

WICOMICO COUNTY RECREATION, PARKS AND TOURISM
SALISBURY, MARYLAND 21804

WICOMICO COUNTY MENS SLOW PITCH LEAGUE RULES 2009

ADMINISTRATION:

The Wicomico County Department of Recreation and Parks shall be responsible for:

- a. Conducting the organizational meetings.
- b. Writing the schedule of regular season, playoff, and all-star games.
- c. Spiking, matting and liming the fields.
- d. Keeping rosters of each team and the contracts of all players on file.
- e. Collecting and depositing all required fees.
- f. Updating standings on a regular basis.
- g. Hiring a groundskeeper for appropriate fields.
- h. Judging the fitness of the playing fields within Salisbury up to 4 p.m., when there is a question of bad weather.

DUTIES OF THE LEAGUE OFFICIALS

- a. Represent the league at the league functions.
- b. Chair all league meetings.
- c. Serve as an ex-official member on any and all committees.
- d. Assist the Wicomico County Department of Recreation and Parks with the organization of the league umpires.
- e. Appoint a committee member to record minutes (league secretary will take minutes).
- f. Conduct all necessary league correspondence.
- g. Appoint a member to serve as Treasurer.
- h. Handle all disputes or protests arising out of league play as soon as possible.

LEAGUE REQUIREMENTS

- a. All teams will be permitted to sign as many players as they deem necessary. It is recommended that teams carry enough players to make up a rained-out game and avoid forfeits.
- b. All contracts and fees must be submitted to the Recreation Department by March 17th. Any contract signed prior to the winter organizational meeting will be considered INVALID. Any player signed after March 17th will be suspended for his team's first three played games of the season. This applies to all divisions except division I.
- c. Players are bound to the team they sign with first. If a player signs with more than one team, he is ineligible to play for either team until he is properly released from one or the other team. Anyone signing two contracts will have a three game suspension after being released.
- d. A player may not play for any team in this league until:
 1. His contract is properly signed and a \$36 fee is paid.
 2. He is properly released from another team or league to play in this league and his contract and release are turned into the Recreation Department by 5 p.m. the day of the game. All contracts turned in after 5 p.m. will be acknowledged the following day.
 3. Any player suspended from any other league after Feb. 10, 1987, will not be eligible to play in this league until he is reinstated in the league from which he was suspended.

FEES AND FINANCES

- a. Each team shall submit the balance of the team's entrance fee **by March 17, 2009**. Any team that has submitted the entrance fee and then decides to withdraw from the league after the start of the season shall be forced to forfeit this entrance fee.
- b. Team rosters must have the accompanying contract fee at the time of submission or they will not be honored. Player contracts will cost an additional \$36 for in-county players and \$41 for out of county players. Contract fees must be submitted by 5:00 PM.
- c. All checks and/or money orders must be made payable to the *Wicomico County Recreation and Parks*. If for any reason payment is not negotiated by the bank for a team or player on a team, all scheduled games for that team will be forfeited until the account is settled.

EQUIPMENT

- a. Each team is responsible for supplying its own playing equipment, (balls, bats, gloves).
- b. The following balls have been approved for the 2009 season:
 - i. **Decker Shark .44 cor, 400 compression, Elite, Yellow.**
 - ii. **Worth Max Spec .44 cor, 400 compression, Elite, Yellow.**
- c. Steel spikes are prohibited.
- d. Legal Bats: **Refer to the constantly changing, USSSA website for the list of legal bats. www.ussa.com**
- e. Each team will supply a minimum of two balls before the game to the umpire. The team hitting a homerun or a foul ball is responsible for replacing the ball.

GAME TIMES

- a. Games shall begin at 6:30, 7:30 & 8:30 p.m. Starting times may vary according to the playing fields. There will be no grace period. At the 6:30 p.m. game time, if eight (8) players are present, the game must begin. There may be an 8:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. start on selected weeks during the Junior Girls softball season.
- b. Teams will play a minimum of 20 regular season games followed by playoffs. (see playoffs and seeding)

TIME LIMITS

- * No new inning may start after a one (1) hour-fifteen (15) minute time limit. This means that there can be a tie awarded to each team. ***International Rule applies if there is time left.*** There will be no tie games during the postseason.

