



**Midland  
Softball  
Association**

**2025  
Bylaws, Playing  
Rules & Umpires**

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***Approved on April 10, 2023***

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\*Red verbiage designates changes that occurred at the most recent Annual Meeting.

## **ARTICLE I**

### **ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURES**

#### **1 TITLE OF ORGANIZATION**

This organization shall be known as the Midland Softball Association, Inc. (MSA).

The Midland Softball Association, Inc. shall be a 501-C4 entity.

#### **2 OBJECTIVES**

To assist in the promotion and improvement of the game of Softball among those who engage in the sport solely for the pleasure and physical, mental, and social benefits they derive there-from.

To educate the public regarding the excellent qualities of the game for players and spectators of all ages and sexes.

To keep the game on a high amateur plane, out of the hands of private promoters interested in personal gain.

To assist in the formation of the rules for the game of Softball.

To establish rules for the conduct of and assist in promotion of local tournaments.

#### **3 ANTI-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY**

It is the MSA's policy to provide full, equal and nondiscriminatory access to its leagues in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. It is the policy of the MSA that all policies and rules with respect to the MSA's leagues are applied consistently without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, lawful source of income, disability, or any other legally protected classification.

#### **4 GOVERNMENT**

The governing board of this Association shall be the Executive Board.

The Executive Board shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, the Commissioner, Umpire-in-Chief and up to but not more than four (4) At-Large Board Members.

The Executive Board shall be empowered to delegate its' authority to an Executive Committee composed of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Commissioner to expedite rulings in the event that only one or two matters need to be acted on by the Board. The Executive Committee must have a quorum of three (3) members, and all matters brought before the Committee shall be reported to the Board in writing.

Each person who is or was a trustee, director, member, officer or member of a committee of the corporation and each person who serves or has served at the request of the corporation, as a trustee, director, officer, partner, employee or agent of any other corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise shall be indemnified by the corporation to the fullest extent permitted by the corporation laws of the State of Michigan as they may be in effect from time to time. The corporation may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any such person against any liability asserted against and incurred by such person in any such capacity or arising out of his status as such, whether or not the corporation would have power to indemnify such person against such liability under the preceding sentence. The corporation may to the extent authorized from time to time by the Board, grant rights to indemnification to any employee or agent of the corporation to the fullest extent provided under the laws of the State of Michigan as they may be in effect from time to time.

#### **5 ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE BOARD**

President. The President shall be a member of the preceding year's Board.

President, Vice-President, Secretary, Historian and Treasurer. Members of the Association at the annual business meeting shall elect the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Historian and Treasurer during the month of March or April.

Divisional Representatives. All Divisional Representatives shall be elected by their respective divisions during the month of March or April, or as soon thereafter as practical.

Commissioner. The City of Midland Department of Parks and Recreation shall designate a qualified member of its staff to serve as Commissioner.

Umpire Representative. The Umpire Representative shall be the Umpire-in-Chief.

## **6 DUTIES OF EXECUTIVE BOARD**

The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Association. He shall preside at the annual meeting and such other meetings of the Association as may be called. He shall appoint such committees as may serve the best interests of the Association. He shall appoint qualified members of the Association to any vacancies occurring on the Executive Board. He shall be one of the authorized signatories on the bank accounts of the Association. He shall serve as the At-Large Commissioner for District 16 for USA Softball of Michigan.

The Vice-President shall assist the President as shall assume the responsibilities of the President's duties in the absence of said President. He shall be one of the authorized signatories on the bank accounts.

The Secretary shall keep minutes of all meetings of the Association and the Executive Board, including names of those present; issue notices and bulletins; and file one copy of such minutes, notices and bulletins with the Commissioner.

The Treasurer shall maintain bank accounts in the name of the Association, all of which shall require two of four authorized signatures; receive and disburse all moneys for the Association and keep an accurate monthly accounting thereof, one copy of which he shall file with the Commissioner and one copy with the President. He shall be one of the authorized signatories on the bank accounts of the Association. He shall not negotiate or issue any check or other instrument drawn on the accounts of the Association unless such check or instrument is endorsed or signed by two of the four authorized signatories.

The Historian shall provide insight and guidance to the Board on past decisions and policies that has shaped MSA Softball.

The Commissioner shall issue memberships to qualified teams and team members, rule on interpretations of all rules pertaining to the players, league regulations or any other matter of dispute that comes before the Association, except as otherwise provided herein. He shall be one of the authorized signatories on the bank accounts.

## **7 MEMBERSHIP**

Sponsor Membership: A person, firm, or organization that finances a team's entry fee.

Team Membership: Teams will be allowed membership when they have 12 or more players and play a regular schedule of games sanctioned by the MSA.

Player Membership: A player who meets the MSA eligibility requirements and pays his membership fees.

A non-player who wishes to become a member of the MSA may do so by paying his membership fee.

## **8 MEETINGS**

An Annual Meeting of the membership shall be held in March or April of each year, for the purpose of conducting Association business; such as election of officers, consideration of by-law changes, proposed rule changes and adoption of financial reports.

The Executive Board meetings shall be called by the President as dictated by impending business and he shall provide notice to the board members. A quorum of the board shall be 50 percent plus one.

A seat of a member of the Executive Board shall be considered vacant if he shall miss two consecutive Board meetings, unless excused.

## **9 AMENDMENTS**

These by-laws may be amended at the annual meeting of the membership, provided:

For passage, a proposed change that has been presented to the Commissioner in writing fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting requires 60% of votes cast to be in favor of change.

For passage, an amendment coming from the floor at the annual meeting requires 75% of votes cast to be in favor of change.

The Board has the authority to make and approve changes that affect the administration of the bylaws, including but not limited to grammatical, renaming, safety changes, etc. These changes must be approved by the Executive Board.

## **10 ELIGIBILITY**

10.1 The MSA Board reserves the right to limit the number of teams. Should limits be imposed the following order of preference will be used:

- A) Teams on which the majority of the players live or work in Midland County.
- B) Teams who played in league the previous season.
- C) New teams will be considered by date of receipt of application.
- D) Teams on which the majority of the players do not live in or work in Midland County.

