

# NORTHWEST CATHOLIC SOFTBALL LEAGUE POLICIES – 2024

(Revised 03/02/24)

## ARTICLE I: PURPOSE

**Section 1:** The League shall be known as the Northwest Catholic Softball League (NCSL or NWCSL).

**Section 2:** The League is organized for the purpose of promoting recreation and conducting amateur softball contests for the mutual benefit and enjoyment of the Players, Managers, Coaches, Spectators, Sponsors and Teams. Furthermore, the League promotes clean sportsmanship, recreation and fellowship between teams and parishes involved.

## ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP

**Section 1:** Teams will be organized according to the following criteria:

Players are to be males having reached their twenty-seventh (27th) birthday the year starting play, and whose immediate family is or whom themselves are registered with a Parish. Annual entry fee for each team is **\$550**.

CLARIFICATION: There shall be a limit of 2 Players aged 27 and 2 Players aged 28 who may play on any given team.

EXCEPTION: The age limit shall not apply to a Parish Priest or Deacon playing for a team (one each per Parish.)

A Player starting a season with a Parish team who is subsequently no longer registered with said Parish, may continue to play for said team subject to all other Sections of Article II.

EXCEPTION: If the Player's new Parish enters a team, said Player may join that team.

A Player desiring to switch teams may do so upon release from a given team, subject to Article II, Section I, and with the approval of the League Officers. If current manager does not release Player said Player must refrain from all play from the League for one (1) year before beginning play with a desired team.

In the case of a Parish closure/cluster, Players may continue to play with any team which represents their Parish of record as defined by the closure/cluster. Players desiring to move to a team other than as defined by the closure/cluster are subject to Article II.

EXCEPTION: The League Officers reserve the right to seed Players into existing teams and/or form new teams as necessary.

**Section 2:** A Parish may enter more than one team. Two (2) Parishes may combine Players to form a team if neither Parish has sufficient Players to form one team.

**Section 3:** No new, non-Catholic Players may be added to a team once said team has five (5). Non-Catholic (NC) players must be designated on the team roster by "NC" after the players name. Catholic players not registered with the Parish represented by the team are not limited.

## Article III: MEETINGS

**Section 1:** Meetings shall be called at the discretion of the League Officers and scheduled by President.

**Section 2:** Each team shall be represented at all League meetings by the Manager or his designate.

**Section 3:** A general meeting of all Managers will be held the last week of each regular season to establish the playoff schedule and, in even-numbered years, elect League Officers by simple majority. Terms of office are two (2) years and begin January 1st of the year following election.

**Section 4:** Attendance of Managers or designates at the general meeting is mandatory. Any team not represented shall be fined twenty-five (\$25) dollars.

PENALTY: Managers shall be suspended for a minimum of one (1) game for failure to be represented at any scheduled meeting.

#### **Article IV: MANAGERS**

**Section 1:** Each Manager shall be responsible for the eligibility of his Players. A Manager or designate must be in attendance at each League game. Each Manager or designate is fully responsible for the Players and/or spectators on the field.

**Section 2:** In the case of an inquiry regarding any Player, the Manager shall be liable to produce records and/or other documents as required by League Officers. If a Player is found to be illegal:

PENALTY: For violations of Article IV, Section 1, and/or Section 2:

1st Offense: Forfeiture of the game in which the Player participated.

2nd Offense: 1st Offense penalty and a minimum three (3) game suspension for the Manager.

**Section 3:** Any change in a team's Manager must be filed by the League Secretary and include the new Manager's name, address and phone numbers.

**Section 4:** All Managers must sign a statement indicating that they have read the current year's League policies, and that each of their Players has received a current copy of the field restrictions.

**Section 5:** Each Player must sign their team's Insurance Waiver/Team Roster form to be eligible to play. Each Player's identification number must be clearly shown on the form.

**Section 6:** Only Players appearing in the batting order in at least half of the regular season games will meet play-off eligibility.

