# Houston Hardball League Playing Rules

This league was created in 1990 to provide for men 18 years of age and over an alternative to softball and enable us to play the game we all grew up playing. Adult attitudes must always prevail, no matter how competitive any league is. The responsibility that this ethic sustains will remain at the responsibility of the individual league President and his officers and anyone who abuses the league's code can be suspended or expelled from the league. These rules were established to serve as guidelines for all local league affiliates by the MSBL.

The **Houston Hardball League** (HHL) is governed by the most recent version of the Major League Baseball Official Rule Book for all league regular season, postseason and All-Star games except where MSBL and/or HHL rules herein supersede those of Major League Baseball. See http://mlb.mlb.com/mlb/official_info/official_rules/official_rules.jsp for a PDF version of the rules.

Where there are inconsistencies, HHL rules will apply. All HHL rules have been adopted from the Men's Senior Baseball League (MSBL) Official Rules & Regulations as printed inside the league score book. Where there are discrepancies, HHL Rules will supersede those of the MSBL. All HHL game rules are subject to change, if in the best interests of the HHL. Any change to the rules requires a majority vote of the HHL managers actively participating in the HHL Managers Meetings. A Rules Committee was established consisting of the Vice President and the Division Commissioners to preside over protests and rules interpretations.

## REVISED Aug 31, 2026

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### RULES

#### *1. UNIFORMS, HELMETS, BASEBALLS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT*

1.a. All Teams, including coaches, must wear full baseball uniforms consisting of caps, numbered baseball jerseys, baseball pants and sanitary socks or stirrups. Each player's uniform must be of similar design to his teammate's uniform. Teams who have sponsorships will be allowed to display the sponsor's name on their uniform via patch or uniform jersey.

a.1. No player out of uniform will be allowed to play without the opposing manager's consent. Upon being informed of infraction, the home plate umpire will stop the game and notify the team having the player infraction. Five (5) minutes will be provided to allow the manager to place compliant players on the field. If an infraction is detected after a player has batted (or played

defense) and he is unable to get into compliance once asked, the player must be removed from the game. His batting position will be skipped without an out being assessed.

a.2. All teams should have their uniforms by their first game. A grace period shall be extended for newly activated players or for new teams to complete their uniforms.

1.b. All batters, on-deck batters and runners must wear helmets with at least one ear flap facing the pitcher for both at-bats and on base. There is no option to this rule. Full double-ear flap helmets are encouraged for at-bats and for running the bases. Catchers must wear a protective helmet (skull cap) under their mask or use a hockey style mask. Base coaches must also wear helmets while on the field of play. Base coach helmets do not have to have ear flaps.

1.c. Each team must provide a minimum of three (3) new baseballs to each game. Only baseballs provided by the league will be permitted. In addition, each manager will provide used baseballs, in very good condition, as needed, to use in the event there are not enough new baseballs to complete the game.

1.d. The Houston Hardball League is an all wood-bat league. Therefore, only natural wood, bamboo composites, wood composite and metal-wood bats are permitted for all league games and tournaments.

1.e. Metal cleats are permitted. However, managers, coaches and players must observe host field rules pertaining to cleats in the host field's batting cages. Failure to abide by host field's rules may result in the ejection of the offending player, coach and/or manager, forfeiture of game by the offending team, loss of field use or other disciplinary action deemed fit by the league office.

1.f. In games that are played on all turf fields, only molded baseball cleats or turf shoes will be permitted. Failure to abide by these rules may result in the ejection of the offending player, coach and/or manager, forfeiture of game by the offending team, loss of field use or other disciplinary action deemed fit by the league office.

## *2. GAME LENGTH, RUN RULE AND RAIN-OUTS*

2.a. All league games are nine (9) innings or 2 hours 30 minutes (2:30). Once the time limit has expired the inning shall be completed and no new inning shall be started. Regular season games can end in a tie.

Re: **DARKNESS** – Five (5) innings will constitute a complete game (based on umpire's discretion). Final score is based on the end of the last completed full inning. Darkness, for the purposes of the HHL, is considered the lack of natural or artificial light.

Re: **RAIN** – Three (3) innings will constitute a complete game or 1-1/2 hours. The final score is based on the end of the last completed full inning.

