

# Wiffleball League of Hampton Roads

## OFFICIAL RULES

Last modified: June 20, 2023

Changes from previous version highlighted in yellow

### FIELD:

- The wiffleball diamond is a square with bases at each corner and equal sides of 45 feet making the base lines.
- There is a “homerun” line at an 85 feet radius in the outfield.
- There is an extra “safety base” just to the right of first base in foul territory.
- There is an out-of-bounds line 20 feet outside of each foul line.

### TEAMS:

- All players must be at least 21 years of age and wear their official league-issued shirts to play in a game and receive the drink specials at the sponsor bar afterwards. WLOHR shirts may be worn under any jackets or sweatshirts given incimate weather, but may be verified at any time by the Umpire. Shirts from other associations are STRICTLY PROHIBITED. Teams will receive a warning on the first offense and if any subsequent offense occurs the player at fault will be removed from the game. If this results in the offending team having to forfeit they will be charged the standard forfeit fee and this will count against their post-season eligibility.
- All players must have signed the official WLOHR waiver form. Captains must also sign a code of conduct and verify that all members of their team have read and understand the rules. These forms must be signed before the start of the season.
- No metal cleats/spikes are allowed. Any player found wearing metal cleats/spikes will be ejected for the remainder of the game.
- Only players who are paid league members may play in a game. Players must play in at least one regular season game in order to play in the playoffs and/or tournament.
- WLOHR reserves the right to conduct random roster checks throughout the season to verify player eligibility.
- Teams must have a minimum of fifteen (15) players on their roster. There is no maximum to the number of players that may be on a team's roster.

### GAMES

- Regular season games will last for seven (7) innings, with games being official after five (5) innings (4 ½ if the home team leads). When game time has reached fifty (50) minutes, only one more foll inning will be played (the game will be shortened if necessary).
- Unlike baseball, there are no extra innings in regular season games; the games can end in a tie. Tie-breakers are not permitted.

- Any team that is not ready to take the field at the scheduled kickoff time shall forfeit the game.  
*1 Game Time is Forfeit Time. There is no grace period.*
- There is a limit of nine (9) runs per inning except for the last inning. If the home team is leading by more than nine (9) runs at the start of the fifth inning, or later, the run limit is removed.
- If a team leads by fifteen (15) runs or more after five (5) innings (4½ if the home team leads), the game will be declared over by 'mercy rule'.

## FIELDING:

- Teams can place between a minimum of eight (8) players and a maximum of ten (10) players on the field. At least four (4) women must be on the field at all times.
- If a team has fewer than four (4) women present, they must play short and receive an automatic out when the missing woman's position is reached in the batting order. If a team has fewer than ten (10) players present, but has at least 4 women, they do not receive any automatic outs.
- If a team has the minimum of eight (8) players, at least two (2) must be women (with automatic outs received for the other two women).
- One of the team players must be catcher and one fielder must play near the opposing team's pitcher to officially end the play in the field. Once the ball is returned to this fielder the play is dead. Otherwise, there are no restrictions on fielder positioning.
  - The opposing team's pitcher may not interfere with the fielding team at any time. If the pitcher interferes with the play on the field then the runner furthest advanced on the bases will be declared out. This is a judgment call by the umpire.
- A team may change fielders, so long as they maintain the minimum of four (4) women on the field, with one exception: the fielding team cannot change their catcher during an inning (except in cases of injury).
- Fielders must stay out of the base line unless they are attempting to tag the runner or catch a batted ball.
- Fielders trying to make a force out on a base may have their foot on the base, but must lean out of the base line.
- No fielders may tag the safety base while making a play at first base.
- If any fielder makes an out by illegally tagging the safety base, the runner is safe.
- If a fielder physically obstructs a runner from advancing (or attempts to do so), the runner may advance as many bases as they would have potentially earned had they been able to run unobstructed. This is a judgment call by the umpire.
- **Fielders are prohibited from making forward movement inside of the 1st-3rd line during the pitch. In this case, the batter is allowed to retake the pitch or accept the result of the play.**
  - **If the fielder's forward movement is determined to be intentional, the fielder shall be ejected. This is a judgment call by the umpire.**
- Once any member of the fielding team has the ball in control and is inside the pitcher's area of control (within one pace of the pitcher's mound), the play is over. Play will resume once the next pitch is thrown.
- **There is no Infield Fly Rule. However, any player intentionally dropping a fly ball will be called for unsportsmanlike conduct, the ball is dead, and all runners are permitted to advance to the base to which they were running, but do not receive additional bases unless forced. This is a judgment call by the umpire.**

## PITCHING/CATCHING:

- Each team will pitch to its own players.

