Vancouver Advertising Slo-Pitch League (VASL)

2026 Rules and Regulations

(SPN rules apply unless stated otherwise)

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FIRST RULE

The goal of this league is ***to provide a fun and enjoyable environment*** for all participants. Every other rule that follows is aimed at ensuring this purpose.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

A team consists of ten players. For all divisions, that consists of 7 males and 3 females. The 10th player must play the rover position which is anywhere in the outfield (see explanation below). They cannot play an extra infield position.

7+3 Rules

Only 9 players:
Play 7 male and 2 female. There is no automatic out, but you still must bat 3 women. The two women have a set spot in the batting order. You can rotate either of the women into 3rd female batting spot. An automatic out will only occur if that person's batting spot comes up while she is still on base, so make sure that you always bat someone who is not due up for some time. **Should you have a 6 man 3 woman roster, you *do not* bat 7 men (i.e. bat one man twice).**

Only 8 players:
The lineup must include 2 women – you can't have 7 men and 1 woman. The opposing team will supply you with a non-playing catcher. They are only allowed to catch and throw the ball back to the pitcher. They are not allowed to participate in any play. You still must bat 3 women; the two women have a fixed spot in the batting order; you can rotate them freely into the other open spot. An automatic out only occurs if that person's normal batting spot comes up and they are still on base.

7 players or less:
The game is defaulted by a score of 10-0. Should the teams want to divide up and play a practice game, please do so.

OUTFIELD

The outfield encroachment line cones must be 150 feet from home plate. When a female is batting all outfielders must be on this line or farther and cannot move forward until the ball is hit.

AGE LIMITATION

All players must be a minimum of 18 years old. 16- and 17-year-old players may play only if they have submitted a signed waiver on the team's SPN web site prior to playing.

EXTRA BATTERS

With a 10-player line-up you are allowed to bat extra players if you wish, but you must always add one male and one female (or just add females). So, you can bat 8 men and 4 women, 9 men and 5 women, etc.

If you are batting extra players, ensure that no one is planning to leave before the end of the game, because that player's spot will become an automatic out. For example, you have 12 people show up and are batting 8+4. If one guy leaves early, batting order stays the same, but his spot is now an automatic out. Same thing if a girl leaves; you still have the automatic out; you can't bench a guy and drop down to a 7+3 lineup.

BATTING ORDER and SUBSTITUTION

We allow unlimited substitutions; a player may come in and out more than once, regardless of where the player is repositioned in the batting order upon returning. ***A substituting player must always play in the field immediately before they enter or re-enter the batting order.*** We have no rule as to how many men may bat in a row. When substituting, it must be guy for guy, girl for girl, or girl for guy.

THE GAME (and OPEN INNING RULE)

If time allows all single games will be 9 innings, with the 9th being open. An open inning must be played. For evening double headers, the maximum number of innings is seven. Sunday double headers are nine innings each.

For the typical 6:30 start, any new inning that begins <u>after</u> 8 PM will be declared the open inning.

If the game is tied at the end of play, each team is awarded one point. Extra innings are not played during league play.

Five innings constitutes a full game. Should you start a game and due to bad weather not complete five innings, it's declared no contest, and the entire game is replayed.

The home team provides all bases, home plate, home plate mat, scoring plate, cones for foul and commitment lines, and one new ball per game. All teams are given 10 balls at the start of the year. This will cover all your home games. Both teams should have their next best game ball available in case one gets lost or damaged.

START TIMES + OPEN INNINGS SUMMARY

Single Games:

- Daylight games start at 6:30 PM (***Jericho has 7 PM starts beginning in mid-May***)
- Open inning is the first inning that starts **after** the 90-minute mark (e.g. after 8 PM for a 6:30 start)

Daylight double headers (late May to early July):

- First game starts at the usual time of 6:30 PM.
- Open inning of the first game is the first inning that starts **<u>after</u>** 7:40 PM.
- 2–3-minute break between games
- Open inning of the second game is either the 7th inning or determined by the umpire **based on light conditions**.

Sunday double headers (9 inning games):

- First game starts at 10:00 AM
- Open inning of the first game is the first inning that starts after 11:30 AM
- Second game at 12 Noon
- Open inning of the second game is the first inning that starts after 1:30 PM
- **Note:** if teams prefer to move up the time of the second game, they can do so. For example, if the teams want the second game to start at 11:45, then the open inning time is 1:15 instead of 1:30.

LATE STARTS + FORFEITS

If teams aren't ready to play at the set start time (6:30 for example) here's how it is handled:

One team is ready and the other one isn't…
The offending team has 10 minutes to field a team. If they can start play at or before 6:40 the game begins at the top of the 2nd inning and the offending team is down 5-0. If they can't start the game before then the game is a 10-0 default.