In a case where a team qualifies for a regular season award, the League will furnish awards only to Players who meet the Article IV, Section 6, eligibility requirement.

To establish Player eligibility for post-season play, Managers are to submit to their Division Secretary a listing of their Players who meet the Article IV, Section 6 eligibility requirement at the annual play-off draw meeting.

In the case where a team qualifies for a post-season award, the League will only furnish awards to Players who participated in 80% of their team's scheduled post-season games.

**Section 7:** Player additions to a team must be made at least one day in advance of the day on which the new player is to begin play and subject to Article II.

PENALTY: For any violation(s) of Article IV, Sections 5-7:

1st Offense: A minimum three (3) game suspension for the Manager.

2nd Offense: A minimum one (1) year suspension for the team.

**Section 8**: With the exception of the pitcher and catcher, who are positioned by USA softball rules, all remaining defensive players must be in fair territory, and not distracting to the batter.

## **Article V: SCHEDULES**

**Section 1**: All League regular season, make-up and post-season games shall be determined and published by the League Secretary based on field availability. All games are to end by the first week of September.

**Section 2**: The League Secretary will designate starting times of games. Forfeit times are fifteen (15) minutes after the designated starting time. In the case where a field has two (2) games scheduled on a given date, for the first game scheduled, no new inning will start after seventy (70) minutes of play are completed. Any team not ready to begin play by the said forfeit time, shall be subject to loss of that game by forfeiture. The ruling of the official present shall be final. In the event of a forfeit, the team that forfeited is responsible for paying both team umpire fees prior to the next scheduled game.

**Section 3**: Eligibility to continue play in the League for teams forfeiting two (2) or more games in a season shall be determined by the Board of Directors. All forfeits shall be awarded as a win to the opposing team.

**Section 4**: Tie games will not be replayed. In the case of two (2) or more teams tie for first (1st) place at the end of the season, the Divisional championship will be decided by the Board of Directors of the League using a point system, awarding two (2) points for wins and one (1) point for ties.

**Section 5**: Scores and Score Sheets are to be completed and submitted as follows:

Score Sheets are to be filled out completely, including the name of the Manager or designate. All Player's first and last names must be legibly written, and each Player's number must be listed. Players in attendance that do not play must be listed on the bottom of the Score Sheets of both teams playing in order to receive credit for attendance at the game.

Scores are to be called in to the appropriate Divisional Secretary between 9pm and 10pm on the day of the game.

Original Score Sheets must be signed by the game umpire and received by the appropriate Divisional Secretary within seventy-two (72) hours of completion of the game.

PENALTY: For violation(s) of Article V, Section 5(b) and/or 5(c):

1st Offense: Ten (10) dollar fine for the team.

2nd Offense: Twenty (20) dollar fine for the team.

3rd Offense: Thirty (30) dollar fine for the team.

4th Offense: Fifty (50) dollar fine for the team and forfeit of the next League game.

All Subsequent Offenses: Fifty (50) dollar fine and forfeit of the next League game. There will be no post-season play for the offending team. The offending team must apply in writing for admission to the League in the year following the fifth (5th) violation.

## **Article VI: RULES OF PLAY**

### **Section 1: Equipment:**

The League will determine the type of ball to be used for all sanctioned games. Each team will provide one (1) new ball for each game. Teams may or may not play for the balls as determined before the start of the game by the Managers or their designate. Use of illegal balls will result in forfeiture of the game by the offending team.

Use of metal, hard plastic or polyurethane cleated shoes is prohibited.

PENALTY: Disqualification of the offending Player for the remainder of that game only.

Players may only use bats labeled with a current League Approval Sticker.

PENALTY: For violation(s) of Article VI, Section 1(c), the Managers shall note the offense on the Score Sheets and the offending Player shall be:

1st Offense: Removed from the game and suspended from play for a minimum of one additional game.

2nd Offense: Removal from the game and disqualified from any further play in the League. Offending team will forfeit the game.