- Each batter will receive a set number of pitches; three (3) for men and five (5) for women. If after the allotted number of pitches the batter has failed to put a ball in play then the batter is out.
- There are no “walks”.
- The catcher must be positioned at least 3 feet away from the batter and behind home plate until the ball is hit. The catcher cannot interfere with the batter.
- If the catcher interferes with the batter, the batter will receive first base. This is a judgment call by the umpire.
- If the catcher fails to catch an un-hit pitch, delay of game may be called by the umpire and one pitch will be subtracted from the applicable pitch count. This is only in extreme cases and is a judgment call by the umpire.
- There is no restriction on the pitching style.

## **BATTING:**

- All players present must bat. There is no restriction on order, however, automatic outs will be received for every missing woman under the four (4) required.
- A team’s batting order cannot change after the first pitch. Players that arrive after the start of the game, but before all other players on the batting team have been up to bat once may be added to the bottom of the batting order. Players that arrive after the start of the game and after all other players on the batting team have already batted once may only be used as substitutes for players of the same gender.
- The official batting order must be provided to the umpire before the start of the game. The home team must keep an official scorecard.
- All batters must stay even with or behind home plate while batting. A player stepping fully into the field of play while hitting will be called out.
- There is no bunting allowed, however, there is no restriction on how far the ball has to travel when hit as long as it stays in the field of play.
- Any ball hit over the "homerun" line before touching the ground is considered a homerun.
  - If an opposing fielder leaves the field of play from inside the "homerun" line and makes a catch on the fly then batter is out. If at any time the opposing fielder touches the area outside the field of play before making a successful catch, the hit will be considered a homerun. This is a judgment call by the umpire.
  - Once a fielder touches the "homerun" line they are no longer allowed to make a play. Should the fielder touch the ball to make a play it will result in a two base award for all runners. This is a judgment call by the umpire.
  - If an opposing fielder touches the ball before it crosses the "homerun" line, but does not make a successful catch, then the ball is considered to be “in play”.
  - Any ball passing over the "homerun" line after touching the ground in the field of play will be considered “in play”.

## **RUNNING:**

- Runners must stay within the base line.
- A batter attempting to run through first base must tag the safety base, not first base. Any batter tagging first base when running through the base from home plate is out.
- A batter tagging first base when running around the base from home plate must avoid the first baseman. Failure to avoid the first baseman will result in the batter being called out. This is a judgment call by the umpire.
- The fielder “owns” the area inside the first base line and is free to make a play on a batted ball within this area. If the runner interferes with the fielder inside the first base line, the runner is out.

- The runner “owns” the area outside the first base line, including the safety base. If the fielder interferes with the runner’s attempt to tag the safety base on his/her run to first, the runner is safe.
- Once the runner has safely reached first base they may occupy the inside base.
- Neither leading off base nor stealing a base is allowed.
  - Any runner leading off base before the ball is hit is out.
- There is **NO** sliding of any kind, **including diving back to a base**, allowed during the course of the game, any runner attempting to slide into a base or sliding to avoid an out will be called out.
- A runner hit with the ball above shoulder level is safe and advances one (1) base except when:
  - The runner intentionally uses his/her head to block the ball, in which case the runner is out. This is a judgment call by the umpire.
  - The runner is ducking or attempting to dodge the ball, in which case the runner is out.
- “The Ponytail Rule”: If the ball hits the runner’s hair, the runner is safe. (Hair is considered part of the head.)
- When a runner is hit with the ball above shoulder level, other runners on base are permitted to advance to the base to which they were running, but do not receive additional bases unless forced.
- If a runner intentionally hits or kicks the ball after being tagged out, the ball is dead and all runners must return to their original bases.
- Runners may leave base as soon as a fly ball is touched by a member of the fielding team. If a batted ball is caught in foul territory (for an out), runners may advance after tagging up.
- All ties go to the runner.
- On an overthrow, all runners may advance as far as they can get unless the ball is in a pre-designated “out of bounds” area. Certain fields may have “out of bounds” areas. Please consult the umpire for details.
- When two runners are on the same base at the same time, the fielder may tag either runner with the ball. The runner who is tagged is out and the other runner is safe and may stay on base.
- If a batter is injured, he/she may use a “pinch runner” after reaching first base safely. This pinch runner should be the last player of the same gender that was out.
  - Players utilizing a pinch runner are not required to be removed from the game.
- It is the responsibility of the runner to avoid a collision. Please save yourself and your opponents from injury by paying attention. Ties go to the runner... there’s no need to take out the baseman.
- Pursuant to the ASA rule, when a fielder has the ball and the runner remains upright and crashes into the fielder, it is considered a “crash”. If the act is determined to be flagrant, the runner shall be ejected.

## **FAIR/FOUL BALLS:**

- A fair ball is:
  - Any hit ball touching a fielder in fair territory;
  - Any hit ball landing on home plate and then proceeding into fair territory or remaining stationary on home plate. (Essentially Homeplate is fair territory.)
- A foul ball is:
  - Any batted ball that settles on foul territory between home and first base, or between home and third base;
  - Any batted ball touching a fielder in foul territory;
  - Any batted ball landing in fair territory, but traveling into foul territory on its own before reaching first or third base;
  - Any batted ball that first falls on foul territory beyond first or third base.

