

BAJA CATINO LEAGUE 2021 RULES

Preface: In order to clarify and govern the conduct of Catino League play, this addendum is published. BAJA has and will continue to follow USA rules for the 2021 season. Any rule not contained in this addendum will be ruled in accordance with the 2020 USA Rulebook. BAJA exceptions to the 2020 USA rulebook are as follows:

A. Playing Fields:

1. **Dimensions:** Our fields meet the specifications of a USA field other than our 275-ft. fence distance.
2. **Batting Mats:** The artificial turf mats purchased will be used as batter's boxes for all games. The home plate mat is now a wooden plank. A pitched ball that hits ANYWHERE on that wooden plate is considered a strike.
3. **Batter's Box:** The batter's boxes marked on the mats are not USA dimensions. BAJA will use the established box dimensions on the mats. A batter will be considered out of the batter's box and therefore called out when a foot is on the ground and completely off the mat or completely over the interior/exterior white lines when the ball is struck.
4. **Alternate Bases:** Alternate bases will be used at both first base and home plate.
 - a. **First Base:** A batter will be called out if there is a play at first base and he fails to run to the Alternate base. The Alternate base will be placed 2 ft. outside first base and even with the 2nd baseline.
 - b. **Home:** BAJA will use a home line during the games. A line is placed in line with the front left corner of home plate extending to the 3rd base side fence and parallel to the first base line. This line will represent home plate. This line will be used at all times. A runner must have a foot in contact with the ground on or beyond the line prior to the catcher touching home plate in order to score. If a player running home touches the home plate on the mat, he/she will be called out and the run does not count. The catcher must be touching the original home plate and catch the ball before the runner touches the line to make an out. Under no circumstances is the catcher to tag the runner once the runner has crossed the "Commitment Line" between 3rd and Home.
 - c. **Run by rule 2ND / 3RD base: THERE IS NO RUN BY RULE AT 2nd OR 3rd BASE.** The runner is responsible for avoiding a collision. A runner must touch the base before advancing.
 1. If an outfielder or infielder is throwing to that base, the runner must veer off to avoid the fielder's attempt to catch the ball and to keep from getting hit by the ball. If the fielder drops the ball, the runner should be deemed safe, must touch the base, and may continue to the next base.
 2. Any player guilty of causing a violent collision with an opposing player will be ejected from that game AND put on probation. If a second violent collision is caused by this player, he/she will be subject to a suspension, the length to be determined by the commissioner(s).

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5. **Base Distance:** Bases will be 65 ft. apart versus the current USA standard of 70 ft.
6. **Outfield:** Cones will be placed 160 ft. from home plate across the entire outfield. At the time of the pitch, the four Outfielders are NOT permitted to be between that line and home plate until the ball is hit. Violation of this rule will result in the batter/runner being awarded one base and all forced runners will move forward accordingly.

B. Equipment:

1. **Ball:** BAJA will not use the current approved USA softball. Instead we will continue to use the 44/375 ball for male batters under 75 years of age. Women, and men whose 75th birthday occurs in or before 2021, will use the 47/450 (blue thread) ball.
2. **Bats:** Bats that are banned by USA are automatically banned from the League. Bats with cracks, flat spots, rattles etc. will not be used. EXCEPTION: Women, and men whose 65th birthday occurs in or before 2021, may use any bat in proper condition. Use of illegal bats: First offense will result in batter being called out; second offense in same game will result in batter ejection. Further offenses will be dealt with by the commissioner and could result in a suspension.
3. **Gloves:** There are no glove restrictions.
4. **Pitching Screen:** A pitching screen **will be used** in all Catino League games. The screen will be set in its proper place prior to the start of the games by the grounds crew. Once set, the screen must remain in said location throughout the entirety of the game. Any batted ball that hits any part of the screen will be ruled a DEAD BALL. A live ball thrown by any player on defense that hits any part of the pitching screen is considered a live ball and is in play.
5. **Pre-game batting practices:** The pitching screen should be used by the visiting team, and the home team should use the extra pitching screen from the orange equipment box.
6. **Pitcher Face Mask:** An USA/SSUSA approved face mask is **REQUIRED** for pitchers when on the mound.

C. Rosters/Lineup:

1. **Accountability:** Managers are responsible for the Roster and Lineup. Failure to comply with the rules set forth will result in forfeiture of that game whether appealed by the opposing manager or not.
2. **Playing Time:** A player should play an equal number of innings as all other players. The manager may manage all players' play time as he/she sees fit, ie. every player sits out 1 or 2 innings per game per day, or a few players sit out 3 or 4 innings but must play whole games the next two sets of games. At the end of the season, all players should have approximately the same number of innings played, unless requested by the player to play less due to medical issues or personal stamina and the Catino commissioner is notified. Players' time out of the game should be noted on the scorebook for monitoring purposes.
3. **Tournament Play:** All players should play equal time over the tournament, unless requested by the player to play less due to medical issues or personal stamina and the Catino commissioner is notified.

