
HOUSTON WOMEN'S SOFTBALL LEAGUE
2011 OPERATING RULES

1.00 SECTION ONE - League Structure

- 1.01 The Houston Women's Softball League (HWSL) will have at least two distinct seasons of play – Spring and Fall. In addition to regular season play, there are three (3) tournaments known as the Spring Pre Season or Marion Pantzer Tournament, the Spring Midseason or Casey Hedgpeth Tournament, and the Fall Preseason or Jerry Kaufman Tournament.
- 1.02 Council will decide the structure of division play. If possible, there will be two distinct divisions. Fall season will consist of one division unless otherwise voted upon and approved by Council at the August Council meeting.
- 1.03 Divisional play and schedules shall be directed by the Board of Officers (BOO) according to the wishes of Council.
- A. Scheduled dates for Spring season play will be presented to the Membership and approved by the Membership at the annual meeting. Scheduled games will be finalized at the March Council meeting. Special consideration for Spring league play must be presented in writing to the BOO prior to the Annual meeting and will be approved as appropriate at the Annual meeting. The Council will review for approval all other submitted written individual requests through the remainder of the season. Any other conflicts in the schedule will be resolved by the teams involved within the approved schedule of league play.
- B. Scheduled dates for Fall season play will be presented to the Membership and approved by the Membership at the August council meeting. Scheduled games will be finalized prior to the 1st week of play. Special consideration for Fall league play must be presented in writing to the BOO prior to the August council meeting and will be approved as appropriate at the August council meeting. The Council will review for approval all other submitted written individual requests through the remainder of the season. Any other conflicts in the schedule will be resolved by the teams involved within the approved schedule of league play.
- 1.04 In both the Spring and Fall seasons, league or Division winners will be determined based on the win-loss record of league play for each season. League play is defined herein as all games played excluding tournament play. Participation plaques or gift cards of equal value will be awarded to every team that wants one. In the Spring season, uniform shirts will awarded to the team with highest win/loss percentage at the end of all Spring play including tournaments and playoffs, if any. Uniform shirts are defined as T-shirts with team logo and numbers, not to exceed \$10 per person, for a maximum of 15 shirts.
- 1.05 The Fall league will begin no later than the weekend following Labor Day in September and end no later than the first weekend in November, including all make-up games.

- 1.06 Insufficient Funds. If the league receives an uncollectible check from a league member, the league member is responsible for collection within a two-week period from notification in writing to the member and coach or the team member will not be eligible to play as per Section 3.02.

2.00 SECTION TWO – Ground Rules

- 2.01 The league will provide game balls for all season games, tournaments, and playoffs. The Commissioner of the league will declare the official game ball.

- 2.02 The HWSL has adopted a uniform code which differs from the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) requirements. It is the preference of HWSL that all players wear an official jersey with a number; however, it is not a requirement. Similar shirts with numbers are acceptable. Sleeves may be taped with approval from the umpires officiating the game. No steel cleats are allowed. Teams participating in the ASANA World Series must meet ASANA uniform code requirements.

- 2.03 For division play, the home team is the last team listed on the schedule and will take the third base dugout. The home team maintains the official score on all games and is responsible for providing official results to the UIC and/or the Officer of the Day (OOD). Games will be seven (7) innings or fifty-five (55) minutes in length, but will finish the inning in progress. The run rule of Fifteen (15) by the 3rd inning and ten (10) by the 5th inning is in effect unless otherwise approved.

- 2.04 Tie Breaker Procedures for League Games. Where there is a tie at the end of regulation play during the regular season, the International Tie Breaker (ITB) rule shall apply for a maximum of 2 innings and will govern the breaking of that tie. Games that remain tied at the end of two ITB innings will be pronounced official and recorded as a ½ win and a ½ loss. The ITB is defined as follows:

If at the end of regulation play, the score for both teams is tied, additional whole innings will be played until the tie is broken. In each of the additional innings, the last player at bat during the previous inning will begin the next inning as a runner on second base.

- 2.05 For each season, ties for 2nd/3rd place will be broken by a play-off game. Ties for the League winner will be broken by a best 2 out of 3 game series. The tie-breaker games will be played on the next available rain-out date (7 innings, no time limit).

- 2.06 Protests may only concern rule interpretations. Oral notification of protest must be given to the plate umpire. Written notification of the protest and a \$10 protest fee must be given to the OOD as soon as possible after oral notification (above) but not later than at the end of the day's league play. Protest fee(s) will be refunded if protest is upheld. Tournament protests will be resolved at the time of the protest by the OOD (who possesses an ASA rule book) and two (2) ASA umpires. All other protest will be handled as soon as possible following that

day's league play. The office receiving the protest must contact all other Board members, the UIC and any other team and/or person involved in the protest. The BOO and the UIC must meet prior to the next scheduled day of play for the protest hearing. Any members directly involved in the protest who wish to challenge the BOO's decision may do so by notifying the BOO within twenty-four (24) hours of its decision. The challenge must be in writing, specifically stating the objections. The BOO will call a special meeting of Council to have Council rule on the BOO's decision. The person/team bringing the matter to Council must provide all Council members with copies of the objections(s). Members involved in the protest and the BOO members are ineligible to vote on the protest at Council. The decision of the Council is final. Any team who has a protest upheld may appeal to Council to have the game involved replayed, provided that the change in ruling could change the outcome of the already-played game.

