

## **MCSSA Softball Rules 2025**



### **MCSSA Morning Leagues Softball Rules**

## 2025 Rules Comparisons

<b>Rule</b>	<b>Mon. Morning Supinski 70+ Women 40+</b>	<b>Tues. Morning Ross Emerson 60+</b>	<b>Wed. Morning Co-Rec 70+ Women 40+</b>
legal Bats. (Rule 2.3)	Composite 1.20 Over 80 1.21	Composite 1.20 Over 75 1.21	Composite 1.20 Over 80 1.21
Home Run Limit (Rule 3.5)	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Minimum to avoid forfeit (Rule 5.2)	9	8	8
Lineup Substitutions (Rule 5.3)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of Defensive Players (Rule 5.6)	12	11	11
Time Limits (Umpires remains One inning after time limit.)	12 noon or 12:30	12 noon or 12:30	12 noon or 12:30
Tie Game After 7 innings in Game 1	No	Yes	No
Tie Game After 5 innings in Game 2	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mercy Rule After 5 <sup>th</sup> inning	12	12	12
Flip flop 10 run difference after 5 inning	Yes	Yes	Yes
Courtesy Runner from Home	Yes	Yes	Yes
Distance Between Bases (Feet)	65	65	65

## 2025 MCSSA Softball Rules

. All games shall be played in accordance with current Montgomery County Senior Sports Association (MCSSA) rules and those of the umpire association contracted to umpire each morning league schedule. The MCSSA Board of Directors will be responsible for developing schedules, establishing, and amending rules, protest resolution as well as procuring playing fields, establishing registration fees, and contracting umpires.

### 1. PLAYING RULES

1.1. All games shall be played in accordance with current Montgomery County Senior Sports Association (MCSSA) rules and those of the umpire association contracted to umpire each morning league schedule.

### 2. EQUIPMENT.

2.1. **SHOES.** Metal and screw-on cleats shall be illegal in all league games.

2.2. **BALLS.** The home team shall provide a new league-approved game ball and all backup balls for the first game of a doubleheader. The visiting team provides a new league approved ball in game two as well as all backup balls.

2.3. **WRONG BALL.** If it is discovered that the wrong size ball was pitched to a batter, the result of the last pitch shall be nullified, and the correct ball (whether men or women) substituted. If an at bat was completed with the wrong size ball and the error is discovered before the first pitch to the next batter, the batter who hit the wrong size ball will have the option of letting the play stand or beginning a new at bat using the correct ball.

2.4. **BATS.** Any bat, including composite bats, labeled BPF 1.20 certified by ASA (USA) or USSSA may be used by all players. Women, regardless of league, may use any bat.

2.4.1. A male player, reaching 75 years of age in the Ross Emerson League, and reaching 80 years of age in the Supinski and Co-Rec League, may use a senior bat, labeled BPF 1.21

2.4.2. A player found violating the bat policy is ruled out and may be ejected from the game. Continued violation of the bat rule may result in suspension. Managers are responsible for communicating this rule to all players.

2.5. **HELMET.** Pitching Helmets Are Strongly Recommended

2.6 **FIELDER'S MASK.** A Fielders Mask is recommended for all player

### 3. FIELD OF PLAY.

3.1. DISTANCE BETWEEN BASES. Distance between bases is 65 feet for all leagues.

3.2. A COMMITMENT LINE, three feet long, shall be marked, halfway between third base and home plate and perpendicular to the foul line. A base runner, advancing beyond this line (**with both feet**), who returns to third base is ruled out—this includes re-crossing on a fly ball out. If a runner re-crosses the line, he/she is declared out and the ball will remain live.

3.3. A SCORING PLATE shall be placed eight feet from the rear point of home plate on an extended line from first base. If a scoring plate is not available or if weather or field conditions would make its use unsafe, a scoring line extended from the backstop will be marked.

3.4. A FULL STRIKE ZONE MAT shall be placed over home plate to demarcate the strike zone.

3.4.1. The mat shall be placed with its front edge aligned with the front edge of home plate and overlapping home plate equally on either side. Legal pitches striking any portion of the mat shall be called strikes. A defensive player may use any part of the FULL mat for a play on a runner attempting to score.

3.5. A RUN BY RULE will be utilized, with the agreement of both managers, when weather conditions have caused the bases and scorer's plate to become slippery and wet.

### 4. ROSTERS AND ELIGIBILITY.

4.1. MCSSA leagues include all draft leagues sanctioned by MCSSA. Commissioners will organize and establish teams that are balanced, with an emphasis on team building, and creating parity

4.2. League eligibility requires each player to meet league age requirements. Playing age is the age a player will have reached by December 31st of the current calendar year.

