

**MARLBORO MVP SOFTBALL LEAGUE BY-LAWS &
RULES OF THE GAME**

Updated: August 1, 2018

RULES OF THE GAME

1. Rule Book Used

a) The League shall follow the rules of the Amateur Softball Association (“ASA”), which may be found at <http://www.azsoftball.org/misc/2006/Misc/05.softball.umpire.rulebook.pdf> Any rules of the League which are intended to supplement or alter the ASA rules shall be listed within these By Laws and posted on the League website, and shall supersede the appropriate ASA rule. When a rule is in doubt, the existing ASA rule shall be used.

2. Playoffs and Seeding

a) Team records and standings shall be kept on the League website. At the conclusion of the regular season, teams in places 1 through 6 shall be seeded in that order in the first round of the playoffs. Teams 7 through 10 shall then play a one-game play-in game, with Team 7 playing Team 10, and Team 8 playing Team 9. The winners of the play-in games will then be seeded as the 7th and 8th teams in the playoffs. The higher seeds will be designated “home team” for the play-in game.

b) In the event that teams do not play the same number of games (i.e., due to rain outs), standings will be determined by winning percentage of games played.

c) Each round of the playoffs shall be best of 3 games, with the first team to win 2 games advancing to the next round. The higher seeded team shall be the home team for games 1 and 3, with the lower seeded team serving as home team for game 2.

d) Teams shall be reseeded according to overall league record after each round.

3. Tiebreakers

a) If two teams have the same record at the end of the regular season, the first tiebreaker shall be their record against each other head to head. If the teams split in the regular season, the next tiebreaker shall be run differential in the games between the teams. If teams are still tied after the second tiebreaker, there shall be a coin flip.

b) If three or more teams have the same record, the first tie breaker shall be each of the three team's records against each other. If still tied, the next tiebreaker shall be run differential in the games between the teams. If teams are still tied after the second tiebreaker, there shall be a coin flip.

4. Official Games

a) All games shall be nine innings. During the regular season, if the game is stopped because of weather condition, it shall be official after the trailing team has batted for five full innings. If less than 5 innings have been played, the game does not count, and will be replayed in its entirety. In all playoff games, however, nine complete innings must be played. If a playoff game is stopped for any reason prior to its completion, the game will continue from the point the game was stopped. Similarly, if a regular season game is stopped for any reason other than weather conditions (i.e., the lights go out), the game will continue at a time and date determined by the Board from the point the game was stopped.

b) Once a game begins, the decision to call the game due to weather conditions shall rest in the sole discretion of the umpire.

c) There are no changes allowed to the league schedule, unless approved by the Board.

d) If a player was not present for a game that was stopped and is being completed at a later date, that player may only enter the game that is being continued if he can still meet the requirement of playing four full innings in the field.

5. Pre-Game Meeting

- a) Prior to each game, the umpire shall meet with the Manager of both teams and go over the field's specific ground rules.
- b) During the initial meeting with the umpire, each Manager must notify the umpire which of his players is not in the lineup. Furthermore, if a player needs to leave the game early or may not be able to play 4 innings in the field, this must be discussed prior to the game and any decision must be agreed by the player in question and **BOTH** managers. Any player arriving at a time in the game in which he would be unable to fulfill the requirement of playing four full innings in the field (after the 6th inning) may not enter the game.

