



# OAKVILLE MASTERS MEN'S SLO-PITCH LEAGUE RULES 2025

Rev: October 6, 2025

## **GENERAL**

### **Prelude:**

The following rules apply to OMMSPL and should be read in concert with the OMMSPL's Constitution and Code of Conduct. Where not specified, playing rules will be in accordance with Slo-Pitch National (SPN) current year Rule Book. The OMMSPL team Managers are responsible to ensure each game is played within the rules as set out below.

**Appeals**, protests, incidents, etc. requiring League follow-up, should be submitted in writing to the Executive Committee within three (3) days. The Executive Committee will render a decision within fourteen (14) days of receiving the submission.

**Umpires:** The League shall use the services of certified umpires, to be chosen by the Executive Committee before each season.

### **Player Umpires:**

If a scheduled umpire does not attend a game each team when batting will provide a neutral umpire. The following applies to player/umpires:

1. In the event of an Umpire "rule misinterpretation", the two Managers, with mutual agreement, may overrule the initial call. "Judgement" calls will stand as ruled by the Umpire.
2. If a Manager requests a change in umpires, and the other Manager agrees, another Umpire must be assigned. The replaced Umpire will not umpire any further that day.

## **Uniforms:**

League jerseys are to be worn during all League games by players on the official team roster; however, may be covered if the weather so dictates. Spare and replacement players need not wear "league jerseys" although Managers may lend jerseys to both spares and replacement players. Players are encouraged to wear League issued hats or no hat at all.

## **ROSTERS**

### **Player Eligibility:**

1. All full-time players, replacements and spares must be at least 60 years of age by December 31, current year.
2. All full-time players, replacements and spares must complete and sign an annual player registration/waiver form prior to participating.
3. All full-time players, replacements and spares must be current members of SloPitch Ontario with an "all-access pass".
4. Team rosters are set at the beginning of each season. If, two weeks prior to the first game of the season, a player withdraws his application, his registration fee may be refunded (see "Constitution") and a new full-time player will be assigned by Executive Committee, if available.

### **Spares:**

1. If a Manager expects to field 10 or fewer players on any game day during the regular season, he must request spare(s) to bring his team total to 11 players.
    - 1.1 The request will be made to the Spare Coordinator or to the League Commissioner.
    - 1.2 It will include the names, ratings and positions of the absent players.
    - 1.3 The Spare Coordinator will select a player on the spare list, taking into consideration the ratings of the missing players and their positions.
    - 1.4 If a regular player(s) who was expected to be absent shows up at game time, all players including the spares will be allowed to play. If this occurs, the Manager must e-mail the Spare Coordinator with this information.
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2. Spares will be placed last in the batting order.

### **Replacement Players:**

1. If a player is expected to be away for three or more consecutive game days, the Manager must report the name, rating, position, and expected return date of the absent player to the Spare Coordinator or to the League Commissioner.
2. If two or more players are expected to be away for three or more consecutive games, the Spare Coordinator will take appropriate action which could include selecting a Replacement(s) or appointing a Spare(s) on a week-to-week basis.
3. Any assigned Replacement player will play (including the playoffs) until the roster player returns and may be placed anywhere in the batting order.

## **GAMES**

### **Equipment:**

The Home team of the first game will occupy 3rd base dugout, install and remove the bases, board, scoring plate, pitching screen and shared bats; attach the Courtesy Runner loop behind home plate; draw lines (Commitment & Pitcher's Box) and supply both a new ball and backup ball. Home team is also responsible for ensuring storage boxes are securely locked post games. Home team of the second game will supply the balls for that game. During playoffs, the visiting team is responsible for field preparations.

All players must use only the bats assigned by the League.