- 2.07 No member of the league, while at the field or during any league activity, will engage in behavior which may be deemed as offensive. Violation of this rule may result in expulsion from the league, being banned from the field, or forfeiture of a game. All teams are responsible for approaching unruly fans in an attempt to control their behavior.
- 2.08 All teams must abide by park district rules. Teams are responsible for cleaning their own area. Pets are not allowed in or attached to the dugouts or attached to any fencing adjacent to the field. All dogs must be leashed.
- 2.09 Teams playing the first game of the day are responsible for chalking and otherwise preparing the field, including hanging tarps provided by the league over the dugouts, as the OOD directs. The winning team of the previous game is responsible for raking or otherwise preparing the field for the next game. Teams playing the next-to-the-last game of the day are responsible for cleaning up the field and bleacher areas. All teams will keep their area as clean as possible. The league will furnish trash bags.
- 2.10 During regulation play, a team may start a game with eight (8), nine (9), ten (10), or eleven (11) players, as follows:
 - A. Eight Players: If beginning a game with eight players, the team must be charged with an out each time the 9th batter position would come up to bat. If the 9th player arrives late, said player may be allowed to enter the game and will be added to the 9th position in the batting order. No out will be charged if the 9th player arrives before the 1st plate appearance of the 9th position in the line up. If playing with eight players and a player is lost due to injury, etc., the game will be recorded as a forfeit.
 - B. Nine Players: If beginning a game with nine players, no penalty will be charged. If the 10th player arrives late, said player may be allowed to enter the game and will be added to the 10th position in the batting order. If playing with nine players and a player is lost due to injury, etc., the team must continue the game conforming to the eight-player rule and be charged with an out each time the injured player's position would come up to bat.

- C. Ten Players: If beginning a game with ten players and an 11th player arrives late, said 11th player would be eligible to enter the game as a substitute only and may not be added the batting order as an EP or DH. If playing with ten players and a player is lost due to injury, etc., no penalty will be charged when that player's turn to bat comes up. If an additional player is lost due to injury, etc., the team must continue the game conforming to the eight-player rule and be charged with an out each time the injured player's (the 9th player's) position would come up to bat.
- D. Eleven Players: If beginning a game with eleven players, the game must end with eleven players. If playing with eleven players and a player is lost due to injury, etc., the game will be recorded as a forfeit. Late arriving players may be added to the lineup as substitutes.

2.11 During regulation play, "SPECIAL SUBSTITUTE" players may be used as follows:

- A. If a team is short handed during a regular season game, but has at least 7 of its own legally rostered players on its line-up, then it is permissible to use up to:
 - 1. Up to TWO legally rostered players from another HWSL team in the same or lower classification.
 - 2. A team can add only enough substitute players (two maximum) from other HWSL teams to make ten (10) total in its line-up. In other words, substitute players cannot be used when their inclusion causes the line-up to total eleven or more players; and a team with only seven of its own players cannot add three substitutes in order to get ten (10) total players.
 - 3. If an original team member arrives after the start of the game, then she must immediately replace the substitute player.
 - 4. Players may not play on more than one team in the same game or at the same time, or play against their own team.
 - 5. Under no circumstances will teams be allowed to use substitute players for playoffs.

2.12 During regulation play, COURTESY RUNNERS (CRs) may be used as follows:

- A. ONE CR will be allowed per inning for any player that use of one is requested.
- B. The player who needs the CR must make it safely to first base AND time must be called BEFORE the CR may take her place.
- C. The CR MUST be the player who was the last player put out prior to the player who needs the runner or the batter if the last out was the 3rd out of the inning.

- D. If a player needing a CR comes up to bat prior to the first out of the game, then the CR will be the last batter to cross home or, if no one has crossed home yet, the last batter in the batting order/line-up.
- E. If an out has not yet occurred in the current inning and a player needing a CR comes up to bat, then the CR will be the last batter/out from the previous inning.
- F. If a player's CR is on base when the CR's next time at bat occurs, then the CR may use a CR as applied by Items B thru E above.

2.13 Over the fence homeruns shall be limited to three per team per game. Additional balls hit over the temporary fence shall constitute a strike or an out in the event that it was the third strike.

