



RULES, REGISTRATION, & MANAGER HANDBOOK ADULT SOFTBALL LEAGUES

Website: www.cityofapplevalley.org/softball

Weather/Cancellation Line: (952)953-2399, option #1

Location: Apple Valley Community Center, 14603 Hayes Rd

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Any new or clarified rule will be highlighted in grey. Apple Valley Parks and Recreation Department reserves the right to add or change rules at any time for the betterment of all, and make rule exceptions when special circumstances exist.

USSSA rules shall govern in all instances where specific Apple Valley league rules are not listed in the following:

MANAGER'S DUTIES

1. **Pre-season manager meeting:** A representative from the team should watch the online manager's meeting on the City of Apple Valley's adult softball webpage.
2. **Be knowledgeable:** Read all league procedures and rules and inform members of your team.
3. **Pre-game meeting:** Meet the umpire before the game to ask question and relay any messages to your team. The person representing your team at the pre-game meeting will be the "designated manager" for the game.
4. **Handling disputes:** The "designated manager" must handle any disputes and should be the only person discussing calls with the official. Don't let one of your players face ejection by arguing over a call..
5. **Communicate with team:** Relay schedule information, changes, or other league information sent via email and posted on the Apple Valley adult softball webpage to your players.
6. **First aid kit:** Each team should equip themselves with a first aid kit.

ROSTERS & ELIGIBILITY

Roster forms are available on the Apple Valley softball webpage as well as the Johnny Cake Ridge Park (JCRP) softball office.

1. **Minimum age:** All participants must be at least 18 years old prior to participating.
2. **Players may play on multiple teams** in Apple Valley leagues, but may only be rostered on one team per night of play.
3. **Rosters:**
 - a. **Preliminary roster deadline:** Rosters should be submitted at the Johnny Cake Ridge Park (JCRP) softball office prior to the start of your first game. All players must fill out all information and sign the roster before stepping on the field.
 - b. **Failure to return the roster:** teams will be issued forfeits until a completed roster is turned in. At the end of each month (excluding April), forfeits will be declared official if the roster has not been handed in. If a roster is returned before that date, the forfeits will be waived and game scores will stand.
 - c. **Adding players to roster is allowed** is allowed at any point prior to your last regular season game. Ask league staff for your original roster to make changes or additions.
 - d. **Rosters are frozen for playoffs** following the last regular season game; no players may be added. All players listed on the team roster are eligible to participate in the post-season tournaments, regardless of the number (if any) regular season games they played.
4. **Games with illegal players** can be ruled as forfeits.
5. **MRPA & USSSA Spring/Summer tournament roster deadline:** 2nd Friday in June. All rosters will be locked at that point for post-season USSSA tournament play only.

DRAFT/FREE AGENT LIST

The Apple Valley Parks and Recreation Department keeps a list of individual players who would like to be placed on a team and/or be substitutes. Email AVathletics@cityofapplevalley.org to request a copy of the list.

Players from the Draft/Free Agent List who play more than three times for the same team must be removed from the draft list and be placed on that particular team's roster. Rather than continually using substitutes from the list, it is recommended that you place these players on your roster and let them become full-time members of your team. Draft list players are not eligible for the play-offs, so invite them on to your team!

If you or one of your players would like to be a free agent for a different night of play, complete a free agent form available on the Apple Valley softball webpage.

ALCOHOL & SMOKING

1. **Alcoholic beverages** are not permitted on the field or in the dugout. Wine coolers, hard liquor and kegs are not allowed.
2. **No glass** bottles of any kind are allowed.
3. **Impaired players** who becomes a safety risk to themselves or others will be asked to leave the game and/or park by the umpire or staff.
4. **Smoking** is not allowed on the field or dugouts.

SAFETY & INSURANCE

1. **Inherent risk of the game:** In addition to the possibility for bodily harm through playing, everyone at the park must be aware of the hazards associated with the game of softball both in and around the ball fields.
2. **Insurance:** Team insurance policies are available, but not required, through the USSSA.
3. **Blood rule:** A player who is bleeding or has an open wound is prohibited from participation until the bleeding is stopped and the wound covered. If treatment can be administered in a reasonable amount of time, the individual will not have to leave the game. If excessive time is involved, the re-entry rule would apply. If there is any blood on the uniform, it must be changed or disinfected. All teams are encouraged to have a First Aid Kit with disinfectant with them during each game.

