

LOWER MERION WOMEN'S SOFTBALL LEAGUE RULES

1. A.S.A. Official Rules govern game play. All exceptions to these rules are listed below. All rules are in effect during the regular season and the playoffs.
2. All games will be played on Mondays and Wednesdays Games will begin at 6:30 PM. Any team with less than eight players at 6:45 PM will forfeit the game. (Umpire's watch)
3. **Alcoholic beverages, smoking and dogs** are **NOT** permitted in Township parks and School District facilities. Any team or spectators of the team, breaking this rule will result in an automatic ejection of the team from the league. Please pay attention to this rule throughout the season.
4. A team consists of ten (10) players plus a maximum of two (2) extra players (Consult rule #20). A team may start with eight (8) players; a team may add up to twelve (12) players until the start of the fourth inning. After that time, the amount of players in the line-up shall not be changed. All twelve (12) are in the Batting Order and only ten (10) can take the field.
5. Games will be seven (7) innings long. Completion of four (4) innings constitutes an official game when the visitors are leading. If the home team is leading, three and a half (3.5) innings constitutes an official game.
6. The home team will be the second team listed on the regular season schedule (higher seed during playoffs) and occupy the bench along the 3rd base line.
7. Both teams must bring their bases and pitching rubbers to the field. The home team is responsible for setting up the field and providing two games balls. The balls will be provided by the Parks and Recreation Department.
8. The home team score book will be the official book unless agreed upon prior to the game. All Scorebooks must have first and last names. **At the conclusion of each game, the umpire must review and verify the official scorebook and sign it to confirm the final score and any recorded incidents (including warnings or ejections). The umpire's signature signifies the game is complete and the score is official. Once signed, no changes may be made without approval from the League Director.** The game will be declared an official game and is over when the umpires leave the playing field.
9. The "reasonable time" for protest is 24 hours. Protests must be filed with the umpire during the game time and written protests are to be filed within 24 hours.
10. **All players must be high school graduates or eighteen years old by May 1 of current year.**
11. **Any individual who is an active collegiate student-athlete in the sport of softball is ineligible to participate in the league. Eligibility for the league begins the day after a student-athletes collegiate eligibility is exhausted. This applies to any student-athlete at any NCAA/NAIA/JUCO etc institution.**
12. Rosters may not be added to after mid season. League rosters will be handed to the teams. Once the league starts a player cannot switch teams.
13. All teams will be involved in the playoffs. The playoff schedule is based on the league standings at the end of the regular season.

14. If a tie in the standings occurs at the end of the regular season, the tie will be broken by the result of the head to head regular season's win lose record between the teams. If the teams split their regular season's games, the tiebreaker will be based on runs scored during those games, if still tied – overall runs scored, if still tied – coin toss.
15. Players must play in 25% of the regular season's games to be eligible for the playoffs.
16. Stealing is not allowed. Runners may not leave the base until the ball has left the pitcher's hand.
17. Windmill pitching is not allowed. Slingshot pitching is **allowed**. This means that the distance from the body and height of the pitcher's arm has no bearing on the legality of the pitch. In the act of delivering the ball, the pitcher shall not take more than one step, which must be forward, toward the batter & simultaneous with the delivery of the ball to the batter. The Pitcher **must** release the ball prior to moving her pivot foot.
18. This league follows USA Softball (ASA) standards regarding sportsmanship. Unsportsmanlike conduct— including arguing judgment calls, using abusive or profane language, taunting, throwing equipment, refusing to comply with umpire rulings, or any behavior deemed detrimental to the spirit of the game— will not be tolerated. The umpire may issue a warning for a first offense and eject a player or coach for subsequent offenses or severe behavior. Ejected individuals must leave the field and spectator area immediately and will receive an automatic one-game suspension, with the possibility of additional discipline at the discretion of the League Director. This is a recreational adult league, and respectful conduct is expected at all times.
19. The team captain or players must voice all team concerns. Non team members will not be involved in any discussions with the league supervisor, the officials, or the other team. A violation of this rule will result in a forfeit for the team involved.
20. If a third strike is dropped, the batter is out.
21. A runner has the option of sliding. Flagrant and unnecessary roughing of the catcher will result in the runner being called out. This is a judgment call by the umpire.
22. An extra player (EP) may be used. ASA rules apply. Capsule summary:
 - A. Extra player(s) is/are optional, but if used, must be made known prior to the game.
 - B. If you start with an EP, you must end with an EP, unless injured, see rule 20.
 - C. All eleven or twelve players bat. Only ten field.
 - D. The EP's may substitute for a fielder in any inning.
 - E. The batting order never changes.
23. Double header game rules:
 - Start of first game = 5:30 PM; 5:45 PM is the forfeit time for seven (7) players, players may be added up until 6:15 PM. **Seven (7)** inning first game, four (4) innings is a complete game - three and a half innings (3.5) if the home team is winning.
 - 6:30 forfeit time for the second game. The second game will be played to seven (7) innings or darkness - whichever comes first. Darkness is a judgment call by the umpire. In the second game, three (3) innings is a complete game - two and a half innings (2.5) if the home team is winning (only in this instance).

