

# **MIDDLESEX COUNTY 60+ SOFTBALL LEAGUE**

## **LEAGUE RULES**

**2024**

**Revised: March 1, 2024**

## **PREAMBLE**

The name of the organization shall be Middlesex County 60+ 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.

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## **A. RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 1) The rules committee will consist of all team managers. This committee will be responsible for voting for all rules changes, additions, deletions, modifications, and clarification. No rule changes can be approved or implemented without their vote. A majority vote of the managers is required for approving any rule change. In the event of a tie vote, the rule change does not pass and is not approved.
- 2) The league Executive Board will consist of a minimum of 4 members and a maximum of 6 members. The Executive Board is responsible for the execution of all administrative activities necessary to properly run the league, including but not limited to, scheduling, insurance, field assignment, finance and enforcing the league rules. The Executive Board has no voting rights on rule changes.

## **B. TEAM AND PLAYER ELIGIBILITY/MOVEMENT**

- 1) Each player must be at least **SIXTY (60)** years old during the calendar year that he joins the League.
- 2) If a player is found to be ineligible due to age, his team forfeits all games in which he participated. The Executive Board reserves the right to determine his future eligibility of play and the right to suspend the team Manager for using an ineligible player.
- 3) Prior to April 1st, any new team can be awarded membership by the Executive board, in unanimous agreement.
- 4) **Up until the start of the 4<sup>th</sup> week of schedule play during the regular season (see Section C, Article 10), any eligible league player has the freedom to move from one team to another. However, it is expected that any player deciding to switch teams to have the professional courtesy of informing his previous manager of his intention. It is also expected that communication between the two team managers affected have occurred prior to any submittal of initial rosters to avoid a player being on two rosters.**

**If a manager expects to be losing more than three players to other teams, he has the option of notify the League Board of this expectation. The League Board will evaluate the impact and will take the necessary action in the best interest of the league.**

## **C. GENERAL RULES/ADMINISTRATIVE**

1. A team manager or representative must be in attendance to vote. There is no proxy voting. A team manager or representative calling in will have his vote count.
2. If the manager misses a meeting, it is his responsibility to communicate with his representative regarding any changes covered during the meetings. A manager not

attending a meeting will not be an excuse for not knowing what was covered during meeting.

3. Only one team representative is required for league meetings. The Commissioner may invite additional attendees as needed.
4. All managers are responsible for the conduct of their team, and knowledge, execution, and enforcement of the rules. If there is a dispute, protest or questioning of the rules, it is the responsibility of the manager to inform the umpire (if said issue is raised during play) and a member of the Executive Board. It is the responsibility of the Executive Board to investigate, query all individuals involved (if any) and render a binding decision.
- 5. In the event of an altercation or dispute that results in unprofessional or unruly behavior that is detrimental to the league and brought before the Executive Board, such event will be thoroughly investigated by the Executive Board by interviewing all participants. The Board will, based on the facts, has the right to implement disciplinary action against those involved, including suspension.**
6. Team rosters will consist of a minimum of sixteen (16) and a maximum of twenty-five (25) players and must initially be submitted no later than ONE (1) WEEK PRIOR TO THE FIRST SCHEDULED GAME. It is the responsibility of the team manager to ensure the eligibility of their roster players. If an ineligible player is discovered, all game in which that player participated will be forfeited. The Executive Board reserves the right to suspend a manager for this violation.
7. Rosters must be sent to the League Secretary's email address, that can be found on website (to make it easier to enter online, we prefer using an excel type spreadsheet). All emails will be saved as proof.
8. Teams will forfeit all played game(s) until roster is submitted.
9. Team rosters will be frozen prior to the start of the 4<sup>th</sup> SCHEDULED game. Any player officially removed from a team roster prior to the 4<sup>th</sup> scheduled game may be eligible to join another team prior to the 4<sup>th</sup> scheduled game, with approval by the Executive Board.
10. Any player found to be on more than one (1) roster will be considered a legal player for the team in which he played his first game. In the event a player did play in a game with a second team, all games played with that second team will result in a forfeit.
11. Teams will not be allowed to submit their final roster beyond the start of the 4<sup>th</sup> scheduled league game. Any team missing the deadline will automatically have their initial roster submission designated as their final roster.
12. In the event any roster player has been diagnosed with a serious medical condition after the fourth scheduled week of play that will prevent him from any further league participation ((i.e., cancer, stroke, life threatening disease, death, season ending injury, etc.), the team manager will be given the option of replacing that player on the roster with a non-roster player that meets the eligibility requirements in cited above. The replacement player must be identified and

approved by the Board before officially added to the team roster. Once replaced, the stricken player is automatically ineligible for play for the remainder of season, including playoffs. There will be no roster additions approved if the season ending incident occurred after the end of regular season play. For the replacement player to be eligible to participate in the playoffs, he must achieve the 40% games played requirements identified in Section D. The 40% will be the cumulative total of the games played by the player he replaced and the games he participated in.

