

2022 HUFF-N-PUFFERS

Official Guide and Playing Rules for 2022

The following rules replace and/or supersede any rules printed prior to the date below for the

HUFF-N-PUFFERS SENIOR SOFTBALL LEAGUE.

All competition will be conducted in accordance with rules set forth in this official guide and in the new edition USA (formerly named ASA) Softball Playing Rules.

Any suggestions, proposed changes, or revisions to our rules must be submitted in writing during regular meetings or at a Governing Board meeting.

2022 RULES COMMITTEE

Jerry Bacher, CHAIR

Rick Demeter Ken Dippong Dan Hodous

Ed Kustra Jim Leonard Tom Zigman

Peter Toomey, Umpire-In-Chief

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RULE 1 Playing Field

1.1 Commitment Line

A three (3) foot Commitment Line shall be marked perpendicular to the foul line halfway (35 feet) between 3rd base and home plate. No tags allowed on runners past the Commitment Line.

1.2 Scoring Plate

There will be a rubber Scoring Plate set to the same distance from 3rd base as the Strike Zone Board is, but eight (8) feet outside of the 3rd base line.

1.3 Strike Zone

A Strike Zone Board will be used with the front of the board centered on and in line with the front of the field home plate. The board will be twenty two (22) inches wide and thirty four (34) inches long. The board will lay on and completely cover the field home plate.

1.4 Double Bag – First Base

An additional base shall abut 1st base. The additional base will be orange and in foul territory.

1.5 Pitcher's Safety Screen

A pitcher's safety screen will be used in all divisions. The placement of the pitcher's screen will be on the glove side of the pitcher, to the middle of the pitching rubber, from three (3) feet to six (6) feet in front of the pitching rubber.

RULE 2 Attire

2.1 Metal Cleats

Metal cleats are not permitted.

2.2 Protective Clothing

Protective equipment and cool weather clothing is allowed.

2.3 Home vs Visitors

The home team will wear white shirts and use the 1st base bench and right field for pre-game practice. The visiting team will wear red shirts and use the 3rd base bench and left field for pre-game practice.

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2.4 Uniform Requirements

Players, Managers, and Coaches must be in proper uniform. Pants or shorts must be dark blue or black in color, stripes and logos are permitted. Only hats, shirts, pants, and shorts approved by Huff-N-Puffers will be permitted. Pants of any style may be worn under the shorts. Players not in proper uniform will not be permitted to play. This rule will be enforced by Managers and Umpires.

RULE 3 Equipment

3.1 Shared Equipment

All equipment will be shared by both teams unless privately owned.

3.2 Softball Specifications

Home teams will furnish game balls supplied by the league. These balls will be determined in all particulars from time to time by the Governing Board. The Governing Board can in its discretion choose a different ball for each division of the league.

3.3 Equipment Required

The equipment specified above shall be used at all regular season and playoff games.

3.4 Illegal or Altered Bats

Anyone using an illegal or altered bat (shaved, rolled, etc.) as defined by the USA Rules will be subject to ejection from the game and further punishment as determined by the Governing Board.

RULE 4 Players

4.1 Division I

Division I teams will field a maximum of twelve (12) defensive players.

4.2 Division II

Division II teams will field a maximum of thirteen (13) defensive players.

4.3 Division III

Division III teams will field a maximum of thirteen (13) players.

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4.4 Minimum – All Divisions

All teams must have nine (9) players from its own roster to start a game.

4.5 Substitute Players

Substitute players may be added to reach the maximums above.

Division I: Substitute players may only be “C” or any available Division II. They fill any of these positions: Right Field, 1st Base, Catcher.

Division II: Substitute players may be used as follows: A “B” or lower may replace a “B” player. A “C” or lower may replace a “C” player. A “D” or lower may replace a “D” player. An “E” may replace an “E” player. Any player may replace an “A” except another “A” player. The first three fill any of these positions: Right Field, 1st Base, Catcher. If a fourth is needed: Right-Center Field.

Division III substitute players can play anywhere. Division III teams may replace an A for A, B for B, etc. for a total to equal the opposition (13 vs 13).

Players from Divisions II/III can be a sub player in the Division above regardless of their ranking.

4.6 Batting Order

Substitute players must bat at the bottom of the order.

