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# Alberta 55 plus Slo-Pitch Rules

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## **General Information**

The rules listed in this section shall be the official rules for any **Alberta 55 plus** event. All Alberta 55 plus Rules are located on our web site at: [www.alberta55plus.ca](http://www.alberta55plus.ca). If there is a discrepancy between any printed rules, the version available on our web site shall prevail.

**Entry Procedures:** Check with your Zone Activity Director for playoff information and date. Contact information is listed on our website at [www.alberta55plus.ca](http://www.alberta55plus.ca)

## **Game Courtesies**

Rules are made to be followed by all players to make games happen. But often there are unwritten “rules” or courtesies which will make the game much better with fewer problems for all. Whether the game is a friendly recreational event among friends or part of an important tournament, participants should practice good sportsmanship and respect for their competitors.

Rules for many of the activities that 55 plus play are contained in rules books written by provincial, national or international governing bodies. These rules are often referred to but any adaptations to these rules will be listed within each rule.

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## Age Groups / Events

All participants must fall within the age group indicated by December 31 of the Event year. All participants in Zone Playoffs must be Active Members.

Age	Events	Tournament Type	Participants Advancing to Provincial Games
55+	Women	Teams are allowed to field 11 players. The number of teams will determine the tournament format. Please note: the smaller ball will be used.	<b>14</b>
60+	Women	Teams are allowed to field 11 players. The number of teams will determine the tournament format. Please note: the smaller ball will be used.	<b>14</b>
55+	Men	Teams can field 10 players. There will be 2 divisions of 4 teams with medals awarded in each division. Following round robin play, the 4 <sup>th</sup> team will be eliminated; 1 <sup>st</sup> place team receives bye; 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> place teams will play off with the loser receiving the bronze medal and the winner playing the 1 <sup>st</sup> place team for gold and silver medals.	<b>14</b>
60+	Men	Teams can field 10 players. There will be 2 divisions of 4 teams with medals awarded in each division. Following round robin play, the 4 <sup>th</sup> place team will be eliminated; 1 <sup>st</sup> place team will receive a bye; 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> place teams will play off with the loser receiving bronze and the winner playing the 1 <sup>st</sup> place team for gold and silver medals.	<b>14</b>
65+	Men	Teams can field 11 players. There will be 2 divisions of 4 teams with medals awarded in each division. Following round robin play, the 4 <sup>th</sup> place team will be eliminated; 1 <sup>st</sup> place team will receive a bye; 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> place teams will play off with the loser receiving bronze and the winner playing the 1 <sup>st</sup> place team for gold and silver medals.	<b>14</b>
70+	Men	Teams are allowed to field 11 players. The number of teams will determine the tournament format.	<b>14</b>
75+	Men	Teams are allowed to field 11 players. The number of teams will determine the tournament format.	<b>14</b>
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS PER ZONE</b>			<b>98</b>

Slo-Pitch National (SPN) Rules as modified by Alberta 55 plus will govern play.

## Rules – Team Registration

1. Each Zone team will submit a team roster consisting of 14 players plus two alternates. An alternate may be added to the Roster to replace a player who is unable to attend the Games as a result of injury or serious family issues. All substitutions must be made no later than the day before the Games registration date. A player cannot register on more than one roster.
2. If a team has a non-playing coach, that individual must be included on the 14-person team roster.
3. All players that are registered on a specific Zone Team Roster must currently reside in that Zone, as verified by the address on their Driver's license.

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4. All team scorekeepers, other than the Official Scorekeepers, are required to be current members of Alberta 55 plus. The team scorekeeper will then be allowed to join the players on the players' bench.