2.14 All forfeits will require coaches and/or managers to call the Assistant Commissioner and verbally discuss need for forfeit. If Assistant Commissioner is not available, verbal discussion with the Commissioner is required. All phone calls must be made no later than 9 pm on Saturday night before Sunday games. With early notice, HWSL will make an effort to reschedule games IF POSSIBLE. HWSL will enforce forfeit fines as follows:

- 1ST forfeiture of Sunday game(s): no fine or penalty--warning only.
- 2nd forfeiture of Sunday game(s): \$25 fine payable prior to start of next game. If fine is not paid, team will not be allowed to play and additional forfeits will occur.
- 3rd and subsequent forfeiture of Sunday game(s): \$25 per forfeited game, AND subject to Board review and possible termination from the league. No refunds on remaining games.

3.00 SECTION THREE – Roster Information

3.01 HWSL conforms to the rules of ASA in regards to eligible rostered players for Women's softball. Every team must roster all players and non players. All people listed on any roster must be a member of HWSL, and be 18 years of age. Team rosters are unlimited in the number of players listed; however, during the Spring season, teams will be limited to actually playing only 18 players per game. All rostered people must have valid Texas I.D. available during league play. Any league member may be a roster player in one division and a roster non-player in another division. Only each team's softball personnel are allowed in the dugout during the games.

3.02 In the Spring season, team fees, rosters, membership forms, and membership fees are due and should be paid and turned in before or at the Manager's meeting prior to the Pre-Season (Marion Pantzer) Tournament. In the Fall season, team fees, rosters, membership forms, and membership fees are due and should be paid prior to the Pre-Season (Jerry Kaufman) Tournament. Dues will be as follows:

<u>Spring Season</u>		<u>Fall Season</u>	
Team Fees:	\$350	Team Fees:	\$200
Membership Fee:	\$45	Membership Fee:	\$20

Those teams or team members that have not met the financial responsibilities for membership into the league will not be eligible to play in the league until such fees are paid in full.

- 3.03 Roster changes must be made prior to the start of the game by the team making the roster change. Membership forms, dues paid and proof of eligibility must be submitted to the OOD prior to any new individual playing in a game. Acceptance will not be given until the team making the changes(s) has completed all necessary paperwork, such as dues paid, membership forms and proof of eligibility, and has personally transmitted the same to the OOD. In the Spring, players may not change teams during the last three (3) weeks of the scheduled play. Also in the Spring, the Alternative division teams must limit Competitive team players to no more than two (2) on their roster as players. The definition of a player's status will be based on in what division that person began the membership year. Any individual can apply to the Board for reclassification of Competitive/Alternative player status. In the Fall, players may play on one (1) team one (1) week and another team the next week, provided the appropriate roster changes are made through the OOD. Any challenge of conformity to this rule must be handled as a protest prior to completion of said game as per Section 2.06 of these rules.
- 3.04 Roster changes involving non players may be made at any time during either season. Temporary changes may be made by notify the OOD and the opposing coach of the change, in each other's presence, prior to the start of the game. Permanent changes may be made by notifying all other teams of the change. This is accomplished by providing the OOD with the new roster.
- 3.05 It is clearly understood that where these Operating Rules or Procedures require submission of monies or data, nothing is final until the proper OOD verifies to all parties concerned that all the necessary steps have been completed.
- 3.06 Individuals are encouraged to be members of HWSL. New league members may be added at any time during the year. It is not a necessity to be on a team roster for a person to be a member of the league.
- 3.07 **MANNER OF ACTING:** The act of a majority of the officers present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the BOO, unless the act of a greater number is required by these Procedures.

4.00 SECTION FOUR – Appealing a Board Decision on Non-Game Issues

- 4.01 Any violation of these rules may be protested by any member of HWSL. The BOO must meet within a one-week period for a hearing with the person and/or team accused of said violation. The person and/or team determined guilty by a violation may appeal the decision, penalty, or both to the Council. If there is an objection to the ruling, further action may be done in writing and given to an officer of the league within forty-eight (48) hours of the

decision of the violation. When an objection is brought to Council, each member of Council must be provided with a copy of the written objection.

- 4.02 Any interpretation of these rules may be protested by any member of HWSL. The BOO must meet within a one-week period with the person and/or team protesting the interpretation. If the person and/or team is not satisfied with Board's interpretation, the interpretation may be appealed to the Council for a final decision. If there is an objection to the ruling, further action may be requested in writing and given to an officer of the league within forty-eight (48) hours of the interpretation. When an appeal is brought to Council, each member of Council must be provided with a copy of the written objection.

5.00 SECTION FIVE – Officers of the Day (OOD)

- 5.01 The BOO will assign a person to be OOD on each day of league play. The OOD will maintain order, record official game results and enforce these Operating Rules. She/He will have a copy of all official rosters on hand and will settle all questions of eligibility as the question pertains to rosters. The OOD and the umpires have the authority to call games due to weather and darkness with the ultimate responsibility lying with the OOD.

