

# **MORRIS/ESSEX TUESDAY SENIOR SOFTBALL LEAGUE RULES SEASON 2017**

**This official document is intended to serve as a guideline pertaining to rules of the Morris/Essex Tuesday Morning Senior Softball League. Any needed references not specifically stated here are to be found in the Official Senior Softball – USA Rulebook which can be found online (<http://seniorsoftball.com>). Rules applying to tournaments are not intended to be considered here.**

## **I. ZERO TOLERANCE:**

- A. There is a zero tolerance policy regarding physical altercations. A player who puts a hand on or bumps another player in an attempt to injure shall be ejected from the game, suspended from play and must leave the field immediately. A player may be banned from continued play in the League for a period of time to be determined by the Board of Directors and Commissioners upon notification by Managers of any incidents within 24 hours.**
- B. All in-game disputes directly related to rules shall be discussed between and resolved by Managers only with no player interference.**

## **II. START AND LENGTH OF GAMES:**

- A. Two official games shall be played on each scheduled date unless prevented by weather or other conditions. Postponement or cancelation of games at one field shall not cause postponement or cancelation of games at any other field, except for week one.**

- B. The first game shall begin promptly at 10:00 a.m. from opening day through June 20 on Tuesday morning or forfeit shall be called. From June 27 to the end of the season all games shall begin at 9:30 a. m. with a forfeit time of 9:45 a. m.**
- C. Managers shall mutually agree which team is 'home' team in the first game, and the opponent shall be 'home' team in the second game.**
- D. Games are seven inning contests unless tied, and shall continue until one team has scored at least one run more than the opponent in any further full inning of play.**
- E. All extra-inning games continue as an extension of the game in progress. Each-half inning begins with a runner on second base, and that runner must be the last batter who was up the previous inning when the last out was made. If that batter had a courtesy runner, then that courtesy runner shall assume second base.**
- F. There shall be at least a 5 minute break between the end of the first game and start of a second game for hydration and rest, but no more than 10 minutes.**
- G. To shorten the 2<sup>nd</sup> game, a starting count of one ball and one strike may be agreed upon by both team Managers, or may be played as a 5-inning contest without using a one and one count.**

**There is no courtesy foul for a batter when using the one and one start count. A foul on a third strike rules the batter out.**

### **III. NUMBER OF PLAYERS/PLAYER USE:**

- A. Each team may field a maximum of 11 positions throughout a game.**

- B. Each team must have at least 9 rostered players on the field to start a game. Less than 9 players shall constitute an official forfeit, and shall be entered as a loss in the league standings.**
- C. Any team starting an official game with 9 rostered players may ask to have one additional player provided by the opponent. The 10<sup>th</sup> player added is 'live' for that team, may only play defensively at the catcher's position and must bat with his own team. Teams with 10 players may not officially request any additional player to be provided by the opposing team.**
- D. All players must play defense a minimum of 3 innings during one game and a minimum of 6 innings during the double header. Any player who may be or becomes physically unable to field or run may elect to bat as a DH. This is limited to one player per game for each team. Players may be freely substituted throughout a game in the field.**
- E. Each team must bat all rostered players who attend games, unless injured. A player who does not bat may not play in the field. There are no pinch hitters.**
- F.1 Any player participating in a game may be a courtesy runner for another player on his team no more than once per inning. This includes being a courtesy runner from Home Plate. A player attempting to be a courtesy runner a second time in the same inning shall be called out. A courtesy runner replacing a batter who reaches a base safely must do so immediately after the batter reaches that base.**
- F.2 When running from home plate for a batter, the courtesy runner must position himself directly behind the catcher at home plate in line with the strike mat, and cannot run until ball contact is made by the batter.**
- G. A courtesy runner, unless injured, may not be replaced by another courtesy runner.**

- H. A courtesy runner on base when it is his turn to bat shall be called out, and must vacate the occupied base. However, if there are less than three outs in the inning, may take his spot in the batting order.
- I. Any players who arrive after their team has taken the field, or after the first pitch of a game, may only be inserted in the last spot of the official batting order.

#### **IV. RUNS/SCORING:**

- A. Five-runs maximum for each team in the first inning.
- B. Second through sixth inning is five run maximum or five runs more than the opponent if tied or losing.
- C. Seventh inning and beyond is unlimited scoring.
- D. When a visiting team is leading by at least twelve runs after five or more fully completed innings of play, or the home team is leading by at least 12 or more runs after 4 ½ innings a 'Mercy' rule automatically applies, and the game is officially ended.

#### **V. FIELD/BASE SPECIFICATIONS AND DIMENSIONS:**

- A. The distance between bases at all fields shall be 65 feet unless prevented by fixed field markings, but then no less than 60 feet.
- B. First base shall have either two separate bases or a double-base. The inside base is for throw-out plays at first base where the fielder receives the ball; the outside base shall be the runner's base when running to first base from home plate on a throw-out play.

