

Softball Queensland Masters Tournament

Ground Rules

AGE GUIDELINES

All players must be 35 years of age and over as at 6 August 2021 to participate in this tournament.

1. RULES

- 1.1 All games shall be played under the Fast Pitch Playing Rules and interpretations of Softball Australia, unless otherwise stated in these rules
- 1.2 Teams who are unable to supply an umpire will be allocated games that they must umpire. Failure to fulfil your umpiring commitments will result in the allocated team losing two points for each infringement.

2. BALLS

- 2.1 Each team will supply their own tournament balls. The tournament ball will be Easton 888.

3. WARM UP

- 3.1 Teams will **not** be allocated time for 'on diamond' warm up prior to each game due to the time available between each timeslot.
- 3.2 Teams **will not** use the infield, or pitch in the infield foul ball territory, whilst the groundstaff are engaged on preparation/maintenance of that diamond.
- 3.3 The designated pitching warm-up area will be located in foul ball territory in the right & left outfield of the diamond on which the warming up pitcher's team is playing. A 'minder' (player with glove) shall stand beside the pitcher warming up to assist with the monitoring of play and protection of the pitcher warming up. The pitcher will pitch towards the home run boundary/fence.

4. TOSS

- 4.1 In the round games, the team named first in the draw shall occupy the first base bench and shall bat first.
- 4.2 In the finals series and medal games, the team named first in the draw shall occupy the first base bench and shall call the toss. An official from each team shall be responsible for deciding the toss 15 minutes prior to the scheduled starting time.

5. GAME

- 5.1 **The Declaration Rule does not apply to any game played. This means that the batting team cannot declare their innings at any time.**
- 5.2 Timing of games shall be the responsibility of the plate umpire. Games will start and finish by the plate umpire's watch. **No new innings will commence with 5 minutes or less of time remaining.**
- 5.3 In all games during the tournament, the game shall be called if:
 - (i) a team is fifteen (15) runs ahead after the 3rd innings;
 - (ii) a team is ten (10) runs ahead after the 4th innings; or
 - (iii) a team is seven (7) runs ahead after the 5th innings.

- NOTE: (a) If the team second at bat is leading by the required run margin, the bottom of the innings shall not be played, the game shall be called immediately; **or**
- (b) Once the team second at bat has attained the required run margin during the bottom of their innings the game shall be called immediately.

- 5.4 (a) **Round Fixtures:** Games in the round(s) of fixtures shall be limited to a regulation game or a time limit of one-and-a-quarter hours.

"Game" shall be called precisely 75 minutes from the scheduled commencement time of the game except that, once a batter has started a turn at bat, "game" shall not be called until all plays resulting from that batter have been completed.

NOTE: The tie breaker rule shall apply in such games after the completion of the seventh innings within the regulation time.

- (b) **Finals Series (games requiring a result):** Games in the finals series shall be limited to a regulation game or a time limit of **one-and-a-quarter hours** except that once an innings has commenced it must be completed.

- (c) **Medal Games:** Medal Games shall be limited to a regulation game or a time limit of **one-and-a-half hours** except that once an innings has commenced it must be completed.

NOTE: (i) If the team second at bat is leading, the bottom of the innings shall not be played.

- (ii) If the score is tied at the completion of regulation time and completed innings, the tiebreaker rule shall commence immediately (regardless of the number of innings completed).

- (d) **Tie Breaker Rule:** Starting from the top of the eighth (8) innings, and each half inning thereafter the offensive team begins its turn at bat with the player who is scheduled to bat ninth in the respective half inning being placed on second base.

NOTE: Should any grand final, either using the above tiebreaker or not, result in a drawn game, (eg. Darkness, storm) both teams shall be declared joint winners of the competition.

6. **FORFEIT**

- 6.1 A forfeit shall be declared by the Plate Umpire in favour of the team not at fault in the following cases:

- (a) If a team fails to appear on the field, or being on the field, refuses to begin a game for which it is scheduled.
- (b) If, after the game has begun, one side refuses to continue to play, unless the game has been suspended or terminated by the umpire.
- (c) If, after play has been suspended by the umpire, one side fails to resume playing (within two minutes after the umpire called "Play Ball")

- 6.2 At the time a forfeit is declared by the plate umpire, the score of a forfeited game shall be 7-0 in favour of the team not at fault unless a higher score was achieved at the time of forfeiture.

7. **DISRUPTIONS and CANCELLED GAMES**

- 7.1 In the event of adverse conditions the decision to cancel or defer play shall be the responsibility of the Host Association Convenor, Tournament Chief Umpire and a SQL Representative.

