

LAKES LEAGUE

OPERATIONS/ORGANIZATION MANUAL

Approved: September 5, 2025; Added III, C 10/8/25

I League Administration

A. Committees

1. *Website Committee*

Website Committee Mission and Responsibilities:

The Website Committee will work to ensure all relevant information regarding the League is posted online, accessible to players and the general public. The Committee will be overseen by the League President.

The Website Committee will maintain and keep current the information deemed appropriate for the website. The Committee may directly contact managers if needed to verify or collect information.

2. *Rules Committee*

Rules Committee Mission and Responsibilities:

The Rules Committee will work to ensure League rules are consistent with League policy, are current, and are followed by League members to help provide a safe and level playing field as well as remaining recreational in nature. This committee and any sub-committees will be staffed and overseen by the League Vice President.

The Committee will review all by-laws, procedural, and playing rules prior to enactment to ensure proper placement in League documents and prevent confusing and/or overlapping demands and/or violations to any national or League rules. The Rules Committee will also provide advice and recommendations to the League's officers and managers through the formation and operation of the following sub-committees:

a. *Parity Sub Committee*

Sub-Committee Mission and Responsibilities:

The Parity Sub-Committee will work to encourage and maintain a *balanced and reasonable* level of competition between the teams playing within each division of the League. We believe that team parity helps to ensure player safety and encourages greater participation in our sport.

The Parity Sub- Committee will provide advice and recommendations to the League's officers and managers pertaining to three general areas of oversight responsibility:

(1) Team Level Review

The sub-committee will develop a process for (a) recommending the appropriate competition level for new teams prior to League entry, and (b) reviewing the competition level of all teams at mid-season.

(2) *Player Level Review*

The sub-committee will develop a process for assessing the skill level of individual players and identifying potential “impact” players for League consideration. This assessment should include available metrics (such as batting average or home runs per game) in addition to Committee member observations.

(3) *Rule-Related Recommendations*

The sub-committee will review the rules governing play in each division annually (or as needed) and make appropriate recommendations for rule changes *meant to improve team parity and player safety*. Suggested review areas might include (for example only) restrictions on player age, home runs allowed, courtesy runners, softballs and bats used, number of higher level players per team per division, etc.

b. *Protest Sub-Committee*

Sub-Committee Mission and Responsibilities:

The Protest Sub Committee will work with the Rules Committee to ensure League rules are properly interpreted.

Upon being notified by the home plate umpire that a protest has been lodged claiming there to be a misinterpretation of a League rule, a Protest Sub-Committee will be formed and shall review the situation and the rule to make a determination. The result will be dealt with per League Rules.

c. *Discipline Sub-Committee*

Sub-Committee Mission and Responsibilities:

The Discipline Sub-Committee will work with the Rules Committee to ensure League rules and expectations are properly executed.

Upon being notified by an umpire or manager that an individual player or coach has allegedly violated League Rules, the Discipline Sub-Committee will be formed to investigate the incident(s) by interviewing /gathering statements from managers, umpires, involved players, etc. They will then recommend if any disciplinary action is to be taken and if so, what it may be. Disciplinary recommendations will be implemented by the League President.

d. *Umpire Rules Coordinating Sub-Committee*

Umpire Rules Coordinating Sub-Committee Mission and Responsibilities:

This Sub-Committee will ensure umpires are well-prepared and trained. It will serve as a liaison helping League members better understand rules, provide expert analysis of rule interpretation in the event of a protest, assist with investigations of the Discipline Sub-Committee and other functions deemed essential by the League.

1. Advise managers, and umpires of SSUSA rules, rule changes, and differences between League rules and SSUSA and/or rules from other nearby leagues.

2. Conduct pre-season and mid-season rules review meetings for all League umpires with open invitation to others (e.g., players, managers, directors).
3. Advise/assist Vice President and Protest Committee on rule(s) interpretation of game protests.
4. Respond to managers/players/umpires on rules questions/concerns.
5. Maintain list of League umpires.
6. Assist Roster Committee on collecting waivers from League umpires.

3. *Schedule Committee*

Schedule Committee Mission and Responsibilities:

This Committee shall help ensure all teams have a fair and balanced annual schedule. This Committee and any Sub-Committees will be staffed and overseen by the League Secretary.

This Committee shall develop the annual schedule in advance of the upcoming season, assigning all game times, locations, and other information needed for the smooth running of League regular season play. It will take into consideration things like federal holidays, special individual team events, overcrowding of a particular field, maximizing opportunities for concession and other fund raising sales, etc. Once the annual schedule is accepted by the League, the Committee's responsibilities end and the individual home teams must notify the opponent should something change. Besides notifying the opponent, the home team shall also notify the web master and the League President.

