

**2025 MIDDLESEX RETIRED SOFTBALL LEAGUE**  
**ARTICLE V (RULES OF PLAY)**  
Revised 4/5/2025

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

Before the start of each softball season, the League Board 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 Executive Board shall consist of the Commissioner, the Associate Commissioner, and the manager of each team.** Each member will have one vote. In the case of an individual serving in two capacities, they will only have one vote. Majority rules with ties broken by the Commissioner.

The treasurer and commission should be joint account holders to the League checking account.

The team managers will authorize any rule changes and roster additions during the season.

Due to the potential absence of any manager, each team must designate an "Assistant Manager" who will manage field operations and will participate in discussions and have voting privileges and responsibilities in the absence of the manager.

**The current League rules of play are as follows:**

League fee-

1. Fee for current season is \$1200. per team
2. Fee covers the payment for liability insurance, umpires, game balls, and field reservations.

Team field strength-

1. Teams will field a maximum of eleven (11) players and a minimum of nine (9).
2. Team must supply a catcher, who will make defensive plays, to opposing team. If they have only 9 or 10 players.
3. If catcher is supplied to opposing team, he will bat for the team that loaned him out.
4. A maximum of one (1) player may be borrowed and this borrowed player must be placed in and execute the catching position only
5. During the game, if a player is injured, the team may continue with 9 or 10 players and the opposing team must supply catcher
6. Players arriving at any time subsequent to the start of the game will be inserted at the bottom of the lineup.
7. Eligibility: Before the start of or during a game, an opposing manager may require a player to provide proper identification to confirm his age or roster eligibility. If a manager has reason to believe that an opponent's team includes (an) ineligible player(s), he may play the game under protest, with a subsequent investigation and ruling to be made by the League Executive Board. Player must turn 58 in the current calendar year.
8. In the event a manager knows he will only have 9 or 10 players on his roster available to play the day before. he must contact commissioner and opposing manager.
9. The team that is short may recruit players from a team that has a bye. That team shall not have more than 11 players on game day. Team must follow step 8 and receive prior permission from commissioner. **This player must bat at bottom of order and may play any position on defense.**

Batting Order-

10. Teams will bat all players. If players present exceed 14, manager may use option in line 11.
11. If more than 14 players are present, the manager may utilize a shared position in the batting order to maintain a lineup of a minimum of 14 positions.  
Example= you have 15 players, player 14 and 15 will alternate AB's

12. All players may play in the field, regardless of lineup used.
13. Injured player to come to watch, are not included as a player present see line 10.
14. Team manager may elect to sit out game regardless of reason. He may enter game as an injury replacement.
15. There is no rule governing individual playing time in the field; however, team Managers must make every effort to give sufficient playing time to all players who desire it.
16. Manager who has a player who needs to leave before the game should notify opposing manager. In case there is an emergency. The spot in lineup is skipped in those events.
17. Players ejected by Umpire, will be an out when his turn in lineup, unless a substitute on roster available.

#### Game rules-

18. A game will be forfeited if a team cannot field a minimum of nine (9) players, fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled starting time or during play. If both teams cannot field nine men, then both teams forfeit the game.
19. Game Length; All games will be 7 innings in length, with each batter starting with a ball/strike count of 0 and 0. International rule in extra innings. Last out will be positioned on 2<sup>nd</sup> base. Courtesy runner will be allowed.
20. Catch-up plus five (5) run rule will be in effect, with no restrictions in the last inning or extra innings.
21. 7 inning game is officially over if one team leads the other by **fifteen (15) runs after five innings** of play have been completed (or 4-1/2 innings if the home team is in the lead). 5 Inning games must complete 5 or 4 ½.

#### Equipment-

22. Pitchers are required to wear a mask during batting practice and game.
23. All bats must have an USA/ASA sticker and must be on the approved bat list (all other associations and Senior bats are not allowed)
24. All bats must past testing requirements and have a current year Middlesex sticker applied.
25. Grace period cutoff for bat testing is prior to week 5.
26. During grace period a bat with a Middlesex prior year sticker is allowed to be used.
27. Bats not complying to lines 23 to 26, will be deemed an illegal bat.
28. Illegal bat penalty's-
  - a) If found during a hit ball or AB- . Batted ball is an out and runners return to their base. Bat will be removed from play. If batter is still up, he must give bat to umpire and use a legal bat.
  - b) If found at any other time during game the bat will be removed from play.
29. Bat(s) removed from game will be held by umpire until play has finished
30. Opposing manager must contact commissioner before next scheduled games.
31. It is the commissioner discretion, on whether to impose a harsher penalty on the player found owning/and or using an illegal bat.