### **Commencement:**

1. In the event of adverse weather and/or sloppy field conditions, prior to game time, the League Commissioner, after consulting with someone who has checked the field conditions, will decide whether or not the games will be played.
  2. Teams will play two - 7 inning games with the first game to start promptly at 9:30 AM, with no grace period.
  3. Pre-game batting practice, if held, will be with the batter hitting from home plate only. Batting practice is not permitted from any other field location. Batters on both teams must have equal opportunity to participate. Once batting practice has begun those players wishing to throw warm-up must do so off the diamond, outside the fence. Managers will ensure batting practice does not delay the commencement of games.
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4. Pre-game infield warm ups are limited to ten minutes for each team and Managers will ensure they do not delay the commencement of games.
5. Managers will convene at home plate five minutes prior to the first game to exchange lineup information.
6. If time permits, infielders are allowed warmup throws between innings. When the Pitcher is ready to pitch, "ball in" must be called. The warmups should not delay the game. A Pitcher is allowed three warm-up pitches per inning and a new Pitcher is allowed five.

**Duration:**

1. Games are to be a full 7 innings.
2. Once a game is underway, decisions to halt or suspend the game due to weather or field conditions will rest with mutual agreement of the two Managers at the park and be immediately reported to the League Commissioner.
3. If a game is delayed or called because of an injury or inclement weather, the game will be deemed to be complete if 5 innings have been played (4 1/2 innings if the home team is leading). If the minimum innings have not been played, the game will not count in the standings.
4. The second 7 inning game will be played immediately following the first game.

**League Standings:**

Two points will be awarded to a team for a win. If a game is tied at the end of 7 innings, each team will receive one point in the standings. If all teams do not play the same number of games for any reason (such as games at one diamond not being played due to field conditions while other games are completed), the standings shall be determined by "points per game played".

**Mercy Rules:**

The following rules apply in all regular season games and playoff games with one exception as noted.

1. A maximum of 5 runs per team will be allowed per inning, except for the last inning, which will be an 'open' inning.
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2. If a team is ahead by 12 runs or more at the completion of 5 or more innings (or 4 1/2 innings if the home team is leading), the game shall be declared a "mercy win". This rule does not apply in the championship game.

## **PARTICIPATION**

**Minimum Players:** The minimum number of players, including spares and/or replacement players, to start a game is nine (9). Teams must field a minimum of nine (9) players during the course of the game and finish with a minimum of nine (9) players. If at any time during the course of the game, the number of fielders or batters on a team falls below the minimum of nine (9), the game shall be declared a forfeit by that team.

**Borrowed Catcher:** At any time during a regular season game (not playoffs) when a team has 10 or fewer players, the opposing team, if asked, will supply a catcher while batting. The 'loaned' player will carry out all functions of a regular catcher and will be limited to the position of catcher only.

**Batting:** All players must bat. Players arriving after the first pitch of the game will be added to the bottom of the order. A player who misses a turn at bat (e.g. due to illness or injury) must leave the game. NOTE that a player who leaves the field due to illness or injury may return to the game provided he does not miss his turn at bat. If a player leaves the game, his team will remove his name from the batting order without penalty. In the regular season (but not the playoffs) the batting order will remain the same for both games and the batter who was on deck when the first game ended must bat first in the second game. In the playoffs the batting order in the second game may be reconfigured in the manager's discretion.

**Defence:** Eleven (11) players may be positioned anywhere on the field.

Managers will do their best to provide players with equal playing time in the field, (pitchers may be excluded) but retain the discretion to play their best players in last inning/ close game situations. In addition, in a playoff game all players except the pitcher must sit once before any player sits twice. Who plays what position is the responsibility of the team Manager. NOTE: It is the player's responsibility to notify the League Executive in writing of any complaints or problems regarding player rotation on his respective team.

## **ON FIELD RULES**

### **Pitching:**

In place of an Umpire-called strike zone, a strike zone mat / board measuring 21" x 36" will be employed.

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A pitched ball must attain a height of between 6 and 12 feet.

### **Safety Screen:**

Pitchers must stand with both feet within a 10' by 2' rectangle 50' from home plate. The Safety Screen must be placed 6 feet from the edge of the rectangle toward home.

The screen may only be moved laterally, left to right, to accommodate left versus righthanded pitchers, provided that when viewed from behind home plate the pitching screen must obscure at least half of second base, as determined by the Umpire. The Pitcher must set the screen where he wants it before the first pitch of an inning and leave it for the whole inning. The Pitcher must be within the pitching rectangle when starting a pitch but may step outside with one foot when releasing the pitch.