- 7.2 Any games suspended due to inclement weather and/or ground conditions may be continued from the point of suspension.
- 7.3 For the purpose of the tournament:
- * Any game cancelled due to weather and/or ground conditions may be rescheduled.
 - * Any game started but not completed due to weather and/or ground conditions shall only be considered a regulation game and the result will stand if either three (3) innings have been completed or forty-five minutes of playing time has expired.
 - * Points for officially cancelled games will be awarded as for a draw.
- 7.4 Where there has been a major disruption to the tournament, the determination of the winner of the each division shall be left to the committee comprising a minimum of three of the following persons: SQI Chief Representative, Host Tournament Convenor, Tournament Chief Umpire and Chief Statistician. However, the committee may decide that insufficient games have been played to declare a winner.
- 7.5 The following guidelines are for the assistance of the committee:
- (a) Every attempt should be made to determine a winner through the playing of games.
 - (b) If a round cannot be completed the winner should be decided on the games played. However, consideration must be given to the number of games each team has played.
 - (c) If the finals can't be played the winner/s would be the team leading on points/run average at the end of the round.
 - (d) If the finals cannot be completed, the Tournament Committee to use the appropriate tools when necessary to declare a winner. The TCS will provide the information required to make this decision.

8. TEAM COMPOSITION

- 8.1 A team must start each game with a minimum of nine players registered for the event including pick up players.
- 8.2 In the case of an injury only, a team may finish each game with a minimum of eight registered players. If a team is reduced to eight players through an ejection matter and there is no eligible substitute enabling the team to finish the game with nine registered/eligible players then a forfeit will be declared.
- 8.3 Should an injury, during the game, reduce the batting line-up to eight, that turn at bat is ignored and the game continues, no out is recorded.
- 8.4 Should it be found that any player/coach is ineligible, ie not registered to participate in this tournament, any game in which they have participated will be declared a forfeit.
- 8.5 Dual / Multiple Registration: Registration as a player in more than one team is strictly prohibited. However, a person may be registered as a player in one team and an official of another.

9. PICK-UP PLAYERS (PUP)

- 9.1 To prevent a forfeit should a team be unable to field nine of their own registered players such team is eligible to pick up a maximum of two players from another team, provided those two players are registered in the same or a lower division as the team requiring pick-ups.
- 9.2 Pick-up players can only be used when a team has been reduced to seven or eight of their own registered players. This would be where players are too ill/injured to participate further in the tournament or aren't in attendance at the grounds for that game.

- 9.3 The venue SQI Representative on that venue **MUST** be informed **PRIOR** to the use of a pick-up player in that game to ensure the team is eligible to use that player. The venue SQI Representative must sign the scorecard to confirm that permission has been granted to use the PUP. If necessary the venue SQI Representative and Sports Medicine personnel will make the final decision on eligibility.
- 9.4 If a team is using a PUP, the team **CANNOT** use a DP/FLEX or PH or DR in that game.
- 9.5 A person may only play (ie actually bat &/or field in a game) as a pick-up player for a maximum of two games, including finals, for the entire tournament.
- 9.6 Pick-up players must be identified on the line-up card with the letters 'PUP' beside their name and the name of their registered team on the back of the card. *Please Note: only 2 pick-up players are permitted to be listed on team line-up cards.*
- 9.7 Pick-up players cannot play in the positions of pitcher and/or catcher.
- 9.8 If a team is of the opinion that the PUP rule is being used incorrectly, then Rule 1.1.9 b) applies and it is treated as a Protest. In this situation, the team wishing to protest must advise the Plate Umpire and the opposition team immediately however, the game will not be stopped to hear this protest.

The "Intent to Protest" and time of notification shall be recorded on the back of the scorecard. The Venue SQI Representative shall be informed by the team lodging the protest as soon as possible but no later than immediately the game concludes.

The Chief SQI Representative, the venue SQI Representative and Venue TCU will hear the protest as soon as practical after receiving notification. If the protest is upheld, the game shall be forfeited by the offending team in accordance with Rule 1.2.14 c) (Result of Protest).

- 9.9 **Finals:** Pick-up players are permitted for finals provided they are the ninth player (No DP/FLEX). This means a team can use 1 pick-up player to ensure continuing the game with 9 players NOT to 'rest' someone from their original team list.
- 9.10 Pick-up players are ineligible for All Star Points.

10. DESIGNATED RUNNER

- 10.1 A designated runner, referred to as a "DR", may be used during the game for any baserunner.
- 10.2 It must be known prior to the start of the game and their name appears in position number eleven (11) on the Line-Up Card.
- 10.3 The DR may enter the game once in each inning to run for any baserunner.
- 10.4 Any baserunner replaced by the DR returns to the game upon completion of the inning, or at their next turn at bat, whichever is the sooner.
- 10.5 The DR may neither enter the game on defence nor offence.
- 10.6 The DR may be substituted for at any time by a pinch runner who then becomes the DR. The substitute must be a player who has not yet been in the game.
- 10.7 The DR substituted by a pinch runner, as above, may not return to the game.

