

## MID-COLUMBIA SENIOR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION (MCSSA) 2025 GAME RULES AND REGULATIONS

The MCSSA intends to create a Co-Ed softball experience for senior men and women that encourages fun, exercise, and competition in a recreational sport environment. Emphasis is placed on avoiding bodily contact that can result in injuries. Emphasis is also placed on sportsmanship and respect for officials and fellow players. The MCSSA intends to abide by the City of Kennewick municipal ordinances for the park, which include prohibitions on tobacco and alcohol consumption.

MCSSA games are played in accordance with the rules for senior softball prescribed by the WSL (World Sports league) softball associations, (With Exceptions). The game management rules specific to the MCSSA and exceptions to the WSL rules are outlined below.

All rules are governed by the MCSSA Board, and are enforced by the board and said designees, specifically the Rules Committee members and umpires. *Italicized words in bold are the 2025 changes.*

### I. Participation Eligibility

- A. MCSSA games are open to men 50 years of age and older, and women 40 years of age and older. Men and Women must be at least 50 and 40 by the end of the calendar year.
- B. Eligibility is limited to men and women who are registered with the MCSSA and whose participation fees are fully paid for the current season.

### II. Equipment

- A. **Bats:** must bear the ASA 2004, USSSA or USA certification mark or be stamped no greater than balance performance factor (BPF) 1.20. No Senior bats.
- B. **Shoes:** No metal cleats are allowed
- C. **Balls:** are ASA certified 12-inch *.44/375 for men and the same 11-inch .44/375 for women.* Use of the smaller ball by women is optional.
- D. **Jewelry:** Any item that can cause injury to the wearer or other players is not to be worn during game play.
- E. **Gloves:** Any style of glove/mitt can be used in all defensive positions.
- F. **Masks:** Masks are required for the pitcher.
- G. **Jerseys / T-Shirts:** *They are to be worn during play and the shirts should be of the same color and have a number on the back side to assist in batting lineup identification and scorekeeping.*

### III. Field Layout

- A. **Base Distance:** The distance between bases is 65 ft.
- B. **Strike Mat:** A rubber Home Plate Extension Mat is used to create a pitching target 19" wide and 35" long.
- C. **Scoring Line:** A line parallel to the leading edge of the primary home plate on the 3<sup>rd</sup> base side. A cone or marker *may* also designate the line.
- D. **Secondary First Base:** A Secondary (orange) First Base is located adjacent to the primary (white) first base in foul territory.
- E. **Commitment Line:** A Commitment Line is placed 20 feet parallel to the 3<sup>rd</sup> base scoring line.

- F. Encroachment Line:** An outfield Encroachment Line is marked with orange cones at a radial distance of 180 feet from home plate.
- G. Pitching Rubber:** The pitching rubber is 50 ft. from home plate.

#### **IV. Game Management**

##### **A. *League Responsibilities***

1. Will provide Rubber Home Plate Extension mats, cones, **and softballs (two 12" balls, one new, one used, two 11" good conditioned balls) for each game.**
2. ***To enhance the identification of golden players, the league will provide gold/yellow wristbands to coaches at the beginning of the season for them to pass out to their team's golden players.***
3. Will provide scorebooks, and game timers to each team at the beginning of the season.

##### **B. *Team Responsibilities***

###### **1. Home Team**

- a. Is responsible for field setup and take down for each game. Early games: make sure home plate mat and outfield cones are set. For late games: make sure the mat and cones are picked up and secured for the evening.
- b. Listed last on the schedule and will sit in the Third Base dugout.
- c. Must provide the scorebook and scorekeeper for the game being played. ***If mutually agreed upon by both teams, an alternate scorekeeper may be selected and will notify the umpire of who that scorekeeper will be prior to the start of the game.***
- d. Is responsible for the official game time and will start the game (start the timer) when the first batter enters the batter's box.

**2. Visiting Team** is listed first on the schedule and will use the First Base dugout.

###### **3. Winning Team**

- a. The Manager of the winning team is expected to report the score of the game within 24 hours of game completion. If scores are not reported by Sunday morning of game week, the game is subject to forfeit.
- b. An email address or phone number for reporting scores will be provided to team managers at the start of the season.