The Schedule Committee may assist with scheduling events like All Star Games and Post Season Tournaments *if requested by the host director*.

4. *Roster Committee*

Roster Committee Mission and Responsibilities:

The Roster Committee shall ensure fairness, safety, and consistency by serving as a depository of up to date rosters. This committee and any sub-committees will be staffed and overseen by the League Secretary.

The Roster Committee shall maintain current up-to-date rosters supported by properly executed Player Agreements (i.e., waivers). In addition, the Committee will ensure all umpires and on-field personnel have the proper paperwork on file. The Committee may recommend procedures to the League to expedite its responsibilities.

5. *Budget and Audit Committee*

Budget and Audit Committee Mission and Responsibilities:

The Budget and Audit Committee shall ensure fiscal stability of the League. This committee and any sub-committees will be staffed by League officers and overseen by the League Treasurer.

The Budget and Audit Committee will provide oversight to the League finances by reviewing past expenditures and current needs. Based on its research, it will present a recommendation for dues prior to the Fall meeting.

B. Fees

All fees owed the League by the teams must be paid in full prior to the first game of the regular season. Failure to pay in full will result in any game(s) to be forfeited. Continued failure to pay on a timely manner may result in ejection from the League.

C. Rosters

Preseason Rosters along with required and completed Player Agreements must be submitted to the Roster Committee Chair and to the Website Manager at least two weeks before the fall meeting. Failure to do so will result in each player being deemed ineligible and all games played will be forfeited. Continued failure to provide this information may result in ejection from the League. Falsification of any record may result in the player or team being disqualified from the League.

II League Structure

A. Divisions (Some divisions described are included as placeholders, giving the League options for the future.)

1. *Division A*
This is an Open Division with unlimited Impact Players (defined in Section B below. Any ball players who wish an extremely high level of competition are invited to be involved.
2. *Division B*
No Impact Players are permitted in this Division. This is the only Division where recently removed Impact Players are eligible. Otherwise, this competitive Division is geared for more highly skilled players.
3. *Division C*
Division meant for knowledgeable but moderately skilled players.
4. *Division D*
Division designed for lower level and older players only. Meant be a Division where the game is less competitive and more social in nature.

B. Impact Players

1. *Definition:* An Impact Player is one who *could compete* at a high level based on his overall skills in the *majority* of these categories:

- **Batting* (power, average, and/or ability to place hit [emphasis on power])
- **Defense* (fielding ability/aggressiveness, range, and/or arm strength/accuracy, covering bases/backing up)
- **Pitching* (if applicable-control of height and location of pitch, aware of hitters strengths and weaknesses, situational awareness, fielding the position, covering bases/backing up plays)
- **Base running* (speed and/or situational awareness)
- **Game awareness* (uses good judgment “on the fly” in high pressure situations during the game, communicates effectively with other defenders, positions himself properly as the situation requires).

2. *Current list*: The current Impact Player list will be distributed to all C Representatives and Coaches/Managers whenever it is revised. Additions to this list can be made as needed per Section II C 4Reed

C. **Rosters**

1. *Pre-season*
 - a. Community representatives must submit copies of player agreements to the Roster Committee Chair, along with their team's preseason roster. This must be done a minimum of two weeks before the League's fall meeting.
 - b. The Roster Committee will verify that the information provided on preseason rosters matches the information provided on individual player agreements. The Committee may request additional information for verification.
 - c. Once verified, the preseason roster for each team will be published on the League website as the official roster for the upcoming season. The League Webmaster will notify community representatives when the official rosters are on the website.
 - d. Community representatives may initiate a Parity Committee review of the placement of any player on a team roster by following the procedures established by the Parity Committee.
2. *Mid-Season Additions*
 - a. Changes or additions to the official roster for any team must be submitted by that team's community representative through an email communication to the Roster Committee Chair (including any new player agreements required for review).
 - b. The Roster Committee Chair will review and approve or reject requested roster changes, and communicate their decision to the community representative. The League Webmaster will be asked to make approved roster changes on the website.
 - c. A player is not eligible to participate in a League game until their player agreement has been received and their verified roster information has been added to their team's official roster and displayed on the League website.
3. *Tournament eligibility*: A player is eligible for tournament play if (a) he is on the pre-season roster of team but unable to participate due to a verifiable illness or injury or (b) he has physically played in at least ten games prior to tournaments. “Physically played” means playing at least one inning on defense and/or batting at least once per game.
4. *Certification/Re-certification of Impact Player*: A player may be certified or re-certified as an Impact Player at any time during a season by a majority vote of the managers from the impacted division. A review and recommendation from the Parity Committee is mandatory.