- C. There are two home plates: the Scoring Plate for the runner and the other is the Strike Mat which also serves as the catcher's home plate. (See Rule IX, Game Equipment, for dimensions of the scoring Plate and Strike Mat).
- D. The pitcher's box is an area 50 feet from the back of the home plate portion of the strike mat to the pitching rubber and extending six feet back with a width of twenty-four inches.
- E. A "commitment line" between third base and home plate shall be indicated on the ground at the mid-way mark with a perpendicular line that crosses the foul line.

## **VI. BASE RUNNING:**

- A. Sliding is permitted at first, second and third bases. Sliding is not permitted at the scoring home plate. Collisions with fielders are to be avoided at all times.
- B. A runner must avoid blocking a throw from a fielder on a force-out play, if not this runner shall be called out. Where a double or triple play from base to base is continuous, the runner must either slide or give himself up. Obvious failure to do this may result in a possible double or triple play being called in an umpire's judgment.
- C. A runner who avoids first base to prevent an obvious collision may be called safe in the umpire's judgment.
- D. Tag plays can be made at any base except home plate. A runner must touch the outside home plate before the player at the strike mat catches and holds the ball with at least one foot on the mat on plays at home plate. Once a runner passes the 'commitment line' he may no longer return toward third base or he will be called out.
- E. At first base the runner must touch the outside base on a play when a throw is made in an attempt to get the runner out who has just

batted a ball, and is attempting to reach the base safely. A runner touching the wrong base shall be declared out. A fielder touching the wrong base shall cause the runner to be called safe.

- F. There is no leading when on base. Runners cannot attempt to advance until a batter swings at a pitched ball. Doing so shall result in the runner being called out, and the pitch shall be called a dead ball.

## VII. PITCHING REGULATIONS:

- A. The slow pitch arc shall be between six and twelve feet in height. Pitches lower or higher than those dimensions shall be declared illegal by the home plate umpire and counted as a ball unless the batter swings at it, the result is in play.
- B. The pitcher must release the ball with at least one foot in the pitcher's box. Non-compliance shall result in the pitch being called a ball by the home plate umpire.
- C. Any pitched ball that is foul-tipped by a batter, but not above his head, directly back to the catcher, and is caught cleanly in the hand(s) or glove without touching the catcher's body is an out.

## VIII. Defensive Positions

No fielder, other than the Short Fielder, may radically change a defensive field location for any opposing batter at the plate.

## IX. GAME EQUIPMENT:

- A. Softballs shall be provided by the League according to current ASA regulations each season. In each game a new or 'game' ball is provided by the home team. A backup ball does not have to be new, but must be in good condition and consistent with ASA regulations.

- B. Current ASA regulations state that a bat cannot exceed 1.21 bpf (Bat Performance Factor) and stamped with the official ASA certification for 2000, 2004 or 2013. A complete list of non-approved ASA bats shall be provided by the Commissioner prior to the start of the current season. A player found to be using non-approved or altered bats in League play shall be automatically ejected from the game, not allowed to return and referred to the Commissioner for determination of penalty.**
- C. A Strike Mat constructed of wood , thirty-six inches in length and twenty-two inches wide, shall be the official mat.**
- D. A Scoring Plate for runners, about the size of Home Plate, shall be placed approximately 9'5" from the third base corner of Home Plate (which would place it about 1'2" to the third base side of the Batter's Box).**
- E. Players shall wear rubber-soled athletic shoes when participating in League games. No metal spikes, metal cleats or other non-rubber material shall be worn. Any player found to be in violation shall be ejected from the game, not allowed to return and referred to the Commissioner for determination of any penalty.**
- F. It is mandatory that anyone who pitches, even in practice, wear a pitcher's mask unless he signs a waiver absolving the M.E.T.S.S. League and all its representatives of any responsibility and liability.**

**X. ROSTERS:**

- A. All Managers must submit a team roster no later than the set date for the official March meeting of the League Commissioner and Board of Directors for the upcoming scheduled season. A roster should have a 15 – man minimum, and there is no maximum number.**
- B. The Commissioner must be notified of and approve any requested additions to rosters after the season begins, and before June 1<sup>st</sup>.**

**Any roster addition after June 1<sup>st</sup> must be submitted to the Commissioner for approval, and the Board of Directors must be notified.**

- C. The League Commissioner shall provide complete League rosters before the start of the season, and any additions to rosters immediately after deadline dates, to all team Managers.**

**XI. SLOCUM DIVISION: The following rule applies only to this division.**

- A. No sliding is allowed at any base, and the player who slides shall be automatically called out. This applies when going to or back to a base, once you are on the ground it is considered a slide.**
- B. All games will start at 9:30 with a forfeit time of 9:45, there will be no 10:00 starts. All triple double header games will be 7 innings with a one and one count.**

**Common sense must prevail when participating in League play. Questions or suggestions relating to league operations, league game rules or anything pertinent to successful and continued League existence should follow the common protocol of addressing the team Manager who shall bring such valid questions or suggestions to the League Commissioners.**

**March 23, 2017**