

# **Marion Senior Softball Association**

## **Softball Rules**

Revision Date 03/12/26

Changes from last document highlighted in yellow

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## **1. Membership Requirements:**

### **A. Age**

To be a member of the fifty and over league, a player must be at least 50 years old by December 31<sup>st</sup> of the current year. To be a member of the sixty and over league, a player must be 60 years old by December 31<sup>st</sup> of the current year. To be a member of the seventy and over league, a player must be at least 70 years old by December 31<sup>st</sup> of the current year. Players that previously played in the 65 league are eligible to play in the 70 league along with any player that was eligible for the 65 league but was unable to play due to health reasons.

League officials may temporarily lower the age annually if necessary to have enough players. A player should be ready to furnish proof of age, such as a driver's license, if asked to do so. A birth certificate is required to enter sanctioned Senior USA tournaments.

### **B. Ejection and Reinstatement**

If a player is ejected from a game for any reason, in that league, the player will miss the remainder of that game, plus the next game. Should the game be completed before a player is ejected that player will miss the next two games. Before being permitted to participate in another contest, the player will be reviewed by the Association Board to determine the acceptability to re-enter the league. If deemed acceptable by the Board, the player must pay a \$25 ejection fee to the Treasurer or authorized representative of Marion Senior Softball Association before playing any game in any league. A player has a right to provide a written request to appeal the decision to the league president within 48 hours. An appeal committee will review the request.

### **C. Player Liability Form**

A player liability form will be required to be signed by each player

### **D. Player Misconduct**

#### **Needed for 2 reasons:**

1. Consistency – So that we treat everyone fairly and equally
2. Sharing the distribution of consequences

<b>Tier</b>	<b>Violation</b>	<b>Immediate Action</b>	<b>Sub Committee Review/ Recommendation</b>
1a	Hurt or try to hurt a teammate, opposing player, umpire or league official to include but not limited to hitting, pushing, throwing a ball, bat, glove or hands	Ejection*	Yes
1b	Vandalism to field, dugout, press box, utility closet, bathroom, scoreboard, lights, poles or fence	Ejection*	Yes
1c	Failure to comply with a verbal warning	Ejection*	Yes
2a	Language - using foul language and/or cursing at another player or umpire	Verbal Warning	Yes
2b	Language - excessive and/or persistent arguing with the umpire	Verbal Warning	Yes
2c	Language - slip of the tongue	Verbal Warning	Yes
2d	Throwing a bat without intention to injure	Verbal Warning	Yes
3a	Lying about age		Yes
3b	Tampering with opposing team members concerning dates, times, and availability of games		Yes
3c	Failure to get a team member in the game for a minimum of 3 innings.		Yes
<b>Note</b>	<b>* An Ejected Player must leave the playing area</b>		

<b>Penalty Options</b>	<b>Penalty Description</b>
1	Ejection with referral to the city prosecutor for possible charges
2	Lifetime suspension
3	Indefinite suspension
4	Definite suspension
5	Immediate action is sufficient
6	Verbal Warning
7	Verbal Correction ( pep talk, reminder )
8	Coach and Umpire Conference

## **From Pages 201, 202 of the 2023 USA Official Rules of Softball**

What types of conduct might subject a USA Softball Member to discipline and ineligibility?

- Unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Physical violence, such as an attack on an umpire, tournament official or participant immediately preceding, during or immediately following a game or arising out of USA Softball Activities.
- Commission of fraud, such as playing under an assumed name, falsifying an affidavit or roster or giving false information to tournament officials.
- Participating when they do not meet the eligibility requirements of USA Softball.
- Knowingly competing with or against individuals or teams which are suspended from USA Softball play.
- Commission of any act while participating in USA Softball activities such as: failure to pay indebtedness, destruction of property, violation of state or local laws or any other acts that are contrary to the objectives and purposes of USA Softball or arising out of USA Softball Activities.
- Violation of USA Softball substance abuse policies and procedures.
- Forfeiting a game in championship play.
- Bullying, hazing, harassment, emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, and sexual misconduct (including child sexual abuse and sexual harassment) as defined by the U.S. Center for SafeSport's SafeSport program at <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/>.
- Interference with any USA Softball Hearing Process as cited in the Bylaws. Other misconduct that reasonably calls into question the participants suitability to participate in the applicable activity.