10.2 All players must sign a roster by July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Membership shall be open. Any member under the age of eighteen years shall be required to present their parent's or guardians' written permission before they are eligible to play in the Midland Softball Association.

Masters: Player must be fifty (50) years old by December 31 of the current Softball season.

Grand Masters: Player must be sixty (60) years old by December 31 of the current Softball season.

Men's Modified: When Women's Modified Division is NOT offered by the Midland Softball Association, females shall be allowed to play in league play.

## **11 LEAGUES**

Leagues will be determined by the Commissioner using preference data supplied by the managers and will have the final authority thereon.

The Commissioner's office will produce the original league schedule.

League winners shall be determined by the league tournament at the end of the regular season league play.

## **12 FEES**

A team fee will be required for players, coaches, managers, and other members participating in Midland Softball Association programs. The fee may vary year to year in accordance with prices.

The City of Midland assesses each adult player a fee to cover the cost associated with administration of the Softball program.

The Executive Board will determine the standard fee for the current season each year by the first of April.

Team entry fee and roster sheets are to be turned in to the Parks and Recreation office on or before the deadline date set by the Commissioner. Teams failing to have a minimum of 12 players registered by the deadline set by the Commissioner may forfeit their first game and subsequent games.

Cost for all local MSA sponsored tournaments will be decided by the Executive Board. Fees for other tournaments will be decided upon by the committee in charge.

District Tournament fees will be set by the Commissioner and administered by the Association with the Association realizing the income.

Team fees once paid, shall not be refunded once the season has begun. Exception: All fees, paid for a league that is not established may be refunded.

Servicemen's Exception: When returning from the Armed Forces they are eligible to play immediately after they sign their team roster with the Parks and Recreation Department.

### **13 CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS**

A player's signature on the team's roster must be on file with the Department of Parks and Recreation, on each team's roster being played, before a player is eligible to play.

A team, team member or manager may be suspended from further league or tournament play for a period of one (1) year for using a non-rostered player. There shall be an appeal allowed.

A player may be listed on any number of rosters in the same division provided that they are not in the same league.

Contract Deadlines. Any player may join the league at any time; however, no contracts will be accepted after June 15<sup>th</sup> for MUSA SOFTBALL state tournament play. Furthermore, no contracts will be accepted for League Tournament play after the date set by the Commissioner.

No player's signature will be considered valid if the player, having played previously on a different team, has not turned in his complete uniform to the former manager. It will be the manager's responsibility to inform the Midland Softball Association of any outstanding uniforms before the start of the next Softball season. The name of the player shall be placed on the ineligible list.

### **14 RELEASES AND TRANSFERS**

A manager may release a player at any time during the regular season. The manager is responsible for notifying the said player of his release. A release must be on file with the Department of Parks and Recreation before it is effective. A player may transfer or released (once per season) without paying an additional player fee.

In the case where a player asks for his release and manager refuses to grant it, the player may appeal, in writing, to the Executive Board, which may hold a hearing and/or issue a release for the player depending upon the circumstances of the case.

### **15 LEAGUE TOURNAMENTS**

Any local or league tournament will be scheduled and conducted by the Commissioner's office.

A) In the event of a tie for league tournament seeding, the tiebreaker will be:

- i. Head-to-head win-loss record (if only two teams exist.)
- ii. Runs allowed during the regular season.
- iii. Runs scored during the regular season.
- iv. Coin flip.

### **16 HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP**

Honorary Life Membership in the Midland Softball Association will be awarded to members or former members who have furthered the objectives of the Association and in recognition of either outstanding service to Softball or in Softball. The award shall consist of an appropriately framed certificate.

Awards will be made at an appropriate Association activity. A maximum of four (4) Honorary Life Memberships may be awarded each year.

Selections shall be made by the Board no later than August 1 from nominations presented by members.

Nominations for the award shall be received by the MSA Board until July 15. Nominations must be in writing and must be submitted to the Parks and Recreation Office.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **PLAYING RULES**

MSA games will be governed by USA Softball rules except where a specific local rule has been adopted herein. Modified-pitch softball will share local rules adopted for fast-pitch.

#### **1 PRACTICE TIME**

Each team will be allowed five minutes of pre-game practice time on the infield within the fifteen minutes prior to game 1 of the evening. Pre-game warm-up (infield practice) will not be permitted or scheduled on the infield for teams playing all subsequent games.

(Fast-pitch/modified) at the start of the game or when a new pitcher is substituted, the pitcher shall be allowed five warm up pitches. At the start of any subsequent half inning, the pitcher shall be allowed three warm up pitches. Any pitcher returning in the same half inning shall be allowed no warm up pitches. This does not apply if the umpire delays the start of play due to substitution, conference, injuries, etc. The plate umpire has the discretion to increase this number due to inclement weather or injury.

#### **2 GAME TIMES AND FORFEIT ALLOWANCE**

Forfeit time is game time.

Subsequent games shall not start before the regular scheduled game time, nor within five (5) minutes after the completion of the previous game, whichever occurs latest.

Provided the game is not tied, no new inning shall start after an elapsed time of one (1) hour and thirty (30) minutes from the starting time of all fast pitch and modified games, and no new inning shall start after an elapsed time of one (1) hour and fifteen (15) minutes from the starting time of the game of all slow pitch games. If the game is tied after the time limit has elapsed:

- A) All slow pitch games will start the next inning, and each half inning thereafter, with the offensive team beginning its turn at bat with the player who scheduled to bat last in that respective half inning being placed on second base until the completion of the next inning in which the tie is broken in accordance with Article 2; 9.1. If a team is playing shorthanded and the runner who is to be placed on second base is the absent player, do not declare an out. The player whose name precedes the absent player shall be placed on second base. NOTE: A substitute may be inserted for the runner.
- B) All fast pitch and modified games will start the next inning, and each half inning thereafter, with the offensive team beginning its turn at bat with the player who scheduled to bat last in that respective half inning being placed on second base until the completion of the next inning in which the tie is broken in accordance with Article 2; 9.1. If a team is playing shorthanded and the runner who is to be placed on second base is the absent player, do not declare an out. The player whose name precedes the absent player shall be placed on second base. NOTE: A substitute may be inserted for the runner.

