



# SWBL Competition Rules 2022

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# SWBL Competition Rules

## 1 General

- 1.1 All games will be played under the current 'Official Rules of Baseball' as adopted by the Australian Baseball Federation and agreed to by the NSWBL and the Sydney Women's Baseball League (SWBL). If there is a conflict, these competition rules stated here as follows shall prevail.

**Note:** The rules of SWBL were developed originally from the then Sydney Metropolitan League of the NSWBL and have been adopted for the specific needs of SWBL.

- 1.2 The Committee reserves the right to vary any of the competition rules at any time, if special circumstances warrant such action. Any substantial variation to the rules will be notified to team representatives.

## 2 Competition Structure

- 2.1 The method of conducting competitions for teams shall be as approved by the Sydney Women's Baseball League ('the League') each year.

- 2.2 The League may conduct competitions in graded divisions.

- 2.3 The competition table shall be updated after each round and published as determined by the Committee at the start of each season.

- 2.4 The competition table shall be decided by ranking teams in descending order, by cumulative points (game points earned throughout the season thus far, minus the cumulative penalties received). Teams equal on points shall be ranked equally. Game points are the points earned on game days for win, loss, draw and abandoned games. Game points shall be awarded as follows.

- 2.4.1 Winning team: 3 points

- 2.4.2 Losing team: 1 point

- 2.4.3 Draw: each team awarded 2 points

- 2.4.4 Forfeiting team: 0 points

- 2.4.5 Bye: 0 points

- 2.4.6 Abandoned game: each team awarded 2 points

- 2.5 If teams are scheduled to play an uneven number of games during the season, each team's cumulative points shall be divided by the number of games that the team has played. This ratio, the points per game ratio will be calculated to 3 decimal places. Teams will be ranked based on this ratio. Teams equal on points per game shall be ranked equally.

- 2.6 For the purposes of compiling the calculation of runs For & Against

- 2.6.1 A team receiving a forfeit shall be regarded as having scored a 9 to 0 win, and the losers a 0 to 9 loss.

- 2.6.2 Teams who have participated in an abandoned game shall be regarded as having scored a 0 – 0 draw regardless of whether they had scored any runs prior to the game being abandoned.

- 2.7 At the conclusion of the final round, if teams are ranked equally, tiebreaker rules will be applied in this order:

- 2.7.1 Head-to head win/loss record (i.e. only considering those games between the teams ranked equally), and if still equal
- 2.7.2 Head to head win/loss record of those teams still ranked equally (i.e. only considering those games between the teams ranked equally after applying 2.7.1), and if still equal
- 2.7.3 Head to head For and Against % (i.e. only considering those games between the teams ranked equally), and if still equal
- 2.7.4 Season For & Against % (i.e. considering all games against all teams), and if still equal
- 2.7.5 By whichever team has the highest percentage of wins for the season, and if still equal
- 2.7.6 By whichever team has the most runs scored for all games in the season per game, and if still equal
- 2.7.7 By toss of a coin.

**Note:** For & Against % =  $\text{Runs For} / (\text{Runs For} + \text{Runs Against}) * 100$

Where:

Runs For = runs scored by the team in relevant games

Runs Against = runs scored against the team in relevant games

This formula shall be calculated to 3 decimal places.

### **3 Registration of Teams**

- 3.1 Teams must submit a team list with full details of all players and officials (coaches, scorers and managers) by the date specified by the Committee.
- 3.2 The Committee reserves the right to refuse the entry of any team and/or the registration of any person.
- 3.3 All monies owing by a team or individual arising from accounts issued by the League, must be paid by the date scheduled by the League. Any team or individual in breach of this rule will not be permitted to continue in the competition, unless the League has granted special approval.

### **4 Registration of Players and Officials**

- 4.1 This League recognises those players registered by the League as per the following rules (i.e. Rule 4) and the Constitution.
- 4.2 Each player is required to register their name and contact details on the form prescribed by the League. All registrations must be in the hands of the League by the date determined by the Committee each year. A registration fee must be paid by each player, is to be set yearly by the Committee, and shall accompany the form.
- 4.3 Any player with monies owing to the League must clear their debt to be eligible to register.
- 4.4 The late registration of a player may be accepted after the determined registration date at the discretion of the Committee.
- 4.5 Only persons whose registrations have been completed, submitted by the determined date and approved by the League may participate in competition games.

- 4.6 Should a player, coach or manager change their contact details, their team must notify the League within 14 days.