## **2. Player Selection:**

In order to play in the MSSA, a player must be drafted by, or allocated to, a team. Each year, on the second or third Sunday in March, a draft will be held to choose players for teams in order to distribute an equal number of players. All previous and new players will be a part of this pool. This should also result in fairly balanced teams.

## **A. Drafting of Players**

A coach from each team must participate in the draft. A representative from the Association will oversee the actual drawing. Coaches will make their actual player selections, in turn, as determined by the procedures previously set forth by the coaches. The coaches will decide before the draft how they are doing the draft for that specific league night. Each coach will be reminded to ensure they draft key positions that not all players can play, such as a pitcher, infielder, outfielder. Draft order of the teams will be in the ascending order (first to last) and then descending order (last to first).

## **B. Trading of Players**

After the draft has been completed, team representatives may trade players among themselves, contingent upon the approval by the other representatives present and the Association representative. No trades will be permitted after draft day.

Any player drafted by or traded to a team must play for that team only. If the player declines to play for that team, the player will have to wait until the next season to play. All exceptions must be approved by the Association.

## **C. Assignment of New Players**

Any players joining after the draft will be placed on a waiting list. When the number of players on the list equals the number of teams in that league, a mini-draft will be held to place those players on a team. The draft will be held in accordance with the wishes of the majority of coaches in that league. When the number of players on the list does not equal the number of teams in that league the President decides which team gets the after draft, sign-up fee paid, players or the President has the option of a mini draft. If, at any time, a coach decides he does not want any new players he should inform his league director and his team will be excluded from the mini-draft. For purposes of determining roster strength, a player who is injured but is expected to be able return during the season is still considered to be a member of his/her team. His/her absence is covered under the "borrowed player" rule, Section 5B.

## **D. Confidentiality of Draft**

The integrity and confidentiality of the draft and the evaluation information is vitally important. The manner and round in which any player was drafted is considered to be confidential information and, as such, is not to be divulged to any individual who did not play an active role in the draft.

### **3. Field Preparation:**

#### **A. Bases and Pitcher's Rubber**

The distance between all bases will be 70 feet. A double base will be used at first base. An extra base, called the Runner's Base, will be used at home. This base will be positioned the same as Home Plate, so that it will be 8 feet from the back tip of Home Plate to the back tip of the Runner's Base and 70 feet from Third Base. A marker, called a Designated Runner's Marker, will be used as the point from which a Designated Runner will stand and begin to run when the ball has been hit. This marker will be positioned to the right of and eight feet from the back tip of Home Plate, so that it will be 70 feet from First Base. All bases will be 70 feet apart. The Pitcher's Rubber will be placed 50 feet from the front of the rubber to the back tip of Home Plate. A mat will be behind Home Plate to help determine strikes and will measure 32 ½ inches long.

Home Plate will be considered part of the strike zone. Teams playing should check the distance of the Pitcher's Rubber to Home Plate, the distance from Third Base to the Runner's Base, the distance from First Base to the Designated Runner's Marker and that the Home Plate mat is the proper size.

#### **B. Commitment Line**

A continuous line shall be drawn from Third Base to the Runner's Base. A three foot line will be drawn across this runner's line midway between Third base and the Runner's Base. If a runner's foot touches or passes this line, he must continue to the Runner's Base and may not safely return to Third Base.

#### **C. Shallow Play Line**

An arc will be drawn from foul line to foul line in the outfield, 180 feet from Home Plate. If a team fields twelve players, at least five must remain behind this line, if a team fields eleven players, at least four must remain behind this line until the ball is hit by the batter. If a team has less than eleven players, at least three must remain behind this line until the ball is hit by the batter. Infielders must stay behind the base lines until the ball is hit by the batter.

#### **D. Authorized Ball**

One new 12 inch restricted flight softball, not to exceed .44 COR will be furnished by the Association at the beginning of each game.

## **E. Pitchers Protective Screen**

The use of pitching screen was added for safety of the pitcher in all 3 leagues and is optional for each pitcher. A portable 3 foot by 6 foot pitching screen, if available, will be utilized. The rules for its use are.

