

General Rules (Effective 03/01/2026)

All Divisions

The Metro East Recreational Baseball and Softball League ("MERBSL") - Baseball and Softball rulebook shall take precedence over NFHS rules. The NFHS rules shall govern when the MERBSL - Baseball and Softball - rulebook does not address a situation. If a situation arises that is not covered, or clarification is needed; it will be addressed by the MERBSL Baseball Commissioner and the League Coordinator.

Conduct

- Inappropriate behavior by players, coaches, or spectators WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. You will be asked to leave the park as a result of any confrontation with an umpire in this league.
- The head coach is responsible for the conduct of their team. This includes assistant coaches, players, and fans. No member of the team (assistant coach or player) other than the head coach may leave the area of the dugout or coaching box to dispute an umpire's call.
- No team member, coach or player, may leave the area of the dugout or coaches' box to argue a call or ridicule an umpire.
- The penalty for this infraction will result in both the offender and the head coach being restricted to the dugout for the remainder of the game.
- If the offender is a player, this will also result in an out each time his spot in the batting order is due. If the incident is severe enough, the offender may be ejected, with the head coach restricted to the dugout.
- If any person threatens an umpire, either physically or verbally, the
- game will be forfeited by the offending team, and if the offending person is a player or coach, he will be permanently banned from participating in the league.
- Fighting during a game will not be tolerated. If there is a fight during a game, all persons will be sent to their respective dugouts until the situation is calmed down. All participants in the fight will be ejected from the game. If there are any further alterations during the game, it will be forfeited by the offending team or teams.
- If ejected for fighting the resulting penalty is a two-game suspension.
- If ejected for fighting twice during the same season will result in being banned for the remainder of the season.
- After an ejection has occurred for any reason, the ejected person must leave the vicinity of the playing area immediately, and is prohibited from further contact, either direct or indirect, with the team (distance must be out of sight and out of sound). Failure to comply will result in a forfeit.
- If for any reason a player, parent, or coach is ejected from a game, he will receive the following disciplinary action.
- The 1st offense will result in a one game suspension, serving the remainder of the game and the next played game. If a parent is ejected, the head coach will automatically be ejected also. If there is not an assistant or representative available or willing to coach the game, the game will end in a forfeit against the offending team.
- The 2nd offense will result in league dismissal for the remainder of the season, with loss of all registration fees.
- All suspensions/ejections can be appealed to the league coordinator.

Official Baseball and Softball

The official baseball and softball of the MERBSL - Baseball and Softball shall be authorized by the MERBSL Athletic Committee. The various divisions of the league must use only the designated baseballs or softballs as authorized for each division. The umpires for each game will provide one new ball and one used ball.

Pitching Outs, Distances, Base Paths, Ball Size, and Time Limit

Baseball

DIVISION	PITCHING	BASE PATH	Machine Speed	BALL SIZE	Game Length
Tee Ball	OFF THE T	50 ft	N/A	Tee Ball	3 innings
Coach Pitch	Coach & Tee	50 ft	N/A	Tee Ball	3 innings
Instructional	42 ft	60 ft	36-38 MPH	Official Baseball	6 innings
Rookie	42 ft	65 ft	N/A	Official Baseball	6 innings
A	50 ft	70 ft	N/A	Official Baseball	6 innings

Softball

DIVISION	PITCHING	BASES	Circle	BALL SIZE	Game Length
Instructional	30 ft	55 ft	N/A	11 in (white)	6 innings
Rookie	35 ft	55 ft	8ft Radius/16ft circumference	11 in (raised seam - yellow)	6 innings
A	40 ft	60 ft	8ft Radius/16ft circumference	12 in (raised seam - yellow)	6 innings
AA	40 ft	60ft	8ft Radius/16ft circumference	12 in (raised seam - yellow)	6 innings

Game Length

- Immediately before the first pitch is thrown, the umpire will shout out the official start time to both coaches and keep track of the official time. Time limits apply to all games, including the post season tournament and are as follows.
- No new inning will start after 1 hr and 30 minutes past the official start time. With the exception of tournament games in case of a tie. (Regular season games can end in a tie game).
- Any inning started must be completed, no matter the length of time, with the exception of the home team would not need to finish batting if ahead in the game after the lapsed time.
- An inning begins at the moment of the 3rd out or 5th run of a completed inning, with the exception of the 6th and any proceeding inning(s), which would be the 3rd out.
 - Example 1: The 3rd out or 5th run is scored of the bottom of the 5th inning, the time is at 1 hr and 29 minutes past the start time, a new inning will start and will be completed.
 - Example 2: The 3rd out or 5th run is scored of the bottom of the 5th inning, the time is at 1 hr and 30 minutes, the game is over.
 - Example 3: Regular season game: 3rd out is completed at the bottom of the 6th inning, tie game, the time is at 1 hr and 29 minutes, a 7th inning will be played.
 - Example 4: Regular season game: 3rd out is completed at the bottom of the 6th inning, tie game, the time is at 1 hr and 30 minutes, the game is over. Tie game is official.
- Tournament Games cannot end in a tie.
- For instructional and older, umpires will be given discretion (based on the pace of the game) to call the last inning and allow for unlimited runs. The goal is to have a game last approximately 1hr 30 minutes but also give the trailing team a chance to win. For example, if the pace of the game leading to innings lasting approximately 20 minutes, then the umpire may call for the last inning around the 1 hr 15 time point and that inning would be played with un-limited runs. This would be communicated to both coaches.

Inclement Weather

- In the event of rain, lightning or darkness, a complete game will consist of four (4) completed innings or 3 1/2 innings if the home team is ahead.
- A MERBSL Baseball and Softball member present and/or a game umpire will make the final decision in regard to weather or nightfall.
- Prior to the start of a game, a MERBSL Baseball and Softball member will make the final decision in regard to weather or nightfall.
- Once the game has started, the umpire will make the final decision in regard to weather or nightfall.
- In the event of a tie game due to rain, lightning or darkness, the game will end in a tie and be officially recorded as such. For "suspended" and "canceled"
- In the event there would be stoppage in play due to necessary field repairs (i.e. broken bases or pitching rubber, backstop fencing) that fall under the MERBSL Baseball and Softball control, time will be added to the length of the game equal to stoppage in play. Even with this additional time, games can still be called in the event of rain, lightning or darkness. Games will be considered complete, suspended or canceled based on Rules set by Game Length and Inclement Weather.
- At no time will time be added due to weather or other conditions out of the control of the MERBSL Baseball and Softball.

Lightning Policy

- If lightning can be seen, all persons shall leave the field/facility and move to a safe area, such as car, pavilion, etc. and enter a mandatory 20-minute delay. If no lightning is seen for 20 minutes, play will resume. If lightning is seen anytime within the 20-minute delay, the countdown resets to 20 minutes. *The U.I.C. and/or the Site Supervisor will be the official timekeepers for any lightning delays. Games cannot resume until approval from the U.I.C or Site Supervisor*
- Weather: The following weather-related protocols will be observed: In the case of lightning or severe rain, all competition will be halted, and all guests will be asked to vacate the fields and proceed to the safety of their vehicles.
- Suspend play immediately for 30 minutes. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
- The competition will resume when the weather clears or may be postponed (in the case of severe weather) In the case of light rain, competition will continue until safety becomes an issue.
- In case of extreme weather, the umpire coordinator or park representative shall determine if and when play shall cease, resume or be rescheduled. It is the responsibility of each manager/coach to obtain the latest schedule information for any and all reschedules.

