

MT. PLEASANT GIRLS SOFTBALL LEAGUE, INC.

*** NATIONAL LEAGUE RULES ***

1) PLAYERS - TEAMS - POSITIONS - BATTING ORDER - SUBSTITUTIONS

A) National League teams shall consist of girls enrolled in either the 5th or 6th or 7th grade as of opening day of the current softball season.

B) A starting team shall consist of 10 players in the following positions: pitcher, catcher, first base, second base, third base, shortstop, left field, center field, right field, and rover. The three outfielders and the rover must begin each pitch in the outfield grass and remain there until the pitched ball crosses home plate.

C) Should a team have less than 10 players present at game time, all will play and may play at any position assigned by their coach as long as there are always players in the pitching and catching positions.

D) There must be a minimum of 7 players present for each team at game time or the game will be forfeited by the team short on players. If a forfeit occurs, the winning team will receive 5 runs for the game. If a team knows in advance of game time that they will be unable to field at least 7 players, a forfeit can be avoided by contacting the League Representative at least 24 hours in advance of the scheduled game time and requesting that the game be rescheduled. The game will be rescheduled if the opposing team is available on the rescheduled date. The League Representative or a designated board member must coordinate the rescheduling process.

E) All team members present at game time will bat in an order designated by their coach. Once the game begins, the batting order cannot be re-arranged. If a player bats out of order, that player will be called out by the umpire. Immediately prior to the start of the game, coaches for each team will exchange batting orders.

F) A team member who arrives late to a game may be added to the end of her team's batting order regardless of how many innings she has missed. The coach of the team with the late arriving player must notify both the home plate umpire and the opposing team's coach of the addition to the batting order.

G) Free substitutions (allowing any player to return to any position in the field at any time) is allowed and encouraged. However, no player shall sit out more than 2 consecutive innings unless injured. Mt. Pleasant Girls Softball League is a recreation league that depends on girls feeling good about their accomplishments on the field so that they will want to play again the following year. Therefore, coaches are asked to plan ahead to ensure that this rule is complied with at all times.

2) GAME TIMES - DUGOUTS - TIE GAMES - CANCELLATIONS

A) National League games will be limited to a maximum of five innings of regulation play. A maximum of 5 runs scored will be allowed in each inning with the exception of the last inning where scoring will be unlimited.

- B) National League games will have a 1 hour and 15 minute time limit with the first game starting at 6:00pm sharp. The second scheduled game will start at 7:30pm or 15 minutes after the completion of the previous game if later than 7:30pm.
- C) The home plate umpire will call last inning following the final out of the bottom of the inning in which the one hour mark for game time is reached.
- D) The third base dugout will be used by the team designated as the home team on the league master schedule. The first base dugout will be used by the team designated as the visiting team on the league master schedule. If the league master schedule does not indicate which team is visiting and which is at home, the first team listed will be the visitors and the second team listed will be the home team.
- E) The League will supply both a home plate and base umpire.
- F) Each team will be allowed 5 minutes of infield warm up time prior to the start of the game, with the visiting team beginning 15 minutes prior to game time and the home team beginning 10 minutes prior to game time.
- G) A game will end and a winner declared if one team is leading another by fifteen runs after three innings or ten or more runs after four innings.
- H) In the event of a tie game after regulation play has concluded, additional innings will be played with the following special rules for the extra inning(s). Each team will begin their turn at bat with one out and a base runner on second base. The base runner will be the player that made the last out in the previous inning. There will be a maximum of 5 runs scored in the extra inning(s). Extra innings will continue until there is a winner or until a time limit of 1.5 hours has been reached; an inning will be finished if the home team is behind at the 1.5 hour time limit. No new inning will begin after 1.5 hours since the game has started (excluding weather delay time). If the game is still tied after the 1.5 hour time limit, it will be called a draw.
- I) All scheduled games will be played at their designated time unless rescheduled by the League Representative or a designated Board Member.
- J) In the event of inclement weather, a complete game will consist of 3 complete innings or 2 ½ innings if the home team is ahead. The decision on when to suspend or call a game due to bad weather shall rest solely with the Board Members on duty for that particular evening. Rainouts called prior to the start of scheduled games will be announced on radio station KILJ and posted on the League website, www.mpssoftball.com.
- K) The League Representative will reschedule rainouts as soon as possible.