Neither team is ready…
Both teams have 10 minutes (until 6:40) to field a team. If both teams aren't ready by 6:40 the game is declared no contest, no points are awarded, and the game will not be re-scheduled. If both teams can start prior to 6:40 the game begins as normal. The only penalty is that you have lost some time.

SPEED OF PLAY

Because of the time limits we're encouraging all teams to play as quickly as possible. Simple things like always having your batting order and substitutions ready can save you 10 to 15 minutes per game.

Pitchers will get a maximum of three warm-up pitches in their first inning, then one per inning afterwards, and the on-deck circle must always be filled. No infield or outfield balls are allowed after the first inning; the umpires are instructed to keep things moving.

RAIN-OUTS

A game day update will be sent by either e-mail or text no later than 3:30 PM if games are to be called on account of rain. If the game is still on (even if the weather is uncertain) both teams are to go to the park, and a decision will be made at the park between the two team captains and the umpire.

If in the umpire's judgment, the field is unsafe to play, the game will be called, and a make-up scheduled. Please be aware that due to the limited number of diamonds make-ups will be scheduled as soon as possible.

RESCHEDULED GAMES

Should your team wish to reschedule a game for a legitimate reason, e-mail the league scheduler with your request. It will be forwarded to the opposing team with various options for their approval. Ideally, we want to accommodate all legitimate requests. However, if a date cannot be worked out then the requesting team loses by default. ***Note: other than for an emergency all reschedules require a minimum of 72 hours' notice.*** No reschedules can be granted within 48 hours of a game, as the umpires have already been paid for that game.

Send rescheduling requests to: vansoftball@gmail.com or text 604-263-6670

DEFAULTS

Teams will be charged $50 (the umpire's fee) for the 1st chargeable default (i.e. less than 24 hours before game time). Your team is charged another $50 for your 2nd default, after which the team will not be invited to return to the league for the following season.

THE DIAMOND

Base paths are 65 feet. All bases must be double-spiked; this is now part of the SPN Insurance Regulations. Please measure - don't assume that the "dirt area" on some of the diamonds is where the bases should be. A number of the diamonds are used for minor softball and their dimensions are shorter.

The pitching line must be a minimum of 50 feet from home plate. Under no circumstances are you allowed to pitch from closer than 50 feet. Two reasons: 1) it would give the pitcher a fielding advantage on bunts. 2) It's an insurance regulation for the pitcher's protection. You are allowed to pitch from as far back as 65 feet.

The commitment line is 20 feet from home plate. Once a runner has crossed this line they must go home. The encroachment line for infielders is 50 feet from home plate. ***See page 8 for the diamond diagram.***

Someone should always carry a rake and shovel in the car. We are responsible to get the fields in playing shape and a little bit of work on a wet diamond can make a huge difference to the quality of the game and safety.

PITCHING

The arc must be 6 to 12 feet. The umpire may call an "illegal" pitch on any ball that is too high or low. An illegal pitch is a ball; however, the batter may still swing at it if he or she wishes.

WALKS

If a male batter walks on a 4-0 count and a female is up next, the male gets second base, and the female must bat. On any batter, (male or female) if after throwing a strike you decide to walk a batter, you just advise the umpire, and no further pitches are required.

STRIKES

If the pitch is thrown with the proper arc and hits any part of the plate or mat, it is a strike. The mat is 24 x 36 inches. **Note:** there is a smaller mat available so if you're buying one make sure you get the larger size. There is one grace foul ball on a third strike (other than bunting - see next rule). The batter is out on the second foul.

BUNTING

- Only women can bunt.
- A third strike foul on a bunt is an out.
- A safety or encroachment line will be marked at 50 feet.

Fielders cannot move closer than this line until the batter makes contact. Once the batter has squared to bunt, she cannot hit away. If she does, she is called out.

LEAD-OFFS

Leadoffs are permitted once the ball **enters the strike zone**. If the umpire feels the runner has left too soon, he or she may call the runner out.

HOME PLATE RULE

The runner must not touch the home plate and/or the mat. If they do, they are out. They must only cross the scoring line or touch the scoring plate.

The umpire will draw in a scoring line and the runner must cross that line (or touch the scoring plate). For a runner to be out the catcher must have the ball and touch any part of home plate and/or the mat before the runner touches the scoring plate or line. Teams that are now using the new SPN mat need to just have the catcher touch any part of the mat. Fielders also have the option of tagging the runner if they aren't able to reach the plate/mat.

OVER-RUN

The runner can over-run first base and return to the bag. If in the umpire's judgment an attempt was made to go to second then the play is live and the runner can be tagged out.

COURTESY RUNNERS

Batters must get to first base.