2.b. All league PLAYOFF GAMES are nine (9) innings or 2 hours 30 minutes (2:30**)** and must be played to completion by league standards. No ties will be allowed. The umpire may suspend a game if in their opinion, the safety of the players is compromised due to inclement weather, poor field conditions, rain, darkness, time limits, etc.

Any game that is suspended by the umpires for whatever reason shall be re-scheduled by the league but may be made up at any time not conflicting with previously scheduled games. All suspended games shall resume from the point at which it was suspended with the original players and lineups in place when the game was suspended. If all original players are not available, then both teams shall be permitted to substitute players subject to MLB and HHL substitution rules.

2.c. All league CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES are nine (9) innings or **2 hours 45 minutes (2:45)** and must be played to completion by league standards. No ties will be allowed. The umpire may suspend a game if, in their opinion, the safety of the players is compromised due to inclement weather, poor field conditions, rain, darkness, time limits, etc.

Any game that is suspended by the umpires for whatever reason shall be re-scheduled by the league but may be made up at any time not conflicting with previously scheduled games. All suspended games shall resume from the point at which it was suspended with the original players and lineups in place when the game was suspended. If all original players are not available, then both teams shall be permitted to substitute players subject to MLB and HHL substitution rules.

2.d. Any game that is rained out will be re-scheduled by the league but may be made up at any time not conflicting with previously scheduled games. Rain out games must be made up in the order of cancellations. Final league standings will be determined by win/loss percentage. For win/loss percentage, ties count as half a win/half a loss. Ties in the final standings will be decided by head-to-head competition first, followed by fewest runs allowed overall.

2.e. Pitchers will be allowed a maximum of 8 warm-up pitches in their first inning of appearance and 5 warm-up pitches in each subsequent inning pitched.

2.f. Umpires must announce the official start time at the plate after the manager's meeting prior to the start of the game. Official start time will be kept by the home plate umpire.

2.g. There is no "run rule" or "mercy rule" in any official HHL games, in any division, regular season, postseason or tournament play.

## *3. TEAMS, PLAYERS, ELIGIBILITY AND LINEUPS*

3.a. All players must be "of age" for their respective age division by December 31st of that season's year.

Re: **35+ DIVISION** – Each team will be allowed to carry a maximum of two (2) players under the age of 35, but no younger than 2 years below the division age (i.e. 33 or 34 years old). Players that fall into this age exemption will not be allowed to pitch for their respective team until they reach their age 35 year. In addition, each team will be allowed to carry one (1) Father/Son pair with the "son" being 16 years of age or older. The father and son must both be rostered players and have paid their full league fees respectively. The son must be accompanied by the father in order for the son to be eligible to participate in a league sanctioned game. The father and the son must have at least 1 plate appearance each during a league sanctioned game.

Re: **25+ DIVISION (Weeknights)** – No exemptions will be allowed in this age division.

Re: **55+ DIVISION** – Each team will be allowed to carry a maximum of two (2) players under the age of 55, but no younger than 2 years below the division age (i.e. 53 or 54 years old). Players

that fall into this age exemption will not be allowed to pitch for their respective team until they reach their age 55 year.

3.b. **New Players**: The league shall control the assignment to teams of all new players who have contacted the league in response to advertising or who have been referred to the league by any means. A player who has not played in league games in either the current or previous year shall be regarded as a new player. A new player acquired by a team through the team's own recruiting efforts shall be subject to control of the team and not the league.

3.c. Team rosters must be submitted to the HHL office prior to "Opening Day", including league fees, player fees, proof of date of birth, and a Player Participation Contract. Rosters may not be changed after the first league game unless:

- Players are lost to injuries.

- A player from their roster voluntarily quits for the remainder of the season.

- The HHL decides to extend dates for final rosters.

3.d. No player may switch teams without the consent of both managers and the league president. If this does not meet with approval, the player must sit out one calendar year from competition, from the last date of his playing, or re-enter the league's next draft, making himself available to any team for selection. In the event a team disbands during the season or at season's conclusion, all players with three (3) years seniority in the league will become automatic free agents and will be permitted to play for any team desired. Players not having 3 years in the league will re-enter the draft. If a player is not invited back by his manager, he must be given his release so that he may go find a team of his choosing or re-enter the draft. If a player is invited back, and he desires not to play for his former team and cannot be successfully traded, he must sit out one entire year or re-enter the draft making himself available to all teams.

Re: **55+ DIVISION** – Players eligible to participate in the 55+ Division will be allowed to switch teams between seasons with no minimum league tenure required.