24. If due to an injury a team is found short of players, the team may finish the game. The empty batting slot is eliminated. If a player is ejected and there is no substitute, the empty batting slot will count as an out.
25. If a pitched ball hits a batter, the batter shall advance to first base, if in the umpire's judgment, the batter has made an attempt to avoid the pitch.
26. Players may wear a helmet. Lower Merion Township Department of Parks & Recreation strongly recommends the wearing of helmets.
27. Metal cleats are not permitted.
28. Game tie breaker rule: starting in the ninth inning, the runner who made the last out in the previous inning starts the inning on second base and the game continues.
29. If a team begins the game with eight (8) players, the empty batting slot is #9. When the empty batting slot arises, there is no out.
30. Courtesy Runners are only permitted for players injured during the current game or with two (2) outs in the inning for the catcher, so that she may be able to prepare to take the field. The runner must be the player, which made the second out of that inning.
31. Double Bag:
 - If a ground ball goes over the white bag it is a fair ball. If it goes over the red/orange bag it is a foul ball.
 - When a play is being made on the batter/runner at First base, the runner must tag the red/orange bag and the fielder tags the white bag.
 - If there is no play on the runner at First, the runner can tag the white bag as she makes the turn toward second base.
 - If a throw carries the First Baseman into the red bag, the First baseman can tag the red bag and the runner can tag the white bag to avoid a collision. This is the only time the runner can tag the white bag on a play at first.
 - On a routine play at first the runner tags the white bag in error and beats the throw. The Umpire will signal SAFE and it is up to the DEFENSIVE team to appeal that she touched the wrong bag. The APPEAL must be done before the runner returns to first base. If the appeal is done correctly the runner will then be ruled out at first by the umpire. If she returns to first base prior to the appeal she will be called safe.
 - After the runner reaches first base, she can then occupy the white bag and leave from that base.
32. Runners advance at their own risk
 - a.) Base stealing is not permitted. Runners may leave the base when the pitcher releases the ball. Base runners are not permitted to advance on passed balls by the catcher or pitcher.
 - b.) You may attempt to pick off the runner. If an attempt to pick off the runner is made the ball becomes a live ball and all runners may advance at their own risk without tagging up. An attempt may consist of a throw down to the base or the catcher leaving the catcher's box area in an attempt to catch the runner off the base. The runner must be tagged for the out. If the catcher fakes a throw the runner(s) may not advance.

c.) If no pick off attempt is made, the base runner must immediately return to the base.

d.) Runners who leave the base before the pitch is released will be "out."

33. Ground rules regarding the basketball courts at South Ardmore "A" Field. If the Ball hits the surface of the basketball courts in the air it will be ruled a Home Run. If the ball rolls onto the surface the runners advance one base from the last base occupied.
34. Rain Outs during Playoffs will be started at the point in which they were suspended. Substitutions are permitted. *During the regular season four (4) innings is a complete game - three and a half (3.5) innings if the home team is winning, with the exception of the #19 Double header rule.*
35. All game bats will be inspected by the umpires prior to the start to approve use. The umpires ruling will be final.
36. The Mercy/Run rule will be used to declare the winner of a game when the leading team is ahead by 15 or more runs after the completion of four (4) innings. If the leading team is the home team it would be the completion of three and a half (3.5) innings of play. Both teams must agree to the Mercy/Run rule at the time of implementation during the game.