Arlington Heights Park District – 50+ Senior Softball League

Welcome to the Senior Softball league! The purpose of this league is to provide competitive games played under safe conditions. We follow Senior Amateur Softball Association Slow Pitch rules with modifications intended to minimize injuries. All players are expected to demonstrate fair play and sporting behavior and to follow league rules.

Facilities and Contact Information

Frontier Park: 1933 N. Kennicott Drive, Arlington Heights

Rand-Berkeley Park: at the intersection of Waverly and Brookwood in Arlington Heights

Jim Hayes, League Coordinator: rosters, games, rules of play, league business

  • ritahayes@sbcglobal.net or 847.308.4934

Paul Ratajczak, Athletic Supervisor: schedules, fields

  • paulr@ahpd.org or 847.506.7132

Cari Boyle, Athletic Coordinator: registration

  • cboyle@ahpd.org or 847.506.8374

Games

- The AHPD inclement weather hotline, 847.577.3003, extension 6, is updated by 4pm daily. To see if your field has been closed due to inclement weather, call the weather hotline.
- Regular season games begin at 6:30pm at Frontier and Rand-Berkley parks; post-season tournament and double-header games begin at 6pm. Rain-outs are made up with double headers and regular season rules apply. The first game of a double header must be seven innings. The number of innings in the second game will be determined by daylight.
- Games are seven innings, and five innings constitute an official (complete) game. If the home team is leading at 4 ½ innings, this also constitutes an official game. If a complete game is called for any reason when the score is tied, the game will be counted as a tie. If an incomplete game is called, it will be declared suspended and will resume at the point where it was stopped. Tie games play extra innings until there is a winner using the international tie-breaker rule: All extra
innings begin with the player that last batted out on second base, and all at bats begin an 0-1 count. There is no slaughter rule.

- Each team has 11 players on defense with unlimited, free substitutions. All players on a team bat, and the batting order remains the same for the entire game. If a player must leave the game before it ends, his spot in the batting order is eliminated but does not count as “battling out of order”. If a player arrives late for a game and everyone on the team has already batted, the player is placed at the end of the batting order.
- Each player must play at least three innings on defense.
- The maximum number of runs allowed per inning is five with the exception of the seventh inning and extra innings, in which runs are unlimited.
- A team that cannot field nine rostered players forfeits the game. If a team only has nine players, the other team must supply a courtesy catcher. The courtesy catcher may make plays at the plate.
- A team that uses non-rostered players forfeits all games in which the non-rostered player participated. A non-rostered player is a player who has not registered or has not been officially assigned to a team by the Park District.
- Both team managers will verify the final score recorded on the umpire’s score card.

**Pitching**

- The pitcher’s zone ranges from 50’ to 60’ from home plate and is two feet wide. The ball must be slow-pitched, and the arc of the ball must be between six and twelve feet. The pitcher must keep at least one foot in the pitcher’s zone until the ball is released. Hesitation moves are not permitted. Spinning or knuckling is permitted.
- A wood strike zone mat that includes home plate is used. A legal pitch that hits any part of the strike zone mat is a strike.
- If a pitch is illegal, the umpire will call “illegal” before the pitch crosses the plate. The batter may swing at an illegal pitch. If there is no swing, the pitch is called a ball.
- Pitchers must wear a face mask.

**Base Running**

- A base runner must do everything possible to avoid a collision with a fielder. The umpire will call a base runner out if he makes little or no effort to avoid colliding with a fielder, the play will be called dead, and all runners will return to the last occupied base. If it happens a second time in a game, the player may be ejected.
- **Home plate to first base**: If a play is contested at first base, the batter must use the safety base located in foul territory next to the regular first base. If there is no play at first base, the batter may use the regular first base. Violation of this rule is an out unless the batter did so to avoid colliding with the first baseman. For example, if the first baseman is off first base fielding a ball, blocking the batter’s path to first base, and using the safety base to force out the batter.
- **First base to second base to third base:** The runner may overrun second or third base in a straight line and return to the overrun base. The runner does not have to touch second or third base when overrunning the base. Force-outs at second and third base are determined by whether the fielder catches the ball before the runner passes the base. Runners must run to the non-fielder side of the base to avoid interfering with the fielder. When overrunning second or third base, the runner must return to the overrun base before advancing to the next base. If the runner does not return, the runner is in play and may be tagged out. The runner cannot be called for interfering with a fielder’s throw as long as the runner is in the three foot wide base lane and does not raise hands to make contact with the ball.