3.e. In the event a player wishes to leave his existing team and form a new team, he may do so. No other player/s can be taken from the existing team without the consent of the existing team manager. No other player/s may be taken from any other team without the respective team manager's approval.

3.f. All players prior to participating in a game must have signed a waiver form on file with the league.

3.g. A team manager may bat as many players as he desires, with a minimum of 10 (subject to number of players available if less than 10). Batters cannot be deleted or skipped over, regardless of their batting position or when they are added during the game. If a team has only nine (9) players and therefore only bats 9, the opposing team will have the option of batting 9 as well. If a team has more than 9 players and still only bats 9, they will be assessed an out each time the $10^{th}$ batting position is skipped. Batting only nine (9) players is NOT a protestable offense.

3.h. A manager may add batters to the bottom of the lineup at any time, but if a batter is pinch hit or run for (except under courtesy runners as outlined in Section 5), the player may not re-enter the game as a hitter but may remain in the game as a fielder or pitcher. Added players to the bottom of the

lineup may be added as individual hitters or as A/B. Each team has a hitting and a defensive lineup that are independent of each other. Players may play in either lineup or both.

3.i. Batting lineups must be exchanged prior to the start of the game. A team MAY declare at the time that lineups are exchanged prior to the start of play, that any batting order position can be occupied by two (2) players in each batting position (A/B). That is 9A/9B, 10, 11A/11B, 12, etc. The first time that position 9 gets an at bat, 9A would hit and the next time this slot hits, 9B would be up. Then 9A hits the third time this spot in the order comes up and so on, alternating between these two players throughout the game. Once a team declares the use of this A/B system, it must continue using it for the remainder of the game. Hitters in the A/B position may be pinch hit for, just as any other player.

3.j. All teams must announce offensive additions, substitutions and/or changes to the home plate umpire AND the opposing team's manager and/or scorekeeper. Only after this has been done will the added player be considered a legal substitution.

If a team fails to announce an offensive addition/change, the player will be called out as soon as he occupies the batter's box, and the lineup will revert to the lineup in effect prior to the player entering the game. The unannounced player will not have officially entered the offensive lineup and is therefore still available offensively even though an out has been assessed.

Example: Team A is batting 12 players and wishes to add a player to the bottom of the lineup (player 13). Player 13 walks up to the plate and is not announced to either the opposing team or home plate umpire. Once this player occupies his position in the batter's box, the umpire will immediately call him out for an illegal substitution, and it will then go back to the number 1 position in the lineup. Player 13 is still available to be added to the lineup legally.

3.k. If a player is forced to leave a game due to injury or ejection, a reserve player not previously entered in the game as a hitter, must hit in the replaced hitter's place. If there are no reserves who can replace the individual, the spot is skipped and all hitters below that position move up. ***The first time this vacated spot comes up in the batting order, an out will be assessed. After that one time, no out will be recorded for skipping the spot vacated by the displaced player.***

3.l. A team must have a minimum of seven (7) players for an official game and may borrow a player from the opposing team with the opposing manager's consent or may borrow a player from another team, also with the opposing manager's consent. A team having less than 7 players at game time will be given a 10-minute grace period. If at any time after the grace period, or during the game, a team falls below the required 7 players, the game shall be declared a forfeit and the team without the required number of players will be assessed a loss. The 10-minute grace period is included in the 2-hour 30-minute game time, and no additional time will be added.

If the team's 8$^{th}$ and/or 9$^{th}$ player arrives after the start of the game, the opposing team player will return to his team. It is an automatic out for the 8$^{th}$ batter position one time through the lineup during the game when playing with only seven (7) official roster players. If the automatic out constitutes the 3$^{rd}$ out of an inning, it cannot end an inning and is therefore carried over as the first out the next inning.

3.m. All players may be substituted for defensively at any time, without affecting the player's offensive status in the lineup. If the pitcher is removed, he may re-enter to pitch only one time during the course of the game, but not in the same inning. The removed pitcher may play any other position after being removed or no position at all.

3.n. Final team rosters must have no less than 12 players.

3.q. Last names and jersey numbers must be used in the scorebook to allow for player identification for follow up inquiries that relate to playoff and national tournament participation requiring minimum playing requirements.

3.r. A player can only be on one (1) official roster within a specific age or division. He may be on the roster of two (2) teams if the teams are playing in separate divisions.

