

OSA League Rules for mixed (co-ed) play: 2023 Season

Rules sub-committee, 10/04/2022 – issue 1

REMINDERS/CLARIFICATIONS (2022)

Borrowing players

- If a team is unable to field a team of 10 that complies with the gender rules, then they may borrow up to two players (of any gender mix) from another OSA team. These players bat, but can only play in the following fielding positions: P, C, RF, CR.
- If a team has sufficient numbers (including borrowed or otherwise), but does not have a recognised pitcher, then they may borrow a pitcher from another OSA team. This borrowed pitcher does not bat (one of your team bats in their place).
- If you have arranged to borrow a player but then find that you have a full team “on the night”, you may not play the borrowed player.

Gender

The 2020-2021 trial rules for non-binary¹ players have been fully incorporated into the rules. In summary:

- You may only field a maximum of 2 male/female/non-binary players in the infield, and the same in the outfield.
- Batting must alternate gender to the extent possible.
- At the start of a game, female and non-binary players may elect to bat a large ball, and if walked they go to 2nd base (and if walked when there are two outs then the following batter may elect to walk to first base).

Mercy/Runs ahead

Both rules are in force:

- The standard WBSC runs ahead rule applies (ahead by 20 runs after 4 innings, and 15 after 5).
- During the first 6 innings, batting stops after the play which scores the 7th run of the innings is concluded.

Statistics

Teams nominate two “best fielders” from their opponents (N.B “best fielder” - this is not an MVP or a “sympathy” nomination).

At bat teams must record strikeouts & walks, and share these with their opponent at the end of the game.

Teams must upload a photo/copy of their scoresheet on the night of the game to: stats@oxfordsoftball.uk

If teams finish on the same points score, head to head wins, and then head to head run difference, is used to decide which finishes above the other in the standings. So, there is no benefit from building up a big run difference against other teams.

First Aid

First aid kits must include as a minimum: plasters/dressings/bandages to manage bleeding, and spray/ice packs to manage bruising.

¹ “non-binary” is used as a convenient short-hand to refer to non-binary, transgender and non-gender.

INTRODUCTION

All World Baseball Softball Confederation rules will be followed for the entire duration of the season, with the exceptions, modifications or clarifications detailed below.

THE LEAGUE

League structure and schedule, promotion and relegation

Structure, scheduling and umpiring

The league structure depends on the number of teams taking part in the current season. The Executive Committee will determine the league structure, game schedule and umpiring responsibilities prior to the start of the season and will circulate relevant information to team captains in a timely fashion.

If the league consists of two or more divisions, then the team finishing the season bottom of division 1 will be relegated, and the team finishing top of division 2 will be promoted.

New and reconstituted teams

New teams joining the league will start in the lower division. However, where there are extenuating circumstances, teams may apply to the Executive Committee for an exemption to this rule.

A team does not qualify as a “new team” by simply changing their name. In the event that existing teams disband to form new teams, and claim the place of the disbanded team, the Executive Committee will determine how to accommodate such instances. The Executive Committee will be guided by the team affiliations of players the previous year, and may conclude that a new team can assume the league place of a disbanded team if the majority of its players were rostered to the disbanded team the previous year.

League game points and final standings

Points for Games

For league tables or league pools, 3 points will be awarded for a win, 1 for a loss, and 0 for a forfeit.

A **forfeited** game is where a team is unable to field a legal team (as defined in the OSA League rules). This is scored as a forfeit (0 points), with a scoreline of 15-0. It is possible that both teams forfeit, in which case both score 0 points, and the scoreline is 0-0.

End of season league standings

The final league standings will be decided on the following criteria:

- The team with the most points. If tied, then
- The team with the greater head to head points scored (i.e. wins). If still tied, then
- The team with the fewest forfeits. If still tied, then
- The team with the greater head to head run difference. If still tied, then
- The team with the fewest head to head runs conceded. If still tied, then
- The team with the greatest head to head hits made. If still tied, then
- Toss a coin.

Officially sanctioned scratch team(s)

With the permission of the Executive Committee, the league may support a scratch team in the lower division. This means that no roster will be required, although regular players may need to register for insurance purposes.

Any spare player from any team or club may play for the scratch team as many times as he or she wishes. Scheduled games involving the scratch team will automatically be scored as a 7-0 (3 point) win to the opposition, providing a game has taken place. A win will not be awarded to teams that forfeit games against the scratch team for reasons of not having the required number of players. Note that the scratch team is a

development opportunity and it is incumbent on league teams to play some kind of game even if there are very few scratch team players available.

