

# ***TRI SPORTS Kickball Rules***

*Revised February 2023*

**Amateur Softball Association (ASA) Rules will be used with the following modifications and clarifications:**

## **OUR PHILOSOPHY, THE PLAYERS, FIELD, and GAME**

**A. Our Philosophy:** We have designed our kickball rules to allow for the most enjoyable game possible. Please be aware, if a game situation falls into a gray area of our written rules, that our refs will rule in the spirit of our rules: fairness & fun. And above all, we want to be inclusive to all skill levels and backgrounds. Aggressive pitching, aggressive catching, and positioning outfielders in the infield, etc., are examples of defensive play that can severely limit an inexperienced kicker's ability to contribute to their team's success, and they go against the inclusive environment we're striving to provide. We expect every pitch to be a nice fat meatball that the kicker can drive with all their might and then it's up to the defense to play great defense from there. That's the spirit of our game.

## **B. Players, Subs, Guest Passes & Forfeits**

Fielding teams are comprised of ten (10) players (4of / 6if) with a min. of four (4) women; there are no infield/outfield minimums for women. A team can play with a min. of 9 (3of / 6if), as long as 3 of the players are women, and it counts. A forfeit will occur if a team can't field 3+ women and 9+ total players by 10 minutes after the scheduled game time. Game clock starts at game time and not when both teams show up. PLEASE be responsible, and respectful of your opponents, by taking a headcount after your game each week, and find out if your team may be short the following week. TRI SPORTS has lots of ways we can help teams get subs and avoid forfeits but contacting us any later than 2 days prior can be super-challenging. A team should never forfeit, but if your team has to, please report it no later than 24 hours in advance of game time. In the case of a rainout of a previously reported forfeit, the game will be re-scheduled, so there is no reason to wait and see if games will be canceled due to weather before contacting us. SUBSTITUTES are allowed in the regular season, but must be legally registered, either on the roster of another team or [for a \\$10 1-day guest pass](#).

## **C. Field**

1. All fields will be set up with the same standard placement of bases (60 feet apart) and pitching rubber.
2. The "Strike zone" extends 12" on each side of home plate and are marked by strike strips.
3. Safety bases are next to 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>. On close plays, fielder should play 1<sup>st</sup> base and the runner should use the safety base. If it's not a close play the runner may use 1<sup>st</sup>. At 2<sup>nd</sup> runner/fielder may use either base but fielder must not inhibit runner from turning the corner to go to 3<sup>rd</sup> (obstruction). It is recommended that fielders use the outside (outfield side) base & runners use the inside (infield) base.

## **D. Game**

1. Games are 7 innings or 45 mins. max. in length. Games are official after 5 innings (4½ if the home team leads). At the 42-minute mark, a new inning will not be started but an inning in progress will be completed. Game clock starts at scheduled game time or 3 mins. after final play of the previous game (whichever is earlier). If a game is tied at the end of 7 innings (or the last inning before the 41-minute limit is reached), it is ruled a tie, except in playoffs. In playoffs, we do extra innings and the final kicker from the previous inning starts on 2<sup>nd</sup> base for each team, each inning until the game is decided. The team that kicks first in the 7<sup>th</sup> inning, also kicks first in the extra innings. Semi-Final & Championship games have no time limit. All other games do.
2. Games are officiated by a TRI SPORTS official who has the final say on all calls. Each team is allowed 1 designated captain who is allowed to discuss calls with the referee (**New in 2023**). Other players besides the captain that dispute calls are subject to ejection from the game. **Arguing with or disrespecting an official is not allowed and may result in disciplinary action up to and including ejection, suspension, game forfeit or removal from the league without refund.** See SPORTSMANSHIP section.
3. An out is recorded when: 1) A player strikes out, 2) A runner is hit by a thrown or kicked ball striking the shoulders or below while not on base, 3) A kicked ball is caught before touching the ground, 4) A runner leads

off and the ball is kicked fair 5) A player on the kicking team intentionally interferes with a fielder attempting to make an out (including “Drop It”-type calls).

4. **MERCY RULE:** A team can score a max. of 8 runs in one inning during the regular season. **EXCEPTIONS:** 1). If a team is behind by more than 8 runs, it may score until the game is tied. 2). The final inning has no run limit. **PLAYOFFS-**There is no 8 run limit per inning, and a team ahead by 15 runs after 4 innings (3½ if home team) or 10+ after 5 (4½ if home team) is the winner. **(New in 2023)**

5. All teams make the playoffs. League standing tiebreakers are determined by # of forfeits, then head-to-head, and then opponents’ records, not runs scored. There is no incentive to beat an opponent by the maximum number of runs possible.