## *4. PLAYERS' BEHAVIOR AND TEAM RESPONSIBILITY*

4.a. There will be no beer or alcoholic beverages permitted at the field before, during or after the game. The field refers to the general playing area and ancillary areas including dugouts, bleachers, grand stands and spectator areas. Players are also responsible for their attending fans.

4.b. The league has the right to eject and/or suspend any player that does not exhibit a sense of good sportsmanship, including intentionally throwing at opposing batters and aggressive slides, who plays without regard to the safety of the umpires, spectators, or other players, including verbal abuse, or who violates any rules found here within. Ejections will result in a suspension of at least one (1) game including playoffs and championship.

4.c. An umpire has the sole discretion to eject any player, manager, or spectator from the game. Ejected persons must leave the playing facility, including grandstands and spectator areas immediately and may not return. Ejections will result in a suspension of at least one (1) game including playoffs and championship.

**EXCEPTION** – Managers are exempt from a 1 game suspension only if their ejection is not considered a Gross Misconduct ejection as outlined in Section 8 of the HHL Rulebook. Only official managers of the team are exempt. Acting managers are NOT exempt from suspension.

4.d. Fighting between players and other teams' players, managers, coaches, or fans will not be tolerated. Neither verbal or physical assaults toward an umpire will be tolerated. Players ejected from a game for any of these violations will be subject to suspension and/or expulsion from the league. Ejections will result in a suspension of at least one (1) game including playoffs and championship.

4.e. The Rules Committee is concerned about possible unnecessary and violent collisions that may occur with the catcher at home plate and with infielders at all bases. The intent of this rule is to encourage base runners and defensive players to avoid such collisions whenever possible.

e.1. When there is a collision between a runner and a fielder who clearly is in possession of the ball, the umpire shall judge:

(1) Whether the collision by the runner was avoidable (could the runner have reached the base without colliding) or unavoidable (the runner's path to the base was blocked) or

(2) Whether the runner was actually attempting to reach base or home plate or attempting to dislodge the ball from the fielder.

**PENALTY – If the runner a) could have avoided the collision and reached base or b) attempted to dislodge the ball, the runner shall be declared out even if the fielder loses possession of the ball. The ball is dead and all other base runners shall return to the last base touched at the time of interference.**

(3) If the fielder blocks the path of the base runner to the base or plate, the runner may make contact or slide into the fielder as long as the runner is making a legitimate attempt to reach the base or plate.

(4) If the collision by the runner was flagrant, the runner shall be declared out and likewise ejected from the game. The ball shall be declared dead, and all runners shall return to the last base touched at the time of the interference. Ejection will result in an automatic one (1) game suspension including playoffs and championship and subject to further disciplinary action.

e.2. If a defensive player blocks the base, plate or base line clearly without the possession of the ball, obstruction will be called. The runner is safe, and the ball shall be declared dead, and all runners shall return to the last base occupied at the time of obstruction.

(1) If the base runner collides flagrantly, the runner shall be declared safe on the obstruction but will be ejected from the game. The ball shall be declared dead, and all runners shall return to the last base occupied at the time of obstruction. Ejection will result in an automatic one (1) game suspension including playoffs and championship and subject to further disciplinary action.

4.f. Decoy Rule – Any fielder may use a decoy only if it serves a strategic purpose.

f.1. For example, if a fielder, who sees a runner attempting to gain second base during a hit and run, looks upward into the sky and yells that he's got the pop-up when in fact the ball has been hit on the ground. That is a legal decoy as it may cause the runner to retreat to first base and prevent him from attempting to advance.

f.2. Conversely, if a fielder fakes a tag, forcing a player to slide, when there is no apparent play, the runner will be ruled safe, and runners will advance one (1) base. This is entirely an umpire judgment decision and not a rule that may be protested.

4.g. The Force Play Slide Rule – The intent of the force-play slide rule is to ensure the safety of the defensive player. This is a safety as well as interference rule. Whether the defense could have completed the double play has no bearing on the applicability of this rule. This rule pertains to a force-play situation at any base, regardless of the number of outs.

g.1. On any force play, the runner must slide on the ground and in a direct line between the two bases.