Personal statistics are not to be collected for individuals playing for or against the 'scratch team'.

The heading numbers below refer to the number of corresponding WBSC rule and are therefore not necessarily continuous.

1 THE GAME

1.1 Start time

The Executive Committee will publish start times for games during the season to maximise the daylight available for evening games.

Unless by prior agreement between captains and umpire, league games will begin at, or before the advertised start time with a minimum of 8 legal players on each team. A grace period of 10 minutes may be applied, if agreed by the umpire, after which the game is forfeited, and it is recommended that a friendly be played instead.

A delayed start, due to poor weather, may be agreed by the umpire.

1.1.4 Offensive/defensive choice

The home team (as defined by the fixtures list) has the option to bat 1st or 2nd.

1.2 Games stopped before completion

1.2.1 Deciding to stop play

A captain may ask the umpire to consider a request to stop play (or resume play) at any time.

The decision to stop play before completion of a game may be taken because it is considered that conditions have become too dangerous to continue play. This decision will be made by any of the following three criteria: a decision by a neutral umpire, by mutual consent of the two captains, or a decision by two or more Executive Committee members. Recommencing a game on the same evening will also be decided by the same groups.

If it is apparent that there will be no further play that evening, then either the game is called as a regulation (completed) game or the game is "frozen" (as outlined below).

Clarification: According to WBSC rule 1 section 2, a game can be considered to be regulation (completed) if the team second at bat is leading in the bottom of the fifth inning or if five innings have been completed. Where a game has to be abandoned within the sixth or seventh innings, the score will be rolled back to the last complete inning, unless the team second at bat is ahead in runs.

Example: Team A bats first and is ahead in runs after 5 complete innings. If the game is called in the top of the 6th, then Team A wins. However, if Team B takes the lead in the bottom of the 6th inning and the game is called, Team B wins.

Incomplete and frozen games

If a game is stopped due to poor light, dangerous conditions, lightning or accident on the field which prevents the game from continuing on that pitch, then the game will be "frozen" unless it can be considered a regulation (completed) game (see clarification above). It will be restarted at an agreed date, from exactly where it stopped (see procedure below).

Lightning

At the first sign of lightning, the umpire shall stop the game and all players must take shelter inside a building if available. The Executive Committee will then liaise with umpires about restarting games but typically if, after

15 minutes, there is no further lightning, then the game can resume. If lightning is still present after a 30 minute period, then the game will be stopped and rules outlined above will be used for an incomplete game.

Reconvening incomplete games

On recommencing a frozen/incomplete game, teams may field different players for the reconvened innings, but players participating in both the original and reconvened innings must appear in the same place in the batting order.

On the postponement of a game through poor light or dangerous conditions, a trailing team (behind on runs) may elect to default, and therefore not require the game to be reconvened.

The Executive Committee will determine a deadline by which the incomplete game must be completed.

Captains must liaise to find a mutually agreeable time to complete the game. If necessary, the Exec Committee will liaise with the captains over finding a mutually agreeable date/time. Where necessary the Exec Committee has the power to specify a date for the game.

If it proves impossible, due to time constraints across the season, to complete an incomplete game, both captains may agree to allow the score to stand and for the result to count as a 'regulation game'.

If one team is able to continue an incomplete game on a date that has been officially timetabled for play, and the other team cannot, the game is forfeited by the latter team. The losing team is able to appeal this decision to the Executive Committee, if it claims that there were exceptional circumstances. If both teams fail to resume the game by their own collective inactivity, the Executive Committee may rule that the score at the time of freezing the game may stand, or that the game is void, or should be scored as a 5-5 tie, depending on evidence of genuine attempts to arrange a date/time for the continuation of the game.

1.2.3 Runs ahead (mercy) rules

Two runs ahead rules will be in place for all OSL games.

The standard WBSC runs ahead rule applies. The game is stopped, and a winner declared if a team is ahead by 20 runs after 4 innings, 15 runs after 5 innings. Complete innings are played unless the home team scores the required number of runs while at bat.

In addition, during the first 6 innings, the offensive team will conclude their innings when the play which scores the 7th run of the innings is concluded.

Example: Having scored 6 runs in a single innings, the batting side scores two runs on their next at bat. After the play concludes, the innings is finished (irrespective of the number of outs), the batting team having scored 8 runs.

