



## **OQSL RULES OF PLAY**

*Updated May 21, 2019*

**General Rules:** Our league adheres to the [Slo-Pitch Ontario Rules](http://slopitch.org/sites/default/files/2018-2019%20SPO%20Handbook%20%28Compressed%29.pdf) except where indicated. An overview is located at <http://slopitch.org/sites/default/files/2018-2019%20SPO%20Handbook%20%28Compressed%29.pdf>

Additional amendments specific to the OQSL are listed in Rules of Play below:

**Umpires:** Umpires will use both the Slo-Pitch Ontario rules and OQSL-specific rules when officiating league sanctioned games.

Any disputes over calls made by the umpire must be conducted by the acting team captains on the field. Captains should conference first and then gently explain the OQSL-specific rule or call agreed upon by the captains to the umpire. All OQSL members who take issue with an umpire ruling should speak directly to their captains. Arguing with umpires will not be tolerated.

**Playing Field:** Bases are 65 feet apart in a diamond pattern. The pitching mound is 50 feet away from home plate. A double base shall be used at first base. A strike mat/home plate shall be provided by the league. A Safe Line shall be drawn in foul territory starting at the top left-hand corner of home plate perpendicular to the third base line. A Commitment Line shall be drawn in foul territory 21 feet from the back of home plate and perpendicular to the third base line.

**Weather:** In the event of inclement weather conditions, teams are required to show up at the diamond. Failure to do so will result in forfeiture. The umpire, in consultation with the captains, will decide if the game is cancelled due to poor weather conditions. We are a RAIN or SHINE league so be sure to communicate this to your team regularly throughout the season. Don't assume. Show up.

**Team Composition:** The league does **not** abide by the rules and regulations of CO-ED playing procedures for batting line-up, fielding requirements nor walks.

Each team will be composed of at least ten (10) players. However, a team can field a team of nine (9) players without being penalized. If a team fields eight (8) players, the opposing team will provide a player to occupy the position of catcher, whose role will be limited to ONLY

catching balls thrown by the pitcher while a batter is in the batter's box. The substitute catcher cannot make any defensive plays.

If a team's batting roster is composed of eight (8) players, an automatic out will be inserted in lieu of the ninth (9th) player, at the bottom of the roster. A team forfeits if they cannot field a team of at least eight (8) players.

**Pickup/Spare Players:** If you're in a need of a spare to increase your roster to 9 or 10 players, i.e. You only have 8 or 9 players and need a 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup>, you can recruit a spare from a team roster that is experiencing a bye week. Non-league members are also invited to be spare players but please be sure to have them fill out [our league waiver form](#) and collect a \$5 guest fee before the spare steps onto the field. It is highly encouraged that captains should try their hardest to recruit spare players honestly and staying mindful of ratings and fair and balanced teams.

**Starting the Game:** Home team will be determined via the posted schedule. The home team shall bat second. A maximum five minute grace period (delay) from the official start time will be allowed if a team does not have enough players to start on time.

**Equipment:** Teams are under no obligation to wear a uniform neither during regular season nor during league playoffs. The league encourages that players on a same team wear the same colours, whenever possible. There are no hat requirements and no requirement to have the visor towards the front. Helmets/head protection may be worn by any player provided it is worn properly.

Players on the field must wear sport shoes (running, cross-training, etc.) or baseball cleats (no metal cleats permitted). Players not wearing appropriate footgear will not play.

Bats in league play must bear the ASA 2004 or 2012 logo or the USSSA 1.20 BPF "Thumbprint" stamp. If you bring your own personal bat to the field, your bat must fit these bat guidelines. You are not required to allow the opposing team to use your bat during the game.

The yellow optic colour, hot dot/red dot (.52COR) 12-inch ball is used for all practices and games. Prior to the first pitch, captains should conference with the umpire at home plate and provide the umpire with the appropriate balls. One brand new ball (plastic sleeve) and one used ball should be provided to the umpire for gameplay. If a third or fourth ball is needed please only provide the umpire with previously used balls. One brand new ball per game.

Please be incredibly mindful when setting up the bases, i.e. nailing the spikes, etc. When securing the bases into the dirt field please make sure the hammer hits the spike head and the bases strap are avoided contact with the hammer. Help us protect the quality of our equipment.

Review the schedule of games, before and after each game, so that you are aware who is and isn't responsible for bringing/taking equipment each week.

**Jewellery:** Jewellery is permitted in the league, provided it is not deemed dangerous/cause bodily harm by the captains. If jewellery is worn, each player is solely responsible for any

injury/damage that may be caused by this item. Umpires may raise their concerns with the captain(s) and reach a possible compromise. Should an umpire ask for it to be removed, please do so.

**Pitching:** At the beginning of each half-inning or when a pitcher relieves another, not more than two minutes may be used to deliver not more than three warm up pitches to the catcher or other teammate.

Before each pitch, the pitcher must stand with one foot (pivot) on the pitching mound, facing the batter with the ball held in one hand. This position must be maintained for 1-5 seconds before delivery to the batter.

The delivery starts when the pitcher makes any motion of their windup after the required pause. A step may be taken in any direction simultaneous with the release of the pitch provided the pivot foot remains in contact with the pitching plate until the pitch is released.

The pitcher must deliver the ball in a continuous, underhand motion on the first forward swing of the pitching arm past the hip.