**EXCEPTION** – A runner need not slide directly into a base as long as the runner slides or runs in a direction away from the fielder to avoid making contact or altering the play of the fielder, better known as "giving yourself up".

g.2. "On the ground" means either a head-first slide or a slide with one leg and buttock on the ground.

g.3. “Directly into a base” means the runner’s entire body (feet, legs, trunk and arms) must stay in a straight line between the bases.

g.4. If a runner goes into a base standing up and does not make contact or alter the play of the defensive player, interference shall not be called.

4.h. Contact with a fielder is legal and interference shall not be called if the runner:

h.1. Makes a legal slide directly into the base or

h.2. Is on the ground at the time of contact and the fielder moves directly down the line between the two bases to attempt a play.

h.3. Makes a legal slide and comes in contact with a defensive player who is on or over, but not beyond, the base.

h.4. When the base runner slides beyond the base, but does not (a) make contact with, or (b) alter the play of the defensive player, interference shall not be called.

4.i. Actions by a runner are illegal and interference shall be called if:

i.1. The runner slides or runs out of the base line in the direction of the fielder.

i.2. The runner uses a rolling, cross-body or pop-up slide and either makes contact with or alters the play of the fielder.

i.3. The runner’s raised leg makes contact higher than the fielder’s knee when in the standing position.

i.4. The runner goes beyond the base and either makes contact with or alters the play of the fielder

***DEFINITION*** - “Beyond the base” means any part of the offensive player’s body makes contact with or alters the play of the fielder beyond the reach of the base.

i.5. The runner slashes or kicks the fielder with either leg.

i.6. The runner illegally slides toward or contacts the fielder even if the fielder makes no attempt to throw to complete the play.

**PENALTY: 1. With less than two outs, the batter-runner, as well as the interfering runner, shall be declared out and no other runner(s) shall advance. 2. With two outs, the interfering runner shall be declared out and no other runner(s) shall advance. 3. If the runner’s slide or collision is flagrant, the runner shall be ejected from the game. Ejection will result in an automatic one (1) game suspension including playoffs and championship and subject to further disciplinary action. 4. If the bases are loaded and no outs, a double-play attempt is made, and interference is called, all other runners must return to their original bases.**

4.j. The Houston Hardball League has its own standards of player/team sportsmanship and may suspend any player or players for conduct unbefitting to the image and policies of the league.

4.k. Failure to abide by age regulations – the managers must all recognize their responsibility to the league and the perpetuity of it as to not cross the line where winning is more important than playing.

An opposing manager may at any time have the right to question a player's age. If the manager wants to lodge a protest, proof of age and residence must be mailed to the manager who lodged the protest by Friday of the following week. If an underage player is detected, penalties to the individual or team will be decided by the league president and/or Rules Committee.

### *5. COURTESY RUNNERS*

5.a. Players that will need courtesy runners must have their manager notify the opposing manager prior to the start of the game. If not so notified, the opposing team may deny the request. Each team will be allowed a maximum of two (2) players per game that can be classified as needing a courtesy runner. Each time the designated player reaches base, he will call time out and the ***LAST RECORDED OUT*** will replace the person needing a courtesy runner. If no out has been recorded, the last batter in the offensive lineup will be the courtesy runner.

Once the game begins and the full complement of 2 courtesy runners has not been used, if a player sustains an injury, an additional courtesy runner may be used. In the event a player becomes injured during the game and the maximum number of courtesy runners (2) have already been designated, the injured player must be removed, and a pinch runner will be used. No courtesy runner will be allowed.

If a batter designated as needing a courtesy runner opts to run or forgets to get a courtesy runner and subsequently runs, he will lose his courtesy runner for the remainder of the game.

The offensive team that is replacing the courtesy runner has 30 seconds to make the runner change. If the runner is not replaced within this time period, the original runner must run and the right to use the courtesy runner for this batter is forfeited for the balance of the game. The 30 second time limit will begin at the time the umpire calls for time to allow the replacement for the runner.

In the event of an A/B batting position batter needing a courtesy runner, the other batting position would be the courtesy runner. (For example: If the position B batter needs a courtesy runner, the A batter will be the courtesy runner for B instead of the last batted out.)

5.b. Each team is allowed the option of a courtesy runner for the pitcher and catcher throughout the game. The courtesy runner is mandatory with 2 out to speed up the game. The ***LAST RECORDED OUT*** will be the person that runs as the courtesy runner.

### *6. PITCHERS*

6.a. No player while pitching may wear white or gray sleeves, nor may a pitcher wear a batting glove or wristband while pitching.