1.2.4 Tiebreaker

WBSC rules regarding tied game will be enforced - additional innings are played until one side has scored more runs than the other at the end of a complete inning, or until the team second at bat has scored more runs in their half of the inning before the third out is made. In the 8th and subsequent half inning, the batter scheduled to bat 10th or 11th (usually who batted last in the previous inning) begins the inning on 2nd base.

A tied game that is stopped for light, rain, lighting etc. will be restarted until a winning team is determined. In the unlikely event of a tied game (a game which is started, stopped on tied runs, and not completed), 2 points will be awarded to both teams.

5.1.26 Infield-Fly Rule

The infield fly rule is to be used in league play.

1.2.11 Protests and disagreements during games

The exact nature of the protest must be made clear to the umpire and opposing captain at the time, and where possible a neutral Executive Committee member.

If the issue cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, the game is then played under protest. The nature of the protest must then be communicated to a member of the Executive Committee verbally on the same evening, and in writing within 5 days if requested by the Executive Committee.

1.2.14 Result of protest

Result of Protest and any arising decisions/penalties will be determined by the Full OSA Committee (minus representatives of the teams involved), although the OSA Committee may choose to form a Protest Subcommittee to investigate and prepare information for the 'Full' OSA committee meeting. The 'Full' OSA Committee will take into consideration existing WBSC guidelines, and OSA procedures for resolving protests.

2. PLAYING FIELD AND EQUIPMENT

2.2 The Playing field

2.2.3 Local field rules

Clarification: Where line markings are present, they are to be enforced. If lines are not marked, the umpire must make decisions based on his/her judgement.

Umpires will discuss any local field rules with captains prior to games commencing. The Executive Committee may choose to issue local field rules at the start of the season.

Providing Bases

The home team is required to provide and lay out bases, pitching strip and home plate prior to the game. Teams not owning such equipment must make arrangements to borrow field equipment for the game, unless equipment is provided by the OSA (Oxfordshire Softball Association).

2.5 Uniforms

Matching shirts are to be encouraged, but are not required. Offensive players may not take advantage of similar coloured shirts to the defensive team to cause confusion during play. Umpires will make decisions and rulings on any such occurrences. No other uniform rules are to be enforced other than those relating to safety, which are at the discretion of the umpire.

2.4 Players' equipment

2.3.1 Bats

Clarification: Bats must all comply with the latest BSF/BASU guidelines. The approved bat list (or banned bat list) must be checked and enforced.

2.4.2 Shoes

No metal or metal tipped studs/cleats/spikes are allowed. In addition, the umpire, at their discretion, may ban footwear on safety grounds.

2.4.3 Protective equipment

Catchers must wear proprietary face masks for all game play and warm ups when a batter is at the plate. The catcher may remove the mask during the course of play after the ball has been batted.

The use of batting helmets is encouraged for all and is compulsory for players under 18. Mouth guards are also required for all U18 players playing in the infield. (Please see BSF U18 guidelines in the captains' pack.) Usage is encouraged for all other players. Teams must make their equipment available for inspection by an

OSA official when requested to do so before a game. This will only be done to ensure that protective equipment of a suitable standard is being provided for games.

3. PARTICIPANTS

3.2 Line-up and rosters

3.2.1 Line up cards

Teams are required to provide line-up cards to the opposition if requested to do so. Teams are also required to present their score book during a game when requested by the opposition, umpire or OSA official.

Team Rosters

For weeks 1 and 2 teams must submit a copy of their line-ups to the opposition and the Exec committee, indicating any borrowed or new players. The OSA holds the team roster on behalf of the BSF, and may add player names to the OSA website. Where possible rosters are also shared with the BSF.

Before games in Week 3 commence, teams must have declared their roster (with the exception of Rookies) to the OSA. "Rookies" are defined as people who have played fewer games in the previous season than the number required for BSF rostering in the OSL in the previous season. A grace period of two League games before rostering is allowed.

For the purpose of League games, players may be rostered to only one OSA League team at any time. This does not exclude players from joining other teams for tournaments not organised by the OSA.

A player may change teams (and hence rosters) once per season, but not during the first or final three weeks of the season.

3.2.2 Number of Players and Gender Rules

The "EP" (extra player) is an option included in League play (that allows a 12 person batting line-up) and is detailed in the WBSC rules.

