

MT. LEBANON GIRLS SOFTBALL OFFICIAL LEAGUE RULES

These rules pertain to all regular season and playoff games
(Last Revised: 3/17/20)

By your example, you will determine how your players act or react to the decisions of the Umpires, the rules of the League and the outcome of the game. Set a good example.

Preamble

Mount Lebanon Girls Softball Association was founded for and remains dedicated to helping girls develop through lessons learned in competition and good sportsmanship, lessons that include grace in defeat and humility in victory.

These rules should be read, interpreted, and acted upon with these lessons at the core of all decisions a coach makes. Coaches must understand that they are responsible for all girls on the field and in the organization.

There are many circumstances not specifically addressed in these rules. It is, none the less, expected that all MLGSA coaches will conduct themselves in accord with the founding ideals of the organization.

Examples of a coach's unacceptable actions and behavior include but are not limited to: intentional walks, running up the score, sitting one player more than another in a regular season game, playing a player in lesser valued positions on a continuous basis (outfield or catcher) during a regular season game, playing a call up in a more valued position than a regular player, etc.

Examples of a coaches expected actions and behavior include but are not limited to: all players should have relatively equal playing time (in a regular season game), all players should play relatively equal time in the infield and outfield (in a regular season game), batters should be encouraged to swing at a reasonable pitch, players should be encouraged to respect an opponent and the umpires, etc.

The Game

1. In the **Majors** and **Seniors**, a complete game will consist of 7 innings or if one team's score exceeds the other team's score by **15 OR MORE RUNS** after 5 complete innings.

In the **Juniors** a complete game will consist of **6 innings** or if one team's score exceeds the other team's score by **15 OR MORE RUNS** after 5 complete innings.

In all Leagues, if another game is scheduled for the same field, **the game will be complete 10 minutes before the scheduled starting time** for the next game regardless of innings played or score.

2. In the **Juniors**, an inning shall consist of three outs or 12 batters, whichever comes first.
3. A game **INTERRUPTED BY BAD WEATHER, DARKNESS, TIME or OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES** will be a complete game if 4 innings have been played or if the home team leads after 3-1/2 innings of play. If 4 innings have been played and the score is tied, a regular season game will be declared a tie; a playoff game will be suspended

and will be resumed at a later date. Any game not deemed to be completed will be declared suspended and will be resumed at a later date.

4. In the case of **BAD WEATHER OR POOR FIELD CONDITIONS** prior to the scheduled start time, the following rules apply:
 - a. No games can be called off prior to 2 hours before game time.
 - b. If both Head Coaches agree that the game should not be played:
 1. The **COORDINATOR OF UMPIRES** for your league must be notified before game time.
 2. The **FIELD COORDINATOR** must be notified so that the game can be rescheduled.
 - c. If the Head Coaches cannot agree on calling the game, the teams must show up at the appointed time and field. The decision to call or play the game then will rest with the Umpire. Clarification: Should the Head Coaches not agree and should one team not show up (and/or show up with less than 8 players), they would forfeit the game if the Umpire feels that the game could be played (regardless of inclement weather conditions subsequent to the Umpire's decision).
5. A game will be **FORFEITED** if a team is unable to begin a game by forfeit time. The forfeit time shall be 15 minutes after the scheduled start time. **Once a team has sufficient players (see Rule 6) and the start time has arrived, the game will begin.**
6. **A TEAM WILL CONSIST** of no fewer than 8 players and a responsible adult coach throughout the game or more than 10 players in the field. Fewer than 8 players by the forfeit time (See rule 5) or any time during the game is an automatic forfeit. The umpire will make this decision.
7. The Home Plate Umpire and Head Coaches will decide, before the game, **GROUND RULES** relating to overthrows and batted balls consistent with field conditions.
8. The Umpire can evict a player or coach from the game for temper tantrums, throwing equipment, swearing, or any other acts of **POOR SPORTSMANSHIP**. A Head Coach may evict his own player or coach for the same reasons even if the Umpire does not.
COMMENT: Acts of poor sportsmanship on the part of an opposing player should be quietly brought to the attention of the opposing Head Coach. Head Coaches are responsible for the conduct and performance of their players.
9. There will be zero tolerance of coaches or players questioning an umpire's call. All instances will be brought to the attention of the league directors for discipline.
10. If lightning is seen during a game, the umpire will stop the game and wait 30 minutes before play resumes. If a subsequent lightning event occurs, the waiting time of 30 minutes will start over. The umpire has final judgment on when play will resume. No coach shall interfere with that decision.