4.7 Roster List

Each Manager will have a roster list of all teams in their Division.

4.8 Forfeit

A team must be ready to play ten (10) minutes after the scheduled starting time or suffer a forfeit. Game starting times are 9:00 A.M. for the first game and 10:45 A.M. for the second game. Field conditions may warrant changes in starting time, the Umpire will consult Managers and then decide.

No early starts, unless both Managers agree.

RULE 5 Draft

5.1 Division Managers

Managers in each division will decide how they want to draft players on draft day, either by (COP) Carry Over Player from the previous season, or 1,2,3,4 – 4,3,2,1, or any other method the Managers choose until all players are drafted.

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5.2 Drafting Managers

Managers will not be drafted; they will be assigned to the team they are drafting and managing.

5.3 Player Can Choose Division

His Application will determine: If the ballplayer wants to go to Division I, he can enter Division I draft. If not selected he will be put in the Division II draft. If not selected he will be put in the Division III draft. Managers may not pull a lower division player up.

5.4 Trades

Each team is allowed one (1) trade. At the Draft, but not after.

RULE 6 Batting

6.1 Strike Count – All Divisions

Each batter will start with a one (1) ball and one (1) strike count.

6.2 Number of Fouls – All Divisions

Two (2) fouls after two (2) strikes is an out.

RULE 7 Pitching

7.1 Legal Pitch

A legal pitch is a minimum of six (6) feet from the ground and a maximum of twelve (12) feet from the ground. Striking any portion of Strike Zone Board will be a strike, except if the ball first touches dirt and bounces into the Board. The pitcher must have one foot touching the rubber when releasing the pitched ball.

7.2 Pitcher's Safety Screen

A thrown ball hitting the screen is a live ball and is playable. A batted ball hitting the screen, if not touched by a defensive player prior to hitting the screen, will be called a dead ball by the Umpire and is not playable. The first time in each at bat that a batter hits the Pitcher's Safety Screen means no change in the existing count. Subsequent hits against the Screen will be called strikes.

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RULE 8 Base Running

8.1 Substitute Runners

Any player in the lineup may be a **Pinch Runner**. Each may pinch run not more than one (1) time per inning and not more than three (3) times per game. He must replace the batter at the base he safely reached, but BEFORE the next pitch.

Division III teams will be allowed as many runners as needed due to injury or physical disability as agreed to by the Managers before the game.

Once a Pinch Runner is on base, he will continue to run until he scores or is out.

If he is on base when it is his turn to bat:

Div I & II: he continues to run, but “the batter” is out.

Div III: he is replaced on base, no out is recorded, and he bats.

Divisions I and II – Allow runners for up to two (2) batters from home plate. The criteria used for Batter’s Runners is for a batter who is injured or hurt (NOT SLOW).

The batter making the last out will run.

The **Batter’s Runner** cannot run on the hit past 2nd base but must stop there, unless the ball is hit over the fence, then it’s a home run. A Batter’s Runner will start behind a line drawn from the the back corner of 1st base side of home plate perpendicular (right angle) to the screen *behind* home plate or the WHITE & RED MARKER hanging on the fence. His starting point shall be no less than eight (8) feet from the back of home plate.

8.2 Commitment Line

Once any part of a runner’s body touches the ground on or beyond the Commitment Line, the runner may not return to 3rd base. A violation of the rule will result in the runner being called out.

No tags by a defensive player are allowed on runners that have crossed the Commitment Line.

8.3 Scoring Plate

The runner will be called out if he touches or crosses the Strike Zone Board.

To score, a base runner must touch the Scoring Plate before a defensive player in possession of the ball touches the Strike Zone Board.

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In a *non-force* situation, a base runner may be out at home *without* a tag: if the runner has crossed the Commitment Line and a defensive player possesses the ball while touching the Strike Zone Board before the runner touches the Scoring Plate.

8.4 Physical Contact

A runner shall not be called out for contact with a defensive player unless, in the Umpire's judgment:

- A. the defensive player was in contact with the Strike Zone Board, or
- B. the runner deliberately hit or could reasonably have been expected to minimize or avoid the contact under the circumstances and failed to do so.

