



# Richland Center Church League Softball

On the Web: [www.rcchurchleague.com](http://www.rcchurchleague.com)

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## 2023 RULES

### Administrative

1. Entry fees (\$150\_per team) and signed rosters must be submitted to the commissioners **AT THE START** of the season **as the RC Parks Department will not allow us to use the diamonds until the league fees are paid.** Teams that have not submitted fees AND rosters by game **3** will forfeit subsequent games until such time as they are submitted.  
**Fees/Rosters can be mailed to the League Treasurer Dave Turk. 1013 N. Central Ave, Richland Center, WI 53581.**
2. All participants play at their own risk.
3. Rain/weather cancellations are announced on WRCO FM 100.9. If possible, we will try to have the announcements on the air during the 5:00 news/sportscasts. Makeup games are arranged at the commissioners' discretion.
4. Teams scheduled to umpire **MUST** furnish **qualified** umpires for the games they are assigned. Failure to comply with this rule will result in lowering of a team's tournament seed.

### Roster/Lineup

1. All players on a team's roster must be attendees of, or affiliated with, the church in accordance with the spirit of Church League. Rosters must be signed by the church's pastor.
2. Roster additions must have the commissioners' approval.
3. Only players listed on the roster may play in games. Players may be listed on ONE team's roster.
4. Players must have participated in at least 40% of regular season games (for 2023 that is 4 games) in order to be eligible for the post-season tournament.
5. A team must field a minimum of six players in order to play.
6. The maximum number that may play on defense is 10.
7. Teams must field at least 40% of players over the age of 20. This restriction may be waived with the consent of the opposing team.

8. Minimum age to play Church League is 13 (There can be exceptions with commissioner's approval).
9. Teams may allow any number of players to bat. Extra hitters may be included anywhere in the lineup. They may play later on defense but must keep their original position in the batting order.
10. Extra batters added to the lineup after a game begins must be added at the end of the lineup.
11. Players may leave the lineup for injury or substitution. If they later re-enter the game, they must play on defense before batting (unless they were a DH). Re-entering players must return to the same position in the batting order.
12. If a player must leave a game due to a work commitment or an emergency, his/her team may choose to vacate a spot in the lineup without an automatic out being charged against them.
13. Players who need Courtesy Runners should be identified to the opposing team and umpires before the start of the game. Courtesy Runners may also be used for players injured during game play. The person who made the last out is to be used as the Courtesy Runner.
14. In the spirit of Church League, we encourage teams to play all players in attendance at a game whenever possible.
15. **Church League is intended to be a co-ed softball league.** Teams must have at least two females, teens age 13-16 (at the start of the season) or persons age 48 or over, or a combination thereof, on the field at all times when playing defense. A team that cannot meet this requirement on a particular night must forfeit. Umpires will remind managers of these requirements prior to the game starting.

## Equipment Rules

1. NO steel or metal spikes are permitted. They must be removed before a player takes the field.
2. THE LEAGUE WILL PROVIDE BATS FOR USE IN GAMES. **NO OTHER BATS WILL BE ALLOWED TO BE USED IN GAMES.**
3. If an illegal bat is used in a game, it shall be tossed out by the umpire and the player and team will receive a warning. Should said player or team break the rule a second time, the game will be considered a forfeit.

## Rules of Conduct

1. There will be no use of tobacco products by Church League players, or team members on or around the diamonds.
2. No foul language shall be used in Church League. Also, no apparel, worn by league participants shall contain any foul language or objectionable advertising (including promotion of alcohol or tobacco products or offensive conduct). Umpires will warn players about these things and have the option of ejecting them for non-compliance.
3. COMPLETE COOPERATION is expected from all managers, players and, spectators in all decisions made by the umpires and commissioners. NO players should dispute an umpire's decision. ONLY the manager of the team is allowed to dispute a call and then ONLY in a well-mannered way. Umpires have authority to eject unsportsmanlike players and can even call a game.
4. There will be no calling of balls and strikes from the bench, coaching box, or by the catcher behind the plate. No deliberate distraction of the batter will be tolerated.

