

**Howard County**  
**50 and Over Men's Softball League**

**GAME RULES**  
**(Revised March 2009)**

**A. Amateur Softball Association of America (ASA)**

Amateur Senior Slow Pitch Softball rules shall apply except as modified herein.

**B. Participation Requirements**

Age: Players must be at least 50 years old during the calendar year of participation (e.g., if a male's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday falls on or before Dec. 31, he is considered to have met the minimum age requirement for that entire calendar year). Proof-of-age documentation must be provided if requested. Use of an under-aged player will result in a forfeit. Each team may carry two players between the ages of 47-49 years of age.

**C. Field Layout**

1.) Distances: Pitching rubber to home plate 50 feet. Between bases: 65 feet.

2.) Pitching Mat: The pitching or strike mat shall be 17 inches wide by 24 inches long, with a "V" cut in one width to fit snugly against the back of home plate.

3.) Double Bag at 1<sup>st</sup> Base: A double bag (or mat equal to base size) shall be used at 1<sup>st</sup> base, with the extra portion of the bag (or mat) positioned in foul territory abutting the base, thereby allowing the batter-runner to avoid contact with the first baseman on a ball hit to the infield.

4.) Extra Home Plate: An extra home plate for scoring purposes shall be placed on the rearward extension of the 1<sup>st</sup> base foul line at a distance of 8 feet from the rearmost corner of the regular home plate (see Rule H-5).

5.) Commit Line: A line 3 feet long shall be marked perpendicular to the foul

line halfway between 3<sup>rd</sup> base and home plate (see Rule H-4).

**D. Games**

1.) Starting Time: Games shall start as scheduled. Early doubleheaders will start at 6:15/7:15 PM. Late doubleheaders will start at 8:15/9:15 PM. There will be no grace period. Game time is forfeit time.

2.) Innings: Single games shall consist of 7 innings unless stopped by the time limit. No full inning can start after 65 minutes.

3.) Rain-Outs and Makeup Games: See Howard County rules. After 4 p.m., players may call 410 313-4453 to determine playability of the fields.

**E. Teams**

1.) Players: A total of 18 players must be present to start a game. All players who show up for a game shall bat, but there is a maximum of 11 defensive players on the field per team. If at least 18 players combined from both teams are present at game's start, the game will be played. If there are less than 10 defensive players, the batting team shall provide a catcher who will make defensive plays.

2.) Substitutions: There is unlimited defensive substitutions at anytime.

3.) Loaning Players: If a team is short of players at game time, the opposing team must (if they have sufficient players) loan enough players to the team that is short players to allow them to start the game with 9 players. The loaned players may only come from the opponent of the team that is short players and may not come from another team in the 50 + league.

**F. Pitching**

A legal pitch is a ball delivered with a perceptible arc that reaches a height of at least 6 feet from the ground, while not

exceeding a maximum height of 12 feet from the ground. A legal pitch striking any portion of home plate or the pitching mat is a strike.

### **G. Batting**

1.) Ball-Strike Count: When the batter comes to the plate, there is a one-ball and one-strike count.

2.) Bunting: No bunting is allowed. Any attempt to bunt shall be an out and runners hold their bases.

3.) Fouls: After batter has two strikes, the *second* foul results in a strikeout.

4.) Home Run Rule:

a. The One – up rule will be in effect for the 50 + league. Once each team reaches their home run limit (1) the teams are allowed one additional home run. As long as both teams keep matching the limit or equal number of home runs teams may continue to hit additional home run(s). If one team reaches the limit and goes over the limit before another team reaches their limit the home run becomes an out. The one up rule is in effect for all innings.

b. If the 5<sup>th</sup> run in an inning is scored by a runner on base during an over the fence home run, all succeeding runners and the batter runner do not score; the team will not be assessed and over the fence home run. There is a limit of 2 innings where this rule applies. Any additional inning that ends where the 5<sup>th</sup> run in an inning is scored by a runner on base during an over the fence home run all succeeding runners and the batter runner do not score; the team will be assessed an over the fence home run.

5.) Bats: See attached list of approved and banned bats. A player who uses a banned bat shall be declared out and ejected from the game and the next scheduled game.

### **H. Baserunning**

1.) Sliding: Sliding is allowed

2.) Overrunning Bases: No over running of bases is allowed.

3.) Avoiding Collisions: Any runner who *deliberately attempts* to run into the fielder who is covering a base or home plate or attempting to field a ball shall automatically be declared out.

*At first base*: When the ball is hit to the infield and there is a play at first base, the batter-runner must run to the portion of the double bag or mat located in foul territory. Failure to observe this rule results in the batter-runner being declared out and all other baserunners restricted to advance one base. This rule does not apply when the ball is hit to the outfield. Having safely touched the portion of the bag or mat in foul territory, the batter-runner need not return and tag the base to advance in the event of an overthrow, etc.

4.) Commit Line: If a runner advancing toward home plate touches the commit line or the ground beyond it, *he cannot return to 3<sup>rd</sup> base*. A runner who recrosses the commit line shall be called out automatically. A runner who left the base before an outfielder touches a fly ball, crossed the commit line, and touched alternate home plate can be declared out on appeal.

5.) Scoring: The play at home is always a force play regardless of the number of runners on base. To score, a runner must touch the extra home plate before the catcher touches the regular home plate while in possession of the ball. *Under no circumstances shall the catcher tag or attempt to tag the runner with the ball* (violation shall result in the runner being declared safe.) A runner who touches or jumps over any portion of the regular home plate or pitching mat shall be declared out. In the event of an errant throw the runner attempting to score must avoid collision with the catcher attempting to field the ball.

Recreation and Parks prior to the first game of the season.

### **I. Courtesy Runners**

- 1.) For a Baserunner: Courtesy runners are permitted for baserunners. A player may only be used as a courtesy runner once per inning. A courtesy runner whose turn at bat comes while on base will be out. The courtesy runner will be removed from the base and come to bat. A second courtesy runner cannot be substituted at this time.
- 2.) For a Batter: There are no courtesy runners for batters. A batter must reach base before a courtesy runner is used.

### **J. Maximum Runs Rule**

- 1.) Runs Per Inning: The inning shall end as soon as the 5<sup>th</sup> run scores. *The last inning is the unlimited run inning. If, due to time limits the game ends prior to the 7<sup>th</sup> inning the last inning played will be the unlimited run inning.*
- 2.) Slaughter Rule: If, after 5 innings, a team is losing by a margin of 15 or more runs, *the losing team* may decide to quit play; the score at that time shall be the score of record. If the aborted game is the first game of a doubleheader, the teams shall proceed to play the second game as scheduled.

### **K. Team Responsibility**

- 1.) Equipment: Each team shall bring to the game new softballs (as supplied by the county), the pitching mat (home plate extension, with team name), and extra home plate.
- 2.) Shirts: Each player shall wear a shirt of the team's assigned color.

### **L. Rosters**

The roster/waiver form must be submitted to the Howard County Dept. of

### **M. Game Scores and Standings**

The manager or representative of the team that *wins the second game of the doubleheader* shall report the score by telephone (410 313-4468) or email at [mpendleton@co.ho.md.us](mailto:mpendleton@co.ho.md.us) no later than *the day after the game*.