## **KICKING AND BASERUNNING**

### **A. Kicking**

1. Teams must write down their order and kick any combo of NF/F (non-female/female) or NF/NF/F, so long as 3NFs NEVER bat in a row. The NF/NF/F combo can only be used to avoid 3NFs in a row. All players must kick (players cannot only play the field). The batting order cannot be altered during the game, except late additions, which can be added at bottom of order. If adding player to the bottom of the order violates the NF/NF/F rule, they may be inserted in the last spot of the order that complies. Accidental order violations must be reported to referee (by fielding team) before the ball is legally kicked into play. If not, the play stands.

2. Count begins @ 1 ball/1 strike. Fouled 3rd strike is an out (i.e. 2 pitches, 2 fouls=batter is out)

3. A “strike” must roll between (or over) the strike zone strips. If the kicker deems the pitch unkickable, the kicker must appeal clearly (so official can hear it) that the pitch was too slow/fast/bouncy etc. and it will not count against them in the strike count. However, the official must agree, or it will count as a strike or ball. For general reference, a ball 4”+ off the ground is considered too bouncy. **Speed & bounce are judged at the time ball reaches the kicker (not when pitched or when crossing home plate).**

4. A foul is a: 1) Kick struck twice or stopped by kicker 2) Kick never touching inbounds, 2) Kick landing inbounds but traveling out of bounds before reaching 1<sup>st</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> or further inbounds (includes balls flying over 1<sup>st</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> & landing foul). Balls touching 1<sup>st</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> or further & rolling foul are fair. A fly ball is judged by the ground directly below the ball when touched by fielder; is that ground fair or foul?

5. All kicks must be taken with plant foot no further than the front edge of home plate (and that line extending both directions) or a foot fault/strike will be called; if a foot fault occurs and the ball popped up & caught, the kicker is out. Runners may not advance on a foot fault. In playoffs, foot faults are an automatic out.

6. Only females may bunt. Bunting is an automatic out for non-females. All non-female kicks should have a plant foot, backswing AND full-strength follow-through. Directional kicks are allowed. Full-kick attempts that go short-distances are not considered bunts.

7. During any play where a ball is popped, that play shall be replayed with a properly inflated ball.

8. Losing team ALWAYS kicks in the top of the final inning so the home team, if losing going into the final inning, will have back-to-back at-bats. The away team never kicks back-to-back they already kick at the top of each inning. Teams get equal at-bats (if needed).

### **B. Baserunning**

1. Runners have the right of way. Runners must try to stay within the base path but are allowed a natural arc or shortest distance path. When attempting to avoid a ball tag, runners may move no more than 5 feet out of their established path.

2. No lead offs. Runners leaving base before the ball is kicked fair are automatically out; result is dead ball out & replay pitch. If fouled, or if official stops game prior to kick, the runner may receive a warning & return to the base.

3. There is no sliding & no stealing. Runners may safely run through first base only. Diving back to the base (not sliding) is allowed. “Diving” is going from standing still or momentum in the direction opposite of the base to falling while reaching back to the base.

4. Runners must make a reasonable attempt to avoid colliding with a player that is playing the other side of the base in anticipation of a play (including but not limited to slowing up to stop on, and not overrun 2nd or 3rd base).
5. Any time a runner is hit with the ball and they are not on base, that runner is out (exception: head or overrunning 1st). If a runner is on base and hit by their teammate's kicked ball, that is a dead ball and replay pitch.
6. Runners advance an extra base on balls thrown out of play. Extra base is defined as 1 base in addition to the base the runner is closest to at the time the ball is called out of play. "Out of play" is determined by official's discretion. All players should continue to play until they hear the official declare "out of play".
7. Thrown balls striking a runner are still live; play doesn't stop. Thrown balls hitting base coach are "dead"; runners get closest base.
8. Balls in play, touching or being touched by bench players (or their gear) result in a dead ball. If it's the fielding team's bench, an extra base is awarded. If it's the kicking team's bench, no extra bases are awarded.
8. Base coaches are not allowed to physically assist runners while the ball is in play.
9. If a runner intentionally bats/kicks a ball away (official's discretion), play stops and the runner is out; runners get closest base.
10. Pitcher must have possession of ball and have 1 foot on the pitcher's rubber for official to call time out. At that time, runners not half-way (or more) to the next base must return to previous base. It must be the pitcher that triggers the timeout.
11. Runners must tag up on fly balls. Runner may advance on caught foul balls. On juggling catches, runner has to tag up from the time the fielder first makes contact with ball, not from the time of the catch.
12. Pinch Runners are allowed from 1st base only and must be the person of the same class (NF/F) who made the last out. Player must be injured during the game or at risk of further injury to receive a pinch runner. If a player is too injured to run prior to the game or run safely to 1st base, they should not be playing in the game.
13. Passing another runner is not allowed. The passing runner is out.
14. When obstructed, a runner should (to avoid a collision) always slow up/stop and immediately appeal to the ref for an obstruction call.
15. Runners should not interfere with a fielder making a play on the ball. Fielders are allowed to enter the basepath to play the ball, and runners need to avoid that fielder.