FITNESS OF GROUNDS

- a. There shall be a 15-minute waiting period (one-half hour maximum) in any case where a game is interrupted by weather conditions. If at any time during the waiting period the umpire should judge the grounds to be fit for play, he shall call the teams to the field and resume the game from the point of suspension.

After 4:00 P.M., field playability will be determined by the umpire assigned to the field.

- b. **Lightning rule:** At the first signs of lightning or thunder, leave the ball field. Go to your vehicle and take shelter with the windows rolled up. "If you can hear it, clear it."
Stay out of the dugouts and bleachers. These are not safe from lightning. Avoid going underneath trees - trees attract lightning. Avoid metal fences, gates, tall light poles and power poles.

Wait 30 minutes after the last observed lightning or thunder before you leave shelter. Game officials will signal a resumption of activities when it is appropriate.

Adapted from the National Lightning Safety Institute,
http://www.lightningsafety.com/nlsi_pls/lsvl_plans.html

- c. For games that are scheduled for ball fields outside the City limits, the local team that uses this ball field as their home park will determine the fitness of the grounds. If the field is not playable, it is up to the local coach or manager to notify the other teams scheduled for this particular field, before 4 p.m. on the day of the game. Condition of fields within the City will be determined by the Recreation Department. Games can be canceled only due to uncontrollable conditions such as weather, etc.

NOTE: During inclement weather, call **410-548-4900 ext 5**. The weather line will be updated by 4:00 pm on a game day. No calls prior to 4 p.m. that day.

POSTPONED GAMES/MAKE-UPS

All postponed games will be made up at designated times during and at the end of the season. Optional Saturday dates may be used at the discretion of the league.

FORFEITS

- a. Any team that forfeits a game must pay a \$25 fee prior to their next regularly scheduled game. Any team forfeiting one of their last three games shall pay a fee of \$35. *Any player on a team with an unpaid balance will not be allowed to enter the league in any future seasons until that player pays for his portion of the team's balance.*
- b. Three forfeits will result in disqualification from playoffs; however, that team will still be able to play for regular season awards.
- c. Four forfeits will result in disqualification from all awards.
- d. In the event both teams of a scheduled game fail to appear for the game, each team will be credited with a forfeit.

RESCHEDULING OF GAMES

All teams will be allowed to make preseason requests. The league will make every effort to honor those requests. Once the official schedule is published, games will only be rescheduled due to weather-related cancellations. Scheduling requests must be submitted in writing to the Program Director by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, March 17th, 2009. Requests received after this date will not be honored.

ELIGIBILITY RULES

Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism Organized Sports Eligibility Rules

- a. Wicomico County organized sports programs are open to both residents and non-residents. Non-residents will pay an additional \$5 to participate.

- b. Players must be 16 years of age or older as of registration deadline.
- c. If at any time, a player is found to be playing with a team that he is not legally registered to play with, that team shall forfeit all games in which he played and the rules and disciplinary committee shall meet in order to decide on a proper suspension for that team, team's coach, and the illegal player.

PROTESTS AND APPEALS:

- a. A protested game will only be considered if the umpire is notified immediately before the next pitch has been thrown after the play in question. If the umpire is not notified there will be no protest, with the exception of illegal player protests which you have 24 hours to report.
- b. A protest must contain the following:
 - 1. A \$50.00 protest fee. This fee must be cash and is refundable only if the protest is upheld.
 - 2. A detailed written account of the situation being protested. Please use the protest form in the back of this rulebook.
 - 3. Rule interpretations must be stated on the report. Please include the page number, section, article and rulebook (Wicomico County Men's Slow Pitch or Official USSSA) in which it is located.
- c. The protesting manager must notify the Athletic Complex Manager within 24 hours of completion of the game in question. Call (410) 548-4900 ext. 105 to report a protest.