Teams are permitted to play with fewer than 10 players, to a minimum of 8. They may choose where these "holes" appear in their field and batting line-up (although they must still comply with gender rules).

For the purposes of the game, gender is defined as male, female, non-binary².

The rules associated with gender aim to be inclusive, and teams are expected to comply with not only the wording of the rules, but also the spirit in which they are intended. The Executive Committee may take action if they consider that the spirit of the rules is not being followed.

Players must specify their gender at the start of the season, and may only change this once during the course of a season.

The following gender rules apply to the structure of a team:

8 person team - No more than 4 players of the same gender (2 x automatic outs for the missing players)

9 person team - No more than 5 players of the same gender (automatic out for the missing player)

10 person team - No more than 5 players of the same gender

12 person team - No more than 6 players of the same gender in the batting line-up, and no more than 5 players of the same gender on the field at any time. Extra hitters must be different genders.

Male batters hit a 12" ball and walk to 2nd.

Female and non-binary batters can choose to hit an 11" ball (walks are to 1st), or a 12" ball (walks are to 2nd, and if there are two outs the next batter has the choice of batting or taking an automatic walk to 1st).

² "non-binary" is used as a convenient short-hand to refer to non-binary, transgender and non-gender.

At the plate conference prior to all games, in addition to discussing any ground rules and highlighting any use of non-rostered players, captains will exchange line-ups, which will specify players' gender and which size ball they will be hitting (including substitutes). This will allow the umpires to apply the rules on ball size, walks, batting line-up and fielding positions appropriately.

To help with smooth communication, captains may choose to notify the opposition and umpires in advance.

Batting order:

In the starting line-up, no two players of the same gender can bat consecutively (regardless of whether they are hitting 12" or 11" balls). Extra hitters (under the EP rule) must be of different genders.

Fielding positions:

The outfield must consist of a maximum of two players from any one gender.

The infield (base fielders and short-stop) must consist of a maximum of two players from any one gender.

The pitcher and catcher must be of different genders.

Substitutions

Non-binary players may be substituted by or for another player of the same or a different gender, providing that the rules for overall player numbers and fielding restrictions are maintained.

The introduction of a substitute of different gender to the player they are replacing may result in consecutive genders in the line-up. This is permitted.

The team making a substitution must notify the opposition captain and/or scorer and confirm which size ball the substitute player will hit.

Teams may field women or non-binary players as men, but not men as non-binary or women.

Teams may field a non-playing catcher of any gender (who does not appear in the batting line-up).

The batting team will field a non-playing catcher if requested to do so by a fielding team that has less than 10 players able to take the field.

An automatic out will be enforced for every person missing from the batting line-up of 10 to a maximum of 2.

If the league has designated an official 'scratch team', automatic outs are not applicable in games involving this team.

Illegal re-entry of a player will result in the ejection of the player only (and not both player and coach/captain).

3.2.5 Injury during the game

If, due to injury during a game, a player is no longer able to participate, they may be replaced by any member of the team not currently in the batting line-up (irrespective of whether that player has already appeared in a different position in the line-up).

Teams that cannot field a full line-up due to injury during a game, are also eligible to borrow from other teams if players are available.

Clarification: OSA respects replacement of players for any injury incurred during the game. This is not merely restricted to bleeding injuries.

Under 18s: welfare

Prior to the game, captains must have written permission from the parents of under 18s to field them in the in-field. The league's Welfare Officer (with responsibilities for safeguarding) must see the written permission before the first game, involving the U18 player, begins.

Clarification: Under 18 boys play as men, and not as women.

Borrowing players

Teams may only borrow players if they have fewer than 5 men and 5 women available from their own roster for the game, or if they do not have a pitcher available for the game.

Clarification: If you arrange to borrow a player and find, unexpectedly, you can field a team of 10 on the night, you may **not** play the borrowed player.

Teams may borrow a maximum of two players of any gender mix. These players must be rostered to another OSL team.

A borrowed player can only play in the following fielding positions: pitcher, catcher, CR or RF position. However, all teams must comply with the rule that requires fielding an equal number of men and women in the in-field. Therefore, a team may field a borrowed player in an in-field position if it is necessary to comply with this rule (e.g. where a team of 5-1 that borrows two players, one in-field position may be filled with a borrowed player or left empty).

A team that can field a full team (with borrowed players or otherwise) but has no pitcher in the lineup may borrow a pitcher from another OSL team. The borrowed pitcher can only pitch/field and is replaced by a designated hitter in the batting line up.

