

MIDDLESEX COUNTY 60+ SOFTBALL LEAGUE

LEAGUE RULES

2023

Revised: April 13, 2023

PREAMBLE

The name of the organization shall be Middlesex County 60+ Softball League Inc. The League shall be a non-profit corporation pursuant to Title 15A: 2-8 of the New Jersey Domestic Non Profit 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.

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RULES COMMITTEE

- 1) A rules committee consisting of 3 members will make all rule related decisions. The league commissioner and vice president will choose a 3rd presentiment, whose has knowledge and understanding of league and will have the best intentions of the league.
- 2) All protests or manager requests will be decided by majority vote of committee.
- 3) The rules committee, if in the the best interests of the league, may override a rule(s).

A. TEAM AND PLAYER ELIGIBILITY/MOVEMENT

- 1) Each player must be at least **SIXTY (60)** years old during the calendar year that he joins the League. There will be no exceptions unless voted upon by the Rules Committee. No VERBAL requests will be acknowledged
- 2) 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.
- 3) Players must turn sixty (60) during the calender year for that season. Prior to April 1, any new team can be awarded membership by the Rules Committee in unanimous agreement.
- 4) Any new team wishing to gain entry into the league must first be in compliance with PLAYER MOVEMENT RULE, see lines 5 thru 9. A request must be submitted one month prior to start of season.
- 5) A player qualifies as a "free agent", if he did not play in a game the previous season. Even if he appears on a teams roster.
- 6) A player that chooses to sit out a season, may choose any team to play for.
- 7) A player may attempt to switch teams without sitting out a season, must meet the following requirements:
 - A. The players former team's manager's must give permission
 - B. an existing team may only take or lose 2 existing players in a season
- 8) A player may become a free agent by footing his current manager that he wants to change teams the following season. Deadline to inform his manager should be made by Oct 1st. Manager must alert Commissioner of this request.
- 9) The Rules committee in the best interests of the league, may deny player movement. Even if rule 7-A/B and 8. are met.

B. GENERAL RULES/ADMINISTRATIVE

- ❖ **It is the manager's responsibility to communicate with his representative regarding any changes covered during said meeting. A manager not attending a meeting will not be an excuse.**
 - ❖ **Every manager must review league rules prior to start of each season.**
- 1) Only one representative per team will be allowed during league meeting. In addition to any Commissioner may invite addition attendees, if pertinent to meeting.
 - 2) Team managers are responsible for meeting all deadlines, as outlined in the League rules.
 - 3) All communication and requests regarding league must be sent by email to commissioner. It is manager's responsibility to attend or have a rep at any league meeting. There will be no excuse for not having or knowing information/changes discussed.

- 4) Team rosters with a minimum of sixteen (16) and a maximum of twenty-five (25) players must be submitted no later than ONE(1) WEEK PRIOR TO FIRST SCHEDULED GAME.. It is the team manager's responsibility to produce a players' driver's license(s) in the event a question (protest) arises regarding actual birth date of player in question. The player in question can not play until DOB is confirmed.
- 5) Rosters must be sent to the League Secretary's email address, that can be found on website (to make it easier to enter online, we prefer using an excel type spreadsheet). All emails will be saved as proof.
- 6) Teams will forfeit all played game(s) until roster is submitted.
- 7) Team rosters will be frozen prior to 4th played game. Any player officially removed from the roster prior to 4th game played and has played in a game(s) is ineligible to play for any other team that year.
- 8) Any player appearing on more than one(1) roster, will be considered a legal player for the team he plays the first game with. If a player does play in a game with more than one team, all games played will be considered a forfeit if said player has played for another team second.
- 9) Teams will not be allowed to hand in a final frozen roster late (must be prior to /4th played game). Original roster will then prevail, if final roster is late or not turned in. It is the managers responsibility and will not be reminded by commissioner.
- 10) In the event a team has numerous injured players and may not be able to finish the season, a team may request to add a replacement player(s). Requesting manager must email a COPY OF DRIVER LICENSE to commissioner. Rules committee will determine if player will be allowed and be eligible for playoffs.
 - a) No replacements will be allowed after regular season schedule is completed.
- 11) The injured player replaced is **not eligible** for balance of season/playoffs.
- 12) **It is the responsibility of the winning team to email Bob Lorencz or designated person with score of the game, the next day.** (It is important to report an accurate scores, if needed for tiebreakers)

C. PLAYOFFS

- 1) Playoff eligibility: A player must play in 40% of league played games. If a team receives a forfeit WIN, all players on that teams roster is credited as playing that game. If odd amount of games are played, then round up...example 11 played, 50% = 5.5, 6 games are needed to qualify.
- 2) Lineup cards will be filled out by each manager prior to game and have opposing teams manager initial lineup card. A carbon-less copy will be exchanged by both managers. See bullet #6 below.
- 3) A playoff eligible roster must be emailed to commissioner when requested by commissioner. He will send a copy to all managers.
- 4) All players at game must be in lineup, unless a legit injury prohibits. (Must adhere to bullets #7/#8 under Rules of Play.)
- 5) Prior to start of playoffs, managers may protest a teams player eligibility
- 6) Manager must produce line up cards to commissioner, if a protest arises.
- 7) Playoff format will be a double elimination format, unless weather or field availability prohibits. A single elimination will be used as a last resort.
- 8) Tie breakers for seeding 1st. head to head. 2nd.Run differential between tied teams teams 3rd coin toss. **exception-** a team with a forfeit loss will automatically lose tiebreaker.

