Play for Missions (PFM) League Plan 2015

I) MISSION STATEMENT

First and foremost, to provide a healthy and competitive sports activity as a means to foster church spirit, camaraderie, and Christian brotherhood WITHIN a local church, focusing on small-to-mid-sized churches with a need to bridge relationships among their young adults and married folk, and especially, as a means to get men more involved in the church;

Secondly, to help unify and mobilize God's Kingdom by networking and building close relationships with other churches;

Third, the league will raise funds for the Missions Ministries or charities of member churches and enlarge their scope of available resources through the network of churches;

Fourth, the league will establish a foundation to create and develop other Christian sports organizations including inter-church leagues for women and youth.

For now, the rules and policies of the games will be simple, flexible, and FRIENDLY; providing member churches a less demanding schedule to work around their other church activities and any conflicts that may arise. Many small/mid-sized churches do not have the time, resources, or involvement among members to commit to long and demanding league schedules, especially those with many married folk. We want to promote church growth and unity through healthy and fun competition without creating conflicting agendas. When churches get too big, or teams get too competitive, sometimes the fun and fellowship among brethren gets forgotten or lost. However, rules and policies may change or evolve for improvement as the league develops.

I. TEAMS (10)

1) Arcola Covenant Church (Paramus, NJ)
2) Metro Community Church (Englewood, NJ)
3) Antioch (Livingston, NJ)
4) PCNJ (Oakland, NJ)
5) New Mercy (Hackensack, NJ)
6) Remnant (Manhattan, NY)
7) Sojourner Presbyterian (Hackensack, NJ)
8) Cornerstone UMC (Tenafly, NJ)
9) New Hope Fellowship (Westchester, NY)
10) Joy Fellowship (NYC, Tenafly, Edgewater, NJ)

III. SCHEDULE, DIVISIONS, & SEEDING

1) Regular season will begin May 5th
2) Total 9 regular season games.
3) Season will conclude with Playoffs, August 9th and August 15th
4) Top 3 teams will be awarded $__ towards their Missions.

IV. FEES & MEMBERSHIP

1) For 2015, fees per each team will be $250 if paid by Captains Meeting, $300 if paid afterwards. Additional fees may be assessed for special events.
2) The fees will be used to support Missions of the League, sponsor special League events, and to cover general operating expenses.
3) Financial Budget and Actual spending will be disseminated to all Captains for transparency during Captains' Meeting. Backup receipts and Bank Book will be shared upon request.
4) At the Commissioner's discretion, a membership may be revoked at any time for non-compliance of League Rules and Policies, or for any conduct that is detrimental to the integrity of the League.

V. RULES & POLICIES

1. GENERAL RULES:

a. Membership Rule - Each team must submit an initial player roster prior to start of season, and his Pastor must approve every player. All players must attend their regular church services to play in the game, or at least be a regular active member of their church approved to play by the Pastor if wasn't able to attend their service. New players may be added to the roster during the season. We encourage churches to include more of their members, especially for attracting new members to get involved, however, all new players must be approved by the Pastor and must attend the church service for that week or cannot play (no 'ringers' rule);

b. Every player on every team must sign an indemnity waiver form in order to play; Until the form is filled out and submitted to the Commissioner's office, that player cannot play;

c. Teams must have a minimum of 8 players on the field, and maximum 10 (including 1 roving outfielder); If a team cannot field a team, that team must forfeit with a losing score of 15-0. There is a minimum age limit of 18 years.

d. Seven innings will constitute a complete game, unless the game is stopped due to rain, darkness or the Mercy Rule is invoked. If the game has been played for at least 5 innings and is forced to stop due to rain, darkness, or a team's inability to field the minimal number of players due to injury, it will be considered a complete game.

e. In the event of a tie after 7 innings, teams will continue play in extra innings until a winner is determined. If the extra inning game is forced to stop due to rain or darkness, the extra inning game must be completed on a different date. If the extra inning game is called due to a team's inability to field the minimum number of players due to injury, that team will suffer the loss. If the team with a full squad is leading at the time the game is called, that score will be declared the final score. If the team with the full squad is losing or the score is tied at the time the game is called, the score will be the original tie score +1 for the winning team.

f. Mercy Rule – **A team leading by 15+ runs after 4 innings or any complete inning thereafter will be declared the winner and the game complete.**

g. Captains of opposing teams decide time and place by **Wednesday prior to the scheduled game day.** Games may be rescheduled or made up for any reason, but must be mutually agreed upon and arranged by the captains of the two scheduled opposing

teams, AND the game <u>must be completed by</u> Sunday July 26th; Otherwise, a forfeit by one or both teams will result.

h. (Left blank on purpose)

i. A score differential, followed by runs allowed will be used for seeding and match-ups in case of same record.

j. (Left blank on purpose)

k. Conduct Rule - Swearing, smoking, drinking alcohol, excessive arguing of calls, bat throwing, and 'inappropriate/excessive' trash talking and unsportsmanlike conduct are ABSOLUTELY PROHIBITED. Players and/or teams may be ejected and disqualified as result *(However, the occasional light, friendly, and tasteful humor of our Pastors and fellow players definitely allowed, but must be really funny.)* Other penalties may be applied if a team fails to eject or control their player, and amicably resolve a situation. Penalties include forfeit of the game(s) **or league membership.**

l. Home Team must supply and setup the bases, foul lines (cones), home plate extension, and new game ball (Clinchers). **During the playoffs/tournament, the higher seed is the home team. (However, the lower seed must supply the bases and game ball.)**

m. Home teams must have fields reserved (if necessary in county parks) for their games and it is their responsibility to provide the necessary insurance coverage if required by the county park. You may have to use the mother church's insurance policy. (You can usually walk-on your local high school field without any permit, but may risk getting kicked off, or may be occupied.)

n. Prior to the start of the game, each team is allowed a quick batting practice to be provided by the home team.

o. ALL GAMES must start and end with a group prayer for both teams (home team opens, visiting team closes with prayer).

p. Captains must bring a First Aid kit to each game. Upon request, league will provide one.

