

SOFTBALL ULSTER Bylaws (2018)

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Softball Ulster (SU) is a regional council of Softball Ireland (SI) who are the governing body of softball on the Island of Ireland (Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland).

SU adopts the current rules and regulations as published by the **World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC)** in the 2018 – 2021 **slow pitch** rulebook. These bylaws define all the amendments to the **WBSC** rules and regulations that apply to any softball leagues and tournaments played in the **Ulster** region under **SU** oversight. **[Updated 2018]**

These bylaws will take precedence over SI bylaws where there is a conflict between the two. SI bylaws will take precedence over **WBSC** rules and regulations where there is a conflict between the two, unless otherwise stated in these bylaws **[Updated 2018]**

BYLAW 1: APPLICATION AND DEFINITIONS

- Sec. 1** The term "SI" means Softball Ireland, the national council or it's designated representative officers or sub-committees.
- Sec. 2** The term "SU" refers to Softball Ulster, the Softball Ulster Council or its designated representative officers or subcommittees.
- Sec. 3** The term "organising body" refers only to the Softball Ulster Council.
- Sec. 4** The word "club" applies to single and multi-team playing organisations.
- Sec. 5** The word "team" refers to any team registered in the SU region or for any SU competition.
- Sec. 6** The word "league" refers to any softball competition played over a period of a number of weeks in a round robin or similar format.
- Sec. 7** The word "championship" refers to the SI Brian Walshe Cup, Plate and Bowl competitions or any derivations of that competition, and to the deciding competition for the national club champions, the Softball Ireland National Club Championships (SINCC).
- Sec. 8** The word "tournament" refers to all official SU competitions played over a single day or over a series of consecutive days.
- Sec. 9** The word "umpire" includes any person officiating a game under the regulation of SI/SU.
- Sec. 10** The term "regional association" refers to a body recognised by the SI Council as having satisfied the requirements of Article 17 of the SI constitution (SU is a regional association).
- Sec. 11** The term "SI regional leagues" refers to the provincial leagues recognised by SI. (SU league is an SI regional league).
- Sec. 12** The term "team contact" refers to any official representative of a team who will liaise in all business related to the league, tournaments and umpire provisions with the SU Council. This representative is an essential requirement of all teams, and the "team contact" is required to:
- a. Familiarise themselves with the rules of the game as described in the **WBSC slow pitch** softball rulebook (accessible from the following website: <http://www.wbcs.org/wp-content/uploads/ENGLISH-2018-2021-Slow-Pitch-Softball-Playing-Rules-A4.pdf>) [**Updated 2018**]

- b. Provide to the SU chairperson (chair@softballulster.com) and secretary (secretary@softballulster.com) a contact email address and telephone number in which he/she can be reached.
- c. Familiarise themselves with these bylaws, which apply to all league, tournament and championship play, except where other regional or competition rules have precedence.

Sec. 13 Teams in the top division of each SI regional league are defined as “Grade A” teams.

Sec. 14 Teams in all divisions below the top tier of each SI regional league are defined as “Grade B” teams. (All the teams in the SU league are defined as Grade A).

BYLAW 2. SI/SU COUNCIL RECOMMENDED POLICIES

The SU council recommends that each club should adopt the following policies as a matter of good practice. If you would like further advice or information on these policies or would like to share any policies that your club currently uses or is considering implementing, then please contact the SU secretary (secretary@softballulster.com).

- Sec. 1** Each club should have a basic constitution outlining the rights, duties and responsibilities of its members. A basic constitution, which can be used as a template, can be made available by request.
- Sec. 2** Each club should have a bank account with at least two signatories on the account.
- Sec. 3** SI and SU recognise that the consumption of alcohol impairs co-ordination and judgment. While recognising the social nature of softball, SI and SU strongly recommend that individuals show personal responsibility, for their own safety and that of others, when consuming alcohol before or during softball events. An effective working guideline is: if you have had too much drink to legally drive, you shouldn't play softball. SI and SU fully support any umpires or other nominated officials who exclude an individual from play due to alcohol induced incapacity.
- Sec. 4** Members are strongly advised against playing while pregnant.
- Sec. 5** Any player who has concerns about insurance coverage (e.g. in case of pregnancy, disability or otherwise) should satisfy themselves, through SI or directly with the insurers, as to whether their needs are met. SI will endeavour, where feasible, to obtain any clarifications or additional cover required with any additional cost to be borne by the player (insurance consultation can be carried out through the SU council or directly with the SI council).
- Sec. 6** In order to compete in a SI tournament, for insurance purposes, all players must be registered with SI.
- Sec. 7** In order to compete in any SU competition all players must be registered with SU or SI.
- Sec. 8** The SI Council recommends that all clubs adopt the SI Club Charter. The SU Council, to reflect best practice and reward clubs who adopt the policies enclosed, will review the charter annually.

BYLAW 3. RULES OF PLAY

In Ulster the rules of play are adopted from the World Baseball Softball Confederation (**WBSC**) Slow Pitch Softball Playing Rules. These rules are accessible from the **WBSC** website at: <http://www.wbsc.org/wp-content/uploads/ENGLISH-2018-2021-Slow-Pitch-Softball-Playing-Rules-A4.pdf>. The following rule adjustments will apply in the Ulster region and replace the rules as they appear in the **WBSC** Slow Pitch Softball Playing Rules. **[Updated 2018]**

1 THE GAME

1.1 DEFINITIONS

1.1.4 HOME AND VISITING TEAM

- a) The home team is determined in the SU region by league assignment. The league schedule is emailed out to team contacts prior to the commencement of the regular league. **[Updated 2018]**

1.2 REGULATION GAME REQUIREMENTS

1.2.3 RUN AHEAD RULE

- a) May be applied to any game at all tournaments and championships when one team leads another by: twenty (20) runs after four (4) innings; or fifteen (15) runs after five or more (5) innings. The run ahead rule is **optional** and **not** compulsory in the Ulster region and may be declined by the losing team. The run ahead rule may be offered to the losing team after each inning provided the aforementioned criteria are still met. **[Updated 2018]**

2 PLAYING FIELD AND EQUIPMENT

2.3 THE PLAYING FIELD

2.3.1 PLAYING FIELD REQUIREMENTS

- a) The playing field must have a clear and unobstructed area within the minimum dimensions set out in Appendix 1 (of the **WBSC** Slow Pitch Softball Playing Rules). Exceptions to these dimensions can be considered if:
 - i. It is a permanent condition of the field.
 - 1. Exception made by the SU Council following the recommendation of the Chief Umpire following a field inspection.
 - ii. It is an unseen temporary condition.