## 5 Eligibility of Players

**Note:** A team playing an ineligible player will result in forfeit of that game.

- 5.1 No player shall be eligible to take part in any match unless the player is registered in accordance with Rules 3 and 4 and has satisfied the League Treasurer of their financial status.
- 5.2 No new players shall be eligible to take part in any match after the determined registration date unless the Committee approves the player, and they are registered in accordance with Rules 3 and 4 and have paid the specified administration fee. The balance of the fee owed for a continuing player is to be paid within 14 days of registration.
- 5.3 All players participating in the game must have their full names listed on the team's line-up at the start of the game. If a player listed on the batting line-up is not present at their time of bat, an automatic out will be applied. See Rule 5.5 for less than 9 players.
- 5.4 A player entering the game after play has started must be added to the bottom of the batting order. If a pick-up player is being used, any player entering the game must substitute for the pick-up player.
- 5.5 No team may take the field unless it has a minimum of 5 players registered with that team.
- 5.7 Any team with at least 5 registered players listed on the team list for a given game may use up to 4 pick-up players (to a maximum of 9 players). Pick-up players must be registered with the League and can be loaned from other teams, including the opposing team in the game. So long as a team has five players, they may use pick up players to get to 9 players.
- 5.9 If a team has less than 9 players as a result of player injury during the game, there will be no automatic out.
- 5.10 No pick-up players shall play if there are registered players from that team available at the grounds who are fit to play and who have not yet participated in the game.
- 5.11 Pick-up players must bat at the bottom of the batting line-up.
- 5.12 For the purpose of this competition, fielders substituted may re-enter the game in any fielding position. Players not on the batting line-up must also be substituted in the batting line-up in place of the fielder they are substituting.
- 5.13 A team may elect, if extra players are available, to name up to a maximum of 14 players in the team batting line-up. Players must continue to bat in named order. They may be substituted by fresh players but any voluntary removal from the batting line-up shall be declared an automatic out. The named players may be substituted in the field by other named players on unlimited occasions. Replacement of players due to injury is allowed at any time (see Rule 5.9).
- 5.14 For the purpose of this competition, there will be no pitcher substitution rule applied.
- 5.15 **Injury and Blood Rule:** Players who are injured in the course of a game and who require treatment may leave the game without penalty. If on base a substitute runner may be used until replaced by the original player. If the injured player is unable to bat, the batting order shall continue without penalty with the next batter in the line-up. (The player shall in this case not bat again until their turn in the order again arrives and if not

fit to take this turn at bat shall be replaced, if this has not already occurred). If in the field, the player may be substituted until they are fit to return.

## **6 Game Rules**

- 6.1 The starting and scheduled completion times for games shall be those stated in the Players' Handbook and Draw issued by the League.
- 6.2 Games shall be for 90 minutes duration or 7 innings, whichever occurs first. Games shall be timed from the actual start time of the game, but shall go for no longer than the maximum finish time. The maximum finish time is defined as 105 minutes from the scheduled start time. No time shall be added due to a delay in the game including, but not limited to, an injury or a disputed umpiring decision.
- 6.3 For all games, the top half of the innings shall not begin after 80 minutes from the actual start time. The top half of the innings is defined as commencing at the moment the previous innings is closed.
- 6.4 In the case of a game reaching the full 90 minutes without 7 innings then:
- 6.4.1 If the team batting first (i.e. the away team) is batting, regardless of whether they are ahead or behind or equal on runs, continue play until either their innings is closed or the maximum finish time, whichever occurs first. If maximum finish time is reached "time and game" will be called and the score will revert back to the previous even innings. If maximum finish time is not reached apply Rule 6.4.2 at the conclusion of their innings.
- 6.4.2 After applying Rule 6.4.1, if applicable,
- a) If the team batting second (i.e. the home team) is ahead on runs "time and game" will be called and the score will stand at the point "time and game" is called.
  - b) If the team batting second (i.e. the home team) is behind on runs or the score is tied, they shall be allowed to bat until the winning run is scored, until they get 3 out or the maximum finish time, whichever occurs first.
    - (i) If the winning run is scored, "time and game" will be called and the score will stand at the point "time and game" is called.
    - (ii) If three batters are legally declared out, "time and game" will be called and the score will stand at the point "time and game" is called.
    - (iii) If the maximum finish time is reached without the team batting second scoring the winning run, "time and game" will be called and the score will revert back to the previous even innings. If the score is tied at maximum finish time the score shall revert back to the previous even innings.
  - c) A team may forfeit their right to bat but this decision will not result in the score reverting to the previous even innings.
- 6.5 It shall be a regulation competition game if the umpire certifies that play has proceeded for at least half the regulation time or 4 innings.
- 6.6 In the event of a team not being able to field 7 of its registered players within 10 minutes after the scheduled starting time, the opposing side shall be awarded the game on appeal (forfeit) to the umpire.
- 6.7 A legal line-up consists of 7 to 14 registered team players. That is, if a team cannot field at least 7 registered players, at any time during the game, they will forfeit the game, except where players have been injured during the game.