6.00 SECTION SIX – Umpires

- 6.01 A head umpire or Umpire-in-Chief (UIC) will be appointed by the BOO and approved by the membership at the annual meeting. Such umpire will organize and oversee the umpiring crew. In the event the UIC is unable to organize or oversee the umpiring crew, the UIC along with the BOO will appoint an interim head umpire. No umpire may call more than seven (7) games per league per day.
- 6.02 If there are any problems with an umpire, any umpire or league member should contact the UIC and a Board member to resolve any discrepancies before the following week of play. If there are any problems with the UIC, any umpire or league member should contact the Commissioner to resolve any discrepancies. (OBJECTIVE: Umpires should not be released in the middle of the season without due process.) The Board's decision will be final.
- 6.03 The HWSL is affiliated with ASA. The current ASA rule book will be reference for all rules of play. ASA brackets will be used for all tournaments. It is clearly understood that upon being appointed as UIC for HWSL, the ASA rulings and rule book will be enforced, except as otherwise written by these rules.
- 6.04 Umpires will keep a scorecard for each HWSL game. At the conclusion of the game, both coaches will initial the scorecard, verifying the score. UIC will collect and turn in all initialed scorecards to the HWSL officer of the day following all games played that Sunday. Umpire payment is contingent on receipt of all the scorecards each week.

7.00 SECTION SEVEN – All Stars

- 7.01 An All-Star team will consist of up to eighteen (18) players and two (2) coaches from each division if possible. The coaches will be determined by a vote of the league coaches from their own division, limited to two (2) votes per team to be given to the All-Star Committee. Each team or its coaches will pick two (2) players from their team to represent them on the All-Star team(s). The All-Star coaches will choose players from the rest of their own division to fill the final slots. The number of players that can be selected from any one team to make up the All-Star team(s) will be determined by the All-Star Committee.
- 7.02 If a player or coach has been selected to the All-Star tournament team(s) and knows within 48 hours of a conflicting interest, notification should be given to the Commissioner or the All-Star coaches so that a replacement may be found.
- 7.03 When possible, All-Star games will be played in alternative locations, rotating between Houston and another city (i.e., Dallas, Austin, etc.). When All-Star games are played in another city, HWSL will pay for hotel expenses for all official Houston representatives. When All-Star games are played in Houston, HWSL will be responsible for all expenses as approved by the All-Star Committee, Council and the BOO. In the event All-Star games cannot be arranged with another city, Council will approve an alternate tournament.

8.00 SECTION EIGHT –Amateur Sports Alliance of North America (ASANA)

- 8.01 The HWSL is a participant in ASANA. HWSL's team representative(s) to the ASANA World Series will be decided on the team(s) in each division recording the fewest number of losses during all games played in the Spring season to include all HWSL Tournaments.
- 8.02 If for any reason one of the HWSL's ASANA qualifying team(s) is unable to attend the ASANA World Series, then the team placing second in their division that meets all the qualifications will represent HWSL. This process will continue through each division respectively until a team has been identified.
- 8.03 If at the end of the Spring season of play, there is a tie in either division among the teams who could represent Houston at the ASANA World Series, the following steps will be taken to determine which team will represent HWSL:
- A. The BOO will obtain a commitment in writing from each team involved that they will be able to field a team at the ASANA World Series.
 - B. If there are more than two (2) teams tied, a round-robin competition will be held, with each team playing every other team twice. If a three- or more-way tie still exists at the end of the round-robin competition, a single elimination tournament will be held with total runs scored in the round robin competition determining seed. In case of equal runs scored, runs scored against, in addition to runs scored, will determine seed (i.e., Teams A, B, and C each score 15 runs during the round-robin competition. Team A and B have 10

- runs scored against them and Team C had 9 runs scored against them. Team C would earn the first seed.) If there is still a tie after totaling runs scored and runs scored against, seed will be determined by numbers selected from hat.
- C. If there are two teams tied, a three game series will be played, with the winner of two out of three games representing Houston at the ASANA World Series.
 - D. No games played as described in Item B above will be allowed to end in a tie. The ITB rule (Section 2.04) will be used to determine the winner.
- 8.04 The HWSL may send up to two (2) representatives to the ASANA meetings to represent Houston. The ASANA representative and/or alternate must be a member of the league and will be elected by Council during the Annual Elections or appointed according Section 4.07 of the HWSL Procedures. Transportation and hotel expenses for one (1) representative to the ASANA meetings will be covered by the league with a limit set forth in the current year's budget and approved each year by Council at the annual meeting. The ASANA representative may request reimbursement of additional expenses for hotel, airfare and transportation and the annual meeting with proper receipts. Approval of the request will be determined by a majority vote of the membership in attendance.