The Complex Manager will notify League Board Representatives within 24 hours of being notified. (Weekends excluded)
- d. The umpire must notify the league umpire assignor within 24 hours of the completion of the game in question.
- e. A protest committee will then be formed, comprised of league officials and division representatives, not including the representative from the division that the player/team is from, or their designees.
- f. The committee will hear and review the case, and make their decision in a timely manner.
- g. Decisions made by the protest committee are final. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- h. All parties involved must attend the protest hearing, including coaches and umpire(s).
- i. If the protesting coach does not attend the meeting, then the protest will be thrown out and the result of the game in question will stand. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- j. **All protests will be heard within a maximum of five days after the protest has been filed. Both coaches will be notified of the date of the protest hearing either by phone, mail or e-mail (if applicable).**

UMPIRES

- a. The umpires shall be appointed by the assignor for all games.
- b. If the umpire does not show for a scheduled game, both teams must agree to play the game with a selected umpire, or the game will not be considered official. The Umpires Association will credit the League for umpires who fail to attend their assigned games.
- c. The umpire has sole authority in conducting a game. If there are any questions regarding any decisions, ONLY the coach, captain, or manager may question the umpire concerning a call made during the game. ANY PLAYER APPROACHING AN UMPIRE IN REGARD TO AN UMPIRE'S DECISION WILL BE SUBJECT TO DISMISSAL FROM THE GAME BY THE UMPIRE.
- d. Umpires must give the assignor 24 hours notice if they cannot make their scheduled game, unless an emergency arises. If the umpire does not show for his scheduled game without giving notice to the umpire-in-chief, he will not be paid for the game missed and will not receive payment for one game already worked.
- e. Umpires MUST have a copy of the league rulebook and Protest and Appeals Form at every game. Umpires are required to collect line-up cards prior to each game. Line-up cards must include first and last names.

EJECTIONS

- a. A player who has been ejected from any game shall not be eligible to play in the remainder of the current game being played plus the next scheduled game that is played.
- b. If a team finds that an ejected player is playing in a game illegally, that game may be protested immediately after the game is over. This must be reported to the umpire immediately and the Complex Manager within 24 hours (please see "protests and appeals").
- c. If the game is protested and upheld, the game will be considered a forfeit.
- d. League officials will handle an ejection, which is deemed severe.
- e. In the event a team has a player ejected and has no additional players to replace him in the lineup, then that particular batting spot will be an out.
- f. If a team has two ejections in one game the team forfeits the game.

PLAYING RULES

- a. If a game is started with 9, 10, 11, or 12 players and a player is injured or ejected the game may continue. However, if there are no additional players available to substitute, an out is registered when the injured or ejected player is supposed to bat. At no time can a team go below 8 players.
- b. Run rule for all divisions is 15 after 4, and 12 after 5.

c. Flip/Flop Rule: In the inning when the Run Rule for that particular program is exceeded and the Home Team is losing, the Home Team will remain at bat and become the Visiting Team. If the team (new Visiting Team) does not score enough runs to reduce the run difference below the Run Rule the game is over. If they reduce the run difference to below the Run Rule then the new Home Team will bat. If they subsequently score enough runs to exceed the Run Rule the game will be over. If they do not, the game will continue under that format. If the situation reverses, the teams would flip/flop again.

d. Eight-Player Rule:

A team may start a game with eight contracted players.

***The ninth spot in the line-up will **NOT** be an automatic out.*

***If the ninth player arrives, he may be inserted directly into the line-up in the ninth batting spot only. A team may not go back down to 8 players unless it is due to an injury or it will be considered a forfeit.*

***If the tenth player arrives, he may be added to the line-up in the tenth batting spot only at any time during the game. An eleventh or twelfth may not.*

e. All line-ups should be presented to the umpire immediately upon demand (with first and last names) before the game and as players are shaking hands. A game cannot start until the umpire has both line-ups. The umpire has the right to call a forfeit if both line-ups are not turned in and if the line-up does not correspond with the number of contracted players on the field

f. All uniforms should be numbered and be of like color.

g. The League shall adhere to the present year's Official USSSA Slow Pitch Softball Rules. (There may be some local adaptations that shall take precedence over the Official USSSA Slow Pitch Rules).

h. **RULE 6. PITCHING RULE**

1. **AT NO TIME** during the progress of the game shall the Pitcher be allowed to use tape or any other substance, including a glove, upon the pitching hand or fingers. Players may not apply any foreign substance to the ball. The only exception is if an umpire permits a player to dry his hands using a bag containing powdered resin.