6.8 If at the conclusion of the third innings of a game or at the conclusion of any completed innings thereafter, a team is 10 or more runs ahead, such team shall be declared the winners ('mercy rule').

6.9 A maximum of 7 runs may be scored in any one innings. The only exception is if the final play involves a home run when all runs would score.

6.10 A designated hitter may be used in accordance with the rules of baseball, but they must form part of that starting line-up on the day of play.

**Note:** A designated hitter is a player who is substituted in the batting line-up for the pitcher. They take no other part in the game. If the pitcher is replaced, the designated hitter may also be substituted for that pitcher.

6.11 Players must be 18 years of age (or turning 18 in the calendar year of which they intend to play) to play in this competition.

Players under the age of 18 can be considered for special dispensation by the committee to be eligible to play in this competition where the consent of a legal guardian is provided. All attendance at social gatherings require players under 18 years of age to be accompanied by a legal guardian.

6.12 Coaches shall be able without penalty to make 2 visits to the pitcher in an innings. On the 3rd visit the pitcher must be replaced but may remain in the game.

6.13 If there is a runner, or runners, it is a balk when:

(a) the pitcher, while touching the pitcher's plate, makes any motion naturally associated with the pitch and fails to make such delivery;

If a left-handed or right-handed pitcher swings his free foot past the back edge of the pitcher's plate, the pitcher is required to pitch to the batter except to throw to second base on a pick-off play.

(b) The pitcher, while touching the pitcher's plate, feints a throw to first base and fails to complete the throw;

(c) A pitcher is to step directly toward a base before throwing to that base but does not require the pitcher to throw (except to first base only) because of the step. It is possible, with runners on first and third, for the pitcher to step toward third and not throw, merely to bluff the runner back to third; then seeing the runner on first start for second, turn and step toward and throw to first base. This is legal.

However, if, with runners on first and third, the pitcher, while in contact with the rubber, steps toward third and then immediately and in practically the same motion 'wheels' and throws to first base, it is obviously an attempt to deceive the runner at first base and in such a move it is practically impossible to step directly toward first base before the throw to first base and such a move shall be called a "balk". Of course, if the pitcher steps off the rubber and then makes such a move, it is not a balk.

(d) The pitcher, while touching the pitcher's plate, throws, or feints a throw to an unoccupied base, except for the purpose of making a play;

(e) The pitcher unnecessarily delays the game;

(f) The pitcher, while giving an intentional base on balls, pitches when the catcher is not in the catcher's box;

PENALTY:

The ball is dead and each runner shall advance one base without liability to be put-out unless the batter reaches first on a hit, an error, a base on balls, a hit batter, or otherwise and all other runners advance at least one base, in which case the play proceeds without reference to the balk.

#### APPROVED RULING 1:

In cases where a pitcher balks and throws wild, either to a base or to home plate, a runner or runners may advance beyond the base to which they are entitled at the risk of being put-out.

#### APPROVED RULING 2:

A runner who misses the first base to which advancing and who is called out on appeal shall be considered as having advanced one base for the purpose of this Rule. Umpires should bear in mind that the purpose of the balk rule is to prevent the pitcher from deliberately deceiving the base runner. If there is doubt in the umpire's mind, the 'intent' of the pitcher should govern. However, certain specifics should be borne in mind:

- (1) Straddling the pitcher's rubber without the ball is to be interpreted as intent to deceive and is ruled a balk.
- (2) With a runner on first base the pitcher may make a complete turn without hesitating toward first and throw to second. This is not to be interpreted as throwing to an unoccupied base.

Definition: A balk is an illegal act by the pitcher with a runner or runners on base, entitling all runners to advance one base.

## 7 Grounds

7.1 The fitness of the ground for competition games shall be decided by the delegated Committee member, and where relevant in consultation with the officially appointed umpire.

