

## Mount Laurel Girls Softball 2017 Recreational League Playing Rules

Mount Laurel Girls Softball will play in accordance with NFHS (National Federation of State Seniors) rules except as subsequently noted in the following pages. All rules are meant to be enforced within the spirit of the game and should not be enforced literally when a literal enforcement of a rule conflicts with the spirit of the rule. All M.L.G.S games shall be played in accordance with these rules. Coaches may not deviate from these rules without the expressed consent of M.L.G.S.

### 1. Field

1-1. **Base Distance:** 60'

1-2. **Double First Base:** The fielders shall use the white portion of the base while making play on batter/runner. When running through first base, the runner shall use the orange bag. (Exception: When attempting to field errant thrown ball which pulls fielder off bag, or ball thrown from foul territory on 1B side, fielder may use orange portion and batter/runner may use white portion of double first base.) Fielders, batter/runners and runners may use either portion on any other play.

1-3. **Pitcher's Plate Distance:** Measured from back tip of HP to front of pitching plate.  
**Rookie:** 30'  
**10U:** 35'

### 2. Equipment

2-1. **Batter's Helmet:** Players must wear helmets with full face cage when at bat, on base, on deck (in "live ball" territory), or serving as a base coach.

2-2. **Catcher's Gear:** Catchers must wear a helmet, mask, shin guards, and chest protector. Catchers must wear approved catcher's helmet with throat protection or a hockey style helmet with extended throat protection. Players are not permitted to wear batting helmets while catching

2-3. **Fielder's Masks and Mouth Guards:** Fielder's masks are mandatory for all infield. Use of mouth guards is recommended for all others.

2-4. **Bats:** Only ASA approved softball bats shall be permitted.

2-5. **Balls:** The following balls shall be used for game play:  
**Rookie:** AD Starr DX5-11 or equivalent 11" safety balls.  
**10U:** AD Starr OA11.47 or equivalent.

### 3. Games

3-1. **Start Time:** Games shall start at the scheduled game time provided that both teams have the minimum number of required players present. The start of the game is the scheduled start time or the throwing of the first pitch (whichever occurs first). The home team should be on the field and in position to begin play prior to the scheduled game time. The start of the game may be extended no longer than 10 minutes to allow a team to satisfy the minimum number of players required. If each team has the required minimum number of players at game time, the start of the game shall not be delayed.

3-2. **Ground Rules:** Coaches shall meet with each other and the umpire no less than five minutes before the scheduled game time to exchange lineups and review the rules. If no umpire is present at the scheduled starting time, both coaches shall agree to appoint a substitute to officiate until an umpire arrives.