3) PITCHING

- A) The pitching distance from the pitching rubber to home plate for National League is 35 feet.
- B) At the beginning of each inning or when coming into the middle of an inning in relief, a pitcher will receive 5 warm up pitches prior to facing her first batter.

C) No player may pitch more than three innings in a game. Pitching to as few as one batter will constitute one inning pitched. This rule applies to suspended games completed on a day other than the day on which they began. Exception: During extra inning situations, players may pitch unlimited innings, but not consecutive innings.

D) When delivering a pitch, the pitcher must start with the pivot foot in contact with the pitching rubber. A single forward step (only one) must be taken toward the batter. Fastpitch regulations state that the pitcher must push off of the plate with her pivot foot, and can only push and drag with her feet. One foot must remain on the ground at all times. A crow hop is an illegal fastpitch move in which the pitcher steps, hops or drags both feet off of the plate, and then replants the foot for a second push-off. Stepping backwards off of the pitching rubber as the first move in a pitcher's windup is also not allowed. A crow hop and a backwards step are both judgment calls to be made by either umpire with each instance resulting in the pitch in question being called a ball.

E) If the ball should slip from the pitcher's hand during her windup or back-swing, the ball is live, the pitch will be called a ball, and any base runners may advance at their own risk.

F) A pitched ball must pass through the strike zone and pass over any part of home plate for the pitch to be a strike. The strike zone is the area between the batter's shoulders and knees. No arch is allowed.

4) BATTING

A) Bunting is allowed.

B) If, when hitting a fair ball, the batter's foot touches home plate, the batter will be called out.

C) If a pitched ball hits the batter, the umpire will rule the ball dead and the batter will be awarded first base. The batter needs to make an attempt to avoid being hit by the pitch. This is a judgement call made by the home plate umpire. If the batter swings and the ball hits the batter (even in the hands), it is a dead ball strike, even if it rolls into fair territory. If the batter can't finish the "at bat", it will be considered an out and a decision will be made about the injured player as outlined in 4.E). Pinch runners for injured players is outlined in 5.L).

D) A batter may advance on a dropped third strike if first base is unoccupied with less than two outs at the time of the pitch or if there are two outs. If, in the judgment of the umpire, the batter does not begin her advance towards first base on a dropped third strike within a reasonable amount of time, the batter will be called out.

E) If an injured player is unable to take her turn in the batting order, the coach has two options. If the coach believes that his player may be able to complete at bats later in the game, the team can skip the injured player in the lineup by taking an out for that player's spot in the batting order. The player may then return to the game when she feels that she is able. If the player will be unable to continue in the game due to her injury, the coach may notify the home plate umpire and the opposing head coach that the injured player is being removed from the game. She may not return to the game and no out will be recorded for her spot in the team's lineup.

F) The infield fly rule is in effect for National League games. The Infield Fly Rule may be called by either umpire when there are either runners on first and second base or the bases are full -and- there are less than two outs -and- the batter hits a fair ball pop fly that does not leave the infield. The batter is out regardless of whether or not the pop fly is caught, the ball is live, and the runners may advance on the base path at their own risk.

G) If in the judgment of the umpire, a player throws a bat in a malicious or dangerous manner, both teams will be warned that any further similar actions will result in the offending player being called out.

5) BASE RUNNING

A) The distance between bases in the National League is 60 feet.

B) The batter/runner is encouraged to use the orange half of the safety base on her first attempt only at first base. Once the runner passes first base she must then use only the white half of the base. If a batter/runner does not use the orange half of the safety base and contact occurs with the defensive player covering first, the runner will be deemed to have been responsible for the contact. If a batted ball should make contact with the safety base, the ball is fair if it strikes any part of the white half and is foul if it makes contact with only the orange half.

C) A defensive player may only use the white half of the base when making a play at first except when receiving a throw on a dropped third strike where the throw is being made from foul territory on the first base side of the field. In this situation, the defensive player may opt to use the orange half of first base to record the out in order to protect the base runner advancing to first base from being struck from behind by a throw.