6. Batting and Fielding

- a) All players shall bat throughout the entire game. Any player who arrives after the team has already batted around shall be placed at the end of the lineup. If the team has not yet come to bat, the player may be placed anywhere in the lineup. If the team has already batted, but not yet batted around, the player may be inserted in any non-batted slot in the lineup. No player arriving late may enter the game if he is unable to fulfill the requirement of 4 innings in the field.
- b) If a player leaves a game early due to injury or any other reason, with the exception of being ejected from the game, his spot in the lineup is skipped and the team shall not be charged with an out. If a player is ejected from the game by the umpire, an out shall be recorded each time that player's position in the lineup is reached.
- c) All players are to play a minimum of 4 complete innings in the field. If a player is found not to have played the field after the fifth inning, the Manager or Co-Manager must ask the other Manager to play that player. If at that point the player does not play the field for 4 innings, the umpire is to be informed before the start of the 7th inning that the game is under protest and the player shall be taken out of the game with his turn at bat being recorded as an out.
- d) Players can be substituted defensively at any time of the game. (See Pitching section for rules for substitution of pitchers)
- e) Bunting is not allowed.

7. Pitching

- a) Pitching rules shall follow ASA rules for "Modified Pitch."
- b) It is the policy of this league that no tournament level pitchers will be allowed to pitch in our league. A tournament level pitcher is defined as a player who currently participates or has participated on a tournament level team. This will be strictly enforced.
- c) A pitcher must pitch to 3 consecutive batters upon entering a game before being replaced. If he faces less than 3 batters in an inning, he must start the next inning until he faces a total of 3 batters. This includes intentional walks. A pitcher can be brought in for the final 1 or 2 outs of a game. If a pitcher has already pitched in the same inning, there will be no warm-up pitches. The player has to remain in the field to come back and pitch in the same inning. He may not return from the bench to pitch in the same inning.
- d) If a pitcher wishes to intentionally walk a player, he may indicate so verbally and the batter will be awarded first base without a pitch having to be thrown.

8. Bases and Base Running

- a) The "visiting" team is responsible for putting out and measuring the bases and pitching rubber. The pitching mound shall be 46 feet in distance to the front of the mound. Bases shall be 60 feet apart.
- b) A "Dual first base" shall be used. Players running through first base must touch the outside (orange) base. Defensive players covering first base must touch the inside (white) base. On extra base hits or balls hit to the outfield, the batter/runner may touch the white or colored portion of the base.
- c) A batted ball hitting or bounding over the white portion of the base is considered fair and in play. A batted ball hitting or bounding over the colored portion of the base is considered foul.
- d) Each player may pinch run only one time per game. Both Managers shall be responsible for keeping track of all pinch runners. A pinch runner is not official until a pitch is thrown. Once a pitch is thrown, they may not be replaced.

- e) A player who is already on the bases may not pinch run for another player who is on the bases at the same time.
- f) A second pinch runner may not run for another pinch runner. If a pinch runner is on base at the time of his at bat, the team will be given an out for that player and the runner will remain on base.
- g) There is no leading or stealing. Runners may leave the base once the ball has left the pitcher's hand toward home plate. An umpire may call a runner out for leaving the base early.
- h) Only the catcher may attempt to pick off a runner. The fielder need only step on the base before the runner returns for the "Out." (For first base, the fielder must hit the inside [white] base). Runners may attempt to advance if there has been an error or missed ball on the pick-off attempt, but must first retouch the base they are on before attempting to advance.
- i) **Dead Balls** (based on ASA rules): When the ball is in play and is overthrown (beyond the boundary lines) or blocked (i.e., due to offensive equipment not involved in the game). – all runners will be awarded two bases, and the award will be governed by the position of the runners when the ball left the fielder's hand (umpires decision as to where the runners are at time of ball leaving fielder's hand). **EXCEPTIONS:** (1) When a fielder loses possession of the ball, such as on an attempted tag, and the ball enters the dead ball area or becomes blocked, each runner is awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the ball entered the dead ball area or became blocked. (2) If the ball becomes blocked due to offensive equipment not involved in the game, the ball is ruled dead and runners are returned to the last base touched at the time of the blocked ball.