2. Exception made by the Plate Umpire in agreement with both team captains. If an agreement cannot be met the game should be suspended pending a decision from the SU Council over postponement or forfeiture.
- b) A warning track is not required on the playing field. **[New 2018]**

2.3.2 THE OFFICIAL DIAMOND

- a) The official diamond layout must comply with the dimensions outlined in Appendix 1 (of the **WBSC** Slow Pitch Softball Playing Rules). Marking of the field (e.g. foul, one meter and side-lines; coaches, batters and catchers boxes; on-deck circle and bases and home plate) is optional. **[Updated 2018]**
- c) Bases do **not** need to be securely fastened into position (e.g. with spiked bases). If spiked bases are used, the spikes should be away from potential running lines:
- i. 1B: spikes should be facing the outfield and foul ball zone.
 - ii. 2B: spikes should be facing left field and right field.
 - iii. 3B: spikes should be facing foul ball zone and left field.
 - iv. Bases can also have a spike hidden under the base (middle of the base).

2.3.3 GROUND OR SPECIAL RULES

- a) If using a baseball field the pitcher's mound must not be in the field of play and the mound must be a minimum of 10 feet from the foul ball line on the field of play.

2.4 GAME EQUIPMENT

2.4.1 OFFICIAL BAT

Bats marked "**WBSC**", "**ISF**" or "**ASA**" approved are permitted for use in the SU region. The bats should have one of the following logos clearly visible:



Slow pitch bats may also have the “ASA” slow pitch logo clearly visible:



In addition, the bats used should not be included on the **ASA non-approved bat list**. Visit http://usa.asasoftball.com/e/build_batlist_w_pics_2000.asp to see a full list of banned bats. **[Updated 2018]**

2.4.3 OFFICIAL SOFTBALL

- b) In co-ed play, the following balls will be pitched:
 - i. 12” 52/300 ball (all **male** batters and any **female** batter who elects to hit the 52/300 ball instead of the 11” 44/375 ball).
 - ii. 11” 44/375 ball (all **female** batters only).

2.5 PLAYERS’ EQUIPMENT

2.5.2 SHOES

- c) No metal soles, heel plates or studs are permitted on shoes.

2.5.3 PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- e) **HELMETS**. Each team is required to have a **minimum of four adult** helmets available in the dugout for use by players. Helmet use is currently **not** compulsory but **highly recommended** by both SI and SU. If **four** helmets are not available the team will automatically forfeit the game due to be played. **[Updated 2018]**

2.6 UNIFORMS

2.6.1 PLAYER UNIFORMS

All players on a team shall wear uniforms alike in colour, trim and style. If a team attends a game without a full uniform, the minimum acceptable standard will be shirts of a similar colour. This ruling will be based upon the judgement of the assigned umpire. In the absence of an assigned umpire, both captains must be in agreement. If players need to wear outer garments due to weather conditions (e.g.

jacket or waterproofs) then they must **not** wear colours that are similar to the opposing team.

- a) CAPS
 - i. Ball caps do **not** need to be alike and are **not** mandatory for male or female players. It would be beneficial for the pitcher to wear a ball cap as the brim is designed to protect players from a ball batted directly to the head, but this is **not** mandatory. **[Updated 2018]**
 - ii. Caps, visors and headbands are optional for male or female players and can be mixed. If more than one type is worn, they do **not** need to be alike or of a similar colour to the team uniform. Plastic or hard visors are not allowed. **[Updated 2018]**
 - iii. Should a defensive player wear an approved helmet, this is **not** required to be of a similar colour to the team uniform or other players. **[New 2018]**

- b) UNDERSHIRTS
 - i. A player may wear an undershirt of any colour and this does **not** need to be alike of the same colour as the team uniform. No player may wear ragged, frayed or slit sleeves on exposed undershirts. **[Updated 2018]**
 - ii. A warming (compression) sleeve may be worn but will be treated in the same manner as a long sleeve undershirt. **[Updated 2018]**

- c) PANTS/SLIDING PANTS
 - i. Sliding pants are **not** compulsory and do **not** need to be alike.

- d) NUMBERS
 - i. Numbers are not a compulsory requirement on team shirts, however it is encouraged that all teams purchasing new kits in the 2018 season have numbers printed on them. Only whole numbers 01 to 99 must be used. **[Updated 2018]**

- e) NAMES
 - i. Individual names are not a compulsory requirement on team shirts. **[New 2018]**

2.8 EQUIPMENT

The Plate Umpire in each game has the right to remove any and all equipment not meeting rules 2.4 and 2.5. This includes bats and helmets during pre-game inspection or bat testing during a game. Removed equipment shall be kept by the Plate Umpire and returned to their rightful owner after the game is finished. **[Updated 2018]**

3 PARTICIPANTS

3.2 LINE UP AND ROSTERS

3.2.1 LINE-UP CARDS

- b) A starting player's name may be on the line-up card if they are not yet present **provided** they are expected to be present by the commencement of the game.
- c) An eligible roster player may be added to the substitute list at **any** time during the game.