Speed-up Rules

- Between innings, five warm-up pitches or two minutes are allowed. New pitchers are allowed eight (8) warm-up pitches. Penalty - if the batting team is delaying the game more than 2 minutes, the umpire will start calling one strike every 20 seconds. If the defensive team is delaying more than 2 minutes, the umpire will call a ball every 20 seconds delayed.

Delay of Game

- Intentional delay of the game by the team in the lead to take unfair advantage of the 1 hour,
- 15 min. the time limit will result in a warning on the first occurrence and, on the second occurrence in the game, will result in a forfeit (Umpire's Judgment).

Mercy Rule

- See Division Summary pages for mercy rule specifics.
- Batting Order: The official batting order must give the player's name and number.
- No players on the same team may have the same number.

- Round Robin batting is used (all available players are in the batting order).
- Once a player is in the lineup and leaves for any reason other than injury, illness, or a predetermined reason, that position in the batting order will be an out each time it comes up for the remainder of the game after the player leaves. All predetermined reasons must be communicated to both head coaches and the umpires before the game begins.
- Players arriving late may be added to the bottom of the batting order at any time before the start of the fourth inning
- In the event of an injury to a player, if the injured player cannot continue when scheduled to bat, the position in the line-up will be dissolved and the injured player will not be allowed to re-enter the game.

Uniforms

- All players will be expected to play any scheduled game with uniform issued by the MERBSL Baseball and Softball.
- All team uniforms will be a tee shirt (must be tucked in), mid- thigh/knee-length black shorts, and visor. (No league-issued pants/shorts for T- Ball or AAA ball).
- Hats/visors are optional; however, only MERBSL Baseball and Softball issued hats/visors or sponsor issued hats can be worn during the game.
- Players may wear additional garments, e.g., a sweatshirt or jacket for their comfort, however, the MERBSL Baseball and Softball shirt shall be worn on the outside of any other clothing.
- All boys must wear a hard cup supported in baseball league play in Instructional and up.
- Shorts are not allowed (except in Tee Ball, Girls Instructional, and Heat advisory situations).
- Pitchers may wear sunglasses as long as they are not distracting to the batter. If the opposing coach issues a complaint to the umpire, the umpire has full authority to ask the pitcher to remove the sunglasses.
- No uniform alterations allowed. Nothing is allowed to be ironed on, silk screened, pressed or attached to league issued hats, pants, shorts or shirts. Examples include personal names, additional numbers, anything that individualizes a person or team. All games will be played as scheduled; however, such uniform alterations will result in an automatic team forfeit (and a loss counted in team standings) until which time proper uniforms can be fielded.

Equipment

- **Metal spikes:** Shoes with metal spikes or metal cleats are strictly prohibited in all divisions. The penalty for wearing them shall be ejection from the game. No exceptions; however, this ejection will not prohibit them from playing in the next game providing proper cleats are worn. Subsequent violations by players will result in an ejection from the game which will prevent them from playing in the next game.
- **Catcher's Equipment:** Players must wear facemasks with throat protector, helmet, chest protector, and shin guards as provided by MERBSL Baseball and Softball for league play. Players warming up a pitcher are required to wear a face mask.
- **Helmets :** All players will wear helmets while batting and running the bases. Any oversight on a forgotten helmet will not cause the play to be called out if the helmet falls off accidentally. Time out will be called when noticed and the player will be required to put on a helmet. Any player who intentionally tosses off a helmet while running the bases shall be declared out. All strikes and balls, hits and outs will stand. MERBSL does require GA and GAA to wear as signed and issued facemasks.
- All equipment will be kept behind the benches or out of the playing area. No player, coach or manager may throw any equipment in anger and the umpire may eject the offending person from the game. In the umpire's judgment, a player flagrantly throwing the bat will be declared out and ejected from the game.
- **Balls:** Game balls are to be supplied by the home team.
- **Bats:**
 - Bats must be USSSA certified, that is, they have the 1.15 BPF stamp or meet the new USA Baseball standard (USABat) or be stamped with the BBCOR .50 Certified Mark or may be wood (solid, one piece).

- As long as the bats meet the criteria stated above, there is no restriction on bat drop.
- Umpires will give players the opportunity to produce any needed equipment, with the exception of players being caught wearing metal cleats. Failure to do so will result in the player being ejected from the game.

Batting/Base Running

- Bat throwing: Coaches must teach their players to hold onto the bat when swinging through the ball. The accidental throwing of the bat by the batter will result in a warning by the umpire. Each team will be given one warning. In the umpire's judgment, subsequent offenses will result in any batter being declared out and play is dead.
- Collisions: Base runners should slide to avoid contact; with the one exception of first base.
- If the runner goes into a base standing up and runs into the defensive player the base runner will be declared out for interference provided the defensive player has possession of the ball. If the runner interferes with the relay throw to another base the batter will also be declared out. If such contact is malicious or intentional, the runner shall be ejected from the game.
- Defensive players must have the ball, or the ball must be thrown to them. They cannot fake or bait runners into slides to reduce chances of advancing.
- Base runners must yield to the fielder when a ball is hit to them. If contact is made with a fielder in the act of catching a ball, it's an out, due to interference.
- Obstruction: If, in the opinion of the umpire, a fielder does not give the runner a piece of the base in which to slide prior to the fielder receiving the ball, obstruction will be called on the fielder. Catchers are allowed to block the plate but must have possession of the ball prior to blocking the plate. The catcher must give the runner access to the base if they don't have the ball.
- Fake Tag: When a defensive player fakes a tag without possession of the ball and impedes the progress of any runner, the umpire shall declare an obstruction and award the runner an additional base. On the second offense, the player will be ejected from the game.
- A batter becomes a batter runner with the right to attempt to score by advancing to first, second and third and then home plate in the listed order when:
 - A. Hitting a fair ball. NOTE: Batter becomes a runner when entitled to run.
 - B. Charged with a third strike. NOTE: if a third strike is caught before the ball touches the ground, the batter is out an instant after becoming a runner.
 - C. A fourth ball is called the Umpire.
 - D. A pitched ball, legally or illegal, hits the batter's person or clothing.
 - EFFECT: The ball is dead immediately.
 - EXCEPTIONS: 1. If the batter swings or the ball enters the strike zone, or the batter prevents the ball from entering the strike zone, a strike is called, and if it is the third strike, the batter is out. 2. If the batter intentionally moves to get hit by the pitch, it is a strike or ball depending on location of the pitch. NOTE: 1. If a batter's loose garment, such as a shirt that is not buttoned, is hit by a pitched ball, the batter is not entitled to first base. 44 16th Edition (Printed 1-2022) 2. It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter. 3. The batter's hands are not considered part of the bat. 4. If a batter swings and the ball hits its hands which send it into fair or foul territory, the ball is dead immediately; A strike is called on the batter; and if it is the third strike, the batter is out

Scoring

- The official score will be kept by the home plate umpire.
- When a team scores five runs in an inning, the inning is over, with the exception of the last inning of the game. In the last inning a team may score until they have made three outs. In the event of extra innings within the time limit of the game, a team may score until they have made three outs. This does not apply to GAA.