SCOREBOOKS

Names and jersey numbers should be used in scorebooks with the home team being the official scorekeeper. Visiting teams are also encouraged to keep score. Accurate scorebooks are important when protests occur, when games are halted before becoming official, when score disputes arise, or when batting line-ups are questioned. After each ½ inning, once the number of runs is reported to the umpire, who then confirms it with both teams, the score becomes final. Designated managers should discuss any score discrepancies.

PROTESTS

A protested game can result when there is a difference of opinion on the field between the protesting team and the umpire regarding the application or interpretation of an official rule. The USSSA has a specific rule protest policy. If you want to protest a rule interpretation by an umpire, be sure to follow the process properly or it is null and void (even if you were right).

Player eligibility may also be protested – again, we recommend closely reading the USSSA rulebook:

1. Teams wishing to protest a player's eligibility must notify the umpire before the end of the game.
2. The umpire will then notify the other manager of the protest.
3. The protesting team must prove their own eligibility first.
4. Then the players who have been protested will be required to print and sign their names on the scorecard before play can resume. If the player refuses to print and sign his/her name, the player will be ejected from the game and his team will forfeit the game.

In either situation (Rule Protest or Eligibility Protest) the protesting team must submit a **\$50.00** protest fee and a written description of the protest to the League Director within 24 hours of the game. The League Director will then rule on the protest. If the protest is upheld, the offending team will forfeit the game in question and the protest fee will be returned. If the protest is denied, the game will stand as played and the protesting team will forfeit their protest fee.

Protests during the playoffs must be handled on the field before play can resume. Cash deposits apply.

UMPIRES

One umpire is contracted per game for all leagues. They are authorized and required to enforce all the rules that govern league play. They have the authority and should use it with discretion to direct managers, coaches, players and fans to do, or not do, any act within their judgment to manage the game and enforce the rules of play.

USSSA has a specific protest policy. If you want to protest a rule interpretation by an umpire, be sure to follow the process properly or it is null and void (even if you were right).

No-show or late umpire: If more than 5 minutes have elapsed from the scheduled game time and an umpire isn't on the field, the teams should jointly agree to either:

1. Play the game with a substitute umpire agreed upon by both teams. This person will be paid if they work a complete game. If you choose to play the game with the stand in umpire:
 - a. Prior to starting a game with a substitute umpire, the managers should confirm in writing that they agree to play the game with a substitute umpire.
 - b. The game is official regardless of how the stand in umpire performs; no rule protests will be allowed.
 - c. The winning team should report the score of the game to another umpire at the complex or to the league director via phone or email before 10 a.m. the next day.
2. If one or both teams don't want to use a substitute umpire, the game will be rescheduled. Depending on field availability, the rescheduled game might not be on the same night of league play. Teams should leave the field and may not play a "for fun" game.

STANDINGS

Standings are generally updated on Wednesdays. Once a score Final regular-season league standings will be based on league points earned (Win = 2 points, Tie = 1 point, Loss = 0 points, Forfeit = -1). If teams are tied, the tie-breaker will be as follows: 1) Least number of forfeits during the regular season. 2) Head-to-head record. 3) Run differential in games between tied teams. 4) Runs given up in games between tied teams. 5) Total run differential for all league games. 6) Coin-flip.

LEAGUE AWARDS

1. Regular-season league champion awards (per division): \$60 team gift card, championship plaque, and t-shirts for up to 16 rostered team players.
2. Regular-season League Runners-Up (per division): \$40 team gift card.
3. Playoff champion (per division): \$40 team gift card.
4. Playoff consolation champion (if applicable) in each division: \$25 team gift card.

SPORTSMANSHIP

APPLE VALLEY CODE OF CONDUCT

In order to provide a friendly and orderly league, managers, coaches, players and fans should treat their opponents, umpires and other fans appropriately. If individuals fail to display good sportsmanship before, during or after a game, their actions can be viewed as a violation of our sportsmanship code of conduct.

An umpire, the league director, or another agent of Apple Valley softball program has the authority to utilize any of the tools in any combination to maintain control and integrity of the game including a warning, an offensive out for causal profanity, asking a manager to voluntarily remove a player for a period of time to avoid ejection, ejecting an individual (player must supply proper name or the player, manager and team may face additional penalties), and/or terminating the game.