The Field

1. **DISTANCE TO BASES:** 60 feet measured from tip of home plate to the back of 1st base or 3rd base and measured from the foul line to the center of 2nd base.
2. **PITCHING DISTANCE:**
45 feet (Majors)
40 feet (Seniors)
35 feet (Juniors)
3. The Umpires and Head Coaches will decide, before the game, **GROUND RULES** relating to overthrows and batted balls consistent with field conditions.

The Equipment

1. Catchers are required to wear masks and helmets. Shin guards will be made available.
2. Wearing of steel **SPIKED SHOES** is prohibited. Rubber cleats are permitted.
3. Pitchers are required to wear a face mask and heart guard starting in the Juniors League and continuing through the Majors League.

The Players

1. All players reporting for a game will appear in the **LINE-UP** and bat in turn. In other words, a player will bat whether she is playing defensively or not at that time.
2. Each player must **PLAY AT LEAST 3 INNINGS** in the field.
3. **A PLAYER ARRIVING AFTER THE START** of the game may be inserted right away defensively if you are not fully manned. Otherwise, she may be inserted defensively the following inning if you so desire. Offensively she will be inserted as the last official batter on the line-up (including any call-ups). See note for Major League call ups and late arrivals
4. Players should wear **TEAM JERSEYS**.
5. A maximum of three players per game may be **CALLED UP** in the **Juniors** and **Seniors**, and a maximum of five players may be called up for **Majors**. The following rules will apply:
 - a. Any players who are called up **must** be pre-registered and noted on the line-up at the pre-game meeting.
 - b. Players called up will appear last in the batting order (excluding any late arrivals after the game starts). The called-up player remains in the batting order for the entire game even if rostered players show up unannounced once the game is underway. Rostered players arriving late will enter the order behind the called-up player.
 - c. Called-up players must play a minimum of three innings in the field. (This remains true even if rostered players show up late once the game is underway.)
 - d. You cannot play a called-up player at the expense of a rostered girl. If late arrivals bring the total number of rostered players to 10, the called-up player is

- limited to the required three innings in the field.
- e. If one player is called up, she must play catcher or right field.
 - f. If two players are called up, they can only play catcher and right field.
 - g. If three players are called up, they can only play catcher and right field. If all three are playing in the field, the third player must play right center field.
 - h. The order of position play for the maximum five call-ups in **Majors** is: 1. Catcher, 2. Right Field, 3. Right Center Field, 4. Left Center Field and 5. Left Field.
 - i. At least five players from the team's roster must be present regardless of the number of players called up. Less than five players will be a forfeit.
6. Players are allowed to participate on both slow pitch and fast pitch teams simultaneously. If there are games scheduled which present a conflict between the slow pitch league and the fast pitch league, the player is expected to attend a playoff game over a regular season game and a regular season game over a practice. In the event two games still present a conflict, the player is expected to inform the head coach of the team whose game she will be missing as soon as possible so roster arrangements (calling up a player, for example) can be made.

The Coaches

1. All Head Coaches must **NOTIFY THEIR NEW PLAYERS** with a personal phone call or email within a week of the draft. Every Head Coach should supply each of their players with schedules and a complete team roster.
2. **IGNORANCE OR "MISUNDERSTANDING" OF THESE RULES** is not an acceptable excuse for violations. Forfeits may be the penalty.
3. Intentionally **NOT NOTIFYING TEAM PLAYERS** of any games will be considered an infraction of the rules and a **forfeit** will follow.
4. When a player is in the batter's box, and after the ball leaves the pitcher's hand, **NO VERBAL INSTRUCTIONS**, such as -- swing, don't swing, looks like a good or bad pitch, etc. -- shall be given by coaches or spectators. Violations of this rule will result in a warning the first time, and either an **out** or a batter given 1st base the second time.
5. **CONDUCT:** A Head Coach may evict his own player or coach for temper tantrums, throwing equipment, swearing, or any other acts of **POOR SPORTSMANSHIP** even if the Umpire does not.