Free substitution

- Free defensive substitutions are allowed at the half inning only. During an inning a player from the bench may enter the game only as a pitcher or in the event of an injury. In addition, a defensive replacement will be allowed during an inning if a player is warming up to pitch.

Equitable Playing Time

- It is to be considered a MERBSL Baseball and Softball guideline that all players are given an opportunity to play in every game.
- All players in league play must participate in a minimum of three innings in a seven- inning game and two innings in a five-inning or six-inning game. Failure of any team to comply with this rule will result in forfeiture of the game. If a game is terminated for any reason (including a ten-run lead) before 5 innings has elapsed, failure of either team to use all of its players shall not be a violation of this rule.
- It is also considered to be a MERBSL Baseball and Softball guideline that all players be given the opportunity to play infield at least one inning per game by the third inning in the Tee Ball, Instructional, Rookie and "A" divisions. Failure by any team in Rookie through "A" divisions to comply with this rule will result in forfeiture of the game. MERBSL Baseball and Softball recognizes the problem with tracking such activity during a game; so if resolution cannot be achieved at the game site, "Rule G20. Protests" can be pursued.

Pitching

- See Division summary pages for specific pitching rules.
- Pitching changes:
 - If a manager or coach calls timeout to talk to the same pitcher more than once in a half inning, a pitcher change must be made.
 - In Baseball divisions, a pitcher removed from the pitching position cannot re-enter the game in the pitching position. In Softball divisions, a player may return to the pitching position as long as the inning limit has not been met.
- Intentional walks will NOT be allowed.

Forfeits

- Failure to have a minimum of eight players available results in a forfeit. A game can be started, continued, and finished with a minimum of eight players.
- Should either team not be ready to start the game within fifteen minutes after the scheduled game time, the Head Umpire shall forfeit the game to the opposing team. In order for a team to be credited with forfeit victory, the team must be present at game time with the minimum number of players to play a game. Should both teams violate the rule, each shall be charged with a loss.

Makeup Games

- All makeup games will be rescheduled by the Scheduling Director in connection with the Head Umpire and posted at the Concession Stand. Divisions Directors will contact each team with the makeup game date and time.

Incllement Weather

- For the most accurate and timely updates, teams are encouraged to check: MERBSL FaceBook Page or www.tritownshippark.org. Links are provided to other parks for offsite fields. Any game stopped due to wet or dangerous conditions where 2 or more innings have been completed shall be deemed "suspended."
- Any "suspended" game will be continued at a later date from the point of which the game was deemed "suspended."
- Any game stopped due to wet or dangerous conditions were less than two innings have been completed shall be deemed "canceled" and made up at a later date from the beginning of the game.

- If at least 3 1/2 innings have been played and the "home team" is winning at the time of play stoppage, the game shall be deemed completed and recorded as such.

League Playoff Championship Games:

- Where scheduling and facilities allow, all playoff championship games will waive the 3 1/2 innings rule. Every possible attempt will be made to complete these suspended games, with the league scheduler having the final say on when suspended games will be made up.
- When the original play is suspended, the games will be "frozen in time" with managers signing each other's scorecard and/or scorebook. If and when the game continues, pitching limits will be maintained; pitchers cannot benefit from the rule rest; as if the game is continued on the same day as when the original game was suspended.
- The same lineups for batting and fielding apply.
- If any players from the suspended game cannot attend the makeup game, their batting spot is skipped; no out is recorded.
- Conversely, if any players attend the makeup game that didn't attend the suspended game, they are added to the bottom of the batting order.
- Regular season time limits apply to all post season games with the only exception being that play-off games will be played until there is a winner.
- Players must have competed in >50% of the games to be eligible for playoffs.
- Team with higher seed is Home team.

Protests

- The MERBSL Baseball and Softball Coordinator and Athletic Committee shall have the authority to act on all rule violations and protests involving teams, players, managers, or coaches under its jurisdiction.
- If games are to be put under protest because of an infraction of the official rules, the following steps should be taken (no protests will be allowed when it involves a question of an umpire's judgment).
- The notification of the intent to protest must be made immediately before the next pitch, concerning infraction of given rule.
- The manager of the protesting team must immediately notify the umpire and the opposing manager that the game is being continued under protest.
- The umpire will notify both scorekeepers that the game is under protest and both scorebooks will be initiated by the umpire indicating the point at which the protest occurred.
- The protest of any game shall be made in writing and filed with a fee of \$25 to the
- MERBSL Baseball and Softball no less than 24 hours after the game in which the alleged rule violation occurred.
- The letter of protest must include the date, names of umpires, and all matters pertaining to the alleged infraction, citing which rule(s) were violated. The letter of intent must be generated by the protesting manager and accompanied by the \$25 fee.
- All specifics relating to a protest must be included in the scorebook:
 - player at bat
 - inning
 - balls
 - strikes
 - name of pitcher
 - number of outs
 - and the bases on which there were runners.
- All protests shall be acted upon by the MERBSL Baseball and Softball Coordinator and Athletic Committee. The decision of the "Committee" is final.
- The \$100 protest fee will be applied to the MERBSL Baseball and Softball Athletic Fund if the protest is denied. The \$100 fee will be reimbursed to the protesting manager if the protest is won.

Play Area

- The "Live Ball" area or "Play Area" is defined as the area enclosed by the line that extends from the end of the backstop and runs parallel to each foul line. For safety reasons, spectators will not be allowed in the official playing area.
- Overthrow advancement rules are defined in the Division Summary pages.
- If a pitched ball delivered by the pitcher goes through or under the backstop or is lodged in the backstop, the runner(s) shall be awarded one (1) base provided stealing is allowed in the division.

Players on Bench

- All players will stay on or behind benches when not in the field.
- Except player at bat and player on-deck batter.
- Only one coach per coach's box.

Individuals behind Backstop

- No managers, coaches, players, or fans are allowed directly behind the backstop during the progress of games. If in the opinion of the umpire, individual(s) are bothering the pitcher, catcher, or umpire, the umpires on duty have the authority to ask the individual(s) to relocate to another portion of the unofficial area.

Field Usage Before Game Time

- The visiting team will have the infield from 30 minutes before game time until 15 minutes before game time.
- The home team will have the infield from 15 minutes before game time until the game starts.
- This example will be used for all start times.
- No batting practice on the infield. All batting practice should be conducted in the outfield. The team will use either the first base side of the field or the third base side.
- Warmups will be simultaneous for both teams. (No pre-game warmups allowed in the spectator areas). There will be no warming up on the spectator side of the out of play areas on any diamond while spectators are watching an ongoing game.

