



MASON SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

Rules of Play



Section 1. General

- A. All league play in the Mason Softball Association (“MSA”) shall be in accordance with the Official Rules of Softball published by the Amateur Softball Association of America (“ASA”) in all applicable cases where ASA rules are not inconsistent with the MSA Bylaws or these Rules of Play (Rules). Registration in an MSA league will include registration with ASA and a copy of the ASA rule book. Questions of any rule interpretation shall be resolved at the sole discretion of the League Director unless otherwise required by these Rules.
- B. Only authorized vehicles will be allowed on the grassy areas of any game field.
- C. Consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited within the field of play or in the immediate area of any player’s bench or dugout area.
- D. Smoking is prohibited within the field of play.
- E. It is recommended that pregnant players refrain from playing softball for their own safety. Pregnant players should consult their physician prior to participation in MSA games.
- F. The League Director will make every effort to contact team managers regarding rainouts prior to game time. If no such contact is made, the umpires will make the determination at the field. Make-up games may be scheduled to occur after the regular season. Make-up games may be scheduled on the appropriate game day of the week or on another day as deemed practical by the League Director. When a rainout is declared, practice play shall not be permitted on game fields.
- G. A tie in end of season league records shall be settled by application of the following tie-breakers in order until a tie is broken:
 - 1. Playoff game to be played on the last day of play of the regular season schedule or on the same day of the week one week after the end of the regular season schedule, subject to weather and the discretion of the League Director.
 - 2. Head-to-head competition between the tied teams during regular season games.
 - 3. Lowest total runs allowed in regular season games.
 - 4. Highest total runs scored in regular season games.
 - 5. Coin toss.

Section 2. Team Registration & Classification

- A. A division spot will be granted to a team that played in that division of MSA the previous year provided the team is found to be in good standing, meaning in compliance with these rules and current in payment of fees to MSA, and provided the required registration materials and fees are submitted to the League Director by the prescribed deadline for returning teams. Returning teams from other divisions in the previous year found to be in good standing will be given priority for a division spot over non-returning teams if the required registration materials and fees are appropriately submitted to the League Director. Division spots for non-returning teams will be granted at the discretion of the League Director on a first-come first-served basis if the required registration materials and fees are appropriately submitted to the League Director. Payment of a deposit may be required to secure a division spot. The League Director may extend the deadline for accepting teams if such an extension is deemed to serve the best interests of MSA.



MASON SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

Rules of Play



B. Team Roster.

1. Number of Players: Each team roster shall consist of a minimum of 10 eligible players. There shall be no limit to the maximum number of players allowed on a team however MSA will provide a maximum of 20 individual awards to any team, including requests for individual awards for sponsors. All players and team managers shall be required to sign a liability waiver on a form provided by MSA.
2. Men Upper Division Players on Lower Division Teams: A men's lower division team roster may include no more than three players who are also included on any MSA men's upper division team roster from the current calendar year. A team shall forfeit any game played while that team's roster is in violation of this subsection and may be required to pay prescribed forfeit fees for said game(s).

- C. Team classification and division assignment shall be determined at the discretion of the League Director with consideration given to team preference and prior team records. Teams will be notified in writing by the League Director if a change in classification and/or division assignment for the team is being considered for future participation by the team in MSA league play. A decision by the League Director to change the classification and/or division assignment of a team may be appealed to the Executive Committee in writing within seven days of notification.

Section 3. Player Eligibility

- A. Players shall be a minimum of 16 years of age on May 1 of the league year. Any player under 18 years of age shall obtain the signature of a parent or legal guardian on the liability waiver form.
- B. Team managers are responsible for keeping their team roster and liability waiver forms updated throughout the season.
- C. No player shall be eligible to participate in MSA league play unless a properly completed liability waiver form has been submitted as required by the League Director and these rules.
- D. Adding Players to Roster. A player may be added to a team roster only upon submission of a properly completed liability waiver form and if such addition is in compliance with these rules. Players added after the last Friday in June, or after the MASA District 11 classification meeting, whichever comes first, shall not be eligible for inclusion on the state ASA roster for the associated team. A fully completed liability waiver form signed by the player shall be submitted either to the League Director or to the umpire at the field prior to the player participating in a game. EXCEPTION: After the third Friday in June for summer play, or the third Friday in September for fall play, player additions at the field shall be limited to one (1) player per game day. Player additions of more than one (1) per game day must be approved by the League Director in advance. The League Director may adjust the exception timing for summer or fall play to address scheduling issues due to weather or other events.
- E. Players can participate with more than one team in MSA league play provided the teams are not in the same division of play and a properly completed liability waiver form is submitted for each team as required by the League Director and these rules.
- F. A player on the roster of a team that wishes to change to the roster of another team in the same division shall obtain a written release from their current team manager. If the written release is denied, the League Director may authorize the team change upon written request by the requesting player.
- G. Penalties. A team shall forfeit any game during which an ineligible player under these rules participates and may be required to pay prescribed forfeit fees for said game. Any player who participates in a game in violation of this section may be disqualified from participating in any MSA games scheduled for the remainder of the week of the violation plus the following week. Should any game during the