D) A base runner must maintain contact with the base they occupy until the pitcher releases the ball from her hand on a pitch. If the base runner is not in contact with the base at the release of the pitch by the pitcher, the umpire will immediately call the ball dead and the runner will be called out

E) A base runner may steal any base.

F) When a ball is overthrown on a play at a base, a base runner may advance at her own risk. If a throw leaves the playing field, all runners shall advance two bases.

G) If a fair batted ball becomes stuck in a fence, bounces over the outfield fence, or rolls out of the playing field, the batter shall be entitled to a ground rule double and all runners shall advance two bases. If a fly ball clears the outfield fence in fair territory without first contacting the ground, it is a homerun.

H) A 16' diameter circle will be centered around the pitching rubber. When the pitcher (it must be the pitcher) has both feet inside the circle and has possession of the ball, and only after all awarded bases have been touched, the runner(s) cannot advance unless played upon. If a runner has already rounded the base as the pitcher enters the circle with possession of the ball, the runner must either continue forward to the next base or retreat to the previous base. If the runner stops between bases, then continues forward, she will be called out.

I) Because ball four is a live ball, a base runner that has been awarded first base on a walk can continue running past first base and on to second and beyond as long as she does not stop between bases as described in Rule 5(H) above.

J) A base runner that is struck by or makes contact with a batted ball in fair territory will be called out.

K) For the safety of everyone involved, a base runner must slide into home plate on any close play. The umpires' judgment is the determining factor for whether or not a play is "close". If a base runner fails to slide on a close play, she will be called out. Coaches are asked to teach their pitchers and catchers to stand forward of the plate and make effective swipe tags instead of taking a collision/blocking position at home plate.

L) Pinch running for a base runner will be limited to injury situations only. If a base runner sustains an injury that may be aggravated by running the bases, she may be replaced by a pinch runner after she reaches base safely. The pinch runner shall be the last player in the team lineup to have made an out.

M) In order to make the game more time efficient, a courtesy runner may be used for the player that will be catching immediately following the team's at bat if there are 2 outs. The courtesy runner shall be the last player in the team lineup to have made an out.

N) A coach may not make physical contact with a base runner while play is in progress or the base runner will be called out.

6) INTERFERENCE - AGGRESSIVE PLAY

A) Fielder Interference – A fielder who is not directly involved in throwing, catching or fielding a ball in play, may not impede or otherwise interfere in any way with a base runner's attempt to reach a base. Should such interference occur, the base runner will be ruled safe at the base that she was attempting to reach. A fielder may not intentionally block the baseline in an attempt to tag out the base runner unless the fielder has possession of the ball. If the fielder intentionally blocks the baseline without possession of the ball, the base runner will be ruled safe. On such a play, both the runner and fielder should make every effort to avoid a collision for the safety of all involved.

B) Runner Interference – A base runner, who in the judgment of the umpire, interferes with a fielder's attempt to throw, catch, or field a ball in play, will be ruled out.

C) Overly Aggressive Play - As a recreation league, we discourage overly aggressive styles of play that may result in intimidation or injury. Each of the following instances and the resulting rulings may be called by the umpire if in his/her judgment the style of play was overly aggressive.

1. If in the judgment of the umpire, a pitcher intentionally attempts to hit a batter with a pitch, regardless of whether or not the batter is actually struck by the ball or not, both teams will be warned that any further similar actions will result in expulsion from the game for the offending player(s).

2. If in the judgment of the umpire, a fielder makes a tag on or instigates contact with a base runner that was unnecessarily rough and could have led to intimidation or injury, the runner will be ruled safe and both teams will be warned that any further similar actions will result in expulsion from the game for the offending player(s).
3. If in the judgment of the umpire, a base runner initiates contact with a fielder that was unnecessarily rough and could have led to intimidation or injury, the ball will be ruled dead, the runner will be ruled out and both teams will be warned that any further similar actions will result in expulsion from the game for the offending player(s).