Dugouts During the Game

- The home team is always entitled to the first base dugout.
- Visitors use the third base dugout.
- The home team is listed on the game schedule second, whereas the visitor is always listed first. For example, if the game schedule shows 1 vs. 2, then team #1 is the visiting team and #2 is the home team.

Umpire's Scorecard

- Both team managers and umpires must legibly sign and date the official game scorecard. This is necessary to ensure that team standings and umpire pay is recorded correctly.

Infield Fly Rule

- The infield fly rule will be enforced for Boys/Girls A, and Girls AA Divisions.
- The infield fly rule will NOT be enforced in all other divisions.
- The infield fly rule is defined as: The batter is declared out when there is a catchable routine fly ball on the infield, with runners on first and second, or bases loaded and less than two outs. Base runners may advance at their own risks.

Miscellaneous Rules:

- NO MODIFICATIONS WILL BE ALLOWED. Plate discussions can be rule clarifications ONLY. No modifications, no differences at different parks. ALL PLAY BY SAME RULES.

- Borrowing Players (Regular Season Only!):
 - Teams may borrow up to 2 players to get up to eight, the minimum required for regular season games (games may occur with <8 players if agreement by coaches is reached).
 - These players must come from the same division (or younger), and they should wear the team's Jersey from which they are from.
 - The Borrowed players must bat at the bottom of the order.
 - Borrowed players are not allowed to pitch or catch.
- Players must play 50 percent of league games to play in playoffs/tournament.
- A maximum of three shirted coaches. Parents and others should be welcome to help but only 3 shirted coaches are allowed. A team of 6 shirted coaches is intimidating to teams with one coach that has no help.
- Sportsmanship rules: no player, coach, or parent may make comments at or about any other player, coach, or parent or purposefully try to intimidate players or coaches. For repeat offenses permanent removal.
- All rosters must be posted/shared at the start of the season. A copy must be kept with coaches for each game along with their player number assigned.
- Walk-up music along with loud warm up music is not allowed.
- Use of the pitching machine before a game is prohibited.
- VIDEO TAPING-Sidelines ONLY by parents.

SPECIAL DIVISION RULES

The MERBSL Baseball and Softball has developed a program which concentrates on teaching baseball/softball fundamentals in the early years and developing baseball/softball skills in the later years. During the early years, the MERBSL Baseball and Softball rules have been modified to help foster learning the game. The intent of the rule modification is to provide all of the younger players with every opportunity to learn the game and to encourage participation in the program in the later years. The Division Summary illustrates how the rules are modified in the early years of the program. It is also provided for quick references for umpires, managers, and coaches.

RULES BY DIVISION SUMMARY

	TB & CP	BI	BR	BA	GI	GR	GA	GAA
Equitable Playing Time	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Equitable Infield Play	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Keep Score	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Standings	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Innings	3	6	6	6	6	6	6	7
Outfielders	Many	4	4	3	4	4	3	3
Pitching	No	Machine	Yes	Yes	Machine	Yes	Yes	Yes
Balk	No	No	Warning	Yes	No	No	No	No
Pitch Count	N/A	N/A	50	85	N/A	3 Innings	4 Innings	N/A
Pitch Rest	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Lead offs	No	No	No	Yes	No	After Pitch	After Pitch	
Stealing	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Stealing Home	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Advance on overthrows	No	No	1 Base	Yes	No	1 Base	Yes	Yes
Dropped 3rd Strike	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Infield Fly	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Bunting	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Dead Ball	Infield	Infield	Infield Possession	X	Infield	Infield Possession	Pitchers Circle	Pitchers Possession

Tee Ball

The primary purpose of this division is for instruction into the sports of baseball and softball. It is intended to be a fun introduction to a sport that can provide enjoyment for all involved. Coach pitching, while optional for each player, is allowed in Tee Ball.

General Rules

The following rules are additions or substitutions to the baseball and softball rules. All baseball and softball rules not mentioned herein apply to the Tee Ball Division. Any rule not stated will be determined by the MERBSL Baseball and Softball and Athletic Committee.

Playing Field & Tee

- Bases will be 50 feet apart.
- The tee will be set up and removed by the manager or coach whenever a potential play at home plate exists.
- One coach is allowed at first base, third base, and home plate.
- Balls are supplied by the home team.

Length of Game

- A game consists of three 3 innings.
- An inning shall be defined as each child batting once through a team's lineup.
- The last batter runs all the way around the bases until the catcher has tagged home plate for the final out of the inning.
- All games end in a tie.
- No records of game scores will be kept.

Hitting/Bunting

- There are no strike-outs in Tee ball.
- 1st Year Tee Ball will utilize the Tee.
- Later in the season the coach can pitch at practices, but games will be off the tee.
- If the batter ball rolls into foul territory on the third strike, it is considered a foul ball.
- If a fielder touches the ball before it crosses the arc, the batter is awarded first base.
- No other base runners may advance unless forced.

Stealing

- There will be no stealing in Tee Ball. The base runner may only advance on a batted ball.
- If a runner leaves the base before the bat contacts the ball or hits the tee below the ball, the ball is dead. At that time, all runners must return to their base.

Overthrows and Base Running

- Runners may leave the base when the batter makes contact with the ball on the tee.
- When a fielder throws the ball home, it must cross the arc before the play is ruled dead.
- When the ball is delivered to the arc and stops play, runners on the base path may advance to the next base they are heading.
- On an overthrow at any base whether in fair or foul territory, the runner(s) advance one base and play is ruled dead.
- After the ball is hit, the batter and base runners may attempt to take as many bases as possible, until the coach declares the play dead.

Defensive Positions

- Each team will field all available players defensively at one time.
- Children may never play the same defensive position in two consecutive innings.
- The infield will have six (6) fielders with the sixth player positioned a few steps in front of second base.
- The remaining players shall be positioned in the outfield.
- Outfielders cannot stand on the foul lines.
- As stated in the General Rules section, it is to be considered a MERBSL Baseball and Softball guideline that all players be given the opportunity to play both infield and outfield (Particularly in the Tee Ball, Instructional, and Rookie Divisions).

Defensive Coach on the Field

- Two (2) coaches will be allowed on the playing field to assist with defense. They must be positioned in the outfield or in the bench area. No in-field coaches are permitted.

Logical Play

- When a ball is hit back to the pitcher, the pitcher can run home to get the force out; however, teach the children to throw base runners out.
- Players should not be encouraged to make an unassisted out unless it is a logical baseball play.
- The player should throw the ball if it is the logical play. This rule is intended to apply to all positions so that appropriate plays are developed.

Coach Pitch

The primary purpose of this division is for instruction into the sports of baseball and softball. It is intended to be a fun introduction to a sport that can provide enjoyment for all involved. Coach pitching, while optional for each player, is allowed in Coach Pitch Ball. If coach pitch is desired, batters may receive up to three (3) coach pitches. If after three pitches (regardless of quality or the outcome) the ball is not hit into play, the ball will be placed on the Tee to speed up play.

