



# NORTHSHORE UNLIMITED SLO-PITCH LEAGUE

Thunder Bay, Ontario

## NSU RULES FOR PLAY

Revised: May 4, 2026

- 1) All teams must have a copy of these rules at all times. Any team protesting a call must have a copy of these rules to back up their argument. Any points of discussion shall be brought up in an orderly manner between the umpires and the team representatives.
- 2) A call based on the judgment of an umpire cannot be protested. Only a misinterpretation of a rule can be protested.
- 3) All players must be registered with NorthShore Unlimited Slo-pitch League. All players must be at least 18 years of age ID's will be checked at league functions. Each team can only sign 2 players under the age of 18 (age 16 years of age turning 17 in the current year.) These players must be identified on the roster.
- 4) **No alcohol or chemicals are to be used on or near the ballparks. Police may be called if suspected.**
- 5) A regulation game shall consist of nine (9) innings. A game called by shall be considered regulation if five (5) or more complete innings have been played. **If both teams agree, a game can be called at any time due to darkness, rain, or any other cause that puts the players or patrons in peril. Where there is no agreement the Umpire in Chief will be contacted to make the call.** A twenty-five (25) run mercy rule will apply after five (5) innings, and a fifteen (15) run mercy rule will apply after seven (7) or more innings have been completed. The score stops at the end of the mercy inning, regardless if the teams continue to play. In the event of a tie score after nine (9) innings, the game will remain a tie, with each team awarded equal points.
- 6) Games will not be considered official until the score has been phoned in to the league executive. The winning team has twenty-four (24) hours to phone the score in. The losing team must also remember to phone in their home runs within 24 hours.
- 7) Each game cannot be delayed for more than **ten (10) minutes** from the starting time, where consideration under the "Grace" period is required. Starting times shall be 6:00pm and 7:45pm in the months of June and July, and 6:00pm and 7:30pm in May, August and September unless otherwise noted by league executives.
- 8) "Grace" period, if a team cannot field a team (6 guys and 2 girls) after 10 minutes, then there will be a 7-0 lead for the team that is ready, and game will commence in the second inning. If a team cannot field a team after 15 minutes, then it is a forfeit. If each team agrees to play out the game following the 15 minutes then the default 7-0 lead is awarded, and game can commence in third inning.
- 9) A new full inning cannot be started after **ten minutes prior to the start of the next game.** The umpire does not need to call "last inning".

- 10) Ten. (10) Players are required on the field to start and finish a game, unless there is consideration as under Rule #8. Three (3) or more females are required at all times. A team may play with two (2) females, but will have an “auto-out” at the third female’s spot in the batting order. Teams will be allowed to play with only eight (8) players.

If a team shows up with less than eight (8) players the game shall be forfeited. There are NO “auto-outs” for playing with fewer than 7 males. You must finish the game with the same amount of players, at minimum, of which you started the game with, any fewer players will have an “auto-out”.

- 11) A player is eligible to play in a game if and only if they are rostered to the team, and has a complete uniform on. A complete uniform is defined as being a proper team jersey showing the team logo and/or team colours. This rule will be enforced at the time of the second tournament, and only if the opposing team makes complaint.

- 12) The home team must supply a new ball for each game. The visiting team may supply a used ball as long as it is in good condition. Regulation balls are to be determined by the league.

- 13) Steel spike cleats are not allowed. **Players are also not allowed to wear sandals of any type.** Only running shoes or approved baseball shoes are to be worn on the playing field for playing. Any other footwear than specified above for the purpose of coaching or umping a game is at players own risk.

- 14) Pitching masks and catcher’s masks are strongly encouraged for player safety but are not mandatory during play. Any player who chooses not to wear protective face masks does so at their own risk and may not be covered under applicable insurance policies for related injuries.

- 15) Only official USSSA approved softball bats with the new USSSA 1.20BPF certification mark on the taper of the bat are to be used. No bats that have been altered or are physically damaged may be used. If an illegal bat is found, the player or team will receive a warning and the bat must be removed from play. If bat continues to be used anytime throughout the season, a player suspension may be issued. The ASA banned bat lists will be the only list approved for checking bat validity.



- 16) **Swearing or abusive language is not allowed and will not be tolerated.** Failure to comply will result in the player being ejected **from the field** and/or the team having to forfeit the game.