5. *Non-Community Players:* The League welcomes both Community and non-Community based teams. Communities are permitted to add players from outside their community. That number is determined by each community's HOA or Management Company. No violations of the Impact Player Rule are permitted.
Non-Community Teams particularly will not be permitted to "load up" and "loading up" with outside players to maintain a competitive balance within the League in general will not be tolerated by the Parity Committee or the League.
6. Male players must be at least 55 years old and females at least 45 years old, except that: one male player may be 50 to 55 years old. He must be a resident of the community from which the team is formed and one female player may be younger than 45. She must be a resident of the community from which the team is formed.

A player's age is determined by how old the player will be at the end of the calendar year in which the current season ends.

III League Play

Game play is governed by SSUSA Rules with these Lakes League exceptions:

- A. *Number of Players* - League has **no** limit on number of players on team rosters.
- B. *Diamond Layout* – Refer to Field Dimensions diagram (Appendix 1). Because some teams do not control the field on which they play, it may be necessary to tolerate minor differences in dimensions.
- C. *Bats* – Bats used in this League must bear the ASA 2000 certification mark, the ASA 2004 certification mark, or the ASA/USA certification marks after 2017 as shown in Appendix 2.
Additionally, any bat used must be listed as an approved bat on the USA softball official site (<https://www.usasoftball.com/certified-equipment>).

Illegal or altered bats are WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO BE USED IN ANY LAKES LEAGUES GAME and penalties will be assessed to anyone using such a bat. An illegal bat is one not on the ASA/USA approved list while an altered bat is one which has been tampered with to give the user an unfair and/or unsaved advantage. Once an umpire has determined a bat to be illegal or altered it may not be used.

Penalties for use of illegal or altered bats will be levied upon investigation by the League.

Penalties for a player using or having used an **altered** bat will be subject to the following sanctions:

1. First Offense 8 Game Suspension
2. Second Offense 16 Game Suspension
3. Third Offense Complete Expulsion from The League

Penalties for a player using or having used an **illegal** bat will be subject to the following sanctions:

1. First Offense Immediate Ejection from The Game Followed with a Four Game Suspension.

2. Second Offense Immediate Ejection from The Game Followed with an Eight Game Suspension.
3. Third Offense Immediate Ejection from the Game Followed with a One Year Suspension.

NOTE: The Suspensions of Games Does Not Include the Game the Player is Ejected From at The Time of Incident.

NOTE: Players are personally responsible for bats they purchase – particularly used bats – and are held personally accountable should the bat later be determined as illegal or altered.

D *Bat Inspection*

1. Each manager is responsible for policing the bats on his own team.
2. All bats to be used in the game must be in the bat rack prior to the start of the game. No bat may be used unless it comes from and is returned to the bat rack.
3. Umpires should inspect all bats prior to the game to identify any unsafe or illegal bat. If one is found prior to the game, the player will be warned and that bat will be removed from the game. The League Vice-President will be notified.
4. If any league official, including managers, players, and umpires, have probable cause, suspicion, strong belief, or any other reasonable information that a particular bat used or being used in an official Lakes League Game will come forth and advise the umpire or Lakes League Board member of this information.

At this time, the umpire, team manager, or Lakes League Board Member will determine/identify the owner of the bat, and user of the bat at this time. The owner of the bat will be asked at the appropriate time to set up a meeting with appropriate board members for proper testing and further investigation.

The Umpire, Manager, or Lakes League Board member will complete at the time of incident an Official Lakes League Form to the owner or user of the bat and maintain another copy/picture of this completed form describing the bat (Make, Model, Color, Weight, and any other identifying features of this bat.

At the time of incident, the bat WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO BE USED IN ANY LAKES LEAGUES GAMES until the matter is resolved. The owner/user of the bat will be permitted to play in the game WITHOUT USE OF THIS PARTICULAR BAT.

ILLEGAL BAT/ALTERED BAT

If a player/owner/user is identified for using a potential illegal bat in a Lakes League Game both managers will be notified immediately and the bat removed from the game. The Board of DIRECTORS WILL BE CONTACTED ASAP WITH THE NECESSARY INFORMATION.