General Rules

The following rules are additions or substitutions to the baseball and softball rules. All baseball and softball rules not mentioned herein apply to the Tee Ball Division. Any rule not stated will be determined by the MERBSL Baseball and Softball and Athletic Committee.

Playing Field & Tee Set Up

- Bases will be 50 feet apart.
- The tee will be set up and removed by the coach whenever a potential play at home plate exists.
- One coach is allowed at first base, third base, and home plate.

Length of Game

- A game consists of three 3 innings.
- An inning shall be defined as each child batting once through a team's lineup.
- The last batter runs all the way around the bases until the catcher has tagged home plate for the final out of the inning.
- All games end in a tie.
- No records of game scores will be kept.

Hitting/Bunting

- There are no strikeouts in Coach Pitch ball.
- If the batted ball is not hit beyond the arc on the third strike and remains in fair territory, the batter shall take first base.
- If the batter ball rolls into foul territory on the third strike, it is considered a foul ball.
- 2nd Year Tee Ball will be Coach Pitch. You will be given a tee for practices and training. The game will be coach pitch. If the player is having trouble after 6 pitches, a Tee can be placed to facilitate. At the beginning of the year this may be needed, but by the end this should not.
- Suggestions-A ball in the air is a home run, a ball hit past the bases is a double. Discuss with the other coach prior to the game.

Stealing

- There will be no stealing in Coach Pitch Ball. The base runner may only advance on a batted ball.
- If a runner leaves the base before the bat contacts the ball or hits the tee below the ball, the ball is dead. At that time, all runners must return to their base.

Overthrows and Base Running

- Runners may leave the base when the batter makes contact with the ball on the tee.
- When a fielder throws the ball home, it must cross the arc before the play is ruled dead.
- When the ball is delivered to the arc and stops play, runners on the base path may advance to the next base they are heading.
- On an overthrow at any base whether in fair or foul territory, the runner(s) advance one base and play is ruled dead.
- After the ball is hit, the batter and base runners may attempt to take as many bases as possible, until the coach declares the play dead.

Defensive Positions

- Each team will field all available players defensively at one time.
- Children may never play the same defensive position in two consecutive innings.
- The infield will have six (6) fielders with the sixth player positioned a few steps in front of second base.
- The remaining players shall be positioned in the outfield.
- Outfielders cannot stand on the foul lines.
- As stated in the General Rules section, it is to be considered a MERBSL Baseball and Softball guideline that all players be given the opportunity to play both infield and outfield (Particularly in the Tee Ball, Instructional, and Rookie Divisions).

Defensive Coach on the Field

- Two (2) coaches will be allowed on the playing field to assist with defense. They must be positioned in the outfield or in the bench area. No in-field coaches are permitted

Logical Play

- When a ball is hit back to the pitcher, the pitcher can run home to get the force out; however, teach the children to throw base runners out.
- Players should not be encouraged to make an unassisted out unless it is a logical baseball play.
- The play should throw the ball if it is the logical play. This rule is intended to apply to all positions so that appropriate plays are developed.

Boys Instructional

General

The Instructional division is intended for kids currently in 1st or 2nd grade. It is a developmental division where players are learning the fundamentals and rules of the game. Scores are kept and an end of season playoff is utilized. Individual leagues will do their best to separate teams into 1st and 2nd grade division to ensure fair competition.

Game Length

- Games are 6 innings
- An inning is 3 outs or 5 runs scored, whichever comes first.
- All innings are played with a 5-run MAX limit except the last inning which will be unlimited.
- No new innings after 1 hour 30 minutes. Umpires (or coach consensus) have discretion to call "last inning" in an attempt to keep games close to the 1 hr 30 minute total length.

Equipment

- Only baseball bats may be used. No softball bats.
- Bats must be USSSA certified, that is, they have the 1.15 BPF stamp or meet the new USA Baseball standard (USABat) or be stamped with the BBCOR .50 Certified Mark or may be wood (solid, one piece).
- As long as the bats meet the criteria stated above, there is no restriction on bat drop.
- No Metal cleats

Batting and Baserunning

- No leadoffs, no walks, and no stealing.
- Players may not leave the base until the ball is hit.
- No advancing on overthrows.
- Players may continue advancing until the ball is back in the infield. Possession is not required.
- The batter is out after 3 strikes. Approximately 7 pitches are allowed, but there is coach discretion here depending on machine/ball quality. We don't want the kids to stare at 7 pitches in a row but if kids are actively fouling balls off, they may continue batting.
- No bunting.
- If a batted ball strikes the pitching machine or the operator, the coaches shall automatically declare a ground rule single, and all other base runners will advance one base.
- If a batted ball is deflected by a fielder prior to striking the machine or operator, or if a thrown ball hits the machine or operator, the ball will be considered live and in play.
- If the pitching machine operator intentionally interferes with a live ball, the batter will be declared out and all runners must return to their previously occupied base.

Defense

- A total of 10 players are used on defense. 4 outfielders, infielders, and a catcher.
- All players must be given an opportunity to play an infield position for a minimum of 1 inning.
- Outfielders should be positioned in the grass or a minimum of 10 feet behind the infielders if the dirt infield is large.
- Each defensive position must be occupied by a single player (e.g. only one pitcher allowed).
- The pitcher position must be even with the pitching machine until after the ball is hit.
- Up to 2 coaches may be positioned in the outfield to help the kids on defense.
- It is recommended to have a coach stand behind home plate to help the catcher and to shag balls.
- No infield fly rule.
- Illogical plays are prohibited. (e.g. the Center fielder should not field a ball and then run it in to tag 2nd base for a force out). If an illogical play occurs, the runner is called "Safe."

Pitching (Machine)

- The machine is located 42 ft from home plate and delivers the ball at approximately 38 mph.
- The coach for the batting team is the machine operator.
- The home team is responsible for initially setting up and optimizing pitch delivery.

- If necessary, adjustments may be made to the machine at the top of each inning. We want the kids to hit the ball.

Umpires

- Instructional games will be umpired by the coaches of the team that is batting.
- The first base coach shall call play at 1st and 2nd base and the third base coach shall call plays at 3rd base and home plate.

Playoff Policies

- All games will be 6 innings with no new innings starting after 1 hr 45 minutes.
- Seeds will be determined by team records as of specified date declared by MERBSL. Higher seed is HOME.
- Last inning will be played with unlimited runs to ensure a winner is established.
- Players must have played in 50% of the regular season games to participate.
- Umpires will be provided by each park.
- A mercy rule will be used in the playoffs. If a team is leading by 15 or more runs after 4 innings or 10 runs after 5 innings, the game is over.
- There is no requirement for all players to play the infield. All players must play a minimum of 3 innings and all players in attendance will be in the batting order.

Boys Rookie

General

The rookie division is intended for kids currently in 3rd and 4th grade. Players are continuing to learn the basic rules of the game and kid pitch is introduced. Scores are kept and an end of season playoff is utilized. A liberal strike zone is utilized to build pitcher confidence and speed up the games.