8.5 1st Base – Double Base

If there is a play on a batter going to 1st base, the first baseman must touch the white bag of the double bag in fair territory and the batter (runner) must tag the orange base in foul territory. The 1st baseman can tag a runner before he touches 1st base for an out. To avoid a collision, a fielder or a runner may use the other base. Runners who fail to step on the orange base are liable to be called out if a defensive player appeals before the runner returns to the base.

8.6 Sliding

Sliding or diving into a base is permitted.

8.7 Outfield Play

In Divisions I and II, an outfielder cannot throw out a batter by throwing directly to 1st base. The throw must be relayed through an infielder.

RULE 9 Scoring

9.1 Scorekeeping

All teams should keep score. Opposing teams' Scorekeepers must agree on the score of the game at the end of each half inning.

RULE 10 The Game

10.1 Required Innings

All players who are present and physically able to play must play in each game. Opposing Managers must be notified of any player physically unable to

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participate before the game. If any changes occur during the game, the opposing Manager must be notified immediately.

Divisions I and II – all players must play at least four (4) innings on defense unless physically unable to play or are the Designated Hitter (for which the opposing Manager is to be notified).

A player removed because of an injury will not be an automatic out.

In Division III, players must play three (3) innings minimum.

10.2 Line-Up Cards

The Managers of each team will exchange lineup cards (if requested prior to the start of the game) listing the offensive players in the order in which they will bat.

10.3 Regular Season Schedule

A round robin schedule will be used during regular season play.

10.4 Rain-Out Games

Rain-out games will be re-scheduled as to the time and day by the Umpire-in-Chief with the approval of the Managers involved. Games in play that are called because of rain before they are a complete game shall be made up at a later date as a new game beginning at the first inning.

A complete game in Divisions I and II is a minimum of five (5) innings or four-and-a-half (4½) innings if the home team is ahead. In Division III a complete game is four (4) innings or three-and-a-half (3½) if the home team is ahead.

10.5 Field Conditions

Field conditions for the playing of games shall be determined initially by the Parma Service Department. At game time or after a game starts, the Umpire(s) working the game will make the decision if the game can continue.

10.6 Innings Played and Tie Breakers

Regulation is seven (7) innings for Division III and nine (9) innings for Divisions I and II.

A game that is tied at the end of regulation shall be played until one of the teams out scores the other in extra innings.

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10.7 Mercy Rule in Regular Season

Divisions I and II – A fifteen (15) run “Mercy” rule will be in effect after seven (7) innings, or six-and-a-half (6½) innings if the home team is ahead.

Division III – A fifteen (15) run “Mercy” rule will be in effect after five (5) innings or four-and-a-half (4½) innings if the home team is ahead.

10.8 Run Limit

All games will have a five (5) run limit per half-inning for all but the last designated inning. The Umpire shall determine the last inning based on time restraints and shall inform both team Managers before the start of the last designated inning.

In extra-inning games, the limit is lifted also for the extra innings.

10.9 Infield Practice

Infield practice between innings will be allowed by the Umpire only if time restraints allow it.

10.10 Designated Hitter

Each team has the option for only one (1) Designated Hitter. If he is able he must run for himself. DH does not play in the field.

If you have fourteen (14) or more players, you field thirteen (13) in Divisions II and III, twelve (12) in Division I. Your lineup card will list all players. If you have thirteen (13) players, DH does not play in the field and you cannot pick up a substitute. Your lineup card will have thirteen (13) players. If you have twelve (12) players, DH does not play in the field, now you can pick up a substitute and your lineup card will have thirteen (13) players. Different players can DH for any game, but you cannot change the DH during the game and they cannot play in the field even if your roster falls below thirteen (13) players. Divisions I and II follow the same rule.

RULE 11 Dead Ball

11.1 Ball in Play

If a ball leaves the playing field, such as going under a fence, the player will not touch the ball, but will raise both hands as a signal to the Umpire. The Umpire will then come to the location and make a decision. Failure to follow the procedure will result in the ball being ruled in play.

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RULE 12 Umpires

12.1 Umpires

The Umpire-in-Chief will be in charge of all Umpires and will be a member of the Rules Committee. His duties will include:

1. Establish a list of qualified Umpires.
2. Assign one or more Umpires to each scheduled game.
3. Schedule make-up games.