NOTE: For determination of legal/illegal bats please refer Lakes League Rule (3.2) (Official Bats) and Appendix II-Non- Approved Bat List Pages 27, 28, 29)

- E *Balls* – In accordance with League rules, softballs will be yellow and can be either 44/375 or 52/300. Home team will inform umpires and visiting team which ball will be used for the game. The Board of Directors will determine which ball is used for All Star Games and Post-Season Tournaments.

F *Uniforms* – All team members must have matching shirts and hats. Hats must be worn with the bill forward, exception if wearing protective headgear.

G *The Game*

1. Length of game – Games will be eight innings. If double headers, games will be six innings.
2. Pitch count will start at 0-0. Third strike foul results in a strike out with batter being deemed out.
3. Batted ball hitting the pitching screen is a “dead ball” with no pitch count and no player advancements.
 - a) Umpires should remind pitchers to move behind screen after releasing pitch. After three or four informal reminders, umpire should issue a formal warning when pitcher has not attempted a move behind screen as ball reaches home plate area. Notifications are to be given to both managers and scorekeeper as well as pitcher.
 - b) Whenever a pitcher fails to move behind screen and fields a ball, umpire will declare a “dead ball”, advance batter and any runner(s) one base, and issue a formal warning.
 - c) After three formal warnings, pitcher must be removed from the pitching position. If the defensive team does not have another pitcher, a *forfeit* will be declared.
4. A *mercy rule* will be enforced when the losing team trails by 15 runs and has batted five innings or more. If the home team is losing, they must have batted an equal number of innings as the visitors.
5. *Number of players*
 - a) Teams must field eleven players on defense and an unlimited number of players on offense. Each defensive player must be in the batting line-up.
 - b) Teams must field at least nine players or forfeit. Teams with nine players may use one player from the other team with no penalty. Teams with ten players may catch themselves with no penalty or borrow a player from the other team with an out being called on the 11th batting position.
 - c) Borrowed players will not bat. After a game starts, teams cannot add players to the batting order but can utilize substitute(s) if listed on lineup card.
6. Lineup cards *must* be exchanged prior to the start of the game and maintained by teams to potentially determine tournament eligibility.
7. Games will be played if the temperature is at least 45 degrees Fahrenheit. The game start may be delayed if the forecast suggests the temperature will reach 45* within an hour of scheduled start time.

H *Scoring of runs*

One run shall be scored each time a runner touches the ground on or beyond the scoring line.

1. No team may score more than five runs in an inning except on an over-the-fence home run which will result in a sixth run being scored. A team trailing by more than five runs can score enough to *catch up only*. An unlimited number of runs may be scored in the last (open) inning or any extra inning.
2. Hit and Sit policy is used for over-the-fence home runs. Batter nor baserunners need to advance.
3. For Divisions A, B, and C, a maximum of three team over-the-fence home runs per game are permitted. After three over-the-fence home runs, the next three over-the fence home

runs will be singles with runners advancing one base only. Subsequent over-the-fence home runs are outs. There is no home run limit for Division D.

I *On Base Situations – Put Outs (Tags and Forces) – A runner, batter-runner, or courtesy runner is put out*

1. When the defensive player in possession of the ball touches the base to which the runner is forced before the runner reaches it
2. When a defensive player in possession of the ball touches the base to which the runner is running (but not forced) provided runner does not reverse direction. A runner is allowed one reversal between bases *when a play is being made on that runner*. Any change of direction is considered a reversal. A second change of direction will result in runner being declared out.
3. When defensive player tags runner when runner is off base.
4. When a runner leaves a base before pitched ball reaches the plate, strikes the ground in or around plate, or is hit by batter.

J *Courtesy Runner (CR)*

1. Any player on the lineup card can be a CR. CR can be used at any time. CR is in the game when he touches the base or reports to the umpire.
2. A CR can be used for the batter. If CR steps over the CR line before the pitched ball is hit, reaches plate, or strikes ground on or around home plate, the batter is out.
3. If batter with a CR runs and touches first base, he will be out and dead ball declared. Runners must return to their original base(s).
4. For extra-inning games, if last batter the previous inning had a CR, that runner will be placed on second base and cannot be replaced.

