



Sunshine Softball Association
Northern District Softball Association
Keilor Park & District Softball Association

North West Softball League

**By-Laws and
PLAYING CONDITIONS**

2021/22

INDEX

1	PLAYING SEASON	page 3
2	DIVISIONS	page 3
3	MATCH RULES	page 3
4	STARTING AND FINISHING TIMES	page 3
5	START OF GAMES	page 4
6	DURATION OF GAMES	page 4
7	POINTS AWARDED	page 4
8	UNIFORMS	page 4
9	MATCH BALLS	page 5
10	PLAYER ELIGIBILITY	page 5
11	PLAYERS & SUBSTITUTES	page 6
12	RELIEF RUNNER	page 6
13	DESIGNATED RUNNER	page 6
14	CATCHER RULE	page 6
15	ELIGIBILITY FOR FINALS	page 6
16	COACHES	page 7
17	MEDICAL ASSISTANCE	page 7
18	INJURY	page 7
19	UMPIRES	page 7
20	TEAM WITHDRAWAL	page 8
21	FORFEITS/RESCHEDULES	page 8
22	PROTESTS	page 8/9
23	WEATHER	page 9
24	SCORE CARDS	page 9
25	SMOKING	page 10
26	ALCOHOL	page 10
27	BEHAVIOUR	page 10
28	JUDICIARY	page 10
29	PERMITS	page 10
30	GROUND RULES	page 10
31	CHANGES TO PLAYING CONDITIONS	page 10

1 PLAYING SEASON

The **North West Softball League Delegates Committee**, consisting of 1 Board Member from SSA, NDSA and KPSA (including a minute secretary) plus 1 club representative from each participating club.

The committee shall be responsible for the following:-

- [a] Determine the playing season of the **NWSL**
- [b] Determine the grading of teams for the **NWSL**
- [c] Set starting times for matches
- [d] Prepare the draw for the current season.
- [e] Set umpire fees and fines for the season.
- [f] Set and clarify playing rules
- [g] Any decisions needed to be voted on will consist of 1 vote per committee member (as above)

2 COMPETITION DIVISIONS

The competition shall be played in the following divisions.

Open Age -

Women / Men (Minimum age 14 years)

Juniors - Mixed

T-Ball 3-8 years (may allow less skilled, brand new 9 year olds to play some games, if requested in writing by clubs)

U12 - 11 years and under

U14 - 9-13 years

U16- 11-15 years

U19 - 18 years and under

Ages determined on 31st December of the current season for State Championships.

Junior players play a maximum of 3 age groups per day and are not recommended to play in a grade more than 2 higher than their own age group as a duty off care.

Any special considerations outside these age limits must be in writing to the NWSL Secretary and will be approved or denied at the discretion of a NWSL Delegates meeting. To promote inclusive clubs, special consideration may also be considered for exemptions to age limits for juniors with disabilities or special needs.

3 MATCH RULES

The competition rules will be those currently in force for the Victorian Championships for the grade being played or as amended. U12. Division to play under Kids Spectacular Rules (2018) with the only difference being that games will play 3 innings of 10 min duration each. All games will be played under current ASF rules and interpretations, except where within this document local ground rules and by laws are to be applied and which the associations will interpret and agree. (I.e. hitting off a Tee flexibility)

4 STARTING AND FINISHING TIMES

[a] Shall be set by the North West Softball League Committee prior to the start of the season. 2021/22 as follows-

U12 9:00-10:00 and 10:15 – 11:15 (double headers)

U16 9:00 -10:00 and 10:15 -11:15 (double header)

U14 11:30 -12:45

U19 11:30- 12:45

T Ball 11:30 – 12:30

Open Women 1:15-2:45pm and 3:00 – 4:30 (double header)

Open Men 3:00 – 4:30

Confirmed at meeting 26th Oct 2021 dependent on team entries

[b] A maximum of five (5) minutes is to be allowed from the scheduled starting time for **late start unless under extenuating circumstances and notification and agreement of both teams to NWSL Secretary at least 24 hours before**. Note:-forfeit rule applies after this time.

Time is set by umpires at the diamond. Any match late starting is to be completed at the scheduled finishing time. There will be no extension of time, except as provided in Playing Condition **18 (a)**

5 START OF GAME

[a] The first named team is home team and will occupy third base bench and field first in all matches during the regular season.

[b] During finals, higher placed team fields first, lower placed team bats first.

