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# MONMOUTH COUNTY SENIOR SOFTBALL LEAGUE

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## **2018 RULES AND NON-APPROVED BATS**

# MCSSL 2018 RULES

## ADMINISTRATION

**Roster and League Fees** - All teams must submit an open, unlimited roster with any number of players no later than May 1<sup>st</sup>. League fees of \$750 and a forfeit fee of \$100 shall also be due and paid by May 1<sup>st</sup>. A final team roster limited to twenty (20) players must be submitted no later than June 1<sup>st</sup>. Non-playing managers and coaches are included in the player count of twenty (20). State softball association roster fees are included in the league fee.

## ALTERED BATS

A bat is considered altered when the physical structure of a legal softball bat has been changed. Penalty is batter shall be called out.

## APPEAL PLAY

- A. An appeal play is a play on which an umpire may not make a decision until requested by a manager, coach or player. The appeal must be made before the next legal or illegal pitch or before the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout area. On the last play of the game, an appeal can be made until the umpires leave the field of play.
- B. Types
  1. Missing a base.
  2. Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched.
  3. Batting out of order.
  4. Attempting to advance to second base after making a turn at first base (umpire's judgment) after the third

## APPROVED BATS

Any bat used in a MCSSL game must be clearly and legibly marked "Official Softball" and must bear one or more of the following labels: a) ASA 2000 Certification; b) ASA 2004 Certification or c) the undated ASA label (new in 2013). Bats with the undated ASA label are approved for play in the 2014 MCSSL season, but are currently under review and retesting by ASA. Any bat with only a USSSA or ISA label will be declared an illegal bat and is not permitted in league play. Any bat approved for league play must be free of burs, dents, cracks, sharp edges and audible rattles. A bat with any of these imperfections will be declared illegal and will be removed from the game at the sole discretion of the umpire. In addition to the above conditions, any bat used in MCSSL league play must not be shown on the **ASA Non-Approved Bat List**. (Refer to list attached on last page)

Any batter found using an illegal or non-approved bat will immediately be declared out, all runners will return to their previous base and the illegal bat must be permanently removed from the game. If the illegal bat was used, but undetected in a prior inning, any hits and runs in the prior inning will remain valid and unchanged. Once detected, if the illegal bat is used again in the same game or a future league game, the player will be declared out, will be ejected from the game and will be subject to league disciplinary action.  
out in order to nullify a run.

## ARC

The height of a legal pitch must be from six (6) to twelve (12) feet above the playing surface. The umpire shall verbally call an illegal pitch before it reaches home plate. If the umpire calls an illegal pitch and the batter swings, the ball is in play. If the pitch is taken, it is an automatic called ball.

## BASE PATH

A base path is an imaginary line three feet (0.91 m) on either side of a direct line between the bases, or a direct line between a base and the runner's position at the time a defensive player is attempting (or about to attempt) to tag the runner.

## **COMMITMENT LINE**

A line will be designated one-half the distance between 3<sup>rd</sup> base and Home Plate. Whenever a runner crosses this commitment line, he must proceed to Home (Scoring Plate) and cannot return to 3<sup>rd</sup> base. The runner must touch the Scoring Plate before the ball reaches the catcher standing on any section of the Strike Zone Mat. There cannot be any contact or tagging the runner at Home Plate or the Scoring Plate even if the catcher is pulled off the Strike Zone Mat.

## **COURTESY RUNNERS**

### **(1) USING COURTESY RUNNERS**

A courtesy runner may be used for a base runner at any time, but the same courtesy runner may not be used more than once per inning. Any courtesy runner found running more than once per inning will be called out.

### **(2) USING A RUNNER ON BASE**

A runner who is replaced with a courtesy runner may not be used as a courtesy runner for the remainder of the inning.

### **(3) COURTESY RUNNER REPLACEMENT**

A courtesy runner may not be replaced by another courtesy runner except for injury causing removal of the original courtesy runner permanently from the game.

### **(4) COURTESY RUNNER COMING TO BAT WHILE ON BASE**

A courtesy runner on base when it is his turn to bat will be declared out. The runner will be removed from the base and courtesy runner cannot be substituted. The courtesy runner called out does not lose his turn at bat.