**Section 2:** All teams must have at least eight (8) Players on the field to start a game. Lending and/or borrowing Players is prohibited. In a case where only one team only has eight (8) Players, the opposing team shall provide one (1) Player to retrieve and return the ball to the pitcher. The retriever is prohibited from making defensive plays. Where a ball retriever is used, the ninth (9) Player arriving must replace the ball retriever. Teams may add Players to the game as soon as they are available to play.

**Section 3:** There shall be unlimited substitution, subject to the following:

(27+ league) A ten (10) or more batter line up shall be exchanged before the start of each game. A team starting with less than ten (10) Players must add subsequent Players to the bottom of the line-up.

The full batting line-up shall be batted at all times.

#### EXCEPTIONS:

1. Injury of a Player.
2. Use of a pinch hitter/pinch runner.
3. At the discretion of the Manager.

RULING: If a Player is removed from the line-up, that Player is prohibited from further participation in that game.

RULING: Each team must bat at least one (1) Player for each defensive position they cover in the field. If a Player is not available to bat (up to and including a ten [10] Player line-up), an out shall be recorded against the offending team.

A batter may be added to the bottom of the line up at any time.

A pinch batter or pinch runner may be used providing he has not been in the batting line -up and the Player he replaces is removed from further participation in the game.

PENALTY: For each violation of Article VI, Section 2, the offending team shall forfeit the game.

If a courtesy runner is used, only the Player who made the last out may be used as the courtesy runner. A courtesy runner may not be used to replace a courtesy runner. Flip-flop of runners is prohibited. Managers **may decide** if a 'pinch runner' from home plate may be used for a batter with physical limitations preventing him from running from home to first base. Opposing manager has the right to refuse the use of a pinch runner from home. The pinch runner must be the last out and must start behind a line perpendicular with the first base line and extending to the back stop from the back corner of the strike mat. Any pinch runner that crosses that line before the batter hits the ball, the batter is declared out.

PENALTY: For each violation of Article VI, Section 3, before the first pitch to the next batter, the illegal courtesy runner shall be called out and an out shall be recorded against the offensive team.

RULING: In the case where a courtesy runner is ruled illegal and an out is recorded, the illegal courtesy runner is not considered as making the last out.

**Section 4:** A “No Crash Rule” will be in effect. When a crash occurs, the following shall apply subject to a ruling by the official present:

The offending Player is declared out. The ball is considered dead.

The offending Player is to be immediately ejected from the game.

The offending Player will be suspended from further League play for a minimum of three (3) or more games at the discretion of the League.

CLARIFICATION: In the case where a runner slides into a defender or fails to yield to a fielder who is in possession of the ball and waiting to make a tag, the offending runner shall be declared out.

**Section 5:** A “No Crash Rule” will be in effect at home plate subject to the following:

A runner is prohibited from touching home plate or strike mat and shall be declared out upon doing so. A base runner may be retired at home plate in a non-force situation without a tag. A defensive Player in possession of the ball must only touch home plate or mat to put the runner out. A base runner crossing the Line of No Return, twenty-five (25) feet from home plate, may not return to 3rd base.

PENALTY: If a runner crosses the twenty-five (25) foot “Line of No Return” (ref. Section 9)

then returns to 3rd base, the runner is declared out and the ball remains live and in play.

In a run-down a base runner shall be declared out as a result of a tag by any defensive Player except the defensive Player positioned in the catcher's position at the start of the play.

The league games will have a 'double' first base with a white base placed and anchored in the normal position in fair territory, 65 feet from home plate. The second orange base will be placed parallel to the white base but in foul territory. Any play at first the batter/runner must touch the orange base prior to a defensive player, with the ball, contacting the white base. If defensive player tags the orange bag the runner is safe, if the batter/runner touches the white base on a play on the initial play at first, the runner is out. If the ball is hit to the outfield by the batter/runner he may use the white base to make the turn toward second base.

If the defensive throw to first base pulls the defender off of the white base, the fielder may tag the batter/runner before reaching the orange base to get the batter/runner out.

