

**MIDDLESEX COUNTY  
OVER 50 SOFTBALL  
LEAGUE, INC.**

**LEAGUE RULES**

**2011**

**April 30, 2011**

## **PREAMBLE**

The name of the organization shall be Middlesex County Over 50 Softball League Inc. The League shall be a non-profit corporation pursuant to Title 15A: 2-8 of the New Jersey Domestic Non Profit Corporation Act (The Act), whose purpose is to organize scheduled softball games for member teams. Each team in the League shall be considered a member pursuant to the Act and shall have equal rights and limitations. If any assets are at any time to be distributed, such distribution shall be equally among active members. All officers and only officers of the League shall be deemed Trustees under the Act. The League hereby indemnifies Trustees/Officers to the maximum extent permitted under Title 15A: 3-4 of the Act against expenses and liabilities in connection with any proceeding. Any provisions of these By-Laws (sometimes referred to as a "Constitution") which are not in accordance with the Act are to be considered null and void. The intention of the League is to operate as a corporation under the Act to limit any personal liabilities of Trustees/ Officers.

# ARTICLE I

## BY-LAWS

### MEMBERSHIP/TEAMS

- A. Each player must be at least fifty (50) years old in the calendar year that he joins the League. If a player is found to be ineligible due to age, his team forfeits all games for which he was on the roster (current season only) and the player is ineligible for future play in the League unless reinstated by the Board.
- B. Prior to April 1, any new team can be awarded membership by the League Board in unanimous agreement. Any new team wishing to gain entry into the league must first be in compliance with Section D below in regards to the number of existing players that can be included for it to be considered “New.” New teams will be accepted singly or in pairs as needed, and will be entered into the League's A, B or C Division at the discretion of the League Board.
- C. Team rosters with a minimum of sixteen (16) and a maximum of twenty (20) players are to be submitted no later than April 1. Photocopies of players' driver's licenses and signed liability release forms must also be submitted along with the team rosters. Teams forfeit all games until rosters are submitted. Team rosters are frozen after the completion of the third regular season playing date. Any player officially removed from the roster is ineligible to play for any team that year.

In the event of injuries, only, new players can be substituted for roster players during the season. Substitute players' names, photocopied driver's licenses and signed liability release forms must be submitted to the Executive Board (10) days prior to the player's first game in order to allow for proper notification of all team managers. In order to avoid exceeding the twenty (20) regular player limit, a substitute player becomes ineligible when the injured roster player for whom he was substituted returns to active player status. Similarly, an injured player may not return to active playing status until his substituted counterpart player is removed from eligibility.

- D. Prior to the first game of the season, no more than two (2) players can be picked up by any team from other existing teams in the League. A player shall be considered as an existing player –i.e. part of an existing team in the league- if he was on an official Player Roster for any team for any period of time (including partial seasons) during the preceding season (they need not have played in a game, just appear on a roster). Therefore, a new player would be anyone who never played in our league or appeared on any rosters at any time in the preceding year.\_
- E. Among the four (4) Division A teams, players may only move from a higher-ranking team to a lower ranking team (based on the final standings from the previous year). Division B and C players may move freely to a Division A team, and Division A players may move freely to a Division B or C team. Players can move freely among the Division B and C teams. However, no more than three (3) players can be picked up by

an existing B team, and no more than four (4) players can be picked up by an existing C team, from other existing teams in the League. Therefore, any “new” team cannot consist of more than 2 existing A Division players, 3 existing B Division players and 4 existing C Division players. In all cases, managers wishing to move players must submit their plan to the Board for approval. No existing players may be moved to other existing teams during the season.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **YEARLY OBLIGATIONS**

All teams must pay League fees of \$1200 by March 1 with the remainder payable no later than April 1. Fees are required to purchase softballs and also include insurance coverage, which the League will supply to the teams, and to pay umpires. Teams in arrears forfeit all games while in arrears.