#### **3 POSTPONEMENTS**

No games shall be postponed except in case of inclement weather. Games postponed due to inclement weather may be rescheduled within the sole discretion of the Commissioner; or provided such game shall be rescheduled when it has a bearing on a team's qualifications for the play-offs or when it would prevent two teams from meeting during the entire season. If all games between two teams were postponed, they shall be rescheduled at least once and shall decide the choice of bat by flip of a coin.

#### **4 LIGHTNING**

Unless an advanced lightening detection device is in use, if activity has been suspended due to lightning, the umpire should wait at least 30 minutes after the last lightning flash or sound of thunder prior to resuming activity. Unless an advanced lightning detection device is in use, each time additional lightning is observed or thunder is heard, the minimum 30-minute waiting period should be reset. A clear sky or lack of rainfall are not adequate indicators for resuming play unless an advanced lightning detection device is in use, the minimum 30-minute return to play waiting period should not be shortened. Play should not be resumed even after the 30-minute waiting period if any signs of thunderstorm activity remain in the area or if the weather forecast indicates the threat is not over.



**5 MINIMUM NUMBER OF PLAYERS RULE****Men's Slow pitch**

- A) Nine (9) players are required to begin a game.
- B) If the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) player becomes available for play after the game has started, he shall enter the game at the first opportunity and he shall be placed number ten (10) in the batting order.

**Women's Slow Pitch**

- C) Women's slow pitch will not follow the USA Softball shorthanded rule regarding the vacant position in the batting order. If only nine players bat, there will not be an out for the 10<sup>th</sup> batter.

**Coed**

- D) Nine (9) players, four (4) men and five (5) women or five (5) men and four (4) women, are required to begin a game in coed play with the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) player position taking an out.

**Fast pitch/modified**

- E) Eight players are required to begin a game.
- F) In fast pitch, if a team begins with eight (8), they must finish with a minimum of eight (8). No DP will be used.
- G) If the ninth (9<sup>th</sup>) player becomes available for play after the game has started, he shall enter the game at the first opportunity and he shall be placed as number nine (9) in the batting order.
- H) If the Executive Board finds a team has violated the spirit of this rule, it shall declare a forfeit of all games in which such team has used eight (8) players. Further, such team shall be required to field a complete team for all games for the remainder of the season.

**6 FORFEIT RULES**

If a team is unable to field a team as set forth in Minimum Number of Players Section prior to 5:00 p.m., the Manager shall notify the Parks and Recreation Department in writing and confirm that someone from the Department has received the notice. A Department representative will contact the opposing team's Manager to make the forfeit official. If all requirements have been met, the game will be recorded as a forfeit and the opponent will not need to be present at the field.

If a team is unable to field a team as set forth in Minimum Number of Players Section on the field, the plate umpire shall declare such team a loser by forfeit.

The manager of the opposite team shall be required to list a complete starting line-up of players present at the game site and present it to the umpire.

If neither team has a sufficient number of players present at the game site and available to play, a double forfeit shall be declared.

Any team, which forfeits two (2) games during the season, shall be reported to the Board for review. The Board may suspend the team for the remainder of the season if circumstances warrant a suspension.

**7 BATTING**

**All slow pitch leagues will use a 1-1 count upon entering the batter's box. (2024)**

**8 COURTESY RUNNER RULE**

Rule 8, Section 9, B2 (All leagues except seniors) any eligible player on the official line-up including available substitutes may be used as a courtesy runner. A courtesy runner may be used once per inning.

**9 RUNS AHEAD RULE**

All leagues will observe the Runs Ahead Rule.

If one team is leading by the number of RUNS listed in the chart below after the indicated amount of INNINGS in the particular type of GAME, and the opposing team has had equal or more turns at bat, the team leading shall be declared the winner.

<u>GAME</u>	<u>RUNS AHEAD</u>	<u>INNING</u>
<b>Slow Pitch</b>	Twenty (20)	After 3
	Fifteen (15)	After 4
	Ten (10)	After 5
<b>Modified</b>	Fifteen (15)	After 3
	Twelve (12)	After 4
	Ten (10)	After 5
<b>Fast Pitch</b>	Fifteen (15)	After 3
	Ten (10)	After 4
	Seven (7)	After 5

## 10 COMPLETE GAMES

A game shall be considered complete when called by the umpire:

- A) On account of darkness, rain or other inclement weather, provided that five (5) or more innings have been played or if the team second at bat has scored more runs in four or more innings than the other team has scored in five or more innings. Exception: No game will end in a tie regardless of time limit (see Game Times and Forfeit Allowance).
- B) If the home team is leading after 3½ or 4½ innings and the Runs Ahead Rule has been invoked.
- C) The time limit has been exceeded.
- D) League. If five innings have not been completed, the game will be rescheduled and will start over from the beginning.
- E) Tournament. USA Softball Rule Applied (Suspension). A regulation game shall consist of seven innings. A full seven innings need not be played if the team second at bat scores more runs in six and one-half innings and/or before the third out in the last of the seventh inning, or the run-ahead rule is applied. All games shall be started and finished on the diamond where scheduled; however, the plate umpire may transfer the game to another diamond at the same complex, if such diamond is available and in more playable condition.

If a game is delayed due to weather or any other reason, the game shall proceed at a time designated by the umpire on the same day. If it cannot be played on the same day, it shall be rescheduled at the discretion of the Commissioner.

In all League tournament play a twilight game that is tied at the end of a complete inning may be completed under the lights; in this instance the section Complete Games shall apply.

## 11 PLAYER CONDUCT

If a player is ejected from a league game, he shall be suspended for the next league game or league tournament game played by his team. There shall be no appeal.

A player shall be suspended for the next two (2) league or league tournament games played by their team for the following reasons. There shall be no appeal.

- A) The second time a player is ejected from a game in one season
- B) If a person is ejected for crashing into a defensive person holding the ball; waiting to make a tag
- C) If a player is ejected from three league or league tournament games in a season, he shall be suspended for a period of twelve months from the date of the third suspension. There shall be an appeal allowed.

