

**MIDDLESEX COUNTY
OVER 50 SOFTBALL LEAGUE, INC.**

LEAGUE RULES

2021

April 13, 2021

PREAMBLE

The name of the organization shall be Middlesex County Over 50 Softball League Inc. The League shall be a corporation pursuant to Title 15A: 2-8 of the New Jersey Domestic Corporation Act (The Act), whose purpose is to organize scheduled softball games for member teams. Each team in the League shall be considered a member pursuant to the Act and shall have equal rights and limitations. If any assets are at any time to be distributed, such distribution shall be equally among active members. All officers and only officers of the League shall be deemed Trustees under the Act. The League hereby indemnifies Trustees/Officers to the maximum extent permitted under Title 15A: 3-4 of the Act against expenses and liabilities in connection with any proceeding. Any provisions of these By-Laws (sometimes referred to as a "Constitution") which are not in accordance with the Act are to be considered null and void. The intention of the League is to operate as a corporation under the Act to limit any personal liabilities of Trustees/ Officers.

ARTICLE I

BY-LAWS

MEMBERSHIP/TEAMS

- A. Each player must be at least fifty (50) years old in the calendar year that he joins the League. If a player is found to be ineligible due to age, his team forfeits all games for which he was on the roster (current season only) and the player is ineligible for future play in the League unless reinstated by the Board.
- B. Prior to April 1, any New Team can be awarded membership by Majority Vote of League Managers. New Teams will be accepted singly or in pairs as needed, and will be entered into the agreed League Division with a Majority Vote of the League Managers in presence of the League Board. Any New Team in League must be in compliance with Section E below in regards to the number of existing players that can be included for it to be considered New.
- C. Team rosters with a minimum of sixteen (16) and a maximum of twenty-five (25) players must be submitted no later than April 1st. It is the team manager's responsibility to procure photocopies of players' driver's licenses. A signed team liability release form must also be submitted along with the team rosters. Teams forfeit all games until rosters are submitted. Team rosters are frozen after the completion of the third regular season playing date. Any player officially removed from the roster is ineligible to play for any other team that year.
- D. Prior to the first game of the season, no more than two (2) players can be picked up by any team from other existing teams in the League. A player shall be considered as an existing player (i.e. part of an existing team in the league) if he was on an official Player Roster for any team for any period of time (including partial seasons) during the preceding season (they need not have played in a game, just appear on a roster). Therefore, a new player would be anyone who never played in our league or appeared on any rosters at any time in the preceding year.
- E. Team ranking will be determined from the final regular season standings. Among the Division A teams, players may only move from a higher-ranking team to a lower ranking team (based on the final standings from the previous year). Division B and C players may move freely to a Division A team, and Division A players may move freely to a any other division team. Players can move freely among the Division B, C and D teams. However, no more than three (3) players can be picked up by an existing B team, and no more than four (4) players can be picked up by an existing C team, from other existing teams in the League. Therefore, any "new" team cannot consist of more than 2 existing A Division players, 3 existing B Division players and 4 existing C Division players. In all cases, managers wishing to move players must submit their plan to the Board for approval. No existing players may be moved to other existing teams during the season.

ARTICLE II

YEARLY OBLIGATIONS

All teams must pay League fees as determined by the Treasurer by April 1st of this year. A general sponsor letter will be made available for each team to track their sponsor's accountability. Fees are required to purchase softballs and also include insurance coverage, which the League will supply to the teams and to pay umpires. Umpires will be paid in cash at the start of all league season or playoff games. Teams in arrears forfeit all games while in arrears.

ARTICLE III

OFFICERS OF THE BOARD

The League Executive Board will be comprised of three (3) members, each with specific responsibilities. The Board will be charged with all League administrative decisions and duties, including enforcing League Rule revisions and additions which will be determined by the managers. The managers will decide all appeals, grievances and protests lodged during the season.

ARTICLE IV

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

All shall be held at a formal meeting called for at any time by the Executive Board or by a simple majority of team Managers and will be governed by the following:

A. Nominations

1. Any designated team can make a nomination representative.
2. Only one nomination or second will be accepted from any designated team representative for each Board position.