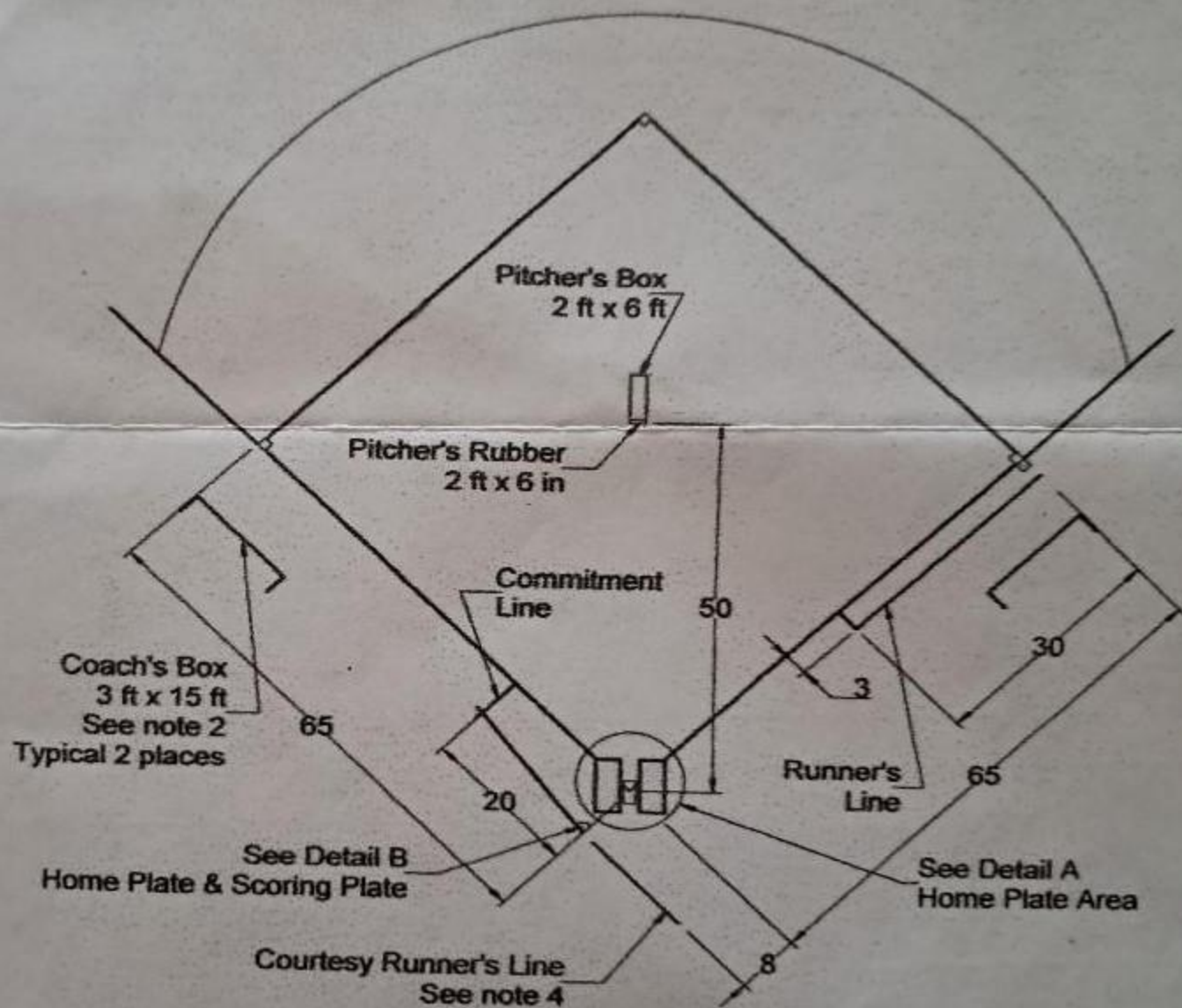
K *Commitment Line*

1. This line marks that point at which a runner may no longer reverse directions. Once one foot touches the ground on or past this line, the runner is committed to advancing. If runner reverses, he is declared out and ball remains live.
2. If runner has one foot across the line and is tagged by a defensive player, a run is awarded and ball remains live.

L *Protest Procedure*

1. A protest may be made prior to the first legal or illegal pitch after the protested event. Note protest in both scorebooks.
2. Managers and umpire(s) will notify Vice President that a protest has been filed. Notifications will include game date, teams playing, inning and game situation, nature of alleged rule misinterpretation or misapplication of rule.
3. The League Vice President will appoint an ad hoc Protest Committee to review and resolve the protest.

Appendix I – Field Dimensions



Infield
1"=20'

Notes:

1. Unless specified otherwise, all dimensions are in feet.
2. Coach's boxes may be placed according to space available.
3. On-deck circles and "X" circles (not shown) may be placed according to space available.
4. Courtesy Runner's Line is to be 8 feet from and parallel with the extended 3rd base line.