

# MONROE SENIOR SOFTBALL LEAGUE RULES

[Modified on June 26, 2026]

1-Bases set at 60 feet

2-Pitcher's rubber set at 45 feet.

3-One Ball and One Strike count with One additional foul ball allowed after two strikes.

4-Batter who foul tips a pitch that is caught by the catcher cleanly after two strikes is an out. Note: A foul tip is a foul ball which first hits the catcher's mitt and then is legally caught by any player. If the ball hits any other part of the catcher first, it is a foul ball.

5- Any foul ball (above 6 feet) and caught by the catcher (or anyone else) is an out.

6-Batter who hits a foul ball with two strikes and NO free ball remaining whether caught or dropped is a dead ball out. Runners may not advance.

7-A double first base shall be used. Players running through first base must touch the outside base. Defensive players covering first base must touch the inside base. Exception- Runner may touch the fielders inside base in order to avoid a possible collision. However, if there is a "normal" play at first base and should the runner touch the inside base the runner is automatically out. Umpire discretion on that call. The runner may touch the inside base when the ball is hit to the outfield and is rounding first to draw a throw or attempts to go to second base.

8- Double Home Plate. We already discussed First Base protocol. As for Home Plate the "catcher's" home plate is the plate where balls and strikes are called. The "runners" home plate is off to the side and cannot be touched or encroached upon by any fielder unless the throw coming in pulls the fielder (most likely the catcher) toward the runner's home plate. If there is catchers' obstruction it is at the discretion of the umpire to decide that the catcher could have avoided the runner's access to home plate. Any play at the plate where the catcher receives the ball while touching the catcher's home plate or wood BEFORE the runner touches the runner's home plate is an out. Effectively whether a true force play or not- any play at the plate is a force play.

9-Pitchers must release the pitch from the pitching rubber. They must start their motion with at least one foot on the rubber.

10-Pitchers must release the pitch with a minimum height of 6 feet and a maximum height of 10 feet. Pitchers are not permitted to throw the pitch with excessive speed.

11-All pitches must have a discernible arc. Pitcher's elbow must be in a locked position. Sidarm deliveries are not permitted. Once the batter is in the batter's box pitcher is allowed to pitch the ball- unless the umpire holds up his or her hand.

12-Umpires shall call "flat" or "too high" on all illegal flat-high and fast pitches early and verbally prior to the pitch arriving at the plate. The batter may nonetheless swing in which event the pitch and the result of the swing counts. If the batter does not swing, the pitch will be declared a ball.

13-Every player in the lineup can use a courtesy runner- and it is unlimited-however no player may run TWICE in the same inning.

14-**(Modified 22-April-26)** - Runners may vacate a base on the swing.

15-**(Modified 22-April-26)** Game is 9-innings and there is a 15-run mercy rule after 7 innings. Teams can concede at their discretion at any point of the game.

16-Any pitch that hits the board which fully covers home plate and meets all of the other qualifications will be declared a strike.

17-Any players injured during the playing of the game will be able to vacate the game without penalty.

18-Any player that must leave the field early must notify both the Umpire and opposing Manager prior to the start of the game, otherwise an out will be declared the next time his spot comes up in the order. Exception: Emergency situations which include an injury. All players shall bat through the entire game. Any player who arrives after his team has batted through the order shall be placed at the end of the lineup. If the team has not yet batted around the player may be placed in the next non-batted slot in the lineup. If a player leaves a game early for any reason, with the exception of being ejected from the game, his spot in the lineup is skipped and the team is not charged with an out.

19-Any player ejected from the game shall forfeit any future at bats and will be considered an out in the order every time his/her spot comes up. NO exceptions. Further discipline may follow.

20-In the absence of a MSSL rule the umpire may enforce USA Softball rules.

21-Batter/Runner is not permitted to slide into first base. The batter will be called out, all other runners will be allowed to advance at their own risk.

22-Slide or Avoid rule will be strictly enforced this year. Runners must take all necessary steps to avoid contact with a fielder. Any contact with a fielder initiated by the runner is an automatic out. The lone exception is if the fielder initiates the contact- i.e. the throw draws the fielder toward the runner. That call is at the discretion of the umpire. Any severe or intentional contact may at the discretion of the umpire get the runner thrown out of the game. Any ejection will be reviewed by The Board and if deemed excessive may include a suspension or expulsion from the league.

23-First and third base coaches are not permitted to have a fielder's glove on their person while coaching.

24-Umpires are in charge of the game and all-weather related decisions, field condition decisions are in his or her per view unless Monroe Rec/Parks Dept intercedes and say we must get off the field. Before the game the decision regarding whether a field is playable or not is at the sole discretion of Monroe Rec.

25-Only the Captain of the team can argue with the umpire, and it is the responsibility of the captain to keep all other players away from the argument. Any severe violation of this rule will be viewed as a violation of our code of conduct and may or may not be subject to an ejection, suspension, or expulsion depending on the severity of that violation.

26-Home teams' book is considered the Official book, and any scoring disagreements should be dealt with at the earliest with assistance of the Umpire.

27-Each team will declare a walk hitter who once designated can only be walked twice per game (whether intentional or otherwise), after which any additional walk will be a two-base award to both him and any runners on base.

28-Fielders are prohibited from decoying the runner into sliding by putting their gloves down. It may cause an injury, and the player may be subject to ejection.

