



SOFTBALL ULSTER

Bylaws & League Rules (2020)

SOFTBALL ULSTER Bylaws & League Rules (2020)

First published: 8/8/2020

Bylaws

1. Introduction to Bylaws
2. Applications and Definitions
3. Recommended Policies
4. Teams
5. Complaints, Disciplinary Procedures and Appeals
6. Umpiring
7. Protests
8. Individual, Team and Club Conduct
9. Drugs in Sport
10. Fees and Expenses
11. Scale of Penalties

League Rules

12. Introduction to League Rules
13. The Softball Ulster League
14. Championship and Tournament Rules
15. Player Eligibility
16. Team and Player Transfer Fees
17. The Field of Play
18. Fixtures
19. Modified Rules of Play

Appendices

- Appendix 1. Official Diamond Layout
- Appendix 2. Summary of Essential Minimum Equipment and Documentation



BYLAWS

1. Introduction to Bylaws

Softball Ulster (SU) is the organising body for the sport of softball in the region of Ulster on the Island of Ireland (Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland). Softball Ulster is recognised by Softball Ireland (SI) as a regional council. These bylaws and league rules are designed to aid the organisation and implementation of the Softball Ulster League, Softball Ulster Tournaments and any Championships taking place in the Ulster region.

As of 2020, the original and modified bylaws document has been separated into two distinct sections: the **Bylaws**, covering definitions, governance and league conduct; and the **League Rules**, covering the adjustments to the WBSC Slow Pitch Softball Rules and Regulations document adopted by SU and SI.

In addition to the Bylaws and League Rules in 2020 SU will also be following the SI Return To Play Protocol (RTPP) with regard to health and safety playing softball during the coronavirus pandemic.

SU will review these bylaws annually.

2. Applications and Definitions

1. The term “SU” refers to Softball Ulster, the regional council or its designated representative officers or subcommittees.
2. The term "SI" refers to Softball Ireland, the national council or its designated representative officers or subcommittees.
3. The term “Organising Body” refers to the Softball Ulster Council.
4. The word “Club” applies to single and multi-team playing organisations.
5. The word “Team” refers to any team registered in any Softball Ulster league or competition.
6. The word “League” refers to any softball league that is played in the Ulster region and overseen by Softball Ulster.
7. The word "Championship" refers to any Softball Ulster or Softball Ireland knockout competition. The Softball Ireland National Club Championship (SINCC) is a championship competition.
8. The word "Tournament" refers to all official Softball Ulster one or two day competitions.
9. The word “Game” refers to any game of softball played in any Softball Ulster League, Championship or Tournament.
10. The word “Player” refers to any registered member of Softball Ulster or Softball Ireland who participates in all or part of a League, Championship or Tournament.
11. The word “Rookie” refers to any new registered member of Softball Ulster or Softball Ireland, or any registered member of Softball Ulster or Softball Ireland who has not been registered within the last five years.
12. The word "Umpire" includes any person officiating a game under the regulation of Softball Ulster or Softball Ireland.
13. The official representative of each team, known as the “Team Contact” (e.g. committee member, captain, coach, manager), is required to familiarize themselves with these bylaws and league rules, which will apply to all league, tournament and championship play.

3. Recommended Policies

SU 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).

1. Each club should have a basic constitution outlining the rights, duties and responsibilities of its members.
2. Each club should have a bank account with at least two signatories on the account.
3. Each club should have a basic privacy policy to make them compliant with the EU General Data Protection Regulation. A basic Privacy Policy is available on the SU website (www.softballulster.com) to download and adapt.
4. SU recognises that the consumption of alcohol impairs co-ordination and judgement. For insurance reasons, SU strongly recommends that players do not consume alcohol before or during league games or tournaments. Any players consuming alcohol may find themselves excluded from SI insurance coverage and open themselves up to personal liability for injuries or damage caused by playing softball. SU fully supports any umpires or other nominated officials who exclude an individual from play due to alcohol induced incapacity.
5. For safety reasons, members are strongly advised against playing while pregnant.
6. Any player who has concerns about insurance coverage (e.g. in case of pregnancy, disability or otherwise) should satisfy himself or herself, through SI, SU or directly with the insurers, as to whether their needs are met. SI and SU 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 SU or directly with SI.
7. For insurances purposes, in order to compete in any SU league, championship or tournament, all players must be registered with SI. SI membership is automatically included with SU membership.