If a player is ejected, the default suspension is two weeks and one year of probation. The League Director can increase or decrease the length of a suspension based on the severity of the offense and previous behavior.

SORR SPORTSMANSHIP POLICY

The League Directors from the SORR communities of Apple Valley, Burnsville, Eagan, Farmington, Lakeville, Rosemount and Savage are interested in ensuring that a high level of sportsmanship be maintained in the sports programs directed by each City. Therefore, the following policy for dealing with cases of unsportsmanlike conduct will be instituted:

1. Any player, coach, manager or spectator ejected from a game for an unsportsmanlike act:
 - a. Suspension will result for profanity, tantrum behavior, verbal abuse, etc., for that game plus at least the next game.
 - i. A suspended player may not be present at any site where league games are in progress.
 - ii. Violation will result in an extended period of suspension.
 - b. The suspended player's name will be placed on one-year probation in the SORR communities.
2. Any player, coach, manager or spectator ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct, during the one-year probation, will be prohibited from participating in any SORR community for at least one calendar year.
3. An individual retains the right of a hearing when the action to be taken is expulsion from participation in the league:
 - a. The player will provide a written explanation of the situation that resulted in his/her ejection from the game.
 - b. An appeal letter must be received within 7 days of being notified of the expulsion to your League Director. Failure to do so will result in a forfeiture of ones right to appeal.
 - c. Invited to attend the hearing will be: the player, his/her manager, the SORR League Directors and the Umpire Assigner for the community.
 - d. A suspended player (or representative) must be present at the next scheduled SORR meeting to review his/her case. Failure to attend this meeting will result in a forfeiture of one's right to appeal the expulsion.
 - e. A majority vote of a minimum of 5 active/present League Directors is necessary to overturn a suspension/expulsion.

CASUAL PROFANITY

Casual profanity pertains to unsportsmanlike language, usually uttered by a player out of frustration. This type of behavior, at the umpire's discretion, may be penalized by outs being declared against the offending team.

1. If the team is at bat and unsportsmanlike words are used, the next batter will be declared out.
2. If the act is committed by a player remaining at bat he/she will be called out.
3. If the defensive team commits the act, the first person to bat in the next inning will be declared out.
4. The outs will be treated as a delayed ball situation.
5. If the violation occurs in the bottom of the last inning where the fielding team might not bat again, player ejection may result.
6. A game may be ended by a casual profanity out.

INCLEMENT WEATHER & THE WEATHER LINE

Weather conditions can change dramatically in a short period of time. If there is a safety concern, a team is never required to play a game, even if the weather line or staff have not cancelled a game. The determination on make-ups, forfeits, etc. can be made at a future time.

1. **Weather line:** Call 952-953-2399, option #1 after 5:00 p.m. This is the official way games are canceled and will be updated immediately when a decision is made. If there is no mention of the games on the recorded message, you should assume games are on and will be cancelled at the field by the umpires and/or field supervisor if necessary.
2. **Play stoppage due to weather:** If conditions become unplayable at game time or after games have started, umpires should delay games for 20 minutes. The umpire should discuss a time and meeting place, and after the 20 minute delay has passed, umpires/managers should make a decision on the status of games for the rest of the evening based on conditions at that time. If games are resumed, they may be shortened if necessary.
3. **Games cancelled once they have started:** If a game is "official" (see "THE GAME" section for details) the results at the point when the game was called will stand. If the game is not official when it is stopped, it will be resumed at a later date from the point it was suspended.
4. **Rescheduled games** will be made up at as time allows end of the season. Managers should check the schedule online two to three business days after the rain-out to view the rescheduled dates and times. Depending on the number of rainouts, playoffs may have to be on a different night from regular-season play.