- **All bases:** Plays at all bases will be force-outs; a runner can be tagged out between bases. A second home plate adjacent to the regular home plate is provided for safety. Runners step on the second base to run through the base at first, second, and third. A runner scores by stepping on the second home plate. The wood strike zone mat is for the catcher, who may step on any part of the strike zone mat to force out the runner. If a runner steps on any part of the strike zone mat, he is out.

- A marker placed perpendicular to the third base line and twenty feet from home plate is the commitment line. Once a runner crosses this line, he must continue to home plate. Violation of this rule is an out.

- Sliding is not allowed. A runner who slides will be called out.

- A runner who continues to play on after making a turn toward or taking a few steps toward the next base may be tagged out. A runner who dives or slides towards a base, whether continuing on or returning, will be called out. A runner may not overrun a base when returning to a base.

- A base runner cannot leave his base until the batter makes contact with the ball. Leaving a base early is an out. **There is no rule violation if a runner leaves the base when the ball is not hit.**

- Only an injured player may have a courtesy runner. The courtesy runner shall be the player who made the last batted out. An injured player must use a courtesy runner every time he reaches base. A player injured during a game may have a courtesy runner at any time. There is no courtesy runner for a batter. A batter must make it to first base before utilizing a courtesy runner. Before the game begins, the manager must notify the umpire of any injured player who needs a courtesy runner.

- **Bases are 65’ apart.**

- Metal cleats are not permitted.

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**Batting**

- A legal bat is an official softball bat that is no more than 34” in length, no more than 38 oz. in weight, and no greater than 2.5” in diameter at its largest part. If a player is discovered using a bat that exceeds these dimensions, the umpire will instruct him to remove the bat from play. If a player violates the rule a second time, he will be ejected from the game, and his at bat will be ruled a strike out.

- High performance and/or altered bats at not permitted in games or in batting practice. Only 100% single wall bats or wood bats are permitted. Players 72 years of age and older may use a
composite or travel bat. The bat must approved with the umpire prior to the game and the opposing manager and umpire are made aware of any players using the composite or travel bat.

- If a player brings or uses an illegal high performance bat or altered bat in the batter’s box during a game, the play will be ruled a strike out. The umpire or opposing team’s manager may challenge the legality of a bat. The challenge must occur during the batter’s at bat. If the umpire determines the bat is illegal, the play will be ruled a strike out. A bat that has the words “High Performance” on it may be a legal bat. The umpire’s decision regarding legality is final.
- There is no marked batter’s box. A reasonable area will be considered the batter’s box. A batter will be called out if he steps on the strike zone mat when hitting a pitch or if all of his back foot is completely in front of the strike zone mat when he hits the pitch.
- Each batter begins with a 0-1 count, no balls and one strike.
- The batter is out on any third strike. This includes a foul ball after two strikes.
- A batter must take a full swing at a pitch. Bunting or chopping is an out.
- **A batter who hits a ground or fly ball into the outfield is automatically awarded first base.**
- If a batter pops a ball overhead and the catcher catches it, the batter is out.
- If a batter throws or releases a bat and it hits another player or the umpire, the player is out. If the batter throws a bat and it does not hit anyone, the player will receive a warning; a second occurrence in a game is an automatic out. A player throwing a bat in anger may be ejected from a game, and his at bat in the lineup will count as an out.

**Live and Dead Balls**

- If an overthrown ball hits the fence and remains on the field, the ball remains live and in play.
- If an overthrown ball hits any dugout equipment or goes out of play, the ball is dead and the runners take their appropriate bases: two bases from where they were at the time of the thrown ball’s release.
- If an overthrown ball hits a coach on the offensive team, the ball is dead and no extra bases are awarded.

The Arlington Heights Park District reserves the right to make changes to this document as necessary during the course of the season.