7) EQUIPMENT

- A) All equipment must be kept in the dugout.
- B) All players must wear closed toe shoes with laces tied. Soft molded, cleated shoes are permitted, but are not required. Metal cleats are not allowed.
- C) Helmets with a facemask must be worn by all batters, base runners, players in the on deck circle, and players coaching a base. If a base runner intentionally removes her helmet while the ball is in play, she will be called out. Inadvertent loss of the helmet will not cause the base runner to be called out.
- D) Once team shirts and/or uniforms have been issued, they must be worn by all players participating in a game.
- E) Shorts are allowed. However, if shorts are worn, the player must also wear padded sliding shorts and a sliding pad on the knee. Otherwise, baseball or other long pants must be worn.
- F) Catchers must wear a catcher's mask/helmet, chest protector, and shin guards any time they are playing behind the plate including practices, warm up, and games
- G) Coaches are asked to train catchers to leave equipment on between innings and to wear their shin guards in the on deck circle when there are two outs. Coaches should also instruct a substitute catcher to put on equipment as soon as the outgoing catcher returns to the dugout.
- H) The League advises players to remove all jewelry except medical alert ID. Players may also consider a band to secure glasses.

8) COACHES AND PLAYERS ON THE FIELD AND IN DUGOUTS

- A) Dugouts are for players and coaches only. Parents, siblings, and friends should watch the game from outside of the fence. Exceptions will be made for coaches' children who have no other supervision and are too young to be outside the fence on their own.
- B) Coaches must remain off the playing field when their team is pitching except during a timeout.
- C) Coaches must remain in the dugout or in the first- or third-base coach's box when their team is batting except during a time-out

D) All players must remain in the dugout when their team is batting with the exception of the batter, the on-deck hitter, any base runners, or a player coaching first or third base.

E) All players assigned to the bench while their team is pitching must remain in the dugout.

9) PROTESTS - APPEALS - CONDUCT

A) Time-out on the field can be granted only by the umpires and all requests for time-out must be routed through them.

B) A base running appeal must be made to the home plate umpire prior the next pitch. To appeal a play, the pitcher must have the ball while on the pitching rubber. She will then step off of the pitching rubber and inform the home plate umpire that she is appealing the play. The pitcher must then deliver the ball to the base where she believes that the appeal applies. The umpire will then rule the base runner safe or out. The home plate umpire may ask the field umpire for assistance.

C) Protest of a play by a coach must be made to the home plate umpire and the opposing coach prior to the next pitch. Judgment calls cannot be protested. The umpires and the coaches will settle any protest prior to resuming play rather than continuing to play in a negative atmosphere. The home plate umpire's decision is final. Board members on duty will only become involved for interpretation of rules.

D) Coaches are expected to be role models for sportsmanlike conduct. They are also expected to control their team and to not allow or participate in unsportsmanlike behavior and to assist the umpires and Board Members on duty in controlling the behavior of spectators and other persons at the softball complex. Derogatory comments or acts directed at umpires, opposing players, coaches, or spectators will not be tolerated.

E) If in the judgment of the home plate umpire the game is being negatively affected by an unresolved situation or unsportsmanlike acts by coaches, players, or spectators, the umpire will stop the game and confer with the coaches and Board Members on duty if necessary.

F) If the home plate umpire determines that coaches, players, or spectators are displaying unsportsmanlike conduct that is detrimental to the atmosphere of the game, the umpire has the authority to eject the offending person(s) from the softball complex. The incident will be reported to the Board Members on duty so that they can enforce the ejection. The full Board will review the incident as soon as possible to determine if further sanctions are required.

10) ALCOHOL - TOBACCO - LITTER

A) Alcohol and tobacco products are prohibited from the entire Mt. Pleasant Girls Softball League complex including the parking lot.

B) Teams are expected to cleanup after themselves. At the completion of a game, and prior to around their dugout. Coaches, parents, and spectators are urged to set a good example by utilizing the litter containers provided.

11) BLOOD AND OPEN WOUNDS - EMERGENCY CONTACT

A) A player or coach who is bleeding or who has an open wound or excessive fresh blood on their uniform/clothing will be prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment has been administered and affected clothing has been changed or adequately cleaned. If medical treatment can be administered immediately (i.e. – cover the wound with a bandage, wrap, or similar medically accepted covering) and there is not excessive blood on the uniform/clothing, the injured person may return to the game. The free substitution rule can apply if an injured player must leave the game to receive medical treatment and is subsequently able to return to the game.

B) The Mt. Pleasant Girls Softball League and its Board of Directors reserve the right to notify law enforcement and/or emergency medical personnel of any circumstance that they feel warrants such notification.