1. If the pitching screen is used it must be used for the entire inning.
2. The pitching screen will be placed approximately 3 feet in front of the pitching rubber and the left or right corner of the screen must be placed so half of the rubber is protected by the screen. The screen cannot be moved during the  $\frac{1}{2}$  inning unless pitchers are changed.
3. If the batter hits the screen, it is a foul ball.
4. If the defense throws a ball and hits the screen it is considered a live ball.
5. The commission highly recommends that a pitcher use the pitching screen or face protection at the players' discretion.

## **4. Equipment:**

### **A. Unauthorized Footwear**

Shoes with metal spikes or cleats will not be permitted to be worn while playing. If a player attempts to play or is found to be playing while wearing metal spikes or cleats, they will be immediately ejected from the game. Shoes must be sturdily constructed and of ankle height or higher. Flip-flops or sandals are not permitted.

### **B. Bats**

All bats used in MSSA play must bear either the ASA 2000 certification mark, the ASA 2004 certification mark, or the 2013 ASA certification mark as shown in the USA Rule concerning bats AND must not be listed on the USA non-approved list. The league can approve non ASA bats.

In addition, any bat, which is intended to be used in MSSA play, must be inspected prior to first use and approved by a member of the MSSA committee appointed for that purpose. Bats determined to be legal for use within the MSSA will have a sticker affixed on the bat by a committee member. If a batter uses an illegal bat after his/her turn at bat, the opposing manager can choose to take the result of the play or have the batter called out. The discovery of using a non-approved bat can be done any time before the next batter takes a pitch.

Senior Bats will be allowed in the 60 and 65 leagues and will be required to have a different sticker than the 50 league bats. In the 50 league when a player turns 58 he is eligible to use a senior bat. Women in any league are allowed to use senior bats. Starting in 2026 all bats used during a game need to be tested. Senior bats compression tested must be greater than 140 psi and ASA/USA bats must be greater than 220 psi. Each player can have 2 bats tested as part of the player fees and additional bats tested would be \$5.00 each. This would be done to ensure player safety. Bats will have a sticker stating the compression results initialed by Sam.

## **5. Playing Rules:**

### **A. Batting Line-up**

A normal team shall consist of a maximum of eleven players on the field when playing defense. When playing offense, the batting line-up will contain all players on the team roster who are present, willing and able to bat. Once the batting line-up has been submitted to the scorekeeper and the game has started, no players shall be added to the batting line-up unless they arrive late at the ball park. There is free substitution of defensive players from the batting line-up in any position. A player willing to play defense would play at least 3 innings of defense per game.

### **B. Borrowing Players ( Substitution Rule )**

**Purpose** – The purpose of this rule is to create teams that are fair, to eliminate penalty runs and to allow games to start on time.

**Eligibility** – Players who are drafted 6-9 in the draft are eligible to be subs for the league and will be contacted by a league commissioner if they are needed.

**Participation** – Each team will play with an equal number of players up to 11 players and substitutes will be used to make up the difference to make teams equal.

**Procedure** – Each team will have at least 9 players and a maximum of 4 substitutes will be used to make sure teams have an equal number of players. A team must have at least 5 players to start the game otherwise the team will forfeit. A MSSA commissioner will contact substitute players. Substitute players can bat anywhere in the lineup and can play anywhere in the field. If a team player does show up late for a game then he/she will replace the substitute player at the ½ inning.

### **C. Player Unable to Bat**

If a player cannot take his turn at bat for any reason, his/her name will be struck from the line-up and he/she may not return to the game. There is no penalty for this and any following players will move up in the line-up if no substitution is available. Once a player is skipped in the batting order no pickup players are permitted for that player. If both teams end up with 10 players there is no penalty out for either team.

### **D. Game Time Limit**

There shall be no time limit placed upon the completion of games. League games shall start at 6:00 PM for the 50 and 60 leagues and 5:30 PM for the 70 league. The Pledge of Allegiance will be said 5 minutes before the starting time. **Note:** Coaches need to have the lineup in before the game and a home team player will lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **E. Ball and Strike Count**

The batter will step to the plate with a one ball and one strike count. Every player must receive a pitched strike in addition to the initial one ball and one strike count. One free foul ball is permitted. A subsequent foul ball will result in the batter being called out on strikes. An **INTENTIONAL WALK** is when the pitcher points to the batter to take 1<sup>st</sup> base. Each batting position can only be intentionally walked once per game.