4. Teams

1. To register as a team with SU the team must complete the 'Team Registration Form' and submit 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 **5pm on Friday 7th August 2020. [Updated 2020]**
2. Each team must have paid a team fee by **6pm on Saturday 22nd August 2020**. The team fee will be **£25** per team in 2020. In addition to the team fee there is an individual player fee of £15 per registered player. Failure to pay the team fee and the player fee by the deadline may be penalised by an SU ruling. Players registered after the deadline should have their fees paid with registration. **[Updated 2020]**
3. All the team's business with SU must be through a nominated representative as documented on the 'Team Registration Form'.
4. All teams that have played for **more than one year** in the league are required to have at least **two** qualified umpires (or umpires in training) willing and available to officiate games. Non-compliance with this bylaw may be penalised following an SU ruling.
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.
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 SU reviews the request.
7. Any team whose umpires are (in the judgement of SU) continuously not available to officiate games may be penalised following an SU ruling.

5. Complaints, Disciplinary Procedures and Appeals

1. Any appeal relating to a disputed game or result must be lodged with the SU secretary in writing (secretary@softballulster.com) within **one 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.
2. Any appeal, made under the appropriate article of the SU constitution, relating to an SU 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.
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.
4. Any SU member may lodge a request for disciplinary action to be taken against another member (or members), team (including non-SU registered visiting teams) for transgressions of these, or other appropriate bylaws, at a game in which they were involved or which they witnessed.
5. The umpire should be notified of the incident at the time of the event or at the end of the game where the incident occurred.
6. Disciplinary action may also be requested in relation to the behaviour of SU members at other events, including social functions organised by SU or subsidiary bodies, public events attended as SU members or officials, any social media sites or published in any form of printed or electronic media.
7. All requests for disciplinary action are to be made in writing to the SU secretary (secretary@softballulster.com) within **one week** from the initial date of the complaint.
8. All requests for disciplinary action must state the date of the incident, the event where the incident occurred and the reason why disciplinary action is being requested. Evidence, where possible (e.g. photos, screen captures, printed or electronic media etc.) should be provided along with the written complaint.
9. SU will appoint a reporting officer to investigate all allegations.
10. For SU disciplinary matters the reporting officer will be selected from the list of qualified umpires officiating over the SU season.

11. 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.
12. No later than **two weeks** from the initial date of the complaint the reporting officer will pass on his/her findings to the SU secretary (secretary@softballulster.com).
13. If the reporting officer finds that an offence has been committed, the officers of SU will, **within a week** and after taking whatever advice they deem necessary, convene an 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.
14. SU will inform the accused's team representative, the accused and the complainant of the outcome.
15. An appeal against a decision to impose disciplinary penalties must be made within **one week** in writing to the SU Secretary and include the appropriate fee.
16. The appeal committee will be convened by SU within **one week** and must complete its work within a further **two weeks**.
17. Reasonable expenses may be paid to members of the appeal committee.
18. SU will keep records of each stage of the disciplinary process including any statements given.
19. SU, on behalf of any SU member, may take disciplinary action against an umpire.
20. SU may take disciplinary action against any SU team, club or player based on recommendations given to them by an umpire.

6. Umpiring

1. SU will schedule umpires to games and will have a chief umpire who, with SU, will deal with all umpire-related queries.
2. In the event of no umpire being present, both teams should agree on a basis for umpiring the game.
3. In the event of no umpire being present, the home team captain will assume responsibility for reporting of the match result and submitting the match report card to SU.
4. 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.