**Section 6:** The Home team is responsible for the following:

Setting the bases (including a double 1st base) which will be properly anchored, marking the field prior to each game, and placing the foul line cones on the first and third base foul lines (at the umpire's discretion).

Home plate strike mats supplied by the League are mandatory.

PENALTY: The offending team will forfeit the game.

**Section 7:** The length of the base line shall be sixty (65) feet. The distance from the home plate to the pitcher's plate shall be fifty (50) feet.

**Section 8:** The Home team shall draw a home plate line, perpendicular to the third base line, from the left front edge of Home Plate twenty-one (21) inches from the 3rd base line and extending to the backstop. To score a run, the runner must make contact with the home plate line or cross the home plate line and contact the ground before a defensive Player, in possession of the ball, touches home plate.

PENALTY: For failure to draw the home plate line:

1st Offense: Five (5) dollar fine for the Home team.

All Subsequent Offenses: Ten (10) dollar fine for the Home team.

**Section 9:** The Home team shall draw a "Line of No Return" (Commit Line) twenty-five (25) feet from the back of home plate towards third base and perpendicular to the third base line in foul territory.

PENALTY: For failure to draw the "Line of No Return:" 1st Offense: Five (5) dollar fine for the Home team.

All subsequent Offenses: Ten (10) dollar fine for the Home team.

**Section 10:** The batters will begin each time at bat with a 1 ball, 1 strike count. After achieving two strikes, a batter is allowed to 'waste' a pitch by hitting a foul ball that is not caught by a defensive player. A batter shall be called out for hitting an uncaught foul ball that is hit after two (2) strikes.

Any foul tip/ foul ball legally caught by the catcher, regardless of the strike count, will be an out, regardless of how high the foul tip/ ball went.

**Section 11:** There shall be no stealing of bases.

**Section 12:** A fifteen (15) run “Mercy Rule” will apply to all regular League games. When any team is ahead by fifteen (15) runs after completing at least five (5) innings of play, the game will end.

**Section 13:** Any Player exhibiting signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion, including but not limited to loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems, shall be removed immediately from the game and not allowed to return until cleared by an appropriate health care professional.

Removal of the Player must be noted on the score sheet including the cause for removal.

Player may resume play after submitting to the League Secretary written clearance from an appropriate health care professional.

PENALTY: Three (3) game suspension for the Player and the Manager.

**Section 14:** Current USA Softball Rules shall apply to all play situations not covered herein.

**Section 15:** A wooden 'strike zone' mat will be used for all games. The 2' x 3' mat constructed of 3/4” plywood will have a 'V' notch cut on one end that will be 19” wide at the opening and 9.5” deep with each side cut at a 45-degree angle and merging at the 9.5” depth. The mat will be painted orange. The mat will be placed on the back of the home plate with the notch paralleling the black of the 'V' of the plate. Any pitched ball, pitched at a legal height, which strikes the mat in the air, will be considered a strike.

- Pitch arcs are to be 6 ft. to 12 ft. from the ground.

**Section 15:** Batting practice is allowed *before the first game only* after the field has been set up for play. No practice is allowed on the infield skin except for the hitter may stand in foul territory at or beyond third or first base and hit toward the outfield grass areas. It is the team responsibility to hit in a safe manner. Any damages caused by batting practice will be the responsibility of the team to reconcile.

## **Article VII: PLAYER CONDUCT**

**Section 1:** Players, Coaches and Managers, on or off the field, shall conduct themselves in an orderly and gentlemanly manner. Any Player, Coach or Manager abusing an official, spectator or another Player, shall be suspended indefinitely. For reinstatement, said Player / Coach / Manager must apply in writing to the League.

Players, Coaches and Managers are required to use appropriate restroom facilities at all times for scheduled games on all fields used by the League.

PENALTY: For violation(s) of Article VII, Section 1(a), the offending Player, Coach or Manager shall be:

1st Offense: Removed from the game and be suspended from play for a minimum of three (3) additional games.