**Additionally, any player or team who is not conducting themselves in a manner that is respectful, courteous, and inclusive, on the field or in NSU forums, may receive a conduct warning. Following 3 conduct warnings the individual or team will be subject to a review and assessed based on their history of conduct to determine the appropriateness for the individual to continue in the season, and/or league.**

- 17) Throwing the bats will not be tolerated. This could lead to ejection from the game.
- 18) The umpires are the representatives of the league by which they have been assigned to a particular game and as such are authorized and required to enforce each section of the league rules. They have the power to order a player, coach, captain, or manager to do or omit any act, which in their judgment is necessary to give force and effect to any of these rules.
- 19) **The home-plate umpire has full control over the game, but any umpire can discuss a ruling with the other ump if they had a better view or position to make the correct call.** No umpire can be overruled without discussion.
- 20) In the judgment of any umpire, any player or fan who exhibits unnecessary harassment towards another player or umpire, the team deemed responsible will be warned of forfeiture. If the warning is not heeded, the umpire can automatically declare a forfeit against the team responsible.
- 21) A forfeited game shall be declared by the umpire in favour of the team not at fault if:
- A team fails to appear on the field, or being on the field, refuses to begin a game for which is scheduled within a time set for forfeiture by the league (see rules 7 & 8)
  - A team employs tactics designed to hasten or delay the game.
  - The order for the removal of a player is not obeyed.
- 22) Only the batter, the on deck batter and two (2) base coaches are allowed to be on the playing field when the offensive team is batting. The on deck batter shall not take their position in the batter's box until the previous play is dead.
- 23) Each team will be allowed to use six (6) courtesy runners each game – 3 male and 3 female. The runner must be the last male (for the male substitutions) or female (for the female substitutions) that was declared out. If the last out is currently on base or on deck, the previous batter out may be substituted instead. If it is the first inning and no outs have been recorded, the courtesy runner will be any batter who is not due up to bat soon. If no outs have been recorded in any other inning, you must use the previous innings last out. The courtesy runner will take his teammates base position at any base once play is stopped **following the batters at bat**. Only one runner may be used per batter, per at bat.

\*rule 8, section 16 of SPN rules does not apply to NSU

- 24) The defensive player must use **only** the white portion of the safety bag, while the offensive player must use **only** the orange portion of the bag (the exception to this rule is when the ball is hit through the infield, the runner may touch the white bag and carry on at their own risk). Failure to use the correct side of the safety bag will result in an interference call being made. If the first baseman touches any portion of the orange bag during a force play at 1<sup>st</sup>, the runner will be awarded 1<sup>st</sup> base.

(For clarification: A player waiting to run on the next play, **MUST** be in some contact with the white portion of the safety bag. The player can be called out if they are not in some contact with the white bag)

- 25) The NSU wooden mat will be placed at the back of the home-plate (the mat should not be touching home-plate). The dimensions of the mat will be the same as the back of the batter's box. Providing the pitch has the minimum arc, and hits any part of the mat, it will be considered a strike. If the ball hits any part of home plate it will be considered a ball. The plate overrules the mat at all times (a pitch that hits both the plate and mat will be considered a ball).

- 26) Slow pitching is required at all times. The ball must be thrown with an arc. The minimum arc will be six (6) feet with the maximum arc being unlimited for males and twelve (12) feet for females. It will be at the umpire's discretion on the speed and the arc of the pitching. A "ball" will be called when the arc is too low (or too high for female batters). A "ball" that is called by an umpire will be an automatic ball unless the batter swings at it.
- 27) Prior to pitching, the pitcher must come to a full and complete stop facing the batter with the shoulders in line with first and third base, and with the ball held in one hand in front of the body. The pitcher's mound will have a circle around it, the pitcher must stay within this circle during their pitch and only after the pitch is released can they leave this area or the pitch will be called a no-pitch by the umpire. The pitcher must have **BOTH** feet inside the circle prior to delivering his/her pitch.
- 28) Substitutions may be made at the end of any completed inning, providing he/she has played defense first. **Any player changes must be told to the opposing team prior to the beginning of that inning** (refer to re-entry rule #47). If a player is injured and is unable to continue he/she may be replaced by any bench player as long as rule 10 is satisfied;
- 29) A pitcher may be substituted once during an inning, provided the substitute is already on the playing field. The pitcher must complete pitches to the current batter before a substitution may take place.
- 30) The catcher shall be in a position that does not interfere with the batter or the judgement of the umpire. Catcher's interference will result in the batter being awarded first base.
- 31) A base runner cannot leave the base until the batter makes contact with the ball. If he/she does, he/ she will be declared out.
- 32) Faking a tag will result in the awarding of a base runner an extra base. This is considered unsportsmanlike conduct. Depending on the severity, the player could be ejected from the game.
- 33) A safe line at home plate and commitment line 1/2 of the way from 3<sup>rd</sup> base to home plate shall be used. The runner is required to pass the safe line at home plate prior to the catcher making contact with home plate, and having possession of the ball to be called safe. If the runner touches any part of the plate and or mat he will be called out. If a runner touches or passes the commitment line he cannot retreat back to third base, if he does he is automatically called out. Once he has passed this line he must continue to home. A base runner must touch down on or after the scoring line at home plate. "Flying or diving" through the air is not considered safe. The catcher also may not apply a tag to a baserunner between the commitment line and the safe line. All plays out at home must be made at home plate.
- 34) No charging bases or home plate. The runner will be declared out, the ball is dead, and all runners' return to the last touched base. If the act is considered flagrant, the umpire shall use his/her discretion as to whether or not the offender shall be ejected from the game – no warning is required.
- 35) The base runner or batter cannot interfere with any fielder attempting to catch a fly ball or make an out on the base-paths. Dead ball is called, and the batter or base-runner will be declared out. The fielder has every right to make the play.
- 36) A base runner that is hit by a batted ball in fair territory will be declared out (unless they were touching a base at the time that they were hit). Ball is dead, and the batter is entitled to first base without liability to

be put out. Any base runners affected by a force play from the runner reaching first will also advance one base.