## **ARTICLE III**

### **OFFICERS OF THE BOARD**

The League Executive Board will be comprised of four (4) to five (5) members, each with specific responsibilities. The Board will be charged with all League administrative decisions and duties, including determining League Rule revisions and additions. The League Board will decide all appeals, grievances and protests lodged during the season.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

All shall be held at a formal meeting called for at any time by the Executive Board or by a simple majority of team Managers and will be governed by the following:

#### **A. Nominations**

1. Any designated team can make a nomination representative.
2. Only one nomination or second will be accepted from any designated team representative for each Board position.

#### **B. Elections**

1. Requirements for voting. Each team has one vote to be cast by the designated team representative.
2. There will be no absentee ballots.
3. Any candidate shall be elected when the balloting yields a majority of the votes cast.

## ARTICLE V

### RULES OF PLAY

The League shall adhere to the current ASA rules and regulations for all playing matters, except as provided in the League rules of play. League rules take precedence over ASA 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 current League rules of play are as follows:

1. Team field strength will be a maximum of eleven (11) players and a minimum of nine (9).
2. Before the start of or during a game, an opposing manager may require a player to provide proper identification to confirm his 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 Board.
3. A game will be forfeited if a team cannot field a minimum of nine (9) players fifteen (15) minutes after the pre-arranged starting time or during play. If both teams cannot field eight men, then both teams forfeit the game.

Penalties for forfeiture of games are as follows:

- a. Any team which forfeits one (1) game will pay the League fifty dollars (\$50.00).
- b. Any team, which forfeits two (2) games, will pay the League an additional one hundred (\$100.00) for the second game, and will become ineligible to represent the League as one of its entrants in the state tournament.
- c. Any team, which forfeits three (3) games, will automatically forfeit all remaining games in the current season, and the team will be ineligible to return to the League during the following year. Players from the disenfranchised team will become available to other teams in the following season through a lottery selection system.

Note: Where the forfeiture in question is a doubleheader, the above listed penalties will be assessed as if the doubleheader represents one forfeiture "occurrence", not two. The sole exception to this interpretation is that the

forfeiting team will record two losses, and the opposing team will record two wins.

Forfeiture fees are due to any League officer no later than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the start of the next scheduled game.

4. A team may bat all players. However, a minimum of twelve (12) players, if available, must be batted.
5. There are no rules governing individual playing time in the field; however, team Managers should make every effort to give sufficient playing time to all players who desire it. Player complaints about inadequate playing time in the field will be addressed to and ruled on by the League Board.
6. There is free substitution with players in the batting order (i.e., a player may be removed from the field of play and reinstated at any time thereafter without liability, including pitchers).
7. Each team may field Eleven players (11).
8. Base runners may not leave base until a pitched ball crosses home plate.
9. Pinch runners are allowed freely except any one player may be used as a pinch runner no more than one time per inning from the batting order.
10. If a player is removed from the game, an automatic out will be recorded (only) for the removed player's next scheduled turn at bat. (No additional outs will be recorded for subsequent scheduled turns at bat). Before the start of the game, players planning to leave a game before its conclusion must inform the umpire and opposing manager of their intended departure time; no penalty will then be imposed. Note that the team is still subject to (non-monetary) forfeiture of the game if it is unable to field eight (8) players as a result of (a) player(s) leaving or having been removed from the game.
11. Players arriving at any time subsequent to the start of the game will be inserted at the bottom of the lineup.
12. This is a slow pitch league with a minimum arc of six (6) feet and a maximum arc of twelve (12) feet above the ground.
13. The pitcher's box shall be two (2) feet wide and four (5) 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.
14. A league approved strike zone mat will be used in all League games. The plate and the mat shall constitute the strike zone.