[c] The team at bat shall be given the use of the diamond eleven (11) minutes prior to commencement time for a five (5) minute warm up. The team second at bat shall take the diamond six (6) minutes before start time, and one minute before start time, the umpire shall allow the starting pitcher five (5) warm-up pitches with a match ball.

6 DURATION OF MATCHES SHALL BE:

[a] Senior matches:- 1hr 30min.
Junior matches: - T Ball 60 min, U12/U14/U16/U19 1 hr.15 min.

[b] **All games must finish on time.** When equal innings are completed with less than five (5) minutes remaining to scheduled finish of game, the next innings shall not commence and the umpire will call "time and game". If in the bottom of the innings the team second at bat is in front, the game is over. Refer to Scoring of Timed Games referenced document.

[c] **Tiebreaker – Any matches** tied at the completion of seven innings will have the international tiebreaker rule played providing time permits. However when time runs out, the umpire will call the game.

[d] **Finals:-**

Semi Finals- All games must have a result. If time has run out **the innings must be completed** to achieve a result. If the game is still tied, the tiebreaker rule will apply and game shall continue until a result is reached. Normal times of games apply

Grand Final Only. Times for juniors will be the same as normal, seniors 2hrs or 7 innings

Equal innings to be played out to get a result. So once the innings has started, with more than 5 minutes to go then the innings must be completed. U19 to be confirmed

[e] The **Mercy Rule** shall apply to all matches in the North West Softball League. The runs will be 7 ahead after 5 innings, 10 ahead after 4 innings and 15 ahead after 3 innings.

[f] **Finals System** shall be played under the page system for competition of 4 teams or more unless delegates of the NWSL agree to an alternative **depending on number of teams per grade.**

7 POINTS AWARDED

Match points will be awarded as follows:

Win – 4 points

Bye – 0 points (All teams playing the same number of games)

Forfeit – 4 points to team not at fault

Draw – 2 point to each competing team

Double Forfeit – **No match points awarded**

Inclement weather or covid lockdown/restrictions announced: – 2 points each as per draw

8 UNIFORMS

[a] Club uniforms must be registered with, and accepted by, their Associations prior to being worn in a match. Recommendation for all uniform tops to be clearly numbered. All players preferably need to be in the same attire. (Either all pants or all shorts)

[b] Sponsorship may be displayed on the uniform or jacket and must be approved by Club Committees prior to being worn in a match.

[c] Warm up jackets may be worn on the diamond at any time.

[d] For all matches, players must be in the correct registered Club uniform within four (4) weeks from their first match in the current season. Let the committee know if this is a problem.

[e] Coaches must wear at least the registered top or jacket within four (4) weeks from their first match in the current season. **No open toe shoes permitted on the diamond during matches. (I.e.thongs/sandals)**

[f] **All junior players (including U19) must wear a hat for sun smart protection.**

(Unless wearing a fielding mask where a hat doesn't fit)

[g] **No metal cleats allowed in any junior games. (TBall up to U16 aligned with National rules)**

Players will be asked to remove them by the umpire before being allowed on the diamond.

[h] **All teams must ensure fielding masks are available for all their junior teams, should players request to wear them.**

9 MATCH BALLS

[a] A yellow match ball, in good condition, must be supplied by each team to the umpire at the commencement of each match.

[b] For a grand final, each competing team must supply a new yellow match ball.

[c] If a team is unable to supply an acceptable match ball, the plate umpire will send a team member to obtain a new ball from the host Association, and the Club will be billed for the cost of such ball.

10 ELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS

[a] Must be registered members of their clubs within their Association.

[b] Eligibility of age of players is up to the 31st December in the year the season commences.

[c] **Senior female teams shall consist of female players only, and senior male teams shall consist of male players only. Any exceptions must be approved by NWSL committee on the day to address the intent. (No battery players permitted as a duty of care)**

[d] Players must be minimum of **14 years of age** at the beginning of the season to compete in the open age competition. Parent/club permission in writing to the secretary is required if a player is starting in seniors at 13 years of age. (Only if turning 14 by 31st Dec) A NWSL Board representative will also need to assess the ability of these junior players as a duty of care. Softball Victoria minimum age for seniors is 14 years old.

[e] Under age players can play in no more than three games on the same day
Under age players meaning all players under 19 years of age as at the 31st December in each season

[f] Subject to 'Playing Condition' 10[e] during the home and away season players may interchange between grades except that where a Club has two or more teams in the one grade, players must not interchange between such teams when it comes to finals. Clubs need to manage players who have played 51 % as they will only be eligible for that particular team. During the season players from each team may support their 'other' team as a pickup player.