3.2.2 PLAYERS

- a) Each team must have a minimum of ten (10) players in the line-up at all times where possible, but may play with nine (9) players using the shorthanded rule. **[Updated 2018]**
- iii. Co-ed: Ten (10) players. Teams may opt to play with six (6) males and four (4) females, five (5) males and five (5) females, or four (4) males and six (6) females.
 - 1. If playing six (6) males and four (4) females, the following set of rules **must** apply:
 - a. The females must alternate through the top of the batting order (i.e. 1,3,5,7 or 2,4,6,8).
 - b. When fielding there must be at least two females in the outfield and two females in the infield. The pitcher is considered an infield position in this case.
 - c. The catcher must be male. The pitcher may be male or female.
 - d. Any substitute must be of the same gender as the substituted player.
 - e. All teams must finish a game with the gender-split it started with.
- iv. Co-ed with Extra Players (EPs): Twelve (12) players. Teams may opt to play with seven (7) males and five (5) females, six (6) males and six (6) females, or five (5) males and seven (7) females.
 - 1. If playing seven (7) males and five (5) females, the following set of rules **must** apply:
 - a. The females must alternate through the top of the batting order (i.e. 1,3,5,7,9 or 2,4,6,8,10).
 - b. When fielding there must be at least two females in the outfield and two females in the infield. The pitcher is considered an infield position in this case.

- c. The catcher must be male. The pitcher may be male or female.
 - d. Any substitute must be of the same gender as the substituted player.
 - e. All teams must finish a game with the gender-split it started with.
 - f. The shorthanded rule may **not** be applied in this scenario.
- c) A team is eligible to apply the shorthanded rule any play with nine (9) players. A team will not be permitted to play shorthanded with eight (8) or fewer players. **[Updated 2018]**
- i. If playing shorthanded with six (6) males and four (4) females the following set of rules must apply:
 - 1. If the missing player is female, the missing player becomes an automatic out in position 7 or 8.
 - 2. If the missing player is male, the missing player becomes an automatic out in position 9 or 10.
 - ii. If playing shorthanded with five (5) males and five (5) females the following set of rules must apply:
 - 1. The missing player (either male or female) becomes an automatic out in position 9 or 10.
 - iii. A team is not permitted to play shorthanded if there are ten (10) players available in a recognised gender split (i.e. 6/4, 5/5, 4/6).

3.2.6 ENTERING THE GAME (SUBSTITUTIONS)

- h) A courtesy runner may be permitted to the offensive team (at the discretion of the umpire, who may choose to consult with both captains) to replace an injured runner on the bases after time has been called. The courtesy runner must touch any awarded base(s) or missed base(s) not previously touched. A courtesy runner may take the place of:
- i. A batter-runner who was injured prior to the last play provided they have not attempted to advance past first base.
 - ii. A runner or batter-runner that was injured while running the bases during the last play, at any of the bases. **[Updated 2018]**
- i) If a courtesy runner is requested and granted, they must be the player who is furthest in the batting order from the previous batter excluding:
- i. Players of a different gender
 - ii. Players who are currently on base
- If no players meet both of the criteria in i and ii, no courtesy runner will be allowed. **[New 2018]**

- j) If a player acting as a courtesy runner leaves their base for the purpose of going to bat, the runner they replaced will be called out and the courtesy runner may resume their place in the batting order. **[New 2018]**

3.7 SCORERS

3.7.1 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OFFICIAL SCORER

An official scorer is not required in the SU region. Each team will be responsible for their scores in the absence of an official scorer. If present the official scorer will have the following responsibilities.

- a) Prepare or cause to be prepared and keep records of a game as provided for in these rules.
- b) Be the sole authority for all scoring decisions involving judgement.
- c) Determine whether a batter's advance to first base is the results of a hit or error.
- d) Not make a scoring decision that is inconsistent or in conflict with these rules or an umpire's decision.

5 BATTING AND BASE RUNNING

5.5 BATTER-RUNNER

5.5.1 THE BATTER BECOMES THE BATTER-RUNNER

- b) Must advance to and touch first base:
 - i. When four balls are called by the plate umpire and the ball is dead.
 - 1. A female batter-runner is awarded one base without liability to be put out.
 - 2. A male batter-runner is awarded two bases when followed immediately by a female batter. The next batter, a female, will bat. If the next batter is an automatic out (female) the male batter is only awarded one base. The next batter, a male, will bat.

APPENDIX 5: UMPIRES

A. GENERAL INFORMATION FOR UMPIRES

- c) Male and female umpires should wear:

1. A powder blue short-sleeved shirt. The SU badge should be worn on the left sleeve of the shirt.
2. Dark navy blue socks are recommended but not compulsory.
3. Dark navy blue trousers (fechheimer style or similar) are recommended but not compulsory.
4. Dark navy blue cap is recommended, but any other colour is acceptable provided it is not the same colour as either team playing.
5. Dark navy ball bags are recommended but not compulsory (plate umpire only).
6. Dark navy blue jacket and/or sweater are recommended but not compulsory.
7. Black shoes and belt are recommended but not compulsory.
8. A white t-shirt or undergarment worn under the powder blue shirt is recommended but not compulsory.

APPENDIX 6: GAME SUMMARY

G. GAME SUMMARY

In Ulster the plate umpire, using the official SU **Match Report** cards, completes the game summary. The completed cards must be emailed to the SU Competitions Officer (competitions@softballulster.com), the SU chief umpire (chiefumpire@softballulster.com) and the SU secretary (secretary@softballulster.com) no later than one day immediately following a game.

BYLAW 4. THE FIELD OF PLAY

- Sec. 1** Every club must ensure that their home ground is suitable and safe for any SI/SU competition or tournament they are entered in and that they have all necessary permits to play there. If there is any doubt about suitability and safety, the club representative should request an inspection by SI/SU.
- Sec. 2** The umpire will set ground rules following consultation with both team captains. Any regularly occurring grounds rules must be forwarded to SU and will be provided to the umpires in advance of games.
- Sec. 3** If a team's home ground is continually unavailable SU can instruct them to make alternative arrangements. The team in question may be instructed to play all their games away from home if alternative arrangements cannot be made.

