

2025 MIDDLESEX RETIRED SOFTBALL LEAGUE
ARTICLE V (RULES OF PLAY)
Revised 2/15/26

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 Commissioner will review and decide on playing rules that shall be in the best interest of the League and adopt a schedule for the regular season and playoffs.

Part of review process includes evaluating team strength/parity, reorganizing rosters, drafting of players, creation of a waiting list/taxi squad etc.

All proposed changes/modifications will be discussed at managers meeting before adopting change. Prior to start of season.

The Executive Board shall consist of the Commissioner and the manager of each team. Majority rules with ties broken by the Commissioner.

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

Any rule changes and roster additions during the season will be approved by Commissioner.

The current League rules of play are as follows:

League fee-

1. Registration Fee for current season (2025) is \$100. per player. Player will be refunded money, only if circumstances apply, that the Commissioner deems worthy. i.e., not drafted to a team, season ending injury, health issue. Etc.
2. Fee covers the payment for liability insurance, umpires, game balls, and field reservations.

CONDUCT OF PLAY-

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 for verbal or physical abuse between players or umpire.
3. **Physical altercations will result in being removed from the League for the remainder of the year.**
4. A player removed from the League for any altercation, will be subject to review by the Commissioner regarding possible suspension and/or future reinstatement the following year.
5. A player removed from the 1st game by an umpire must leave the vicinity of the ballpark, or sit in his car for the remainder of that game. That player is automatically not eligible to play in 2nd game of doubleheader.
6. If ejection occurs during 2nd game, player is eligible to play the next scheduled game only if ejection was not the result of a severe altercation.
7. The League has adopted a "Code of Conduct". It is posted on our website. Teams will be allocated 14 players for their roster. Injury replacements will be made by Commissioner on a case by case occurrence.

Team field strength-

1. Teams will have roster of 14 or 15. They will field a maximum of eleven (11) players and a minimum of nine (9).
2. A taxi squad will be formed weekly, which will consist of team players that have a bye and/or part-time players. A waiting list will be maintained to fill in players that drop out.
3. A team needing a player(s), to reach 10 or 11 players, must contact commissioner as soon as possible to pull from taxi squad. Team borrowing players may elect to use 10 or 11. The borrowed players will bat at the bottom of order and can play anywhere in the field.
4. If a team is still short on game day with 9 or 10 players, the opposing team may supply a catcher, who will make defensive plays,. An out will be recorded in the last spot of batting order. A maximum of one (1) player may be borrowed. The team that's short can decide they do not want the extra player and not take an out in the lineup.
5. During the game, if a player is injured or leaves early, the team may continue with 9 or 10 players. The team that is short can request the opposing team to supply catcher, following rule #4 above. No out is recorded for that spot in batting order for the player who is injured or leaves.
6. Players arriving at any time subsequent to the start of the game will be inserted at the bottom of the lineup.
7. Players must be/turn 60 years of age during the season. Commissioner may require a player to provide proper identification to confirm his age or roster eligibility. If a team is found to have an illegal player (under age limit). Commissioner has the option to penalize that, team. Penalty's may include forfeiture of game(s). Illegal player will be removed from league play.

Batting Order-

1. Teams must bat all players present, up to 14 spots. Teams with a 15th player will be allowed to either split games or alternate spots in the 14th position of order.
2. Teams will follow rule#1 above in Playoffs. **No taxi squad players will be used for playoffs**. It is a forfeit if you have less than 9 players. If a team is short they can request a defensive catcher and take an out in the last position of batting order.
3. All players should play in the field, regardless of lineup used. There is no rule governing individual playing time in the field; however, team Manager's must make every effort to give sufficient playing time to all players who desire it.
4. Injured player to come to watch, are not included as a player present.
5. Team manager may elect to sit out game regardless of reason. He may enter game as a replacement.
6. Manager who has a player who needs to leave before the game should notify opposing manager. The spot in lineup is skipped in those events.
7. Players ejected by Umpire, will be an out when his turn in lineup, unless a substitute on roster available.

General Game rules-

1. 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.
2. Games will be 7 innings in length, with each batter starting with a ball/strike count of 0/ 0.

3. International rule in extra innings. Last out will be positioned on 2nd base. Courtesy runner will be allowed.
4. Mercy run rule- fifteen (15) runs after five innings of play have been completed (4-1/2 innings if home team is in the lead).
5. Catch-up plus five (5) run rule will be in effect, with no restrictions in the last inning or extra innings. There is a 5 run limit in the first inning.
6. HR limit is 2 + 1up. Over the limit is a grounds rule double.

Equipment-

1. Pitching screen will be supplied for BP and game. Screen will be placed just in front of rubber.
2. Pitchers are not required to wear a mask during batting practice and game..Onl one NEW game ball will be used per game. Home team will provide 1 new ball. A used backup ball must be identical to NEW one.
3. All bats must have an USA/ASA sticker and must be on the approved bat list. Senior bats with SSUSA sticker may be use for age 72 or older player. (all other associations are not allowed)
4. All non-senior asa/usa bats must past testing requirements and have a current year Middlesex sticker applied.
5. Grace period cutoff for bat testing is prior to week 5.
6. During grace period a bat with a Middlesex prior year sticker is allowed to be used.
7. Bats not complying to rule 3 and 4, will be deemed an illegal bat.
8. Illegal bat penalty's-
 - A. If found during a hit ball - Batted ball is an out and runners return to their base.
 - B. Bat will be removed from play. If batter is still up, he must give bat to umpire and use a legal bat.
 - C. If found at any other time during game the bat will be removed from play.
 - D. Bat(s) removed from game will be held by umpire until play has finished
 - E. Opposing manager must contact commissioner before next scheduled games.
 - F. 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-

1. Metal spikes are not allowed (Player will be ejected).
2. Overrunning of bases other than first is not allowed.
3. Sliding is allowed at 2nd or 3rd base only. When a runner is advancing to 2nd base and there will be a throw from 2nd 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.
4. 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.

5. 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.
6. 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 Commissioner will render a decision.
7. The minimum arc of six (6) feet and a maximum arc of twelve (12) feet above the ground. Pitcher must have one foot touching ground behind screen (in the pitching box) see #12. He is allowed outside of screen to field a slow hopper or a pop-up.
8. The pitcher's box shall be three (3) feet wide and five(5) feet deep. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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 no courtesy foul with an 0/0 count.
12. All foul balls caught by the catcher are out, no matter the height.
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 or dictated due to field limitations.
14. 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.
15. Base runners may not leave a base until the pitched ball crosses home plate.
16. 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.
17. If the courtesy runner is occupying a base, he is considered an out, if his spot in the batting order occurs. You can not get a runner to run for this player so he can take his turn at bat.
18. A player can not be thrown out at first base from the outfield on a clean hit. If the batter (now a runner) makes a turn towards second base, may be picked off returning to 1st base.
19. Exception to rule#22, is if batted ball touches a glove of fielder still on the infield dirt. Fielder must have both feet on dirt. If his momentum carries him to OF grass, he can make the play at 1st as long as rule#22 is followed.
20. On a clean hit, see rule #22, a force play or a base runner thrown out on a non-force play may be completed at 2nd, 3rd and/or home.

21. 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.

Playoffs-

1. Players must play in 50% of games played.
2. Injury exceptions to line 1, will be made on a case by case basis. Player ruling by commissioner.
3. Format will be determined by commissioner prior to season end.
4. Refer to rules#1and 2 under batting order.