D. EQUIPMENT

- 1) 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.
- 2) A second Safety first base is to be used. The safety base at first base will be placed eighteen (18") inches from the regular base.
- 3) A 2nd home plate to be used for all scoring plays at home. The scoring plate will be placed eight (8') feet from the mat on the first base line extended.
- 4) Pitcher must wear a mask during game
- 5) A pitching screen must be used for batting practice
- 6) Both teams shall provide one (1) new ball for each game and a game used ball as backup.
- 7) All bats must be inspected and tested prior to the start of every season. The League will use a SSL Portable Barrel compression bat tester set to ASA standards. A bat that passes test will have the current year sticker applied.
- 8) All bats must be official slow-pitch, and be on the approved ASA bat list for the current season. All bats must be equal to the 1.20 BPF standards. **NO SENIOR or USSSA BATS ARE ALLOWED.**
- 9) A bat without league sticker can not be used during the game or BP. It is managers responsibility to communicate the rule to team members and ensure only bats with correct stickers are used.
- 10) A three(3) week grace period will be allowed (first three played games) for bat testing. A bat may be used if it has the prior year's sticker from the Middlesex 60's League, during the first three weeks. The League commissioner will be available during first week of season at field, prior to game time, to start testing.
- 11) Any player who comes to the plate without the correct sticker on his bat shall be declared an out and runners return to their base, if ball was put in play. Said player(s) will not be allowed to further use bat. It is preferable that the bat remain in the manager's possession, until game end.
- 12) Any manager may challenge the legality of a stickered bat and will be tested as soon as possible. If its determined that the bat has not been altered, but just dropped below ASA standards, that bat will be ejected from use in league with no penalties.
- 13) If a player continue to use a bat ejected from league use, that player will be ejected from league.
- 14) Any player who has two events (2 bats tested and failing), after passing initial testing during the season, may be ejected from the league. After a decision of Rules committee, the league has the right to at any time to have random bat testing, conducted to ensure the safety of the players.
- 15) If at any time a player is seriously injured by a batted ball, the bat used will be tested. If the bat fails the compression test, it will be sent to the manufacturer to see if it was altered. If bat is found not to be altered, league will reimburse the player for the replacement of bat or a similar priced model. If bat is found to be altered, the player will be ejected from the league and can be open to civil and criminal litigation.

E. PLAYER DISCIPLINE

- 1) 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.
- 2) An umpire may remove a player(s) for verbal or physical abuse. This rule applies to a conflict between players and/or with an umpire.
- 3) Physical abuse will result in being suspended from the League for the remainder of the year.
- 4) A player removed for verbal abuse will result in a minimum of one game suspension of player, for next played game(s).
- 5) The rules committee will review all violations for further disciplinary actions as noted in bullet #4 and also review and make a decision on disciplinary actions to cover #6.
- 6) All conflicts that are not addressed by Umpire during game or occurring pre and/or post game, will be addressed by rules committee. Manager(s) should report conflicts to commiserate. Disciplinary action, if needed, will be reviewed, by rule committee.
- 7) If a player is removed for the remainder of season from the League for physical abuse, that player will be subject to review by the rules committee regarding future reinstatement the following year. ***(If conflict occurred late in the season, suspension may carry over to following season)***
- 8) A player(s) removed from the game by an umpire must leave the vicinity of the ballpark to avoid more conflict between players and/or umpire. Umpire should advise team manager that failure to do so will result in his team's forfeiture of the game.

F. RULES OF PLAY

- ❖ The League shall adhere to the current senior USA/ASA rules and regulations for all playing matters, except as provided in the League rules of play. League rules take precedence over ASA rules.
 - ❖ Before the start of each softball season, team managers and the Executive board will review the playing rules that shall be in the best interest of the League. The Rules Committee will consider new proposals and decide appropriately.
 - ❖ 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 Rules committee.
- 1) Team field strength will be a maximum of eleven (11) players and a minimum of nine (9).
 - 2) A game will be forfeited if a team cannot field a minimum of nine (9) players fifteen (15) minutes after the pre-arranged starting time or during play. If both teams cannot field nine (9) men, then both teams forfeit the game.
 - 3) Teams will supply a catcher for nine (9) players only and will participate in all defensive plays.
An out will be recorded every time the tenth batting position is up to bat.
 - 4) Teams can share players to field a team to avoid a forfeit, if agreed upon by both managers. (not a requirement). Game counts as official game.