Game Length

- Games are 6 innings
- An inning is 3 outs or 5 runs scored, whichever comes first.
- All innings are played with a 5-run MAX limit except the last inning which will be unlimited.
- No new innings after 1 hour 30 minutes. Umpires (or coach consensus) have discretion to call "last inning" in an attempt to keep games close to the 1 hr 30-minute total length.

Equipment

- Only baseball bats may be used. No softball bats.
- Bats must be USSSA certified, that is, they have the 1.15 BPF stamp or meet the new USA Baseball standard (USABat) or be stamped with the BBCOR .50 Certified Mark or may be wood (solid, one piece).
- As long as the bats meet the criteria stated above, there is no restriction on bat drop.
- No Metal cleats

Batting and Baserunning

- Players may steal but cannot leave the base until the ball crosses the plate. Players may steal on a wild pitch or passed ball but stealing of home is not allowed even if a wild pitch or passed ball occurs.
- Stealing home is not allowed under any circumstances.
- No Lead offs
- If an overthrow occurs, players may take the next base at their own discretion. No further advancement will be allowed, regardless of defensive possession.
- When the ball is in play, players may continue advancing until the play is called dead by the umpire. The play is dead when an infielder has possession of the ball on the infield playing surface. If a runner is greater than or equal to halfway to the next base, they may take the base. If the umpire determines they were less than halfway, they will return to the previous base.

- The batter is out after 3 strikes. There is **no** dropped third strike rule.
- No bunting or slap hitting.
- Courtesy runner for the catcher with two-outs is allowed to help speed up the game.

Defense

- A total of 10 players are used on defense. 4 outfielders, infielders, and a catcher.
- All players must be given an opportunity to play an infield position for a minimum of 1 inning.
- Outfielders should be positioned in the grass or a minimum of 10 feet behind the infielders if the dirt infield is large.
- Each defensive position must be occupied by a single player (e.g. only one pitcher allowed).
- **It is recommended to have a coach stand behind home plate to help the catcher and to shag balls.**
- NO Infield Fly Rule
- The play is dead when an infielder possesses the ball on the infield playing surface.
- Coaches should encourage players to make logical baseball plays (e.g. the Center fielder should not field a ball and then run it in to tag 2nd base for a force out). If umpires deem that an illogical play has been made, they will call the runner safe.

Pitching

- Players may pitch a maximum of 50 pitches per day.
- If pitch count is reached in the middle of an at-bat, the pitcher may complete pitching to the batter they are facing.
- No balks will be called but umpires/coaches should warn pitchers, so they learn the rule.
- Pitchers may not re-enter the game to pitch once they have been removed from the mound.
- Required rest for baseball pitchers is as follows:
 - 1-20 pitches = 0 Days rest
 - 21-35 pitches = 1 Day rest
 - 36-50 pitches = 2 Days rest

Umpires

- Umpires will be provided by each park.
- There will be a liberal strike zone. Umpires will be calling strikes in an area they feel is good enough for a batter to hit the ball.

Playoff Policies

- All games will be 6 innings with no new innings starting after 1 hr 45 minutes.
- Seeds will be determined by team records as of the specified date declared by MERBSL. Higher seed is HOME.
- The last inning will be played with unlimited runs to ensure a winner is established.
- Players must have played in 50% of the regular season games to participate.
- Umpires will be provided by each park.
- A mercy rule will be used in the playoffs. If a team is leading by 15 or more runs after 4 innings or 10 runs after 5 innings, the game is over.
- There is no requirement for all players to play the infield. All players must play a minimum of 3 innings and all players in attendance will be in the batting order.

Boys A

General

The A division is intended for kids currently in 5th and 6th grade. Scores are kept and an end of season playoff is utilized. Rules that are specific to our recreational league are mentioned in this document. Any rules not specified here will follow the current [USSSA standard](#).

Game Length

- Games are 6 innings
- An inning is 3 outs or 5 runs scored, whichever comes first.
- All innings are played with a 5-run MAX limit except the last inning which will be unlimited.
- No new innings after 1 hour 30 minutes. Umpires (or coach consensus) have discretion to call “last inning” in an attempt to keep games close to the 1 hr 30-minute total length.
- A mercy rule is in effect. If a team is leading by 15 or more runs after 4 innings or 10 runs after 5 innings, the game is over.

Equipment

- Only baseball bats may be used. No softball bats.
- Bats must be USSSA certified, that is, they have the 1.15 BPF stamp or meet the new USA Baseball standard (USABat) or be stamped with the BBCOR .50 Certified Mark or may be wood (solid, one piece).
- As long as the bats meet the criteria stated above, there is no restriction on bat drop.
- No Metal cleats

Batting and Baserunning

- Leading off and stealing are allowed at all times. This includes stealing home on passed balls.
- If an overthrow occurs, players may take the next base at their own discretion. If umpire determines that the ball has left the field of play, players will be awarded one base.
- Runners are not required to slide on every play at a base. However, runners that do not slide and make contact with a defensive player who is making a defensive play may be called out by the umpire. This is judgment call by the umpire. If a player makes intentional contact with a defensive player and does not slide may be removed from the game. This is also a judgment call by the umpire.
- The dropped third strike rule is in effect. The batter/runners can advance on a dropped third strike, if first base is not occupied with less than two outs, or with two outs and any base occupied. If the batter “commits” to going to their dug out they will be called out. (Committing is defined as leaving the batter’s box with the intent of returning to their dugout.)
- Bunting is allowed.
- Courtesy runner for the catcher with two-outs is allowed to help speed up the game.

Defense

- A total of 9 players are used on defense. 3 outfielders, infielders, and a catcher.
- All players must be given an opportunity to play an infield position for a minimum of 1 inning.
- Outfielders should be positioned in the grass or a minimum of 10 feet behind the infielders if the dirt infield is large.
- Each defensive position must be occupied by a single player (e.g. only one pitcher allowed).
- The infield fly rule is in effect.
- The play is dead when runners stop advancing.

Pitching

- Players may pitch a maximum of 85 pitches per day.
- If pitch count is reached in the middle of an at-bat, the pitcher may complete pitching to the batter they are facing.
- Balks will be called but pitchers will be given one warning each before the Balk rule is enforced.
- Pitchers may not re-enter the game to pitch once they have been removed from the mound.
- Required rest for baseball pitchers is as follows:
 - 1-20 pitches = 0 Days rest
 - 21-35 pitches = 1 Day rest
 - 36-50 pitches = 2 Days rest
 - 51-65 pitches = 3 Days rest
 - 66-85 pitches = 4 Days rest

Umpires

- Umpires will be provided by each park.

Playoff Policies

- All games will be 6 innings with no new innings starting after 1 hr 45 minutes.
- Seeds will be determined by team records as of specified date declared by MERBSL. Higher seed is HOME.
- Last inning will be played with unlimited runs to ensure a winner is established.
- Players must have played in 50% of the regular season games to participate.
- Umpires will be provided by each park.
- A mercy rule will be used in the playoffs. If a team is leading by 15 or more runs after 4 innings or 10 runs after 5 innings, the game is over.
- There is no requirement for all players to play the infield. All players must play a minimum of 3 innings and all players in attendance will be in the batting order.