Teams are allowed three pinch runners per game total. Any player on the team is eligible to be a pinch runner regardless if they are in the lineup or on the bench, but a player can only serve as a pinch runner once. If there is more than one injured player on a team in need of a pinch runner, the team captains can meet before the game to expand the number of pinch runners allowed – if both captains agree. The captains must then inform the umpire at the pre-game meeting **IF** they plan to allow additional pinch runners. Even if the number is expanded, players can only pinch run once.

MERCY RULE

We have a maximum of 5 runs per inning except for the open inning, which is unlimited.

15 run mercy rule: If one team is ahead by 15 runs or more any time ***after*** 6 full innings (or 5½ innings if the home team is ahead) the game is ***immediately*** over.

Please note that if the home team is ahead going into to bottom half of the open inning, they do not take their last at bats.

FLIP-FLOP RULE (Voluntary)

The intent of the rule is to speed up the game when the score is lopsided and reduce the possibility of a team piling on runs - especially when light or time is a factor:

If the **visiting** team is ahead by ten or more runs going into the last inning, the home team will remain at bat and start a new at bat (beginning their last inning as the visiting team). It will be the open inning. If the original home team ties or goes ahead, the original visiting team bats in the bottom of that inning.

If the run differential is less than ten runs and both coaches agree, the flip/flop rule can be instigated. It's worth considering if it's the first game of a doubleheader and light or time may be an issue.

This is a voluntary rule (regardless of whether the visiting team is ahead by more or less than ten runs). Both teams must agree for it to be implemented.

UMPIRE COMPLAINTS

If you feel that an umpire has overstepped his or her authority or has not interpreted our rules correctly, please e-mail vansoftball@gmail.com after the game with a calm, thorough, and reasoned explanation of the problem(s). This will then be reviewed and sent on to the umpire's association and get it resolved.

Please note that it is the responsibility of the team captains to always have a copy of our rules. These umpires do several different leagues, and the rules vary. They only carry a "highlights" version of our rules. It is suggested that the captains have a quick meeting with the umpire prior the game and do a quick review.

UMPIRE OR PLAYER ABUSE

No physical or verbal abuse of an umpire or player will be tolerated, and the umpire has the power to eject any player from the game if deemed necessary. An ejection automatically results in a one game suspension for the next game your team plays. This applies to both the regular season and playoffs.

Any player who uses any level of violence can be permanently expelled from the league by a 3/4 vote of the rules committee. The rules committee will request information from both team captains and the umpire, before forwarding the complaint to the rules committee for a final decision.

ALCOHOL POLICY / SMOKING POLICY

It is the official league policy that alcohol is not allowed at any of the parks. Period.

This is also stated on all our permits.

Please note that if any fines are incurred, they are the responsibility of the team or teams involved, not the league. Note also that smoking is prohibited in Vancouver Parks. Again, any fines incurred for smoking are the responsibility of the player and/or team only.

BEHAVIOUR INFRACTIONS

Behavior infractions will result in probation on first incident and disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from the league on second incident. Disciplinary action will be subject to review by rules committee. In the event of expulsion there will be no refund of league fees

PLAYOFFS & ELIGIBILITY

All players must have played a minimum of five league games for their team during the season to qualify for playoffs. No exceptions. Teams will be responsible for providing the eligibility of any player.

A player may only play for **one team** in the playoffs in **each division**, even if they played five games with more than one team in the regular season. For example, if a player has played 5+ games for two teams in the C Division and one in D, that player can participate in the playoffs for only one of the C teams (and can also play for the D team).

SCORES

The winning team is responsible for notifying the league statistician of the game results by the morning after the game. Please make sure that both teams agree on the final score. The actual score sheet is not required. However, all team captains should keep them in case a player's playoff eligibility is questioned.

VASL Score Reporting:	**TEXT (preferred)**	**604-263-6670 (text right after the game)**
	E-MAIL	**vansoftball@gmail.com**

LEAGUE TIE BREAKERS

Playoff positions are determined with tiebreakers are as follows:

