**Westmoreland Sports League Softball Rules**

**General**

**Waiver of Liability**

* All participants must agree to the waiver of liability, which can be signed online under your player dashboard
* All participants in the league assume the risk of injury.  The WSL, its volunteers, and employees shall not be liable for injury to person, loss or damage to personal property arising from or in any way resulting from participation in the league.  This includes ***cars getting hit by softballs hit over the fence.  Players participating in the league also are aware of the risk of Covid and waive the WSL, its volunteers, and employees of the liability associated with the risk of transmission.***
* Any player under the age of 18 will need a signed waiver from a parent or guardian in order to play.  Players will be required to wear a helmet while batting if under the age of 18

**Sportsmanship**

* Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated
* Any behavior that is deemed violent, harassing, and/or inappropriate in any way (vulgar language), will result in the following:
	+ 1st infraction – A warning may be given to the violating players depending on the severity of the situation.  After an initial warning, the player is removed from the current game and must leave the premises.  Depending on severity, player may be suspended for the remainder of the season based on staff discretion.
	+ 2nd infraction – player is suspended for the remainder of the season
* The official reserves the right to end a game or call a timeout at any point if the overall sportsmanship is out of line
* Captains are to be the team liaison to discuss any call or rule with an official during gameplay
* Teams are responsible for cleaning up their benches at the end of their matches for the day.
* Glass bottles are not permitted on the premises.
* Smoking and/or drinking are not permitted on the playing field.
* If a player is visibly intoxicated and is causing issues (arguments, trying to drive home etc.), the league director and officials reserve the right to revoke that player’s privilege to drink alcohol at the games.  If a player does not comply, they will be suspended for the year and depending on the severity, may receive a lifetime ban of WSL events.
* Home teams at the beginning of the days are responsible for helping with field set-up. This will speed up the process and not put all work on one person.
* Both teams are responsible for cleaning benches/bleachers after games are concluded. If teams leave bench area a mess and have to be reminded more than once a league penalty of an automatic forfeit will be handed out and all players on the roster will not be awarded credit for games played.

**Weather Policy**

* The decision to call a rainout will be made as early as possible
* We will play in mildly inclement weather as long as the field conditions are not extremely poor or the weather is deemed dangerous
* Officials have the jurisdiction to call a game due to weather at the beginning or during a game
* If a game is canceled, we will try to make the game up on a different day during the week.
* We cannot control the weather and playing in / signing up for a fall season there is a possibility that games get canceled or end of season tournament may not be playable the later in the fall we get due to cancellations. We will do our best to ensure this does not happen however when signing up you understand this possibility and WSL softball will not reimburse teams due to a season being canceled because of weather or unsafe field conditions.

**TEAMS**

**Rosters**

* Each team must submit a roster with a minimum of 10 players and a maximum of 25 players.
* No player may register for more than 1 team.
* Rosters must be submitted and a waiver form must be signed before any player may take the field
* Players will be allowed to be rostered up until the designated “roster freeze” date.  In order to be eligible for playoffs, they must play in at least 6 regular season games.
* Only rostered players will be eligible for playoffs
* Rec. League teams are allowed a maximum of two Comp league players. The league director reserves the right to deny any comp. league players from joining and rec. league teams.

**Players**

* Teams must have 3 females minimum; teams can consist of all females but not all men
* A team can start play with a minimum of 8 players (1 female minimum)
	+ A team must have a minimum of 9 players (2 female minimum) by the start of the 2nd inning or they forfeit the game
	+ If a team has 9 players but not a minimum of 2 girls, there will be an automatic out put into the lineup for the missing girl.  Team captains may decide where the outs will be placed at in the lineup
* Teams will have 15 minutes after the scheduled start time to have enough players to play. After 15 minutes the game will be considered a forfeit.