### **(5) COURTESY RUNNER OFFICALLY IN THE GAME**

A courtesy runner is in the game when he/she touches the base. **If a courtesy runner is determined to be illegal, he will be called out upon touching the base and no other courtesy runner will be allowed. The original runner may not return as the runner.**

## **FORFEITED GAMES**

A forfeited game shall be declared by the umpire in favor of the team not at fault in the following cases:

- A. If an umpire is physically attacked by any team member and/or spectator.
- B. If a team fails to appear on the field, or, being on the field refuses to begin a game for which it is scheduled or assigned within a time set for forfeitures.
- C. If one side refuses to continue to play after the game has begun, unless the game has been suspended or terminated by the umpire.
- D. If, after play has been suspended by the umpire, one side fails to resume playing within two minutes after "play ball"
- E. If a team employs tactics noticeably designed to delay or to hasten the game.
- F. If, after warning by the umpire, any one of the rules of the game is willfully violated.
- G. If the order for the ejection of a player is not obeyed within one minute.
- H. If the ejection of a player or players from the game results in fewer than the required number of players to continue the game.
- I. If an ejected player is discovered participating again.

## **FOUL BALL AFTER 2 STRIKES**

After a batter has 2 strikes, the batter will be called out on the 1<sup>st</sup> foul ball (ground ball or fly ball) as if he has 3 strikes. The ball will be considered dead and base runners cannot advance. Except in this instance, other foul fly balls will be played as live balls and runners may advance at their own discretion.

## **FOUL TIP**

A batted ball that goes directly from the bat, whether higher or lower than the batter's head, and is legally caught by the catcher before hitting the ground is an out.

### **GAME SCORING**

Each inning of all games shall be played using the **Even +5 Rule** except that unlimited scoring shall be permitted in the seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) inning, all extra innings and any full inning prior to the 7<sup>th</sup> inning that is declared by an umpire to be the final inning of a game due to darkness. There shall be no time limit for the completion of games. There shall be no "mercy" rule.

### **HOME RUN RULE**

For any home run (over the fence or by local rule), the batter must touch 1<sup>st</sup> base only and is not required to touch any other bases.

### **ILLEGALLY BATTED BALL**

An illegally batted ball occurs when the batter hits the ball fair or foul and:

- A. The entire foot is completely outside the lines of the batter's box and on the ground.
- B. Any part of the foot is touching home plate,
- C. An illegal or altered bat is used.

### **INFIELD FLY**

A fair fly ball (not including a line drive) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> bases or 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> bases are occupied before there are two (2) outs. Any defensive player who positions himself in the infield at the start of the pitch shall be considered an infielder for the purposes of this rule. The infield fly is ruled when the ball reaches the highest point based on the position of the closest infielder regardless of who makes the play. When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire shall immediately declare "Infield Fly. The batter is out" for the benefit of the runners. If the ball is near a foul line, the umpire shall declare "Infield Fly. The batter is out if fair." The ball is alive and runners may advance at the risk of being caught. The runners can tag up and advance once the batted ball is touched (prior to catching), the same as on any fly ball. If a declared infield fly becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul ball.

### **INTERNATIONAL TIE BREAKER RULE**

When the teams are tied after seven (7) innings and going into extra innings, each team starts each inning with a runner on second base. That designated base runner is the batter-runner (player at bat) when the last out was made in the previous inning, and no substitute or courtesy runner may replace him until he has reached third base. If the last batter out cannot continue to play because of injury, illness, etc., he will be declared out and the next previous batter out will be the designated tie-breaker runner. The designated runner, as long as he has not been replaced, may be used as a courtesy runner in the same inning.

### **METAL CLEATS ARE PROHIBITED**

A player found wearing metal cleats in a game will be ejected from the game, and if on base, he will be called out. Any player on base at the time the ejected player came to bat must return to the base occupied at that time if there are fewer than three (3) outs.

## **NUMBER OF PLAYERS ON A TEAM**

In the 50+ Division, ten (10) players constitute a team. However, a team may start a game with no fewer than nine (9) players. A tenth (10th) player on the roster may be added any time during the game, batting in the last (10th) position.

In the 60+ Division, eleven (11) players constitute a team. However, a team may start a game with no fewer than ten (10) players. An eleventh (11th) player on the roster may be added any time during the game, batting in the last (11th) position.

In both divisions, additional players (in excess of the required 10 or 11 players) who have arrived at the field prior to the start of the game, but are not listed in the starting lineup at game time, may only enter the game under the rules of substitution and reentry.

Additional players arriving at the field after the start of the game, may, at the manager's option: 1) be entered after the last position in the starting lineup or 2) be entered into the game under the rules of substitution and reentry.

Managers are permitted to review an opposing team's starting lineup prior to the start of the game.

## **OBSTRUCTION**

Obstruction is the act of:

- A. A defensive player or team member which hinders or prevents a batter from striking at or hitting a pitched ball.
- B. A fielder, who is not in possession of the ball, in the act of fielding a batted ball, nor about to receive a thrown ball, that impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running bases.