13. Lineup cards will be filled out by each manager prior to every game and have opposing team managers initial to show acknowledgement. A copy/photo of each card must be texted back to the designated League Board member for recording purposes.
14. Replacement player(s) must meet all eligibility requirements Section A above..
15. **It is the responsibility of the winning team to email Bob Lorencz or designated person with score of the game, the next day.** (It is important to report accurate scores, for tie-breaking purposes.

#### **D. PLAYOFFS**

- 1) **Playoff eligibility: A player must participate in 40% of the schedule league games. If a team receives a forfeit WIN, all players on that team roster is credited as playing that game. If the league cancels games to facilitate the start of the playoffs, all players on the team are credited as playing in that game. (Games played 15/eligible 6. 14,13,12 played/eligible 5. Less than 12/eligible 4). A player must play a minimum of 5 innings to be credited with a game played.**
- 2) Prior to the start of the playoffs, managers have the right to address/protest player eligibility.
- 3) The playoff format will be double elimination. A single elimination format will be used as a last resort in the event of weather, field availability or other circumstances prevent a double-elimination format.
- 4) Tie breakers for seeding purposes will be determine as follows:
  - 1<sup>st</sup>- Head-to-head record
  - 2<sup>nd</sup>-Run differential between tied teams
  - 3<sup>rd</sup>- Coin toss.Any team in a tie breaker situation that has forfeited any games during the regular season will automatically lose the tie breaker.

#### **E. EQUIPMENT**

- 1) A league approved wooden strike zone mat (22" x 36") will be used in all League games. The plate and the mat shall constitute the strike zone.
- 2) A second Safety first base is to be used. The safety base at first base will be placed eighteen (18") inches from the regular base.

- 3) A 2<sup>nd</sup> home plate to be used for all scoring plays at home. The scoring plate will be placed eight (8') feet from the mat on the first base line extended.
- 4) A pitching screen must be used for pre-game batting practice. For safety reasons, batting practice held prior to the start of each game must be a joint practice. Teams will not conduct separate batting practices.
- 5) **For safety reasons, a pitching screen will be used for all league games. The pitching screen shall be placed forty-eight feet (48') from home plate and centered in front of the pitching rubber. The pitching screen once properly placed will not be moved. The home team will provide the pitching screen, but both teams must bring their pitching screens in the event one becomes damaged or unsafe to use. Once properly set in place, only the umpire has the authority to move the screen. A warning will be given by the umpire to any player attempting to move the pitching screen. Any further attempts will result in an immediate ejection by the offending player. The pitcher has the option of wearing a mask during the game. It is recommended that the pitcher remain behind the pitching screen until the batter contacts the pitched ball.**
- 6) **During the course of a game, any batted ball hitting the pitching screen will be called a dead ball and all runners must return to the previous base they occupied. In the event a batted ball hits the pitching screen when the batter has two strikes against him, the call will be a dead ball third strike out and all runners must return to the previous base they occupied, if there was less than two outs when the dead ball strike out occurs.**
- 7) Both teams shall provide one (1) new ball for each game and a game used ball as backup.
- 8) All bats must be inspected and tested prior to the start of every season. The League will use an SSL Portable Barrel compression bat tester set to ASA standards. A bat that passes test will have the current year sticker applied.
- 9) All bats must be official slow-pitch and be on the approved ASA bat list for the current season. All bats must be equal to the 1.20 BPF standards. **NO SENIOR or USSSA BATS ARE ALLOWED.**
- 10) A bat without league sticker cannot be used during the game or BP. It is managers responsibility to communicate the rule to team members and ensure only bats with correct stickers are used.
- 11) A three (3) week grace period will be allowed (first three played games) for bat testing. **A bat may be used if it has the prior year's sticker from the Middlesex 60's League, during the first three weeks.** The League commissioner will be available during season at field, prior to game time, to start testing.
- 12) Any player who comes to the plate without the correct sticker on his bat shall be declared an out and runners return to their base if ball was put in play. Said player(s) will not be allowed further use bat. It is preferable that the bat remain in the manager's possession until games end.