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- 4. Designated Hitter (DH):** Players not starting a game defensively will be listed as designated hitters. They may enter the game defensively anytime at the discretion of the manager. A Player may be listed as DH in only one game of a double header. Careful attention needs to be paid to the seven innings per double header. No player may be designated a DH in consecutive games, unless requested by the player due to medical issues or personal stamina.
- 5. Injured Player:** If a player is injured during the game and cannot continue or has to leave the game for ANY legitimate reason, he/she is simply removed from the lineup without any penalty. If this causes the lineup to drop below 9 players, the Forfeit Rule (see 6 below) applies.
- 6. Forfeit Rule:** Teams with only eight players in the batting lineup will forfeit. A short-handed team (9 or 10 players) may elect, but is not required to, borrow a catcher. Any BAJA League softball player may catch. The borrowed catcher will not be placed in the batting lineup and will only play that position.
- 7. Waivers: MANAGERS MAY NOT WAIVE any RULES!** If a forfeit situation occurs, scores of 7 to 0 will be recorded for league standings. Managers may agree to use the field time to play a pick-up game or scrimmage. These pick-up games will have no effect on league standings.

D. Player Pool/Substitutes:

We WILL ATTEMPT to create a Player Pool of replacement players to fill gaps in a team's roster. If a roster drops below 11 players, a manager may request from the Commissioner a Pool Player for **that day only**. Re-assignment for additional days may be made if deemed necessary. At the end of day, the pool player will return to the player pool. Assignment of pool players by the commissioner will be made as equitable as possible, since, in effect, he/she will be replacing multiple players. **Permanent pool replacements will be made only under very extenuating circumstances.**

E. Conduct of Play:

- 1. Time Limit:** Double Headers will begin at 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. If no extra innings occur, no inning will be started after 12:15 p.m. The last inning starting prior to 12:15 p.m. will be announced as an "open inning" by the umpire. If a tie exists after the open inning, USA rules will be used, and games will be played until there is a winner. Time limit and field conditions (the sun) will determine how many extra innings can be played.
- 2. Playing the Field:** Managers will play 11 players in the field. How that player is utilized is the manager's discretion. See COVID Mask Rules below.
- 3. Batting:** A batter, before entering the batter's box, will announce to the pitcher which ball he/she is eligible for. If the wrong ball is put into play, the play will stand, and the game will move on.
- 4. Batting Count:** All players will begin each at bat with a 1 ball and 1 strike count.

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5. **Pitching:** Pitches will be within current USA Slow Pitch standards. Pitches will be thrown **from the rubber over the top of the pitching screen**. If the pitch hits the screen or is not pitched over the screen, the pitch will be called a ball.
6. **Warm-ups:** At the start of the game, a pitcher is given five warm-up pitches. Each infielder may take 2 balls from the first baseman. Between innings, pitchers get one pitch and fielders NO throws. A pitcher in relief may elect to be given 5 warm-up pitches, unless this pitcher is re-entering game, then he/she gets but two pitches. A fielder in relief gets 2 throws.
7. **Slow Play:** Umpires will be encouraged to keep the games moving. Conferences whether offensive or defensive will be kept at a minimum and will not exceed USA rules. Umpires, at their discretion will issue balls or strikes as appropriate.
 - a. Players should be prepared to get to their position with their gear on and ready to go as soon as the last out is made unless they are the last batter, the on-deck batter, or a base runner. Excessive dawdling will result in a ball called for the first batter of the inning by the umpire.
 - b. A player who is on his way to be a base coach CANNOT call a timeout to get to the base coach area. If he/she is not there on time, that is his/her problem. The game should continue regardless. Base coaches should not cross between the umpire, catcher, and the pitcher. Doing so could lead to the umpire calling a ball for the delay of game. The base coach should walk behind the umpire to get to their position.
 - c. Inactive players should NOT delay the game to run through the field to go out the gates by the restrooms. Doing so could lead to the umpire calling a ball for the delay of game.
8. **Courtesy Runners:**
 - a. There will be NO courtesy runners from home. Instead, if the batted ball touches the grass, that batter is safely awarded first base. See Rule #9 Green Grass Rule. All other runners are subject to the normal rules of softball. A Courtesy Runner may only run once per inning.
 - b. A Courtesy Runner may not be granted a Courtesy Runner. Exception: when a courtesy runner's time at bat comes while he/she is on base.
 - c. If a Courtesy Runner is on base when he or she is on deck, the Courtesy Runner will be removed from the base, a replacement runner will be placed on base, and the Courtesy Runner will bat his turn without penalty.
 - d. The DH may serve as a courtesy runner.
 - e. A courtesy runner CAN be any level of player for any level of player. The opposing team CANNOT restrict one runner for another because of level of ability.
9. **Green Grass Rule:** If the batted ball touches the grass, that batter is safely awarded first base. If the batted ball hits the dirt and is fielded by a player in the grass but the ball did not touch the grass, the batter is NOT automatically awarded first base. **PLEASE NOTE:** The infield fly rule has precedence over the green grass rule. If an infield fly is called but the ball is dropped and it hits the grass, the batter is still out.

