

**MERCER COUNTY SENIOR 60 and OVER
SOFTBALL LEAGUE RULES**

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Softball Committee: Treasurer, Manager and Assistant Manager of each Team. The Treasurer does not participate in Committee votes on league issues. It takes a majority vote to change a league rule or approve a game appeal. For example, when the League consists of 4 teams, it takes *at least 3* approval votes to change a rule or uphold an appeal.

Code of Conduct: Each player shall receive the league Code of Conduct and will be required to acknowledge their receipt by signing a league provided document.

Rules: The USSSA Rulebook will be used as the Official Rule Book for the regular season and playoffs except for specific Mercer County Senior 60 (and Over) League Rules listed below.

Game Time: All games begin at 6 PM. There will be a 15-minute grace period for single games before a forfeit takes place. There will be no grace period for the first game of doubleheaders. If the first game of a doubleheader is forfeited then the 15-minute grace period applies to the second game.

Dugout Assignments: The home team is always assigned the first base dugout and the visiting team the third base dugout.

Forfeit Rule: A team with **7** or less players shall forfeit the game. If both teams have 7 or less players, the game shall be treated the same as a rainout. Any game called for rainout before 4:45pm nullifies any forfeit.

8 or 9 Player Rule: Teams with only 8 or 9 players shall borrow only 1 player from the opposing team. The borrowed player will play catcher only and will continue to play both offense and defense for his own team. The borrowed player may be substituted freely with other players from the loaner team. The object is to play every scheduled game. Umpires are to stay if any type of game is played.

Five Run or Catch-up Rule: This rule allows the losing team to score 5 runs or enough runs to tie the score in any inning. No limit on the number of runs scored by either team in the last inning.

Mercy Rule: The mercy rule of 15 runs shall be applied in the 5th inning.

Rainouts: These games shall be made up at the discretion of the League Managers and will be played in the week immediately after the end of the regular season.

Courtesy Runners: Any player can be used as a courtesy runner. He can only be used once an inning. A player becomes a courtesy runner when he touches the base. He is out if he is on base when his turn to bat comes up in the lineup. He cannot be replaced by another runner. No courtesy runners can be used from Home Plate. Any special situations will be resolved in the field by agreement of both managers and umpire.

Extra Inning Game: No International Rule for extra-inning games.

Balls: The home team will supply the umpire with two new balls prior to the start of each game. Balls with COR .44 and Maximum Compression of 375 pounds shall be used.

Bases: Home team shall provide lay down bases for games when needed. Bases will be placed at a distance of 65 feet.

Bats: Bats no longer need to strictly meet the requirements listed in the USSSA Rule Book. Instead, any bat that passes the compression test is deemed acceptable. This includes "Senior" bats which are allowed as long as they pass the compression test.

Every bat must have a current season certification sticker indicating it has passed the league approved compression test. When a non-certified bat is used then during or immediately after an at bat (and before the next pitch) the offending batter is declared out and all runners return to the base they occupied before the offending at bat.

Balls/Strikes: Pitches are to be between 6-12 feet. Flat or high pitches will be called illegal and will be considered balls unless the batter swings at the pitch. If the batter swings the result will be a strike if he misses it, a hit ball is in play. A second foul ball hit after the second strike will be an out. Any other foul ball will be a strike unless caught for an out. A fair ball will be a hit or an out depending on the play made in the field. The entire home plate surface is considered a strike, including the edges of the plate.

Pitcher's Screen

The league has adopted a new rule in 2019 whereby pitchers must use a screen for safety reasons. All batted balls that hit the pitchers' screen will be called a strike by the umpire. Thrown balls that hit the screen remain in play. The home team will provide the screen for each game.

Pitcher's Rules: The Pitcher's Box will be the width of the Pitching Rubber and extend 6 feet back towards 2nd base. The pitcher can deliver pitches from anywhere within the box. The pitcher shall deliver all pitches to an individual batter from the same distance during that batter's entire time up. The pitcher can alter his pitching distance for each individual player. Pitchers can wear protective equipment such as masks, shin guards, etc. at their option.

Umpire Delay: If the umpire is late the games should be started with the Catcher or Player calling balls/strikes/fair/foul and 1st and 3rd base coaches or another designated player to make calls in the field. If coaches are used, the 3rd base coach makes calls at 2nd base. The coach closest to a play in the field will make that call.

Official Game: If the game is called due to darkness or weather the umpire shall notify each team that the next inning will be the last. Then the last full inning score shall apply. An official game must be 5 innings or rescheduled for replay from start as a part of a doubleheader the next time the teams meet.

Batting: Every player attending the game should bat each time through the lineup (unless injured). Extra batters do not have to take the field. If a player is ejected from a game, the vacated position in the batting order shall be an out every time he is scheduled to bat. If a player is required to leave the game for any other reason their spot on the batting order will be 'rolled up' and will not result in an out. ONLY if a player is ejected will their position in the order be an out.

A late coming player can be inserted at the end of the line-up. Any loaned players will be returned to the other Team when a late comer arrives.

Playoff Eligibility: To be eligible for playing in the playoffs a player shall have been awarded ½ of the regular season games. A player who either participates (is in the box score) in any part of a game or an injured player who attends an entire game will be awarded one game for the purpose of playoff eligibility. Team managers shall produce evidence of these games if challenged by the opposing team. In the case of missing games due to injury the Softball Committee will rule on the eligibility of injured players.

Rosters: All rosters shall be turned in and approved prior to the start of the season. These rosters must have Name, Phone Number and Date of Birth. All players must be 59 years old before September 1. Each Team Manager will be given a copy of all team rosters before the season starts. No additional or replacement players shall be added to any team without approval of the Softball Committee and in accordance with draft order and rules. Drafting will be round robin based on the prior year final regular season standing.

Reporting Game Results: Winning team managers shall report scores to the designated league scorekeeper.

Strike Zone Mat: A one-piece rectangular mat will be used for home plate. The mat will be approximately 21" x 36" (as per the current USSSA Senior Rule).

Base Running: A base runner that touches or passes the commit line after third base may be forced out by a play at home. The defense may not tag a runner who is touching or is past the commit line.

Playoff Series: All playoff series will be the best of three games.

Playoff Line-up: Each team will field 11 players during each playoff game. All remaining players on the team roster will become "extra players". Extra players may be used as substitute players or pinch runners. If a sub is used as a pinch runner, he may be eligible to enter the game defensively. The pinch runner may also sub for the player for whom he ran. All courtesy runners must be in the lineup. If a player in the line-up leaves the game and is not replaced with a sub, that team will take an out when that player's position comes to bat.

Tossed Player: If an umpire tosses a player from a game, that player will have to sit out the next scheduled game.

Designated Player: A team may designate one player prior to the start of the game who when becoming a batter runner cannot be forced out at first base by a throw from either the 4 or 5 outfielders.

League Draft: The draft order is determined by the reverse order of the final regular season standings. All teams must draft in proper order until the team roster reaches a minimum of 16 players. Once the minimum is met, a team may skip a draft round if desired.

Player Continuation: At the conclusion of each season a player may elect to

return to the draft for the next season. Players wishing to do so must inform the team manager who in turn will notify the league commissioner. Similarly, a manager at his discretion may remove any player(s) from his roster for cause. The manager will notify the player(s) and the league commissioner of this decision. The player then can re-enter the draft for the coming season or leave the league. There is no appeal process.