15. If the umpire calls a pitch illegal and the batter swings, the ball is in play. If the pitch is taken, it is an automatic called Ball.
16. A third strike foul (i.e., a foul hit when the count is already strike two) is an automatic out. If such a third strike foul out is caught by a fielder, the ball is in play and runners may attempt to advance at their own discretion.
17. 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 due to field limitations.
18. A commitment line will be designated halfway (32½ ft) between third and home.
19. No base stealing, bunting or slap hitting are allowed.
20. All games will be seven (7) innings. Five (5) innings must be completed (4-1/2 if the home team is winning) for a game to be official.
21. In the first inning, the maximum amount of runs scored will be 5 per team. After the first inning, the even plus five (5) run rule will be in effect, with no restrictions in the last inning or extra innings.
22. Mercy Rule: a game is officially over if one team leads the other by fifteen (15) runs after five (5) innings of play have been completed (or 4-1/2 innings if the home team is in the lead).
23. All bats must be slow-pitch officially approved by ASA. Bats with altered [original manufacturer] markings are prohibited. All bats must be equal to the 1.20 BPF standard. Every player will be required to sign a written statement attesting to the fact that his bat does not exceed the 1.20 BPF standard. (If a player is in doubt about the specifications of his bat, it cannot be used.) A batter using a bat prohibited by these rules will be declared out and ejected from the game.
24. Metal spikes are not allowed.
25. Sliding is permitted into all bases, including (the scoring) home plate and (the batter's) first base. At any base and regardless of the specific circumstances of the play, a runner who does not slide must veer out of the way of an infielder in order to avoid a collision. (A player cannot break up a force out, tag play or a double play by running into a fielder.) 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. The player's action will be reviewed by the League Board to determine if further disciplinary action should be taken. Any decision made by the Committee will be strictly enforced. We are a "fun" League.



26. On a play at home plate, the catcher can record an out only by touching any portion of the 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.
27. Where playing field design makes the use of a scoring plate potentially dangerous, as agreed upon by the opposing managers and the umpire, a scoring line (extension of the first base line into foul territory on the third base side) may be used instead of a scoring plate.
28. Both teams shall provide one (1) new ball for each game.
29. 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.
30. 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.
31. After the umpire calls, "Play Ball"; a team has two (2) minutes to resume play or the umpire can call a (non-monetary) forfeit.
32. 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.
33. 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.
34. 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 game one can return for game two of the doubleheader.
35. End of season ties in the standings will be decided by the record of each team against all teams with which it is tied. If ties still exist, the tiebreaker is recorded against the highest finishing team or group of teams in the division against the next highest, etc., in descending order through all teams. Ties shall be settled from bottom of standings to top in ascending order (ties for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> are settled before ties for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>). In case of ties still existing, a coin toss in the presence of representatives of all affected teams shall decide. Won/lost percentage, rather than games ahead/behind, will be the criterion for comparing records. A 0-1 record is better than 0-2 where neither team has at least one victory.

36. This same tiebreaker procedure will be used to determine competing team pairings for all "Bumper Week" games. (That is, within each Division, the team currently standing #1 plays team #2 and #3 plays #4-- with these standings having been determined by the tie-breaker procedure, above.)
37. If the umpire does not show up for a scheduled game, or leaves during the course of the game, both managers must agree on a substitute or substitutes, who can be from either or both teams (and can even play in the game when not serving as an umpire), or a spectator. Once the game begins, it cannot be terminated over dissatisfaction with the umpiring.
38. While it is preferred that all players wear uniforms, this provision shall not be mandatory.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **DIVISIONS**

- A. During pre-season meetings, both the Division and cross-Division team alignment will be reviewed and decided upon for the coming season. A majority vote will be required for approval. Every effort should be made to maintain parity among teams in any given Division.
- B. State Championships  
Teams from the league may participate in the NJSSA State Championships. These shall include teams from any Division. Application must be made the the NJSSA prior to team participation. Details are contained on the NJSSA.US website.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **RATIFICATION**

New By Laws are proposed and adopted for the League at the discretion of the League Board. If so designated by the Board, a meeting of League Managers may be called at any time to consider and adopt By Law revisions and/or additions. If such a meeting is held, ratification shall require that at least a quorum must be in attendance and at least two-thirds (66-2/3 per cent) of those present must vote for the Article I (By-Laws) in the affirmative. Changes in Article VI (Rules of Play), however, require only a simple majority vote approval.