7. Protests

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**).
2. Protest outcomes are decided by SU in consultation with the SU chief umpire and communicated to teams as per the **WBSC** rulebook (**Rule 1.2.14**).
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.
4. SU will issue its decision to both teams and the umpire (if applicable) within **two weeks** of receiving the protest.
5. Protest decisions **cannot** be appealed.
6. A “protest fee” will be charged to the club lodging a protest (when the protest is formally lodged with SU) as outlined in these bylaws. This fee will be returned if the protest is successful.
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 the SU secretary (secretary@softballulster.com).

8. Individual, Team and Club Conduct

- 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 Softball Ulster.
 - f. Failure of the team captain, manager, coach or other club members to intervene, within a reasonable time, in any activity or behaviour listed above, where the perpetrator is a bystander who can be related to a specific club or team.

 - 2.** Destruction of, damage to, or failure to return, SU equipment or intellectual property is a category 1 offence.

 - 3.** SU may refuse to renew membership of, grant new membership to, suspend existing membership of, or prevent participation in any SU event of any individual or group involved in an on-going legal dispute with SU or any member of SU.
-

9. Drugs in Sport

1. No registered 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. World Baseball Softball Confederation Europe (WBSC Europe).
 - e. Olympic Council of Ireland (OCI).
 - f. Sport Ireland
 - g. Sport NI

2. A full list of prohibited substances can be obtained from the Sport Ireland website: <http://www.sportireland.ie/Anti-Doping/>.

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/or national or international anti-doping organisations.

4. Members in the following categories are liable for testing for illegal substances:
 - a. All SU league players.

5. Testing of SU members may be performed by duly appointed representatives of Sport Ireland at any or all of the following:
 - a. All SU league games.
 - b. All SU tournaments.**

10. Fees and Expenses

1. Appeal fee:
 - a. £50.
 - b. Applies to any player making an appeal to SU involving an appeal as per **Bylaw 5 Section 15**.
 - c. If an appeal is upheld, fee will be returned to the player.

2. Protest fee:
 - a. £50.
 - b. Applies to any club making an appeal to SU involving a protest as per **Bylaw 7 Section 6**.
 - c. If a protest is upheld, the fee will be returned to the club.

3. In the event of a forfeited game, SU will determine which team will pay any applicable costs as a result.

11. Scale of Penalties

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

2. **Table 1.** Outlines the category and range of offences 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 Regional Team for more than two years.
2	1. Suspension for one season; 2. Suspension for more than five games or weeks; 3. Suspension from Regional Team for up to two years.
3	1. Suspension for less than five games or weeks; 2. Suspension for more than two games or weeks;
4	1. Suspension for one game or one week; 2. Fine of between £50 & £130;
5	1. Fine of less than £50; 2. Written caution; 3. Community service up to 5 hours.

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



League Rules

12. Introduction to League Rules

SU adopts the current rules and regulations as published by the **World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC)** in the 2018 – 2021 **Slow Pitch** Rulebook. 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 league rules that follow will detail amendments to the **WBSC** rules and regulations that apply to any softball leagues, championships and tournaments played in the Ulster region under SU oversight.

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

These league rules will be reviewed annually by SU.

13. The Softball Ulster League

1. The Softball Ulster League will be based on a round-robin type competition with each team playing one another on two occasions.
2. The home team for each league game will be designated according to the schedule as issued by SU.
3. 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 2020 and will represent the Ulster Region in the 2020 SINCC tournament if it is played.
4. The team finishing last in the league standings (after any necessary tiebreakers are applied) will be awarded the wooden spoon.
5. A week in the SU league will run from Sunday to Saturday. In 2020 Week 1 of the league will commence on **Sunday 9th August 2020**.
6. The League fixtures will be played as follows:
 - a. Sundays at 3pm (for single games).
 - b. Sunday 1pm and 3pm (for double headers).
 - c. Sunday 12pm, 2pm and 4pm (for triple headers).
 - d. Tuesday 7pm (for friendlies or rescheduled games only).
7. 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.
 - a. Distances will be calculated using each team's home ground and "Google Maps" (<https://www.google.co.uk/maps>).
 - b. 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.
8. A points system will determine the league standings.
 - a. 5 Points for a win
 - b. 2 Points for a loss
 - c. 0 Points for a forfeit
9. In the event of a forfeit, the team forfeiting the game will also forfeit the head-to-head record 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 head-to-head record will **not** be forfeited.
 - b. The final decision of the validity of the circumstances and forfeiture of the head-to-head record will rest with SU.