### **F. Inning Run Limit**

During the first six innings of play, a team may score a maximum of five runs in an inning. In the seventh and subsequent innings teams will be allowed to score an unlimited number of runs.

### **G. Mercy Rule**

If, after the completion of five (5) full innings by the losing team, the leading team is ahead by twelve (12) or more runs, or ten runs after six (6) innings the game shall end and the leading team shall be declared the winner.

### **H. Courtesy Runners**

MSSA Courtesy Runner rule will be the same as the USA Courtesy Runner rule. A base runner may ask for a courtesy player at any time and only the coach decides who is the courtesy runner and as usual an individual can only be used as a courtesy

runner only once in each inning. A walked batter can ask for a courtesy runner immediately and doesn't have to touch 1<sup>st</sup> base. The coaches should have a courtesy runner already assigned.

### **I. Partially Disabled Players**

It is the intention of the leaders of the MSSA to allow as many individuals as possible to participate in the game of softball. If there are individuals who desire to play but who have been diagnosed with a current medical condition, approved by the board, which may not allow them to be 100% physically capable of play offensively and defensively, allowances will be made for their condition on an annual basis. In addition if a player has a current injury the league commissioner can approve a temporary runner from home plate for the duration of the game.

If a player is able to bat, but unable to run, another player on that team will be permitted to run for that batter during the game. The Designated Runner (DR) will be as follows: In the 1<sup>st</sup> inning the coach would assign a runner and in subsequent innings the last willing and capable batter from the previous inning would be the runner. The runner will take his/her place at the Designated Runner's Marker when the partially disabled player comes to the plate to bat. The courtesy runner will remain standing upright and will not be allowed to take a crouching or sprinter's position when preparing to run. Any 75 year or older player can have a designated courtesy runner.

### **J. Commitment Line**

Once the runner has touched or passed the commitment line between third and home and if a defensive player touches any part of the strike mat with possession of the ball before the runner touches the Runner's Base, the runner will be ruled out. If the runner touches Home Plate, he will be ruled out. If the catcher tags the runner or touches the Runner's Base with the intent to put the runner out, the runner will be ruled safe.

### **K. Home Run Limit**

Each team shall be limited to three (3) untouched, over-the-fence home runs per game. Any home run hit over the fence in excess of the three (3) per game per team shall be ruled a single. Inside-the-park home runs shall not count toward the home run total for the team. **The Home Run differential rule will be in effect.** The

differential between the two teams playing will be three (3) home runs plus one (1) up. The home team **CANNOT** go up one (Home Run) in their at bat, beyond the 6<sup>th</sup> inning.

#### **L. Tie Breaker**

To break a tie each team starts the extra inning with a runner at 2<sup>nd</sup> base. The runner shall be the last batter from the previous inning that completed his/her turn at bat. No courtesy runner can replace the original 2<sup>nd</sup> base runner until he/she reaches 3<sup>rd</sup> base.

### **6. Standings:**

To determine position in the league at the end of the season in case of a tie, use the following criteria:

- a. Head to head competition where equalizer runs are included and if tied then,
- b. Run differential head to head where equalizer runs are included and if tied then,
- c. Flip of a coin.

### **7. Tournament Play:**

#### **A. Invitation**

If an invitation to a tournament is extended to our Association for less than the number of teams in the league, the teams at the top of the standings after the completion of play on the last Thursday in June will have first opportunity to participate.

#### **B. Backfilling of Tournament Roster**

In order to ensure that teams participating in a tournament have sufficient players to play, it will be possible for those teams to pick up additional players from non-participating teams in the league. The only restriction of backfilling a roster is that all of the players on the participating teams must be given the opportunity to participate prior to picking up any substitute players. It must be noted that restrictions put in place by the inviting league take precedence over this Section 7B.

#### **C. Classification of Tournaments**

Invitations to "Open" tournaments are deemed to have been made to the coaches of the individual teams rather than to the Association, therefore, the coaches of the invited teams, rather than the Association, shall determine which players will represent their teams in the tournament. The Association will set forth the manner

in which teams and players are invited to all other tournaments created and sponsored by the Association or tournaments in which the Association receives the invitation to supply teams for the tournament.

#### **D. End of Season Tournaments**

MSSA post season tournaments will use the following bracketing procedure for tournament play: the first place team will select first, the second place team will select second, third place team will select third and etc. A flip of the coin will determine the home team for the playoff games.