BYLAW 5. EQUIPMENT AND SAFETY

Sec. 1 Each club is required to have the following minimum list of equipment for each SU competition or tournament home game:

- a. One set of softball bases with one dual-coloured safety base at first base.
- b. A home plate and a pitcher's plate.
- c. At least one legal softball bat.
- d. At least 10 softball gloves (9 if playing shorthanded).
- e. At least two legal 12" 52/300 softballs and at least two legal 11" 44/375 softballs as defined by **Rule 3** of the ISF rulebook. Each team should only use the provided balls during league games. Failure on the part of the HOME team to provide legal balls at the beginning of the game will constitute a forfeit for that team.
- f. A **minimum of four adult** helmets available in the dugout for use by players. Helmet use is currently **not** compulsory but **highly recommended** by both SI and SU. If **four** helmets are not available the team will automatically forfeit the game due to be played. **[Updated 2018]**
- g. Where applicable a letter from the local or government authority certifying authorization to use the ground.

Sec. 2 Acceptable footwear, prosthesis, headwear and jewellery should comply with **WBSC Rule 2.5** and the associated amendments included within these bylaws. **[Updated 2018]**

BYLAW 6. PLAYERS

- Sec. 1** Players must be members of SI/SU (i.e. they must be registered for the current season with the club/team for which they play and with SU) in order to take part in any SI/SU tournament or competition or any Regional league.
- Sec. 2** In order to meet insurance requirements, all players must be registered with SU and assigned to a **club** by **6pm on Friday 27th April 2018** to be eligible for the Start of Season Tournament and assigned to a **team** by **6pm on Friday 18th May 2018** to be eligible for the start of the regular league. A player registration spreadsheet (to be emailed out by the SU secretary in advance of the deadline) must be completed and **emailed only** to the SU secretary (secretary@softballulster.com) by the deadline above. A player will **not** be considered registered unless a **full name, date of birth** and **email address** is supplied at time of registration. **[Updated 2018]**
- Sec. 3** During the season all teams may continue registering players up until the final week of play. In order for a player to be eligible to play in a game, he or she must be registered before 6pm on the Friday before the scheduled game. No exceptions will be made. Registration is accomplished by forwarding the appropriate player registration form (found on the SU website) to the SU secretary (secretary@softballulster.com) by the deadline above. Again, a player will **not** be considered registered unless a **full name, date of birth** and **email address** is supplied at time of registration.
- Sec. 4** An umpire or any other SI/SU official is entitled to ask for proof of identity from any player. In the absence of satisfactory proof of identity, the player may be asked for a signature and allowed to play under caution. SI/SU may require the team or player to substantiate this identification at a later date.
- Sec. 5** Impersonation of another member is a category three offence by both the player and their team.
- Sec. 6** The lower age limit for participation in any competition is 18 years.
- Sec. 7** SI/SU do not accept any liability in cases where the player's condition renders them excluded from SI's insurance policy.
- Sec. 8** A player may not **permanently** transfer teams within the league season without applying to SU for, and being granted, a transfer of registration under the conditions listed below. Player transfer is accomplished within seven days (counted from the moment the SU secretary gets the written request), by forwarding the appropriate 'Player Transfer Form' (found on the SU website) to the SU secretary (secretary@softballulster.com) provided the following conditions are met:

- a. The required fee has been paid (£10 per player in 2018).
- b. There is no unfair advantage to any third party.
- c. The player is not subject to any disciplinary penalties or proceedings at the time of requested transfer.
- d. There are at least three league games (excluding playoffs) still to be played by the destination team.

Sec. 9 A team may play with only nine players, otherwise known as the short-handed rule. The missing player will be considered an “automatic out” awarding one out to the short-handed team when the missing player is due to bat. The position of the “automatic out” will be as per **Rule 1.2.3(a)** as set out in **Section 3** of these bylaws.

- a. If playing shorthanded and a substitute arrives, the substitute must be inserted immediately into the vacant spot.
 - i. The plate umpire should grant the substitute player adequate time for warm-up.
- b. If the substitute refuses to enter for any reason that player becomes ineligible for the remainder of the game.

Sec. 10 A player may not play for any other team in the SU league (except for their primary team) unless ‘borrowed’ **temporarily** to another team using the exemptions below. **[Terminology Updated 2018]**

- a. A player may only play in a team other than their primary team as per these bylaws when no other primary player is available for that team and that team can only field seven or eight players.
- b. A team that can only field seven or eight players in a game may invite up to two players from any other teams in the league to play for that team for that game (as long as the players in question are properly registered and insured by SU).
- c. A player may play for any other team in the league under these rules only once per season per team.
- d. Up to 2 players per team can be borrowed under these rules per game and the gender balance should be maintained:
 - i. In any case of borrowing players, the team requiring the borrowed players should only have seven or eight of their own players available for the game (with a minimum of 1 female player) and after the substitution the team should have a minimum of three female players and a maximum of nine players in total.
 - ii. If a team is using borrowed players from another team for a game, those players must be subbed out of the game upon the arrival of a primary player of the same sex (the plate umpire should grant the arriving player appropriate warm-up time).

Sec. 11 Players may transfer between teams within the SU clubs under the same rules as for team transfers.

BYLAW 7. TEAMS/CLUBS

- Sec. 1** To register as a team/club with SU the team/club must have completed the 'Team Registration Form' and submitted this to the SU secretary (secretary@softballulster.com) by the close of registration for the current season. The registration deadline for regular league teams is **6pm on Friday 20^h April 2018**. No team fees will apply in the 2018 season. **[Updated 2018]**
- Sec. 2** Each team must have paid the appropriate player membership fees by the close of registration for the current season.
- Sec. 3** All the club's business with SI or SU must be through a nominated representative.
- Sec. 4** All Teams that have played for more than one year in the league are required to have at least 2 qualified umpires (or umpires in training) willing to officiate games. Non-compliance with this bylaw may be penalised following an SU council ruling.
- Sec. 5** A team looking for an exception to the above bylaw should do so in writing to the SU secretary (secretary@softballulster.com) who will table the matter at the following council meeting. Reasons for an exception should be stated for an exception to be granted.
- Sec. 6** Once a request for an exception reaches the SU secretary, or once the team has nominated the required number of umpires in writing to the SU secretary, the penalty shall be lifted until the SU council reviews the request.
- Sec. 7** Any team whose umpires are (in the judgement of SU) continuously not available to officiate games can be penalised as described in **Bylaw 7 Section 3**.