Girls Instructional

General

The Instructional division is intended for kids currently in 1st or 2nd grade. It is a developmental division where players are learning the fundamentals and rules of the game. Scores are kept and an end of season playoff is utilized.

Game Length

- Games are 6 innings
- An inning is 3 outs or 5 runs scored, whichever comes first.
- All innings are played with a 5-run MAX limit except the last inning which will be unlimited.
- No new innings after 1 hour 30 minutes. Umpires (or coach consensus) have discretion to call “last inning” in an attempt to keep games close to the 1 hr 30 minute total length.

Equipment

- Only fastpitch softball bats may be used. Must be labeled as ASA or USSSA. No baseball bats.
- Helmets should have a facemask.
- Fielding masks are recommended but not required.

Batting and Baserunning

- No leadoffs, no walks, and no stealing.
- Players may not leave the base until the ball is hit.
- No advancing on overthrows.
- Players may continue advancing until the ball is back in the infield. Possession is not required.
- The batter is out after 3 strikes. Approximately 7 pitches are allowed, but there is some coach discretion here depending on machine/ball quality. We don't want the kids to stare at 7 pitches in a row but if kids are actively fouling balls off, they may continue batting.
- No bunting or slap hitting.
- If a batted ball strikes the pitching machine or the operator, the coaches shall automatically declare a ground rule single and all other base runners may advance one base.
- If a batted ball is deflected by a fielder prior to striking the machine or operator, or if a thrown ball hits the machine or operator, the ball will be considered live and in play.
- If the pitching machine operator intentionally interferes with a live ball, the batter will be declared out and all runners must return to their previously occupied base.

Defense

- A total of 10 players are used on defense. 4 outfielders, infielders, and a catcher.
- All players must be given an opportunity to play an infield position for a minimum of 1 inning.
- Outfielders should be positioned in the grass or a minimum of 10 feet behind the infielders if the dirt infield is large.
- Each defensive position must be occupied by a single player (e.g. only one pitcher allowed).
- The pitcher position must be even with the pitching machine until after the ball is hit.
- Up to 2 coaches may be positioned in the outfield to help the kids on defense.
- It is recommended to have a coach stand behind home plate to help the catcher and to shag balls.
- No infield fly rule.
- Coaches should encourage players to make logical softball plays (e.g. the Center fielder should not field a ball and then run it in to tag 2nd base for a force out).

Pitching (Machine)

- The machine is located 30 ft (approximately 10 paces) from home plate and delivers the ball at approximately 32 mph.
- A coach for the batting team is the machine operator.
- The home team is responsible for initially setting up and optimizing pitch delivery.
- If necessary, adjustments may be made to the machine at the top of each inning. We want the kids to hit the ball.

Umpires

- Instructional games may be umpired by the coaches of the team that is batting.
- The first base coach shall call play at 1st and 2nd base and the third base coach shall call plays at 3rd base and home plate.

Playoff Policies

- All games will be 6 innings with no new innings starting after 1 hr 45 minutes.
- Seeds will be determined by team records as of specified date declared by MERBSL. Higher seed is HOME.
- Last inning will be played with unlimited runs to ensure a winner is established.
- Players must have played in 50% of the regular season games to participate.
- Umpires will be provided by each park.
- A mercy rule will be used in the playoffs. If a team is leading by 15 or more runs after 4 innings or 10 runs after 5 innings, the game is over.
- There is no requirement for all players to play the infield. All players must play a minimum of 3 innings and all players in attendance will be in the batting order.

Girls Rookie

General

The rookie division is intended for kids currently in 3rd and 4th grade. Players are continuing to learn the basic rules of the game and kid pitch is introduced. A kid pitch/coach pitch hybrid approach is used at this age to encourage getting balls in play. Scores are kept and an end of season playoff is utilized.

Game Length

- Games are 6 innings
- An inning is 3 outs or 5 runs scored, whichever comes first.
- All innings are played with a 5-run MAX limit except the last inning which will be unlimited.
- No new innings after 1 hour 30 minutes. Umpires (or coach consensus) have discretion to call "last inning" in an attempt to keep games close to the 1 hr 30-minute total length.

Equipment

- Only fastpitch softball bats may be used. Must be labeled as ASA or USSSA. No baseball bats.
- Helmets must have a facemask
- Fielding masks are highly recommended but not required.

Batting and Baserunning

- Stealing is NOT allowed (this includes on passed balls and wild pitches).
- Players may perform a standard softball lead-off when the ball leaves the pitcher's (or coach's) hand but they cannot advance to the next base until the ball is hit.
- If an overthrow occurs, players may take the next base at their own discretion. No further advancement will be allowed, regardless of defensive possession.
- When a ball is in play, players may continue advancing until the play is called dead by the umpire. The play is dead when an infielder has possession of the ball on the infield playing surface. If a runner is greater than or equal to halfway to the next base, they may take the base. If the umpire determines they were less than half way, they will return to the previous base.
- The batter is out after 3 strikes. There is **no** dropped third strike rule.
- No bunting or slap hitting.
- There are no walks with the exception of a modified hit-by-pitch rule outlined below. When a batter reaches a four (4) ball count, a coach from the batter's team will move quickly to the mound not using this as an opportunity to delay the game) and **throw a maximum of three (3) pitches**. The strike count will carry over throughout the batter's time at the plate. The batter will either hit the ball or strike out. (the umpire will continue to call strikes when the coach is pitching i.e. if the coach enters with a (2) strike count and the first pitch from the coach is in the strike zone or swung at and missed, the batter is out). A foul ball hit on the third pitch will not constitute an out. If the coach throws 3

horrible pitches, the batter is out. The intent here is to keep the game moving so the kids can play more innings in the time allotted.

- HBP-rule - 1st base will be awarded to the batter if they are hit by the pitcher (not coach) with a ball in the air. Pitched balls that hit the ground first and then strike the batter will not result in 1st base being awarded. If a coach is in to pitch and hits a player, the player is NOT awarded 1st base.
- Courtesy runner for the catcher with two-outs is allowed to help speed up the game.

Defense

- A total of 10 players are used on defense. 4 outfielders, infielders, and a catcher.
- All players must be given an opportunity to play an infield position for a minimum of 1 inning.
- Outfielders should be positioned in the grass or a minimum of 10 feet behind the infielders if the dirt infield is large.
- Each defensive position must be occupied by a single player (e.g. only one pitcher allowed).
- **It is recommended to have a coach stand behind home plate to help the catcher and to shag balls.**
- NO Infield Fly rule
- The play is dead when an infielder possesses the ball on the infield playing surface.
- Coaches should encourage players to make logical softball plays (e.g. the Center fielder should not field a ball and then run it in to tag 2nd base for a force out). If umpires deem that an illogical play has been made, they will call the runner safe.

Pitching

- Players must begin their pitching motion with one foot on the pitching rubber.
- Players may pitch a maximum of 3 innings in a game. A pitcher may be removed and re-enter later in the game if they have not met their 3 inning limit. No specific pitch count in softball.

