

Kup Media Softball League

Official Rules and Regulations

(Updated for 2026 season)

Note: Any questions regarding rules, policies, or eligibility must be addressed before the start of the game with the commissioner and/or umpires.

The mission of our league is providing social connection for Chicago journalists and media members — that’s what makes us unique among the many, many other local softball leagues.

This is a company softball league. Our goal isn’t to have the highest level of play in town — you can get that elsewhere — but instead to continue to provide a genuinely welcoming opportunity for anyone in the industry to participate.

As such, though roster eligibility is not strictly limited to people who work for the organization that sponsors the team, please first invite your colleagues, and then any journalism/media folks who don’t have a team, before you call your family and friends to fill any remaining openings.

1. Teams use 10 players in the field and must have a minimum of 8 players to compete. Fewer than 8 players results in a forfeit.
2. Teams may have a **maximum of 7 players of the same gender** on the field at one time. If a team has fewer than 3 players of the minority gender:

Players	Result
0	Team forfeits the game
1	2 empty spots in the field (8 fielders) and 2 automatic outs in the lineup
2	1 empty spot in the field (9 fielders) and 1 automatic out in the lineup

Three minority gender players must come to the plate every time through the order.

The gender that a player identifies as is considered their gender. The Kup League accepts those who don't identify within the binary gender system and acknowledges that not all players identify as male or female. This league welcomes people of all identities and genders.

3. **Players who do not identify as male may wear gloves** in the field if they desire. There are no restrictions about what positions can be played by gloved players. Team captains will clarify with each other and with the umpire before the game which of their players, if any, will be using gloves.

4. Every player in the lineup must play a minimum of two innings in the field. Everyone in the field must bat. There are no designated hitters or fielding specialists.

5. Teams may bat at least 10 players. Substitutions may be made in the field, but not batting order changes. (A player who leaves the game because of an injury may be skipped in the batting order without penalty, but cannot be replaced in the lineup and cannot return to the game.) **To bat more than 12 players in a lineup, a team must include a 4th player of the minority gender.** Players can share a spot in the lineup with another player. In such a case, those players alternate at-bat per at-bat (e.g., player A bats the first time through the order and player B bats the next time, etc.).

6. All games are seven innings (roughly one hour), warm-up time included. **Arrive and start on time!** Once a regular-season game reaches 75 minutes, any inning in progress will be completed, but no new innings will start. The home team will get its at-bat. If the game is still tied after that, the game ends in a tie. No time limit for a playoff game.

7. Only the captain or a designated captain substitute can argue/address calls with umpires. Umpires must provide captains a warning if a player on said captain's team is close to being ejected. Umpires may eject players following warnings.

8. All batters start with a one-ball, one-strike count. Foul balls count as strikes. If a batter fouls with two strikes, the batter is out.

9. Mercy rule: 15 runs after five complete innings, 10 after six complete innings.

10. Batters must complete a full swing. Half-swings and bunts are illegal.

11. Batters do not take a base if hit by a pitch.

12. Infield fly rule is in effect.

13. No leadoffs or stealing. Runners may leave the base once the ball is hit. If a runner leaves early, the ball is dead and the runner is sent back. Pinch runners cannot be used for strategic purposes; they are to be used only if a batter reaches base but is physically unable to run the bases. In this case, this courtesy runner must be the **last batter** to make an out. (Gender is not a factor.) If you need a courtesy runner, this must be declared before the game (unless there is a sudden injury) and you should be playing catcher on defense, not running around in the field on defense.

14. Pitchers may start their wind-up from wherever they like, but must have one foot on the rubber at release. "Quick pitching" before the batter is ready is a dirty no-good trick, but it is up to the umpire to call the ball dead. Legal pitches are between 6 and 12 feet. The depth of the strike zone is 30 inches behind the point of the plate. **A strike mat is used to mark the strike zone. A pitch that hits the mat, past the plate, is a strike. The strike mat is not part of the base; runners must touch the plate itself to score a run.** A pitch will be called a ball if it hits the plate.

15. In the field, a defense must have at least four players on the outfield grass until the ball is hit.

16. Base runner to defensive player contact should be avoided. Any excessive contact or collision may result in an "out" and/or ejection. This includes contact with the catcher. Sliding is allowed. Any sliding into a base to make contact, or any intentional (in the eyes of the umpire) interference with the defensive player, and the runner will be called out. No metal spikes allowed.

17. Mozart Park ground rules -- it is an automatic home run if:

- on the southwest field, a fair ball a) strikes a tree on the fly; or b) reaches the sidewalk along Dickens Avenue; or
- on the northeast field, a fair ball enters the playground.

If a hit ball makes contact with a tree overhanging the field in fair territory, it is declared a dead ball and the batter is awarded a ground-rule double. If it's in foul territory, it is simply a dead ball.

18. Players may use any softball bat.

19. The Kup softball league is a recreational league — the idea is to have **fun**. Although

the games may become intense, you still can be competitive while maintaining good sportsmanship. Unsportsmanlike conduct, as determined by the umpire, may be punishable by ejection from the game.

20. Substitute players are allowed from within the league during the regular season; you can pull a sub from another team in our league. However, no one can play for more than one team during the playoffs.

21. If you know in advance that your team is going to forfeit, please call/text/email the commissioner(s) and the other team's captain(s) so we can coordinate with teams and umpires.

22. Drinking alcohol is prohibited at Mozart Park and typically is enforced by vigilant surveillance by park employees and local neighbors.

For Umpires

Umpires coordinate and run the games. Any rules not listed above follow ASA guidelines and are based on the umpire's judgment. Umpire responsibilities include:

- Placing the bases and pitcher's rubber.
- Starting games on time.
- Calling balls/strikes and keeping the count.
- Calling outs, making final calls on any disputed balls or strikes.
- Settling all disputes or disputed calls.

It is understood that umps will assist in tracking the score and assist in any judgment calls with regards to the coed lineup ratios, player shortages, etc. However, it is the responsibility of both teams to maintain their respective lineups and scores each inning.

Playoffs:

Playoffs are single-elimination. Teams are seeded according to winning percentage. Tiebreaker is head-to-head performance. Second tiebreaker is run differential. Third tiebreaker is total runs scored. Fourth tiebreaker is fewest runs allowed. Fifth tiebreaker is a coin toss.