29-Both fielders and runners are prohibited from verbally yelling during a play in the infield in order to cause confusion to the opposing player. Umpires will make a ruling concerning penalties.

30-Players can be substituted defensively at any time of the game.

31-**(Modified 22-April-26)** Players are limited to pinch running only three times per game. A player who is already on the bases may pinch run for another player who is on the bases at the same time. That will be considered one of their three sanctioned pinch

runner opportunities per game. If you switch base runners from first and second as an example that counts as a "pinch run"- and therefore those two runners are precluded from running again in the inning that the double switch occurred. Just because a runner is already on base does not change that fact.

32-If a team wishes to intentionally walk a player, he may indicate the same verbally.

33-There will be a cone placed approximately halfway between third base and the runners home plate whereby if a runner from third base or rounding third base passes the cone ("commit line") they are "committed" to continue toward home plate.

34-Glove selection – ANY glove can be used at any position.

35-Any batted ball that passes through the infield and hits the OF grass-whether as a fly ball or ground ball- automatically awards the batter first base. He can NOT be thrown out at first base. However, any runner that is on base at the time can be forced out at another base. Additionally should any infielder touch a batted ball, and the ball goes into the OF- it is still considered an infield ball, and the runner can be thrown out at first base.

36-**(Modified 22-April-26)** All games shall be nine innings. Regular season games shall be official after the trailing team has batted for seven full innings. All playoff games, however, must be finished to completion. If, in a playoff game, the game is called after it would otherwise be an official game it shall resume exactly where it left off. If a playoff game is called due to weather prior to becoming an otherwise official game the game shall be suspended. Barring emergent circumstances, captains may not agree to alter this rule or edit same. Once a playoff game begins, if for any reason it gets called prior to the end (other than due to weather), the game will pick up where it left off.

(37)-**Modified 22-April-26)** Runs are capped at 7 runs per inning except the 9<sup>th</sup> inning (and extra innings if it goes that far) where it is unlimited

(38)-We have 14-man rosters- everyone bats. Should there be a differential of 3 or more players between competing teams (i.e. should one team show with 14 players and the competing team shows with 11 players)- the team with more players gets to choose one player on the other team that must bat twice. Should there be a 4 or 5 player differential (i.e. 13 vs 9 , 14 vs 9) the team with the higher amount gets to choose TWO players that bat twice. The team that has to bat one or more players twice gets to decide where that batter bats twice. Presumably in the middle and end of the lineup.

39-The decision of the umpires shall always be final. No games may be protested.

40-Bench selection – Regular season home team gets choice of field bench. During playoffs, the higher seeded team selects bench choice.

41-An umpire shall have the discretion to advise players that they do not have to touch home plate if there is no play on them if the area around home plate is wet or dangerous.

42-No Sneakers or Metal Cleats. Rubber Cleats, Golf Shoes, or Turf Shoes are acceptable footwear.

**43-(Modified 26-June-26)** - All bats stamped "USSSA", "USA", and "ASA" are legal in our league. While we use USA Softball umpires, our league rules supersede theirs unless we have not specified a particular rule. These bats have been used since the league's inception in 2023 (which precedes our use of USA softball umpires), and we do not intend to change our rules to conform to the USA umpires' interpretation. However, we do want to avoid using double-wall or loaded bats.

44-There must be at least nine players present on each team to begin a game. A team who cannot field nine players within fifteen minutes of the scheduled start time shall forfeit the game. If a team is reduced to eight players during any game, that team shall forfeit the game.

45-You can field up to 11 fielders- 1 Pitcher, 1 Catcher, 5 Infielders, and 4 Outfielders. Infielders MUST have both feet on the dirt part of the infield until there is contact with a batted ball. Outfielders must have both feet on the outfield grass until there is contact with a batted ball.

46-We put together a code of conduct. That must be signed with the waiver in order to be allowed on the field. During the season any violation of that code of conduct will be reviewed by The Board and based on the severity of that conduct, players could be subject to either a suspension and/or dismissed from the league altogether without reimbursement.

47-Should a runner coming home touch the wrong home plate (the wooden board) the runner will be deemed automatically out. It is the same rationale as the runner touching the wrong first base – it can and might impede the fielder's ability to make a play – EVEN if there is no throw to the plate. With a runner heading to the wooden board it gets into the catcher's safe zone. While the catcher has to give the runner their home plate so must the runner allow the catcher that same safe zone. The ONLY exception is an errant throw pulling the catcher toward the runner's home plate. However in that circumstance it would need to be a tag play to get an out.

48-You cannot carry a bat to first base. If so, it's an automatic out. In the umpire's discretion – should the bat be dropped close to first where it causes the potential for a dangerous situation – like an errant throw – that would become an out as well.

49-Substitute players will only be used to prevent a forfeit.

50-Runners CAN NOT run past second or third base like first base.

51-**(Modified 22-April-26)** - All games will start at 9:00 AM or 8:30 AM depending on heat advisories.

52-Pitchers. Every team should have a legitimate pitcher, therefore there will be a separate draft for starting pitchers. Once each team has one, the balance of those players who indicated they wanted to be considered a pitcher and were not drafted in the pitcher's draft will go into the general, league-wide draft.

53-All players must commit to play in at least 75% of the games to be eligible for the league.

**54-(Added 22-April-26)**-Any player who arrives after the start of the 5<sup>th</sup> inning is ineligible to play in that game. If a captain knows one of his players will be coming late, he must inform the opposing captain before the start of the game.