2nd Offense: Removed from the game and disqualified from further play in the League.

**Section 2:** In the case of a questionable decision by an official, only the Manager or designate may question the official about the decision.

**Section 3:** A Player, Manager or Coach ejected from a game for un-sportsmanlike conduct shall automatically be suspended for a minimum of the next three (3) games his team participates in. Suspended Players are prohibited from all play in any division of the League. Managers are responsible for knowing the status of their Players whose eligibility may be in question.

**Section 4:** Player ejection(s) must be noted on both Score Sheets. Both Managers must contact the League Secretary and Vice-President on the day of the ejection.

PENALTY: Forfeiture of the game and possible suspension of the Manager(s).

**Section 5:** Unwarranted or continuous jockeying or harassment of an official by Players, Coaches or Managers will not be tolerated.

**Section 6:** Use of a suspended or ineligible Player shall result in forfeiture of all games played in by said Player. The League reserves the right to initiate further action in said case.

**Section 7:** Profanity will not be tolerated. Drinking of alcoholic beverages during a game is strictly forbidden. Disciplinary action will be taken against Players and/or teams violating this policy.

**Section 8:** Managers shall be responsible for the actions of their Players. In the case of Players violating any of the Sections of Article VII, where a Manager does not step in to control his Player(s), said Manager may be suspended for a minimum of three (3) games. All Manager suspensions are determined solely by the League Officers.

**Section 9:** In the case of the League receiving a complaint from a Parish against a team for any violations of Article VII, said team shall be assessed a one hundred (100) dollar fine.

**Section 10:** In the case where a Hearing is convened, only those called to appear shall be heard.

### **Article VIII: PROTESTS and FEES**

**Section 1:** The entry fee shall be five hundred and fifty hundred (\$550) dollars per team.

**Section 2:** The entry fee shall be payable at the time the team files for entry into the League. All fees paid to the League shall become property of the League. In the case of an entry fee not fully paid, no schedule will be issued to said team.

**Section 3:** Protests must be made in writing and filed with the League Secretary and Vice-President not later than 5:00pm on the day following the game for which the protest is lodged. The letter of protest must include the date of the game, name of the official(s) present, all matters pertaining to the alleged violation and cite the specific rule(s) violated. The protest letter must be accompanied by a fifteen (15) dollar cash fee. If the protest is upheld, the fee will be refunded. If the protest is denied, the fee will be retained by the League.

**Section 4:** Any Manager or Player (Appellant) subject to a ruling on policy who disagrees with said ruling, may appeal the ruling subject to the following criteria:



The Appellant must submit a letter to the League Secretary clearly stating the reason for the appeal. Appeals must be received within three (3) months of the date of the ruling.

A quorum of the Board of Directors will determine the merit of the appeal and either empower a Review Panel to resolve the appeal or deny the appeal.

All rulings of the appeal process will be final.

### **Article IX: RAIN-OUTS**

**Section 1:** In the event that rain may cause a field to be unplayable, the Managers of the first game are responsible to determine if the field is playable or not, and report to the League President and Secretary and all other teams scheduled by 5:00 pm on the day of the scheduled game. Rained out games will be rescheduled by the League as soon as possible, subject to field availability.

### **Article X: UMPIRES**

**Section 1:** Umpires are to be assigned by the Umpire-In-Chief.

**Section 2:** The Umpire-In-Charge is the official representative of the League and has complete authority over the grounds and the play of the game. The Umpire performs the following duties:

1. Starts the game on time.
2. Keeps the game moving in accordance with Article V, Section 2.
3. Determine if any jewelry is deemed dangerous for which the player must remove to play in game.
4. Acquaints Managers with ground rules and any other special rules specific to the games to be played.
5. Enforces all rules, policies and/or regulations.
6. When violations occur, the umpire warns offending Players, Managers, and/or spectators as regards to the violation and ejects offending persons from the game and/or grounds as necessary.