### Rules – Playing Field Specifications / Pitching

5. The outfield fence, measured from the back of the home plate to the outfield fence, should meet or exceed a distance of 250-feet. A distance of 270-feet to 300-feet is preferred for the younger age groups.
6. The distance between bases is currently established at 65 feet.
7. The pitching distance may vary from 50 – 65 feet measured from the back of the original home plate to the pitching plate. The pitching plate is usually fixed at 50-feet and 65-feet is normally marked with a chalk line. The pitching plate is usually constructed of wood or rubber, 24-inches in width, matching the width of Home plate.
8. Home plate, also known as the strike plate, is to be a mat or wooden board 2 feet wide by 3 feet long. The front half of the rectangular mat or board will be placed to cover the original home plate and the back half of the mat or board will extend back between the batter's boxes.
9. A legally delivered ball striking any part of the strike mat or board before it touches the ground is a strike regardless of the direction the ball deflects.
10. In order to be called a strike, the minimum height of a pitched ball shall be 6 feet and the maximum height shall be 12 feet and it must make contact with the strike board. A ball hitting the mat or board after being struck by the batter is considered to be a fair ball if it ends up in fair territory or if it stops on the mat or board.
11. Bunting is not allowed.

### Rules – Player Safety

12. In order to mitigate the possibility of a serious injury, the pitchers should wear a face mask and/or head protection gear.
13. No metal cleats will be allowed. Offending players will be ejected.
14. A safe base at first is mandatory. A runner must touch the orange half of the safe base at first base, unless there is no play at first base. If there is no play at first, the defending player must allow the runner access to the white half of the safe base regardless of whether the runner intends to advance to second base or remain at 1<sup>st</sup> base.
15. A safe line at home plate is a 10-foot chalk line extending into foul territory from the front corner of the strike mat perpendicular to the 3<sup>rd</sup> base line. A runner, to be safe, must step on the safe line or on the dirt beyond the safe line before the ball is caught by the catcher. If the runner touches the strike mat or board, the runner is an automatic out.

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16. The commitment line is marked with chalk at a distance of 45 feet from 3rd base (20 feet from home plate). The defending player is not allowed to tag the runner attempting to score if the runner has entered the area between the commitment line and the safe line. If the catcher has the ball and touches home plate before the runner from third can gain the safe line, the runner is out.

Sliding into 1<sup>st</sup> base or sliding in at home plate is not allowed. The runner will be called out if they choose to slide into 1<sup>st</sup> base or slide in the vicinity of home plate. Sliding into 2<sup>nd</sup> base or sliding into 3<sup>rd</sup> base is permitted.

### Rules – Team Roster / Batting line-up / Substitutions

17. If all of the players on the team are in the batting line-up and one is injured during the game and is unable to play, no automatic out will be assessed if the player is removed from the line-up. However, the team manager must advise the umpire that a player has been injured prior to that player stepping up to the plate. The injured player will not be allowed to re-enter the game.
18. All players MUST have a number on their uniform. Three line-up cards will be used for each game. One copy of the line-up is for the Official Scorekeeper or Umpire, one copy for the opposing team and one copy for the home team.
19. Extra players (EP) may be used in each game upon condition that they are included on the line-up card for each game.
20. Substitute players may be inserted into the line-up or on defense at any time. Substitute players will not be included in the batting line-up, but they must be identified on the team line-up card. The substitute player, upon replacing a player in the line-up, will occupy that player's spot in the batting line-up.
21. A player in the starting line-up can be removed and may re-enter the game for the player that replaced him/her, once during the game, in the same spot in the batting line-up.

### Rules – Base Running / Courtesy Runners

22. A) Unlimited courtesy runners are allowed, but a player can only be used once as a courtesy runner per inning. The courtesy runner must be inserted at the first stoppage of play and at the base the batter attained during the play. If the courtesy runner is a substitute player the substitute player is now in the line-up and the player he is running for is now out of the line-up. The replaced player may re-enter the game under the re-entry rule. A courtesy runner cannot be replaced by another courtesy runner in the same inning.
- B) If a courtesy runner is a runner from home, he/she must start 6 feet behind a line that extends the 3<sup>rd</sup> base line to the back-stop and may advance only to first base on the first hit. The courtesy runner cannot advance beyond first base on an overthrow. If the courtesy runner attempts to run to 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base and subsequently causes confusion on the defensive team, interference is to be called on the courtesy runner, and the courtesy runner will be called out.
- C) Courtesy runners (55+ Women, 55+, 60+ and 65+ Divisions) may run from home if both coaches are in agreement, prior to the start of the game.