3.4 Coaches

Team coaches are generally referred to as "captains" and "vice-captains".

- An offensive base coach stationed near third base must not wear a catching glove.
- The offensive base coach stationed near first base must wear a catching glove for the purpose of providing the pitcher with the correct ball. However, they must not "present" their glove during the course of play (which would be judged as interference).

3.6 Umpires

Details of umpiring arrangements are outlined in the Umpiring Procedures document circulated separately.

Clarification: All players are reminded that the interpretation or enforcing of rules may be questioned by only the captain or vice-captain of either team. Judgement calls by the umpire (e.g. ball/strikes, force outs etc. etc.) may not be questioned.

3.7 Scorers

3.7.1 Official scorer

There is no official scorer, and both teams shall keep scorebooks. Teams should endeavour to check that their scorebooks tally at the end of each half innings. Disagreements should be immediately resolved by the captains with input from the umpire as required.

4.3 PITCHING

Pitchers may elect to move the pitching strip further away from the batter for reasons of safety. They must still pitch a legal pitch from within the diamond from a location that the umpire judges to be reasonable. The pitching strip can be returned to its normal position at any time.

PROCEDURES FOR RAIN OFFS

Procedures for stopping play during the game are included elsewhere, this section deals with procedures for terminating play prior to the game starting time.

Weather monitors

The OSA shall appoint a weather monitor, and a deputy weather monitor.

Based on forecast information, and possibly taking into account the views of the team captains, the weather monitor will decide if play is to be cancelled. All players should assume that play is to proceed unless they hear otherwise. Captains will be notified by 4:30pm on the day of the game if the game is being cancelled or postponed.

“Rain-out” slots will be included in the League schedule, and teams are expected to play games in these. If this proves impossible, due to time constraints across the season, the game may be designated a 5-5 tie by mutual consent of the captains.

If one team is able or willing play to a rain-out game on one of the designated rain-out sessions, then similar rules will apply to those outlined above for the completion of incomplete games.

TEAM COMMITMENTS

Team Equipment

All teams playing should have a kit bag which must contain the following:

- Pitching plate
- Home plate
- First (Safety) base
- 2x bases (2nd/3rd base)
- 2x batting helmets
- Catcher’s Mask
- First Aid kit

All kit bags are subject to be checked by umpires and OSA officials.

Recording Statistics

Each team in the League must provide correct statistics as indicated in these rules. The penalty for not complying with this is that statistics may not be included in determining end of season awards for teams and individuals.

The following stats are the minimum required to be included in the relevant awards:

- PA (the amount of times a player goes to bat)
- AB (the amount of times a player goes to bat and does not walk)
- Hits and bases reached (the amount of times the batter hit the ball and got to a base without getting out or forcing someone else to be out)
- Walks (bases on balls)
- HR (the amount of times a batter makes it all the way around the bases to home plate in one play)
- FC (fielder’s choice – when a batter hits the ball into fair territory, but gets one of their team mates out on a forced play. This is regardless of whether the batter makes it to base without being out themselves)
- Male and female best fielders for each game from each team. Where a team fails to provide this for the opposing team, a captain is eligible to assign the awards to players from their own team.
- The number of strikes and walks achieved by each opposing pitcher.

Errors: For the purpose of batting statistics, errors in the form of overthrows only should be taken into account.

Guesting: Guesting players should be clearly marked on scoresheets. Statistics for guesting players will not count towards end of season awards.

Inter-Divisional Games: All regular season games will contribute to statistics for the end of season awards.

At the end of the match:

- Best Fielders: Each team is required to nominate a best male and female fielder from the opposing team. If they fail to do so, the captain may appoint these nominations to their own players.
- Walks and strike-outs: Each team is required to share the number of strikes and walks achieved by each opposing pitcher.
- Teams must upload a photo/copy of their scoresheet on the night of the game to: stats@oxfordsoftball.uk

Teams will be required to upload their statistics to the OSA website. Details and deadlines will be provided to team captains.

Return of trophies

The winning team must return its trophy by the last competitive game of the season (not including rainouts). If a team fails to return the trophy, then any decisions/penalties will be determined by the full OSA Committee.