4.3. Challenges to violation of the age requirement shall be reported to the umpire, who will sign the reporting team's scorebook indicating the name of the protested player, the inning and score.

### 5. PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES

5.1 Maximum number of defensive players per team.

5.1.1. The Supinski League permits twelve defensive players in the field. The defensive team, if fully positioned, must have five infielders positioned in the infield area (not touching the outfield grass) **until the batter contacts the ball**, five outfielders positioned behind the outfield 160-foot commitment line **until the batter makes contact with the ball**.



5.1.2. The Ross Emerson and Co-Rec Leagues permits 11 defensive players in the field. The defensive team, if fully positioned, must have five infielders positioned in the infield area (**not touching the outfield grass**) until the batter contacts the ball, four outfielders positioned behind the outfield 160-foot commitment line until the batter contacts the ball.

5.2. A team may start and continue with at least nine (9) eligible players, to include a borrowed player. A team with fewer than 8 players is permitted a 10-minute grace period beginning with the scheduled starting time for an eighth player to arrive. Game time limit will not be adjusted and will be calculated from the scheduled starting time.

### 5.3. Forfeits and Borrowed Players

Teams with fewer than eight players will forfeit the game to the opponent with the below listed exceptions.

5.3.1a. In the Supinski, Co-Rec, and Ross Emerson Leagues it is recommended that managers, believing they will not be able to field a team, request players from the other morning leagues to avoid a forfeit. The added players must be rated equally with the players they will be substituting for. The benefit of this process gives the manager the ability to field a complete team of either eleven or twelve players before the day of the scheduled game. If managers do not exercise this opportunity prior to the day of the scheduled game, 5.3.1b, and 1c is the only recourse available.

5.3.1b. In the Ross Emerson and Co-Rec Leagues, teams with eight players on game day may add two borrowed players for defense only from the opponent to avoid forfeiting; the Supinski League teams may borrow three players for defense only if a team has only eight players available at game time.

5.3.1c. In both 1a. and 1b. the manager of the team providing the borrowed players will select the player(s) to be borrowed.

5.3.1d. All substitute or late arriving players will be inserted at the end of the batting order. If rostered player arrives late borrowed player(s) must return to their team.

5.4. All players present at the start of the game are required to be in the batting lineup and entitled to play seven defensive innings of the doubleheader unless the player has an injury or health issues.

5.5. No out shall be charged for any lineup vacancy unless due to an ejection for unsporting behavior, to include the use of an illegal bat. The position of the player in the batting order will remain vacant and ruled out each time said player would come to bat.

## 6. TIME AND LIMITATIONS

6.1. **STARTING TIME.** A team with fewer than 9 players at the scheduled start time of the first game shall be permitted a 10-minute grace period. The game shall begin as soon as a 9th player arrives. The game time limit shall be calculated from the scheduled starting time. Managers and the umpire may agree to start prior to the scheduled time.

6.2. **INNINGS.** Batting ends for each team when the team makes three outs or the team scores four runs, whichever occurs first.

6.3. **TIME LIMITS.** The first game of the doubleheader is played to completion, meaning 7 completed innings. If the score is tied after 7 completed innings the game ends in a tie with each team awarded 1 point.

6.3.1. In game two, if five innings have not been completed and the time limit is a factor, (the umpire departs after completing one additional inning either after 12:30pm for games beginning at 10:00am or 12 noon for games beginning at 9:30am, the game will continue with team members or spectators selected as umpires with the consent of both managers until 5 innings have been completed. If the score is tied after 5 innings with self umpires the game ends in a tie.

6.4. To begin game two of the doubleheader, the batting order will be continuous. The player following the last batter in the lineup of game one will bat first in game two.

6.4.1. Exception: Continuous batting order is eliminated for all play-off games.

6.5. **UNLIMITED INNING.** The 7th inning will be declared the unlimited run inning. An exception occurs when time becomes a factor and the fifth or sixth inning is designated as the unlimited run inning.

6.6. **MERCY RULE.** If a team leads by 12 or more runs, after the opposing team has batted in the 5th or 6th inning, the game shall end.

6.7. **FLIP FLOP RULE.** Regardless of the score, with the approval of both managers, umpires may allow the trailing team to bat twice consecutively in the sixth inning to shorten the game. The rule will automatically apply in any game when there is a 10-run differential in favor of the visiting team at the start of the "unlimited inning."

6.8. **RUNNER RULE.** If a player at bat walks and he is going to have a runner, the batter may return to the team bench without touching first base with the runner prepared to immediately go to first base. Similarly, when a home run is hit over the fence, the batter and any runners on base will score without having to advance to the next base.