7.2 The dimensions of, and on the field, should where possible be:

<b>Diamond</b>	85' or 25.908m
<b>Pitching</b>	57' or 17.374m
<b>Foul Line</b>	300' (min.) or 91.44m
<b>Centre</b>	360' (min.) or 109.728m
<b>Dead Ball Line to Foul Line</b>	10' or 3.048m

7.3 The team named first in the competition draw shall be the home team and field first in that game. They shall also dress and set up the ground prior to the game in accordance with the Rules of Baseball.

## 8 Game Results and Forfeits

8.1 In the event of a game:

- a) not being played because of the unfitness of the ground, or
- b) not fulfilling the minimum requirements as prescribed in Rule 6.5

The result shall be declared an abandoned game and points will be awarded as such.

- 8.2 The Committee will determine at the start of each season the appropriate procedures for partially completed rounds.
- 8.3 Once an appeal has been made against poor light, the fitness of the light for play shall be in the hands of the umpire for decision at any time without further appeal.
- 8.4 Only teams that have been forfeited against are able to count the game towards their player's eligibility in the final series, provided that the players are listed on the scoresheet for that game.

## 9 Notification of Results

- 9.1 Both teams must submit a completed scoresheet, in the manner prescribed by the League, for each game on the day the game was played.
- 9.2 Both teams involved in a forfeited game must submit a completed scoresheet before any game of the next game day.

## 10 Safety

- 10.1 Players must wear the minimum safety equipment including, but not restricted to the following:
- Footwear worn must be suitable for running on grass surfaces in all weather conditions. Players are required to wear fully covered footwear and preferably shoes with studs. Only plastic studs are permitted. **Metal or any types of screw-in studs are not permitted.**
  - Players fielding in the catching position must wear regulation catcher's gear including chest protector, mask with helmet, chin guard if the mask does not have one, and catcher's leg guards.
  - Players are required to wear a helmet in the batting box and while acting as a base runner. Any player who removes their helmet during play shall be called out, at the discretion of the umpire.
- 10.2 Players must remove watches and jewellery from their hands and wrists.
- 10.3 Players warming up must do so such that they do not endanger any other participants or spectators on the grounds, including members or spectators around the BBQ area and dugouts.
- 10.4 Notifications of violations to safety rules during a game must be made to the umpire. Other violations must be notified to the Committee in writing within 24 hours (see also Rule 11.3).

## 11 Behaviour

- 11.1 A player, coach or umpire participating in the game, is not allowed to be under the influence of alcohol or any illicit drug during the course of the game. Nor is any player, coach or umpire participating in the game allowed to engage in consumption of or intake of any alcoholic or illicit drug product during a game. Offenders will be removed from the game.
- Note:** If a participant is injured whilst under the influence of alcohol or any illicit drug, their insurance may be voided.
- 11.2 Smoking by a player, coach or umpire on the field of play while fielding will result in mandatory expulsion of the offending participant from the game.

**Note:** The field of play includes the diamond, the outfield, and the foul ball territory. It applies also to the positions of base coach and base umpire.

- 11.3 Teams are responsible for the behaviour of their supporters in uniform or not, both on and off the playing field. Any breach of this rule will be subject to disciplinary action by the League.

## **12 Eligibility of Players for the Final Series**

- 12.1 To be eligible to play in the semi-finals, finals or grand finals, a player must be registered on that team's list held by the League, and have participated in at least 30% of competition games played by that team during the current season. If a player has transferred mid-season from another team, the games played for that other team should be counted in this calculation.

## **13 Determination of Teams for the Final Series**

- 13.1 In competitions where semi-finals, finals and grand finals are to be played, the team leading the competition table at the conclusion of the last game prior to the semi-finals shall be declared the 'Minor Premiers' (see Rule 2.4 & 2.5).
- 13.2 In the event of two or more teams being equal in the competition table their respective positions shall be determined by tiebreaker rules (see Rule 2.7).
- 13.3 The League shall determine the final series format taking into account such factors as number of teams in each grade and standard of teams in each grade.
- 13.4 The winner of the grand final shall be declared the 'Premiers'.
- 13.5 In the event of a semi-final, final or grand final not being commenced or not being completed as a constituted game, the League if possible shall endeavour to reschedule the game. If the game is again not commenced or not completed the team that led in the competition table shall be declared the winner, unless, in the case of a grand final only, a specified alternative date or venue was declared by the League.
- 13.6 The team finishing the higher of the two in the competition will be the home team, except for the grand final where the home team shall be the team first into the grand final game.