- 3-3. **Scheduled innings to be played:** 6 innings.
- 3-4. **Time Limitation:** After 70 minutes of play from the start of the game, or the scheduled start time (whichever occurs first) the current inning is finished and the subsequent inning shall be declared final inning. A new inning commences when the third out is called at the bottom half of any inning. The home team shall be responsible for monitoring time. A maximum 20 minutes may be added to time limit in event of weather delay.
- 3-5. **Official Game:** Games ending prior to scheduled number of innings played shall be considered official if 4 innings (3 ½ innings if the home team is ahead) are completed. Such rules for playoff games may be adjusted at the discretion of the division commissioner, and be announced prior to the start of any playoff tournament.
- 3-6. **Playing Conditions:** Division commissioners shall be responsible for postponing games due to weather or field conditions when able. In the absence of the division commissioner, the head coaches shall decide, in conference with the umpire, to postpone, suspend or end a game if field conditions, weather, or darkness, prevent safe play. If the head coaches cannot agree, the umpire shall be the final arbiter. Player safety must always be the top priority. If any game is ended after it has become official, the final score shall revert to the last full inning played, unless the home team is leading when the game is ended. If a game is suspended before it is official, the amount of time expired shall be noted and the game will be completed from the point it was suspended until the game is completed or the time limit expires.
- 3-7. **Lightning Advisory:** If visual flash of lightning is seen, the game shall be suspended immediately and may not restart until at least 30 minutes from the last observed flash of lightning.
- 3-8. **Final Inning Declaration:** Following the inning at which the 70-minute mark has occurred, the final inning shall be declared as the next inning. There shall be no run limit in final inning.
- 3-9. **Score Keeping:** Score books must be kept by both teams. **Rookie:** Score is only kept for your team to know batting order and how many runs have been scored in an inning. **10U:** Score keepers should compare scores at the end of each inning. If there is a discrepancy in the between the two books, the home team score book shall be recognized as the official book.
- 3-10. **Tie Games:** Tie games are official and shall be recorded, provided that the minimum numbers of innings have been played. Extra innings shall be played if teams are tied at the end of scheduled innings and the time limit is not exceeded. In the playoffs, extra innings will be played until a winner is determined. International Tie-Breaker rules will be used with last batter of the previous inning starting on 2<sup>nd</sup> base to begin all extra innings.
- 3-11. **Rescheduling Games:** Except for weather or field conditions, games may not be postponed or rescheduled in advance without the prior consent of the division commissioner. All postponed games shall be rescheduled as soon as possible in the next available time slot.
- 3-12. **Time Between Innings:** The time between half innings shall not exceed three minutes. The catcher shall be equipped and ready to take her position prior to the third out unless she is at bat or on deck. If the catcher is on deck with two outs, the catcher shall wear her shin guards. If the catcher is on base with 2 outs, she must be taken out for a courtesy runner, so she can start putting on her catcher's gear. The courtesy runner will be the last girl who recorded an out.
- 3-13. **Run Limitations:** Maximum 4 runs per inning. 10U Only: No run limit in scheduled or declared final inning.
- 3-14. **Batting Order:** A universal batting order (all players bat) shall be used. Lineups shall be exchanged prior to start of game. Any player arriving after lineups are exchanged shall be placed at the bottom of the order. If a player leaves the game for any reason other than ejection, that player shall be removed from the batting order without penalty. An out shall be recorded for any ejected player. If a player is removed from

the game because of injury or other reason and the player is subsequently able to return to the game, she shall be returned to her place the batting order.

#### **4. Players and Coaches**

- 4-1. **Permitted Player Areas:** All players not in the field, at bat, on base, on deck, or warming up outside “live ball area” shall always remain in the bench area during the game. This means no trips to the concession stand or sitting with parents during the game. Players are to remain with their team during the game. Pitchers shall warm up in designated areas only. Any player warming up a pitcher must wear catcher’s mask.
- 4-2. **Permitted Batting Areas:** No player shall be permitted to swing a bat outside of the “live ball area”, or designated on deck area. If the on-deck area is in “live ball” territory, the area shall be marked. Only one on deck player may be in the on-deck area and that player shall wear a batting helmet. “Hitting sticks”, or any other batting practice mechanisms operated outside of the bench area, are not permitted during games due to spectator safety concerns.
- 4-3. **Permitted Coaching Area:** The offensive team may have one first base coach along with one third base coach who shall occupy their respective base coaches’ box. If such base coach boxes are not marked, these coaches shall occupy the areas, which would normally constitute such zones. **Rookie:** Defensive teams shall have one defensive coach positioned behind the infielders and one defensive coach behind the catcher to get balls back to the pitcher. All other coaches shall remain in the bench area, outside the live ball area. **10U:** All defensive coaches shall remain in the bench area, outside the live ball area
- 4-4. **Permitted Spectator Areas:** Spectators are not permitted in the bench area or on the field of play at any time during the game except to attend to an injured or ill player.
- 4-5. **Conduct:** Players, coaches and spectators shall refrain from unsportsmanlike behavior at all times. Players, coaches and spectators shall treat all umpires with respect and courtesy. In the event of a disputed call by an umpire, the head coaches only, shall meet with the umpire to discuss calmly and discreetly. If an error in the application of the rules has been made, and the head coaches agree, they may remedy the mistake. Judgment calls are not to be disputed! Head coaches are responsible for the conduct of their players, assistants, and parents.
- 4-6. **Number and Position of Fielders:** (a) Teams shall play with 10 defensive players including 4 outfielders. All outfielders shall be positioned on the outfield grass at the time of the pitch. Outfielders are not permitted to tag out a runner or touch a base to force out a runner. Penalty: Play is dead and all runners are awarded the base that they were advancing to at the time of the infraction.
- 4-7. **Minimum Number of Players:** (a) Teams must have a minimum of 7 players to start game. Failure to field a minimum of 7 players after the 10-minute grace period from scheduled start time, shall result in a forfeit. If at any time during the game a team is unable to field the minimum number of players, that team shall forfeit. If any team has less than 9 players, that team shall borrow up to two players each inning from the opposing team in order to field three outfield positions. These shall be the last batter(s) due up at the start of the inning and must be placed in the outfield. In the event that such a player’s turn in the lineup approaches, she shall be replaced by one making the previous out in such an inning.
- 4-8. **Participation:** No player shall sit out a second inning in the field, except due to injury, until all other players have sat out at least one inning. No player shall sit out more than two innings during a game unless the player is injured. **10U:** Primary catchers who catch a minimum of 4 innings are exempt.
- 4-9. **Rotation:** (a) **Rookie:** Each player shall be rotated to multiple positions each game. No player may play a third inning in the outfield until all other players have played at least two innings in the outfield. No player shall play the same position for more than 2 innings in any game.