**Game Length**

* Regulation games are 7 innings.  Regulation games can end in a tie
* If a game is called due to weather after 5 full innings of play, the game shall be considered a regulation game and will not be made up.
* Any game called before 5 full innings of play will be made up and restarted from the beginning
* Each game has a max of 1 hour and 15 minutes of play in order to fit all of the games in.
* If there is time, an extra inning may be played in case of a tie.  There needs to be at least 10 minutes before the next game or end of day in order for the extra inning to be played.  ASA Extra Innings rules will apply with the last batted out starting at 2nd base.
* The mercy rule will be in effect.  The game will end if a team is winning by 20 or more runs after the 3rd inning, 15 or more runs after the 4th, 10 or more runs after the 5th inning
* Playoff games will be played until a winner is determined.  In case of a playoff game being called during gameplay, the game will be rescheduled and the score will carry over to the next game

**Rules**

**Playing Field**

* The bases are set 70 feet apart
* The pitcher’s mound is approximately 50 feet from home plate
	+ Pitchers have to be in line between home plate and 2nd base and no more than 3 ft to the left or right of 2nd base
* There will be a strike mat behind home plate for the rec. league.  Any legal pitch (6ft from the ground min. and 12 ft from the ground max) that lands on the strike mat and/or home plate (including the black trim) will be called a strike.
* Comp. league will have a traditional strike zone whereas the strike zone is below the batters highest shoulder and above the batters front knee closest to the pitcher. The Pitch must fall within the height requirement of 6 - 12ft from the ground. The plate will not be considered a strike any ball striking the plate (including the black trim) will be called a ball.
* There will be an orange “safety” first base for runners to run to
* There will be a commit line for runners going to home plate to score.  The commit line will be 30 feet from home plate. There will also be a scoring home plate for the runners to run to.
	+ As soon as a runner passes over the commit line, they have to go home as it then becomes a force out at home.  If the catcher catches the ball and tags home plate (not the strike mat) before the runner touches the scoring plate, the runner is out.  The runner *cannot* be tagged out at home after passing the “commit line”.
* If a runner touches home plate to score instead of crossing over the score line, the runner will be out.

**Lineups**

* Line-Ups will consist of 10 or more players.  If a team has ten or more players present, they must bat at least 10.  Teams may choose to bat everyone or they can sub a player in for another player in a spot in the lineup.  Subs are permitted to reenter the game with no limit on number of times they enter.
* Players that are not in the batting line up may still play the field at any time
* A player arriving late to the game may be added to the end of the lineup as long as their spot in the lineup has not come up yet.  If a team has already gone through their order, the player arriving late would have to enter as a sub.
* If a player has to leave early from a game, the order will stay the same and there will not be an out when their spot in the lineup is reached
* If a player would like a “pinch runner”, any rostered player may run however that runner may not be used again that inning unless the same batter comes back up to bat in the same inning. There is no limit on how many pinch runners can be used. If the same runner runs for another player in the same inning and he/she touches a base before the mistake is caught time will be called and the result will be an out by that runner. Players needing a pinch runner must make the umpire aware before the game unless a player is injured during game play.

**Illegal line-up/bat rules**

* For a list of approved bats, you can visit: [www.teamusa.org/usa-softball/certified-equipment](http://www.teamusa.org/usa-softball/certified-equipment).
* All approved bats must have the ASA/USA stamp and ***must be single walled***.  On the approved bats list, the bat will be legal as long as it doesn’t have a ***MW*** (Multi -Walled) label.
* Females may use any “approved bat” from the Team USA websites for both leagues.
* An illegal bat will be removed from gameplay immediately if used.
* Any player batting out of order or using an illegal bat during an at-bat will be ruled “out”. In the event of batting out of order, the correct batter will be up to bat and assume the count of the batter that is out of order (if not called out from reaching base safely).
* Any runs scored while using an illegal bat or lineup will be nullified.

