.m. with forfeit at 6:25 p.m.).
2. **Game length.** Unless otherwise determined, all games will be eight innings. However, no inning shall begin more than 1 hour and 20 minutes after the starting time. If tied at end of eight and time remains, continue to play using the International tie-breaker rules, modified such that each team has the option of using either the last male batter or last female batter, until one team is ahead at the end of an inning.
3. **Field position.** There will be four natural outfielders (no short fielders). Outfielders must have both feet behind the outfield line, Infielders must have both feet on the dirt, and the defensive pitcher must have both feet within the circle around the mound, until the ball is hit. Players may not take a running start before the ball is hit. There must be at least 4 women playing on defense in each inning. One woman must play either pitcher or catcher. In addition, there must be at least one woman at one of the other 4 infield positions and at least 2 women outfielders. However, if only 3 women are present for a team, the number of outfielders is reduced to three, two of whom men; a woman must play an infielder position and a pitcher or catcher position. If only 2 women are present for a team the number of outfielders is reduced to three, one of whom must be a woman; the other woman must play an infielder position other than pitcher or catcher. Three male players fill out the infield and one male player at pitcher. Only 8 players from that team can play until a third woman is fielded. In the case of a team playing with 8 players, the offense will provide a catcher for the purpose of catching the pitched ball only. Once the ball is in play the catcher will move out of the way so that other defensive players can move into the catching position.
4. **Substitutions.** Free substitution is allowed on defense. All players must play a minimum of 2 innings (6 outs) during the game. Pinch runners are allowed at any time after a batter reaches base safely, the substitute runner shall be the person of the same gender who made the immediately previous out.
5. **Batting order.** All team members who play defense must bat, and all players who bat must play defense. Batting order will be no more than one man between women batters for the first 4 innings. Starting in the 5th inning batting order will be no more than 2 men between women batters. The first batter in the 5th inning will be of the opposite gender from the last batter in the 4th inning. Players who arrive after the start of the game will be added to the end of the order for that gender. The initial order must be followed throughout the game.
6. **Pitching.** The offensive team pitches 3 balls. If the batter fails to hit a fair ball on the 3 pitches, the batter is out. If the batted ball contacts the offensive pitcher the ball will be ruled dead and a strike called. In this case if the pitcher does not make reasonable effort to avoid contact with the ball the batter will be ruled out. Pitches to men shall be made from the regular mound; pitches to women may be made from a closer point. One person may be designated by a team at the beginning of the game to play as an offensive pitcher only, and that person may pitch but play neither defense nor bat. If not designated as such, pitchers must play in the game.
8. **Hitting/Bunting.** Only women may bunt. Women shall have the option of choosing which ball (11" or 12") they would like to hit. Once the umpire is notified of the choice it cannot be changed. The total number of home runs for any team at any time during the game cannot exceed ONE more than the total number of home runs made by the opposing team. Any 'home run' causing the total to exceed ONE more than the opposing team total shall be ruled a homerun rule single. A fly ball into the playground area is an automatic out. A pitched ball cannot be hit after it has struck the ground. Batter may step on home plate to hit pitched ball.
9. **Base running.** No leads are allowed; runner must remain on base until the ball is hit. No sliding, whether feet or head first; runner is automatically out. Runner must avoid contact when reaching a base.
10. **First base.** There will be a double first base – runners should run to the orange section of the base on a close play to avoid a collision with the first base person. The first baseman must always try to protect the runner on throws.
11. **Home plate.** All plays at home plate are force plays. No tags of runners coming to home plate after the halfway point down the third base line count as an out. At halfway down the line as marked, runners from third to home must veer to the right from the baseline and touch the offensive base marked behind home plate. If the runner reaches that marked base before home plate is tagged with the ball, a run is scored. If a runner from third to home touches the defensive home plate, the runner is out whether there is a play at home or not. When a runner from third to home goes beyond the halfway point down the baseline from third base, a force is in order at home plate whether or not the runner later retreats to third base.
12. **Ground rules for Town Center Field.** Balls bouncing over the outfield fence or rolling out of the gates will be considered ground rule doubles.
13. **Equipment and Uniforms.** Balls will be limited flight, Incredi-ball type softballs. No metal spikes are allowed. Each player on team should wear a shirt that is basically color-matched to other players on the team. Bats must be single wall aluminum softball bats certified legal by ASA – titanium, multi-walled or composite bats are not allowed.
14. **Mercy Rule.** The captain of the team that is losing has the option of calling a game by the mercy rule or continuing play.
15. **Umpires.** An umpire will be present for each game. Arguing with an umpire will result in an ejection.

NO ARGUING PLEASE. PROFANITY OR HECKLING WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

ABUSE OF THESE RULES ARE GROUNDS FOR EXPULSION FROM THE LEAGUE.

NO bottles, cans, or cups ON the field at ANY time. PLEASE respect the grounds and pick up ALL trash after each game.

Be responsible for your own children and be careful of others'.

MOST OF ALL, WE'RE HERE TO HAVE FUN