(b) **10U:** Each player shall play a minimum of 1 inning in the outfield and 2 innings in the infield each game. Primary catchers who catch a minimum of 4 innings are exempt from all rotation requirements.

### **5. Pitching**

- 5-1. **Requirements:** Pitchers at all levels shall demonstrate a basic proficiency commensurate with the appropriate division level prior to their being permitted to pitch in any game. The minimum skill levels for each division shall be established by each respective division commissioner. Those wishing to pitch are encouraged to attend free clinics offered by M.L.G.S. to help attain the minimum required standards.
- 5-2. **Legal Pitching Form:** All pitchers shall use legal pitching position as defined by ASA. Prior to delivery, pitchers shall take a position with both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate and hands separated. The pitcher must bring hands together to begin delivery. Penalty for an illegal pitch shall be enforced, if the pitcher is gaining an advantage. "No pitch" declared.
- 5-3. **Inning Limits:** The following innings limits per game shall apply. **10U:** Maximum 3 innings **Rookie:** Maximum 1 inning 1 pitch = inning. In the event of extra inning play, each pitcher may pitch one additional inning.
- 5-4. **Removal and Re-entry:** If a pitcher is removed from pitching during an inning, she may not return to pitch in that inning. Any pitcher who has previously pitched in the game, and is re-inserted into the game, other than at the beginning of an inning, shall not be afforded any warm up pitches. Any pitcher who has not previously pitched in the game, and is inserted into the game shall be afforded a maximum of 5 warm up pitches.
- 5-5. **HBP Limits:** Any pitcher who hits a batter with a pitched ball, 3 times in the same inning shall be relieved for the balance of the inning. The removed pitcher shall be permitted to return in subsequent innings subject to their inning limit. Any pitcher who hits a total of 5 batters in one game, shall not be permitted to pitch for the balance of the game.
- 5-6. **Base on Balls: When player is pitching:**
- The batter may not receive a base on balls. If the pitcher throws "ball four" to a batter, a coach from the offensive team shall relieve the pitcher.
  - The current strike count remains on the batter when the coach comes in to pitch. Umpires shall call balls and strikes on coach's pitches.
  - The coach must pitch from the pitching plate.
  - Coaches must NOT encourage players to wait until the coach takes over to pitch before swinging at pitches.
  - If the coach touches a batted ball, while pitching, the ball will be ruled dead and no pitch. All runners will return to their previous bases and the batter will receive another pitch.
  - No stealing is allowed while a coach is pitching.
- 5-7. **Coach Pitch:** While the coach is pitching, players occupying pitcher's position shall remain with one foot inside the pitching circle at the time of pitch. Coaches shall pitch from the pitcher's plate. No stealing while a coach is pitching. **Rookie:** The batter shall receive a maximum of 6 pitches from a coach during an at bat, unless a foul ball is called on the final pitch of the at bat. The batter is out after 3 strikes or 6 pitches. No called strikes shall be imposed.

### **6. Playing Rules:**

- 6-1. **General:** Unless stated in the following M.L.G.S playing rules, 2017 NFHS fast pitch softball playing rules shall apply.
- 6-2. **Look Back Rule:** LBR does not apply.

6-3. **Dead Ball:**

**Rookie:** The batter and/or runner(s) have achieved the maximum allowed bases. All runners who are off base, and less than half way to the following base when the ball becomes dead shall return to the last touched base. Runners who are more than half way to the following base shall be awarded such.