[g] **Pick up players from other clubs are permitted during the season and not be part of your regular team. They must be of eligible age and registered to a club** Pick up players may bat and field when filling in. The team that is short must have a minimum of **7** of their own registered players. Pick up players must be in the batting line up **below** all the regular players. **They are NOT permitted to play in battery positions. (Pitcher/catcher)** The intention is to make up numbers and allow the regular players to play in their key positions. Pick up players need to be recorded on match cards as a PU player. (Encourage Integrity for all players in all games)

NO PICK UP PLAYERS PERMITTED TO PLAY IN FINALS.

Note:-Pick up players (not registered with SV) need to pay the current casual fee online through the SV casual registration portal (RevSport) prior to playing. Permit if needed and consider insurance liability.

11 PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES

- [a] A match must commence or continue with a minimum of seven (7) players.
- [b] Where both teams equally field 7 or 8 players for the game, teams can elect prior to commencement of the game to bat through until 3 out is achieved by the fielding side, rather than play the substitution rule- sub is out in the score book.
- [c] During a match, an eligible player arriving at the diamond may be entered for a blank, and such player shall participate in the game as soon as announced by the plate umpire in charge of the game.
- [d] Where blanks occur, an out will occur, unless applying rule 11b

12 RELIEF RUNNER

If, with 9 players or less, a runner is injured during a live ball play and has made or been awarded 1st base, a relief runner will be allowed. It shall be the preceding runner who has completed their turn at bat and is either out or has made home. Use of a relief runner must be approved by the plate umpire and must be requested prior to the next pitch.

13 DESIGNATED RUNNER

The DR rule as played in Victorian Championships will be played in all sections of the NWSL.

14 CATCHER RULE (Temporary Runner)

- [a] The catcher (speed up) rule as played in Victorian Championships will be played in all sections of the NWSL.
- [b] If the DR is used as the runner for the catcher, this will be considered to be the DR rule.

15 ELIGIBILITY FOR FINALS

- [a] A senior player must be fully registered and have played a minimum of three (3) games for their club in the North West Softball League in the appropriate grade to be eligible for their own club team.
- [b] Under age players may play in open/higher age finals for their club teams, provided they have qualified for finals in their age group in the North West Softball League.
- [c] A senior player will be tied to the team that they have played the most games in, except that a player may play in a higher grade, for their own club teams.
- [e] Where a club has more than one team in the same grade, players will be bound to the team they have played the most games with (51%) for finals.
- [f] For all finals matches, all players must be in correct, registered club uniform.
- [g] For all finals matches all coaches and team managers must wear at least registered club top or jacket.
- [h] Any infringement of Playing Condition 15 during finals will result in forfeiture of all matches relating to offences.

16 COACHES

[a] Coaches must be registered members of clubs, and must be registered with the Association, prior to participation.

[b] Any coach coaching **junior players** (both in junior or senior teams) must have a current Working With Children Certificate and have it recorded with NDSA / SSA / KPDSA. In the coach's absence at least one senior player must have a WWC certificate for a junior player to take the diamond. It is the club's responsibility to ensure sufficient coaches/seniors have applied for this certificate.

[c] All teams must nominate their coaches to the North West Softball League that are responsible for queries regarding that team. Coaches names should be added to the score cards for every match.

17 MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

It is the responsibility of the host Association to ensure, where practicable, a qualified first aider is in attendance during competition.

Where a medically qualified person leaves a game in which they are participating for the purpose of rendering first aid assistance to an injured person then:

[a] If a substitute is available, that substitute shall be permitted to enter the game without penalty OR

[b] Where a substitute is not available, when the player's name appears in the batting order, it shall be ignored and no penalty applied. The player may return to the game at any time, and resume their position in the line-up without penalty.

18 INJURY

[a] In the event of an injury causing the injured person to remain on the diamond until medical attention is received, time will be called. Once player is attended to, game may resume and play continues until scheduled time is called. (No additional time will be added to the game. A regulation game will be minimum 3 innings. If not a minimum regulation game then a draw will apply or refer to 18b)

[b] If the injury causes undue delay in the opinion of the plate umpire, the match may be continued at a time and date to be decided by the NWSL Committee after such undue delay is reported by the plate umpire.

[c] All injuries must be documented on the host Association's Medical Report Form as soon as practicable following the injury.