2. **AT THE BEGINNING** of an inning or when a Pitcher relieves another Pitcher, one minute may be used to deliver not more than THREE PRACTICE PITCHES to the Catcher or some other teammate.

3. **LEGAL POSITIONS OF THE PITCHER'S FEET.**

i. The pitcher may pitch from the Pitching Plate or from the Pitching Area, an area the width of the Plate and up to six (6) feet behind the Pitcher's Plate.

ii. Prior to pitching, the Pitcher shall take a position with his pivot foot firmly on the ground and in contact with the Pitching Plate or Pitching Area. The pivot foot must be in contact with the Pitcher's Plate or Pitching Area when the pitched ball is released.

- iii. The other foot (free foot) has no restriction on position and may be placed on, in front of, to the rear of, or to the side of the Pitcher's Plate or Pitching Area. After taking the initial position, the Pitcher may take more than one step with the free foot, in any direction of his choice, provided that it is taken prior to, simultaneously with, or during the actions of delivering the pitched ball.
 - iv. After the release of the Pitch, there are no restrictions on Pitcher's subsequent movements, or the fielding positions he may assume as a defensive player.
4. **Sec. 4. PITCHER'S LEGAL MOTIONS ALLOWED IN ACTUAL DELIVERY OF THE PITCH.**
- i. After assuming the pitching position on the Pitcher's Plate or in the Pitching Area, the Pitcher must present the ball in FRONT OF HIS BODY (for at least one second) in either one or both hands before starting the delivery motions. Note: All Pitching rules that apply to the Pitcher's actions before and during the release of the pitch along with the restrictions on height, speed, etc, shall remain the same.
 - ii. The Pitcher may hold or grip the ball in any manner before delivery.
 - iii. Only a definite underhand motion is permitted in the delivery of the Pitch.
 - iv. The Pitcher may release the pitched ball in any manner when delivering the Pitch. This includes any and all types of delivery.

EFFECT Sec. i-iv. After the Pitcher presents the ball, he may make any windup or arm motions desired, either in front of his body, above his head or behind his back, including stops and pauses in these motions.

- v. Once the Pitcher begins his delivery motions; the umpire shall not give a call or signal for "Time" unless something unusual occurs.
 - vi. The pitched ball must be released within 5 seconds from the time the Pitcher has the ball and the batter has taken his position in the Batter's Box. From this point, the Umpire shall not give a call or signal for "Time" unless something unusual occurs.
 - vii. Pitcher must face Home Plate on delivery of pitch.
- NOTE Sec. 4. i-v. Realizing that the Pitcher does not fool very many batters to the extent that they can not hit the ball, it is desired that Pitchers not be handicapped by technicalities when they do develop a new technique or delivery that may add appeal for the spectators. The pitcher must still adhere to the basic Pitching Rules.
5. **Sec. 5. TYPE OF PITCH PERMITTED.**
- i. The ball must be Pitched underhanded at Slow Speed.
 - ii. The Pitched Ball must arc at least 3 feet after leaving the Pitcher's hand and before it passes any part of Home Plate.
 - iii. The Pitched Ball shall not rise higher than 10 feet above the ground.

EFFECT Sec. 5. i-iii. The speed of the Pitch and height of the pitched ball are left entirely to the judgment of the Umpire (**NOTE:** For sake of uniformity in decisions, any doubtful Pitch should be ruled as an unfairly delivered pitch). The Umpire shall warn a Pitcher who delivers a Pitch with EXCESSIVE SPEED that repeating such EXCESSIVE SPEED PITCH will cause the Pitcher's removal from the Pitcher's position for the remainder of the game. A Pitch that does not arc the full 3 feet as required (flat level

pitch) may not be an EXCESSIVE SPEED PITCH, but merely an Unfairly delivered Pitch.