2. EQUIPMENT RULES:

a. Bats – For everyone's safety, fairness of play, and test of true skill rather than who can afford the most juiced bat, *ONLY "ASA" and "USSSA" APPROVED BATS ALLOWED*! Team captains will be held responsible. Batters will be called 'out' if using non-approved bats. *<u>HOWEVER</u>*, team captains may agree to allow certain bats for their game, if both agree to share use of the bat(s) and have equal opportunities to use it for their advantage.

b. Balls – Clinchers. A new game ball for each game must be furnished by the Home team.

c. Cleats – No METAL cleats allowed.

3. BATTING & PITCHING RULES:

a. The batter begins with the count of one ball and one strike. When the batter receives two strikes, he is given one courtesy foul. In other words, when the batter hits a foul with a two-strike count, he is not declared out unless he hits a second foul ball or gets another non-foul strike.

b. A walk is issued after 4 balls. The walk limit per inning per team will be 5. After the maximum 5 walks have been issued in the inning, the fourth ball will remain as ball 3 until the batter puts the ball in play or strikes out.

c. Bunting is not allowed.

d. *All fielding players MUST bat and stay in the order of the lineup throughout the game; each team may have UNLIMITED Designated Hitters*. Players may be substituted for fielding or batting, but players removed for substitutions cannot return to the same game. Players may switch positions, but the player MUST keep their original order in the batting lineup. However, once a pitcher is removed or switched from pitching, they may not return to pitch again. *The batting line up numbers must remain intact throughout the entire game. The vacant hitting spot will be an automatic out. (For example, start with 11 hitters, and then you cannot add another DH or remove the DH spot in middle of the game.)*

e. A pitch must be underhand and have an arch reaching the height of at least 4 feet from the ground, while not exceeding the maximum height of 10 feet when crossing the plate. A pitch that hits any part of the plate and/or the plate extension is a strike. Provided the hitter does not swing, if a pitch does not meet these requirements it will automatically be considered a "dead ball" and counted as a ball. The catcher of the fielding team will make all calls on pitches. The 3rd base coach can make dead ball calls for pitches below 4 feet and above 10 feet.

f. The pitcher must pitch off the pitcher's plate/rubber.

4. GAME PLAY RULES:

a. All field specific rules shall be discussed between opposing coaches/captains prior to the start of the game. Likewise, all discussions and/or rule debates will be discussed between the opposing coaches/captains only.

b. The official distance between the bases is 60', and 46' from pitcher's plate to home base.

c. (left blank on purpose)

d. No runner shall advance on a passed ball or a wild pitch.

e. Runners MUST make a reasonable attempt to avoid contact with the defensive player by sliding *when the defensive player has or is about to receive the ball*. Failure to do so or any other act of harmful interference can result in the runner being declared out especially if the runner makes harmful contact or unfair interference with the play. At the same token, the defensive player must NOT stand in the runner's base-path without the ball. Interfering or impeding the base runner without the ball can result in a safe call. *Please use your judgment wisely when invoking this rule. (the safety of all our league members is paramount and is always precedent when making any ruling).*

f. On double play balls, lead runners MUST slide into the base or make attempt to avoid contact with the defensive player *when the defensive player is about to throw the ball to complete the double play*. Failure to do so or any other act of intentional interference will result in the tail runner being declared out. This rule can be invoked if the defensive player makes a legitimate attempt to make the relay throw to first base. *Please use your judgment wisely when invoking this rule*.

g. *No leading. The runner may not leave the base until the ball is HIT or makes any contact with the bat. If any runner blatantly and intentionally leaves before the ball is hit or before the ball crosses over the proximity of the plate, that runner can be declared out (at the discretion of the captains/umpire).*

h. *NEW RULE! For the safety of all our players, fielding players MAY NOT block the base path when without ball in hand in order to impede or obstruct the base runner from advancing or making an attempt to slide safely. Fielding players may not block*

ANYWHERE along the base path while both feet are off the base and while WAITING for an incoming throw. Base runners may make 'reasonable' attempts to avoid harmful contact with a fielder who is obstructing the base path without the ball in hand, without being called out for running within reason outside the base path. Whoever initiates contact due to failure to observe this rule, will either be called out (if runner initiates contact) or allowed to advance (if fielder initiates contact).

i. No stealing bases.

j. Infield fly rule will be in effect. Any pop-up infield fly balls within fair territory are an AUTOMATIC out for the hitter, when there are men on 1st and 2nd or bases loaded AND less than two outs. Foul line and grass edge constitute "infield".

k. Tagging-up allowed from all bases, advancement of only 1 base.

l. Courtesy Runners are NOT allowed, except under one condition. If a player is injured prior to or during the game and must play or else the team cannot field the minimum 8 players, courtesy runners will be allowed for the injured player. Courtesy Runners must be announced before the injured player receives his first pitch. The runner must be the member of the batting team who made the last out.

m. Substitute players/batters may be made at any time. The starting number of batters and batting order must remain intact throughout the entire game.

n. The catcher will call balls & strikes, foul & fair balls, and infield fly rule. The 1st and 3rd base coach will make calls on safe/out on all bases, including at home.

o. Only the championship game will be officiated by a professional umpire. Teams may petition to the league if an opposing team showed unreasonable conduct that was inconsistent with league policies. The league (and captains of teams) will review and try to resolve case by case as quickly and fairly as possible.