B. Elections

1. Requirements for voting. Each team has one vote to be cast by the designated team representative.
2. There will be no absentee ballots.
3. Any candidate shall be elected when the balloting yields a majority of the votes cast.

ARTICLE V

RULES OF PLAY

The League shall adhere to the current senior SSUSA rules and regulations for all playing matters, except as provided in the League rules of play. League rules take precedence over SSUSA rules.

Before the start of each softball season, the League Managers will review and decide on playing rules that shall be in the best interest of the League. The Board shall also adopt a schedule for the regular season. Subsequent suggested revisions to individual regular season game dates, times, and fields may be made with the approval of the Executive Board.

The current League rules of play are as follows:

1. Team field strength will be a maximum of eleven (11) players and a minimum of eight (8).
2. A game will be forfeited if a team cannot field a minimum of eight (8) players fifteen (15) minutes after the pre-arranged starting time or during play. If both teams cannot field eight (8) men, then both teams forfeit the game. Teams will supply a catcher for eight (8) players **only** and will not participate in any defensive plays. Managers can share players to field a team to avoid a forfeit. Players that are not on a teams roster and do not play on another team in the league can fill in during regular season games only to prevent forfeits. Manager on other team will be informed of player filling in for absent player. Only roster players can participate in the playoffs.
3. If a Team Manager contacts opponents manager by Thursday 6pm prior to a Saturday game stating their team does not have enough players there will be No forfeit fees, just 2 Loses of 7-0 for both games. If the same Manager DOES NOT CONTACT opponents manager by 6pm Thursday prior to Saturdays game or does not show up to game on the forfeit fine will be \$40 sent to League Treasurer prior to next game to be paid to umpire.
4. The umpire will be paid \$40/game with incentive pay of \$4/game dependent upon +/- rating each game by both manages on arc height and hustle of official. If managers do not report the ratings to league commisioner, they will be recorded as + while – ratings must be reported. A bonus check will be forwarded to the umpire assignor at the half point and end of season for distribution to the umpires as rated.
5. A team may bat all players. However, a minimum of twelve (12) players, if available, must be batted. Any player playing the field must bat. Optionally, two players may occupy the same slot in the batting order, alternate at bats and may play in the field. They may not move to any other slot in the batting order for that game.
5. Base runners may not leave base until pitched ball is hit. If the runner leaves early, the runner is out and the pitch counts for the batter.

6. If a player is removed from the game, an automatic out will be recorded (only) for the removed player's next scheduled turn at bat. (No additional outs will be recorded for subsequent scheduled turns at bat). Before the start of the game, players planning to leave a game before its conclusion must inform the umpire and opposing manager of their intended departure time; no penalty will then be imposed. Note that the team is still subject to (non-monetary) forfeiture of the game if it is unable to field eight (8) players as a result of (a) player(s) leaving or having been removed from the game.
7. Players arriving at any time after start of game can be inserted any spot in the batting lineup as long as the team has not batted one time through the lineup. If a team has batted though entire line up, the late player will be inserted at the bottom of the lineup.
8. This is a slow pitch league with a minimum arc of six (6) feet and a maximum arc of twelve (12) feet above the ground. **All pitchers must pitch from behind the screen.** Batted balls that hit the screen will be a strike. Hitting the screen with 2 strikes on the batter is a 3rd strike out. All other balls that contact the screen are in play as live balls. However, if a thrown ball becomes lodged in the screen and for safety reasons, it will be a dead ball and (2) two bases awarded to all runners.
9. The pitcher's box shall be three (3) feet wide to match the width of the pitching screen and five (5) feet deep. The pitcher can pitch from any spot in the box, as long as he has one foot in the box. The pivot foot must remain in the pitcher's box throughout the delivery. Consistent with current regulations, the pitcher must pause at least one (1) second before the start of delivery i.e. he cannot run up while in the box.
10. The pitching screen will be placed at forty-eight (48) feet centered in front of the pitching rubber. **The pitching screen must not be moved.** The managers will decide which team's pitching screen will be used. It is the umpire's duty to enforce prevention of any players from either team moving the screen during games. If any player violates this rule, there will be first a warning and then followed by an immediate ejection.
11. A league approved wooden strike zone mat (22" x 36") will be used in all League games. The plate and the mat shall constitute the strike zone. If a team supplies their own approved strike zone mat, they will be reimbursed by submitting a receipt to the league.
12. A third strike foul (i.e., a foul hit when the count is already strike two) is an automatic out. If such a third strike foul out is caught by a fielder, the ball is in play and runners may attempt to advance at their own discretion.
13. All base paths are sixty-five (65) feet between bases and the pitching rubber is fifty (50) feet from home plate except where otherwise agreed due to field limitations.
14. A commitment line will be designated halfway (32½ ft.) between third and home. This line must be made by the umpire. During play, once a runner during play touches the commitment line or crosses commitment line they must advance and cannot go backwards past commitment line towards third base or they will be immediately called out.