- The team with the most wins
- Head-to-Head competition
- Run differential

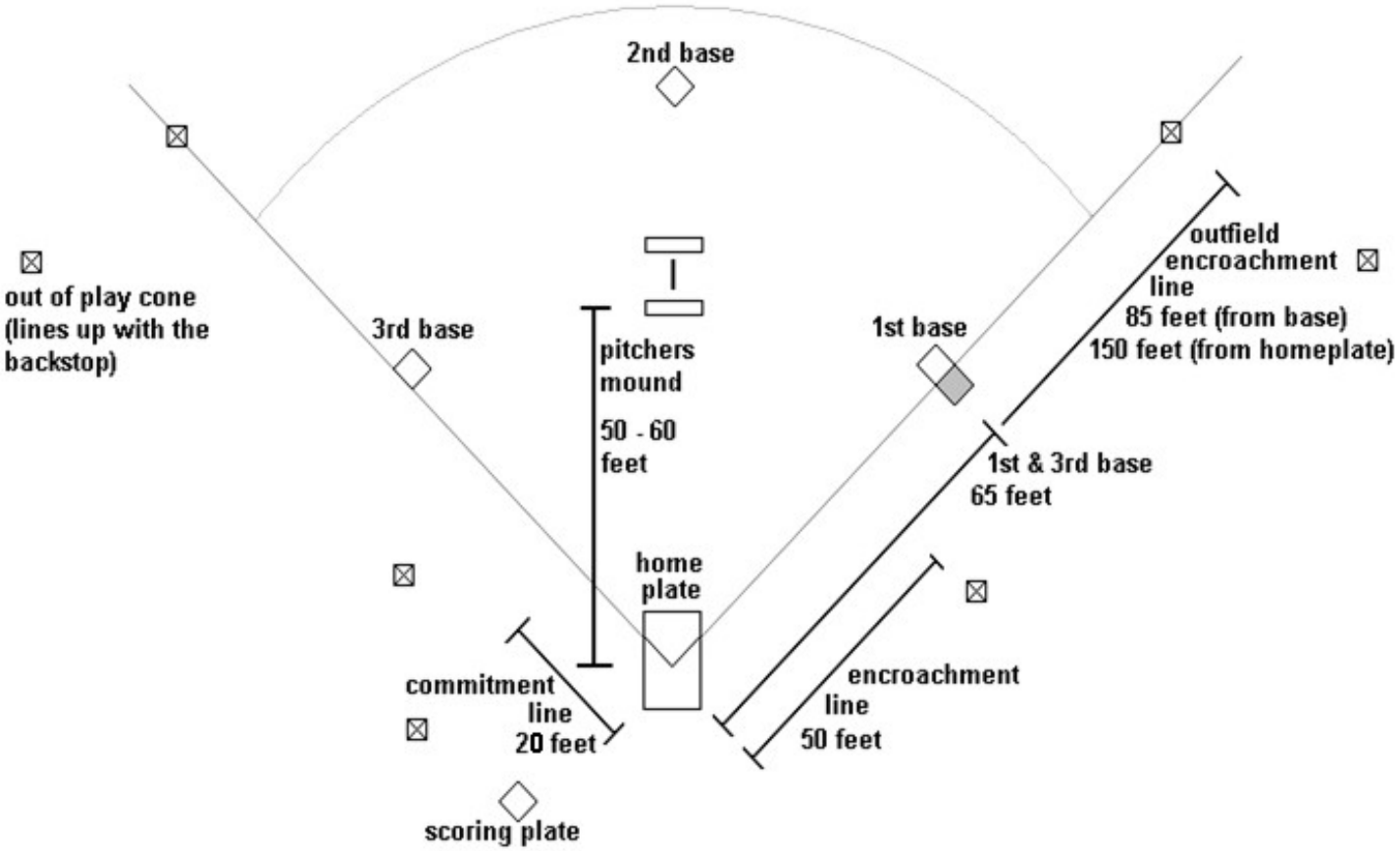
RULES COMMITTEE

The rules committee consists of the team captains of each team. Any questions, concerns, or disputes regarding the rules should be forwarded to the rules committee chairperson. Any required actions will be carried out by the rules committee less the teams involved in the dispute, if any.

LAST RULE

See First Rule.

THE SLOWPITCH DIAMOND



1st Base is a double safety base. The orange bag is in foul territory, the white bag in fair territory.

1st and 3rd Base are 65 feet from the back tip of Home Plate to the far outside corner of the bags (white bag for 1st).

2nd Base is 91' 11" from the back tip of Home Plate to the back tip of the base pointing to center field.

Cones (Minimum of 4 needed):
Two cones on the foul lines 150 feet from the back tip of home plate (85 feet from the back corner of the bases).
Two more at the same distance, but in line with the fence or backstop to denote the "out of play" boundary.

Encroachment and Runner's Lines:

Basepath: starting halfway down the first base line, the runner must be in the basepath - the three feet wide path in foul territory shown above. This prevents runner interference with the fielders, especially on bunts (runner interference = the runner is out).

Outfield encroachment line: the cones at 150 feet mark the outfield encroachment line – outfielders cannot play in closer than this line when women are up to bat. The line "curves" around the outfield – remind the umpire if you see outfielders coming in on women batters.

Infield encroachment line: you can use two more cones if you wish to mark this line, although it's not necessary. Infielders are not allowed to come closer than 50 feet from home plate. The infield encroachment line starts at the inner range of the pitching area, so basically a semi-circle from the front of the pitching area to the foul lines denotes the infield encroachment area.

Commitment Line: A smaller cone or marker is placed by the fence marking the spot 20 feet down the 3rd base line from the back tip of home plate. This is the commitment line – a player on 3rd running to home (running to the scoring plate) cannot turn back once crossing that mark – otherwise he or she is automatically out.