Any player striking or pushing the umpire shall be suspended for a period of twelve (12) months from the date of such incident. There shall be an appeal from such suspension provided it is made within two business days of the incident.

Any display of violent or abusive behavior by a MSA member reported by a MSA member, spectator or umpire to the Board and documented, may be reviewed for disciplinary consideration.

If a suspended player participates in a game his team shall forfeit the game and the length of time remaining in player's suspension shall be doubled.

A player suspended, either as a result of an ejection from a previous game or as a direct result of MSA Board action, shall be subject to the following restrictions:

- D) He/she shall be limited to the role of a passive spectator at any games involving his team or league.
- E) He/she shall be restricted to those areas specifically designated for spectators. In either case he/she shall be clearly away from the bench area of either team.
- F) His/her interaction with players of both teams and game officials will be limited to spontaneously cheering an outstanding play.
- G) Any violation of the above will result in a forfeited game as well as doubling of the games remaining in the suspension.

Any player or team representative discovered consuming alcohol or illegal drugs during a game would be ejected. Alcohol and or illegal drugs will not be brought into the playing field or into the bench area. A repeat offense during a season may result in disciplinary action by the Midland Softball Association Board.

Once a bat is presented for pre-game umpire inspection, it must stay on the bat rack or on the fence adjacent to the rack for the remainder of the game.

## **12 REINSTATEMENT**

Any player suspended under the provision of the sub-sections 11.3 or 11.4 must petition the Executive Board for reinstatement before being eligible to play.

## **13 PROTESTS**

The Protest Committee will consist of at least six members of the Board of the MSA. Protest will be heard within two weeks of the filing of the written protest.

A protest form, in duplicate, shall be filed with the Commissioner at the Parks and Recreation

Playing Rules. Within twenty-four (24) hours of the incident protested by the representative of the team lodging the protest.

Eligibility Rules. At any time during the season

A protest fee of \$30.00 shall be paid when a playing rule protest is filed. Eligibility protests will pay no fee. Such fee shall be refundable only if the Protest Committee determines there was substantial basis in fact for the protest.

No protests shall be accepted by the Commissioner unless Rule 9 of the USA Softball Official Softball Rules has been followed.

Protests during the league tournament play shall be made at the time the alleged infraction of the rules occurs and the protest must be settled before the game continues. Umpires are to settle field protest; however, they may confer with the Commissioner and/or MSUA Representative, if present. An appeal shall not postpone the game.

## **14 SCORING AND RECORDS**

The home team shall designate the official scorer for each game. It shall be the responsibility of each team to check periodically with the scorer to be sure that there is no disagreement.

## **15 EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATIONS**

All equipment must meet current USA Softball specifications.

Balls.

- A) The Association will furnish top grade balls. The Board will select the make of ball to be used.

Bats.

- B) All bats must be USA Softball approved and must have the ASA logo.
- C) All bats must be tested and have the readable 'MASA D16' hologram label unaltered and affixed to the bat.
  - i. Bats may be spot tested at any time throughout the season by a committee from the MSA Board.
  - ii. Any bat failing inspection will immediately have the hologram sticker removed and removed from play with no violation to previous users.
  - iii. Any bat in the dugout is subject to inspection, regardless of being in a bag or not.
- D) Bats not in compliance with rules 15.3 A) & B), shall result in the bat being declared an illegal bat.
- E) Once inspected by an umpire, all bats will remain on, or in close proximity to, the bat rack, or the area that the umpire agrees to deem the bat area in the absence of a bat rack.
  - i. Bats shall not be taken or placed outside of dugout area out of the field of play.
  - ii. Bats shall not be placed in any bag or holder or case or item, etc.
  - iii. Bats seen in violation of this rule shall become altered and taken out of play for the duration of the game.
- F) Penalty for using an illegal or altered bat:
  - i. Before the game: No penalty and bat cannot be used and will be removed from bat rack area.
  - ii. Once play ball is called up to the end of the game, (even if umpire had previously passed bat for game play):
    - For using a bat without the hologram label, will result in an out, ejection, and suspension for one (1) year from the date of the occurrence for any and all MSA play excluding USA Softball state play.
- G) Equipment may be confiscated by the umpire, field director, or the MSA Board at any time, and/or if someone is injured and needs medical assistance.
- H) In the senior leagues, they will follow the bat regulations of men's slow pitch.

## **16 UNIFORMS**

It is suggested that all members of a team be dressed alike for the morale of the team.

## **17 DOUBLE FIRST BASE RULE**

If a double bag is used, the INSIDE bag will be white. The OUTSIDE bag shall be fluorescent orange. See the USA Softball rule for proper usage of the double base.

## **18 RESPONSIBILITIES OF MANAGER**

He/she will be responsible to and for his/her team in the Softball program.

## **19 DUTIES OF MANAGER**

Register their team.

Register their players.

Register for all tournaments.

Inform all players of schedule changes.

Read the USA Softball Rules and Regulations & MSA By-Laws.

Check and properly fill out the scorecard.

Inform MSA of any outstanding uniforms for ineligible list.

**20 MISCELLANEOUS**

Rules and regulations governing Grand Masters League play will be the result of collaboration between the participating teams and the Softball Commissioner. The MSA Executive Board will have the final authority thereon.

Stealing is not permitted in the following leagues: All Slow Pitch leagues (2023)

Men's Municipal Slow Pitch League Only – Three (3) home run limit per team per game and then go one-up after that. (2019)

If a team knows they are unable to field a complete team on a certain date they must notify the league director in the following instances:

- 1) Prior to season schedules being completed at the start of the season.
- 2) Mid-season in the event that games need to be rescheduled for make-ups. The Commissioner will do their best to accommodate any scheduling requests but will not guarantee any scheduling requests.
- 3) Only the first 2 games that are cancelled due to weather (mother nature) will be rescheduled for makeups.

**Diamond Reservations**

Practice or Practice Games. The Parks and Recreation Department will schedule all Softball Diamond Reservations. One reservation per team per week will be accepted. Each team will be allowed one reservation only. (2023)

Exhibition Games. Exhibition games are games involving at least one Midland team, but in which both teams are USA Softball sanctioned. The Umpire-in-Chief or the Commissioner assigns umpires. For matters of player conduct, the teams will be subject to MSA by-laws.