- 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 SU.
- 11.** In the event of a team withdrawing or being expelled from the league, all of their fixtures will be removed from the schedule. The win/loss records, and points, of the other teams in the league will be adjusted to remove their impact on the competition.
- 12.** If a tie exists at the end of the regular season, the tiebreaker criteria outlined below will be applied.
- 13.** 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 percentage.
 - b. Winning percentage of every team involved counting only the head-to-head record of the teams involved.
 - c. Run Difference (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.
- 14.** The final standings of the 2019 season were as follows:
- | | | |
|----|------------------|-----------|
| 1. | Belfast Brawlers | 47 Points |
| 2. | Belfast Cubs | 38 Points |
| 3. | Belfast Sliders | 38 Points |
| 4. | Smokin' Aces | 38 Points |
| 5. | Bangor Bucs | 26 Points |
| 6. | Belfast Angels | 21 Points |
- 15.** SU will settle resolution of any circumstances not foreseen here.

14. Championship and Tournament Rules

1. The structure and any applicable playing rules for any SU championship or tournament will be issued to all competing teams at least **two weeks** before commencement of each competition.
2. In the event of a gap developing in an SU championship or tournament due to the non-participation of a team, SU may fill the position as appropriate.
3. In the event of a team withdrawing or being expelled from a tournament, all of their fixtures will be removed from the schedule. The win/loss records, and points, of the other teams in the tournament will be adjusted to remove their impact on the competition.
4. SI determines the SINCC rules, regulations and structures. The team representing Ulster in the SINCC tournament will be the outright champion of the SU league.
 - a. If SI determines that (due to team ratios) more than one team from the SU league qualifies for SINCC, then the teams that finished outright second, third 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.
5. The format of this competition will be chosen by SI and scheduled to follow the completion of the SI regional leagues.
6. 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.
7. A player is eligible to represent a club in the SINCC if they meet the following criteria:
 - a. The player is registered with SU.
 - 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 2020 Season. These appearances may be shared across teams within the club.

15. Player Eligibility

1. Players must be members of SU and designate a primary team playing within SU in order to take part in the SU league. Players may designate a primary club only and still be eligible to play in SU tournaments.
2. 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 documents must be completed prior to their first fixture and forwarded to the SU secretary.
3. In order to meet insurance requirements, all players must be registered with SU and assigned to a **club** by **6pm on Friday 7th August 2020** 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 2020]**
4. 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, they must be registered **before 6pm on the Friday before the scheduled game. No exceptions will be made.** Registration is accomplished by forwarding an updated copy of the player registration spreadsheet 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.
5. An umpire or any other 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. SU may require the team or player to substantiate this identification at a later date.
6. Impersonation of another member is a category 3 offence by both the player and their team.
7. The lower age limit for participation in the SU league is currently **18 years**.
8. SU do not accept any liability in cases where the player's condition renders them excluded from SI's insurance policy.
9. 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 by forwarding the appropriate 'Player Transfer Form' (found on the SU website) to the SU secretary (secretary@softballulster.com) before **6pm on the Friday before the next scheduled game**, provided the following conditions are met:

- a. The required fee has been paid (£10 per player in 2020).
 - 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.
- 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.
- 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 match day (as long as the players in question are properly registered and insured by SI). **[Updated 2020]**
 - c. A player may play for any other team in the league under these rules only one match day per season per team. **[Updated 2020]**
 - d. Up to two 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 one 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).
- 11.** Players may transfer between teams within the SU clubs under the same rules as for team transfers.