MASON SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

Rules of Play



disqualification period be rescheduled for any reason, the disqualification period may be extended through the next scheduled game after the current disqualification period. Should the disqualification period, or a portion thereof, occur when no MSA games are scheduled, the disqualification period, or portion thereof, may be extended through the next scheduled MSA game in which the subject player is on a roster.

Section 4. League Fees

- A. The Executive Committee shall annually establish the amounts for MSA fees including, but not limited to, the following:
1. Team Fee
 2. Forfeit Deposit
 3. Forfeit Fee
 4. Late Fee
 5. NSF Check Fee
 6. Umpire Compensation (one-man)
 7. Umpire Compensation (two-man)
- B. All team fees shall be paid to the League Director by the stated deadline unless arrangements are made with the League Director in advance. If all fees due are not paid per this rule the team will not be allowed to play.
- C. Forfeit.
1. Each team shall pay a refundable forfeit deposit in addition to the team fee. The unused balance of the forfeit deposit will be refunded after completion of league play.
 2. A forfeiting team will be charged a forfeit fee equal to the total umpire compensation in the forfeited game. If a team manager informs the League Director prior to noon on game day that their team will forfeit, the forfeit fee will be reduced to 50% of the umpire compensation in the forfeited game.
 3. A forfeit fee is to be paid to the League Director prior to the next scheduled game of the forfeiting team that is not on the same day as the forfeited game or the team will not be allowed to play and another forfeit shall be declared.
 4. A team with more than two forfeits in a season risks losing eligibility to play in MSA leagues.
- D. There will be a charge for a non-sufficient funds (NSF) check written to MSA. Payment of the fee covered by the NSF check and the NSF charge shall be made to the League Director prior to the next game played by the team or a forfeit shall be declared. This charge will be deducted from the forfeit deposit unless paid to the League Director.

Section 5. Game Rules

- A. Time Limit. Games will be scheduled for seven innings with a 60 minute time limit. Any inning started before the expiration of the time limit shall be completed.



MASON SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

Rules of Play



1. If a game is tied after completion of seven innings, additional full innings shall be played until a winner is determined or the time limit is reached.
 2. If a game is tied after expiration of the time limit, one additional full inning shall be played in accordance with the ASA Tie Breaker Rule, Rule 5, Section 11, and the game will end after that inning.
 3. Umpires shall encourage players to clear and take the field in a timely manner. The umpire retains full discretion to add time to the 60 minute time limit due to significant delays caused by injury, field equipment problems, or the failure of any player to promptly leave or take the field as appropriate. If time is to be added, the umpire shall inform both team managers of the amount of time added.
- B. Forfeit. Scheduled game time is forfeit time. Umpires may delay game start up to fifteen minutes because of adverse weather or field conditions.
- C. Warm-up Area. Teams shall use only the designated areas for player warm-up before and during a game. The designated warm-up areas shall be beyond first and third bases in the out of play area or outside the outfield fence.
- D. Line-up Card. Line-up cards must be submitted to the home plate umpire prior to game time on a line-up card form approved by the League Director. Repeated violation of this rule may result in forfeit at the discretion of the League Director.
- E. Scorekeeping. Teams are encouraged to keep the game score. The home plate umpire will maintain the official score and will verify the score with both teams at the end of each half-inning. The umpire shall defer to the home team scorebook in the event of a dispute as to the number of runs scored in each half-inning unless the umpire determines the home book is in error or unless the umpire designates the visiting team scorebook as official prior to the game beginning.
- F. Inclement Weather.
1. Umpires shall apply the principals and guidelines of the ASA Safety Awareness Guide in the assessment of, and reaction to, field and weather conditions and shall retain sole discretion to suspend or end a game. Umpires shall note on the scorecard the actions taken (suspension, call game) including the time of their decision and the game score.
 2. If a game is ended due to inclement weather or unsafe playing conditions prior to the game becoming a legal complete game, a make-up game, if scheduled, will be played as a new complete game with a new line-up permitted.
- G. One & One Count. Batters will start each at-bat with a one ball and one strike count. One grace foul ball will be allowed when the batter has two strikes.
- H. Extra Player (EP).
1. Men (all), Coed Upper. An EP can be utilized as per ASA rule with the following exceptions:
 - a. A team may continue to play by the shorthanded player rule.
 - b. A coed team must use both an extra male and female player.
 2. Coed Lower. A maximum of 20 batters may be included in a batting lineup except that only an even number of batters of alternating sexes is allowed if the number of batters is more than 10.