6.b. Each team is allowed to intentionally walk an opposing team player once in a game. Therefore, the total number of intentional walks each team is allowed each game is one (1). The team in the field will notify the home plate umpire of the intended intentional walk and the batter will automatically be awarded first base. No pitches are thrown.

6.c. If a pitcher hits 4 batters in any one game, the pitcher must be removed on the fourth hit batsman.

6.d. There is no regulation as to how many innings a pitcher may pitch in a game or a week.

6.e. As per MSBL National Rules, regarding substituting for the pitcher, if he is removed from the mound, he may re-enter as a pitcher only once in the game and must wait until the start of the next full inning before he can resume pitching regardless of whether he stays in the game as a position player (i.e. as the right fielder). This can only be done once per game, regardless of the number of pitchers.

6.f. Pitchers are not subject to the “3 disengagements” rule.

6.g. Pitchers and batters are not subject to a time clock.

## *7. GENERAL LEAGUE RULES*

7.a. Prior to each season, all players on the league waiting (Free Agent) list will be invited to a tryout and a draft. The draft will be conducted in a manner to allow parity in the divisions by having the prior season’s teams with the lowest finishing records drafting first based on their regular season record, playoffs not included.

7.b. In order for a player to qualify and participate in HHL league playoffs, they must participate in **at least five (5) league games during a twelve (12) game season and at least four (4) league games during a ten (10) game season.** If such a player fails to meet the requirements due to injury, a letter should be submitted to the league office explaining non-compliance for review and a decision of eligibility prior to the start of the playoffs.

Player participation in a league game for the purposes of playoff eligibility is defined as follows: One (1) Plate Appearance in a complete, official league game or one (1) complete inning pitched (3 outs). A complete official league game is defined in Section 2.a. of this rulebook. The minimum of 1 AB or 1 IP must be publicly logged online to constitute participation or must be presented in a scorebook from the opposing team.

In the case of forfeited games, the winning team and all its players are given credit as a game played so as to not punish the team that had enough players to play. The forfeiting team is not given credit for a game played.

**EXCEPTION –** Any player who participates in a sanctioned MABL/MSBL National Tournament and has verifiable proof of participation, will be given a 1 GAME credit towards their league participation.

7.c. Prior to playoffs, managers must submit to the league commissioner a final playoff roster of only players eligible to participate in the post-season playoffs. Managers are responsible to comply with the eligibility rules and must be able to prove eligibility of players if called upon to do so through website stats, lineup cards and/or game scorebook.

7.d. Playoff seeding will be based on winning percentage. If teams have the same record, tie breakers are as follows:

1.Head-to-Head
2.Fewest Runs Allowed
3. Most Runs Scored
4. Coin Toss

7.e. Each game will have 2 umpires at a cost of $90 per umpire. In the event only 1 umpire were to show up for the game, the umpire will collect 1-1/2 umpire fees ($135).

7.f. Two forfeits by any team could mean immediate expulsion from the league with no money refunded to the team. The HHL Board of Directors, consisting of the League President, Vice President and Division Commissioners, will evaluate each circumstance before rendering a decision. If forfeiting teams fail to notify the league with enough advance notice (24 hours or more), the forfeiting team is responsible for paying both umpires at the field and will be invoiced by the league office.

7.g. All protests should be lodged to the League President within 24 hours after the conclusion of the game in question. All protests will be forwarded to the league's Protest Committee. All verdicts will be rendered as soon as all the pertinent information is gathered and a conclusion is met, usually before the next scheduled game of the teams involved in the protest. A fee of $75 will be assessed for all protests. The fee is refunded if the protest is upheld.

7.h. Only MSBL and MABL affiliated league members are eligible for all MSBL/MABL sanctioned regional and national tournaments unless waived by national tournament committee.

7.i. Determination of eligibility to participate in MSBL regional and national tournament competition will be based solely on the decision of the MSBL National Tournament Rules Committee. In general, no player will be allowed to participate in regional or national tournaments unless the player has participated in at least 50% of their regular season MSBL/MABL games.

7.j. **For 55+ Division Only** – No batter/runner shall be thrown out at first base with a direct throw from an outfielder to first base. The batter/runner can be thrown out if the outfielder throws to any infielder except the first baseman and the throw is then relayed to first base. Any base runners can be forced out with a direct throw from the outfield.