GAME TIMES, LATE ARRIVALS, & FORFEITS

1. **Game start times** on weekdays are typically 6:15, 7:15, 8:15, and 9:15 p.m. and Sundays are typically 5:30, 6:30, 7:30 and 8:30 pm. In double-header leagues, every effort is made to schedule games back-to-back.
2. **Player limit to play:** A team must have eight players to start a game; no team shall start short.
 - a. Co-Rec: Must have equal or up to two more women than men. 4 men/4 women or 5 women/3 men.
3. **Grace period:** A ten-minute grace period is allowed only for 6:15pm games Monday through Friday only for teams to get the minimum number of players to start. Those ten minutes come off the game time.
4. **Starting short on players:** If a team is still short players when the game is scheduled to begin, they will be declared the visiting team and play will start. If they 1) run out of available batters to field a full 8-person team or 2) need to take the field and are still short players at that point, the game will be declared a forfeit.
5. **Forfeits:**
 - a. Forfeits are never a positive situation, but are even worse when a team fails to show up for a game and doesn't notify the other team and League Director within a reasonable amount of time. Any team that no shows without proper notification will be fined \$25. This fee must be paid before they can play their next game.
 - b. A forfeit will be recorded as a 7-0 score, or the score at the time of the forfeit, whichever is greater.
 - c. Any team with three or more games forfeited may be dropped from the league.

THE PLAYING FIELD

1. **Pitching distance:** 50 feet along with a pitching area the width of the pitcher’s plate up to 6’ behind the back edge of the pitcher’s place
2. **Base length:** 70 feet.
3. **Batter’s boxes are not provided.** It is the judgement of the umpire as to where the box begins and ends.
4. **Co-rec play area:**
 - a. An arc line is painted 160’ from home plate for co-rec leagues. All outfielders must remain behind the arc line until the ball is hit. First violation: no pitch and warning to the team. The next violation by the same team: no pitch and awarding first base to the batter.
 - b. No infielder (except the pitcher) shall be in front of the base paths until the ball is hit. Penalty: fielder’s interference. A delayed dead ball will be called by the umpire. If batter reaches base safely, the play will stand. If an out is made the batter will be placed at first base safely.
5. **Team bench area:** Only players, managers, and coaches who are listed on the roster will be allowed in the team bench area or on the field of play. Due to safety considerations, scorekeepers, pets, children and fans are not permitted on the field or dugout at any time.

EQUIPMENT

1. **Official bat:** All bats must have the new USSSA thumbprint to be used in league play (pictured at right). For more information on bats, please refer to the USSSA Rule Book under Rule 2, Section 2. Approved bats can be found at: www.ussa.com.
2. **Hot or alter bags:** If in the judgement of an umpire, a bat seems “hot”, has flat spots, pronounced dents, or seems altered, the one of following will occur:
 - a. The bat will be removed from that game and turned over to the umpire until it can be tested or
 - b. The player keeps his/her bat and accepts an immediate suspension from the league of up to one year.
3. **Official softballs** will be Yellow 12” .40 cor and 325 compression for men and Yellow 11” .44 cor and 400 compression for women.
 - a. The City of Apple Valley softball teams will receive the appropriate number of softballs required for regular-season league play at the start of the season. The home team must supply one new ball at the umpire/manager meeting before each game or be subject to a 3-run penalty. Teams may purchase additional balls if needed at the concession stand.
 - b. Back-up balls should be available by each team. Please retrieve all balls hit out of play as soon as possible and return them to the umpire.
4. **Shoes** must be worn at all times. Metal spikes will not be allowed in any leagues.
5. **Bat rings** or “donuts” are not allowed.
6. **Uniforms:** Teams are requested, but not required, to have matching colored shirts.
7. **Electronic equipment** including a camera, audio or video device may not be worn or used by an umpire, player, or coach on the field of play.
8. **First Aid:** Each team should supply a first aid kit for their team.



THE GAME

1. The “home” team is listed first on the schedule. The “away” team is listed second on the schedule. Each team has a balance of home and away games throughout the season.
2. **Designated manager** is the person meeting with the umpire at the umpire/manager pregame meeting. Any discussions with the official should only involve the designated manager.
3. **Official game** shall consist of seven innings or 55 minutes, unless otherwise noted below:
 - a. The home team is leading after the visiting team has batted in the seventh inning.
 - b. **Time limit:** No new inning shall begin after 55 minutes, starting at the conclusion of the pre-game meeting (not the scheduled game time).
 - c. **Official game:** A game is official after four innings are completed or 3 ½ if the home team is in the lead. If the minimum innings have not been played, the game may continue past the time limit in order to make an official game.
 - d. **Shortened games:** Game time limits may be shortened to get games in due to weather delays or to accommodate additional make-up games if a season gets an unusual amount of rainouts.
 - e. **Ties:** Games can end in a tie. Extra innings will only be played to break the tie if there is time remaining.