- 13) Any manager may challenge the legality of a stickered, damaged, or suspect bat. The bat in question will be tested as soon as possible. If it's determined that the bat has not been altered, but just dropped below ASA standards, that bat will be ejected from use in league with no penalties.
- 14) If a player uses or continues to use a bat ejected by the league, that player will be ejected from the league.
- 15) Any player involved with two events of failed bat use after initial testing will be ejected from the league. The Executive Committee reserves the right to conduct random bat testing throughout the season to ensure player safety and league integrity.
- 16) If at any time a player is seriously injured by a batted ball, the bat used will be tested. If the bat fails the compression test, it will be sent to the manufacturer to see if it was altered. If bat is found not to be altered, league will reimburse the player for the replacement of bat or a similar priced model. If bat is found to be altered, the player will be ejected from the league and can be open to civil and criminal litigation.

## **F. PLAYER DISCIPLINE**

- 1) **During play, only team managers (or the Assistant Manager in their absence) can discuss calls with the umpire, or other items pertaining to the nature of play. Managers must make this clear to their players. Any player other than the Manager or Assistant Manager confronting an umpire under this rule can be ejected from the game by the umpire.**
- 2) An umpire reserves the right to eject any player or players for verbal or physical abuse directed at him in violation of rule #1 above. Any physical or verbal abuse or confrontation between opposing players may also result in their ejection by the umpire.
- 3) Physical abuse of an umpire will result in suspension from the League for the remainder of the year.
- 4) A player ejected for verbal or physical abuse will result in a minimum of a one game suspension. In all player ejections, the Executive Board will interview all involved individuals and investigate the incident. If suspension is warranted, said suspension will be served immediately upon the results of the investigation. The team manager will be immediately informed of the Executive Board's decision.
- 5) Any pre-game or post—game conflicts (in the absence of the umpire) should be reported by the managers to the League Board for investigation. Based on the results of the investigation, the League Board has the right to impose disciplinary action commensurate to the conflict.
- 6) If a player is removed for the remainder of season from the League for physical abuse, that player actions will be subject to review by the Executive Committee regarding future reinstatement the following year. ***(If incident occurred late in the season, suspension may carry over to following season)***

- 7) A player(s) removed from the game by an umpire must leave the vicinity of the ballpark to avoid more conflict between players and/or umpire. Umpires have been informed to advise team manager that failure to do so will result in his team's forfeiture of the game.

## **G. RULES OF PLAY**

- 1) The League shall adhere to the current senior USA/ASA rules and regulations for all playing matters, except as provided in the League rules of play. League rules take precedence over ASA rules.
- 2) Before the start of each season, the Executive Board will review the rules with the Managers and discuss/vote on appropriate rule changes in the best interest of the league.
- 3) The Board will create an equitable schedule for the regular season. Subsequent suggested revisions to regular season game dates, times, and fields may be made by managers to the Executive Board for discussion and then voted upon.
- 4) Team field strength will be a maximum of eleven (11) players and a minimum of nine (9).
- 5) 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 neither team can field nine (9) men, then both teams forfeit the game.
- 6) **If a team only has 8 players, the opposing team must provide a catcher to prevent a forfeit. The supplied catcher will participate in all defensive plays. An out will be recoded every time the ninth position in batting order is scheduled to bat.**
- 7) **If a team has only 9 players, they have the option of having the opposing team provide a catcher. If they choose to accept a catcher from the opposing team, the supplied catcher will participate in all defensive plays. An out will be recorded every time the 10<sup>th</sup> position in the batting order is schedule to bat. If they choose not to accept a catcher, they play and bat their nine players with no penalty to the 10<sup>th</sup> position in the batting order.**
- 8) If a team fields only ten (10) players, the opposing team is not required to provide a catcher.
- 9) Forfeit fines will be imposed by each successive offense at \$50, \$75, etc. Forfeit fines must be paid to the league treasurer prior to the next scheduled game. If not paid, the team will forfeit that game and be assessed another fine. A team that forfeits more than 2 games will be evaluated by the Executive Board for continued play for the remainder of season.