## Rules of Play

1. Games must start within 15 minutes of the scheduled time. If a team is not prepared to play by the deadline, a forfeit will be declared.
2. Games are 7 innings long. In the event of rain, if 4 full innings of play are complete, the game counts as a completed game.
3. **Lightning Safety:** In order to comply with the RC Parks Department policy on lightning safety, game play will be suspended immediately upon seeing lightning or hearing thunder. Play will not resume until 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning or rumble of thunder.
4. The game will end if a team is ahead by 15 runs or more after the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> inning. In innings 1-5 of a game, a team can score a maximum of 7 runs per inning. Once this limit is reached, the inning will end regardless of the number of outs. Any runs scored over 7 will not be counted.
5. Two strikes are an out. Strikes include a swing and a miss, a foul ball or a called strike. All pitches must arc higher than a batter's head and hit the plate or mat to be called a strike. A pitch with insufficient arc will be called a ball. While there is no maximum pitch arc by rule, teams are reminded this this is Church League and in that spirit are strongly encouraged to avoid "moon ball" pitches. If it continues to be a problem, we may have to establish a maximum arc rule. Three balls constitutes a walk. Pitches need not be thrown for an intentional walk if runners are on base.
6. Pitchers must pitch from between 46-50 feet from home plate. Umpires will mark this range before the start of the game and enforce it during the game. Pitchers are allowed 3 warm-up pitches at the beginning of each inning after the first.
7. Base runners may not advance when the pitcher has the ball in the infield.
8. A player will be called out if he/she tries to steal, lead off or bunt. Base runners should not leave the base until the ball is hit. A courtesy step is allowed.
9. Sliding is permitted at first, second and third bases, BUT NOT AT HOME PLATE!! Sliding to intentionally collide with another player is NOT permitted and WILL result in an ejection.
10. Baserunners who obstruct a throw may be called out if the umpire determines that the obstruction was intentional. An automatic double-play may also be called if this occurs during a possible double-play.
11. All plays at home plate are force plays. Fielders MUST make defensive plays on the PLATE. The runner MUST tag the MAT at all times, not just when there is a play. Runners that tag the plate and not the mat may be called out on appeal. If a runner goes for the plate and collides with the fielder, the runner will be called out. Fielders may tag baserunners out so long as they do not impede the progress of the runner. Force plays are encouraged as we want to avoid collisions.

12. Umpires will draw a line approximately halfway between third base and home plate. Any runner who crosses this line is forced to go to home or be called out.
13. The umpire shall establish a line approximately 18 inches in front of the plate. If the batter's FRONT foot completely crosses the line, s/he will be called out. His/her front foot shall be no further backward than the back of the MAT. If his/her foot is farther back than this, the batter shall be called out. Also, THERE WILL BE NO RUNNING UP ON A PITCH.
14. Batters may not throw bats after hitting the ball. Umpires will give a player one warning about this and any subsequent instances will result in the batter being called out.
15. A thrown or batted ball is out of play if it crosses an imaginary line extended straight out from the backstop, parallel to the foul line. Any ball that strikes an object adjacent to the field will also be considered out of play, even if the ball subsequently falls back into the field of play. A ground rule double will be called if the ball bounces over the outfield fence or if it becomes stuck at the base of the fence. When a thrown ball goes out of play, runners will be awarded the base they were advancing to plus one.
16. Umpires will call the infield fly rule when appropriate. The infield fly can occur only when there are less than two out, and if runners occupy either first and second bases, or all three bases. The batter is automatically declared out, and the runners can advance at their own risk.
17. It is anticipated that we will be using the extended first bases. When there is a play at first and the batter is running the play out, s/he is required to use the orange portion of the base (in foul territory) while the fielder shall use the white portion. When a runner is rounding the base to continue on to second, the runner must use the white portion of the base. The fielder should not be on the base unless there is a play so as not to interfere with the runner.
18. When the last game of the night is completed on a diamond, teams are asked to use the available rakes to rake the area around home plate and tamp down the pitchers' mound by the rubber. Re-grooming these areas will make pooling of water less likely and make the diamonds easier to get ready after any rainfall.
19. In games played on the East and West diamonds, if a ball reaches the parking lot area adjacent to the Richland Center Community Center (far right field on the East Diamond or far left field on the West Diamond) it shall be ruled a ground rule triple.