- f. **Run rule:** If a team has a run lead of 15 runs after 5 innings or more of play are complete (4.5 if the home team has the lead), the trailing team can choose to end the game at that time OR they can choose to continue play. The flip-flop rule will not be utilized. If they continue to play, at exactly 55 minutes the game is over regardless of the game situation at that time.
4. **Home runs:** All leagues will have a two homerun limit per game with the one-up rule in effect. Any other ball hit over the fence between the foul lines, except when touched by a fielder, after the limit is reached, shall be declared an out.
 - a. **One-up rule:** All leagues will use the one-up rule. In short, once teams are at the home run limit, they can't have more than one homerun than their opponent, with the exception of the bottom of the last inning. In the last inning, the home team can equal the number of home runs from the visiting team, but may not go "one-up".
 - b. **Hit-n-sit:** Immediate following a home run, the batter and any runners on base can simply return to the dugout; they do not need to run the bases.

THE PLAYERS & SUBSTITUTES

1. **Minimum number of players:** A team must have at least eight players to start and continue a game. Players may immediately enter the game as they arrive and be placed at the bottom of the batting order. Co-rec teams must have at least four women to start or continue play. See "Batting line-ups" for co-rec line-up options.
2. **Player leaving game without a substitute:** Teams that start with nine or more players may drop down (injuries, ejections, players needing to leave early, etc.) to a minimum of eight players. See "BATTING" for more information. Co-Rec will default to a snake batting line-up if the dropped player is a woman.
3. **Courtesy runners** may be used – details are in BASE RUNNING.
4. **Defensive positions:** All players listed on the batting order are eligible to play any position in the field at the frequency determined by the team.
5. Co-rec fielding:
 - a. Teams should have five men and five women on the field. If teams only have four women they may take the field with five men and four women (cannot have 6 men and four women).
 - b. There are no male/female restrictions for defensive positions in co-rec leagues. However, once an inning starts, players must remain at the defensive position in which they began the inning except for pitching changes and substitutions. Pitching changes and substitutions must be same sex.
 - c. The shortstop, 1st, 2nd and 3rd basemen must play behind the baseline until the ball is hit. In the outfield, a white painted fielding arc of 160 feet from home plate will be used. All four outfielders (including a short fielder if used) must remain behind this arc line until the ball is hit. First violation: no pitch and warning to the team. The next violation by the same team: no pitch and awarding first base to the batter.

PITCHING

Pitching area is the width of the pitcher's plate up to 6' behind the back edge of the pitcher's place. Refer to the USSSA Official Slow Pitch Playing rules for legal pitching options.

BATTING

1. **Batting line-ups** will default to "everyone" unless a team specifically requests a set batting line-up length, which the manager would have to do at the manager/umpire pregame meeting.
 - a. **"Everyone" or continuous batting line-up** option will allow every official player at the game to bat. If a player has to leave the lineup for an emergency or injury, the line-up will collapse and no out occurs.
 - b. **Specified number line-up length** may be 8, 9, 10, 11 or 12. Rules for teams opting for this option would default to USSSA rulebook with the most notable differences being strict substitution rules and that any drop in the original batting line-up length will result in an appealed out when that player's spot in the batting line-up comes up, unless a substitute is available to fill the vacated spot.
 - c. **The line-up for Co-rec play** is designed to consist of five men and five women or six men and six women alternating man, woman every other spot in the batting line-up. However, for recreational purposes, the City of Apple Valley softball leagues also allows the following:
 1. A team may have up to two more women than men in the batting line-up.
 2. Teams must have at least four women to play.
 3. Teams can use a floating men's line-up within a women's line-up (snake line-up). I.E. If a team has 5 men and four women, the team would bat "everyone" using 9 batting positions. The batting

line-up would alternate man/women with the men always batting one spot after the same man and the women batting one spot after the same woman.