BYLAW 8. FIXTURES

- Sec. 1** All fixtures are the property of the SU Council. No team or club may rearrange a fixture without the express consent of the SU Council.
- Sec. 2** In exceptional circumstances a team/club may make a written request for the postponement of a game. The SU Council has complete discretion to refuse or grant a postponement. Where granted the organising body will reschedule the fixture. All written requests must be submitted to the SU secretary (secretary@softballulster.com) no later than 6pm on the Friday before the scheduled game in question is due to be played.
- Sec. 3** Exceptional circumstances leading to the SU Council considering the postponement of a game will include:
- Three or more members of any one team (not club) being selected to represent their country in either slow pitch (SP) or fast pitch (FP) softball. This ruling extends to all tournaments and championships, but not to training sessions or fund-raising events.
 - If any team has been selected to represent SI/SU in slow pitch (SP) softball tournaments or championships.
- Sec. 4** Circumstances where the SU Council will NOT consider postponement of a game will include:
- Commitments to any other sport, **including baseball**.
 - Commitments to other events, such as fund-raising, charity work or employment.
 - Lack of transport to or from a game fixture.
- Sec. 5** Where a field is suspected to be unsafe for play an SU umpire **must** inspect the pitch before the start of the scheduled game in order to make a determination on whether the game should proceed or be postponed. If an umpire is not assigned to a game, either captain can request that SU make a determination on whether the game should proceed or be postponed. SU reserves the right to assign a neutral representative to make a determination in these situations. **[Updated 2018]**
- Sec. 6** A game suspended for reasons of light, safety or any other reason determined by an umpire (or agreed by the captains in the absence of an umpire), before the conclusion of a legal game must be advised to the organising body, who will reschedule the fixture. Details of such a suspension must include the position of play (i.e. line-ups, position of runners, next batting position, outs, runs, strikes/balls and score) at the time of suspension. **The game will resume from the exact point of the suspension of play and will continue to completion.**

- Sec. 7** League Playing weeks run from Sunday to Saturday starting on the Sunday in which the first game is scheduled according to the SU calendar (in 2018, week 1 will commence on Sunday 20th May 2018). **[Updated 2018]**
- Sec. 8** All postponed or suspended games must be concluded by the end of the week of play following the week when the game was originally schedule. If both teams are unable to agree on a date, or in exceptional circumstances, Softball Ulster will set the date of the fixture at its discretion. Failure to play any re-arranged fixture by a date set by the organising body where reasonable notice was given may result in one or both teams forfeiting the game in accordance with **Bylaw 9 Section 1**.
- Sec. 9** A team not showing for a scheduled league game without notifying SU can be penalised according to SU council ruling.

BYLAW 9. FORFEITS

In addition to the **WBSC** rules regarding forfeits (**Rule 1.2.2**) the following additional rules will apply.

- Sec. 1** A forfeit is awarded against any team that does not have enough registered players available to begin a game after 15 minutes have elapsed from the designated start time.
- a. A single forfeit applies if only one team is short of players.
 - b. A double forfeit applies if both teams are short of players.
- Sec. 2** A game must not be further delayed if a team has enough registered players available to begin a game under the short-handed rule (**Bylaw 6 Section 9**). The game **MUST** commence as soon as the short-handed rule requirements are met.
- Sec. 3** A forfeit is awarded against a team that is unable to continue due to the departure or ejection of players. The minimum number to start or continue is nine (**Bylaw 6 Section 9**).
- Sec. 4** If a player is ejected a team must have a legal replacement available to continue and avoid a forfeit.
- Sec. 5** A forfeit is **NOT** awarded against a team that is not able to continue with the minimum number of players due to an injury that happened during the game where the player was injured.
- Sec. 6** A team will be awarded a forfeit for using a player who is not registered with the team at the start of the game.
- Sec. 7** A team will be awarded a forfeit for a game using more than two players substituted through **Bylaw 6 Section 10**.
- Sec. 8** In the event of a forfeit, the SU Council will determine who will pay any applicable costs.
- Sec. 9** In the event of a forfeit, the team forfeiting the game will also forfeit the head-to-head (H2H) series against that opponent.
- a. An exception would be if both teams start the game as scheduled (or re-scheduled) and one team forfeits due to injury or unforeseen circumstances. In this scenario the H2H series will **NOT** be forfeited.
 - b. The final decision of the validity of the circumstances and forfeiture of the H2H series will rest with the SU Council.
- Sec. 10** If any one team forfeits three or more games during a season they will be

penalised and required to withdraw from the league with win/loss records (and points if applicable) of the other teams in the league being adjusted to remove their impact on the standings. A team may be spared this penalty if there are exceptional circumstances, although the final decision will rest with the SU Council.

BYLAW 10. SI/SU TOURNAMENT STRUCTURES & SI CHAMPIONSHIP

- Sec. 1** The structure and any applicable playing rules for any SU competition or tournament will be issued to all competing clubs at least 2 weeks before commencement of each competition.
- Sec. 2** The home team for each league game and tournament game will be designated according to the schedule as issued by the organising body.
- Sec. 3** In the event of a gap developing in an SU Tournament or competition due to the non-participation of a team, SU may fill the position as appropriate.
- Sec. 4** In the event of a team withdrawing or being expelled from a competition or tournament, all of their fixtures will be removed from the schedule and win/loss records (and points if applicable) of the other teams in the competition being adjusted to remove their impact on the competition.
- Sec. 5** The SINCC rules, regulations and structures are determined by Softball Ireland. The SU representative to the SINCC tournament is the outright champion of the SU league.
- a. If SI determines that (due to team ratios) more than 1 team from the SU league qualifies for SINCC, then the teams that finished outright 2nd, 3rd etc. depending on SI decision regarding the number of teams will also represent Ulster in the tournament.
 - b. If a team declines, or cannot take part in SINCC, then the team following them in the final standings for the league shall take its place.
- Sec. 6** The format of this competition will be chosen by Softball Ireland and scheduled to follow the completion of the SI provincial leagues.
- Sec. 7** The winner of this competition will be offered the chance to represent Ireland at the ESF “European Cup Co-ed Slow-pitch (ECCS)” held on alternate years. The preceding two winners of SINCC are eligible to compete.
- Sec. 8** If the winning team is unwilling or unable to attend the ECCS, then SI reserves the right to offer their spot to another team.
- Sec. 9** Players must be registered with the qualifying club or team before the end of the SU league season and in accordance with these bylaws, to qualify for the SINCC.
- Sec. 10** A player is eligible to represent a club in the SINCC if they meet the following criteria:

- a. The player is a paid up member of SU and is registered with SI.
- b. The player registered with their club with at least three games (excluding playoffs) still to be played.
- c. The player has played in at least four league games for the club in the 2018 Season. These appearances may be shared across teams within the club. **[Updated 2018]**

BYLAW 11. SOFTBALL ULSTER LEAGUE STRUCTURE

- Sec. 1** The Softball Ulster League will be based on a round-robin type competition with each team playing one another on two occasions.
- Sec. 2** At the end of the season, the team at the top of the standings (after any necessary tiebreakers are applied) will be declared league champion for 2018 and will represent the Ulster Region in the SINCC tournament.
- Sec. 3** The team finishing last in the league standings (after any necessary tiebreakers are applied) will be awarded the wooden spoon.
- Sec. 4** The League fixtures will be played as follows:
- Sundays at 2pm (for single games).
 - Sunday 1pm and 3pm (for double headers).
 - Sunday 12pm, 2pm and 4pm (for triple headers).
 - Monday 7pm (single games only).
 - Wednesday 7pm, as required (for rescheduled games only).
- Sec. 5** If any team is expected to travel 40 miles or more to any fixture, the game **MUST** be played on a Sunday to facilitate players travelling to and from the game. Distances will be calculated using each team's home ground and "Google Maps" (<https://www.google.co.uk/maps>). If a team is unable to secure their home ground on any given Sunday (if they normally play on a Monday) then the game may be rescheduled without any forfeit or penalties being incurred by the home team.
- Sec. 6** If, at the scheduled time for the start of any game, any of the teams involved has 8 or fewer players available, the umpire will concede a 15-minute wait so that the necessary number of players required for commencement of the game can show up. If after the 15-minute wait any (or both) of the teams have less than 9 players, the game will be forfeited (or double forfeited) according to the **WBSC** rules and **Bylaw 9 Section 1**.
- Sec. 7** If, at game time or at any point during the 15-minute wait, both teams have 9 or more players available, the game should be started immediately. Failure by any team to start the game when directed to do so by the umpire will forfeit the game as per ISF rules (**Rule 5 Section 3 (f) (1)**).
- Sec. 8** A points system will determine the league standings.
- 5 Points for a win
 - 2 Points for a loss
 - 0 Points for a forfeit
- Sec. 9** If a tie exists at the end of the regular season, the tiebreaker criteria

outlined in **Bylaw 11 Section 11** will be applied.

Sec. 10 In case of games reaching the last inning on a tie, extra-innings will be played until there is a winner as per **WBSC** rules.

Sec. 11 In the event of teams having equal points at the end of the season, the following criteria will apply to break all ties. These criteria will be applied in order until the tie is broken (in case of more than two teams tied, the criteria will start over after every team involved has been taken out of the tie by any criteria and there are still two or more teams tied):

- a. Winning percentage¹.
- b. Winning percentage of every team involved counting only the head-to-head record of the teams involved.
- c. Run Difference² (counting only tied teams)
- d. Run Difference (counting all games)
- e. Runs Scored (against other tied teams only)
- f. Runs Scored (against all teams)
- g. If there are more than 2 teams involved at this stage, rank using previous season final standings (**Bylaw 11 Section 12**)

Sec. 12 The final standings of the 2017 are as follows: **[Updated 2018]**

1. Belfast Brawlers (League winner)	50 Points
2. Belfast Cubs	41 Points
3. Belfast Sliders	35 Points
4. Smokin' Aces	35 Points
5. Belfast Angels	25 Points
6. Bangor Bucs (Wooden spoon)	16 Points

Sec. 13 The SU Council will settle resolution of any circumstance(s) not foreseen here (including additional criteria).

¹ A team winning percentage is calculated by dividing the number of games won by the total of games played (GW/GP).

² Run difference is 'runs scored' minus 'runs allowed' (RS-RA).

BYLAW 12. COMPLAINTS, DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AND APPEALS

- Sec. 1** Any appeal relating to a disputed game or result must be lodged with the SU secretary in writing (secretary@softballulster.com) within 1 week of the actual incident or in accordance with the tournament or competition rules. In cases where this timeline is not met, the result will stand as reported by the umpire or by either team captain if no umpire was assigned.
- Sec. 2** Any appeal, made under the appropriate article of the SU constitution, relating to an SU Council decision, which adversely affects a member, must be lodged in writing with the SU secretary (secretary@softballulster.com). This appeal must be made within one week of the member being informed of the decision in writing (email is acceptable) by the SU secretary. In cases where this timeline is not met the decision will stand.
- Sec. 3** Any decisions made in the appeals process are considered final and not subject to further appeal unless the subsequent appeal is considered materially different to the original.
- Sec. 4** Any SI/SU member may lodge a request for disciplinary action to be taken against another member (or members), team (including non-SI registered visiting teams) for transgressions of these, or other appropriate byelaws, at a game in which they were involved or which they witnessed.
- Sec. 5** Disciplinary action may also be requested in relation to SI/SU members' behaviour at other events, including social functions organised by SI or subsidiary bodies, public events attended as SI/SU members or officials, any social media sites or published in any form in any type of media outlet (electronic or not).
- Sec. 6** Any request pertaining to **Bylaw 12 Section 4** or **Bylaw 12 Section 5** must be in writing (letter or e-mail), stating the date and event when the incident occurred and the reason why disciplinary action is being sought. In case of behaviour in any type of media, printed or not, proof needs to be provided to the SU Council as well.
- Sec. 7** All requests are to be made to the SU secretary (secretary@softballulster.com).
- Sec. 8** SU will appoint a "reporting officer" not barred by Article 8 of the SI Constitution (and SU constitution) to handle the case.
- Sec. 9** For SU disciplinary matters the reporting officer will be selected from the list of qualified umpires officiating over the SU season and eligible as per **Bylaw 12 Section 8**.