- 37) If a base-runner fails to touch any base while attempting to score a run after a safe hit, it is up the defensive team to notify the umpire and the base shall be tagged, and the runner will be declared out. This appeal play must be brought forward before the next pitch. The umpire upon seeing the above infraction cannot alert the defensive team until it is brought to his/her attention. The umpire must be aware of the base runners at all times. In the event of this call being made, the base runner that missed the base shall be declared out, and all other base runners must return to their last touched base.
- 38) The base-runner is out when in running to any base, he/she runs more than three (3) feet off of the base path\* in a regular or reverse order to avoid being touched by the ball in the hand of a fielder. (\* An established base path is an imaginary line three (3) feet to either side of a direct line from the runner to the base to which he/she is advancing. **The base path becomes established when the fielder receives the ball and begins his/her attempt to tag the runner**).
- 39) A base-runner is safe if more than one defensive player have their foot on the base when a play is being made to that base.
- 40) Baselines of 65 feet between all bases.
- 41) Any female batter is allowed to bunt. A bunt is a batted ball not swung at but intentionally met with the bat and tapped slowly within the infield. Any bunting (by males), stealing or chopping at the ball is disallowed. A base runner cannot leave the base until the batter makes contact with the ball. If he/she does, he/she will be declared out.
- 42) If the batter hits or bunts a foul ball with one strike already against them, the batter will get another at bat (courtesy foul). If the above occurs and the batter hits another foul ball, the batter will be declared out.
- 43) The "infield fly" rule will prevail.

"An infield fly is a fair ball (not including a line drive) which can be caught by a fielder with ordinary effort, when the first and second, or, the first, second and third bases are occupied, with less than two (2) out.

NOTE: The catcher, pitcher or any fielder who positions himself in the field of play shall be considered fielders for the purpose of this rule.

NOTE: When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire shall immediately declare, "infield fly" for the benefit of the runners. If the ball is near the baselines, the umpire shall declare, "infield fly if fair". The batter is automatically out. The ball is alive and the runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught, or retouch the base and advance after the ball is touched, the same as on any fly ball.

NOTE: If a declared fly "infield fly" is allowed to fall untouched to the ground, and bounces foul before passing first or third base, it is a foul ball. If a declared "infield fly" falls untouched to the ground in fair territory, it is an "infield fly," the batter is out and the runners may advance at their own risk (the runners do not have to re-tag).

- 44) When a male batter is walked on three (3) consecutive balls without a strike being pitched and he is followed by a female batter, the female has the option of batting or taking an automatic walk (the female

does not have to touch home-plate before taking the walk). The male batter automatically goes to second base. If the male batter is walked but has one (1) strike against him, the female batter has to bat, and the male must remain at first base.

- 45) Any tip ball that is caught by the catcher will result in the batter being declared out.
- 46) In all regular season games, the batting team will supply two ump's. If using a third base coach, this person cannot be used to umpire plays, nor referred to as a consult. Tournaments and playoffs will have assigned umpires as indicated on the official tournament schedule.
- 47) There will be a home run limit of a plus-5 differential. Any home run hit over the limit will result in a single. All runners advance one base, regardless of whether a force is in effect.
- 48) When a home run is hit, the batter must touch first base, and then may leave the field without touching the rest of the bases. All baserunners may leave the field immediately. Play is dead. If a batter after hitting a home run leaves the field of play without touching first base, they are declared out, no runs are scored and baserunners return to their base.
- 49) Re-Entry Rule: Players may re-enter the game, after being substituted out of the game for at least two full innings. The player re-entering may assume any position on the field and lineup as long as rule 10 is satisfied at all times. Any player removed due to injury, may not re-enter the game.
- 50) RESCHEDULING GAMES: If a team needs to reschedule a game, the game time may be rescheduled as agreed upon by both teams. The responding team is not obligated to agree to reschedule. The requesting team is to be clear of their intention to forfeit, should there be no agreement to reschedule, otherwise it should be assumed the original game will continue. The rescheduled game time must be determined within one week of the originally scheduled date, or the team who was unable to field a team will be assigned a forfeit loss. Should a team be unable to field a team for the rescheduled date, a forfeit will be assigned based on the agreed to rescheduled game, not the original. Each team is only allowed two (2) rescheduled/forfeit games per season, for reasons other than weather. Any extenuating circumstances are to be considered by the Executive Committee prior to approval of additional rescheduled games.

**ALL OTHER RULES WILL BE TAKEN FROM THE SPN 2026 RULE BOOK <https://slo-pitch.com/rulebook>**