11. COURTESY TEMPORARY RUNNER FOR CATCHER

- 11.1 When there is two (2) out and the catcher is on base, any player listed on the score card may replace the catcher on base as the runner. This does not count as a substitution.

12. ELIGIBILITY FOR MEDAL GAMES

- 12.1 Participants must have played 50% of the scheduled games for their own team to participate in medal games (for any team). Teams that have the majority of their games on day one, must provide the names of any players unable to play on that day to an SQI Representative no later than the commencement of their teams' first game of the tournament.

The players MUST register before their first game on the Saturday and participate in all remaining fixture games for their team, for the person to be eligible for finals. Where 50% of the scheduled games is an uneven number, it will be "rounded up" to the nearest whole (eg 50% of 5 games = 2½, rounded up = 3).

NOTE: **Participate** means the player must take the field in defence and/or complete a turn at bat. Having a person's name on the scorecard in the line-up does **NOT** count as participation.

13. PITCHING

- 13.1 a. Pitching distances shall be:
Women: 40ft (12.19m) Men: 46ft (14.02m)
- b. If a pitching mat is used, it must extend 2 feet beyond the front of the pitching circle. If the mat becomes unsuitable during the course of the game, it may be removed at the discretion of the plate umpire.
- 13.2 Resin, if used, shall be inspected by the plate umpire at the commencement of play and shall remain on the field until the completion of the game.
- 13.3 Pitchers shall be allowed no more than three (3) warm-up pitches between innings, with the exception of the start of each half of the first innings and when one pitcher relieves another, then five (5) warm-up pitches shall be allowed.

14. DIAMONDS

Men's and Women's Diamonds

The playing fields shall have a clear unobstructed area with the boundary clearly marked with collapsible dome markers.

Note:

A batted long fly ball going beyond the marked distance will be awarded an automatic home run. A batted ground ball going beyond the marked distance will be awarded a three-base hit, the ball will be called "dead" and three bases shall be awarded.

15. UNIFORMS

- 15.1 All participants in a Masters team shall wear uniforms alike in colour, trim and style. No participant may wear ragged uniforms.
- a. Numbers on uniforms are not required.
- b. Caps, visors and headbands are optional for all players and can be mixed.
- Exception:** Should a defensive player elect to wear an approved helmet of identical colour to the team cap, he will not be required to wear a cap.
- c. Casts (plaster, metal or other hard substances in its final form) may not be worn in a game. **Note:** Any exposed metal (other than a cast) may be considered legal if adequately covered by a soft material, taped and approved by the umpire.

16. METAL CLEATS

- 16.1 In the interests of safety for all participants, metal cleats should not be worn at the Masters Tournament. Metal cleats should not be worn on predominately grass infields. No hard plastic, nylon or polyurethane spikes similar to a metal sole and heel plate are permitted. Polyurethane or plastic cleats, shaped to look like a metal triangle toe and heel plate, are also illegal for all players. If there are nubbins, or round plastic cleats in addition to the triangle plate, the shoe is legal. Cleats that screw onto a post are illegal but cleats that screw into the shoe are legal.

NOTE: If a player is requested by the umpire to remove illegal shoes, or illegal parts of the uniform and they refuse, the player will be removed from the game

17. EQUIPMENT

- 17.1 Equipment checks shall be instigated at the discretion of the Tournament Chief Umpire.

18. PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- 18.1 As per Rule 2.4.3 of the Softball Australia Fast Pitch Playing Rules, all catchers must wear full protective equipment while receiving warm-up pitches from the pitching plate or in the warm-up area. It is mandatory at SQ Masters Tournament that anyone acting as a catcher to receive pitches, must comply with this rule, otherwise they must be replaced by a person who will comply with the rule.

19. EJECTION OF PLAYERS/OFFICIALS FROM GAME

- 19.1 (a) Players/officials ejected from the game shall be automatically suspended for the next scheduled game.
- (b) Players/officials ejected may be required to provide a written account of the incident at the request of the SQI Chief Representative. The umpire who orders the ejection must submit a written report to the SQI Chief Representative. Further action on the incident shall be at the discretion of the SQI Chief Representative.
- (c) A player/official who is ejected from two (2) games for reasons indicated in number (a) and/or (b) above shall be required to appear before a tribunal to show cause why he/she should not be suspended for the remainder of the tournament.
- (d) The tribunal shall consist of the TCU or their representative, Host Association Convenor and the SQI Chief Representative who shall be Chairperson.
- 19.2 The word 'ejected' shall mean:
The ejected player and or official must leave the proximity of the diamond in such a way that they can no longer have an influence on the game. Failure to take control of this situation will result in forfeiture of the game.

