

Marlboro Girls Softball – Special League Rules 2019

League Rules

The Marlboro Girls Softball League uses official softball playing rules as adopted and documented for the USA Softball League except for special league rules as explained in this document. The USA rule book, Official Rules of Softball and USA Code, fully documents the USA playing rules. All managers get a copy of this rule book complements of the USA.

Special league rules supplement, override, and in some cases emphasize the official softball rules to ensure that the level of play is consistent with the league goal.

Number of fielders

Major League 13-15 year olds

- 9 fielders will be on the field at one time. Pitcher, catcher, 4 infielders and 3 outfielders. A team may play with 8 fielders if shorthanded. At anytime during the game you go down to 7 players a forfeit will be given. The score of a forfeit will be 7-0

Free Substitution

Free substitution and reentry of all players including pitchers is allowed at any time during a game, meaning if a starter or substitute is pulled out they can re-enter the game freely. The pitchers are the only ones that have an inning limit at their position, 4 for majors.

SAFETY

Batting helmets

Players must wear batting helmets with fastened chinstraps in Instructional, Juniors and Minors (chinstraps optional for major league) Face cage is required on all helmets for all leagues, Helmets must be worn on deck for batting, running bases, or coaching a base during games and practice. Managers and coaches should not conduct any form of batting practice without a batting helmet.

Face Masks

Players that play infield positions are STRONGLY encouraged to wear facemasks while fielding the positions, especially pitchers. The league offers these for sale at a discounted price or you can buy one at a local sporting goods store.

Catchers Helmets and Masks

Players who catch for a pitcher at any time, whether in a game situation, during practice, or for warm up, must wear a catcher's helmet and mask. **Coaches need to enforce this rule. This is an official USA rule.**

Cleats

Players can wear athletic shoes that have rubber cleats. However, metal cleats are not allowed at any age level.

Jewelry – No Jewelry is to be worn by any player. **No earrings, necklaces, bracelets, eyebrow piercing, tongue piercing etc.** Earrings **cannot** be taped over. The only acceptable jewelry is medical alert necklaces or bracelets and they need to be taped to body.

Arguing with umpires

Managers, coaches, players and spectators will refrain from arguing with umpires. Once a game has started, the managers are the only team representatives who can speak with an umpire. This rule remains in effect until 15 minutes after the game has ended.

Base and Pitching Distances/Ball size

The league adheres to the USA base and pitching distances listed in the following table:

League	Bases	Pitching	Ball size
Major	60ft	43ft	12 inch regular

Pitching

Minor and Major Division

- Pitching distance is 43ft for Majors

- If a pitcher hits **3 batters** in an inning, she must be removed from the pitching position for the remainder of that inning. If a pitcher hits 5 batters in a game they must be removed for the remainder of the game.

When at bat, if a pitched ball hits a batter in the air, she is awarded first base. If a ball bounces on the ground and then hits a batter and the umpire feels the batter made NO attempt to get out of the way, then it is up to their discretion to award the base

- All USA fast pitch pitching rules apply except those noted below. For example, pitchers must start delivery with both feet touching the pitching plate (actual or marked), they can take no more than one step before releasing a pitch, and so forth.

- Pitching limits are as follows. Major league 4 innings per game. 1 pitch is counted as an inning pitched. There are no exceptions made for extra innings. Free substitution by pitchers is allowed. **Coaches may visit the mound once per inning without taking the pitcher out. On the second visit per inning the pitcher must be removed for the rest of that inning.**

The penalty in minor league for pitching a pitcher beyond their limit is that 6 runs will be added to your opponents score for each inning pitched beyond the limit. Penalty in Major league will be a forfeit.

- Absolutely NO minor league player can pitch for a major league team and NO Junior league player can pitch in minors

Infielder Positioning

- Managers and coaches are responsible for ensuring that infielders are positioned a safe distance from home plate. Serious accidents do happen! Even small players can make good contact with a pitch, players need enough distance to react to line drives.
- As a courtesy managers should warn opposing teams when a strong batter comes to the plate and the fielders are not positioned at a safe distance. This is particularly important in the Instructional, Junior and Minor league divisions.

Outfielder Positioning

- Outfielders must be positioned on the grass.

When not on the playing field

All players who are not on the playing field, coaching a base, on deck for batting, or at bat, must stay on the bench or in the dugout. On deck batters, must warm up in an appropriate area on the playing field.

Batting

Minors & Majors

- Every player present at the game will be listed in the batting order. Any player arriving late (after the lineup is given to the opposing coach) that player shall be placed at the bottom of the batting order. Every girl must bat and play the field. They cannot just bat or just play the field. If they cannot do both, they cannot play.