The Pitcher must step completely behind the screen after each pitch. The Pitcher may move from behind the screen and field balls after contact.

Any violation of the above rules will be declared an "Illegal pitch" and a "Ball" will be called.

Batted balls striking the Safety Screen are considered "dead balls" and will be called "No Pitch" by the umpire.

Any thrown ball that is in play and hits the screen is considered a live ball and runners may advance at their own risk.

### **Restrictions on Walks:**

1. Intentional walks are not permitted except for valid strategic reasons unrelated to the hitting ability of the batter. For example, a batter may be intentionally walked if there is a runner on second or third base, first base is empty, and a double play would end the inning. A player may not be intentionally walked when the bases are empty.
2. If a player is walked (whether intentionally or not) in a game, then in all subsequent at-bats in that game the batter cannot be walked without his consent. If he does not consent to a walk he must be pitched to until he hits a ball into play or strikes out.

### **Batting:**

1. A strike will be called by the Umpire if a legally pitched ball makes any contact with the board on its descent. Contact with the board must occur prior to the ball striking the ground. The batter is declared out if a foul ball or tip is caught by the catcher, regardless of the height of the ball.
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2. Fair Territory is that part of the playing area within and including the first and third base foul lines from the home plate / strike mat to the bottom of the extreme playing area fence and then extending perpendicularly upwards. (The home plate / strike mat is in fair territory).

3. At no time during a game will the number of over the fence home runs (untouched) hit by one team, be more than two (2) above the number hit by the opposing team. Any such home run in excess of two (2) will result in the batter being declared "out" and other base runners may not advance. When a player hits an untouched over the fence home run but does not score himself as a result of the '5 run maximum runs per inning' rule, the home run will still count toward the 'excess of two (2)' rule for over the fence home runs.

### **Courtesy Runners:**

1. A Manager may replace a player on base by a Courtesy Runner for any reason. Except in last inning/ close game situations and in playoff games it is preferable for the Manager to ask the runner on base if he would like a Courtesy Runner, and refrain from making the substitution if the player would prefer to run for himself.

2. Each Courtesy Runner (including a Courtesy Runner from the screen discussed below) may run a maximum of three times per game (or four times in the championship game). A player may be a Courtesy Runner multiple times in an inning, but a player already occupying a base may not replace a player on another base.

3. If a batter has a physical impairment or injury and cannot run from Home plate, a Courtesy Runner may run in his stead. The Courtesy Runner will grasp a loop attached to the screen at the corner post located about 7 feet to the right (viewed from home plate) of where the extension of the third base foul line intersects with the screen. The Courtesy Runner must continue to grasp the loop until the Batter makes contact with the ball. If the Courtesy Runner releases in advance of contact being made by the Batter, an "Out" will be charged to the team but the Batter will still bat either in that inning or, if it is the third Out, leading off in the next inning. Upon the Batter making contact, the Courtesy Runner from the screen (with exception of an out-of-the-park-homerun) may advance to 1<sup>st</sup> base only. (If the Courtesy Runner runs toward 2<sup>nd</sup> base he will be allowed to return to 1<sup>st</sup> base.) Other base runners may advance beyond the next base at their own peril. If the Courtesy Runner fails to reach 1st base (including due to the batter striking out) that attempt will count towards his maximum of three courtesy substitutions per game. If the defensive team throws the ball out of play (such as into the dugout) all baserunners, including the Courtesy Runner from the screen if he made it safely to 1<sup>st</sup> base, are entitled to advance one base.

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## Ground Rules:

1. When a ball is thrown from anywhere on the field and rolls under the fence into the dugout, it will be treated the same as one which rolls through the doorway with one additional base being awarded to all runners.
2. At parks (such as Millbank where the side fences do not extend to the back fence) when a fair ball rolls into foul territory in the outfield and continues out of play or past the end fence, it will be a ground rule double.

## Base Running:

Bases are 65 feet apart. At first base, Runners must touch any portion of the orange safety base if a play is going to be made, otherwise the Runner is out. The Fielder must play any portion of the white bag, otherwise the Runner is safe. Once the play is made, the white base is the only base in play.