The pitch must have a minimum arc of 6 feet from the ground. The maximum allowable arc is 12 feet from the ground.

Any infraction of these rules shall be deemed an illegal pitch. The batter has the option of taking the illegal pitch as an automatic ball or swinging at the pitch. If the pitch is swung at, the pitch becomes legal and enters live play.

**Hitting:** The starting count on the batter is zero (0) balls and zero (0) strikes. The batter can switch sides of the batter's box during a same at bat. However, once the pitcher has a foot on the rubber of the pitching mound, the batter is locked in the box for that pitch.

There is a limit of one (1) over-the-fence homerun per inning, per team. Once the limit has been reached, all hits which would otherwise be considered an over-the-fence homerun will be registered as automatic outs. Players on base (if any) cannot advance to the next base as a result of this play.

There are no limits to the number of homeruns per inning a team can hit in the following scenarios: a) In-the-park homeruns b) While playing at fields that do not have a fence in the outfield.

Illegal "hits": A batted ball that is considered by the umpire to be a bunt or a chop shall be called out. A bunt is defined as a tapped ball not swung at but met with the bat. A chopped ball is a batted ball intentionally directed downward so that the ball bounces high into the air.

Throwing the bat during a swing or after a hit is prohibited. It is up to the sole discretion of the umpire to either provide the batter with a warning or to remove them from the game. Safety is the highest priority of our league and the umpire should control the pace of what is and isn't safe. Captains should consistently remind players of the proper etiquette on how to swing a bat and place the bat on the ground before running to first base.

**Base Running:** When running to first base after hitting the ball, the batter may use the orange portion (or right side) of the double base. It is the only time that this portion of the base can be used. Once the player has been deemed safe at first, the orange portion is no longer in use. At no time can the defensive player use the orange portion. On the batter's first attempt to reach first base, they may overrun the base and safely return to the base provided they touched the orange portion of the Double Base and do not try to advance to second base. The direction in which the batter-runner turns to return to first base does not matter.

Sliding is not permitted. Lead offs and anticipation steps are not permitted. Any runner that intentionally slides, leads off or completes an anticipation step will be called out. If field conditions are slippery, captains should work together in collaboration with the umpire and remain flexible and open-minded when considering an intentional slide versus a slip and unintentional slide due to field conditions. If a base runner slides intentionally or unintentionally, they will be given a warning. If the same runner completes an intentional slide, after already receiving a warning, within the same game, they will be called out and removed from the remaining of the game.

The base runner attempting to reach home plate must cross the Safe Line instead of touching home plate. The runner is out if they touch home plate whether or not a play is being made. A runner is not out if the plate is touched in an attempt to avoid a collision. If the base runner crosses the commitment line between third (3rd) base and the home plate, the base runner cannot return to third (3rd) base; the base runner must continue towards the Safe Line, with the exception of a pop fly out.

**Courtesy Runners:** Captains should remain honest and with good sportsmanship when considering the use of a courtesy runner. The courtesy runner must be the player that was last retired or, if no players have been retired, the bottom of the batting order. If a player asks for a courtesy runner, that player must continue to use a courtesy runner for the rest of the game.

**Blood/Injury Rule:** Any participant (player, coach or umpire) who is bleeding may not participate until the bleeding is controlled. If the cleanup can be accomplished quickly, play would be suspended until the participant is ready to play. If this cannot be done quickly, the player is removed from the game and replaced by another player on the roster. Any player who is injured on the field and is unable to continue the inning shall be removed from the game and replaced by another player on the roster. If a player is removed due to blood or injury, their place in the batting order is simply missed and there is no penalty.

**Mercy Rule:** A maximum of eight (8) runs can be scored by a team during one (1) inning. The mercy rule does not apply for the last inning.

**Scoring:** A run is scored when a player safely touches, in order first base, second base, third base and places their foot on the ground completely past the Safe Line. A runner may not score ahead of a preceding runner who has not been retired. A runner may not score if the last out of an inning is a force out or a preceding runner declared out. A run in excess of the mercy rule while the mercy rule applies shall not score.

If a game has started, is in progress and has been postponed due to inclement weather and unable to be completed that night, the game will resume where it was postponed and the score will be frozen until the next scheduled game. I.e. If lightning strikes and the game is

called by the umpire in the bottom of the 2<sup>nd</sup> inning, with the score 8-2, runners on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> and with 2 outs, the game will be postponed and rescheduled to a later date. When the teams meet again, the game will resume in the bottom of the 2<sup>nd</sup> inning, with the score 8-2, runners on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> and with 2 outs.

The score of a forfeited game shall be 7-0 in favour of the team not at fault.

**Game Duration:** A game consists of seven (7) innings or ninety (90) minutes. The game ends if: a) The team batting second has scored more runs in six innings than the other team has scored in seven innings or b) The team batting second has scored more runs before the third out in the last half of the seventh inning than the other team has scored in seven innings. **A tied game, if time allows,** will continue with extra innings using standard tie-breaking rules until one side has scored more runs at the end of a completed inning, or until the team batting second scores more in their half inning before their third out.

**No new inning may start after 80 minutes.** This rule should apply to all games but should be strictly enforced on the OQSL Fridays and Saturdays of doubleheaders.

The umpire may stop play prior to the time limit for safety reasons (inclement weather, loss of light, etc.). **A game stopped by the umpire will be considered complete if five innings (or four and one half innings if the second batting team is leading) have been completed.**

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