15. All games will be seven (7) innings. Five (5) innings must be completed (4-1/2 if the home team is winning) for a game to be official.
16. The away team is assigned the 1st base side and home team the 3rd base side as designated by that weeks schedule. The home team is responsible for the screen, mat and bases. However both managers should bring these items in case of an emergency.
17. Teams may score a maximum of 5 runs per inning or catch-up. There are no restrictions in the last inning or extra innings. Example: a team is leading 10-0, other team can catch up to 10 and tie game but cannot exceed the tie unless 7th open inning.
18. There is a limit of three (3) “over the fence” home runs plus one (1) up in a game per team. All home runs hit exceeding the maximum number of team home runs is an out.
19. There is no mercy rule if one team leads the other by fifteen (15) runs after five (5) innings of play have been completed (or 4-1/2 innings if the home team is in the lead), however, the losing team may elect to terminate the game.
20. All bats must be slow-pitch officially approved by ASA. Bats with altered [original manufacturer] markings are prohibited. All bats must be equal to the 1.20 BPF standards. A player using a bat prohibited by these rules will be declared out and ejected from the game. No bat testing is required.
21. The safety base at first base will be placed eighteen (18”) inches from the regular base. If there is a close play at 1B, the runner must tag safety base or runner is out. Runner can touch either 1B or safety base if no play at 1B.
22. Sliding is permitted into all bases, including (the scoring) home plate and (the batter's) first base. At any base and regardless of the specific circumstances of the play, a runner who does not slide must veer out of the way of an infielder in order to avoid a collision. (A player cannot break up a force out, tag play or a double play by running into a fielder.) The umpire will declare (an) out(s) as appropriate if this rule is violated. If the runner runs into the fielder and, in the umpire's judgment, it was a dangerous play; the runner will be ejected from the game and may face suspension. The player's action will be reviewed by the League Board to determine if further disciplinary action should be taken. Any decision made by the Committee will be strictly enforced. We are a competitive league.
23. On a play at home plate, the catcher can record an out only by touching any portion of the mat. This means that the catcher cannot tag out a runner coming home or block him from crossing the scoring plate, even if the incoming throw draws him toward the runner and/or scoring plate. Correspondingly, the runner who touches home plate or interferes with the incoming throw at home plate shall be automatically called out.
24. The scoring plate will be placed by the umpire eight (8’) feet from the mat on the first base line extended. Where playing field design makes the use of a scoring plate potentially dangerous, as agreed upon by the opposing managers and the umpire, a scoring line (extension of the first base line into foul territory on the third base side) may be used instead of a scoring plate.