###### **4. Golden Player**

- a. Teams shall identify players on their roster who are 65 years or older by having them wear the gold/yellow wristbands. Umpires and opposing teams will need to be notified when a Golden Player is at bat.
- b. ***The gold/yellow wristbands must be worn during play if they are taking advantage of the automatic award to first base option. See courtesy runner for more details.***

##### **C. *Team Participation***

1. All players shall be in the batting lineup unless a player opts out. Once a player chooses not to bat, they are out of the game from that point forward.
2. No player will sit out more than 2 innings per game unless there is a medical reason or if the player chooses to sit out.

3. Any player who does not believe they are being given ample playing time should address their coach first, then contact any Board member for resolution.
4. Games will be played with a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 10 fielders.
  - a) A team with an insufficient number of players (less than 10, or no females) may pick up a maximum of 3 substitute players from other teams.
  - b) A team playing with substitute players must field at least 7 players of its own team. If the insufficiency is due to no females and the substitute player is a male, the male substitute would be required to bat opposite handed with an out being recorded in the 7<sup>th</sup> batting position.
5. Substitute players: may play catcher, right field, right-center at the Coaches discretion, or first base by mutual agreement of both coaches.
6. *A game may be completed with one less player than what it started with. However, your lineup must still account for 10 players. An out will be recorded for every missing player each time through the lineup, unless mutually agreed upon by both coaches.*
7. Substitute players must be *a registered league* players.

#### ***D. Game Duration and Scoring***

1. **Duration:** Games are seven innings or one hour and thirty minutes (90 minutes). The last inning (Open Inning) will be called at hour and fifteen minutes (75 minutes) *into the game*. No inning will begin after the time limit has expired. An inning started before the time limit will be completed. The Home Team will be responsible for the official game duration.
2. **Mercy Rule:** A team leading by 15 or more runs at the completion of the 5<sup>th</sup> inning is deemed to have won. Games can continue unofficially after the 5<sup>th</sup> inning if time allows.
3. **Run Rule:** A team may score a maximum of 5 runs per inning (Excluding the Open Inning), unless a team is behind by more than 5 runs, in which case the trailing team is allowed to score enough runs to pull even. If a team reaches the number of runs on a play that produces excess runs beyond the catch up those runs do not count.
4. **Open Inning:** There is no scoring limit in the last inning (Open Inning), as called by the umpire.
5. **Forfeit:** For the purposes of scoring, a team winning by forfeit is awarded 7 runs.
6. **Termination:** The umpire is empowered to call a game for any condition deemed to place the players in peril (e.g., lightning, wet field, light fixture failure). A game terminated by the umpire due to unsafe conditions or time constraints will be considered complete if it is called after five innings or after 4 1/2 innings if the home team has a lead.

#### ***E. Tied Games***

1. A game that is tied at the end of seven innings, and still within the 90-minute time limit will be continued by playing up to two additional innings. If during these extra innings time expires, the score will revert to the last full inning and the game will be called a tie.

2. In the extra innings each team will start with one out and a runner on 2nd base (the last batter or the runner for that batter from the previous inning). If the game is still tied after two extra innings, it will be recorded as a tie.
3. A tied game that is called after five innings, will be recorded as a tie.

## V. Game Rules

### A. *Batting*

1. All players shall be in the batting lineup unless a player opts out.
2. Players leaving the game early must let both coaches and umpires know prior to leaving. This will avoid an out being called for the missing player.
3. All batting lineups will have a female batter by the 7th position or an out will be recorded.
4. Substitute players will be limited to a single during each at-bat, this includes Home Runs.
5. Prior to the pitch, the batter must have both feet completely within the lines of the batter's box. The batter may touch the lines, but no part of the foot may be outside the lines prior to the pitch and while contacting the ball.
6. The strike zone is the mat.
7. The batter enters the batter's box with a 1-1 count.
8. A batter can hit a foul ball with 2 strikes and is allowed one more strike, either by pitch or foul ball before being called out.
9. The batter must take the batter's position in the batter's box after being directed to do so by the umpire.
10. **Substitute players:** will be placed at the bottom of the lineup, except for female batters, who would move to the 7<sup>th</sup> position if no other females were on the team.
11. **Home Runs:** Each team is allowed 3 Home Runs per game. Any excess Home Runs are ruled dead ball outs. A Home Run by a Substitute player is ruled a single and does not count against the 3 Home Run rule. Runners only advance if forced on a Substitute player Home Run.

