

MT. LEBANON GIRLS SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

OFFICIAL LEAGUE RULES SLOW PITCH

These rules pertain to all regular season and playoff games
(Last Revised: 03/18/25)

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mt. Lebanon Girls Softball Association is a non-profit organization committed to providing girls the opportunity to play softball as an organized recreational activity and in promoting good sportsmanship in all association sponsored activities.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to affirm the principles of the Mt. Lebanon Girls Softball Association (MLGSA) and set a baseline level of understanding for every coach involved in our program.

PREAMBLE

The MLGSA 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 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, consistently sitting one player more than others 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 coach's expected actions and behavior include but are not limited to: All players should have relatively equal playing time (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.

GAME RULES

1. Rules established by MLGSA, Inter-Community League and/or tournament organizer pertain to regular and playoff games.
2. If another game is scheduled for the same field, the game will be complete ten minutes before the scheduled starting time for the next game regardless of innings played or score.

Major League

- a. A complete game will consist of seven innings or if one team's score exceeds the other team's score by fifteen OR MORE RUNS after five complete innings.
- b. An inning shall consist of three outs or a maximum of nine runs scored, with no continuation, until the final inning.

Senior Leagues

- a. A complete game will consist of seven innings or if one team's score exceeds the other team's score by fifteen OR MORE RUNS after five complete innings.

- b. An inning shall consist of three outs or a maximum of seven runs scored, with no continuation, until the final inning.

Junior League

- a. A complete game will consist of six innings or if one team's score exceeds the other team's score by fifteen OR MORE RUNS after five complete innings.
- b. An inning shall consist of three outs or a maximum of five runs scored, with no continuation, until the final inning.

Instructional League

- a. A complete game will consist of four innings or if one team's score exceeds the other team's score by ten OR MORE RUNS after three complete innings.
- b. An inning shall consist of three outs or a maximum of four runs scored, with no continuation, until the final inning.

3. A game **INTERRUPTED BY BAD WEATHER, DARKNESS, TIME or OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES** will be a complete game if four innings have been played or if the home team leads after three and one-half innings of play. If four 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.

If lightning is heard or visualized during a practice or game, the coach or umpire will immediately halt and seek safe shelter for all players. The minimum waiting time from the last lightning strike is thirty minutes before play resumes. If a subsequent lightning event occurs, the waiting time of thirty minutes will start over. In games, the umpire has final judgment on when play will resume. No coach shall interfere with that decision.

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 two hours before game time.
 - b. If both head coaches agree that the game should not be played:
 - i. The **COORDINATOR OF UMPIRES** for your league must be notified before game time.
 - ii. The **FIELD COORDINATOR** must be notified so that the game can be rescheduled.
 - c. If both 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 fifteen 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.**

A **TEAM WILL CONSIST** of at least eight players and at least one adult coach who has been approved by the MLGSA board. Fewer than eight players by the forfeit time (See rule 5) or any time during the game is an automatic forfeit. The umpire will make this decision. No more than ten players may take the field on defense at any given time.

6. The home plate umpire and head coaches will decide, before the game, **GROUND RULES** relating to overthrows and batted balls consistent with field conditions.
7. The umpire can remove a player or coach from the game for temper tantrums, throwing equipment, swearing, or any other acts of **POOR SPORTSMANSHIP**. A head coach may remove his/her 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 brought to the attention of the opposing head coach. Head coaches are responsible for the conduct and performance of their players.

8. 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.

FIELD

1. Age specific field measurements and rules will be followed as established by MLGSA, USA Softball, Inter-Community League and/or tournament organizer.
2. **COACHES** are expected to drag and rake the infield after each practice and/or game.
3. **DISTANCE TO BASES:** Sixty feet measured from tip of home plate to the back of first base or third base and measured from the foul line to the center of second base.
4. **PITCHING DISTANCE:**
 - Major League
46 or 50 feet

 - Senior League
40, 43, or 46 feet

 - Junior League
35 or 40 feet

The distance from the pitcher's mound to home plate can be changed at the start of an inning. The distance can't be changed after a pitcher's first pitch in an inning. If the pitcher is replaced by another player during the inning the distance can only be adjusted prior to their first pitch.