- 5) If a team fields only ten(10), opposing team is not required to share player. *The League suggests to avoid a forfeit, the manager of shorthanded team contact the opposing manager to see if a solution can be worked out.*
- 6) Forfeit fines will be imposed by each successive offense at \$50, \$75, etc. Forfeit fines must be paid to the league treasurer prior to the next scheduled game. If not paid, the team will forfeit that game and be assessed another fine. **A team that forfeits more than 2 games will be ruled out of the remainder of season.**
- 7) A team must bat all players. However, a minimum of twelve (12) players, if available, must be batted. Any player playing the field must bat. Two players may occupy the same slot in the batting order and alternate at bats as long as lineup has minimum of 12 batting positions listed.
- 8) A pinch hitter or re-entry is not allowed. A substitution can only be made if the manager elected not to be in the lineup to start game. A player arriving late can not be used as a substitute and shall be placed at the end of the batting order.
- 9) In the event a substitute is not available (see bullet #8 above), the number of batters listed in the batting cannot be reduced without recording an out when the vacant position comes to bat. *If a player is ejected and a substitute is not available an out will be recorded every time that position comes to bat.* **In the case of an injury an out will be recorded in the lineup only for the next at bat.**
- 10) The exception to bullet #9 above- 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 be imposed. His place in lineup will be skipped. *Note that the team is still subject to (non-monetary) forfeiture of the game, if it is unable to field nine (9) players as a result of (a) player(s) leaving or having been removed or ejected from the game.*
- 11) Players arriving at any time subsequent to the start of the game will be inserted at the bottom of the lineup.
- 12) 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.
- 13) The pitcher's box shall be three (3) feet wide to match the width of the pitching rubber and five (5) feet deep.
 - a) The pitcher can pitch from any spot in the box, as long as he has one foot in the box.
 - b) The pivot foot must remain in the pitcher's box throughout the delivery.
 - c) Walking up towards batter is prohibited (example- taking steps similar to bowling, prior to releasing ball) Any U-Trip pitching motions are not allowed.
 - d) 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.
- 14) Courtesy runner rules- a runner can pinch run once per inning. If a pinch runner is on a base when his turn at bat comes, it is called an out.
- 15) 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.
- 16) 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.
- 17) A commitment line will be designated halfway (32½ ft.) between third and home. This line should be made by the umpire or ground crew.

- 18) All games will be nine (9) innings. Five(5) innings must be completed (4-1/2 if the home team is winning) for a game to be official.
- 19) There is a mercy rule if one team leads the other by fifteen (15) runs after seven (7) innings of play have been completed or 6-1/2 innings if the home team is in the lead.
- 20) Sliding is permitted into all bases, excluding (the scoring) home plate and (the batter's) first base. (**head first sliding or diving back to a base arms first is discouraged by the league**).
- 21) 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. It will be up to umpires discretion, as to his interference call. (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.
- 22) 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.
- 23) If the home plate mat is accidentally moved/kicked, the catcher must touch the original permanent home plate to make the out. DO NOT CHASE THE MAT.
- 24) 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.
- 25) Rainouts will be made up time and field permitting. No guarantee all game to be made-up.
- 26) Guidelines for game that can not complete the full 9innings (8 1/2 if home team is ahead):
 - a) The last inning may not start after 7:15 at Vets (game must end at 7:30) or a decision at Phillips regarding the daylight remaining.
 - b) At Vets, if HOME team can not finish their at bats, if behind, prior to time limit of 7:30.
 - >The game reverts to last full inning played.
 - c) At Phillips, if its determined HOME team can not hit or not finish their at-bats because of loss of daylight,if behind.
 - > The game reverts to last full inning played.
 - d) Exception to 7:30 cutoff at Vets- If there is not a game waiting to start the home team may finish their at-bats.

G. YEARLY OBLIGATIONS

- 1) All teams must pay League fees as determined by the Treasurer are due prior to the first game. 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.
- 2) Teams may forfeit all games played until league fee is paid. It is the manager's responsibility and will not be reminded by the League Commissioner. Late payment exceptions will be at commissioners discretion. Fees are due prior to first game.

- 3) League fee for the 2023 season is \$850. Managers and league officials do not have to pay. A team fee will be calculated after cost of field, umpires, insurance, and equipment(balls) are updated.

H. OFFICERS OF THE BOARD

- ❖ The League Executive Board will be comprised of four (4) members, each with specific responsibilities. The Board will be charged with all League administrative decisions and duties.
- ❖ The rules committee will enforce League Rules, revisions and additions which will be made in the best interest of league.
- ❖ All appeals, grievances and protests lodged during the season will be reviewed and decided upon by the Rules Committee.
- ❖ At all formal league meetings, the attendees: must have only one representative for each team and members of executive committee.

I. 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:

1) Nominations

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

2) Elections

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