Diamonds are available for exhibition games. Permission must be secured from the Commissioner at least seven days prior to game with diamonds allocated by the Parks and Recreation office.



## **ARTICLE III**

### **UMPIRES**

#### **1 UMPIRE-IN-CHIEF**

He shall be selected by the umpires and serve as a voting member of the Softball Board.

He is responsible for all duties outlined in the USA Softball Umpires Manual.

He will assist the Parks and Recreation office in rating and assigning umpires to league games.

He will make all umpire assignments as pertains to all exhibition and tournament games excluding district and regional play.

Compensation. He will receive compensation equivalent to the fast pitch/modified pay rate, or whichever pay rate is higher, per week beginning the first week of scheduled play and continuing through season end.

He should have a minimum of seven (7) days' notice for assignment of umpires for exhibition and tournament games.

Recommendations will be accepted from sponsoring managers or groups.

#### **2 UMPIRES**

Umpires for all MSA Softball / USA Softball of Michigan / USA Softball sponsored games will be selected from the Umpires Organization (MSUA), which is part of the MSA, and supervised by the Softball Commissioner.

All officials must have completed the instruction program as sanctioned by the MSA.

State Registration. All officials must be registered with the USA Softball of Michigan and with USA Softball as officials.

Duties of the umpires are as follows:

- A) Umpires are responsible for knowledge of and execution of all materials included in the USA Softball Official Guide, USA Softball Umpires Manual, USA Softball Official Scorers Manual, and MSA by-laws.
- B) After the game, secure possession of the game balls and completed scorecard.
- C) Report conducts of game, manager, coaches, spectators, and unusual incidents.

#### **3 UMPIRE CLINICS**

A clinic will be held each year:

- A) To promote better softball through adequate training prior to the softball season
- B) To encourage and obtain additional people to actively engage in umpiring
- C) To increase the number of local people who can be sanctioned by the state as a qualified umpire.

# **MIDLAND SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION**

## **2025 COED SUMMER RULES**

1. **Coed teams consist of 10 players; five males and five females.** Each team must have a minimum of nine (9) players to start the game, five (5) male and four (4) female, or five (5) female and four (4) male with the tenth player position taking an out. There are no requirements on positions played in league play.
2. 175' line is an arc 175' from home plate that runs from foul line to foul line. When a player is at bat, no outfielder may be within that arc until the ball is hit. Infielders must play normal depth and only four infielders in addition to the pitcher and catcher are allowed. Comment on rule 9: **Penalty for not staying outside the 175' line will be single to the batter, or the result of the previous play, whichever is greater.** Example: Player at bat, outfielder is within 175' arc, player hits the ball. Ball gets past fielder, runners on base score and batter ends up on second. Play stands, result of play is greater than the within arc penalty. Example: Player at bat, outfield is within arc. Player hits ball and outfield makes a catch. Dead ball, batter is awarded first base, all other base runners advance one base if forced.
3. When substitutes are used, a male player can only replace another male player, and a female player can only replace a female player.
4. The batting order must alternate between male and female players. The first batter in the line-up can be either male or female.
5. If a male batter walks, he is awarded second base. The next batter (a female) will bat.  
**EXCEPTION:** With two outs, the female batter has the option to walk or bat.
6. Players may only wear molded cleats, all-purpose shoes or tennis shoes in coed games. Players wearing metal cleats will not be allowed to play.
7. It is strongly recommended, for safety purposes, that teams use a male pitcher.
8. The extra player rule in coed requires that when used, it must be with two extra players, one male and one female. **There is no designated runner allowed in coed.**
9. The current USA Softball runs ahead rule will be in effect for all games.
10. Please be aware of the USA Softball short-handed rule.
11. Batters will start with a 1-1 count.

## 2025 Midland Softball Association Gold Grand Masters (60+) League



### Supplemental Rules of the Game

**THE GOLD GRAND MASTERS LEAGUE RULES AND REGULATIONS WILL BE GOVERNED BY MSA AND ASA RULES. ACCORDING TO THE MSA BYLAW 37.1 “Rules and regulations governing Grand Masters League play will be the result of collaboration between the participating teams and the Softball Commissioner. The Commissioner will have the final authority with approval of the MSA board.”**

#### **GAME RULES**

1. The defensive line-up may consist of 11 players.
2. A team must start and finish with a minimum of 9 players. Players may be borrowed from another team. (A minimum of 8 players must be from the team which is short players.)  
Penalty - forfeit.
3. Games are to be of 7 innings. No new inning shall start after an elapsed time of **one hour and fifteen minutes** from the starting time of the game. All slow pitch games will continue without interruption until the completion of the next inning in which the tie is broken.
4. Forfeit time is game time.
5. Relaxed step (reflex action) - if a runner leaves base unintentionally, and in the umpire's judgment, without evidence of proceeding to the next base, the runner will not be called out.
6. No Run Ahead Rule (Rev 2019)
7. If a player is injured, that player can be removed from the batting order without it becoming a automatic out. The injured player will be ineligible to play for the rest of the day. (Rev. 2011)
8. There will be no time limit in tournament play. (Rev 2015)
9. Batters will start with 1 strike and 1 ball for a count. (Rev 2016)
10. 175' line is an arc 175' from home plate that runs from foul line to foul line. When a player is at bat, no outfielder may be within that arc until the ball is hit. Infielders must play normal depth and only five infielders in addition to the pitcher and catcher are allowed. The 11<sup>th</sup> player can still play anywhere on the field. (Rev 2016)



### **PITCHING REGULATION**

1. A strike zone mat will be used. The mat will be seventeen (17) inches wide and twenty-four (24) inches long measuring from the end of the mat to the tip of each side that abuts to the back side of home plate. The end of the mat that abuts to the home plate shall have a "V" shaped notch that will conform to the outline of the backside of the plate. (Rev. 2006)
2. Legal pitching: the ball striking any portion of the mat or home plate will be a strike.
3. Height of a legal pitch: Must be six (6) feet high to twelve (12) feet high from the playing surface.