16. Team and Player Transfer Fees

4. SU Team Fee (in conjunction with individual player registration fees):
 - a. £25 per team. **[Updated 2020]**
 - b. Applies to all teams registering to participate in the SU league.
 - c. Must be paid to SU by **5pm on Saturday 22nd August 2020. [Updated 2020]**
 - d. The penalty for non-payment of the team fee will be the forfeit of every game, retrospective to the first game of the season, played in the 2020 until payment is received.

4. SU Player Fee:
 - a. £15 per player. **[Updated 2020]**
 - b. Applies to all players registering to participate in the SU league.
 - c. Must be paid to SU by **5pm on Saturday 22nd August 2020. [Updated 2020]**
 - d. The penalty for non-payment of the player fee will be the forfeit of every game, retrospective to the first game of the season, played in the 2020 until payment is received.

5. SU Visiting Membership Fee:
 - a. £10 per player.
 - b. Applies to any player who wishes to play in a tournament but is not already registered with SI or SU.
 - c. Must be paid to a member of the SU Council before the end of the tournament attended.
 - d. This is non-refundable if the player later joins an SI or SU team.

6. SU Player Transfer Fee:
 - a. £10 per player.
 - b. Applies to any player who wishes to change team within the SU league during a season. The player will not be considered transferred until SU has received a fully completed 'Player Transfer Form' available on the SU website.
 - c. Must be paid by the **receiving** team within four weeks of the player transfer.
 - d. This fee will **not** be applicable until the player has played their first game with their new team.
 - e. The penalty for non-payment of the player registration fee will be the forfeit of every game where the transferred player was included on the team line-up.

17. The Field of Play

1. All SU League matches in 2020 will be played at a central neutral venue, at Hydebank Playing Fields. **[Updated 2020]**
2. 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.

18. Fixtures

1. All fixtures are the property of SU. No team or club may rearrange a fixture without the express consent of SU.
2. In exceptional circumstances a team or club may make a written request for the postponement of a game. SU has complete discretion to refuse or grant a postponement. Where granted SU will reschedule the fixture. All written requests must be submitted to the SU competitions officer (competitions@softballulster.com) no later than 6pm on the Friday before the scheduled game in question is due to be played.
3. Exceptional circumstances leading to SU considering the postponement of a game will include:
 - a. 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.
 - b. If any team has been selected to represent SI/SU in slow pitch (SP) softball tournaments or championships.
4. Circumstances where SU will not consider postponement of a game will include:
 - a. Commitments to any other sport, including baseball.
 - b. Commitments to other events, such as fund-raising, charity work or employment.
 - c. Lack of transport to or from a game fixture.
5. 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.**
6. All postponed or suspended games must be concluded by the end of the week of play following the week when the game was originally scheduled. If both teams are unable to agree on a date, or in exceptional circumstances, SU 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.

19. Modified 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.

1 THE GAME

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.

1.2 REGULATION GAME REQUIREMENTS

1.2.2 FORFEITED GAME

- a) A team fails to appear on the field.
 - i. 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.
 - 1. A single forfeit applies if only one team is short of players.
 - 2. A double forfeit applies if both teams are short of players.
 - ii. Any team that does not show for a scheduled league game without notifying SU may be penalized according to an SU ruling.
- b) A team on the field refuses to begin a game for which it is scheduled or assigned at the time scheduled or within a time set for forfeitures by the organization in which the team is playing.
 - i. If, at the scheduled time for the start of any game, any of the teams involved has **eight 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 nine** players, the game will be forfeited (or double forfeited).
 - ii. If, at game time or at any point during the 15-minute wait, both teams have **nine 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.