**10U:** The ball shall be dead when the ball is in control of the pitcher within the 8' radius pitcher's circle, and the pitcher does not attempt to make any further play. All runners who are off base, and less than half way to the following base when the ball becomes dead shall return to the last touched base. Runners who are more than half way to the following base shall be awarded such.

6-4. **Maximum Bases Allowed: Rookie:** The batter and all runners may advance a maximum of 1 base on any batted ball that remains in the infield, and 2 bases on any batted ball that reaches the outfield, either in flight or on the ground.

6-5. **Runners Leaving Base:** When the ball crosses HP. Any runner caught leaving their base early shall be called out without warning. In such cases, the ball is immediately dead, and no other action may occur.

6-6. **Base Stealing: Rookie:** Not permitted.

**10U:** Stealing limited to 2B and 3B. Runners who are off base and not permitted to advance on a steal are liable to be tagged out prior to returning to base. Maximum 1 stolen base per attempted steal

6-7. **Dropped Third Strike:** No dropped third strike application.

6-8. **Infield Fly Rule:** IFR does not apply.

6-9. **Batter Hit by Pitched Ball: 10U:** Any batter hit by a pitched ball, the ball shall be immediately dead and all runners must return to their bases. A coach from the offensive team will enter and finish the at bat as if the batter was walked. This does not count as a walk. If a team's pitcher (s) hits 3 batters in an inning, she must be removed for the remainder of the inning. Once a pitcher hits 5 batters in a game, they must be removed for the remainder of the game.

6-10. **Hit by Pitch Exceptions:** (a)The batter made no attempt to avoid being struck and the umpire determined that the pitch was easily avoidable. (b)The batter intentionally caused herself to be struck. (c)The batter was struck in the strike zone. If any of these occur, the ball is dead and no pitch is declared.

6-11. **Bunting:** Not permitted.

6-12. **No Collision Rule:** Runners are not permitted to collide with any fielder in possession of the ball, or where the runner has a clear path to the base/plate. Runners must slide, or otherwise avoid such collisions, or they will be ruled out. Malicious contact shall be subject to ejection.

6-13. **Obstruction:** Fielders without possession of the ball, may not block or impede a runner. In such cases, it is a "delayed dead ball" and umpire shall award base runner(s) according to standard NHFS rules. Note that runners are only protected to those bases which the umpire has determined the runners would have achieved had the obstruction not occurred.

6-14. **Catcher's Obstruction:** "No pitch" shall be declared in such cases.

6-15. **Runner's Interference:** Any runner struck by a batted ball that does not first touch a fielder shall be ruled out. The runner is out when contacting or impeding a fielder making a play on a batted ball. In cases where runner interference is called, the ball is immediately dead, the batter is awarded 1B, and all runners return to their previous base unless forced to advance.

6-16. **Overthrows: Rookie:** No advancement on overthrows. Girls are encouraged to throw to the appropriate base to try and get a girl out.

**10U:** Runners shall be permitted a maximum of 1 base on all overthrows from an infielder. Overthrows by balls thrown by outfielders are unlimited until the ball is controlled in the pitcher's circle by a member of the defensive team.

- 6-17. **Foul Tip:** A foul tip is defined as a ball that travels sharply and directly to the catcher's mitt and is legally caught. In all cases, it is treated as a strike and the ball remains live.
- 6-18. **Courtesy Runners:** A courtesy runner must be used for the next designated catcher with 2 outs. The courtesy runner for the catcher shall be the player making the previous out of the inning. Other courtesy runners are not allowed unless the batter/runner is injured or urgently needs to temporarily leave the game. The courtesy runner shall be the last player, not on base, who precedes the injured player in the batting order.
- 6-19. **Throwing the Bat:** Any batter carelessly throwing her bat shall be given a warning by the umpire. Such batter may be called out for any subsequent offenses.
- 6-20. **Charged Conferences:** A defensive coach shall be permitted to call time and conference with their pitcher, or any player(s) on the field, once per inning. A second conference shall require the replacement of the pitcher for the duration of that inning. Once the pitcher is replaced, a defensive coach shall be permitted an additional conference for that inning, with any additional conference forcing the removal of the pitcher. Conferences shall be limited to one defensive coach. A conference shall not be charged to attend to an injured player. An offensive coach shall be permitted to call time and conference with batter or runner(s) once per inning.

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