7.k. Interleague games will be played using the rules and exemptions that apply to the younger division teams (e.g. 35+ plays a 55+ team in an interleague game, the game will be played under rules applying to the 35+ division)

## *8. CODE OF CONDUCT*

### *PROHIBITIONS*

Managers and players shall always conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner. No manager or player shall commit the following:

1. **Lay a hand upon, shove or strike, or threaten an official**. Players and managers guilty of such conduct shall be immediately ejected from further participation in the game, and shall be suspended until his conduct is reviewed by the league's Board of Directors. Players and managers guilty of such conduct shall be subject to suspension for the remainder of the season or expulsion from the league for life.
2. **Refuse to abide by an official's decision.** Players guilty of such conduct shall be immediately ejected from the game and shall be suspended until his conduct is reviewed by the Board of Directors. Players guilty of such conduct shall be subject to probation or suspension for the remainder of the season.

3. **Be guilty of objectionable demonstrations of dissent at an official's decision**. Players and managers guilty of such conduct shall be subject to ejection from the game. Ejections will result in a suspension of one (1) game.
4. **Discuss with an official or officials the decision reached by such official or officials, except for the manager or his designee who are authorized to participate in such discussions.** Players guilty of such conduct shall be subject to ejection from the game. Ejections will result in a suspension of one (1) game.
5. **Use unnecessarily rough tactics in the play of the game** against the body or person of an opposing player. Examples of rough tactics include aggressive slides into a fielder and intentionally throwing a pitch at a batter. Players guilty of such conduct shall be immediately ejected from the game and shall be subject to probation or suspension for the remainder of the season. Ejections will result in a suspension of at least one (1) game.
6. **Be guilty of physical attack as an aggressor upon any player, manager, official, or spectator, before, during, or after a game.** Players guilty of such conduct shall be immediately ejected from the game and shall remain suspended until their conduct is reviewed by the Board of Directors. Players guilty of such conduct shall be subject to suspension for the remainder of the season or expulsion from the league for life.
7. **Be guilty of being verbally abusive upon any player, manager, official, or spectator, before, during, or after a game**. Players guilty of such conduct shall be immediately ejected from the game and shall remain suspended until their conduct is reviewed by the Board of Directors. Players guilty of such conduct shall be subject to suspension for the remainder of the season.
8. **Consume alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs during the game or be on the field of play at any time in an intoxicated condition**. Players guilty of such conduct shall be immediately ejected from the game and shall be subject to probation or suspension for the remainder of the season.
9. **Smoke on the field of play or in the dugout.** Players guilty of such conduct shall be immediately ejected from the game. Ejections will result in a suspension of one (1) game.

Such actions are considered Gross Misconduct and subject to disciplinary action and penalties as described:

***PENALTIES***

1. The Board of Directors may, by vote of the majority of the directors, suspend any player or manager for such a period and upon such terms as it may propose, for the conduct within its opinion is prejudicial to the welfare, interest, reputation, or charter of the league.
2. Except as otherwise provided, the commissioners shall determine the appropriate action required for violations of the codes of conduct, and shall report their decision to the player, manager and the Board of Directors.
3. A player found in violation of any provision delineated in the codes of conduct, after being placed on probation for the remainder of the season shall then be suspended for the remainder of the season.
4. Any player found in violation of any provisions delineated in the codes of conduct, after being ejected from a game, shall be suspended for the remainder of the season.

## *GRIEVENCES, PROTESTS AND APPEALS*

1. Grievances may be filed by an individual player or by the manager of a team provided that a grievance is formally submitted in writing to their respective Division Commissioner or within 24 hours of the issue in question. The commissioner shall adjudicate all such grievances and shall report any action taken to the Board of Directors.
2. There will be a $75 Protest Filing Fee using an online payment link that will be provided at the time of the filing and must be paid within the 24-hour filing period. If the protest is upheld, a full refund will be issued. If protest is denied, then the $75 fee will be submitted. (This is to limit the number of frivolous protest filings we have had in the past).
3. An appeal of any action or ruling may be filed with the League's Rules Committee by an individual player or by the manager of a team provided that the appeal is formally submitted in writing via email or written letter. However, all decisions by the League's Rules Committee are final and not subject to further appeal.
4. Any teams found to be in violation of using ineligible players (cheating) is subject to their team being disqualified for all remaining playoff games without refund. Multiple cheating infractions may result in permanent expulsion of the player in question, the manager and/or the team committing the infraction.