5. The umpires and head coaches will decide, before the game, **GROUND RULES** relating to overthrows and batted balls consistent with field conditions.

EQUIPMENT

Equipment rules will be followed as established by MLGSA, USA Softball, Inter-Community League and/or tournament organizer.

Pitchers

- a. All pitchers are required to wear a softball fielder's face mask starting in the Junior League and continuing through the Major League.
- b. All pitchers are required to wear a softball chest protector / heart guard starting in the Junior League and continuing through the Major League.

Catchers

- a. All catchers are required to wear a softball catcher's helmet with a throat guard and chest protector.

Batters

- a. All batters are required to wear a softball helmet meeting NOCSAE® standards.

Base Runners

- a. All base runners are required to wear a softball helmet meeting NOCSAE® standards.

Cleats

- a. All players are prohibited from wearing steel cleats. Athletic shoes and Molded cleats are permitted.

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 THREE 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 are expected to wear their issued **TEAM UNIFORM**.
5. A maximum of three players per game may be **CALLED UP** in the **Junior League** and **Senior League**, and a maximum of five players may be called up for **Major League**. The following rules will apply:
 - a. Any players who are called up must be registered with MLGSA and noted on the line-up at the pre-game meeting.
 - b. Players called up must bat last in the batting order (excluding any late arrivals after the game starts). If only one player is called up to play, that 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 after the start of the game will enter the order behind the called-up player.
 - c. If multiple called-up players are present, and late rostered arrivals push the full line-up to eleven players or more, then all call-ups must share a single spot in the batting order. For example, if a team has eight rostered players and two call-ups, and then another rostered player arrives late pushing the full line-up to eleven, then those two call-ups must share a batting order spot, alternating plate appearances.
 - d. 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.)
 - e. A called-up player can't play in the field at the expense of a rostered girl. If late arrivals bring the total number of rostered players to ten or more, the called-up player is limited to a maximum of the required three innings in the field.
 - f. If one player is called up, she must play catcher or right field.
 - g. If two players are called up, they can only play catcher and right field.
 - h. 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.
 - i. If four or five players are called-up in the Major League they can only play: catcher, right field, right center field, left center field and left field.
 - j. At least five players from the team's roster must be present regardless of the number of players called up. Less than five players from the rostered team will result in a forfeit.

6. Players may be rostered on both MLGSA Slow Pitch and Fast Pitch teams simultaneously. If there is a scheduling conflict between the two leagues the player is expected to attend a game over a practice. A coach may make roster arrangements by calling up an eligible player per **MLGSA, INTER-COMMUNITY LEAGUE** and/or **TOURNAMENT** rules.
7. If a **PLAYER** is removed by a coach or umpire from a game, practice or team function for a code of conduct violation, at a minimum the **PLAYER** will serve a one game suspension for the first offense. A second offense will result in an indefinite suspension until the **PLAYER** is reinstated by the MLGSA Board. MLGSA will also enforce the established rules and disciplinary actions of inter-community leagues and/or tournaments. The removal or suspension of a **PLAYER** does not prevent a related **COACH, PLAYER or PARENT** from attending a game, practice or team function. Disciplinary actions shall be at the discretion of the MLGSA Board or its designee.

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 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 first base the second time.
5. **CONDUCT:** A head coach may remove his/her 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 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.

6. If a **COACH** is removed from a game, practice or team function for a code of conduct violation, at a minimum the **COACH** will serve a one game suspension for the first offense. A second offense will result in an indefinite suspension until the **COACH** is reinstated by the MLGSA Board. MLGSA will also enforce the established rules and disciplinary actions of inter-community leagues and/or tournaments. The removal or suspension of a **COACH** does not prevent a related **COACH, PLAYER or PARENT** from attending a game, practice or team function. Disciplinary actions shall be at the discretion of the MLGSA Board or its designee.