**Game Play**

* Bunting, stealing, or advancing on a wild pitch is not permitted.
* Base runners may not leave the base until the ball is hit.  Leaving the base before the batter contacts the ball is an out.
* Pitchers must pitch underhand with an arc between 6-12 feet from the ground and must have one foot in contact with the pitching line during the release.
* After the batter is set and the umpire gives the permission to pitch, pitchers must pitch the ball within “10 seconds” or else a “ball” will be called for a delay of game.
* After the pitcher is ready and the umpire calls for a batter, batters will have 10 seconds to be set in the batter’s box or else a “strike” will be called for a delay of game.
* The infield fly rule will be in effect.
* Each batter starts with a 1-1 count.  Any foul ball that occurs when there are two strikes will be the 3rd strike.
* Throwing a bat after a follow-through of a swing will merit a warning from the umpire.  The second time it occurs, the batter will be out
* If a team intentionally wants to walk a batter, the pitcher may waive the pitches and the batter may advance to first base. If a male batter is walked infront of a female batter the male batter will be awarded second base to ensure we’re not taking advantage of female batters.
* A runner may not slide beyond the base to break up a double play
	+ The runner’s feet must go at the bag if sliding feet first
	+ If a runner slides to break up a double play, they will be called out.  If the runner at the prior base reaches safely due to the double play being broken up, he/she will also be called out
* Fielders may not block a base or baseline unless they have possession of the ball or is in the act of fielding the ball. “Obstruction” will be called and the umpire will award the base runner the bases they felt they would have earned without the obstruction
* “Interference” will be called when an offensive player hinders a defensive player from making a play.  Examples of interference include physical contact with a fielder, distracting the fielder during a play (such as yelling “miss it”), or intentionally swatting a ball out of a fielder’s glove.
* When a fielder has the ball and is waiting at the base to make the tag, the runner is not permitted to purposefully make contact with the fielder in an attempt to have them drop the ball.  The runner is permitted to try to avoid the tag by dodging or sliding around the fielder.  Any runner that purposely attempts to run over a fielder or slide through them to make contact will be ruled “out” and may face a suspension depending on the severity.
* A runner will be called out if they go outside of the baseline by more than 3 feet
* While batting, the batter will be called “out” if their back foot is in front of home-plate during contact with the ball. Batters will also be called “out” if their foot touches home-plate while contact the ball.
* The umpire will go over the “out of play” area while going over the field ground rules.  If a player catches a ball and runs out of play (“Catch and Carry”), the runners will be awarded 1 base from the time the fielder went out of play.
* Overthrows that go out of play will result in “2” bases awarded to each runner based on the time of the throw, regardless of where the throw was made from.
* Any “fair” batted ball that rolls out of play will result in two bases at the time the ball went out of play.
* Outfielders are not permitted to throw a female out at first base while in the outfield.  If a throw is attempted from the outfield, the female runner will be awarded first base safely.  If the ball goes out of play, all runners will be awarded “2” bases, with the female runner at first being awarded second base.
* Home-Run Limit/rule:
* Comp. League: Each team will designate a home run hitter, one guy and one girl, they each can hit unlimited home runs. If a DHH is walked the team gets one “free” homerun until the DHH comes back up to bat at which point if not used the “free” homerun is forfeited. Each team will have one additional homerun that can be hit by anyone on the team. Once the team homerun is hit any ball that is hit over the fence will be ruled an out.

* Rec League: We will follow the “3 + 1 Up Rule” where a team cannot hit more than 3 homeruns over the fence without the other team hitting a homerun over the fence.  Any home runs that are hit over the fence beyond the 3-homerun difference will be ruled an out.
* We will have cones set up in the outfield at 245ft from the point of home plate. When a female is up to bat all outfielders must remain behind the cones standing still until the ball is struck at which point they can move in-front of the cones to make a play on the ball. If the ball goes over the cones on the fly it will be a homerun and will count towards the teams home run total. Infielders must play their normal positions when a female player is up bat. Normal positions are up to the umpires discretion and will be discussed before the game is played.

**Equipment**

* Softballs will be provided by the WSL.  We will use TATTOO yellow softballs (12”).
* Teams must bring their own bats and gloves
* Metal cleats/spikes are not permitted
* Pitchers are encouraged to bring/wear protective gear (face mask/shin guards).
* Captains are responsible for keeping the “book” for their team.  If there are any discrepancies with the line-up, the captain must bring it up with the umpire.

**Playoffs**

**Seedings**

* All teams will make playoffs
* Seedings will be based off of wins/losses
* Playoffs will be double-elimination

**Tiebreakers**

* Teams that are tied in the standings will use the following order to determine seeding:
	+ Head to head record
	+ Most regular season wins
	+ Least runs allowed
	+ Most runs scored
	+ Coin toss

\*We will follow ASA softball rules for most of the rulings other than the league rules mentioned above.