19 UMPIRES - NDSA to manage umpire fees. Ray to record allocated umpires on spreadsheet Plate/line umpires to record their own names on match cards

Umpires fees to be paid out monthly to umpires. Each team pays a fee (\$250) to cover the season based on 10 rounds. This will be recalculated at season end if there is a discrepancy/ shortfall. Money left over to go towards trophies

Umpire Fees are set at \$30.00 to Plate and \$15.00 to Line (\$22.50 per team per game)

T-Ball - No payment is required.

All Clubs participating in the North West Softball League must endeavor to encourage independent umpires to its Association to be added to the umpire pool.

Junior age umpires (U15 years old) are not permitted to plate umpire U19 or Senior games, unless already having acquired an accredited level.

20 TEAM WITHDRAWAL

In the event of a team withdrawing from the competition, players from that team, may transfer to another team, but shall not be eligible for finals unless they have played three (3) regular fixture games with the team they have transferred to.

21 FORFEITS/RESCHEDULED MATCHES

- [a] The score of a forfeited match shall be seven (7) – nil (0) in favor of the team not at fault. For an un-notified forfeit, at least seven (7) eligible players from the team not at fault must be in attendance at the allocated diamond at the match time and these players' names must be recorded on the scorecard. The umpire and the coach of the team not in default must sign the card. In the event that notice of intent to forfeit is given *48 hours* prior to the scheduled starting time of the match, A match card is still required (with a minimum of 7 names from the team not at fault) to be submitted prior to the next round.
- [b] Should a team forfeit on three (3) occasions during a season, then that team may be withdrawn from the competition and a bye inserted. *The Committee will meet with the team prior to making the decision on a withdrawal.*
- [c] **Rescheduling of Games** will only be permitted if the team requests it in writing to the NWSL and **if both teams agree**. Game to be played within a **reasonable time frame** determined by the committee. (ie washout, Pan Pacs etc)

22 PROTESTS

- [a] Notification of intent to protest must be made to the plate umpire **before the next pitch**.
- [b] *After discussion with the umpires, should the protesting coach, decide to continue the protest, they must advise the plate umpire before the next pitch legal or illegal. The umpire will remind scorers to record all details on the score cards for the protest committee to meet ASAP or within 7 days.*
- [c] Protests on judgment will not be considered.
- [d] Time will not be added to the game currently being played.
- [e] Scorers must endorse both scorebooks, ensuring the following details are marked.
(1) Position of runner(s) on base/s. (2) Time of protest. (3) Ball and strike count on batter. (4) The actual point of protest marked with letter P.
- [f] If a protest is made at the end of the game, the protesting coach must notify the umpire **before** they leave the diamond and record it on the match card.
Scorers to make sure all protests are recorded on the score cards.
- [g] **The game shall continue** until time is completed or the match resolved.

The Protest Committee shall consist of one nominated person per Association plus one neutral member not involved in the match. (Ideally 3-5 members to avoid tied vote)

[h] Written protest must include:-

- [1] Date, time and place of match
- [2] Names of umpires and scorers
- [3] The Rule reference of the official Rules or Local Rule under which the protest is made
- [4] Decision and conditions surrounding the making of the decision

[5] All essential factors involved in the matter protested

NOTE 1: Failure to provide this information, in addition to that specified in paragraph c shall render the protest inadmissible.

NOTE 2: A winning team cannot protest, however, the team may refer the matter to the Umpires coordinator or executive committee for clarification. Such clarification should be made available to all parties involved.

In the event that the protest is upheld and the game ordered replayed or continued, then the relevant scorecard shall be held by the Protest Committee until such replay or continuation is completed, at which time a new score card should be lodged.

23 WEATHER

[a] The SV weather policy will be adhered to by this competition. (Heat Policy- hot weather guidelines, hot weather checklist) Extreme weather forecast may determine part/whole round suspension. Associations will also be guided by Brimbank and Whittlesea City Councils ground closures.

[b] In the event of inclement weather, the Executive/Ground committee of the host association will determine if any games will be cancelled, 15 minutes prior to the commencement of the scheduled game. Each grade/time slot will be assessed accordingly. During play, the umpire shall suspend the game if he/she considers it dangerous until the weather clears. When time is up the game will be considered over.

NOTE: In the event of lightning the game will be immediately abandoned and if hailing, game suspended.

If extreme heat is forecast 24 hours prior to round commencing, the NWSL committee will meet to make a decision as to which games may go ahead and then notify competing clubs.