- All foul balls count as strikes in the pitch count, even on the third (3rd) pitch for men or the third (3rd) strike for women.

## **OUTS:**

- A count of three (3) outs by a team completes that team's half of the inning.
- An out is:
  - A count of three (3) pitches not put into play by the batter for men;
  - A count of five (5) pitches not put into play or a strikeout by the batter for women;
  - A count of three (3) strikes (to include a foul as the third strike) for women;
  - A runner touched by the ball at any time while not on base;
  - A runner who is on the same base with another runner and is tagged with the ball;
  - Any batted ball (fair or foul) that is caught on the fly;
  - A ball tag on a base to which a runner is forced to run;
  - A runner leading off base before a ball is hit.
- Hitting a base with the ball does not count as an out. The fielder must tag the runner with the ball or maintain control of the ball on the base on a forced run.

## **POSTSEASON GAMES:**

- All playoffs and tournaments are single-elimination.
- The playoff and/or tournament format and number of teams will be determined later in the season.
- Any player ejected from a postseason game will be suspended for the remainder of the postseason.
- Postseason games will last for seven (7) innings unless shortened by the mercy rule. There is no time limit to postseason games.
- In the event of a tie at the end of seven (7) innings, two extra innings may be played to determine the winner. In the event of a tie at the end of nine (9) innings, the last batter from the previous inning will advance to second base, and the batting order will proceed as specified for as many extra innings as are needed to determine the winner. Any other form of tie-breaker is not permitted.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY:**

- WLOHR will play in the rain if the fields are playable.
- Weather Line: (757) 664-6814. The line will be updated after 4:00 p.m. on game days.

## **OTHER RULES:**

- All games will be officiated by WLOHR umpires. The umpire fee is \$14 per team per game.
- Foul language is not allowed. This is a judgment call by the umpire.
- No bottles are allowed on the field at any time.
- Only league provided equipment may be used during the game. All league equipment will be clearly marked. Any player found to be using non-league equipment will be declared out. A second offense and the player will be ejected from the game and the team will receive an out in their place in the line-up. This is a judgment call by the umpire.
- Teams that forfeit a game and did not provide notification by email (wiffleballhamptonroads@gmail.com) by 5:00 PM the day before the game will be charged the forfeit fine of \$60: \$28 for the umpire fee, \$20 for the opposing team's bar tab, and \$12 for league administrative costs.

- If at least 24-hours advance notice is provided to the league, one forfeit per team per season is permitted without future consequences. If a team does not provide advance notice of a forfeit and/or a team forfeits more than one game in a season, that team will be banned from postseason play and will not be guaranteed a spot in the league the following season.
- The season's game schedule is set one week prior to the start of the season. At this time, any team may make game reschedule requests without penalty. After the season begins, it costs \$50 to reschedule a game.
- Captains are responsible for controlling their team. We are adults... please act like it.
  - If a player is ejected from a regular season game, he/she will not be allowed to play in the next scheduled game.
  - If a player is ejected from a postseason game, he/she will not be allowed to play for the remainder of the postseason.
  - If a player is ejected from more than one game in a season, that player will be ejected from the league for the season.
  - If a player is ejected from any three games during their wiffleball career, they will be ejected from the Wiffleball League of Hampton Roads forever.
  - Fighting is strictly prohibited. Any player that is caught fighting during a game will be ejected from the Wiffleball League of Hampton Roads forever.
  - Ejected players that fail to immediately leave the premises or return to the premises ahead of their suspension being served will be ejected from the Kickball League of Hampton Roads forever.
- Captains are responsible for keeping track of the batting order, inning and score in their scorebooks. If there is a dispute over the batting order, inning, or score, the scorebooks are used to make the final decision.
- Captains are responsible for checking their game results every week. Incorrect results must be reported to WLOHR within one week.
- Captains and Assistant Captains are the only people who are allowed to discuss rules/calls with the umpire.
- All players in the "bench area" must maintain adequate distance from the field to avoid interference in the game. Players/teams who fail to comply may be penalized. This is a judgment call by the umpire.
- Some fields may have "out of bounds" areas. The umpire will declare these areas before the start of each game. If the ball enters one of these areas, the ball is dead and play will stop. Extra bases may be awarded depending on the particular field.
- There is **NO** Infield Fly Rule.
- There are no errors.
- If a rule is not otherwise stated here, ASA softball rules apply.
- The official game umpires have the final ruling; however, league commissioners or team captains may be consulted concerning the official rules. Umpires may make judgment calls where appropriate.
- Field Leaders will have a copy of the rules at each field location. Captains are empowered to ask the umpire for a consultation with the Field Leader if a rule is in question.
- Dogs must be on a leash at all times in city parks.

***Please support our sponsor bars. As always, WLOHR and its sponsors encourage responsible drinking.***

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