### **PITCHING SAFETY RULES**

The pitcher must use protective gear which consists of a mask, shin guards and an optional chest protector. (Rev. 2019)

### **BASE RUNNING RULE**

1. Bases will be 65'. (Rev. 2014)
2. There will be no running through on second and third base. Sliding is optional. (Rev. 2011)
3. A base runner advancing home: all plays at home on a base runner advancing home **will be a force play.**

### **NO FORFEIT RULE**

1. There will be no forfeit if a team fields a minimum of nine (9) players. Eight players must be rostered players of that team.
2. When a team cannot field nine (9) of its own team members, they may borrow players from the other teams in the Gold Grand Masters League to make up to eleven (11) players. (95) (League play only).
3. If a player of the borrowing team arrives, the borrowed player must relinquish his position to the borrowing team's player immediately.

## **PLAYER ELIGIBILITY**

1. A player who is, or will attain the required age of 60 by **December 31st** of the current year may play in any game of the current year. **A player must play in a regular season game, in order to be eligible for playoff games.**
2. Max roster is 18 players (Rev 2016)

## **NUMBER OF PLAYERS ALLOWED TO PLAY RULE**

1. Maximum number of players allowed on a defensive team is eleven (11).
2. Minimum number of players allowed on a defensive team is nine (9).
3. Maximum number of players allowed on an offensive team is UNLIMITED.
  - A. If a team starts with eleven or more, the number of offensive players shall not exceed the number of players listed on the line up card at the beginning of the game. All players not listed on the line up card may be used as substitutes.
  - B. If a team starts with less than eleven, players may be inserted into the line up but shall total no more than eleven. All others may join the game as substitutes.
4. Minimum number of players allowed on an offensive team is nine (9), less than nine (9) players constitute a forfeit.

## **WHAT CONSTITUTES A HALF INNING RULE**

1. For the first (1st) thru sixth (6th) innings a half inning will terminate when the offensive team either makes three (3) outs, scores **four (4)** runs, or scores enough runs to catch up or tie. Ex. Top of 3rd, visitors losing by 10 – visitors can score **up to** 10 to catch up. (Revised 2025)
2. For the seventh (7th) inning **(and beyond, in case of a tie)**, a half inning will terminate when the offensive team makes three (3) outs, no limit on runs; an exception to this rule would be if the home team scores enough runs to win the game in the seventh (7th) inning **(or beyond, in case of a tie)**. (Revised 2025)

## **COURTESY RUNNER RULE**

1. May be any player on the team, but he may only run once per inning as a courtesy runner.
2. Cannot run for the "batter". Batter must reach first base on his own.

3. May replace a runner at any base for any reason. A runner replaced by a courtesy runner may remain in the game.

### **DOUBLE FIRST BASE RULE**

1. A double bag may be used at first base. The INSIDE bag shall be for the use of the defensive fielder. Any use of the OUTSIDE bag by a defensive fielder shall not be considered. The OUTSIDE bag shall be for the use of the base runner coming from home plate. The runner from home plate MAY use the INSIDE bag only if a play at first base IS NOT IMMINENT, i.e., an extra-base hit to the outfield. The OUTSIDE bag shall be painted fluorescent orange.

### **COMMITMENT LINE RULE**

1. **A COMMITMENT LINE:** A three-foot long, three inch wide commitment line shall be marked perpendicular to the foul line and place 32'-6" from third base. Once a runners foot touches the ground on or past the commitment line, the runner may not return to third base, the runner must continue toward the scoring plate. Violations will result in an out.
2. A base runner that has not advanced past the commitment line between third base and home plate may return to third base at his own risk of being tagged out by a defensive player.
3. A runner that has crossed the commitment line but not reached the scoring plate shall be declared OUT if: A defensive player in possession of the ball touches home plate.

### **SCORING PLATE RULE**

1. **A SCORING PLATE:** A scoring plate shall be placed eight feet from the back tip of home plate on an extended line from first base. A line shall be drawn from third base to the scoring plate. **The scoring plate is for use by the offensive player only.**
2. **All plays at the plate shall be force plays.** A defender shall record an out at the plate by having possession of the ball and tagging home plate prior to the runner touching the scoring plate. If a defender attempts to tag an offensive player the runner shall be called safe. **A runner who attempts to score by touching other than the scoring plate shall be called out.**

### **SHOE RULE**

1. **No metal cleats or spikes may be used.**

# 2025 Midland Softball Association Silver Grand Masters (50+) League

## Supplemental Rules of the Game

**THE SILVER GRAND MASTERS LEAGUE RULES AND REGULATIONS WILL BE GOVERNED BY MSA AND ASA RULES. ACCORDING TO THE MSA BYLAW 37.1 “Rules and regulations governing Grand Masters League play will be the result of collaboration between the participating teams and the Softball Commissioner. The Commissioner will have the final authority with the approval of the MSA board.”**

### **GAME RULES**

1. The defensive line-up may consist of eleven (11) players.
2. A team must start and finish with a minimum of nine (9) players. Players may be borrowed from another team. (A minimum of eight (8) players must be from the team which is short players.) Penalty - forfeit.
3. Games are to be of seven (7) innings. No new inning shall start after an elapsed time of **one (1) hour and fifteen (15) minutes** from the starting time of the game. All slow pitch games will continue without interruption until the completion of the next inning in which the tie is broken.
4. Forfeit time is game time.
5. Relaxed step (reflex action) - if a runner leaves base unintentionally, and in the umpire's judgment, without evidence of proceeding to the next base, the runner will not be called out.
6. The run ahead rule for all games will be 12 runs after 5 innings (4 ½ if the home team is ahead). Last revised 2.17.10
7. If a player is injured, that player can be removed from the batting order without it becoming an automatic out. The injured player will be ineligible to play for the rest of the day. (Rev. 2011)
8. There will be no time limit in tournament play. (Rev 2015)
9. Batter shall assume a 1-1 count upon entering the batter's box (Rev. 2019)
10. 175' line is an arc 175' from home plate that runs from foul line to foul line. When a player is at bat, no outfielder may be within that arc until the ball is hit. Infielders must play normal depth and only five infielders in addition to the pitcher and catcher are allowed. The 11<sup>th</sup> player can still play anywhere on the field. (Rev. 2019)

### **PITCHING REGULATION**

4. A strike zone mat will be used. The mat will be seventeen (17) inches wide and twenty-four (24) inches long measuring from the end of the mat to the tip of each side that abuts to the back side of home plate. The end of the mat that abuts to the home plate shall have a "V" shaped notch that will conform to the outline of the backside of the plate. (Rev. 2006)
5. Legal pitching: the ball striking any portion of the mat or home plate will be a strike.
6. Height of a legal pitch: Must be six (6) feet high to twelve (12) feet high from the playing surface.