## **14 Specific Rules for the Final and Grand Final**

- 14.1 All previous game rules will apply, except for the following variations and other special rules as notified by the Committee.
- 14.2\* The final and grand final games shall run for 2 hours. In the case of an incomplete innings or tied game upon reaching the time limit, the game shall continue until the next completed innings that the score is no longer tied.
- 14.3\* It shall be a completed grand final game if the umpire certifies that play has proceeded for at least one hour or 3 completed innings. In the event that the umpire calls time and game before the minimum has been played, deeming the conditions are no longer safe; the following conditions apply:
- a) If a contingency round is available, then the game will be cancelled, and rescheduled for the contingency weekend and will be replayed.
  - b) If no contingency round is available, then the home team will be declared 'Premiers'.
- 14.4 No pick-up players will be allowed for the Final Series.

## **15 Penalties**

- 15.1 The Committee reserves the right to implement a penalty of loss of points, to teams who breach these rules. One competition penalty point will be deducted per infringement for any team that fails to satisfy and/or fulfill their duties to the League as determined by the Committee.

## **16 Disputes**

- 16.1 A coach of a team has the right to protest a non-judgment decision (such as technical rules) made by an umpire. This protest must be made to the Committee provided that the intention to protest is indicated to the umpire at the time of the disputed decision and before the next ball is pitched, and before any intervening play occurs and is so marked in the score book and scoresheet.
- 16.2 A team wishing the Committee to form a Protest Committee to adjudicate upon any dispute shall forward to the League in writing within 24 hours of the game out of which the dispute arose, a clear statement of the matter in dispute signed by a team official.
- 16.3 A player or coach dismissed from a game of baseball shall be required to attend the Protest Committee meeting, where their case is to be heard. The umpire shall be required to submit a report on the incident to the League on the day following the sending off. The umpire shall advise the offending team's coach of the nature of the offence. The Protest Committee will determine if the umpire should be present at the hearing.
- 16.4 If the Protest Hearing is not held prior to the player's next scheduled game, they may play unless the Protest Committee specifically instructs the player and team that they cannot play. If the player plays after receiving instructions not to play, the game is forfeit.
- 16.5 Any matter brought to the attention of the Committee with regard to behaviour; breach of rules, or any act that could adversely affect the good name of the League will be investigated and acted on by the Committee. The Committee reserves the right to form a Protest Committee to pass any such matter on to for their investigation and advice.
- 16.6 The Protest Committee is formed as per the Sydney Women's Baseball League Incorporated Constitution.

## **17 Sliding or Must Avoid Contact Rule**

- 17.1 Runners must avoid collision (interference) with a fielder in possession of the ball or in the act of fielding the ball, by either sliding or by surrendering the base; otherwise the runner will be given out.
- 17.2 Any player adjudged by the umpire to have deliberately or recklessly caused a collision to occur shall be ejected from the game.

## **18 First Base Safety**

- 18.1 The fielder must use the side of the double base that the ball is secured on to make the play.
- 18.2 The runner is encouraged to use the side of the double base in foul territory, so as to avoid collision with the fielder in the act of fielding the ball.

## **19 Player Condition Notification Rule**

- 19.1 Players shall notify their coach and League officials of any condition that may affect their performance or participation in the sport of baseball. Such conditions may include, for example, epilepsy, pregnancy, etc.
- 19.2 Players with such a condition shall seek medical advice in relation to their ongoing participation in the sport.
- 19.3 The League shall not be held responsible for the player or individual's failure to seek and follow appropriate medical advice. An injured player who has submitted an insurance claim and wishes to continue playing during the season must obtain a medical certificate stating they are fit enough to take the field.
- 19.4 Information relating to a player's condition shall be held confidentially (unless this is not required) but may be used by the organisation for administrative, insurance, legal or related purposes.
- 19.5 A player agrees that they shall not contravene medical advice in relation to their continued participation, and when required, shall provide a copy of a medical certificate approving their participation.
- 19.6 The League is not responsible for notifying the insurance company of any incidents. Injured players must lodge their own insurance claim forms. The League will, however, be of assistance with any documentation required once a claim has been lodged.

## **20 Transfers**

- 20.1 Players cannot transfer teams mid season unless approved by the Committee. Players are not restricted to transfer to a new team at the completion of a season.

## **21 Players' Handbook**

- 21.1 The League will publish a *Players' Handbook* at the start of each season with the dates and specific rules for the season.

## **22 SWBL Competition Rules**

- 22.1 These rules will be reviewed by the Committee prior to the start of each season (see also Rule 1.2).