2. **Ejections:** If a player is ejected, that spot in the batting order is an automatic out unless they have a substitute available to fill the vacated spot. This applies to both batting line-up options.
3. **Batting count (balls/strikes):** A three-ball, two-strike count will be used in all leagues.
4. **Courtesy fouls:** No courtesy fouls will be used in any men's leagues. The Friday night Co-rec Recreational leagues will be allowed a courtesy foul.
5. **Batter's box:** The USSSA batter's box rule as written in 2020 is being rejected as inappropriate for recreation leagues. We will be playing as we have in the past. Summarized and simplified, if a batter steps on the plate, in front of the plate, or too far toward the pitcher, they will be called out.

BASE RUNNING

1. **Double-wide 1st base** will be used for league play.
 - a. If a play is being made on the batter/runner prior to reaching first base, the batter/runner must use the orange base and the defense must use the white base; however, should he/she reach and go beyond first base, they must return to the white base.
 - b. On extra base hits or balls hit to the outfield when there is no play being made at first base, the runner may touch the white base.
 - c. When tagging up on a fly ball, the white base must be used.
 - d. A batted ball hitting the white base is declared fair while the orange base is declared foul.
2. **Courtesy runners:** Unlimited courtesy runners are permitted for two players during the game. The last out for that team must be the courtesy runner for that player.
 - a. Co-Rec: 2 men and 2 women are allowed courtesy runners. The last out for the male player/players and the last out for female player/players must be the courtesy runner for that player.
3. **Men walked in co-rec:** In co-rec leagues, if a man is walked, the next batter has the option to bat or walk. The man is awarded second base whether the woman chooses to walk or bat.
4. **Home run hit-n-sit:** After a player hits a home run over the fence, they can choose to hit-n-sit instead of running the bases. Any player(s) on base when a home run is hit over the fence have the same option.
5. **Sliding** is allowed in all leagues, but is never required under any circumstance. All players must avoid contact while running the bases and defensive players may not block baselines. If a player runs into a defensive player, it will be an out (and possible ejection in severe cases). Safety bases will be used at 2nd & 3rd base; however, there is always danger of injury to any player who slides into a base.
6. **Foul balls** are not a live ball and base runners may not advance. Note, this is how the game has been played in the past, but USSSA input a rule in 2020 that MN USSSA has rejected.

POST-SEASON PLAY

APPLE VALLEY LEAGUE PLAYOFFS

1. Playoffs will be held for all spring/summer leagues. They will be single elimination and a consolation bracket will be played. Playoffs will begin the week following the last regular-season game.
2. Depending on the number of rainouts, playoffs may have to be on a different night from regular-season play.
3. The higher regular-season seed will be the home team in each match-up.
4. No games will end due to time limit, but the run rules are in effect.
5. Ties will be broken by playing extra innings.
6. Protests during the playoffs must be handled on the field before play can resume. Cash deposits apply.
7. League will provide game balls for playoffs.
8. All league rules apply unless otherwise noted.

SANCTIONING & REGIONAL/STATE SOFTBALL TOURNAMENTS

All teams in Apple Valley's leagues are sanctioned through USSSA and eligible for sanctioned regional, state, and some national tournaments. Teams interested in playing their respective region/state tournament can find details and registration information online www.mnusssa.com.

LEAGUE PLACEMENT

When the numbers of teams call for it, a league may be split into a gold (upper) and silver (lower) division.

As a general rule, where applicable, league winners will move up a league and the last place teams will move down a league. The League Director can make exceptions at their discretion including moving multiple teams up/down or leaving teams in the same league based on a wide variety of reasons and situations. While input from teams is encouraged and taken into consideration, refunds will not be issued to teams who disagree with the division in which they are ultimately placed.

LOST & FOUND

The City of Apple Valley will not be responsible lost or stolen items. Any items found should be turned in to the softball office. Individuals who have lost an item should inquire at the softball office between 5:45 - 10:00 p.m., Sunday through Friday. Claimants will be asked to describe the lost item in detail. All items that are not claimed within ten days after the league ends will either be used for Parks and Recreation programs or donated.

COVID-19 SOFTBALL LEAGUE GUIDELINES – UPDATED 6/24/2020

Apple Valley Parks & Recreation strives to make your experience as safe and fun as possible. Please take a few moments to read through the guidelines and discuss them with teammates. Any guideline below will override any league rule that contradicts it. All guidelines are subject to change based on what is best for the league and we will continue to evolve and adapt with new recommendations from the MDH, CDC, and State of Minnesota.

If you have any questions, please contact our office at 952-953-2316 or AVathletics@cityofapplevalley.org.