#### In-Game rules-

32. Metal spikes are not allowed (Player will be ejected).
33. Overrunning of bases other than first is not allowed.
34. Sliding is allowed at 2nd or 3rd base only. When a runner is advancing to 2nd base and there will be a throw from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 1st (double-play), the runner must either (1) slide or (2) veer off the base path to allow the throw without hitting the base runner. 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.
35. On a play at home plate, the catcher can record an out only by touching any part of the home plate 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.
36. A Commitment line will be designated one-half the distance (32.5 feet) between 3rd base and home. Whenever a runner crosses this commitment line, he must proceed to home and cannot return to 3rd

base. Runner must touch the alternative home plate before the ball reaches the catcher standing on ANY section of the home mat.

37. Home team for each game will provide 1 new and 1 backup ball.
38. Judgment calls cannot be protested except for player-eligibility protests, a protest, when allowed, must be made before the next pitch and submitted in writing within two (2) days to the Board. The protest must be important to the outcome of the game and the League Executive Board will render a decision.
39. 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.
40. 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. SEE CODE OF CONDUCT
41. 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. SEE CODE OF CONDUCT
42. A player removed from the game by an umpire must leave the vicinity of the ballpark, or sit in his car for the remainder of that game. Failure to do so will result in his team's (non-monetary) forfeiture of the game. A player removed from the first game of a doubleheader can return for game two of the doubleheader
43. The League has adopted a "Code of Conduct". It is posted on our website.
44. The minimum arc of six (6) feet and a maximum arc of twelve (12) feet above the ground.
45. The pitcher's box shall be two (2) feet wide and six (6) 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.
46. A strike zone mat or wooden plate will be used in all League games. The wood plate and the mat shall constitute the strike zone. Any legal pitch striking the mat or wooden plate is a "strike". Size 22 Inches by 36 Inches.
47. If the umpire calls a pitch illegal and the batter swings and connects, the ball is in play. If the pitch is taken, it is an automatic called Ball. An illegal pitch is one which exceeds 12 feet in height or is lower than (flat) 6 feet in height.
48. A THIRD STRIKE FOUL BY A BATTER IS AN AUTOMATIC OUT. If such a foul out is caught by a fielder, the ball is dead, and runners may not attempt to advance. There is not courtesy foul with an 0/0 count.
49. All foul balls caught by the catcher are out.
50. 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 or dictated due to field limitations.
51. A batter running to 1st base must use the secondary base located a minimum of 12 inches outside the 1st base foul line whenever a play is being made, even from the outfield. If there is no play at 1st base, the runner may make the turn rounding 1st base using the inside base. A runner will be called out if touching the wrong base.
52. Base runners may not leave a base until the pitched ball crosses home plate.
53. There is no limit on courtesy runners, except that the same pinch runner may run only once during the same inning. A courtesy runner must be inserted immediately when the batter reaches his base. A courtesy runner can not be used once batter advances to next base, unless an injury warrants such move.
54. If the courtesy runner is occupying a base, he is considered an out, if his spot in the batting order occurs.
55. A player may not be thrown out at first base from the outfield on a clean hit UNLESS the player (now a runner) makes a turn towards second base.

A. If a ball is hit cleanly through or over the infield UNTOUCHED and is not caught in the air, the batter is

awarded first base. If there are runners on base, they may be forced out at any other base or plate. However the original batter cannot be put out at first base. (This rule is designed to let slower runners reach base on a clean hit and eliminated the designated runner (the rabbit) from home plate. Runners on base but not forced, may advance at their own risk.

B. If an infielder touches a batted ball in fair territory, that infielder or any other defensive player may Injury exceptions complete the defensive play including throwing the batter out at first base.

C. The mid-fielder or rover can play as an infielder or outfielder as long as the 4 other infielders are on the dirt of the infield and the 4 outfielders are on the outfield grass. The mid-fielder is subject to the rules stated above.

D. The automatic single rule is as follows:

Whenever a batted ball hits the ground in the outfield grass before touching any defensive player (including such player's glove, uniform, or hat), the batter-runner will be automatically awarded first base and therefore cannot be forced out at first base.

Notes:

1. This rule does not affect any runner going to 2nd, 3rd or home.
2. It does not matter where any defensive player is situated in the field either before or after the ball is batted.
3. The same rules for catching a fly ball will apply in determining whether the ball hits the ground in the outfield.

Playoffs-

1. Players must play in 50% of games played.
2. Injury exceptions to line 1, will be made on a case by case player ruling by commissioner.
3. Format will be determined by commissioner prior to season end.