- h) A team that is unable to continue because of the removal or ejection of any players from the game by the Umpire, voluntary departure of any players or for any other reason. The minimum number of players to continue a game is nine or eleven if playing EH.
 - i. If a player is ejected, a team may continue with a legal replacement in order to avoid a forfeit.
 - ii. A forfeit is not awarded against a team that is unable to continue with the minimum number of players due to an injury that happened during the game where the player was injured.
- k) A team fails to have the minimum required equipment available as set out in these league rules (see Appendix 2).
- l) A team uses a player who is not registered with the team at the start of the game.
- m) A team uses more than two players substituted from any other team.

1.2.3 RUN AHEAD RULE

- a) Will 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.

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 SU 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 SU over postponement or forfeiture.
- b) A warning track is not required on the playing field.

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.
- 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

Ground or special rules establishing the limits of the playing field may be agreed prior to the start of a game and used whenever backstops, fences, stands, vehicles, spectators or other obstructions are within the prescribed area. The umpire, following consultation with both team captains, will set the ground rules. The ground rules should be recorded in the match report and forwarded to SU.

- a) Any obstruction on fair territory less than the minimum fence distances set out in the Distance Table (**WBSC** Rules Appendix 1) must be clearly marked for the Umpire's information. Any regularly occurring ground rules must be forwarded to SU and will be provided to umpires in advance of games.
- b) 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.

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 or 52/300 ball).
 - ii. 11” 44/375 or 52/300 ball (all **female** batters only). A team can choose between using the 44/375 or 52/300 specification 11” balls, but 2 balls of the same specification must be supplied to the umpire at the start of the game. Teams cannot mix the two 11” specification balls in a game. **[Updated 2020]**

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.

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.
- 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.
- 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.

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.
- ii. A warming (compression) sleeve may be worn but will be treated in the same manner as a long sleeve undershirt.

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 2020 season have numbers printed on them. Only whole numbers 01 to 99 must be used.

e) NAMES

- i. Individual names are not a compulsory requirement on team shirts.

g) DISTRACTING ADORNMENTS.

- i. No exposed items, including jewelry, judged by the umpire to be distracting to opposing players, may be worn or displayed. The Umpire must require the item to be removed or covered. Medical alert

bracelets and/or necklaces, if deemed distracting, must be taped to the body in such a manner that the medical alert information is visible.
EXCEPTION: Essential prosthesis.

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.

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.
 - 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.
 - 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).
 - iv. If playing shorthanded and a substitute arrive, the substitute must be inserted immediately into the vacant spot in the lineup.
 - 1. The plate umpire should grant the substitute player adequate time for warm-up.
 - v. If any substitute refuses to enter for any reason that player becomes ineligible for the remainder of the game.

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.
- 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 rules 3.2.6(j)(i) and 3.2.6(j)(ii), no courtesy runner will be allowed.
- 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.

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 of 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) [The batter] 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