## 7. PITCHING REGULATIONS.

7.1. In all leagues, the batter shall begin with a 1-1 ball-strike count and be allowed one courtesy foul after 2 strikes.

7.2. An intentional walk may be issued at any time by pitcher's declaration.

7.3. The pitching arc is set between 6 and 12 feet. The pitched ball must arc 3 feet in an up and down delivery after leaving the pitcher's hand and shall not rise higher than 12 feet from the ground. Pitches that do not meet the legal pitch requirements will be ruled an illegal pitch by the umpire, and a ball on the batter.

7.4 PITCHER'S DELIVERY. The pitcher may take a position from the front edge of the pitcher's plate to six feet behind the pitcher's plate within the 24-inch width of the pitcher's plate with both feet firmly on the ground. The pitcher must deliver a pitch within, and not step outside, this 24-inch pitcher's lane. A pitch delivered outside of the pitcher's lane will result in an illegal pitch call by the umpire. Continued violations may result in a technical out called by the umpire.

7.5. Use of the pitching screen is mandatory during batting practice and all games.

7.5.1. The rules governing the placement and usage of the screen by the pitcher will rigorously be enforced. Failure to strictly follow pitching guidelines and procedures will result in a pitcher restricted as a position player only. MCSSA is resolute in its adherence to this rule!

7.5.2. The pitcher's screen must be placed so that one edge of the screen's box is positioned in the middle of the pitcher's plate (12 inches).

7.5.3. The pitcher's screen must be placed six feet in front of the pitcher's plate.

7.5.4. The pitcher's screen will be placed to the left of a right handed pitcher's pitching hand and to the right of a left handed pitcher's throwing hand.

A batted ball, untouched by a defensive player, contacting any part of the pitching screen is ruled a foul ball. A live ball thrown by a fielder that strikes the pitching screen remains live and in play. A live ball thrown by any fielder that sits in the pitcher's screen box is ruled a dead ball with runners advancing one additional base.

7.5.5. If brought to the attention of the umpire by the manager that the pitcher's screen has been moved and not in position as noted above, the umpire shall rule an illegal pitch and award the batter first base with baserunners advancing one base. If the batter swings at the pitch and reaches base, all baserunners will be granted one additional base. If an out occurs on the play, the batter is awarded first base with all runners advancing one base.

## 8. BASE RUNNING.

8.1. REACHING FIRST BASE. The defensive player shall use the white (inside) bag. The batter-runner shall use the double (orange) bag if there is a play at first base and may use the inside bag only if the ball is not playable at first base or to avoid colliding with a defensive player moving into the base path. A batter-runner otherwise touching the inside bag shall be called out. A defensive player may use the outside bag only if drawn by the throw to the foul line side of first base.

8.1.1. A batter cannot be thrown out at first base, by either an infielder or outfielder, after a batted ball touches the outfield grass. This includes a ball fielded by an infielder while positioned on the outfield grass. The batter can be thrown out at first base by an infielder from the outfield if the batted ball is initially touched while the infielder is positioned in the infield before it reaches the outfield grass.

8.2. SLIDING AND DIVING. Advancing runners sliding or diving into any base will be ruled a legal play. A runner, who has overrun a base, may lunge with an outstretched arm to return to the base.

8.3. OUT BY TAG. A runner may be tagged out at any base other than home plate.

8.4. ADVANCING TO HOME PLATE. No contact whatsoever is permitted at or around home plate, to include the runners scoring plate (scoring line). A runner advancing from third base and crossing the commitment line with both feet is:

8.4.1. awarded home if the player is tagged by a defensive player or touches the scoring plate before a defensive player, in possession of the ball, touches home plate.

8.4.2. is ruled a force out if a defensive player in possession of the ball touches home plate before the runner touches the scoring plate or after crossing the scoring line.

8.4.3. is ruled a force out if he/she re-crosses the commitment line or touches or crosses over home plate.

8.5. COURTESY RUNNERS. A courtesy runner is a runner who runs for a batter before a pitch has been thrown or replaces a player who has already reached base safely.

8.5.1. A courtesy runner shall replace a base runner only when the ball is dead. A courtesy runner becomes a base runner when he/she touches the appropriate base. A courtesy runner cannot replace a batter reaching first base safely if a pitch has been thrown to the next batter. The courtesy runner must wait until the next "at bat" is completed before replacing any baserunner.

8.5.2. A player may not be used as a courtesy runner more than once per inning. A player shall be called out if he/she becomes a courtesy runner more than once in an inning.