RULE 13 Protests

13.1 When to Make a Protest

The notification of intent to protest must be made immediately before the next legal or illegal pitch or, if the final out, before both teams have left the playing field. Ineligible player protest can be made at any time. All protests shall be presented in writing to any member of the Rules Committee before the next scheduled game for the team submitting the protest.

13.2 Protest Ruling

The Rules Committee will rule on all protests as soon as possible.

RULE 14 Deadlines

14.1 For Rosters

The deadline for trading players with the consent of both Managers and players involved is the end of the Division's Draft Meeting.

No player can be added after the end of the first half of the season, unless approved by the Governing Board.

14.2 For Membership

The deadline for filing an application for league membership shall be determined by the Governing Board.

There is NO deadline for new players entering the League. Division Directors will designate where new players will be placed.

RULE 15 Playoffs

Home team will be determined by a coin toss.

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15.1 Adding Players for Playoffs

Playoff and championship games must be played without adding any players from other teams.

15.2 The Season

Division I will play a full season.

Division II will have a first and second half.

Division III will play a full season and will play a double-elimination tournament.

15.3 Divisions I and II Playoffs

Division I: An end-of-season single-elimination playoff among the second- to fifth-place teams. The winner plays the first-place team, best-of-three games, for the season championship.

Division II: In the event of a tie for the first half championship, the winner will be decided the first time the two (2) tied teams play each other in the second half. This game is played under Playoff Rule 15.1 and will also count in the second half standings.

At the end of the season, first and second half champions play best-of-three games for the championship. If they cannot play due to weather or field unavailability, the Governing Board will declare the half-champion with the best overall record the season champions.

15.4 Tournament

The Governing Board may declare a double-elimination tournament at the end of the regular season for all teams interested. In the tournament games, a player cannot be a Substitute unless his team has been eliminated.

RULE 16 Player evaluations

16.1 Evaluations

All new ballplayers applying for the Huff-N-Puffers will be invited to the annual evaluations of new ballplayers before the draft. The evaluators will be the current and/or new Managers. All Managers will evaluate all ball players. The Managers will determine what division the new ballplayers should be placed. Players will be evaluated on hitting, fielding, throwing, and running, then given a grade of A,B,C,D, or E. This information will then be available for the drafts.

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16.2 Changing Divisions

A player in Division I or II that is rated an A or B may not request to move to a lower division without the approval of the Governing Board. Only players rated a C or below may move of their own choosing to a lower division. If, however, an A or a B player has NOT been drafted back into the division of last year's play, he will be moving into a lower division.

RULE 17 Rule Changes

17.1 Rule Changes

Rule changes will only be considered before each season begins. If you have a rule change that you would like to submit, you must put it in writing, sign it, and get it to the Rules Chairman. You can also give it to your Manager, any Officer, or any member of the Governing Board and they will submit it to the Rules Chairman.

RULE 18 Points of Emphasis

18.1 Unresolvable Disagreements

Unresolvable disagreements between a player and Manager regarding his team assignment will be resolved by the Governing Board.

18.2 Injured Players

All injured players must have a doctor's release to return to an active team roster.

18.3 Refusal to Play

A player refusing to play on a team drafting him will be suspended unless a trade can be made, which is subject to Governing Board approval.

18.4 Conduct

Conduct not considered in the best interest of the Huff-N-Puffers will be subject to disciplinary action. Fighting between players will result in removal from the game with suspension from the following three (3) games for the first offense. The second offense will result in suspension for the season. Fighting in the parking lot or near the playing area is covered by this directive. Profanity will not be tolerated on or off the fields: players will be ejected from the game and be suspended for the next game. A second offense can result in suspension for the season. (REMEMBER, LADIES AND CHILDREN ARE IN THE STANDS).

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18.5 Avoiding Collisions

A runner must make every effort to avoid colliding with opposing players while running the bases or sliding or diving. If, in the Umpire's judgment, the runner fails to avoid a collision with a defensive player involved in the play, the ball will be declared dead and that runner called out. If, in the judgment of the Umpire the collision is considered malicious (bowling over, throwing elbows, etc.) by either the runner or defensive player, the ball will be declared dead and the offending individual will be ejected from the game and suspended for an additional game for the first offense. A second offense will be cause for suspension for the remainder of the season.

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