### **PITCHING SAFETY RULES**

The pitcher must use protective gear which consists of a mask, shin guards and an optional chest protector. (Rev 2019)

#### **BASE RUNNING RULE**

4. Bases will be 65'. (Rev. 2014)
5. There will be no running through on second and third base. Sliding will be optional. (Rev. 2011)
6. A base runner advancing home: **all plays at home on a base runner advancing home will be a force play.**

### **NO FORFEIT RULE**

1. There will be no forfeit if a team fields a minimum of nine (9) players. Eight players must be rostered players of that team.
2. When a team cannot field nine (9) of its own team members, they can borrow players from any of the other teams in the Silver Grand Masters League to make up to eleven (11) players. (95) (League play only).
3. If a player of the borrowing team arrives, the borrowed player must relinquish his position to the borrowing team's player immediately.

**PLAYER ELIGIBILITY: Any player who is, or will attain the required age of 50 by December 31st of the current year may play in any game of that season.** A player must play in a regular season game, in order to be eligible for playoff games.

### **NUMBER OF PLAYERS ALLOWED TO PLAY RULE**

1. Maximum number of players allowed on a defensive team is eleven (11).
2. Minimum number of players allowed on a defensive team is nine (9).
3. Maximum number of players allowed on an offensive team is **UNLIMITED**.
  - A. If a team starts with eleven or more, the number of offensive players shall not exceed the number of players listed on the line up card at the beginning of the game. All players not listed on the lineup card may be used as substitutes.
  - B. If a team starts with less than eleven, players may be inserted into the line up but shall total no more than eleven. All others may join the game as substitutes.
4. Minimum players allowed to be used on an offensive team will be nine (9), less than nine (9) players constitutes a forfeit.

### **WHAT CONSTITUTES A HALF INNING RULE**

1. A half inning will terminate when the offensive team either makes three (3) outs, scores five runs, or scores more than 5 runs to catch up or tie. Ex. Top of 3<sup>rd</sup>, visitors losing by 10 – visitors can score 10 to catch up. In the bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning the home team will be able to catch up and go up by 1 run to win. (Revised 2019)

### **COURTESY RUNNER RULE**

1. May be any player on the team, but he may only run once per inning as a courtesy runner.
2. Cannot run for the "batter". Batter must reach first base on his own.
3. May replace a runner at any base for any reason. A runner replaced by a courtesy runner may remain in the game.

**DOUBLE FIRST BASE RULE:** A double bag may be used at first base. The INSIDE bag shall be for the use of the defensive fielder. Any use of the OUTSIDE bag by a defensive fielder shall not be considered. The OUTSIDE bag shall be for the use of the base runner coming from home plate. The runner from home plate MAY use the INSIDE bag only if a play at first base IS NOT IMMINENT, i.e., an extra-base hit to the outfield. The OUTSIDE bag shall be painted fluorescent orange.

### **COMMITMENT LINE RULE**

1. **A COMMITMENT LINE:** A three-foot long, three inch wide commitment line shall be marked perpendicular to the foul line and placed 32'-6" from third base. Once a runner's foot touches the ground on or past the commitment line, the runner may not return to third base, the runner must continue toward the scoring plate. Violations will result in an out.
2. A base runner that has not advanced past the commitment line between third base and home plate may return to third base at his own risk of being tagged out by a defensive player.
3. A runner that has passed the COMMITMENT LINE but not reached the SCORING PLATE shall be declared OUT if: A defensive player in possession of the ball touches home plate.

### **SCORING PLATE RULE**

1. **A SCORING PLATE:** A scoring plate shall be placed eight feet from the back tip of home plate on an extended line from first base. A line shall be drawn from third base to the scoring plate. **The scoring plate is for use by the offensive player only.**
2. **All plays at the plate shall be force plays.** A defender shall record an out at the plate by having possession of the ball and tagging home plate prior to the runner touching the scoring plate. If a defender attempts to tag an offensive player the runner shall be called safe. **A runner who attempts to score by touching other than the scoring plate shall be called out.**

### **SHOE RULE**

1. **No metal cleats or spikes may be used.**

# **MSA MEN'S FAST PITCH RULES**

## **(Clarification of rules and bylaws)**

### **BAT TESTING – (Article II 15.3)**

- D) All bats must be USA Softball approved and must have the ASA logo.
- E) All bats must be tested and have the readable 'MASA D16' hologram label unaltered and affixed to the bat.
- F) Penalty for using an illegal or altered bat:
  - Before the game: No penalty and bat cannot be used and will be removed from bat rack area.
  - Once play ball is called up to the end of the game, (even if umpire had previously passed bat for game play): For using a bat without the hologram label, will result in an out, ejection, and suspension for one (1) year from the date of the occurrence for any and all MSA play excluding USA Softball state play.
- G) Equipment may be confiscated by the umpire, field director, or the MSA Board at any time, and/or if someone is injured and needs medical assistance.

**Time Limit (Article II 2.3)** – Provided the game is not tied , no new inning shall start after 1 hour and 30 minutes.

**TIE BREAKER (Article II 2.3 B)** - The international tie-breaker rule is in effect for all games tied after the 7th inning.

**COURTESY RUNNER TEAM RULE (Article II 8.1)** - Rule 8, Section 9, B2 (All leagues except Seniors) Any eligible player on the official line-up including available substitutes may be used as a courtesy runner. A courtesy runner may be used once per inning.