20. BENCH

- 20.1 Smoking and the consumption of alcohol are prohibited in the bench area.
PENALTY: Players/Officials will be removed from the game. Personnel removed from the game for breaches to this ground rule have one minute to comply. Failure to comply will result in forfeiture of the game to the team not at fault.
- 20.2 Only registered team members are permitted to be in the bench area during a game.
- 20.3 In the game situation all players must stay on or behind the bench in full uniform until the game is over.

21. SCORECARDS

- 21.1 Scorecards are to be exchanged 10 minutes prior to the scheduled commencement of all games.
- 21.2 Scorecards will be checked at the Pre- Game Meeting.
- 21.3 Completed scorecards, showing the result of the game and signed by the team's coach and all umpires, shall be returned by the plate umpire to the Venue TCU at the conclusion of each game.
- 21.4 Scorecards must be completed correctly by the team scorer and all information needed for recording purposes MUST be marked correctly on the scorecard as listed in 21.4.1 below.
- 21.4.1 The following must be recorded on the scorecards:
- Name of Team and Division
 - Date and Time of Game
 - Opposing Team
 - Correctly spelt names
 - Final score and innings scores are completed
 - Substitutions are recorded on the card. *This is essential as it is needed to record participation rates.*
 - Pick-up players are noted on the front of the card and their own team and division noted on the back.
 - Check that the Game Result (score) on both team cards is the same

The Venue SQI Representative and TCU is responsible for informing the SQI Chief Statistician of the game results.

22. PROTESTS

Except for Ground Rule 9.8, the following will apply.

- 22.1 The Protest Committee at each venue shall comprise the TCU and the SQI Representative. Additional support/advice may be sought from the Tournament Chief Umpire (via communication devices) should the need arise.
- 22.2 All protests will be handled immediately.
- 22.3 The team lodging the protest shall be responsible for summoning the Venue TCU and SQI Representative to the game.
- 22.4 Games will stop until the protest is heard. Any time lost due to the protest will not be added to the game.
- 22.5 The decision of the Protest Committee shall be final and binding providing that a representative of each team which competed in subject game shall be entitled to attend a Protest Committee meeting.

Note: Ground Rule 9.8 outlines the procedure governing protests concerning ineligible player/s.

23. CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING TEAM PLACEMENTS FOR THE FINALS

- 23.1 Two (2) points shall be awarded for each win in the fixture round games.
One (1) point shall be awarded for each draw in the fixture round games.
Zero (0) points shall be awarded for each loss in the fixture round games.
Zero (0) points shall be awarded for each forfeit.

23.2 In the event of teams being equal on points for any position following the completion of the first round, the following criteria shall be used to determine team placement for the final round: -

The positions of teams on equal points shall be determined by the total runs scored against a team in the first round. The team with the lower runs against will occupy the higher position.

23.3 If teams remain tied, then the positions will be determined firstly, the winner of the head to head game during the initial round and if still tied, by the toss of a coin.

24. ALL STAR TEAMS

An All Star Team will be selected in each division and announced at the Closing Ceremony.

Teams are to nominate those **opposition players** who they believe have performed the best in each game using a 3, 2, 1 points scale.

The **full name** of these three players and the positions they played is to be recorded on the back of each game scorecard. (ie Team A records the name/position of the best three players from Team B on the back of Team A's scorecard).

- Points are awarded on games except for the medal games
- No points are awarded for the team at fault on a forfeit game.

25. BRIEFINGS – REGISTRATIONS/SIGN-IN

25.1 An umpire's pre-tournament briefing shall be held at the grounds 1 hour prior to the first game of the Tournament. This meeting is compulsory for all participating umpires and team representative for those teams not supplying an umpire.

25.2 A Manager's pre-tournament briefing shall be held at the grounds on Thursday night prior to the tournament. Note: If the Manager cannot attend then a team member can attend. A maximum of two team members can attend this meeting.

25.3 All participants must register (sign-in), at the event registration area, within the given timeframe and prior to the commencement of their first game. There will be an event registration area on each of the three venues. Failure to register as described will result in a forfeit being declared if the participant concerned participates in any game in any capacity prior to registration.

25.4 New registrations are accepted after the commencement of the Tournament, only in the event that a team has insufficient players due to a player/s being unable to take the field because of severe illness or injury preventing them from participating in the game. (refer to Ground Rules 8, 9 and 12)

26. BEHAVIOUR AND CONDUCT

26.1 All participants (Team Personnel, Umpires and Administrators) shall abide by the Softball Australia/Softball Queensland Codes of Conduct/Ethics.

26.2 Spectators shall abide by the Spectators Code of Conduct.

26.3 All participants and spectators shall abide by the SQI Zero Tolerance Policy.

27. DISCRETIONARY POWER OF THE SQI CHIEF REPRESENTATIVE

27.1 The SQI Chief Representative, or their appointed person if they are unavailable, shall have discretionary power to deal with any matter that may arise at the tournament not otherwise covered by the rules, by-laws and policies.