25. Both teams shall provide one (1) new ball for each game.
26. During play, **only team managers can discuss calls with the umpire**, or other items pertaining to the nature of play. Managers must make this clear to their players. The umpires will enforce this rule. If any player other than a manager or designated captain when the manager is not present continues to discuss or argue any part of the game or rules, the umpire will warn players once and an ejection afterwards from the game.
27. After the umpire calls, "Play Ball"; a team has two (2) minutes to resume play or the umpire can call a (non-monetary) forfeit.
28. An umpire may remove a player for verbal abuse or physical abuse. Physical abuse will result in being removed from the League for the remainder of the year.
29. A player removed from the League for physical abuse will be subject to review by the League Board regarding possible future reinstatement the following year.
30. A player removed from the game by an umpire must leave the vicinity of the ballpark. Failure to do so will result in his team's forfeiture of the game. **A player removed from the game must also serve an additional one game suspension. Game 1 ejection results in game 2 suspension. Game 2 ejection results in game 1 suspension the following week.**
31. End of season ties in the standings will be decided by the record of each team against all teams with which it is tied. If ties still exist, the tiebreaker is recorded against the least runs allowed finishing team or group of teams in the division against the next highest, etc., in descending order through all teams. Ties shall be settled from bottom of standings to top in ascending order (ties for 3rd and 4th are settled before ties for 1st and 2nd). In case of ties still existing, a coin toss in the presence of representatives of all affected teams shall decide. Won/Lost percentage, rather than games ahead/behind, will be the criterion for comparing records. A 0-1 record is better than 0-2 where neither team has at least one victory.
32. Should any Bumper Week games be scheduled in that year, this same tiebreaker procedure will be used to determine competing team pairings for all Bumper Week games. (That is, within each Division, the team currently standing #1 plays team #2 and #3 plays #4-- with these standings having been determined by the tie-breaker procedure, above.)
33. Playoff groupings will be 3, 3, 3, 3 determined by final season standings. The 1st seed in each division will receive a bye while 2 vs 3 will play with the highest seed getting home field advantage for the 1st and 3rd games for 1st round of playoffs and championship of each division.
34. For playoffs with an odd number of teams in that division, the top 1 seeds in each division get byes while the last 2 teams play for the last position and the remaining teams play each other.

35. If the umpire does not show up for a scheduled game, or leaves during the course of the game, both managers must agree on a substitute or substitutes, who can be from either or both teams (and can even play in the game when not serving as an umpire), or a spectator. Once the game begins, it cannot be terminated over dissatisfaction with the umpiring.
36. The order of rainout makeups will be as they occurred in the schedule.
37. The league will not play on the following Saturdays during the season: Memorial Day, July 4th and Labor Day.
38. Protests: If any manager protests a game, the umpire and other manager must be notified immediately prior to the next pitch of that game with a brief formal meeting with both managers at home plate. Only managers or team representative in lieu of manager not being present at game can protest game. Absolutely no protests after game is completed.
39. Flip Flop Rule, optional as per both Managers agreement during a game if needed for 6th and 7th innings.
40. Games Cancelled for Inclement Weather: If one field is cancelled on Saturday for inclement weather, all games at other fields will also be cancelled for that Saturday. Makeups will be made up in the order they occurred on the schedule.
41. International Tie Breaker Rule will be utilized after 7 innings of play with both teams tied for maximum of 2 innings play each game.
42. Severe Weather Expected. If severe weather (i.e. excessive heat, hurricane, etc) is expected for a scheduled games, all managers will be contacted to vote to play or cancel games for health and safety of players. Games will be rescheduled as usual for a future date.

ARTICLE VI

DIVISIONS

During pre-season meetings, both the Division and cross-Division team alignment will be reviewed and decided upon for the coming season. A majority vote will be required for approval. Every effort should be made to maintain parity among teams in any given Division.

ARTICLE VII

RATIFICATION

New by Laws are proposed and adopted for the League at the discretion of the League Managers. If so designated by the Board, a meeting of League Managers may be called at any time to consider and adopt By Law revisions and/or additions. If such a meeting is held, ratification shall require that at least a quorum must be in attendance and at least two-thirds (66-2/3 per cent) of those present must vote for the Article I (By-Laws) in the affirmative. Changes in Article VI (Rules of Play), however, require only a simple majority vote approval.