Acts of poor sportsmanship on the part of an opponent player should be quietly brought to the attention of the opposing Head Coach. Head Coaches should be responsible for the conduct and performance of their players, parents and coaches.

If a Coach or Player is evicted by the umpire, a minimum of a one game suspension will result from the first offense. A second offense will result in an indefinite suspension until reinstated by the MLGSA Board.

The Pitcher

1. The **MAXIMUM PITCHING ARC** is **12 FEET**. A **LEGAL PITCH** is one which is not more than the maximum pitching arc from the ground with a perceptible arc (arc must go above the batter's head). A flat pitch will be called a "ball" by the Umpire if it is not struck

at by the batter.

2. The pitcher must present the ball before pitching. The pitcher must have at least one foot in contact with the rubber (or a line drawn at the proper distance from the pitcher's mound to home plate). There can be no **WALKING ONTO THE RUBBER**. One foot must stay in contact with the rubber until the ball is pitched, otherwise, the pitch is a ball. The pitcher should be in direct line between home plate and second base. The Umpire will enforce.
3. The **STRIKE ZONE** will be from a player's shoulder to her knee when she is in her normal stance. The ball must pass above the knee closest to the pitcher and below the shoulder away from the pitcher. Batters should be encouraged to take a normal stance beside the plate, and may not assume an unreasonable crouch.
4. A pitched ball striking home plate and not swung at will be called a ball. The **BLACK OF HOME PLATE** is not considered part of the plate, and a ball striking the black on the back part of the plate (and satisfying the conditions of rule 15) may be considered a strike.
5. In the **Majors**, there is no innings limit on pitchers.

In the **Seniors**, a player may not appear in more than **5 INNINGS** in a single game as a **PITCHER**.

In the **Juniors**, a player may not appear in more than **4 INNINGS** in a single game as a **PITCHER**.

6. In the **Majors**, a **PITCHER ONCE REMOVED** from the pitching position may not be reinstated as a pitcher in that game unless the game goes into extra innings at which time she may be reinstated.

In the **Juniors and Seniors**, a **PITCHER ONCE REMOVED** from the pitching position may be reinstated as a pitcher one time in that game. She may be reinstated a second time if the game goes into extra innings.

The Batter

1. Batters should be encouraged to take a normal stance beside the plate, and may not assume an **UNREASONABLE CROUCH**.
2. The **BATTER MAY NOT STEP ONTO**, directly in front of, or across home plate when hitting the ball. The batter will be called **OUT** only if contact (fair or foul) is made with the ball.
3. The Umpire will call a player **out** for **THROWING THE BAT**. **No warning will be given**.
4. The **INFIELD FLY RULE** is in effect in the Majors League only.
5. An **out** will be called on **FOUL TIPS** which travel above the batter's head and are caught by a defensive player. The third strike foul tip need not travel above the batter's head - if that ball is caught, the batter is also **out**.
6. All batters and runners must wear a **HELMET**. A runner intentionally removing her

helmet while running the bases will be called out.

7. A pinch runner is not permitted for the batter. A batter may have a pinch runner once she makes it safely to first base. The batter is not permitted to proceed beyond first base except if additional bases are awarded, such as on a throw going into dead ball territory. The pinch runner shall be the player that made the last out. Should the pinch runner be needed before the first out of a game, the pinch runner shall be the last player in the batting order.
8. When a player is in the batter's box, and after the ball leaves the pitcher's hand, **NO VERBAL INSTRUCTIONS**, such as "swing, don't swing, looks like a good or bad pitch, etc." shall be given by coaches or spectators. Violations of this rule will result in a warning the first time, and either an **out** or a batter given 1st base the second time.