**No Anticipation** - The Batter must make contact with the ball before a Runner on any base may step off the base. If violated, the runner will be declared "Out".

Runners may slide into second and/or third base, but not initially at first base nor the scoring plate. If a defensive player has the ball and is waiting for the Runner and the Runner deliberately, with great force, crashes into the defensive player, the offensive player is out and is automatically ejected from the game. The ball is dead and no Runners may advance.

## Scoring:

1. **"Scoring Plate"** is a second Home Plate placed on an extended 1<sup>st</sup> base line, 8' from the back tip of home plate. A runner who has passed the Commitment Line and not reached the Scoring Plate shall be declared out if:
    - A.** A defensive player, in control of the ball, touches the Board at home plate before the runner makes contact with the scoring plate or, **B.** The runner touches the Board.
    - C.** The runner slides into the Scoring Plate.
  2. **Commitment Line** is twenty (20) feet from home plate. Once a Runner touches or passes the line, he is committed to proceed to the Scoring Plate and cannot return to 3<sup>rd</sup>. A runner may be "tagged" prior to crossing the Commitment Line.
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After crossing the Commitment Line, a Runner cannot be "tagged out". A Runner who has been "tagged" after crossing the Commitment Line is considered safe at the plate. Similarly, if a Runner has crossed the Commitment Line, he cannot return to 3rd to tag up on a fly ball; he is automatically out.

## **PLAYOFFS**

### **Playoff Positions:**

At the end of the regular season, ties in the league standings will be broken in the following sequence:

1. Head to head record amongst teams tied;
2. Number of wins;
3. Run differential amongst teams tied;
4. Total season runs against;
5. Total season runs for.

### **Playoff Format:**

Playoffs will consist of 7 inning round robin games against different teams. The two teams with the best record in the round robin will play a 9 inning championship game. The other teams will compete in 7 inning Consolation games.

Ties in playoff standings will be broken by Regular Season Final Standings.

### **Spares in the Playoffs, etc.**

1. Managers should encourage their players to be available for playoff games. Teams should not directly or indirectly encourage any player to be absent for a game.
  2. If a team does not have 9 regular players on a game day it will forfeit both games scheduled for that day. Instead, that team and its opponent will play recreational games with the opponent lending players as required.
  3. To the extent appropriate spares are available they will be assigned in order that each team and its opponent will have 11 players. Where possible, the average of the ratings of the spares assigned to a team shall not exceed the average of the ratings of the team's absent players.
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4. If enough spares with appropriate ratings are not available to satisfy the requirements of all teams the Executive Committee shall determine which spare(s) are assigned to which teams having regard to all factors it considers relevant in the circumstances, with the goal of treating all teams fairly.
5. If the teams playing each other have an unequal number of players (including spares), the team with more players will lend the shorthanded team a catcher who will make plays in the usual fashion.
6. If both teams playing each other have 10 players (including spares) then each team will lend a catcher to the other team who will make plays in the usual fashion, unless both managers agree to play with 10 players only.

## **PLAYER CONDUCT**

### **Alcohol:**

As per the Permit conditions set out by the Town of Oakville, all permit holders have been warned that Permits will be cancelled if alcohol is consumed at the Ball Parks at any time during or after a game.

### **Sportsmanship:**

While it is understandable that the heat of competition may occasionally give rise to heightened emotions, all players are expected to behave in a cordial and gentlemanly manner. Only team Managers or their Assistants, should discuss on field issues, questionable calls, or rule interpretations with the Umpire.

### **Objectionable Conduct:**

All Players shall comply with the terms outlined in the "Code of Conduct" which include:

- respecting the game, playing fairly and following its rules and regulations.
- accepting judgement decisions made by umpires and Managers.
- not using intoxicating substances, nor appearing to be intoxicated.
- demonstrating good sportsmanship before, during and after games.
- respecting the privilege and rules of the public facilities we are using.

Players demonstrating objectionable conduct (such as arguing, abusive language, bullying, displays of temper, or reaction in a violent manner with an opposing player, official, team mate or spectator) will be reported by Managers to the League Executive

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who will review and determine disciplinary action including suspension or permanent expulsion from the League.

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