8.5.3. A courtesy runner shall not replace another courtesy runner except in case of injury, in which case the original courtesy runner shall not reenter the game as a courtesy runner for the remainder of the game.

8.5.4. A courtesy runner on base when it is his/her turn to bat shall be called out as the base runner but shall take his/her turn at bat.

8.5.5. Courtesy runners who run for batters shall leave from a point behind a line that is extended from the backstop.

8.5.5.1. If a courtesy runner from home plate leaves before the ball is hit, the batter shall be ruled out. The ball is dead, runners do not advance.

8.5.5.2. A batter who has a courtesy runner from home plate shall be called out if the batter causes confusion or interferes with a defensive player attempting to make a play at first base or home plate.

8.5.5.3. A courtesy runner from home plate, must take a position before the first pitch to the batter, with both feet behind the restraining line. A courtesy runner from home plate shall not advance beyond first base on a batted ball, unless the batted ball is hit over the fence and declared a home run. The courtesy runner may not advance on any play at first base to throw the courtesy runner out. That also pertains to a ball thrown out of play because of a play to throw the courtesy runner out at first base. However, if a fielder attempts to make a play on any other player advancing to another base, the courtesy runner may advance at will as there was no attempt to make a play on the courtesy runner.

## **9. UMPIRES.**

9.1. MCSSA shall provide certified CASO or USA (ASA) umpires for all morning leagues.

9.2. If the assigned umpire has not arrived by 10 minutes after the scheduled start time, the game shall begin without an official umpire and shall be completed. An assigned umpire arriving after the game has begun shall complete it. Time limits will not be adjusted and will be calculated from the scheduled starting time.

9.3. If the umpire does not arrive or arrives late, the league commissioner shall notify MCSSA.

## **10. PROTESTS.**

10.1. Misapplication of a rule protest shall be submitted to the league commissioner within 24 hours. The MCSSA protest committee chaired by the MCSSA president will address the protest in consult with the umpire's association. At the time of the protest, misapplication of a specific league rule must be alleged and stated to the umpire who will sign the scorebook at the time of the protest. The protesting team shall deposit \$25

to the MCSSA Treasurer in order for the protest to be heard. The deposit will immediately be returned if there is favorable determination.

10.2. Player eligibility protests must be submitted in writing to the MCSSA president within 24 hours after the completion of the game. The protest of an ineligible player must be made during the game played, with the umpire informed of the protest. No fee is required.

10.3. A team using an ineligible player shall forfeit all games in which the ineligible player participated.

## **11. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS.**

11.1. RESPONSIBILITY. Team managers shall bear responsibility for the conduct of their team and spectators.

11.1.1. A player using profanity or displaying unsporting behavior may be immediately ejected by the umpire and will be suspended for the next game. If requested by a manager or an umpire that a more severe penalty be imposed, the MCSSA President will chair a committee to immediately address the appeal.

11.2. EJECTION. A player, manager or coach ejected from a game shall be suspended for the remainder of that game and the team's next game. MCSSA shall have the power to discipline further any individual ejected more than once during a season.

11.3. **TECHNICAL OUT**. The umpire, rather than ejecting a player for unsporting behavior, has an option of charging a technical out against the team of the offending player or players.

11.3.1. Offense: If the team at bat is guilty of unsporting behavior, the umpire may enforce an out against them. If the technical out is the first or second out of the inning, the game continues with the batter and base runners being unaffected; an additional out is simply added to the team's total. If the technical out is the third out of the inning, the next inning will resume with the batter who would have batted had the technical out not been called. In this case the batter will begin with a new ball/strike count.

11.3.2. Defense: If the team in the field is guilty of unsporting behavior, the umpire may invoke the technical out rule by reducing by one the number of outs that the defense will have when they come to bat.

11.3.3. Two consecutive technical outs may not be assessed against the same team. At least one additional pitch (legal or illegal) must occur before a second technical out is called. An ejection for any unsporting behavior must be accompanied by charging a technical out to the offending team.

## **12. SCORE REPORTING AND LEAGUE STANDINGS.**

12.1. The manager of the team winning game one of the doubleheader shall report the game score(s) by email on the same day as the games played, but not later than 24 hours later to the league Commissioner or league designated scorer. The Commissioner will ensure scores are appropriately posted.

12.2. League standings shall be determined by won-lost standings points. Standings points are awarded as follows: win, 2 points; tie, 1 point.

12.3. It is imperative that scores are accurately reported as a tie in league standings will be broken using the following criteria:

- a. Head-to-head record.
- b. Head-to-head run differential.
- c. Fewer runs allowed in all games.