- 10) A team may bat all players. However, a minimum of twelve (12) players, if available, must be batted. Any player playing the field must bat. Two players may occupy the same slot in the batting order and alternate at bats if lineup has minimum of 12 batting positions listed.
- 11) No pinch hitting or re-entry is allowed. The only substitution allowed is the manager and only if he was not in the starting lineup to start the game. A player arriving late cannot be used as a substitute and shall be placed at the bottom of the batting order.
- 12) In the event a substitute is not available (article #11 above), the number of batters listed in the batting cannot be reduced without recording an out when the vacant position comes to bat. If a player is ejected and a substitute is not available an out will be recorded every time that position comes to bat. **In the case of an injury an out will be recorded in the lineup only for the next at bat.**
- 13) The exception to above: 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 be imposed. His place in lineup will be skipped. **Note that the team is still subject to (non-monetary) forfeiture of the game if it is unable to field nine (9) players because of (a) player(s) leaving or having been removed or ejected from the game.**
- 14) Players arriving at any time after the start of the game will be inserted at the bottom of the lineup.
- 15) 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.
- 16) The pitcher's box shall be three (3) feet wide to match the width of the pitching rubber and five (5) feet deep.
- 17) The pitcher can pitch from any spot in the box if he has one foot in the box.
- 18) The pivot foot must remain in the pitcher's box throughout the delivery.
- 19) Walking up towards batter is prohibited (example- taking steps like bowling, prior to releasing ball) Any U-Trip pitching motions are not allowed.
- 20) 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.
- 21) Courtesy runner rules- a runner can pinch run once per inning. If a pinch runner is on a base when his turn at bat comes, it is called an out.
- 22)** 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.
- 23) 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.
- 24) A commitment line will be designated halfway (32½ ft.) between third and home. This line should be made by the umpire or ground crew.

- 25) All games will be nine (9) innings. Five (5) innings must be completed (4-1/2 if the home team is winning) for a game to be official.
- 26) There is a mercy rule if one team leads the other by fifteen (15) runs after seven (7) innings of play have been completed or 6-1/2 innings if the home team is in the lead.
- 27) Sliding is permitted into all bases, excluding (the scoring) home plate and (the batter's) first base. **Headfirst sliding or diving back to a base arm(s) first is discouraged by the league**.
- 28) 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 to avoid a collision. (A player cannot break up a force out, tag play or a double play by running into a fielder. It will be up to the umpire's discretion, as to his interference call. (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.
- 29) 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.
- 30) If the home plate mat is accidentally moved/kicked, the catcher must touch the original permanent home plate to make the out. DO NOT CHASE THE MAT.
- 31) If the umpire does not show up for a scheduled game, or leaves during 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.
- 32) Rainouts will be made up time and field permitting. No guarantee all game to be made-up.
- 33) Guidelines for game that can not complete the full 9innings (8 1/2 if home team is ahead):
- 34) The last inning may not start after 7:15 at Vets (game must end at 7:30) or a decision at Phillips regarding the daylight remaining.
- 35) At Vets, if HOME team can not finish their at bat, if behind, prior to time limit of 7:30, the game reverts to last full inning played.
- 36) At Phillips, if its determined HOME team can not hit or not finish their at-bats because of loss of daylight, if behind, the game reverts to last full inning played.

- 37) Exception to 7:30 cutoff at Vets- If there is not a game waiting to start the home team may finish their at-bats.
- 38) **When the league is comprised of A designated division teams and B designated division teams, the A-division teams will spot the B-division team five runs. The runs will be awarded in one run segments between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> innings. These additional runs will not count toward the maximum 5 run limit a team can plate per inning. The League Board reserves the right to evaluate this rule any time during the regular season based on individual team strength.**

#### **H. YEARLY OBLIGATIONS**

- 1) All teams must pay League fees as determined by the Treasurer. They are due prior to the first game. Fees are required to purchase softballs and include insurance coverage, which the League will supply to the teams and to pay umpires. Umpires will be paid in cash at the start of all league season or playoff games.
- 2) Teams may forfeit all games played until league fee is paid. It is the manager's responsibility and will not be reminded by the League Commissioner. Late payment exceptions will be at the Commissioner's discretion. Fees are due prior to first game.

#### **I. OFFICERS OF THE BOARD**

- 1) The League Executive Board will be comprised of a minimum of four (4) and maximum of six (6) members, each with specific administrative responsibilities.
- 2) The Board will consist of four officers, President, Vice president, Secretary and Treasurer.
- 3) The League Executive Board will enforce in season League Rules. All conflicts, discipline, appeals, grievances and protests lodged during the season will be reviewed and decided upon.

#### **J. 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:

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

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