- i. The league will be playing with a one-one count, and a courtesy foul.
- j. Extra innings: International rule plus one pitch will be used.
- k. Extra Player - optional
 1. Opposing manager must be notified before game begins - 12 men at bat.
 2. The extra player may be used as a defensive player at any time. The player leaving the game can become the extra player or removed from the game for a substitute. In any event, the batting order may not change.
- l. Player Transfer:

Once a player is registered with a team in a particular division, that player will only be permitted to move laterally or up in divisions. For example a player on a team in Division III can move to Divisions I, II, or III, but may not move to Division IV during the season.
- m. Late Player Registration:
 1. Players registering after March 17th 2009, may play in the team's 4th played game and thereafter as long as they are registered by 5:00 PM of first game day player is playing. (this does not apply to division I)
 2. No players shall be added to a team roster after the seasons' mid-point as noted on the official schedule.
- n. Re-entry Rule - Any starting player may re-enter the ball game one time; the managers only may dispute the misuse of the re-entry rule.
- o. **Home Run limits are set as follows:**

Division I – One home run per inning plus a designated home run hitter. If the home run hitter is not decided upon before the first pitch of the game, then the first person to hit the first home run in the game becomes the designated home run hitter.

Designated home run hitter rule: If the designated home run hitter is walked, the designated home run hitter goes to third base and the homerun does not pass back. If the designated hitter comes up to bat again in the same inning, he is allowed to hit another home run.

Division II – One home run per inning.

Division III - One home run per inning.

Division IV - One home run per inning.

* Note: Any home run after the limit listed above shall be an out.
- p. Any ball clearing the fence (tipped or otherwise), counts toward the home run totals.

- q. After the limit is hit, a tipped ball over the fence is considered a four base error.
- r. If a player is injured and is bleeding, he has two (2) minutes to stop the bleeding or have a substitution made for him. If the bleeding does not stop in the two (2) minute period and a substitution is not available, then the player, which made the last out, can run for said player. If injured player is unable to return to the game and a substitute is not available, one (1) out will be awarded for each time at bat.
- s. If a player is 40 years and over, he may have the option of a courtesy runner. The courtesy runner will be the player who made the very last out. If a courtesy runner is needed before the first out of the first inning, the last man in the line-up shall be the courtesy runner. All players 40 years and over must be designated on the managers roster sheet. If the courtesy runner is also over 40, the courtesy runner may pass back to the first person that is under 40. A player is allowed a courtesy runner if the player is injured during the game in which he is playing. The courtesy runner will only be in effect for the current game. A courtesy runner may not carry over to future games. The opposing team's coach must approve the courtesy runner.
- t. Foul Language Rule - Anyone using foul language will be ejected from the game plus one additional game (and possibly more based on the severity of the offense). Umpires opinions will be highly considered in all suspensions.
- u. Teams are responsible for their fans. The coach may be tossed if he cannot control his fans' behavior. Foul language or inappropriate comments are prohibited.

PUBLICITY

Scores shall be recorded by umpires immediately following the game. Updated standings will be emailed to league captains and will be available at www.wicomcorecandparks.org. (provided web service is working)

PLAY-OFF AND SEEDING

- a. The top 8 teams in each division will make the playoffs. Playoff formats for all divisions will be a straight double elimination tournament. If a division does not have 8 teams, byes will be awarded as necessary. In larger divisions, only the top 8 teams will make the playoffs and the rest of the teams are finished for the season.
- b. The playoff brackets will be determined as follows:
 - i. The team with the best regular season record will receive the #1 seed in the playoff bracket.
 - ii. In leagues with 2 separate divisions (American and National), the #2 seed will be the other division winner (regardless of regular season record).
 - iii. The remaining seeds (#3 through #8) will be determined by regular season records, regardless of which division the team plays in.
 - iv. Leagues that have only one division will be seeded #1 through #8 based on regular season records.

The team with the best seed shall be the home team for the first playoff game.

After each team has played one game a coin flip will determine the home team.

Tiebreakers

- 1) Head to Head
- 2) Run Differential
- 3) Division Record (if applicable)
- 4) Record versus other division (if applicable)
- 5) Record versus other playoff teams
- 6) Coin Toss

** = new rule introduced this year-(please take note)