An out will not be charged if a batter leaves the game at any point as long as the other team is notified PRIOR to the player's at bat.

- A team remains at bat until the fielding team makes 3 outs or the team at bat scores 6 runs. (6 runs applies to Minors only)
- The first time in a given game that a player throws a bat, after hitting the ball or otherwise, the team will receive a warning. If any player throwing a bat again during that game, the player who threw the bat will be called out.
- A 13-run mercy rule goes into effect after the losing team completes 4 at bats minors and 5 at bats majors.
- Bunting is allowed. No FAKE BUNTING is allowed. (Batter cannot show bunt, draw in infield and then pull back and swing away)
- Stealing is allowed, including home. After a team is up by 13 runs no stealing is allowed at all.
- Dropped 3rd strike is in effect. (Majors only)
- Infield fly rule applies (both leagues)
- A 12 inch ball will be used

Base Running

Major Division

- Base runners must slide into bases feet first. Head first slide is an automatic out. A dive back is not considered a head first slide. **Base runners must AVOID contact when going into a base where a play is being made.**

- Base runners can lead after pitcher releases the ball.
- Stealing home is allowed
- The USA dropped third strike rule does apply.
- Pinch runners may be used at any time for the NEXT inning's pitcher or catcher, or for an injured player. The last out made will be the pinch runner. If you are in the last inning of play either due to time limit or you reach the 7th inning you cannot use a pinch runner except for an injured player.

- The ASA “Look Back Rule” applies. When a batter gets a hit, play is live until the **pitcher** has possession of the ball in the eight foot radius around the pitchers mound. Once possession is made, all runners may only stop once, but then must immediately return to the base or advance to the next base. Failure to immediately return nonstop to the base or proceed to the next base will result in a runner being called out. Once a runner stops at a base for any reason they will be declared out if they leave that base.
Exception: The runner will not be declared out if a play is made on her or another runner. (A fake throw is considered a play)

Game Times

- Games are 7 innings for major league whenever possible.

No new inning will start after 1 hour 40min. Coaches are required to keep the games moving, catchers ready, lineups done etc.

- A 15 minute grace period is allowed at the beginning of the 1st game of the day if you are short handed. If you do not have enough players to play after the 15 minutes a forfeit will be given. You may then play for fun if you want.

Major league games will start at 6:45 pm until June 2nd at which time they will start at 6:15pm. No new inning will start after 1hr 40min has passed. **The start of an inning is noted as the time the last out is made in the previous inning. Any inning started before 1:40 will be played to its completion.**

Rain outs – Ending games

- If a game gets called because of rain and the losing team has completed 3 at bats (Minors) or 4 at bats (Majors) it is considered a complete game. If you have completed less than 3 innings (minors) 4 innings (majors) then the game will be considered a rain out and rescheduled.
- Playoff games: **All playoff games will be suspended if stopped due to weather. If less than 1 FULL inning has been played,** the game will be started over.

Thunder and Lightning (all divisions)

At the first sign of thunder or lightning, managers must stop a game or practice. After 30 minutes waiting time if there is no more thunder or lightning, then play can resume but at the next sign of thunder or lightning the game will be called and the proper rainout procedure will be followed.

Playoffs

- To be eligible for the playoffs the following criteria must be met. A player must play in 6 or more game to be eligible to play in all playoff games. 5 games, sit out first game of playoffs your team is involved in. 4 games, must sit out first 2 games your team is in. Play in 3 or fewer games, not eligible to participate in playoffs. Doctor noted injuries are exempt.
- Playoff games will be held at the end of the regular season of play.

- **All teams make the playoffs, which will be double elimination. Seeding for the playoffs will be based on the final regular** Season standings. Home team will be determined by seeding with the exception of the 1st game of the finals in which case the team advancing through the winners’ bracket will be home team for the 1st game.
 - There are no time limits in the playoffs, but the mercy rule will apply. No new inning will start after 10:30pm, but any started inning will be completed. If they game is still not completed, it will be suspended at the point it stopped and completed in the next time slot for those 2 teams.

Umpires

Major League

A patched USA umpire will umpire major league games. This umpire must be at least 18 years of age to umpire at this level. If an umpire does not show up the coaches can agree on a parent or suitable substitute to fill in. Major league umpires are paid after each game from concession stand funds

Standings, schedules and other softball related info will be posted on the website so please get in your game scores each week. All other rules not presented in these special rules will be from the USA rule book.