MASON SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

Rules of Play



- I. Shorthanded Player Rule. Per ASA Rule 4, Section 1-D with the following exceptions:
1. To start a game:
 - a. Teams may play shorthanded per ASA rule except that a team may start play with a minimum of eight players.
 - b. Coed: There shall be no more than five male players or more than five female players when playing shorthanded. An out shall be recorded when a vacant position in the batting order is scheduled to bat.
 - c. Men & Women: No out will be recorded when a vacant position in the batting order that existed at the start of the game is scheduled to bat and there is no physically capable and eligible substitute present at the field.
 2. To continue a game:
 - a. Teams may play shorthanded per ASA rule except that a team may continue play with a minimum of eight players, including ejections, regardless of the number of players that start the game. An out shall be recorded when a vacant position in the batting order that did not exist at the start of the game is scheduled to bat.
 - b. Coed: There shall be no more than five male players or more than five female players when playing shorthanded.
- J. Mercy Rule. Per ASA Rule 5, Section 9-A-3a.
- K. Courtesy Runner (CR). A Courtesy Runner (CR) may be used for any runner on base per ASA Rule 8, Section 9-B-2 and per ASA Rule 8, Section 9-C with the exceptions noted in this subsection. In Coed play, the CR must be of the same sex as the player replaced and one CR of each sex may be used per inning. A CR may not be replaced for any reason other than obvious injury. A CR replaced due to obvious injury shall not be allowed to participate in any capacity for the remainder of the game.
- L. Player Number. Player identification by number is encouraged. Uniforms are not required but players are urged to dress similarly. There shall be no duplication of player numbers on a team.
- M. Home Run Rule. The following shall apply to any over the fence home run.
1. The batter and base runners are not required to run out a home run.
 2. Coed Lower division: One (1) unassisted home run per game shall be allowed. Any subsequent unassisted home runs shall result in a dead ball and the batter being called out.
 3. Men Lower division: Home runs will be allowed in compliance with a "1-up" home run rule. At any time a team has hit one more unassisted home run than the opposing team, any subsequent unassisted home run shall be declared an out until the opposing team hits at least one unassisted home run. Home runs declared outs shall not be counted for purposes of this rule.
 4. Men Upper and Coed Upper divisions: Home runs will be allowed in compliance with a "3-up" home run rule. At any time a team has hit three more unassisted home runs than the opposing team, any subsequent unassisted home run shall be declared an out until the opposing team hits at least one unassisted home run. Home runs declared outs shall not be counted for purposes of this rule.