9. Slide or Avoid

- a) A base runner must slide or avoid a defensive player attempting to make a play on him. Contact with a defensive player (unless incidental as determined by the umpire) shall result in a dead ball and the base runner shall be called out. Any other base runner(s) shall return to their previous base. It is the sole discretion of the umpire to eject a player for a violation of the slide or avoid rule. Any player ejection based upon a violation of the slide or avoid rule shall be subject to Board review for a determination as to whether the player shall serve the otherwise automatic one game suspension for an ejection.
- b) An umpire shall have the discretion to advise players that they do not have to touch home plate if there is no play on them if the area around home plate is wet or dangerous.

10. Player Behavior

- a) Any player whose actions cause him to be ejected from the game by the umpire will automatically be suspended for a minimum of one game. At the discretion of the Board, the player may be suspended for additional games depending on the severity of his actions. Suspensions will begin with the team's next regularly scheduled game (regular season or playoff game). In the event that a player is ejected from a game that is not completed (i.e., due to rain), the player will be suspended for the team's next regularly scheduled game. Even though he has served his suspension, he will not be eligible to play in the make-up game.
- b) A player who is ejected must immediately leave the field of play. If a player does not leave the field upon being ejected, his team may forfeit the game at the umpire's discretion. If a player refuses to leave the field he is subject to further suspensions and/or may be banned from the league for a length of time to be determined by The Board. An ejected player may remain on the bench at the umpire's discretion. If a player who has been ejected is asked to leave the bench by the umpire and does not comply with this request, his team may forfeit the game at the umpire's discretion.
- c) A Manager who wishes to appeal a player's ejection must notify the Commissioner by e-mail within 24 hours of the game. To appeal a suspension, the Manager and suspended player shall each supply to the Board an e-mail explaining the action committed by the player, any circumstances pertinent to the ejection, and the reason(s) it is believed that the player should not be suspended. The Commissioner or a member of the Board shall conduct an investigation and the Board will then vote on the player's appeal. A player who loses an appeal **may** be subject to suspension for an additional game which shall be decided by a majority vote of the Board.
- d) Subject to the discretion of the Board, any person verbally or physically threatening or touching an umpire or another player will be suspended from that point forward through the end of the season and maybe subject to being banned from the league permanently.

- e) Umpires shall have the discretion of ejecting a player using foul language. Prior to an ejection, a warning may be given to the offending player, or to all players, although a warning is not mandatory.
- f) All players are expected to play the entire season.
- (g) Player behavior (Code of Conduct) - is not limited to actions on the field of play. For off the field behavior, the Board has the discretion at any time to deny the application of; suspend; remove as Commissioner, Board Member, Manager or player, any individual whose actions are deemed to be a detriment to the operation, purpose, and integrity of the League. While this list is not exhaustive, it includes, but is not limited to, the use of any Social Media or other forum (i.e., e-mails, text messages) which attacks or cyber-bullies any League official, member, sponsors, families or other League-related parties or initiates, promotes or otherwise advances actions which circumvent the Bylaws and effective operation of the League. Any action taken requires a majority vote by the Board.

11. Disputed Calls

- a) If there is a dispute with an umpire's call, only a team Manager or Co-Manager may address an umpire. The Manager shall not "argue" with the umpire and shall not question discretionary calls such as balls and strikes. A Manager may discuss with an umpire a League Rule that he believes the umpire has misinterpreted or overlooked.
- b) A manager may file a protest if he believes an umpire has made a call counter to ASA or League Rules. Both the umpire and opposing manager must be notified immediately following the disputed call (i.e., before the next pitch is thrown) in order for the protest to be considered. The Manager protesting the game must notify the Commissioner or a Board member by e-mail within 24 hours of the game. To file a protest, the Manager shall supply to the Board an e-mail explaining the situation and why he believes the call was not correct. The Commissioner or Board member shall conduct an investigation and The Board will then vote on the protest. If the manager wins the protest, the game will be rescheduled, with the Board determining at what point the game will be picked up.

12. Rainouts

- a) Games that are postponed due to rain or other conditions shall be made up on a date to be determined by the Board.
- b) Toward the end of the regular season, the Board may communicate a "cut off" date after which no cancelled games are rescheduled.