## **FIELDING & PITCHING**

### **Fielding**

1. Infielders must be beyond the base path until the ball is kicked (exception: Bunting Defense). Infielders fading too far into the outfield (ref's discretion) may be called back closer to the basepath (**New in 2023**).
2. Bunting Defense [female kickers only] Infielders must be beyond the base path until ball is released from pitcher's hand. At that time, only one established infielder may charge in front of the base path, but no closer than a line 90° from pitcher's rubber to the base path, until the ball is kicked. Infringement on the kicker results in kicker's choice of re-kick or result of play.
3. Outfielders must be standing in the outfield (and not charging) until the ball is kicked. Outfielders cheating too far toward the infield (ref's discretion) may be asked to back up (**New in 2023**).
4. Catchers must stand behind 1 of 2 designated marks at time of ball contact (**New in 2023**). Option to re-do if kicker is infringed on.
5. Catchers should never stand on top of home plate; stand in front (with a toe on the corner of home plate) to prevent collisions with runners. If a runner is obstructed from touching home, the runner will be ruled safe & the catcher receives a sportsmanship warning.
6. There is no infield fly rule. But double/triple plays directly resulting from un/intentionally dropped balls [be it thru trickery, general confusion and/or ref's inability to communicate catch/no catch clearly to both teams, or similar] will only count for the first out of the double/triple play & play is stopped. A second out may be gotten on a dropped fly ball play if it is in no way a result of the drop.
7. Fielders may not switch positions during an inning for specific kickers or strategic defensive purposes. Injury switches are allowed.

8. Fielders must not stand on top of base or in base path without a ball. They may touch base with a small portion of 1 foot to await throw.
9. Fielders must avoid contact with runners. Any obstruction/hindering runner's ability to reach base by a fielder, not in possession of (or playing) the ball results in automatic "safe" call.
10. Hitting the base with the ball does NOT count as tagging the base. Fielder must maintain control of the ball while tagging the base.
11. Pegging a runner in the head is not allowed. Play is stopped (dead ball) and all runners get closest base. Exceptions: if a runner lowers self or ducks to dodge a ball, falls, or intentionally heads the ball, then the runner is out.
12. Any rough contact or overly aggressive throws that are deemed unnecessarily rough will result in a warning and/or automatic ejection or other disciplinary action at the discretion of the official.
13. A fielder can be in the runner's path to play a live ball that safely beats the runner to that point. On a ball arriving at the same time/after the runner, the fielder cannot wait in the path for the ball to arrive. If the runner slows up to avoid colliding, they are safe.

### **Pitching**

1. Pitchers begin pitching motion on or behind the rubber and must be behind the front edge of the rubber when ball is kicked. No player, pitcher or bunt-charger can be inside the square designated by baselines to the rubber and home plate until the ball is kicked.
2. Any time pitcher has possession of a live ball and steps on the pitcher's rubber, intentional or not, a time out is called.
3. Pitching MUST be underhand. No curveballs or fireballs. The kicker is allowed to request slower/faster/less bouncy pitches. This is a social league, so every pitch should be an attempt to deliver the ball in the strike zone, not bouncing, and at a moderate speed.
4. Pitchers failing to deliver slower/faster/less bouncy pitches when requested, will receive a sportsmanship warning initially, and may be removed from their pitching duties by the referee, if it continues (New in 2023).

### **ATTIRE**

**No metal cleats.** Metal-tipped plastic cleats are okay. Athletic shoes must be worn. Please wear appropriate matching team shirts.

### **SPORTSMANSHIP**

We have a Zero Tolerance Policy in regard to unsportsmanlike behavior. All participants (and spectators) are, at all times, required to act in a sportsmanlike manner towards teammates, opponents and officials. Every professional sporting event these days, despite numerous referees at the top of their profession and instant replay (in many), has controversial and/or blown calls, and you should expect them in your rec games as well. We strive for quality & consistency by our referees, but ultimately, calls will go against your team, correctly called or not, and it is your responsibility to accept the call and make the next play. Arguing with, swearing at, questioning the competency of, and overall disrespecting our referees may result in ejection (likely), suspension (mandatory with ejection), league expulsion, fines, and forfeiture of monies paid.