[c] Except in finals, in the event that an umpire abandons a match, or declares a diamond unfit or dangerous for play during a match, then match points shall only be allocated if two thirds of the allocated time has elapsed OR three (3) innings have been completed. Anything less than this shall be called a draw and two (2) match points will be awarded to each competing team.

[d] Two points will be awarded to any team when play is cancelled.

[e] Finals matches shall be governed by the Rules of Softball where it is an innings game and time games shall be considered complete if two thirds of the allocated time has elapsed, OR five (5) innings are completed. In the event of a draw the match shall be continued at a time and date to be set by the NWSL committee.

[f] If any finals match is abandoned, the game shall be awarded to the team graded higher on the Premiership table UNLESS the Executive Committee determines that the match can be replayed, if time allows.

24 SCORE CARDS

[a] Score cards to be taken to the diamond by the home team prior to the game and the winning team is responsible for handing the completed score card into the host Association immediately following the match. Cards must be handed in at the latest by the end of the days play. Failing to do so may result in loss of points.

[b] On completion of the match, the match result, complete with final score, is the responsibility of BOTH coaches and the umpire, ensuring that score is correct and must be correctly completed and signed by **both coaches and scorers** as being correct. (Preferably in pen)

Bench players' names should not be listed on the score card until they have been legally entered into the game.

[c] Coaches/scorers are only responsible for the player details of their own team. Note that a substitute player must be included on the scorecard, with a reference to their club or the scorecard will be deemed to be incorrect.

[d] In the event of an abandoned match, a scorecard must be submitted by the plate umpire.

[e] Full names of all participants must be **PRINTED** on the scorecard and the **SIGNATURE** of coaches, scorers and plate umpire must all be recorded **in ball point pen.**

25 SMOKING

Players, coaches, scorers, team managers and umpires are not permitted to smoke during any matches, on or around the diamond. Any participant found smoking during a match will be asked to desist, and if they refuse to do so will be removed from the game. **NO SMOKING** will be permitted during junior games within 10 meters of the diamond. Refer to each Association's Good Sports Policies.

26 ALCOHOL

[a] Any **player or official** who is observed to be intoxicated and/or drinking alcohol excessively will not be permitted to participate in a game. It is a duty of care of all clubs to be vigilant in this responsibility and report offenders to the executive committee.

[b] **Alcohol must not be consumed prior to and during games by all officials and players involved in the scheduled games.** Failure to comply with this request will result in a forfeit by the offending team.

[c] All supporters/families/spectators are to refrain from drinking during and around junior games.

27 BEHAVIOUR

Clubs are responsible for the behavior of their Players, Officials and Supporters. (Refer to Codes of Conduct) Foul or abusive language, derogatory/racial comments or behavior detrimental to the game will not be tolerated.

Offending player and/or coach shall be ejected from the match and the game shall be forfeited should the team allow any unacceptable behavior to continue. (Umpire's discretion)

Umpire may need to lodge a report of the incident to the executive and offending player/coach will be asked to meet with the NWSL committee where a penalty may apply.

Players or officials from non-participating teams may be placed on report as well.

28 JUDICIARY

The Softball Victoria Zero Tolerance policy will be enforced by this competition. Penalties as set out by this policy will apply. All queries during a game will be addressed directly to the plate umpire and must be directed through the nominated coach in the match. Time should be called directly following the play and before the next pitch.

29 PERMITS

[a] Failure to comply with 'Playing Conditions' of the North West Softball League shall render permit holders liable to penalties as prescribed in the Playing Conditions of the North West Softball League.

[b] Players must be registered (insured) prior to playing. Permits must be formally submitted within seven days of commencement of play by the team requesting a permit. Failure to comply with this will render the permit player ineligible to participate.

30 GROUND RULES

[a] The Victorian open field blocked ball rule will apply.

[b] Local Association Ground Rules will apply- ie if cones are used or a fence marks the outfield.

31 CHANGES TO PLAYING CONDITIONS

The Sunshine/Northern District/Keilor Park Softball Associations general membership committee, which consists of an Executive member from each association, secretary and a representative from each club that is represented in the Sunshine/Northern District/Keilor Park Softball Associations, which has been duly convened, can change the Playing Conditions of the North West Softball League. A change may be made by a majority vote. There must be at least 75% representation by clubs at the meeting. The Chairperson of the meeting will have a casting vote should a tied vote arise. All clubs will be advised of any changes in writing as soon as practicable after the meeting. *Needs to consider participating clubs from other Associations e.g. Clubs from other Associations playing in the North West Softball League competition, may put forward recommendations for consideration by the NWSL committee.*