

Softball Ireland

Regulations

Effective: January 1, 2020

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1. APPLICATION AND DEFINITIONS

1.1 The word “Club” applies to single and multi-team playing organisations. The word “Team” refers to any team registered in any Softball Ireland region or for any Softball Ireland or Regional competition.

1.2 The word "championship" refers to the Softball Ireland Brian Walshe Cup, or any derivations of that competition, and to the deciding competition for the national club champions

1.3 The word "tournament" refers to all official Softball Ireland one or two consecutive day competitions.

1.4 The official representative of each team, known as the “team contact” (e.g. committee member, captain, coach or manager), is required to familiarise themselves with these Regulations, which apply to all league, tournament and championship play, except where other regional or competition rules have precedence

1.5 The term "SI" means Softball Ireland, the National Board or its designated representative officers or any sub committees.

1.6 The word "umpire" includes any person officiating a game under the regulation of Softball Ireland.

1.7 The term “Regional Association” refers to a body recognised by Softball Ireland Board as having satisfied the requirements of the Softball Ireland constitution.

1.8 The term “SI Regional Leagues” refers to the provincial leagues recognised by Softball Ireland.

1.9 Teams in top division of each SI Regional league are defined as “Grade A” teams. Teams in all divisions below the top tier of each SI Regional league are defined as “Grade B” teams.

1.10 The “Softball Ireland National Club Championships”, or “SINCC”, is contested by the nominated champions of the SI Regional leagues ias nominated by their respective

1.11 These Regulations apply to all members of SI for the 2020 Softball Ireland year.

2. SI BOARD RECOMMENDED POLICIES

2.1 SI Board recommends that each Club should adopt the following policies as a matter of good practice. If you would like further advice or information on these policies or would like to share any policies that your club currently uses or is considering implementing, then please contact the SI Secretary. (secretary@softball.ie).

2.2 Each club should have a basic constitution outlining the rights, duties and responsibilities of its members. A basic constitution, which can be used as a template can be made available by request.

2.3 Each club should have a bank account with at least two signatories on the account.

2.4 SI recognises that the consumption of alcohol impairs co-ordination and judgment. While recognising the social nature of softball, SI strongly recommends that individuals show personal responsibility, for their own safety and that of others, when consuming alcohol before or during softball events. An effective working guideline is: if you have had too much drink to legally drive, you shouldn't play softball. SI fully supports any umpires or other nominated officials who exclude an individual from play due to alcohol induced incapacity.

2.5 Members are strongly advised against playing while pregnant.

2.6 Any player who has concerns about insurance coverage (e.g. in case of pregnancy, disability or otherwise) should satisfy themselves, through SI or directly with the insurers, as to whether their needs are met. SI will endeavour, where feasible, to obtain any clarifications or additional cover required with any additional cost to be borne by the player.

2.6.1 In order to compete in a Softball Ireland tournament, for insurance purposes, all players must be registered with Softball Ireland through their Region.

3 RULES OF PLAY

3.1 The rules of play are those of the World Baseball Softball Confederation (the "WBSC", <http://www.wbsc.org/wp-content/uploads/ENGLISH-2018-2021-Slow-Pitch-Softball-Playing-Rules-A4-1.pdf>) for adult co-ed slow pitch softball as contained in the current ASA rulebook, with the following adjustments:

3.2 In Softball Ireland competitions, teams may opt to play with 6 men and 4 women (or 7 men and 5 women if applying the Extra Player rule) under the conditions as listed below unless otherwise stipulated in a specific competition or tournaments rules.

3.2.1 The women must alternate through the top of the batting order, batting at either: 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 or 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 in the order.

3.2.2 Any substitute must be of the same gender as the substituted player.

3.2.3 When fielding, there must be at least two females in the outfield and two in the infield, unless a team plays under the Short Handed Rule (i.e. 9 players in the line-up) and the missing player is female, in which case the team must play with two females in the infield, one female in the outfield and one vacant position in the outfield.

3.2.4 If a team is playing under the Short Handed Rule and the missing player is female, then the missing player becomes an automatic out in position 8 or position 7 in the batting order, in accordance with Byelaw 3.2.1.

3.2.5 The catcher must be male but there is no requirement that the pitcher must be female. (Note for clarification: if a team opts to play under the 6 and 4 rule and has a female pitching then in order to comply with Byelaw 3.2.3 there must be three male infielders and one female; and two male outfielders and two female).

3.2.6 A male batter who is walked will be awarded only 1 base if he is followed in the batting order by another male.

3.2.6.1 Note for clarification that this includes the following situation: if a team is playing under the Short Handed Rule and the male, who is followed by an automatic out in place of a female, is walked then the male is awarded only one base.

3.2.7 A team must complete the game with the gender split it started with.

3.3 Bases need not be spiked.

3.4 The standard softball for all SI official tournaments and competitions from 2018 is any brand specifying a COR of .52 and a compression of .300lbs and 12" in size for male batters, and 11" softballs of the same COR and compression will be used for female batters only. Both white and yellow balls are permissible.

3.4.1 The responsibility, for determining whether the quality of a ball is of a suitably high standard for use, remains with the umpire.

3.5 A courtesy runner is allowed for an injured batter-runner or runner on any base after time has been called. It is at the discretion of the Umpire who may consult with both captains as to whether a courtesy runner is warranted. In the absence of an umpire, both team captains must agree that a courtesy runner is allowed.

3.6 Where there is a contradiction between the WBSC rules and these Regulations, these Regulations have precedence.

3.7 In cases of doubt about the applicability or interpretation of any Regulation, the decision rests with the umpire. Where no umpire is present, the two captains will record any disputed interpretation on the match report and record the position of play (i.e. position of runners, next batting position, outs, runs and score) at the time of dispute. Wherever possible games should be completed but should an appeal be forthcoming no prejudice shall exist on any side.

3.8 SI will adopt the USA Softball's banned bat list and USA Softball approved bat list.

3.9 An umpire, has the right on the grounds of safety, to stop a player or team from using a specific bat that he/she feels is an altered or banned bat. In such a case the bat shall be removed from play by the umpire and returned to the player after the game. The player or team can appeal this decision to SI. The SI Board will then determine if the bat is in fact a banned bat and therefore the bat will not be allowed to be used in any SI organised event or if the bat is not a banned bat and therefore will be allowed to be used in future matches. The team will not be allowed to appeal the result of the game.

3.10 The batter will enter the batter's box with a zero ball zero strike count in all Softball Ireland games unless further specified in the competition or tournament rules.

4. THE FIELD OF PLAY

4.1 Every club must ensure that their home ground is suitable and safe for any SI competition or tournament they are entered in and that they have all necessary permits to play there. If there is any doubt about suitability and safety, the club representative should request an inspection by SI.

4.2 Ground rules will be set by the umpire following consultation with both team captains. Any regularly occurring grounds rules must be forwarded to SI and will be provided to the umpires.

5. EQUIPMENT AND SAFETY

5.1 Each club is required to have the following minimum list of equipment for each SI competition or tournament home game

5.1.1 One set of softball bases with one dual-coloured safety base at first base

5.1.2 A home plate and a pitcher's plate

5.1.3 At least one legal softball bat

5.1.4 At least 10 softball gloves (9 if playing shorthanded)

5.1.5 At least two legal 12" softballs and at least two legal 11" softballs. Legal softballs are defined by Byelaw 3.5.

5.1.6 Where applicable a letter from the local or government authority certifying authorisation to use the ground.

5.1.7 Four approved helmets

5.2 Players must wear acceptable footwear which in the opinion of the Umpire does not create a danger to other players' safety. An umpire has the right, on the grounds of safety, to stop a player from wearing footwear which in the Umpire's opinion may threaten the safety of other players. Footwear which may be deemed unsafe for play includes:

5.2.1 All metal studs;

5.2.2 Metal baseball cleats;

5.2.3 Screw on studs (screw in studs are acceptable, once they are rubber);

5.2.4 Any plastic or rubber stud which through wear and tear has become worn or sharp to the touch and in the opinion of the Umpire may cause injury to any other player.

6. PLAYERS

6.1 Players must be registered members of SI i.e. they must be registered for the current season with the club/team for which they play in order to take part in any SI tournament or competition or any Regional league.

6.2 An umpire or any other SI official is entitled to ask for proof of identity of any player. In the absence of satisfactory proof of identity, the player may be asked for a signature,

and allowed to play under caution. SI may require the team or player to substantiate this identification at a later date.

6.3 Impersonation of another member is a category 3 offence by the player and the team.

6.4 The lower age limit for participation in any competition is 18 years with the following exception listed below

6.4.1 A team may apply to SI for an exemption for players aged 14 up to 18 years of age. An exemption may be granted subject to agreement of the Board and may require an assessment by an authorised agent of SI. The Player will be bound by the SI age grade policy.

6.5 SI does not accept any liability in cases where the player's condition renders them excluded from SI's insurance policy.

7. CLUBS

7.1 To register as a club with a Regional Association, a club must have paid the appropriate Regional team fee for each of its teams, and the SI Team fee by the close of registration for the current season.

7.2 All the club's business with SI or relevant Regional Association must be through a representative nominated according to the SI Constitution.

8. FIXTURES

8.1 All fixtures are the property of the organising body. No team or club may rearrange a fixture without the express consent of the organising body.

8.2 In exceptional circumstances a team / club may make a written request for postponement. The organising body has complete discretion to grant or refuse a postponement and where granted, will reschedule the fixture. All written requests must be submitted to the organising body. Postponements will only be granted in extreme circumstances, with the following exceptions:

8.2.1 SI will grant postponements, upon written request, to a team for any SI game scheduled to take place during the week of the ESF Competitions if 3 or more members of the team have been selected to represent their country in a playing or coaching capacity.

8.2.2 SI will grant postponements, upon written request, to a team for any SI game scheduled to take place during the week of the ESF "European Cup Co-Ed Slow-pitch" if the clubs' team has been selected to represent SI.

8.3 Where a field appears unsafe for play and in the absence of an umpire, either team / club captain can refuse to play and seek retrospective permission for a postponement without incurring a forfeit.

9. SOFTBALL IRELAND CHAMPIONSHIP & TOURNAMENT STRUCTURES

9.1 The structure and any applicable playing rules for any SI competition or tournament will be issued to all competing clubs at least 2 weeks before commencement of each competition.

9.2 The home team will be designated according to the schedule as issued by the organising body or by toss of a coin on the day.

9.3 In the event of a gap developing in a SI Tournament or competition due to the non-participation of a team / club, then SI may fill the position as appropriate

9.4 In the event of a team withdrawing or being expelled from a competition or tournament, all of their fixtures will be removed from the schedule and any points gained in fixtures against them will be deducted from the other teams in the competition in question to remove their impact on the competition.

9.5 The SINCC is contested by the nominated champions of the SI Regional leagues in accordance with the ratios set out by SI

9.5.1 The format of this competition will be chosen by Softball Ireland and scheduled to follow the completion of the SI provincial leagues.

9.5.2 The winner of this competition will be offered the chance to represent Ireland at the ESF "European Cup Co-Ed Slow-pitch (ECCS)" held the following season.

9.5.2.1. If the winning team is unwilling or unable to attend the ECCS then SI reserves the right to offer their spot to another team / club.

9.5.3 Players must be registered with the qualifying club or team before the end of their SI Regional league season and in accordance with these Regulations, to qualify for the SINCC.

9.5.4 Where a team, which is part of a multi-team club, qualifies for the Softball Ireland National Club Championship, the team may select any player from their club.

9.5.5 Teams that are scheduled to compete within the SINCC must submit their final playing roster no less than 1 week prior to the tournament and the following eligibility rules apply:

9.5.5.1 All players appearing on the playing roster must be fully paid up members of SI

9.5.5.2 All players appearing on the playing roster must be free of any disciplinary actions

9.5.5.3 All players appearing on the playing roster must have featured or played for their team / club in the current season when the SINCC takes place for no less than 30% of games

10. COMPLAINTS, DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AND APPEALS

10.1 Any appeal relating to a SI Board decision which adversely affects a member, must be lodged in writing with the SI Secretary (email is acceptable) within 1 week of the member being informed of the decision in writing (email is acceptable) by the SI Secretary. In cases where this timeline is not met the decision will stand.

10.1.1 Any decisions made in the appeals process are considered final and not subject to further appeal unless the subsequent appeal is considered materially different to the original.

10.2 Any SI member may lodge a request for disciplinary action to be taken against another member (or members), team (including non-SI registered visiting teams) for transgressions of these or other appropriate Regulations at a game in which they were involved or which they witnessed.

10.3 Disciplinary action may also be requested in relation to SI members' behaviour at other events, including social functions organised by SI or subsidiary bodies, or public events attended as SI members or officials.

10.4 A request pertaining to Byelaw 10.3 or 10.4 must be in writing (letter or e-mail) stating the date and event when the incident occurred and the reason why disciplinary action is being sought.

10.5 All requests are to be made to the SI Secretary (secretary@softball.ie)

10.6 SI will appoint a "reporting officer" to handle the case.

10.7 The reporting officer must request statements from the complainant, the accused, and any umpire present, and may also request statements from team captains and any SI representatives or other witnesses present at the time.

10.8 No later than 2 weeks from the initial date of the complaint the reporting officer will pass on his/her findings to the SI Secretary.

10.9 If the reporting officer finds that an offence has been committed, the officers of SI will, within a week and after taking whatever advice they deem necessary, convene a SI Board meeting to hear the accused person's defence, and if necessary to impose appropriate penalties.

10.10 SI will inform the accused's club representative, the accused and the complainant of the outcome.

10.11 An appeal against a decision to impose disciplinary penalties must be made within 1 week in writing to the SI Secretary on payment of the fee specified in Byelaw 18.

10.12 The appeal committee will be convened by the SI Secretary within 1 week, and must complete its work within a further 2 weeks.

10.13 Reasonable expenses may be paid to members of the appeal committee.

10.14 The SI Secretary will keep records of each stage of the disciplinary process including any statements given.

10.15 "Involved" should be interpreted to include:

10.15.1 direct personal involvement in the incident under investigation

10.15.2 direct involvement of immediate family (parent, partner, sibling or offspring) in the incident

10.15.3 Playing or coaching for one of the teams involved

10.15.4 Membership of one of the teams involved

10.15.5 Playing or coaching in the same division as the team involved

10.15.6 being a sponsor of a team under investigation or being employed by such a sponsor.

10.15.7 Failure of an official to declare such involvement may be grounds for upholding an appeal.

10.16 SI, on behalf of any SI registered member, may take disciplinary action against an umpire.

10.17 SI may take disciplinary action against a team, club or any member of SI on recommendations given to them by a registered umpire.

10.18 Any team, club or any member of SI may appeal a decision of a Regional Associations to SI as follows:

10.18.1 Any team, club or any member of SI may appeal a decision of a Regional Association to the SI Board once the appeal process as set out by the Regions Bye-Laws have been exhausted

- 10.18.2 The Applicable appeal fee is submitted to SI at the time of the appeal submission
- 10.18.3 The appeal should be submitted within 1 week of the decision of the Regional Associations decision
- 10.18.4 Upon receipt of the appeal, Softball Ireland will appoint a reporting officer (who may be a Board member). The reporting officer must request statements from the appellant and the Regional Association and all supporting documentation and correspondence.
- 10.18.5 The reporting officer will present findings and recommendations to the SI Board within 2 weeks of their appointment who will make a final decision on the matter, the decision of the SI Board is not subject to appeal.
- 10.18.6 The appellant and Regional Association will be notified in writing within in 7 days of the SI Board decision.
- 10.18.7 The decision of the Board will be publicized on softball.ie within 14 days of its decision

11. INDIVIDUAL & CLUB CONDUCT

- 11.1 The following are reasons for disciplinary action against an individual and/or their club as determined by SI:
 - 11.1.1 Failure of a team captain, manager or coach, or other club members to intervene within a reasonable time to prevent or discourage misconduct.
 - 11.1.2 Ejection from any SI organized game.
 - 11.1.3 Assault either physical or verbal, on a player, Umpire or member of the public.
 - 11.1.4 Coercion or forcing of any participant into in-human, degrading or illegal activities.
 - 11.1.5 Conduct likely to damage the good name of softball or SI or Provincial Association.
- 11.2 Destruction of, damage to, or failure to return, SI equipment or intellectual property is a Category 1 offence.
- 11.3 SI may refuse to renew membership of, grant new membership to, suspend existing membership of, or prevent participation in any SI event of any individual or group involved in an on-going legal dispute with SI or any member of SI.

12. DRUGS IN SPORT

12.1 No affiliated player may contravene the relevant doping laws of the following organisations:

- 12.1.1 International Olympic Committee (IOC)
- 12.1.2 World Anti-Doping Association (WADA)
- 12.1.3 World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC)
- 12.1.4 European Softball Federation (ESF)
- 12.1.5 Olympic Federation of Ireland (OFI)
- 12.1.6 Sport Ireland (SPI)

12.2 A full list of prohibited substances is available from SI. Players who have any doubt about any substance should contact SI for clarification.

12.3 Infraction of this regulation will be a category 4 offence at minimum, and penalties will be in line with those applied by other comparable associations and federations and/or national or international anti-doping organisations.

12.4 Members in the following categories are liable for testing for illegal substances:

12.4.1 any player/manager/coach on international duty, which is defined as being:

- 12.4.1.1. currently serving on any international squad;
- 12.4.1.2. available for selection for any international squad;

13. FEES AND EXPENSES 2020

13.1 SI Fees and Expenses

13.1.1 SI Team Fee: €350.00

13.2 All players must ensure that their Membership fees are fully paid before they play in any fixture. Failure to do so could result in each fixture being counted as a forfeit until such time as all outstanding funds have been paid to SI.

13.2.1 All registration must be completed through the Softball Ireland website.

14. SCALE OF PENALTIES

14.1 Depending on the seriousness of the offence, SI may impose any combination of the penalties within the following ranges for infraction of these Regulations.

14.2 Incurring more than two written cautions for any individual or club in any 3 month period is a category 4 offence.

Category Of Offence	Range of penalties for individuals
1	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Permanent expulsion;2. Suspension for more than one season;3. Suspension from National Squad for more than two years.
2	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Suspension for one season;2. Suspension for more than 5 games or weeks;3. Suspension from National Squad for up to two years.
3	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Suspension for less than 5 games or weeks;2. Suspension for more than 2 games or weeks;3. Community service between 10 and 20 hours.
4	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Suspension for 1 game or 1 week;2. Fine between €75 & €130;3. Community service up to 10 hours.
5	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Fine less than €75;2. Written caution;3. Community service up to 5 hours.