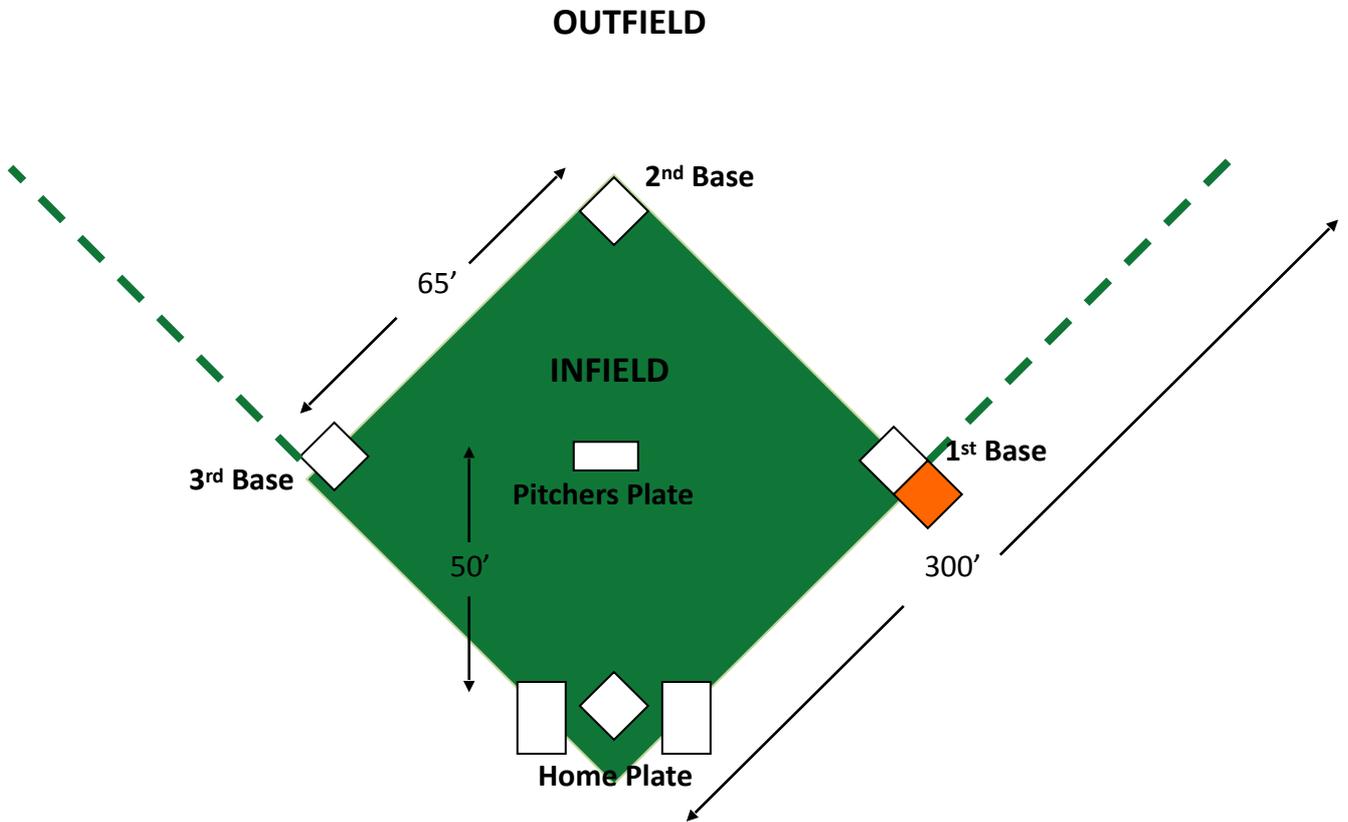
- c) Male and female umpires should wear:
1. A powder blue short-sleeved shirt. The SU badge should be worn on the left sleeve of the shirt.
 2. Dark navy blue socks are recommended but not compulsory.
 3. Dark navy blue trousers (fechheimer style or similar) are recommended but not compulsory.
 4. Dark 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.

Appendix 1. Official Diamond Layout



Appendix 2. Summary of Essential Minimum Equipment and Documentation

The following is a summary of the essential minimum equipment requirements and documentation for each SU league game or tournament. Failure to have the items listed below will result in a forfeit being declared.

1. Home Team:
 - a. One full set of softball bases including one dual-coloured safety base at first base, two single bases, a home plate and a pitchers plate.
 - b. At least one legal softball bat.
 - c. At least ten softball gloves (nine if playing shorthanded).
 - d. At least two legal 12" 52/300 softballs and at least two legal 11" 44/375 or 11" 52/300 softballs. **[Updated 2020]**
 - e. A minimum of four adult helmets available for use by players.
 - f. If requested by an umpire or SU official, written confirmation of authorisation to use the home ground.

2. Away Team (or any tournament team):
 - a. At least one legal softball bat.
 - b. At least ten softball gloves (nine if playing shorthanded).
 - c. A minimum of four adult helmets available for use by players.