

**Metro Sports Leagues, Inc. Softball Rules**  
**WITH STRIKE MAT**

1. A "strike mat" will be used to determine sure strikes, if the softball touches any part of the mat on a legal pitch (6'-12' arc), it will be considered a strike. Pitches touching any part of the plate **WILL BE** considered a strike as well (Because of the small size of the strike mat and the difficulty of pitching, MSL has included the plate to promote teams to swing more and give pitchers a larger target.)
1. All batters will start with a one ball, one strike count.
2. If a male is walked on three straight balls, and a female follows him in the batting order, the female has the choice to take a walk or bat. (Exception: \*\*\*if the bases are loaded at the time a male is at-bat with a female on deck). Umps will enforce this rule upon request; however, they will not be responsible for notifying the batter in each walk situation. The umpire must be made aware that a female is on deck before the 2<sup>nd</sup> pitch is thrown. If the female decides to bat the male player that was walked will stay at first base.
3. A batter with two strikes is allowed one courtesy foul ball. After that the batter is out.
4. All games are seven innings or one hour; the last inning will start 10 - 15 minutes to the hour. The ump will enforce this rule and will make the call at the top of the final inning. Note: Due to differing circumstances in each and every game, some games will finish short on an hour in length, while others might run over the hour mark. Please respect your ump's call in this matter. He/she must keep all games on time in fairness to teams playing later hours and due to facility permit restrictions.
5. 10 players (at least 3 females) in the field at all time. (THERE ARE NO POSITION REQUIREMENTS of any players, i.e. there need not be 2 females in outfield and 2 in the infield) MSL rules will allow a team to play with a minimum of 8 players (at least 2 females). If only 2 females are present the team must take an out when it comes to the tenth batter or the position where the female should be batting.
6. Teams may bat more than ten players; however, these teams must bat the same ratio (3 to 1) of men and women. Prior to game time, let the ump see the line-up so that he can verify the 3-1 ratio.
7. All players in the field must be listed in the batting order. Players do not have to play in the field in order to bat.
8. There are no guy-girl batting order rules. (i.e. You may bat 7 men followed by 3 women or vice-versa). Teams may bat a DH. The DH can be a male player. However, the 12<sup>th</sup> player in the order would then have to be a female.
9. Game mercy rule: 10 runs up after five complete innings.
10. Inning run limit rule: There will be a 7 run limit per inning through innings 1-4. (Exception: unlimited runs may be scored if one of the innings 1-4 is declared the final inning of the game.) Unlimited runs may be scored in innings 5,6, and 7 always.

11. No leadoffs or stealing, runners can leave the base once the ball is hit by the batter. If a runner leaves early, the ball is dead and the runner is declared out. If this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> out of the inning the batter will be first up in the next inning.
12. Games start on time!!! Teams must be prepared to play.  
Forfeit rule: 10 minutes after game time. If one team has less than the minimum number of players (8 total-2 females) at ten past the designated start time, the game will be deemed a forfeit.
13. Base runner to defensive player contact will be closely watched by the ump.  
Any excessive contact or collision will result in an “out” and/or ejection. This includes contact with the catcher. Sliding is allowed. Any intentional (in the eyes of the monitor) interference with the defensive player, the runner and the batter will be called out. The strike mat is considered a part of home plate to avoid collisions at home.
14. **NO METAL SPIKES ARE ALLOWED.**  
Any equipment in question should be brought to the attention of the umpire. The umpire will make all final decisions with regard to equipment discrepancies.
15. A foul ball above the batter’s head may be caught for an out.
16. All thrown balls are deemed out of play when:
  - The ball is thrown over the fence
  - The ball is thrown beyond the fence
  - The ball is thrown beyond the imaginary line extending from the end of the backstop (if there is no fence).
  - This imaginary line applies to overthrows and caught fly foul balls.
  - If the ball is overthrown and hits the fence behind the 1st or 3rd base lines, this is NOT considered out of play and the runner may advance, BUT at his/her own risk.
  - On overthrows out of play, the runner is granted the base he/she is going to (at the point of the throw) plus one more. Note: in cases where a base runner runs past first base, he/she must make a clearly aggressive turn towards second base to be granted 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in overthrow situations.
17. On an infield fly (any fly ball within the infield with significant arc and deemed an “easy catch”) with less than 2 outs and runners on 1st and 2nd or 1st, 2nd and 3rd, the batter is automatically out and runners can advance, BUT at their own risk.
18. A player must play in a minimum of three regular season games in order to play in the playoffs. Rosters can be required before playoff games so always bring them to the playoff games. A team can add players prior to game time of the 3<sup>rd</sup> game of the season.
19. If two teams are tied at the end of the season below are the tie breakers...
  - Head to head
  - Run differential
  - Record versus other playoff teams
  - Fewest runs allowed
  - Most runs scored
  - Flip a coin