Umpires

- Umpires will be provided by each park.
- There will be a liberal strike zone. Umpires will be calling strikes in an area they feel is good enough for a batter to hit the ball.

Playoff Policies

- All games will be 6 innings with no new innings starting after 1 hr 45 minutes.
- Seeds will be determined by team records as of specified date declared by MERBSL. Higher seed is HOME.
- Last inning will be played with unlimited runs to ensure a winner is established.
- Players must have played in 50% of the regular season games to participate.
- Umpires will be provided by each park.
- A mercy rule will be used in the playoffs. If a team is leading by 15 or more runs after 4 innings or 10 runs after 5 innings, the game is over.
- There is no requirement for all players to play the infield. All players must play a minimum of 3 innings and all players in attendance will be in the batting order.

Girls A

General

The A division is intended for players currently in 5th and 6th grade. Scores are kept and an end of season playoff is utilized. Rules that are specific to our recreational league are mentioned in this document. Any rules not specified here will follow the current [USSSA standard](#).

Game Length

- Games are 6 innings
- An inning is 3 outs or 5 runs scored, whichever comes first.
- All innings are played with a 5-run MAX limit except the last inning which is unlimited.
- No new innings after 1 hour 30 minutes. Umpires (or coach consensus) have discretion to call “last inning” in an attempt to keep games close to the 1 hr 30 minute total length.
- A mercy rule is in effect. If Ywea team is leading by 15 or more runs after 4 innings or 10 runs after 5 innings, the game is over.

Equipment

- Only fastpitch softball bats may be used. Must be labeled as ASA or USSSA. No baseball bats.
- Helmets must have a facemask
- Fielding masks are highly recommended but not required.

Batting and Baserunning

- Leading off and stealing are allowed at all times. This includes stealing home on passed balls.
- Runners cannot lead off or steal until the ball has left the pitcher’s hand. Runners who leave early will be called “out” by the umpires.
- If an overthrow occurs, players may take the next base at their own discretion. If umpire determines that the ball has left the field of play, players will be awarded one base.
- Runners are not required to slide on every play at a base. However, runners that do not slide and make contact with a defensive player who is making a defensive play may be called out by the umpire. This is judgment call by the umpire. If a player makes intentional contact with a defensive player and does not slide may be removed from the game. This is also a judgment call by the umpire.
- The dropped third strike rule is in effect. The batter/runners can advance on a dropped third strike, if first base is not occupied with less than two outs, or with two outs and any base occupied. If the batter “commits” to going to their dug out they will be called out. (Committing is defined as leaving the batter’s box with the intent of returning to their dugout.)
- Bunting/slapping is allowed.
- Courtesy runner for the catcher with two-outs is allowed to help speed up the game.

Defense

- A total of 9 players are used on defense. 3 outfielders, infielders, and a catcher.
- All players must be given an opportunity to play an infield position for a minimum of 1 inning.
- Outfielders should be positioned in the grass or a minimum of 10 feet behind the infielders if the dirt infield is large.
- Each defensive position must be occupied by a single player (e.g. only one pitcher allowed).
- The infield fly rule is in effect.
- The play is dead when the pitcher has possession of the ball inside the pitcher’s circle.

Pitching

- Pitcher’s may throw a maximum of 4 innings per game. These do not have to be consecutive innings. Pitcher’s who are relieved may re-enter the game as a pitcher as long as their 4 inning requirement has not been met. The throwing of a single pitch in an inning constitutes an “inning pitched”

Umpires

- Umpires will be provided by each park.

Playoff Policies

- All games will be 6 innings with no new innings starting after 1 hr 45 minutes.
- Seeds will be determined by team records as of specified date declared by MERBSL. Higher seed is HOME.
- Last inning will be played with unlimited runs to ensure a winner is established.
- Players must have played in 50% of the regular season games to participate.
- Umpires will be provided by each park.
- A mercy rule will be used in the playoffs. If a team is leading by 15 or more runs after 4 innings or 10 runs after 5 innings, the game is over.
- There is no requirement for all players to play the infield. All players must play a minimum of 3 innings and all players in attendance will be in the batting order

Girls AA

General

The AA division is intended for players currently in 7th-10th grade. Scores are kept and an end of season playoff is utilized. Rules that are specific to our recreational league are mentioned in this document. Any rules not specified here will follow the current [USSSA standard](#).

Game Length

- Games are 7 innings
- An inning is 3 outs or 7 runs scored, whichever comes first.
- All innings are played with a 7-run MAX limit except the last inning which is unlimited.
- No new innings after 1 hour 30 minutes. Umpires (or coach consensus) have discretion to call “last inning” in an attempt to keep games close to the 1 hr 30 minute total length.
- A mercy rule is in effect. If a team is leading by 12 or more runs after 3 innings or 10 or more runs after 4 innings, or 8 runs after 5 innings.

Equipment

- Only fastpitch softball bats may be used. Must be labeled as ASA or USSSA. No baseball bats.
- Helmets must have a facemask
- Fielding masks are highly recommended but not required.

Batting and Baserunning

- Leading off and stealing are allowed at all times. This includes stealing home on passed balls.
- Runners cannot lead off or steal until the ball has left the pitcher’s hand. Runners who leave early will be called “out” by the umpires.
- If an overthrow occurs, players may take the next base at their own discretion. If umpire determines that the ball has left the field of play, players will be awarded one base.
- Runners are not required to slide on every play at a base. However, runners that do not slide and make contact with a defensive player who is making a defensive play may be called out by the umpire. This is judgment call by the umpire. If a player makes intentional contact with a defensive player and does not slide may be removed from the game. This is also a judgment call by the umpire.
- The dropped third strike rule is in effect. The batter/runners can advance on a dropped third strike, if first base is not occupied with less than two outs, or with two outs and any base occupied. If the batter “commits” to going to their dug out they will be called out. (Committing is defined as leaving the batter’s box with the intent of returning to their dugout.)
- Bunting/slapping is allowed.
- Courtesy runner for the catcher with two-outs is allowed to help speed up the game.

Defense

- A total of 9 players are used on defense. 3 outfielders, infielders, and a catcher.
- Outfielders should be positioned in the grass or a minimum of 10 feet behind the infielders if the dirt infield is large.
- Each defensive position must be occupied by a single player (e.g. only one pitcher allowed).
- The infield fly rule is in effect.
- The play is dead when the pitcher has possession of the ball inside the pitcher's circle.

Pitching

- USSSA rules are followed for pitcher requirements.

Umpires

- Umpires will be provided by each park.

Playoff Policies

- All games will be 6 innings with no new innings starting after 1 hr 45 minutes.
- Seeds will be determined by team records as of specified date declared by MERBSL. Higher seed is HOME.
- Last inning will be played with unlimited runs to ensure a winner is established.
- Players must have played in 50% of the regular season games to participate.
- Umpires will be provided by each park.
- A mercy rule will be used in the playoffs. If a team is leading by 12 or more runs after 3 innings or 10 or more runs after 4 innings, or 8 runs after 5 innings the game is over.
- There is no requirement for all players to play the infield. All players must play a minimum of 3 innings and all players in attendance will be in the batting order