### B. *Pitching*

1. **Distance:** The pitcher must pitch from 50 feet or more from The Home Plate Extension Mat. They do not need to touch the rubber at 50 feet, but they must be in line with the Home Plate Extension Mat and the pitching rubber.
2. **Arc:** The ball must be delivered with an arc that reaches a height of between 6 feet and 12 feet above the ground.
3. **Ball Size:** The 11-inch ball will be pitched to women batters unless the batter requests that the 12-inch ball be used. If a woman batter chooses to hit the 12-inch ball they must continue using it during that at bat.
4. **Masks:** Pitchers are required to wear approved softball pitching masks during the game play.

### C. *Fielding*

1. Outfielders, including the rover, must be positioned and remain outside the encroachment line until the pitch is struck. If the encroachment line is crossed before the ball is hit, the umpire may award a single or the batter can accept the result of the play.

2. Defensive players attempting to make a force-out at first base must touch the primary (white) base to record an out or tag the runner. Tagging the orange base will be the same result as missing first base.
3. Fielders may tag runners with the ball or gloved ball to record an out. No tagging is permitted between the Commitment Line and the Scoring line.
4. Defensive players must touch the Home Plate Extension Mat to record an out at home plate when the runner is between the commitment line and scoring line.
5. ***Automatic Award to 1<sup>st</sup> Base:***  
If a batter/runner who is 65 or older hits a ***pitched ball which touches the outfield/grass that is either on the fly (without being caught) or on the ground (whether touched by an infielder or not) the batter/runner cannot be thrown out at first base. The batter/runner may be thrown out if he/she attempts to advance beyond first base. Any runners on base can advance at their own risk. This does not apply when using a courtesy runner from home.***

#### ***D. Base Running***

1. If there is a play on the batter at first base the batter/base runner must touch the secondary (orange) base. The runner can be called out if he/she first touches the primary (white) base.
2. Sliding into a base is permitted. A runner choosing not to slide must not interfere with a fielder attempt to complete a play (i.e., duck or otherwise get out of the way).
3. If the runner overruns the base, any defensive player can tag the runner and the runner will be called out if caught off base, except 1<sup>st</sup> base.
4. Runners attempting to score from third base may not reverse their direction after they have crossed the Commitment Line. To score, runners must proceed directly to the scoring line before a fielder with the ball touches the Home Plate Extension mat. The runner from third base need not be forced by another base runner to be called out at home. If the runner touches the Home Plate Extension Mat instead of the scoring line, he/she will be called out.
5. Any Player on base when a Substitute batter gets a hit can advance at their own risk. Once the runners have safely advanced, the hit shall be ruled a dead ball. If an attempt is made to throw a runner out and the ball goes out of play, all runners are awarded the base they were attempting plus one from the last base occupied at the time the throw went out of play.

#### ***E. Courtesy Base Runner***

1. A courtesy runner may be used for any player on base.
2. Courtesy runners from home plate are only allowed for players 65 years or older. ***Using a courtesy home plate runner forfeits the advantage of getting the automatic award to 1<sup>st</sup> base and the runner a live player limited to a single base only.*** All other base runners may advance at their own risk. The home plate courtesy runner will start ~~line~~ directly behind home plate. The courtesy runner may only be awarded additional bases on an out-of-play throw at first base. When using a courtesy runner from home plate, if the batter runs more than 15 feet down the first baseline from home plate, the batter shall be called out.

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3. If a courtesy runner cannot continue running (*the bases*), the original player must return and replace the courtesy runner. If the original player cannot *replace that courtesy runner*, an out will be recorded.
4. You can use as many courtesy runners as available in an inning.
5. Each player can only run once per inning as a courtesy runner.
6. If the Courtesy runner is on base when his/her turn at bat comes up, he/she is removed from base, an out is recorded, and they will then take their turn at bat.