Safety

Head Injuries

The BSF strongly recommends that all players who sustain head injuries, no matter how trivial they might seem, are taken to Accident and Emergency for examination. During a game, a player who receives a direct hit to the head or whiplash from a collision, dive etc. should have a head injury assessment (HIA). A medical professional is advantageous, but where such a person is not present at the game, a coach or team-mate should assess the injured person (for lucidity, balance, vision etc.) before allowing them to continue in the game. Players themselves are not eligible to determine whether they are fit to continue.

All head injuries and any other serious injuries should be reported using the **Incident Report Form** to be found in the captains' pack or downloaded from the BSUK web site (see below).

First aid kits

As specified in Team Equipment, all team kit bags must contain a first aid kit. This must include as a minimum plasters/dressings/bandages to manage bleeding, and spray/ice packs to manage bruising.

Accident reporting

All accident/near misses should be reported using the incident report form. The form is available in the captains' pack and may be downloaded from:

<http://www.baseballsoftballuk.com/insurance/incidents>

(or the online form at that web address may be used to register the incident).

Frequently Asked Questions

Oxford League Specific Rules

Mercy Rule

Two mercy rules will be in place for all OSL games:

- The WBSC runs ahead rule (a win if ahead by 20 runs after 4 innings, 15 runs after 5 innings).
- The "Oxford League" 7 runs per innings rule (for innings 1-6 only).

Borrowing Players

If you cannot field a full team from your roster, then you may borrow two players who must be rostered to OSL teams. A borrowed player can only play as pitcher, catcher, CR or RF position.³

Rules for borrowing a pitcher are different. You do not have to be short of players. However, if you must borrow a pitcher when you have 10 or more players available, then this borrowed player only plays for you when you field. You must use one of your own players in the batting line up.

Fielding and Batting Restrictions

OSL rules recognise that players may identify as male, female, or non-binary⁴.

A full team of 10 must have a maximum of 2 of any gender in the outfield, and the same applies for bases+shortstop. The pitcher and catcher must be of different genders.

Women and non-binary players may play as men.

Batting line-ups cannot have two players of the same gender batting sequentially.

Fair/ Foul/ Dead Ball

Definition of a fair hit

Outfield hit: A ball passing 1st/3rd base in the air must make its first bounce in fair territory.

Bouncing hit: A ball that bounces in the infield must pass out of the infield in fair territory, or stop in the infield. N.B. This does not necessarily mean that the ball must take its first bounce in fair territory! It may bounce foul and then roll back into the infield... where it stops or passes into the outfield in fair territory.

Other Fair/Foul/Dead Ball

1st base (white portion), 3rd base and the home plate are part of fair territory.

Umpires should "call" a foul ball, but not make an audible call for a fair ball (they may point to fair territory).

A batted fly ball may be caught in foul territory, and the play remains live.

A batted ball otherwise touched (i.e. not caught) in foul territory is "foul".

A batted fly ball caught in dead ball territory is usually charged as a foul, and is not a catch.

However, the fielder may stand in foul territory and reach to catch, or leap from foul territory and catch the ball before his/her foot touches the ground: these are valid catches.

A thrown/carried ball passing into foul territory is still live.

A thrown/carried ball passing into dead ball territory is dead. Runners are awarded the base they were advancing to (at the time of the throw), and one more.

Pitching

The pitcher should only pitch once the batter is ready (this usually means in the batter's box, in their stance and looking at the pitcher).

The pitcher must keep one foot on the pitching strip from start to release (otherwise the pitch is illegal and charged as a ball).

³ There is an exception to this if you have a team of 5-1 and borrow 2 players. Keeping to the rules regarding male/female fielding positions means that you may field a borrowed player as an in-fielder.

⁴ "non-binary" is used as a convenient short-hand to refer to non-binary, transgender and non-gender.

Illegal pitches (including balls arcing over 12 feet or under 6 feet) should be called by the umpire as soon as possible i.e. before the ball reaches the batter. The umpire may also call a pitch illegal if it is considered to be too fast (although this is rare). Balls and strikes are called after the ball has passed the batter.

Any pitch hitting home plate is a ball (unless it has been swung at).

A pitch bouncing before reaching the plate is called a ball even if the batter swings (unless the swing is before the bounce).

Catcher

The catcher is required to wear a face mask, but may discard this during the course of play.

If discarding the face mask after a hit, catchers are reminded that umpires usually make their way into the infield to the catcher's left-hand side!

Batting

The batter must start with both feet within or on the lines of the batting box.