**Section 3:** Each team shall pay the umpire twenty (20) dollars per game and each team is required to provide a new softball that was supplied by the League. Payments and balls are to be made and supplied prior to the start of the game.

### **Article XI: OFFICERS and BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Section 1:** The League Officers are defined as President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary. The League Officers appoint three (3) Divisional Secretary-Directors and three (3) Directors-at-Large.

**Section 2:** The Board of Directors shall include all of the League Officers and Appointed Directors. Officers and Directors are expected to attend all meetings called by the President.

Section 3: League Officers shall have the authority to discipline Players, Managers and/or teams for violations of the rules and/or policies of the League, including conduct unbecoming a member of the League.

Section 4: League Officers reserve the right to make decisions in the best interest of the League.

### **ADDENDUM for the CLASSIC DIVISION**

The Classic (Senior) Division of the League is organized for Players who are at least 50 years of age. All League Policies, with the following **exceptions**, govern the Classic Division:

#### **Article II: MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1: Teams will be organized at the discretion of the League Officers. Entry fee will be **\$450** per year. Players are to be males having reached their 50th birthday in the year in which they begin play.

To be eligible, a Player must be turning 50 the year they start play or have turned 50 must fill out and submit the on-line form to be eligible for the Classic Division draft.

Before the season begins teams may add new players, who have not entered their name in the draft, under the following guidelines:

Teams that finished with a .500 record or better, may add one (1) player not included in the draft. Teams that finished with a sub .500 record may add two (2) players not included in the draft.

Players wanting to enter the Classic Division draw/ draft by completing and submitting the on-line form, [NCSL Classic Division](#) tab.

Section 2: The League Officers will seed new Players into existing teams and/or form new teams as necessary to maintain a balance of skill, ability and a sense of fair play. The 'draft' will be conducted by the league secretary and all managers of the Classic Division.

Section 3: If a Classic Division team finds a **need to add players** during the season, after the draft, to prevent forfeiting games due to injuries or players having left the team, they must present the names and background of the player(s) they would like to add to their roster to the League Board who will review and poll the other team managers for approval. Unanimous approval is required.

#### **Article VI: RULES OF PLAY**

**Section 1:** There shall be unlimited Player substitution subject to the following:

- a. The full batting line-up shall be batted at all times. An eleven (11) or more batting line up shall be exchanged before the start of each game. A team starting with less than eleven (11) players must add subsequent players to the bottom of the line up. With the exception of the catcher and pitcher, all remaining defensive players must be in fair territory.

EXCEPTION: Injury of a Player.

RULING: If a Player is removed from the batting line-up when his turn at bat comes up, an out shall be recorded.

- b.** Any Player may be a courtesy runner only once per given inning. A courtesy runner may not be used to replace another courtesy runner. If the courtesy runner is on base when his turn at bat comes up, an out shall be recorded. A courtesy runner may be used from home plate and must be declared before the start of the game or agreed to by opposing manager, the runner must start behind a line parallel to the back corner of the strike mat on the first base side. The pinch runner from home cannot pass the start line until the batter hits the ball, crossing the line before that time is an automatic out, regardless of the count. A pinch runner from home is only allowed to achieve second base unless the batted ball is hit into an automatic home run area of the field.

**Section 2:** Pitchers may stand up to six (6) feet behind the pitching rubber to deliver the pitch per the USA rules. He must be directly behind the rubber and facing the plate when pitching. Does not have to make contact with the rubber during delivery. Only allowed one step to deliver, cannot walk forward without coming to complete stop, for one second, before delivering pitch.

**Section 3:** A “Five (5) Run Rule” shall apply to all games. When a team is behind by five (5) or more runs in any inning they may score any runs necessary to tie the game. Any team behind by less than five (5) runs may score up to five runs and then the team shall cease batting and take the field.

EXCEPTION: The “Five Run Rule” shall be suspended during play of the last inning.

**Section 4:** An 11th defensive player shall be used whenever a team has 11 or more batters in the line-up.