PARENTS

If a **PARENT** is removed by a coach or umpire from a game, practice or team function for a code of conduct violation, at a minimum the **PARENT** will serve a one game suspension for the first offense. A second offense will result in an indefinite suspension until the **PARENT** is reinstated by the MLGSA Board. MLGSA will also enforce the established rules and disciplinary actions of inter-community leagues and/or tournaments. The removal or suspension of a **PARENT** does not prevent a related **COACH, PLAYER or PARENT** from attending a game, practice or team function. Disciplinary actions shall be at the discretion of the MLGSA Board or its designee.

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 **Junior League**, once a pitcher has thrown ball 4 to any batter in an inning, the following rules will be applied:
 - a. A coach from the batting team will come into pitch the remainder of the at bat.
 - b. The batter will retain the number of strikes.
 - c. The arc of the pitch from the coach must remain.
 - d. The coach will have up to four pitches to complete the at bat.
 - e. If a pitch from the coach results in a swinging 3rd strike or any other out, the at bat is over and an out is recorded for the batting team, regardless of the number of pitches the coach has thrown.
 - f. If the batter fails to make contact with the ball on the fourth pitch, she will be out.
 - g. The umpire does not call coach pitches balls or strikes.
 - h. If the 3rd strike is fouled off, the batter continues to bat until the ball is put in play, she fails to swing at pitch four or greater, or the batter is out.
 - i. Once the batter's turn is complete, the pitcher may reenter the game for the next batter or another pitcher may take the mound.
6. In the **Major League**, there is no innings limit on pitchers. In the Senior League, a player may not appear in more than 5 INNINGS in a single game as a PITCHER. In the Junior League, a player may not appear in more than 4 INNINGS in a single game as a PITCHER.
7. Pitchers may be removed from the pitching position and then later reinstated as pitcher an unlimited number of times, provided they do not exceed the maximum inning limit.

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 Major 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.

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:** In order to prevent injury and protect the defensive, a runner will be called out at the discretion of the Home Plate Umpire if she impedes, hinders or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play. It may be in the form of physical contact, verbal distraction, visual distraction, or any type of distraction which would hinder the fielder in the execution of the play. **COMMENT:** Base runners should be advised to avoid stand-up collisions.
3. **NO FIELDER MAY BE POSITIONED ANY CLOSER TO THE BATTER** than 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 fourth 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. The rover cannot make a force out at a base by stepping on a base or catching a thrown ball to a base.
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 four players including the injured player may change positions. (The bench counts as a position.)

BASE 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.
6. **INTERFERENCE:** In order to prevent injury and protect the defensive, a runner will be called out at the discretion of the Home Plate Umpire if she impedes, hinders or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play. It may be in the form of physical contact, verbal distraction, visual distraction, or any type of distraction which would hinder the fielder in the execution of the play. **COMMENT:** Base runners should be advised to avoid stand-up collisions.
2. 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.
3. All runners must wear **HELMETS**. Any runner who intentionally removes their helmets while running will be called out.
4. 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.
5. First base will consist of a safety 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

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 within twenty-four hours. Protests will be reviewed and decided upon within three 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 twenty-four 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 canceling a **Major League** game, contact:

- Umpire Contact Jeff Zeigler (412-480-0410)
- Major League Director Pete Damron (412-513-5027)

When canceling a **Senior League** game, contact:

- Umpire Contact Jeff Zeigler (412-480-0410)
- Senior League Director Tom Wittman (412-480-8965)

When canceling a **Junior League** game, contact:

- Junior League Director and Director of Umpires John Naylor (412-726-0323)

When canceling a **Instructional League** game, contact:

- Instructional League Director Brian Owens (770-722-3681)

RESCHEDULING

To reschedule a make-up game, email MLGSA Field Coordinator David Gloss at davegloss114@gmail.com.