- Sec. 10** The reporting officer must request statements from the complainant, the accused, and any umpire present, and may also request statements from team captains and any SI or SU representatives or other witnesses present at the time.
- Sec. 11** No later than 2 weeks from the initial date of the complaint the reporting officer will pass on his/her findings to the SU secretary (secretary@softballulster.com).
- Sec. 12** If the reporting officer finds that an offence has been committed, the officers of the SU Council will, within a week and after taking whatever advice they deem necessary, convene a SU Council meeting to hear the accused person's defence, and if necessary to impose appropriate penalties. If the accused fails to attend this meeting, then SU will apply the penalties deemed appropriate and will communicate them to the player and team contact within one week of the decision being made.
- Sec. 13** SU will inform the accused's team representative, the accused and the complainant of the outcome.
- Sec. 14** An appeal against a decision to impose disciplinary penalties must be made within 1 week in writing to the SU Secretary under **Article 9 of the SI Constitution**, on payment of the fee specified in **Bylaw 17 Section 5**.
- Sec. 15** The appeal committee will be convened by the SU secretary within one week and must complete its work within a further two weeks.
- Sec. 16** Reasonable expenses may be paid to members of the appeal committee.
- Sec. 17** The SU secretary will keep records of each stage of the disciplinary process including any statements given.
- Sec. 18** "Involved" in Articles 8 and 9 of the SI Constitution should be interpreted to include:
- a. Direct personal involvement in the incident under investigation.
 - b. Direct involvement of immediate family (parent, partner, sibling or offspring) in the incident.
 - c. Playing or coaching for one of the teams involved.
 - d. Membership of one of the teams involved.
 - e. Playing or coaching in the same division as the team involved.
 - f. Being a sponsor of a team under investigation or being employed by such a sponsor.
 - g. Failure of an official to declare such involvement may be grounds for upholding an appeal.

Sec. 19 SI/SU, on behalf of any SI/SU registered member, may take disciplinary action against an umpire.

Sec. 20 SI/SU may take disciplinary action against any team, club or member of SI on recommendations given to them by a registered umpire.

13. UMPIRING

- Sec. 1** In the event of no umpire being present, both clubs should agree on a basis for umpiring the game.
- Sec. 2** The home club captain shall assume responsibilities for reporting of the match result that day.
- Sec. 3** Where two clubs fail to agree on an umpiring arrangement, both team captains should contact SU within 24 hours and report the reason for failure.

14. PROTESTS

- Sec. 1** In order to bring forward a protest, the guidelines outlined in the **WBSC** rulebook should be followed (**Rule 1.2.8 – 1.2.14**).
- Sec. 2** Protest outcomes are decided by SU in consultation with the chief umpire for SI/SU and communicated to teams as per the **WBSC** rulebook (**Rule 1.2.14**)
- Sec. 3** The written protest with the information described in **Rule 1.2.13** should be lodged with the SU secretary (secretary@softballulster.com) in writing (email is sufficient) no later than 24 hours from the scheduled start time of the game in question. Teams lodging a protest are strongly advised to consult the **WBSC** rulebook and these bylaws before officially lodging a protest with the organising body.
- Sec. 4** SU will issue its decision to both teams and the umpire (if applicable) within two weeks of receiving the protest.
- Sec. 5** Protest decisions **cannot** be appealed.
- Sec. 6** A “protest fee” will be charged to the club lodging a protest (when the protest is formally lodged with SU) as outlined **Bylaw 17 Section 6**. This fee will be returned if the protest is successful.
- Sec. 7** Playing a game under protest must be notified to the plate umpire immediately upon reaching that decision. There is no fee for protesting a game or playing the game under protest. If the team playing under protest loses the game, they may choose to lodge the protest officially with SU upon which the protest fee will apply. A team protesting a game with SU should do so in writing, no later than 24 hours from the scheduled starting time of the game being protested, to SU secretary (secretary@softballulster.com).

15. INDIVIDUAL AND CLUB/TEAM CONDUCT

- Sec. 1** The following are reasons for disciplinary action against an individual and/or their club as determined by SU:
- a. Failure of a team captain, manager or coach, or other team members to intervene within a reasonable time to prevent or discourage misconduct.
 - b. Ejection from any game.
 - c. Assault either physical or verbal, on a player, umpire or member of the public.
 - d. Coercion or forcing of any participant into inhuman, degrading or illegal activities.
 - e. Conduct likely to damage the good name of softball or SI or SU or SL.
 - f. Failure of the team captain, manager, coach or other club members to intervene, within a reasonable time, in any activity or behaviour list in **Bylaw 15 Section 1(a), 1(c), 1(d) or 1(e)**, where the perpetrator is a bystander who can be related to a specific club or team.
- Sec. 2** Destruction of, damage to, or failure to return, SI/SU equipment or intellectual property is a Category 1 offence.
- Sec. 3** SI/SU may refuse to renew membership of, grant new membership to, suspend existing membership of, or prevent participation in any SI/SU event of any individual or group involved in an on-going legal dispute with SI/SU or any member of SI/SU.