The Fielder

1. First base will consist of a double base, half in fair territory and half in foul territory. On plays at first base involving the batter, the first baseman is to play the fair half, the batter is to touch the foul half. If the first baseman touches the foul half it will be deemed that she did not touch the base. If the runner touches the fair half, she will be deemed to have not touched the base. On plays where there is no play being made on the batter, the batter may use either part of the base. Once the batter has reached the base safely, only the fair half is used.
2. Interference: A runner will be called **out** if, in the opinion of the Umpire, she **PURPOSELY RUNS INTO AN OPPONENT** with the intent of dislodging a ball from the opponent's glove. The Home Plate Umpire's discretion shall prevail.
COMMENT: Our intent is to avoid bodily harm and runners should be advised to avoid stand-up collisions.
3. **NO FIELDER MAY BE POSITIONED ANY CLOSER TO THE BATTER** than is the pitcher. The fielders may not penetrate (charging) this distance except in the act of fielding the ball or making a put-out.
4. There is only one **ROVER** and she can be used as the 4th outfielder, or, she can play "in" as far as the edge of the grass. She cannot become an infielder or position herself in the infield.
5. During any inning, only **THE PITCHER AND ONE OR TWO OTHER PLAYERS MAY SWITCH POSITIONS** with each other. Such a move may occur only once per inning and it must involve the pitcher. Moves such as switching only the left fielder and right fielder without also moving the pitcher are not permitted. In the event of an injury to a defensive player, she may be replaced by a bench player or a field player, but no more than 4 players including the injured player may change positions. (The bench counts as a position.)

The Runner

1. Once the pitcher starts the pitching motion, the **BASE RUNNER CANNOT LEAVE THE BASE** until the ball is hit (fair or foul). If she does, she will be called **out**. **No warning will be given.**

2. Interference: A runner will be called **out** if, in the opinion of the Umpire, she **PURPOSELY RUNS INTO AN OPPONENT** with the intent of dislodging a ball from the opponent's glove. The Home Plate Umpire's discretion shall prevail.

COMMENT: Our intent is to avoid bodily harm and runners should be advised to avoid stand-up collisions.

3. Play will be stopped (time called) when all runners have stopped running and the ball is in the possession of a fielder in the infield area. It will be solely the judgment of the umpire as to when **PLAY IS HALTED**. Runners who are off a base but not running will be sent back to the last base touched.
4. All runners must wear **HELMETS**. Any runner who intentionally removes their helmets while running will be called **out**.
5. A pinch runner is not permitted for the batter. Once the batter reaches first base, a pinch runner may be used for an injured player. The pinch runner shall be the player that made the last out. Should the pinch runner be needed before the first out of a game, the pinch runner shall be the last player in the batting order.
6. First base will consist of a double base, half in fair territory and half in foul territory. On plays involving the batter, the first baseman is to play the fair half, the batter is to touch the foul half. If the first baseman touches the foul half it will be deemed that she did not touch the base. If the runner touches the fair half, she will be deemed to have not touched the base. Once the batter has reached the base safely, only the fair half is used.

Protests

1. **NOTIFICATION OF PROTESTS** must be made to the Umpire and the opposition Head Coach **at the time of the alleged infraction**. Same notification must also be given to the League Director or Board Member within 24 hours. Protests will be reviewed and decided upon within 3 days by a Protest Committee consisting of the League Directors. The involved Head Coach and Umpire may also be asked to be present at the meeting - if the protester does not attend when asked to, the protest will not be allowed.

EXCEPTION: The use of an illegal player can be protested within 24 hours.

COMMENT: Protests cannot be made solely on the basis of disagreement with an Umpire's judgment.

Official A.S.A. Rules may be used as reference to govern any situation not covered by League Rules. Both Head Coach and the Umpire must confer/agree when this alternative is used.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Game Cancellations

When cancelling a Major League game, contact both ...

Umpire Contact Glenn Rump (412-443-3111)
Major League Director Jeff Ziegler (412-480-0410).

When cancelling a Senior League game, contact both ...

Umpire Contact Glenn Rump (412-443-3111)
Senior League Director Pete Damron (412-513-5027).

When cancelling a Junior League game, contact ...

Director of Umpires Joe Perveiler (708-268-1290) or
Charlotte Perveiler (412-956-0323).

Rescheduling

To reschedule a make-up game, email MLGSA Field Coordinator Mike Shanahan at mshany_2000@yahoo.com.