MASON SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

Rules of Play



- N. Out Of Play Ball. A team hitting a home run or foul ball out of play shall make a legitimate effort to retrieve the ball as soon as possible.
- O. Vicinity Rule. The pitcher shall pitch from the pitching rubber per ASA rule or in accordance with ASA Rule 6, Section 1-B. The pitcher must come to a complete stop with the ball to define the start of a pitch.
- P. Bats. Any bat used in MSA play shall meet all ASA specifications and requirements.
1. Illegal Bats: A player who uses a bat that is not a certified ASA slow pitch softball bat or that is otherwise not in compliance with ASA requirements, and is also not considered a Non-Approved or Altered bat as defined in this subsection (O), shall be declared out for the at bat.
 2. Non-Approved Bats: A player who uses a bat listed on the ASA Non-Approved Bat list shall be declared out, ejected from the game and disqualified from participating in any MSA games scheduled for the remainder of the week of the violation plus the following week. Should any game(s) during the disqualification period be rescheduled for any reason, the disqualification period shall be extended to include an equivalent number of succeeding games. Should the disqualification period, or a portion thereof, occur when no MSA games are scheduled, the disqualification period shall be extended to include an equivalent number of games in which the subject player is on a roster. The penalty for a second violation of this rule shall be disqualification from MSA play for twelve (12) months starting the day after the violation. A third violation shall result in lifetime disqualification from MSA play.
 3. Altered Bats: A player who uses an Altered bat shall be declared out, ejected from the game and disqualified from participating in any MSA games scheduled for the remainder of the week of the violation plus the following two (2) weeks. Should any game during the disqualification period be rescheduled for any reason, the disqualification period shall be extended to include an equivalent number of succeeding games. Should the disqualification period occur when no MSA games are scheduled, the disqualification period shall be extended to include an equivalent number of games in which the subject player is on a roster. The penalty for a second violation of this rule shall be disqualification from MSA play for twelve (12) months starting the day after the violation. A third violation shall result in lifetime disqualification from MSA play.
 4. Appeal: A player who believes a bat has been inappropriately deemed Non-Approved or Altered may appeal this decision to the League Director. The appeal must be made to the umpire making the determination prior to the next batter entering the batter's box. If an appeal is made the umpire shall immediately take possession of the bat in question and deliver it to the League Director, or a designee, as soon as possible. The player shall also pay a fee to MSA equivalent to the Forfeit Fee. The League Director, or a designee, shall examine the bat, including appropriate testing if necessary. If it is determined that the bat was inappropriately deemed Non-Approved or Altered, the bat and fee will be returned to the player and player disqualification for games following the day of the alleged violation will be rescinded. An appeal shall have no impact upon penalties assessed on the day of the alleged violation but additional disqualification shall not be immediately enforced. If the determination of the umpire is upheld on appeal, the disqualification period will be reinstated beginning on the day after the decision on the appeal.
- Q. Player Ejection. The League Director shall be notified by the umpire of any player ejection, including the player's name and a brief description of the circumstances involved. If a player is ejected from a game for unsportsmanlike conduct, said player shall also be disqualified from the next game played by their team. If an ejection for unsportsmanlike conduct occurs after a game is complete, the ejected player shall be disqualified from the next two (2) games played by their team. The League Director shall investigate the matter and shall determine if additional disciplinary action is warranted as well as the details of such disciplinary action. Such additional disciplinary action may include disqualification from playing in additional games. If a conflict of interest exists for the League Director in dealing with the ejection, the



MASON SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

Rules of Play



Umpire-in-Chief (UIC) shall make the determination on additional disciplinary action. If a conflict of interest exists for both the League Director and UIC in dealing with the ejection, the MSA President shall make the determination on additional disciplinary action. If a conflict of interest exists for the League Director, UIC, and MSA President in dealing with the ejection, the members of the MSA Executive Committee who do not have a conflict of interest shall make the determination on additional disciplinary action by majority vote. Any decision on additional disciplinary action under this rule shall be considered final.

- R. Each team shall pay the umpires prior to game time in accordance with Section 6(C) of these rules.
- S. Each team is responsible for picking up all trash, equipment, and other items from their bench area prior to leaving that area. Trash is to be disposed of properly. Repeated violation of this rule may result in a \$20 fee being charged to the offending team to be paid in the same manner as a forfeit fee.
- T. Noise. The use of artificial noisemakers, air horns or electronic amplifiers on site during a game by players, coaches, or spectators is prohibited. For the purpose of this rule, the playing field, dugouts, parking lots, spectator areas and surrounding grounds are considered to be on site. Further, any complaint by a player involved with the game shall be sufficient to determine that the noise that is complained about is in violation of this rule. The penalty for violation of this rule shall be ejection for unsportsmanlike conduct. The umpire shall have sole discretion in determining who is subject to an ejection for violation of this rule.
- U. Steel Cleats. Steel cleats will not be allowed in any division of play.