13. Lights

- a) The home team Manager on the right hand field (Field #2) shall be responsible for turning the lights on for both fields before each game. The last Manager to leave their field shall be responsible for turning the lights off. All players must be off the field by 11:00 p.m.
 - b) In the event that the lights go out before the completion of a game, the game will be picked up from that point at a date to be determined by the Board.
- #### 14. Start Times
- a) All regular season games shall begin at 8:00 p.m. unless otherwise scheduled by the Board. Each team must have a minimum of 8 players to start the game. Forfeit time is 15 minutes after scheduled start. The game shall start when both teams have a minimum of 8 players present. Players arriving late may go into the field immediately, if their team is in the field. (see "Batting and Fielding" section for batting order). If a team is reduced to seven players during any game, that team shall forfeit the game.

14. Equipment, Uniforms

- a) All equipment, including, but not limited to bats, must meet with the standards of the ASA. Any bat deemed illegal or banned by the Amateur Softball Association shall be considered banned by the League.
- b) The Board reserves the right to impose additional restrictions on the use of certain bats. Such additional restrictions, if any, shall be as posted on the League website. A player using an illegal bat will be called out and ejected from the game. If a player is ejected for using an illegal bat, an out shall be recorded each time that player's position in the lineup is reached. The ejected player will also be suspended for the remainder of the

season and may be subject to suspension the following season at the discretion of the Board. During the pre-game meeting between the umpire and Managers, this issue should be specifically addressed so as to avoid any problems during the game.

c) Metal spikes are prohibited.

d) Batting helmets must be worn by all players at the plate and while running the bases.

e) The supplied uniform shirts must be worn by all players. A player cannot play without the required team shirt. Replacement players are temporarily exempt from this rule until such time as they are issued shirts. Shorts are permitted.

f) Bats - ALL Miken bats are banned. There is a banned equipment link on the MVP website with information on what bats are allowed and disallowed.

15. Softballs

a) The softball approved for use in 2018 league games is the Clincher Gold Softball.

b) At the outset of game, each Manager shall provide to the umpire one new ball. New balls shall be inserted into the game at the top of the first inning and the bottom of the first inning. Only softballs approved for League play at the outset of each season shall be used. In the event these balls are out of play each Manager shall supply the umpire with the "best balls available" from their supply. The umpire will determine if a ball is appropriate for use.

16. Additional Rules

a) Additional League Rules may be posted on the League's website and shall have the same force and effect as if set forth herein. The following are a list of Rules that are specific to the MVP League. If any League Rule listed in this section contradicts a rule contained in the Amateur Softball Association, the League Rules shall supersede.

- Players must be in "Dead Ball Territory" when they are not in the field. Only the next "on Deck" batter may be in the batter's circle.
- The winning manager shall be responsible for emailing the appointed web administrator after every game and advising him of the winning team and the score.
- Each manager shall be responsible for emailing the Commissioner after every game with a list of players who did not play in that game
- The umpire shall be responsible to keep the official score.
- All catchers must wear a protective mask at all times.
- The "mercy rule" shall be invoked when a losing team has batted at least five complete innings and is down by 20 runs or more, or after 6 complete innings and is down by 18 runs or more, or after seven innings and is down by 15 runs or more. If the home team is losing they shall still hit in the bottom of the inning. The mercy rule shall apply to playoff games.
- For the 2018 season, the play-in games will be played the Tuesday following Labor Day. Playoffs will start as soon as possible following the play-in games.
- All players are required to leave the field IMMEDIATELY if the Lightning Device sounds.
- Extra-inning games continue as normal. MVP does not follow the ASA/ITB rule of having a runner start on 2nd Base.

These By-Laws will be reviewed periodically by the Commissioner and the Board. League members will be notified of any changes. Any questions or comments on the rules should be directed to the Commissioner and/or the Board.