## **Revision History:**

1. 04/01/03 - Original Document (60's League)
2. 04/02/03 - Revision 1 (60's League)
3. 04/03/03 - Submitted and Adopted (60's League)
4. 03/08/12 - Original Document (55's League)
5. 03/11/12 - Revision 2 (60's League)
6. 01/20/13 - Combined 55 & 60 Leagues and included several rules additions/changes
7. 03/16/14 - Modified Rule 2C, 3C and 5B
8. 02/23/15 - Modified Rules 2B and 5K
9. 03/09/15 - Modified Rules 2A and 5B
10. 03/23/15 - Modified Rule 7D
11. 04/11/16 - Modified Rules 5B and 5E
12. 02/21/17 - Modified Rules 3C, 5B and 5E
13. 11/28/17 – Modified Rule 1A ( Added 65 league )
14. 11/28/17 – Modified rule 5G ( Mercy Rule )
15. 02/06/18 – Modified Rule 2C ( After Draft Players )
16. 02/06/18 – Modified Rule 5B ( Pick Up Players )
17. 02/06/18 – Modified Rule 5H ( Courtesy Runners )
18. 02/06/18 – Modified Rule 5I ( Partially Disabled Players )
19. 03/08/18 – Modified Rule 4B ( Senior bats )
20. 04/30/18 – Added Rule 1C – ( Player Liability Form )
21. 04/30/18 – Modified Rule 5B ( 10 to 11 players )
22. 04/30/18 – Modified Rule 5C ( Clarification )
23. 09/25/18 – Modified Rule 3A – Bases 70 feet apart
24. 09/25/18 – Modified Rule 5I – Added word Permanent and 80 year or older players
25. 11/27/18 – Modified Rule 5B – Borrowed players - 2 runs for 1<sup>st</sup> pick up player
26. 02/05/19 – Modified Rule 5B – Borrowed players and Rule 5J – home plate mat.
27. 11/26/19 – Modified Rules 4B, 5D, 5E, 6, 7C, 7D.
28. 05/18/20 – Modified Rule 5B ( Borrowing Players – Substitution Rule )
29. 06/09/20 – Modified Rules 3C, 4B, 5B, and 5C
30. 03/07/21 – Modified Rules 1B, 3C, 4B, 5I (Ejections, Shallow Play Line, Senior Bats, Runners)
31. 04/12/21 – Modified Rules 5B, 5H and added Rule 3E – Pitchers Protective Screen
32. 05/10/21 – Modified Rules 3E, 4B, 5C
33. 11/21/21 – Modified Rules 1A, 1B, 3E, 4B, 5B, 5I
34. 12/11/22 - Modified Rules 3C, 3E, 5A, 5B, 5E - 12 players defense, No free foul, Players play at least 3 innings defense, Eliminate need to have foot on pitching rubber when using screen.

35. 01/29/23 – Modified Rules 3E, 4B – Pitching screen requirement and senior bat changes
36. 03/20/23 – Modified Rule 5E – Added a free foul on 3<sup>rd</sup> strike
37. 04/24/23 – Clarified Rule 1A, Added Rule 1D – Player Misconduct, Modified Rule 3E, Corrected error on 5B and Modified Rule 5I
38. 01/29/24 – Modified Rule 3E ( Pitching Screen ) and Rule 5J ( Commitment Line )
39. 04/01/24 – Modified Rule 5A, 5B (11 Players), Rule 5D (Game Time Limit & Lineups), 5F (Texas Shootout Inning), 5H (Courtesy Runner), 5K (Eliminate Homerun Differential Rule), 6D (End of Season Tournament on weekends)
40. 02/10/25 – Modified Rule 4B so 58 year olds and above can use senior bats.
41. 03/12/25 – Modified Rule 2A to clarify drafting of players
42. 11/11/25 – Eliminated special rules that were implemented when we didn't have lights and and 65 league is now the 70 league.
43. 01/07/26 – Modified Rules 4B – Bat testing, 5I – courtesy runners for disabled players and added Rule 5L – Tie breaker.
44. 3/12/26 – Modified Rule 5B – Changed subs from 5-8 to 6-9 and maximum of 4 subs per game, Modified Rule 5I – added wording that courtesy runner must also be willing to run.