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D) In the 70+ and 75+ Divisions, a courtesy runner from behind home plate may be used at the coach's discretion. Consent of the opposing coach is not required.

E) a runner may step off any base after the pitched ball has struck the ground or passed through the plane of the strike board without being called out.

## Rules –Game Duration / Tie Breakers

23. Games shall consist of 7 innings. If the home team is ahead after 6 ½ innings, they do not bat, and the game is over.
24. The five-run rule per inning is in effect, except for the last or extra innings, which are declared as “open-run” innings by the umpire.
25. All games shall continue until a winner is determined. The international Tie-breaker rule shall come into play after 7 innings. Start the 8<sup>th</sup> inning with 1 out. Last official batter goes to 2<sup>nd</sup> base.
26. If there is a 2-way tie after the round robin, go to “who beat who”. If there is a 3-way tie after the round robin, go to the formula of “runs for minus runs against” in the games between the 3 tied teams.

## Rules –Fifth Inning Mercy Rule

**The 5-Run Rule will be used throughout the tournament.** If a team is about to be “mercy ruled”, the 5-run rule will be extended to allow the team to get 1 run under the mercy rule. Example: fifth inning, team is losing 24 to 5, the team that is losing would be able to score 8 runs and the inning would be over

- A mercy rule of 12 runs after 5 innings will apply to all games, including finals.

## Rules –Home-Run Rule: “2-Up”

27. Either team is allowed to hit two home-runs. If a team hits a third home-run before the other team has hit one home-run, the third home-run will be an automatic out. There can never be more than a two home-run difference between the two teams.

## Rules – Illegal Bats

28. To ensure the safety of all players, certain bats will not be allowed (see current year banned bat list [www.asasoftball.com](http://www.asasoftball.com)). ASA non-approved bat list to be followed.

Before the start of a game and when the umpire is checking bats of the teams about to play, if a bat is found to be illegal as in not meeting the standards of the definition of a legal bat,(dents, flat spots, rips, too big, too long, baseball bat, unsafe grips, non-approved) then the bat is to be removed from the game and not allowed for play.

If a batter is found to be using an illegal bat (see above) during live play, then the batter is out and ejected for the rest of that game. If a legal bat becomes illegal after a batter has just used it,

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as in it becomes dented or rips or breaks on the swing, then the batter is not out, the play stands and the now illegal bat is removed from the game.

If a batter is found to be using a non-approved bat, one that is on the non-approved list, then that batter is out and ejected and the manager/coach is ejected as well. The player could face further sanctions including suspension from play. The player who used the non-approved bat is the ejected player, not the owner of the bat. It is the responsibility of both players and coaches to know what bats are being used for play.

If a batter is found to be using an altered bat, one that has been altered in a way that increases distance on a hit ball, affects how the ball travels after being struck or has modifications made to the bat that somehow changes the structure of the bat, that batter is out and ejected and the manager/coach is ejected as well. The bat will be confiscated and tested. If the bat proves to have been altered, the player will be suspended from play for a period not less than three years.

### **Rules – Carded Umpires / Protests**

29. The Host Community will provide carded umpires and restricted flight balls (Worth Gold Dot .44 core or equivalent). Note: 55+ Women will play with the smaller ball (11-inch circumference as opposed to 12-inch circumference).
30. Any protests must be made in writing within ½ hour of the completion of the game and submitted to the Alberta 55 plus Summer Games Slo-pitch chairperson. Umpire calls may not be protested. Any physical altercations may be dealt with by the Alberta 55 plus Discipline Committee.