## **PITCHER'S BOX**

The Pitcher's Box consisting of the area from the front of the pitcher's plate, 50 feet (15.24 m) from Home Plate, and extending back six feet perpendicular to the pitcher's plate shall be used. The Pitcher's plate shall be of rubber or wood, 24 inches (60.96cm) long and six inches (15.24cm) wide. The top of the pitching rubber shall be level with the ground. The front of the pitching rubber shall be the prescribed pitching distance from the back point of home plate (50 feet; 15.24 m). The Pitcher's Box will be marked with chalk or field paint.

## **PLAYOFF SEEDING TIE-BREAKER**

At the end of the regular season, if two or more teams are tied, playoff seeding will be determined by comparing team statistics in the following order:

- Head-to-head record
- Run differential – head-to-head
- Run differential – common opponents

If still tied after the above comparison, seeding will be determined by a coin toss.

## **PROTESTS**

Only managers or acting managers may consult the umpire over rule interpretations. There are three types of protests:

- A. Misinterpretation of a playing rule — must be made before the next pitch or, if on the last play of the game, before the umpires leave the playing field.
- B. Illegal substitute — must be made while they are in the game and before the umpires leave the playing field.
- C. Ineligible player — can be made any time during or after the game. Eligibility is the decision of the protest committee.

## **RE-ENTRY**

Any of the starting players, including an EP, may be substituted and re-entered once, provided players occupy the same batting positions whenever in the lineup. The starting player and the substitute(s) may not be in the lineup at the

same time. If a manager removes a substitute from the game and re-enters the same substitute later in the game, this is considered an illegal re-entry.

### **REGULATION GAME**

A regulation game shall consist of seven (7) innings. However, the umpire is empowered to call a game due to darkness, rain, lightning or any other cause that places players in peril. A game called by the umpire shall be considered regulation if the team second at bat (home team) has scored more runs in 4 or more complete innings than the other team has scored in 5 or more complete innings. Games that are not considered regulation and games that are tied when suspended shall be rescheduled and resumed as follows:

- a) If both teams will meet again later in the season for another regularly scheduled game, the suspended game shall be resumed at the exact point where play was suspended and completed prior to the start of the next regularly scheduled game;
- b) If both teams are not scheduled to meet again during the season and the game has no impact on playoff standings, the game will not be resumed or replayed;
- c) If both teams are not scheduled to meet again during the regular season, but the game will impact playoff standings or if the suspended game is a playoff game, the suspended game will be rescheduled and restarted from the beginning.

### **SAFETY BASE – 1<sup>ST</sup> BASE**

The home team shall supply a separate Safety Bag to be located 12" away from 1<sup>st</sup> Base in foul territory. If there is a play on a batter running to 1<sup>st</sup> Base, the batter must touch the Safety Bag in foul territory. If the batter touches the 1<sup>st</sup> Base bag in fair territory, the batter shall be called out. This is not an appeal play. Likewise, a fielder must touch the 1<sup>st</sup> Base bag in fair territory while making a play on a batter. If the fielder touches the Safety Bag while making the play, the batter shall be safe. A runner returning to 1<sup>st</sup> Base shall be permitted to return to the fair territory 1<sup>st</sup> Base bag. Any fielder, including outfielders, may attempt to throw out a runner going to 1<sup>st</sup> Base.

### **SAFETY BASE – HOME PLATE**

The home team shall supply a secondary home plate (Scoring Plate) to be placed 9' from the back tip of home plate on an extended line from first base. Any runner attempting to score shall touch the Scoring Plate. Any runner touching the main home plate will be called out. This is not an appeal play.

### **SLIDING**

Sliding or diving into 1<sup>st</sup> Base or the Scoring Plate is **not permitted**, and such players will be called out. However, a player may slide or dive into 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Bases and when returning to any base, except the Scoring Plate. All slides must be directly to the base. Roll blocks and take out slides are not permitted and the runner may be declared out at the discretion of the umpire. At any base, a runner who does not slide must veer out of the way of an infielder in order to avoid a collision.

### **START TIME / GRACE PERIOD**

All games must start promptly at 6:30 PM if both teams have the minimum number of required players (9 players in the 50+ division, 10 players in the 60+ division). Teams waiting for additional players to arrive to reach the minimum number of required players shall have a maximum grace period of 15 minutes before a forfeit is declared.

### **STRIKE ZONE MAT**

A Strike Zone Mat will be used. The mat will be 19" wide and 34 ½" long. The mat shall be made of rubber or other suitable material determined by the league. During a play at home plate, the runner will be declared out if the catcher touches any part of the strike mat before the runner reaches the Scoring Plate.

### **TIE GAMES**

Tie games after seven (7) innings will continue until one team is ahead after the completion of any subsequent inning. After the seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) inning, tie games will be played using the International Tie Breaker Rule. Tie games will be continued on another day if play is suspended due to darkness or weather. Play will resume at the exact point where

play was suspended. The above rules shall apply to regular season games and to playoff games.