16. DRUGS IN SPORT

- Sec. 1** No affiliated player may contravene the relevant doping laws of the following organisations:
- a. International Olympic Committee (IOC).
 - b. World Anti-Doping Association (WADA).
 - c. World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC).
 - d. European Softball Federation (ESF).
 - e. American Softball Association (ASA).
 - f. Olympic Council of Ireland (OCI).
 - g. Irish Sports Council (ISC).
 - h. Northern Ireland Sports Council (SportNI).
- Sec. 2** A full list of prohibited substances is available from SI. Players who have any doubt about any substance should contact SI for clarification.
- Sec. 3** Infraction of this bylaw will be a category 4 offence at a minimum and penalties will be in line with those applied by other comparable associations and federations and/or national or international anti-doping organisations.
- Sec. 4** Members in the following categories are liable for testing for illegal substances:
- a. Any player/manager/coach on international duty, which is defined as being: Currently serving on any international squad.
 - b. Making themselves available for selection for any international squad.
 - c. Making themselves available for selection for any provincial squad.
- Sec. 5** Testing of SI members may be performed by duly appointed representatives of the Irish Sports Council (the Irish Anti-Doping Agency) at any or all of the following events:
- a. Any matches involving international squad players.
 - b. Championship matches involving at least one Premier or Division One team.
 - c. All official SI one or two consecutive day tournaments or competitions.
- Sec. 6** Out Of Competition Testing is performed by duly appointed representatives of the Irish Sports Council (the Irish Anti-Doping Agency) at their discretion.

17. FEES AND EXPENSES 2017

- Sec. 1** SU player membership fee (per player):
- £30. **[Increased 2018]**
 - Applies to all players registering with SU following their first season with SI/SU or within five years of playing as a registered member of SI/SU.
- Sec. 2** SU rookie fee:
- £15. **[Increased 2018]**
 - Applies to anyone in his or her first season with SU or anyone who has not been a registered member of SU in the last five years.
- Sec. 3** Visiting membership fee:
- £10.
 - Applies to any player who wishes to play in a tournament but is not registered directly with either SU or SI.
- Sec. 4** Player transfer to another SU team fee:
- £10.
 - Applies to any player who wishes to change team within the SU league during a season. This fee will NOT be applicable until the player has played their first game with their new team. This fee will also be required following the initial registration of a player. The appropriate documentation must be completed prior to transfer as per **Bylaw 6 Section 7**.
- Sec. 5** Appeal fee:
- £50.
 - Applies to any player making an appeal to SU involving an appeal as per **Bylaw 12 Section 14**.
 - If an appeal is upheld, fee will be returned to the player.
- Sec. 6** Protest fee:
- £50.
 - Applies to any club making an appeal to SU involving a protest as per **Bylaw 14 Section 6**.
 - If a protest is upheld, the fee will be returned to the club.
- Sec. 7** By **1st June 2018** every team should pay SU the player membership fees up to that date. The rest of the money due (new players registered on or after **1st June 2018**) needs to reach SU by the **31st August 2018**. Penalty for not paying on time will be the forfeit of every game played that season (retrospective to the first game of the season). **[Updated 2018]**

- Sec. 8** All players must ensure that they are properly registered with SU before they play in any fixture. Failure to do so could result in each fixture being counted as a forfeit. The appropriate documentation must be completed prior to their first fixture and forwarded to the SU secretary (secretary@softballulster.com) as per **Bylaw 6 Sections 2 & 3**.
- Sec. 9** All player registrations **MUST** be completed through the SU secretary (secretary@softballulster.com). All player registrations must be accompanied by the appropriate documentation as outlines in **Bylaw 6 Sections 2 & 3**.
- a. Any player not registered through the SU secretary will not be considered a registered member of SI/SU and will therefore not be eligible to play for games in the regular season league and tournaments, with the accompanied forfeits as outlined in these bylaws.

18. SCALE OF PENALTIES

Sec. 1 Depending on the seriousness of the offence, SI/SU may impose any combination of the penalties within the following ranges for infraction of these bylaws.

Sec. 2 Incurring more than two written cautions for any individual or club in any three-month period is a category 4 offence.

Sec. 3 Table 1. Outlines the category and range of offenses within the SU region.

Category Of Offence	Range of penalties for individuals
1	1. Permanent expulsion; 2. Suspension for more than one season; 3. Suspension from National Squad for more than two years.
2	1. Suspension for one season; 2. Suspension for more than 5 games or weeks; 3. Suspension from National Squad for up to two years.
3	1. Suspension for less than 5 games or weeks; 2. Suspension for more than 2 games or weeks; 3. Community service between 10 and 20 hours.
4	1. Suspension for 1 game or 1 week; 2. Fine between £50 & £130; 3. Community service up to 10 hours.
5	1. Fine less than £50; 2. Written caution; 3. Community service up to 5 hours.

APPENDIX 1: Softball Ulster Team Registration Form (2018)

SOFTBALL ULSTER Team Registration Form (2018)

First published: 31st January 2018

In order to register your team with Softball Ulster you are required to complete this form and email it directly to secretary@softballulster.com before the team registration deadline on **Friday 6th April 2018**. Teams may apply after this time but may not be eligible for full league participation.

TEAM DETAILS

Permitted days of play are Sundays and Mondays. No offensive team names allowed.

Team Name:

Home Ground:

Day of Play:

Team Captain:

TEAM CONTACT

The team contact may be separate to the team captain. It is preferred that a single contact is provided within the team.

Team Contact:

Contact Email:

UMPIRES

All teams with 1+ year's participation in Softball Ulster are required to nominate a minimum of two players who will act as umpires during the season.

Umpire #1:

Umpire #2:

Umpire #3:

Umpire #4:

APPENDIX 2: Softball Ulster Player Transfer Form (2018)

SOFTBALL ULSTER Player Transfer Form (2018)

First published: 31st January 2018

In order to be eligible to play for a new team all players are required to complete the following player transfer form and email it to secretary@softballulster.com **before 6pm on any given Friday** in order to be eligible to play for a new team at the commencement of the following week's league games on Sunday.

PLAYER DETAILS

Name:

Date of Birth:

Email Address:

CURRENT TEAM

Team Name:

SI League:

NEW TEAM

Team Name:

SI League:

Date of Transfer: