



COMOX VALLEY
SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB

SLO-PITCH LEAGUE RULES

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SECTION 1 – SPORTSMANSHIP + SPIRIT SCORES

Sportsmanship and the CVSSC:

The CVSSC endeavours to make all games as safe and fun as possible, emphasizing the 'Spirit of the Game' no matter the sport or level of play. All players are expected to play with an overriding emphasis on sportsmanship, fair play and a fun-first approach. Players, or teams, that do not play by these values may face league discipline, including suspension or expulsion from the leagues.

Spirit Scores Explained:

To help ensure that teams adopt a sportsmanlike manner in games, the CVSSC collects post-game sportsmanship ratings known as 'spirit scores' from team captains in most leagues. In these 'spirit scores,' team captains are grading their opponents on a 0-5 scale on how fair, sportsmanlike and fun they were to play. These scores are kept private until the end of the regular season, but are used for the following purposes: (1) The first tie-breaker in the standings, thereby rewarding the more sportsmanlike team in the event of a tie; (2) Identifying whether a team may need to be addressed in regards to their behaviour, rules knowledge, or for safety concerns during the season; (3) Putting together an objective, peer-sourced review of each team to help support any decisions by the league to reward the most sportsmanlike teams in the CVSSC and/or discipline the least sportsmanlike teams. For reference, a spirit score of '5' has evolved to become a standard, decent game. Teams can give a lower rating to their opponent if there were any issues, with a score of 2 or below generally initiating a follow-up. As of 2021, captains can also give up to two bonus points (up to a 7 out of 5), to help single out the most fun and sportsmanlike teams for recognition.

Reporting Scores and Spirit Scores:

Captains can report the spirit score and game score to the CVSSC coordinator after the game, where possible. If there is no CVSSC representative, or that rep is unavailable, please send the information to Scott Petersen (Director, CVSSC) at scott@comoxvalleysports.ca within 24 hours of your game. If you do not report these scores within 24 hours, whatever game score is submitted will be used by default and the opponent will receive an automatic 5 for spirit score.

Reporting Sportsmanship Concerns:

Captains are encouraged to communicate with each other before games, and

during stoppages in play, if any issues need to be resolved. If not sufficiently resolved by the opposing team, please contact the CVSSC coordinator at an appropriate time for help, when possible. If you deem the issue requires further action, please send a summary of the incident to the league at the email address above.

SECTION 2 – WEATHER + CANCELLATION POLICY

Indoor Sports Weather Policy:

The CVSSC is unlikely to cancel indoor games due to weather conditions, unless they result in the facility being closed or otherwise inaccessible.

Teams will be contacted via the 'cancellation call' protocol below when that is the case.

Outdoor Sports Weather Policy:

The CVSSC will cancel and re-schedule games when it's believed the weather or field conditions may compromise safety or playing experience. However, since field space and available game nights are at a premium, players should expect to play through some wind/rain during an outdoor sports season for most sports.

- **Weekday Sports** – The initial decision on whether to play or cancel the games will take place by 4 p.m. on game nights. Unless notified of a cancellation via the 'cancellation call' protocol below, please proceed to your game as scheduled. The field coordinator and team captains can consult with each other on whether to delay the start time and/or cancel the games if the weather or field conditions have worsened.
- **Weekend Sports** – Unless otherwise notified before game time via the 'cancellation call' procedures below, teams should show up to the field for their game times regardless of weather. A call on whether to postpone start time, play or cancel, will be made by the team captains (in conjunction with the coordinator, when applicable).

Cancellation Call:

When games are cancelled, the CVSSC will notify its players via the following methods:

- **Facebook Posting** – When games are cancelled, a notice will be posted on the CVSSC Facebook Page at www.facebook.com/ComoxValleySports/ for all players to see. Typically, weather cancellations will be posted around 4 p.m.

- **Captains Email** – Once games have been cancelled (weather, gym closure, field closure, etc...), the CVSSC will send out an email to team captains and singles teams. This is typically only possible if the decision is received/made by 4 p.m.
- **Coordinator Phone/Text** – When cancellations are last-minute or that decision is reached at the field/ beach courts, we will attempt to contact team captains and singles via phone call or text. Beach volleyball is a bit more weather dependant than most sports and more likely to have the info delivered this route.

SECTION 3 – EQUIPMENT, SET-UP + CLEAN-UP

Equipment:

Keys: Captains are required to sign out a set of keys to the Highland Fields storage room and washrooms at the Comox Recreation Centre before the season. The storage room contains the lime and lining equipment (first door on the right), rakes for the infield and the CVSSC Storage Locker. The CVSSC will provide another key at the start of the season for the league's storage locker, which contains the bases, cones and a 'dig-out' tool for the base anchors.

CVSSC Equipment: Each team will be provided 3 game balls at the start of the season. Additional 12" game balls can be purchased from the CVSSC or at Happy's Source For Sports. The bases, cones, rakes, lime and lining equipment can all be found in the storage room as per the note above.

Players' Equipment: Cleats are highly recommended, although metal spikes are not allowed for safety reasons. Players/teams are also responsible for bringing their own gloves, batting helmets, bats and lineup/scoring sheets to games. A link to a list of banned bats is available on the slo-pitch page of the website.

Singles Teams: Teams made up of individual and group registrants will be loaned a bat, a few batting helmets, some balls and scoring equipment for return at the end of the season. Players are encouraged to bring their own helmets.

Field Set-Up + Clean-Up:

The schedule denotes which teams are responsible for setting up and putting away the gear, as well as locking/unlocking the storage room and washrooms. If your team is setting up, please arrive at least 30 minutes early to be able to complete the set-up, warm-up and be prepared to start on time. If you are cleaning up, it is imperative that everything is properly stored away and locked away at the end of the night.

Field Set-Up Instructions: Click on the Field Set-Up link on the Slo-Pitch page of the website for the proper set-up instructions.

- **Base Locations:** Bases are 60-65 feet apart and there are base anchors installed in the ground (with plugs) where each base goes. Please remove the plugs and place them somewhere obvious on the bench during game play so that they can be replaced at the end of the night. A 'dig out' tool is supplied in the CVSSC storage locker if dirt needs to be removed to get the bases to sit flush with the ground.
- **'Safety' Base at 1st:** A safety base will be installed at first base, with the orange side of the base in foul territory. If there is a play at first base, the runner must contact only the orange safety base, and the fielder only the white base in fair territory in order to avoid collisions.
- **Lining the Field:** Teams should line the foul lines (third base is entirely in fair territory, while the foul line should intersect the two bases of the safety base on first), commitment line (halfway between 3rd base and home), scoring line (along front left edge of home plate) and pitching mound (approximately in the center of the diamond, about 50 feet/17 paces from home plate).
- **The Commitment Line:** This line is halfway between third base and home plate. Once a runner touches or crosses this line, they cannot retreat back to third base and it becomes a force play at home plate (the catcher just has to touch home plate with possession of the ball before the runner crosses the home plate line).
- **The Home Plate Line:** This line is drawn directly in line from the front edge of home plate to the backstop. Runners must only cross this line in order to score, but may not touch home plate in order to avoid potential collisions.
- **The Respect Line:** This is a coned-off area in the outfield approximately 30 paces beyond the bases. Three or four cones are

used to create an arcing line that three of the four outfielders cannot cross until the ball has been contacted by the bat. However, the rover (4th OF) is allowed anywhere within that area before the pitch. Two of the cones should be used to help extend the foul lines beyond 1st and 3rd base to help with fair and foul calls.

- **Out of Bounds Line:** Use the backstop and dugout front posts as a guide for when the ball becomes 'out of bounds' on an overthrow by the fielding team. If the ball passes the invisible line on a defensive play, play is dead and the runners are able to advance one base. If a runner would've received the base they were headed to easily and unchallenged, they get that base and one more. Of note, any pop up is fair play for catching, whether it crosses the out of bounds line in the air or not. If it is caught, runners on base can choose to tag up and try to advance.

*The CVSSC is not responsible for personal items before, during or after games. Please clean up after yourselves and teammates before leaving and certainly check with the both the CVSSC and the facility's lost and found for anything left behind, including: water bottles, clothing, equipment, keys, wallets and more.

SECTION 4 – ROSTERS, SUBS + DEFAULTS

Rosters:

- There is no maximum number of players that can be on a roster, but teams are advised to include all players they expect will play on their roster when registering. Most slo-pitch rosters will have about 15 players. All players must have signed the new online waiver at least once since 2021: <https://comoxvalleysports.ca/waiver/>.
- Teams can bring in additional players that are not on their roster during the season as long as those players are of similar ability to those they are replacing and signed the online waiver (link above).
- In the spirit of sportsmanship, players are expected to have played with the team during the regular season to be able to play with them in the playoffs.
- In the playoffs, teams that are playing for a chance at first place (typically the top 4 teams) can only field players that have played at least 1 regular season game for them. Teams outside the top 4 may bring in subs via the usual sub rules.

- Individual teams rosters (for players that signed up without a team) and league information will be emailed out at least 48 hours before first scheduled game.
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Subs:

- Lists of available subs can be found via links on the home page and on each sport's league page. Give subs as much advance notice as possible and text/phone for best results.
 - Players can get their names and info on the subs list by filling out the online form at: <https://comoxvalleysports.ca/sub-list-signup/>. To edit your entry, or remove yourself, simply fill out the form again with the same name and contact info and re-submit your entry. It will update your preferences.
 - Teams may also contact Scott at the CVSSC for a list of potential suitable options at scott@comoxvalleysports.ca.
 - Teams may bring in subs when they are short players.
 - In the spirit of sportsmanship, teams are expected to bring in subs of a similar skill level to those missing. Bringing in 'ringers' for games is heavily discouraged.
 - Team captains are advised to run any subs past their opponents before the game, for their approval. This is designed to give a team a say in which player(s) they get to play and avoid the possibility of a ringer swinging the game result.
 - Teams may borrow player(s) from another team (such as a team in a previous time slot), as long as said player(s) are needed to make a game happen, and meet the subbing requirements (similar skill level of player replacing, and agreed upon by opposing team).
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Defaults:

- If a team is unable to field the minimum number of players (at least 7 players with at least two female players) within 15 minutes of the scheduled game time, the result will go down as a default win for the opponent with a recorded score of 20-0.

- Any team that defaults more than once in a season can face further league discipline, including potentially being removed from the league.
- Because the leagues are about playing, and having fun, an opponent may waive their right to a default victory before the game and choose to play. They may even loan players to make it happen. But both teams must agree before the game whether the result will count in the standings. That decision cannot be reversed after the fact.

*If a game is a default, please split up players and play for fun. The idea is to have as good a time as possible each time out. Ask the coordinator for ideas or help to make it work if you need it.

SECTION 5 – MATCH PLAY + FORMAT

Game Format:

- **Game Length:** Games will be seven innings, or up to 90 minutes. There must be at least 10 minutes left in the time slot to start a new inning, otherwise the game should be deemed completed.
- **Positions:** Games are 10-on-10 this season (pitcher, catcher, first base, second base, shortstop, third base, three designated outfielders and a rover). Teams pitch to their opponent using the strike mat to help judge balls and strikes.
- **Male/Female Ratio:** At least 3 of the defensive players on the field should be female as the standard, though teams may play more if they so choose. Teams can field a minimum of 2 female players in the field if they are short, but will play with one less defensive player as a result.
- **Scoring Limits:** There is a “catch-up plus 5” rule in place in each inning. This means that teams can score enough runs to catch their opponent and then surpass them by 5 runs in each inning. There are no open innings.
- **Mercy Rule:** If a team takes a lead of 20 runs and that inning is complete, scorekeeping is stopped and the game is considered complete. Teams are encouraged to continue playing for fun.
- **Substitutions:** Teams can sub players in and out of whichever positions they like between innings, but not during innings (unless there’s an injury).

- **Ties:** Regular season games can end in a tie. In the playoffs, teams will go to extra innings to decide a victor.

SECTION 6 – GENERAL RULES

Starting the Game and Keeping Score:

- Team captains should meet before the game to discuss any issues, decide who is home/away team via a game of RPS (rock, paper, scissors), exchange rosters and get their game started promptly.
- Both teams are responsible for keeping score and double-checking with each other between each inning that they have the same score. Any discrepancies should be figured out before the game continues. Links to two versions of score sheets are available on the slo-pitch page of the CVSSC website for printing and use by the teams.
- Before starting the game, both teams should make sure the bases are sitting flat and level and that the playing surface is free of any soccer goals, debris, or any other potential safety issues.

Pitching To Opponent:

- Teams pitch to their opponents from a pitching 'mound' 50 feet (approx. 17 paces) away from home plate. Pitchers are not allowed to move closer to the plate due to safety considerations.
 - Each batter receives up to 3 strikes and/or 4 balls.
 - The pitch must be an underhand toss that travels an arc of between 6-12 feet, or it will be deemed illegal. (The umpire must call 'illegal' before the batter makes a play on the ball. It results in an additional 'ball' on the batter's count. If the batter makes a play on the ball, the result of the play cannot be overturned.
 - A strike occurs:
 - On a swing and a miss or a foul ball. A foul ball with two strikes does count as a third strike and an out.
 - If the ball contacts any part of the strike mat. (Home plate is not considered part of the strike mat and is a ball.)
 - If a batter is walked on four straight balls (no strikes) to begin an at-bat, the batter proceeds to second base and the next batter on deck can choose between batting or taking an auto-

walk to first base. Other base runners would only advance to the next base if the walk(s) force them to it.

- On a swing and a miss or a foul ball.
- If the ball contacts any part of the strike mat. (Home plate is not considered part of the strike mat and is a ball.)

Batting and Base-Running:

- **Ground Rule Doubles:** Any ball that lands in fair territory and leaves the field of play beyond first and third base becomes an automatic ground rule double. This includes a ball that gets stuck in bushes, enters the forest, or slices down an embankment and out of play. If the fielder cannot retrieve the ball in fair/foul territory due an obstacle of this nature, the ground rule double takes effect. Any base-runners move up just two bases.
- **Bunting:** Not allowed for all players. A full swing resulting in a short hit is fine.
- **Banned Bats:** There is a link on the slo pitch page of the website to a list of banned bats.
- **Courtesy Runner:** If a player is injured in a way that affects their running, a team may substitute the last player out of the same gender onto the bases for them.
- **Fair/Foul Balls:** The ball is judged based on its first point of contact with the ground and then whether it passes first/third base in fair territory. Calls should be made clearly by the acting umpire at the time.
- **Base Running:** Lead-offs and stolen bases are not allowed. Runners must wait to leave first base until the ball is contacted with the bat. Please respect this rule and remind players if you see infractions. Tag-ups are allowed on pop flies. Baserunners can no longer attempt to advance once the ball is back to the pitcher. All ties go to the runner.
- **Sliding:** Sliding is not allowed into any base.
- **Force Out at Home/No Tag:** Once the baserunner crosses the commitment line, they can no longer return to third base and it becomes a force out at home plate. The baserunner must cross the home plate line with a foot on the ground before a defender touches home plate with possession of the ball. The runner cannot be tagged

beyond the commitment line to avoid collisions. The runner must not touch home plate to avoid collisions. The runner is out if they touch home plate.

- **Runner Interference:** This is when a runner is obstructed from advancing to a base by a fielder, or a fielder is obstructed from making a defensive play by the runner. It is too subjective to have one rule cover all instances. If this happens and it is not obvious what the decision should be (ie. runner(s) being safe or out), re-play the pitch.
- **Infield Fly Rule:** This is a complicated rule used in many baseball and slo pitch leagues to keep infielders from purposefully dropping an infield fly ball to try and turn a double play or get a more advantageous out at another base. However, because it is complicated and contentious, it does not exist in our recreational league and the impetus is on the players and team captains to make sure it's not being taken advantage of with purposefully dropped fly balls. Runners are on their own to decide whether they want to try and advance or not on an infield fly. Infielders are on their own to do their best to make the catch and appropriate play. If it seems like a questionable result came from a dropped infield fly, it is possible to replay the pitch.
- **Foul Tips:** To be out on a foul tip caught by the catcher, the tipped ball must travel at least above the batter's head first.

Umpiring:

- **Self-Umpiring:** All CVSSC Slo-Pitch games are self-umpired. The umpire should be a player who knows the rules well and makes clear, audible calls.
 - The batting team will supply a home plate umpire to call balls, strikes, outs, as well as fair and foul balls.
 - 1st and 3rd umpires are not mandatory, but are encouraged to help make any calls. They would also be supplied by the batting team.
 - If an umpire makes an incorrect call, the two captains should quickly agree on a resolution.
- **Outs:** The batting team can (i) strike out (including hitting a foul ball when already have two strikes); (ii) be tagged out with the ball; (iii) caught out on a fly ball; (iv) forced out by the fielding team tagging

the base they must advance to on a ball in play (this includes home plate after touching/crossing the commitment line); (v) hit by a batted ball while running bases, thereby affecting the fielding team's chances of making a play in a 'runner interference' situation; (vi) be called out for leaving the base path to avoid being tagged; (vii) touching home plate; and (viii) have an automatic "Jane Doe out" in their lineup if they are unable to have at least three females in the batting lineup (ie. Each time the third woman in the lineup would be up to bat, she's considered an automatic out and the next player comes to the plate).

Batting Lineup:

The entire team can be placed in the batting lineup, regardless of whether they're playing defence in the field for a given inning. However, there can never be more than two guys batting in a row in the lineup, including the switch from bottom of the order to top of the order. That means a girl should be up at least every third batter.

1) Proper Batting Line-Up Example: M-M-F-M-M-F-M-M-F

2) Improper Batting Line-Up Example: M-F-M-M-M-F-M-M-M-F

To make this ratio possible, some teams may have to rotate girls through the order a bit faster than the guys. In this instance, it helps to have separate batting line-ups for the guys and girls. In the example below of what this looks like on a score sheet where the team has only three girls, the girls would rotate through the different female spots in the batting order, taking turns being "Girl" as their spot in the ladies order comes up.

3) XTRA Guys Line-Up Example:

Joe, Jim, **Girl**, Jay, Gus, **Girl**, Bo, Bob, **Girl**, Lou, Drew, **Girl**.

If a team is short on girls (fewer than 3 girls), then every third time a girl would be up in the order would be an automatic out. As long as

4) Jane Doe Line-Up Example (only two women in line-up):

Joe, Jim, Girl1, Jay, Gus, Girl2, Bo, Bob, **Jane Doe Out**, Lou, Drew, Girl1

SECTION 7 – SCHEDULES, SCORES, STANDINGS + PLAYOFFS

Schedules:

Schedules will be posted online and accessible via each team's Team Page and the 'Schedule' link on each sport homepage online at least 48 hours before the first game, with team captains and singles registrants all notified via email. Each subsequent schedule update will follow the same protocol. Please double-check your schedule online before each game and notify the CVSSC of any issues or discrepancies at scott@comoxvalleysports.ca.

Scores:

Game Scores should be submitted to the CVSSC coordinator by both teams at the end of the game. If a CVSSC rep is not available, both teams should email the info to scott@comoxvalleysports.ca within 24 hours. If only one team submits a score, that score will be used in updating the standings.

Standings:

The Standings Page of the CVSSC will be updated on a weekly basis and can be viewed online at: www.comoxvalleysports.ca/league-standings.php. Players can click their team name to review game scores, while the standings page also has filters to allow players the ability to search the results for various seasons and years.

- **Final standings** – Are determined by number of points (two for a win; one for a tie; zero for a loss).
- **Tie-breakers** – (1) Spirit points totals (in all leagues that collect spirit points); (2) Most wins; (3) Runs differential; (4) Head-to-head result; (5) Coin flip or RPS.

Playoffs:

Playoffs will be scheduled to take up anywhere from 1-3 weeks of the scheduled season. All teams make the playoffs, but typically only the top 4-8 seeds have a shot at finishing in first place to allow for closer games and hopefully allow for as much fun as possible. Playoff matches will be set by the CVSSC based on the standings at the end of the regular season and teams will be notified via the 'schedule' protocols listed above.

*The CVSSC reserves the right to alter the schedule and adjust match-ups, tiers, and tweak the final standings in order to make sure everyone is playing at the level most suitable to them, and to maximize safety and fun.

Team Communications: (a) Team captains are advised to keep in touch with each other throughout the game if there are any issues that pop up, and make any changes as necessary. It is important that these communications be kept civil, with the idea of 'fixing' any problems and not placing blame. If needed, the next step is to involve the coordinator; (b) Teams should refrain from yelling at each other for any reason, and if anything needs clarified, work together to pause the game action and sort it out; (c) If a game is going very well, let the opponent know how much fun you're having. Slo-Pitch is an amazing sport, with so much great stuff happening, and everyone loves to hear good things.

Sportsmanship and 'Funnest' Teams: Play to have fun. Each game should be a good time for everyone involved on both teams. And if you play a team that was above-and-beyond terrific to play against, please let the coordinator and/or CVSSC management know.

SECTION 8 – WAIVERS, FIELDS + FACILITIES

Waivers:

All players must have signed an online waiver, which outlines the CVSSC's liability and sportsmanship policies (among other things), before playing a game: <https://comoxvalleysports.ca/waiver/>. Players need only sign a CVSSC waiver once since 2021 to be allowed to play, regardless of the number of sports or seasons they are participating in. Captains must make sure any new players and subs have signed a waiver before playing.

Fields and Facilities:

The CVSSC rents playing fields and facilities from various providers throughout the Comox Valley. Please be exceptionally respectful of each location, whether indoors or outdoors, to ensure the CVSSC can continue booking many of the best fields and facilities available and offer these recreational sports leagues. Here are some important things expected from our players:

- **Smoking/Drinking:** Follow proper facility/field protocols on smoking. Unless otherwise specified, the CVSSC establishments are alcohol free.
- **Garbage:** Clean up before leaving – including water bottles.
- **Damages:** You will be held responsible for any damages you cause. Be respectful of the facilities and fields we rent.
- **Footwear:** Bring clean, non-marking shoes for indoors. No metal cleats allowed for outdoors.
- **Warm-Up:** Arrive 15-30 minutes early to get warmed up while ensuring your warm-up doesn't affect games in progress.

Alcohol Policy:

The CVSSC rents public facilities for all its leagues and tournaments. Unless otherwise stated, these facilities are unlicensed. As such, possession and consumption of alcohol during CVSSC league games and tournaments (unless in a licensed area) is not legal and prohibited.

Sponsor Bars:

If players would like to socialize over some food or drink, the CVSSC sets up Sponsor Bar deals at various locations. Check out the details online at: <http://www.comoxvalleysports.ca/sponsors.php>.