

## 2018 Middle Essex Softball Rules

### GAMES:

- Scheduled game time is 6:15 PM – However, some games are played “under the lights.”
- If a team has only 8 players, the USA shorthanded rule is in effect.
- Umpires are responsible for ending games with regard to darkness or other factors once a game has begun.
- Home teams should be off the field 15 minutes prior to the game so that the visitors may have infield practice.
  - Teams must play their games according to the league schedule. If for some reason your team is not able to play on an assigned date, you must take a forfeit. Teams are not allowed to reschedule games.
- When posting a forfeit, the proper score per the USA is 7-0.
- Rain-outs are an exception to this rule. If a game has to be postponed because of rain or other weather related events, it can be played on a new date. When coaches are in communication on the day of a rain-out, possible options for the rescheduled date should be offered at that time and confirmed within two days. If a new date is not confirmed within two days, either team may notify the league President who will then declare a new date for the game.

*The intent of this rule is to ensure that teams account for all 14 of their scheduled games.*

- In order to be considered for league championships, teams must play at least 13 of the 14 games on the schedule. In the event of an unusual number of rain cancellations the league president is empowered to re-work this policy to best address the situation.

### RULES:

The current rules of the USA are in effect with the following notes, exceptions and highlights.

- Time limit --- No new inning may begin after 1 hour and 45 minutes. If the game is tied, the international tie- breaker rule will be put into effect in the next inning after the time limit has expired. {Coaches are not allowed to waive this rule... or any other rule...for that matter}
- Any game that plays to the time limit will be considered an official game regardless of the number of innings. If the home team doesn't get to bat at the end of a game, the score reverts to the last completed inning.
- Divisions 18A, 18B, 14A and 14B pitch from 43 feet. The 12's pitch from 40 feet and the 10's pitch from 35 feet.
- A team may use either a rule- book line up or a continuous batting order. The later allows for free substitution. – The only restriction here regards the pitcher, if removed she may not return to pitch in the same inning, but is free to pitch in any other inning.
- Each player **MUST** play three (3) defensive innings. Consideration should be given to games that will not go the entire seven innings to ensure players receive adequate playing time. {In other words, don't wait until the 5<sup>th</sup> inning to put a player in the game.} – If using a rule- book line up and there is a DP, the DP is exempted from the 3 defensive innings rule.

- The following Divisions will play with ten (10) fielders – 14B, 12B and 10U. That tenth player must be positioned on the outfield grass and may not make a put-out in the infield except on a fly ball or double play. Other Divisions will play with 9 fielders.
- A 15 run slaughter...ok, mercy rule is in effect. It is invoked after 5 innings (4 ½ if home team) and at the point in which it occurs.
- Base coaches may be either adults or players (players must wear a helmet).
- Smoking by anyone near the softball diamond is prohibited. Coaches should actively enforce this rule.

### **SIX RUN RULE:**

This rule applies to all Divisions except 18A. An inning will end early if a team scores six runs before they are put out three times. The play on which the sixth run scores will end at its normal conclusion. {Effect, if more than 6 runs score in the inning they all count.} The six run rule is lifted in the 7<sup>th</sup> inning. {Clarification... if the game is likely to end before the 7<sup>th</sup>, because of darkness or other circumstance, the six run rule is still in effect... It's only lifted in the 7<sup>th</sup> and beyond.}

### **SPECIAL RULES FOR THE 12B DIVISION:**

- A runner may not leave the base until the pitched ball reaches the plate. (Same penalty as the rulebook, you're out for leaving early).
- There is no dropped third strike rule.
- The infield fly rule is in effect
- Coaches should go over these rules with the umpire during the pre-game conference.

### **SPECIAL RULES FOR THE 10U DIVISION:**

- Players pitch from 35 feet. If having difficulty at this distance and with the consent of both coaches, a girl may modify her pitching stance so that only one foot is in contact with the pitching rubber. This provision is made to make the game flow along more smoothly.
- Base runners may steal from second to third and third to home, but only two runs per inning may be scored in this fashion. Runners must wait until the pitched ball reaches home plate.
- However, in the A Division, a runner may also steal from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup>
- The catcher's throw to any base (to catch a stealing runner) is a live ball
- The "walk and run" play is not allowed. A player may not advance to second on a walk.
- The dropped third strike rule is not in effect.
- There is no infield fly rule.
- The five run rule & 15 run mercy rules are in effect as detailed in previous sections.
- Games will be played with 11- inch softball.
- 10U games in this league are 7 innings.
  - Pitchers, first and third basemen are required to wear an approved face guard.
  - In 10B if a team short on players borrows from another team, the game counts as a loss, but the game should be played.