WAIVERS & CONTACT TRACING

- **COVID-19 waiver:** In addition to the league roster, all players must sign a USSSA COVID-19 waiver before participating. Copies will be made available at the fields for players to sign at their first game.
- **Book:** Each team should keep their own book with all participating player first and last names for contact tracing, if necessary.

EQUIPMENT

- **Minimize shared equipment:** It is recommended that all players and umpires use their own equipment while participating. This includes gloves, bats, helmets, etc.
- **Chairs:** We recommend players and spectators bring their own chairs to aid in social distancing and avoid shared contact points.
- **Masks:** All staff, players, umpires and spectators are encouraged but not required to wear a mask.
- **Sunflower seeds** will not be allowed.
- **Balls:** All teams are required to only use their own team's softballs when in the field. Once a half-inning is complete, fielding team will take their ball into the dugout and team going to play the fields provides one of their team's softballs.
 - Team managers will receive a supply of new balls the first night of games. One new ball should be used per game and teams should keep the balls in their original wrapper until the game starts.
 - Teams should not touch the opposing team's softballs even in the case of a foul ball or homeruns. If a ball goes over the outfield fence or is fouled out of play, the fielding team is responsible to retrieve the ball.
 - In co-rec leagues, the catcher will be responsible to switch out balls
- **Hand sanitizer:** We recommend staff, players, umpires and spectators bring hand sanitizing products with them and use it frequently including any time a player touches any shared equipment.
- **Concessions** will not be available.

SANITIZATION

- **Restrooms:** Restrooms will be open to encourage hand washing and they will be sanitized prior to game starting each evening.
- **Hand sanitizer:** We recommend staff, players, umpires and spectators bring hand sanitizing products and/or sanitizing wipes with them.
- **Sanitizing dugouts:** All teams should clean their dugouts and team bench areas on arrival and departure. This includes wiping down benches and any high-touch areas and removing any trash. Sanitizing products will be supplied.

SANITARY ETIQUETTE

- **Spitting or touching face:** Please refrain from activities that have a higher likelihood of spreading germs including spitting, touching your face, etc. Umpires have discretion to handle irresponsible sanitary behavior at an appropriate level ranging from a warning to ejection.
- **Sneezes or coughs:** All should cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Dispose of tissues and wash or sanitize hands immediately afterward
- **Handwashing or sanitizing:** All staff and participants should wash hands or sanitize their hands frequently.

SOCIAL DISTANCING AND MINIMIZING CONTACT

- **6' distancing:** All staff, players, umpires and spectators are encouraged to continue 6 feet social distancing on and off the field during an event. It is also important that social distancing take place before and after matches to ensure we can continue to provide opportunities for people to recreate in our leagues and programs.
- **Field capacity** will adhere to MDH and State guidelines. As of June 23, the limit on each field is 25 people total including players, umpires, coaches, etc. Teams should limit the number of players and/or coaches they bring.
- **Spectators** should be limited and should maintain social distancing.
- **Pre-game meeting:** One coach or manager per team will conduct a pregame meeting at home plate. All involved are requested to keep 6 feet social distancing during ground rules and coin toss.
- **Dugouts** will be extended to allow for proper social distancing.
- **The catcher and umpire** shall position themselves during a player's at-bat to allow for social distancing. Catcher shall position themselves behind the umpire, at least 6 feet, and become a "retriever", not a catcher.
- **Transition between games:** Teams should not enter dugout until the other team exits. Teams must leave the field immediately after their game concludes and dugout sanitation is completed. If teams aren't able to quickly transition, we may have to change the game time limit to 50 minutes.

ILLNESS

A participant is required to stay home if they are [exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19](#) or if they have exposure to others with COVID-19 symptoms/illness in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to other people. The Parks & Recreation department will follow [Minnesota Department of Health \(MDH\) guidelines regarding how long to stay home if you're sick](#). If you have tested positive for COVID-19 and have participated in Parks & Recreation program, we would appreciate it if you contact our office as soon as possible.

STATE RESOURCES

- [Guidance for Social Distancing in Adult Sports:](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sportsguidefaq.pdf) <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sportsguidefaq.pdf>
- [Stay Safe Guidance for Organized Sports Website :](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/organized-sports.jsp) <https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/organized-sports.jsp>