Section 6. Umpires

A. Umpire Duties.

1. Umpires are representatives of the League Director and Executive Committee and as such are authorized and required to enforce these rules.
2. Umpires shall be responsible for opening appropriate buildings and storage areas and for properly positioning bases on the game field prior to game time. Umpires shall be responsible for returning bases to appropriate storage area and locking buildings and storage areas upon completion of games scheduled that day.
3. Umpires shall maintain a record of game score on the scorecard provided and shall verify the score with both teams at the end of each half inning. Completed scorecards shall be handled in the manner prescribed by the League Director.
4. Umpires shall attend the summer league manager's meeting or a designated umpire meeting as established by the League Director or Umpire-in-Chief for the purpose of assuring familiarity with MSA rules.
5. Umpires shall provide and utilize a timing device for tracking the running game time. Use of clock or watch time shall not satisfy this requirement. The timer must be capable of at minimum a 60 minute countdown and should be equipped with an audible alarm upon expiration of the set time.
6. Umpires shall conduct a meeting with team managers prior to the game to discuss ground rules, exchange line-up cards, designate the official scorebook, and discuss any other pertinent matters. If the teams are scheduled to play each other in a double-header, the meeting prior to the second game shall be at the discretion of the umpire.



MASON SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

Rules of Play



7. Umpires shall report to the League Director and Umpire-In-Chief on any ejection or questionable player conduct.

B. Umpire Pay.

1. Umpires shall be paid at the field by the teams scheduled to play prior to game start. Each team shall be responsible for ½ of the cost of umpires for the game.
2. Failure by a team to pay for umpires may result in declaration of a forfeit by that team at the discretion of the umpire(s).
3. If an umpire arrives late to a two-umpire game assignment and the game has progressed past the end of the second inning, the umpire shall be paid half of the normal umpire rate for the game unless both managers agree to continue the game with one umpire.
4. An umpire working alone for a full game which had been scheduled as a two umpire game shall receive payment at the one umpire rate.
5. If a game cannot be started due to inclement weather or unsafe field conditions, the umpires shall return to the teams any money collected and MSA shall pay the umpires for the game. If the first scheduled game of the day is cancelled due to inclement weather or unsafe field conditions after 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the game, umpires shall be paid by MSA.
6. Suspended Games: If a game is started and then suspended the umpires shall retain the payments from each team. If the game is suspended due to inclement weather or unsafe field conditions, MSA shall cover the cost of umpires for any make-up game. If a game is suspended for any other reason the League Director shall determine if a make-up game will be scheduled and if the teams will be required to cover the cost of umpires for the make-up game.
7. Umpires shall not be entitled to pay for any game scheduled to be played after a cancelled or suspended game if such subsequent games are also cancelled at the time of cancellation/suspension of the original game.
8. Playoff Games: Teams playing in any playoff game shall be responsible for payment of umpires as if the game were a regularly scheduled game.

Section 7. Blood Rule

- A. Whenever a player suffers a wound where oozing or bleeding occurs the game will be stopped by the umpire at the earliest possible time and the player will leave the field of play to cover the wound. Play will resume after the wounded player has left the field with replacement of the wounded player handled as follows:
 1. Defensive Player.
 - a. Team may substitute following ASA rules. Return of the wounded player must be in accordance with ASA rules.
 - b. Team may play without the player with no penalty until the player is allowed to return in compliance with this rule.



MASON SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

Rules of Play



2. Offensive Player.
 - a. While Batting:
 - 1) Team may substitute following ASA rules. Return of the wounded player must be in accordance with ASA rules.
 - 2) Team may skip the spot in the batting order for one inning without a penalty, after which a substitution must be made following ASA rules. For coed play the batter immediately following the skipped batter shall also be skipped.
 - b. While On Base:
 - 1) Team may substitute following ASA rules. Return of the wounded player must be in accordance with ASA rules.
 - 2) Team may replace the player with next available player of same sex moving backwards in batting order as an additional Courtesy Runner for one inning, after which a substitution must be made following ASA rules.
- B. Sufficient treatment of a wound consists of cleaning the wound and surrounding area of all bodily fluids and covering the area with some form of bandage or wrap. If the bleeding or oozing is visible on any portion of clothing then that clothing must either be removed, replaced, or covered securely. If any bodily fluid can be seen the wound will not be considered sufficiently treated.
- C. A wounded player must either return to the game with the wound sufficiently treated or be replaced by a substitute in accordance with this rule within 10 minutes. If a substitute is not available, continuation of the game shall be subject to the Shorthanded Player Rule, Section 5(1)(2), in these Rules.