**COURTESY RUNNER PITCHER/CATCHER RULE** – USA Rule Book – Rule 8, Section 10

**RUN AHEAD RUN (Article II 9.2)** - If one team is leading by the number of RUNS listed in the chart below after the indicated amount of INNINGS in the particular type of GAME, and the opposing team has had equal or more turns at bat, the team leading shall be declared the winner.

<b><u>GAME</u></b>	<b><u>RUNS AHEAD</u></b>	<b><u>INNING</u></b>
<b>Fast Pitch</b>	Fifteen (15)	After 3
	Ten (10)	After 4
	Seven (7)	After 5

All other rules will follow USA SOFTBALL RULE BOOK & MSA Bylaw



# **Playoff Tournament Rules FAQ**

- 1) Are there different Tournament Rules? Rules are the same as regular season
- 2) Who is home team? Highest seeded team is home team throughout the tournament
- 3) Is there a time limit? Yes, same as regular season  
(Exception: Grand Masters have no time limit)
- 4) How many games per night? Possible multiple games per night depending on winning or losing.
- 5) Do I win league because I am #1 seed? NO! The Playoff Tournament champion will be the league champion.
- 6) Can I pick up players? No! Players must have already been on your roster no later than July 15.
- 7) What if I have to forfeit the 6:30 game but have enough players to play the 9:00 game? Please send your forfeit in writing to [jstewart@midland-mi.org](mailto:jstewart@midland-mi.org). Please explain that your team will only forfeit the 6:30 game but you will have enough for the 9:00 game. This way I can contact the other team and make it official. If you do not hear from Midland Parks and Recreation the forfeit is not official and your team will need to show up to the field to turn in a lineup card.

# MIDLAND SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

## 2025 FALL RULES

1. Pick-up players are allowed in the fall leagues.
  - a. Teams may pick up AS MANY PLAYERS YOU NEED from other teams on your night of play to start the game.
  - b. With this allowance, you are not allowed to pick up players just to bat extra players; (i.e. if you have seven players, you can pick up three to get to 10, but not five to bat 12.)
  - c. **Pickup players must bat at the end/bottom of your lineup.**
2. All leagues will utilize the 12" Ball Hot Dot softball.
3. The current USA softball runs-ahead rule will be in effect for all games.
4. The USA softball short-handed rule will be in effect regardless of number of batters.
5. Stealing is not allowed.
6. Tie games will be played out and international tiebreaker rule applies.
7. Batters will start with a 1-1 count. There is no courtesy foul ball.
8. Courtesy Runner:
  - a. Any eligible player, whether in the current line-up or not, may be used as a courtesy runner.
  - b. Men's: A courtesy runner may be used once per inning.
  - c. Co-ed: A courtesy runner may be used once per inning per gender and male for male and female for female and not interchangeable.
  - d. Courtesy runners cannot be a pick-up player that is not in the lineup.
9. **Three home run limit (and then one-up) is in effect for all leagues.**
  - a. Each team is allowed to hit three home runs.
  - b. Once both teams have reached their allotted home run limit; either team may hit an additional home run, to go **one-up**; however, no team may ever go more than one home run up on the other team, after reaching their limit of three. Any home run hit over the limit of three will result in a dead ball out.
  - c. If one team does not hit three homeruns, then the one-up rule will not be used.
  - d. Considering the bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning or later, the home team, may hit any number of home runs to pull even with the number of home runs hit by the visiting team, but may not hit a home run to go one-up. **A one-up home run, in the bottom half of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning or the bottom half of any later inning, will result in a dead ball out.**
10. **Mat Ball.**
  - a. All leagues shall utilize mat ball for a strike zone.
  - b. 6'-10' arc requirement still in effect.
  - c. A strike shall be called if the pitch meets the arc requirement and any part of the ball lands on any part of the mat or home plate, including the black around home plate and the edge of the mat.
  - d. Home plate must be touched to score runs.
11. Lineup:
  - a. You can bat your whole roster in the lineup but are limited to 10 players on defense.

- b. For co-ed, this means batting 10, 12, 14, etc., due to adding a male and female in combination. Rule about pick-up players still exists, you can't pick up players to bat extra batters.
- c. Short-handed rule is still in play, if someone is injured and can't be substituted, there is an out taken. If there is an ejection, and no substitutions, the game is forfeited. A team can not add a pick-up player to avoid an out or an ejection.

## **SPECIAL CO-ED ADDENDUM:**

1. **Coed teams consist of 10 players; five males and five females.** Each team must have a minimum of nine (9) players to start the game, five (5) male and four (4) female, or five (5) female and four (4) male with the tenth player position taking an out. There are no requirements on positions played in league play.
2. **Coed Line:** 175' line is an arc 175' from home plate that runs from foul line to foul line. When a player is at bat, no outfielder may be within that arc until the ball is hit. Infielders must play normal depth and only four infielders in addition to the pitcher and catcher are allowed. There must be two infielders on either side of second base, not counting the pitcher and catcher, prior to the ball being hit.  
**Penalty for not staying outside the 175' line or infielders not being at normal depth/ position, will be single to the batter, or the result of the previous play, whichever is greater.** Example: Player at bat, outfielder is within 175' arc, player hits the ball. Ball gets past fielder, runners on base score and batter ends up on second. Play stands, result of play is greater than the within arc penalty. Example: Player at bat, outfield is within arc. Player hits ball and outfield makes a catch. Dead ball, batter is awarded first base; all other base runners advance one base if forced.
3. **Substitutions:** A male player can only replace a male player, and a female player can only replace a female player.
4. The batting order must alternate between male and female players. The first batter in the line-up can be either.
5. If a male batter walks, he is awarded second base. The next batter (a female) will bat. **EXCEPTION:** With two outs, the female batter has the option to walk or bat.
6. Players may only wear **molded cleats, all-purpose shoes or tennis shoes** in coed games. **Players wearing metal cleats will not be allowed to play**, there are no exceptions. A player caught with metal cleats, male or female, will be asked to change them, or be disqualified.
7. It is strongly recommended, for safety purposes, that teams use a male pitcher.
8. The extra player rule in coed requires that when used, it must be with two extra players, one male and one female.