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10. **Walk Rule:** If a guy walks, whether intentional or not, the woman batter on deck has the option to walk.
11. **Flip-Flop Rule:** The flip-flop rule will be invoked in any game when there is a 5-run differential in favor of the visiting team at the start of the “open inning”. If the visiting is ahead by 5 or more runs, the home team starts the open inning at bat. If the home team fails to tie or go ahead, the game ends and the visiting team wins. If the home team ties or goes ahead, the visiting team takes its turn at bat.
12. **Mercy Rule:** If a team is behind by 12 or more runs at any time after 5 full at bats have been completed, the game ends and shall be declared a complete regulation game.
13. **High Wind Situations:** Managers must consult with the umpire prior to or during any game where high winds are present, to not call balls, cancel or stop play.
14. **Official Protests/Appeals:** Only a **manager** may question a ruling made by an umpire. **Non-managers protesting decisions are subject to immediate ejection.** Notification of an official protest or appeal must be made to the umpire as per ASA rules. Appeals will be adjudicated immediately by the umpire. It will be the umpire’s responsibility to notify the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner of the protest for adjudication. The Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner will recuse themselves in any situation that may be perceived as a conflict of interest for them.
15. **Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** The umpire is authorized at their discretion to warn or eject any player who exhibits bad conduct or use of foul language. An ejected player must leave the area immediately. This ejection is for this game only, unless the commissioner deems the player’s behavior to be excessive. The Commissioner reserves the right to impose a more serious penalty. This overruling includes, but is not limited to, ejecting a player with habitual misconduct for additional games. Any fan exhibiting bad conduct will be reported to the Commissioner for resolution.
16. **Umpire Selection.** During the season, including the tournament, any person who attends the BAJA Umpire Clinic or is a certified USA umpire may umpire a game. Umpires will be assigned games by the Chief Umpire. Managers may NOT waive these assignments. During the End of Season Tourney, the Commissioner and Chief Umpire will assign umpires.
17. **Scoring:** Managers may designate anyone their scorekeeper. The home team book will be the official book for that game. If the home team cannot keep a complete scoring record for both teams, the visiting team’s book will become the official book if it maintains a complete scoring record. If neither team can keep a complete scoring record, the umpire is the official scorer. He may consult with either or both books at his discretion.
18. **Rain outs/Make-up Games:** No regular season game will be made up if cancelled. If at the end of the regular season, a tie for first place in the standings exists, a one game play-off will be played on the first day of the Tournament between the tied teams. The winner will be declared season winner and first seed for the tournament. If ties exist at the season’s end for position other than first, a coin flip will be used to determine tournament seeding.
19. **Manager Selection:** During the summer and fall leading up to the season, the Commissioner will select the Managers for the leagues. Managers will be required to attend a brief Manager’s Clinic to review rules, guidelines and tips for managing.
20. **Waiver:** Except where specifically stated, **NO USA OR BAJA RULE IN AFFECT WILL BE WAIVED WITHOUT CONSULTATION WITH THE COMMISSIONER.**

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E. Special Policies:

1. **Pet Policy:** Any pet belonging to a player that enters the dugout or playing field during or after the game will receive a warning. The second offense will result in a one game suspension.
2. **Smoking Policy:** No smoking is allowed within 30ft of the playing field.
3. **“Using the Hill”:** Please refrain from using the hill to relieve yourself. There are restrooms provided just outside the Catino outfield gate.
4. **Covid-19 Mask Requirements:** All players, umpires, and spectators will wear a mask at all times at the fields. This means starting from when you get out of your car and ending when you get back into your car.
 - a. **Mask Exceptions:** When you are batting, when you are on base, or playing in the field (Catchers excepted).
 - b. **The dugouts will not be used.** Hang bags on the fence along both sides and maintain 6 feet distance. Bring your own chair to sit on.
 - c. **12:30 PM Teams:** Do not hang your bags on the fence until the 9:30 AM teams have vacated the area with their bags.

ZERO TOLERANCE: ANYONE EXHIBITING UNSPORTSMANLIKE BEHAVIOR WILL BE EJECTED FROM THE GAME. CONTINUED SUCH BEHAVIOR AFTER THE EJECTION, COULD RESULT IN THE TEAM HAVING TO FORFEIT THE GAME.