The batter may not deliberately bunt or chop (hit the ball with no swing or hit the ball straight into the ground) - if they do, they are out.

When hitting the ball, if the batter has a foot touching the ground and completely outside of the box (or touching home plate), they are out. A foot is allowed to be partially outside of the box. It is rare for a batter to have a foot completely outside the box when hitting the ball. It is more common for a batter to place a foot outside the box as part of their follow-through AFTER hitting the ball. This is allowed.

If a batted ball is caught behind by the catcher, it is only an out if the ball has travelled above the batter's head height from the bat (otherwise it is a "foul tip" and counts as a strike).

Male batters walk to 2nd, as do female and non-binary batters electing to hit a 12" ball.

If there are two outs and a batter hitting a 12" ball is walked, the next batter has the choice of batting or taking an automatic walk to first.

Batters throwing the bat behind them in a dangerous manner will be warned or called out by the umpire.

Home plate is in fair territory. If a batted ball hits home plate, the ball is still considered live and the hit is FAIR, unless the ball rolls or bounces into foul territory without first being picked up by a fielder. For example if the ball hits home plate and rolls forward, it is fair. If it hits and remains on home plate it is still fair: the catcher can pick up the ball and play it.

Infield Fly

This rule is played in full.

Under relevant situations, the umpire calls the batter out before the ball is caught and the play is still live.

The runners may advance, after the ball has been touched by a fielder or hit the ground, like any other catch or near catch situation.

From the WBSC rules. RULE 5 Sec. 1.26.

INFIELD FLY.

A fair fly ball (not including a line drive) that can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when first and second, or first, second, and third bases are occupied, before two are out. The pitcher, catcher, and any outfielder who position themselves in the infield on the play shall be considered infielders 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. IF FAIR-THE BATTER IS OUT," for the benefit of the runners. The ball is live and runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught, or retouch and advance after the ball is touched, the same as on any fly ball. If the hit becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul. If a declared 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 outside the baseline, and bounces fair before passing first or third base, it is an infield fly."

Some may find the last sentence above confusing. However, please read the "Fair / Foul / Dead Ball" FAQ. A struck ball that lands foul before reaching 1st or 3rd bases, but which then bounces into the infield before passing those bases is FAIR."

Also note that the infield fly rule is not in effect when there is only a base runner on first.

Base Running

Runners may not leave their base until the ball is hit. If they do so it is an automatic out.

Runners may risk advancing after a catch if they touch their original base after the catch is made. If they leave before the catch, then the play is a forced play to the original base.

The base runner is not allowed to deviate more than 1 metre either side of a reasonable running line to avoid a tag. A "reasonable running line" is not necessarily a straight line between bases.

A fielder must not get in the way of a runner, unless they are in the process of trying to make a tag (and therefore already holding the ball). If they do get in the way of a runner, then the play remains live (unless the obstructed runner is out). On conclusion of the play, the umpire makes any corrections to outs/base runners locations that he considers would represent the situation if the obstruction had not occurred.

Catchers are especially reminded that they must not stand over the home plate or obstruct runners trying to make home plate unless they are already holding the ball.

If a batter gets in the way of a fielder (Interference), the batter is out.

If a runner is hit by a batted ball (when a fielder excluding the pitcher has not had the chance to make a play) they are out unless they are either touching a base or in foul territory.

Changing Offence/Defence, and On Deck Batters

It is appreciated that organising a team and substituting players can take time between innings. However, teams at bat are expected to have the correct batter and on-deck batter ready in a timely fashion. Players taking/leaving the field are expected to jog on/off the pitch, and have the correct/legal fielding team ready to play in a similarly timely fashion.

Substituting Players/Batting Line-up

Substitution may take place at any time, as long as the umpire and opposing captain are informed.

Any starting player may be withdrawn and re-enter the game once (in the same place in the batting order). The substitute and the starter are therefore mutually exclusive players, and the substitute cannot enter the game a second time (either for the same or different player). The only exception to this is in the case of an injury which means that the starting player has to leave the game entirely. (Note that this is more lenient than the WBSC rule, which mandates a blood injury in this case. This lenient rule must not be abused.)

OSL uses the standard WBSC rules on 'Extra players' (EPs), which requires 12 players in the batting order. Ten players (that comply with gender rules) are selected from this list to field each innings. Note that a team electing to use the EP option must complete the game with this option in place.

Changing the umpire will be clearly announced to both teams.