

**MONTVILLE SOFTBALL RULES**  
**B LEAGUE – 4<sup>TH</sup> AND 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**

April 21, 2008

**RULES COMMITTEE**

- Members
  - John Haugh
  - Bill Mulligan
  - Scott Holmes
  - Scot Campbell
  - John Hill
  
- Please contact any of the members of the rules committee if you have questions.

**GOVERNING RULES**

- Current high school rules as amended by this document shall be used.
  
- Since all rules and situations cannot be addressed by this document, any problem that arises during a game that cannot be ruled on by the umpire will be brought to the attention of any Board Member or member of the Rules Committee who will interpret the rules and make a decision to the best of his/her ability. His/her decision shall be final.

**RULES**

- **Safety**
  - All coaches must possess a current Montville Township coaching certification.
  - Each batter shall wear a helmet with a face mask when at bat and in the on-deck area.
  - All base runners shall wear a helmet with a face mask.
  - All pitchers shall wear heart guards.
  - All long hair shall be tied back to prevent it from falling in front of the player's face.
  - Sneakers or cleats (non-metal) shall be worn.
  - Jewelry shall not be worn. Jewelry includes, but not limited to, rings, watches, necklaces, bracelets and earrings.
  - Catchers shall wear a throat protector.
  - Players shall remain in the dugouts at all times during the game except when batting, on deck or playing in the field.
  - Coaches and umpires shall be responsible for keeping the areas adjacent to home plate and the on-deck area clear of traffic.
  - All games shall immediately stop and players shall leave the field when there is lightning and/or thunder. Games shall not be resumed until at least 30 minutes have elapsed from the last sound of thunder or sighting of lightning.
  - The umpire shall issue a team warning when a player throws the bat during batting. The second team occurrence shall result in an automatic out for the batter, the ball shall be considered dead and all runners shall return to the base they occupied prior to the start of the play.
  - Runners shall slide or avoid the fielder. Any runner who fails to slide and makes contact or interferes with the fielder shall be called out.
  - Only feet first sliding shall be permitted going to any bases. A runner may dive head first back to a base.

- **Conduct and Sportsmanship**
  - Coaches shall not talk to umpires except between innings or when a time out is called to discuss a ruling. Only certified team coaches and the umpire shall engage in the discussion. The Umpire's decision shall be final for a ruling on the field.
  - Coaches, players and spectators shall not harass the umpires.
  - Intentional throwing of equipment by a player or coach shall initially result in a team warning. The second off shall result in ejection from the game.
  - No words of discouragement shall be exchanged between coaches, assistants, players and/or spectators during a game.
  - No coach, player or spectator shall stand behind the backstop.
  - No coach, player or spectator shall encourage a batter from the opposing team to swing.
  - Teams shall shake hands with the opposing team at the end of the game.
  
- **Time Limits**
  - Home teams shall have the responsibility to write the start time of the game in their scorebook. The start time shall be defined as the time when the first official pitch is thrown.
  - For games when there is a game scheduled to follow:
    - No new inning after 1 hour and 30 minutes.
    - Drop dead at 1 hour and 45 minutes.
    - If the last inning has not been completed, the game result shall revert to the previous completed inning.
  - For games starting at 7:30 pm:
    - No new innings after 9:15 pm.
    - Drop dead at 9:30 pm.
    - If the last inning has not been completed, the game result shall revert to the previous completed inning.
  - For games with no games scheduled to follow:
    - Play to completion unless the game is stopped due to inclement weather or darkness.
  
- **Games**
  - Regulation games are six (6) innings.
  - A game called by the umpire shall be considered a regulation game if 4 or more innings have been played.
  - There shall be a 15 run mercy rule after four (4) innings.
  - Games shall be played until a winner is declared, or the game is called because of time constraints, darkness or inclement weather.
    - Regular season games may end in a tie.
  - Only one head coach and two assistants shall be permitted on the field and/or in the dugout area during a game. Coaches shall not be on the field when their team is in the field.
  - Coaches and umpires shall discuss and agree on the ground rules prior to the start of the game.
  - Scorebooks shall be used by both teams and the score should be compared at the end of each half inning.
  - Each team shall have a minimum of eight (8) players to start a game. A team having less than eight (8) players shall forfeit the game.
    - A fifteen (15) minute grace period shall be granted if a team does not have enough players to start the game. If there is a game scheduled to follow, no new inning shall start within 30 minutes of the next game and drop dead will be 15 minutes prior to the next games.

- If during a game the number of players for a team drops below eight (8), the game shall continue and the vacancy in the batting order shall be recorded as an out.
- A coach may visit a pitcher or hold a defensive conference once in an inning. The second time a coach enters the field during an inning, the pitcher shall be replaced. There shall be a maximum of two (2) defensive conferences per inning, excluding timeouts for injury.
- A coach shall have only one offensive conference per inning, excluding timeouts for injury.
- The maximum number of innings any player shall sit out on defense is two, except for injury, sickness or late arrival.
- Free field substitutions shall be allowed for fielders and catcher only.
- Any player arriving after the start of the game shall be added to the bottom of the batting order.
- Players shall be in full uniform with a uniform number visible on their shirt so opposing coaches can monitor the batting order.
- A half-inning shall consist of three (3) outs or when ten (10) batters come to bat, whichever occurs first. If a team is playing with less than 10 players, the maximum number of batters allowed for the half-inning shall be the team's number of players present at the game.
  - The batter's coach shall announce the 10<sup>th</sup> batter prior to or upon the batter taking her position at the plate.
  - The batter's coach shall announce whether the batter will accept a walk or will be hitting (cannot be walked).
    - If the 10<sup>th</sup> batter has been declared to be hitting and is hit by a pitch, the batter will go to first base and the next batter in the order shall bat. The 10<sup>th</sup> batter rules shall apply to that batter.
  - If the batter's coach elects to chance a walk and the batter is walked with the bases loaded, one run shall score and the inning shall be over.
  - If the batter strikes out the inning shall be over.
  - If the batter hits the ball, the inning shall end when the batter or any other base runner is called out, when any player has possession of the ball and steps on home plate, or when the ball is thrown back to the pitcher's circle.
  - Failure of the batter's coach to bring the 10<sup>th</sup> batter to the attention of the opposing coach and the umpires shall result in the batter being charged with an automatic strike for each pitch made prior to any declaration by the batter's coach. Any hits shall be ruled as strikes and, if the batter is not out, the batter shall return to the batter's box with the number of strikes equaling the number of pitches thrown to that point. All runners shall return to their previously occupied base.

- **Pitching**

- The pitching distance shall be 35 feet.
- An 11 inch ASA sanctioned softball shall be used.
- Pitching shall be a combination of coach and player pitching. Players will begin pitching each inning. The pitcher shall be relieved if she walks five (5) batters in an inning. The pitcher may pitch in another inning subject to maximum number of innings limitation.
  - After five (5) walks, a coach from the team at bat shall pitch to his/her own players.
  - No balls or strikes shall be called; no walks shall be allowed.
  - The batter shall be called out after three (3) strikes or after she receives eight (8) pitches and does not put the ball into play. Even if the 8<sup>th</sup> pitch is fouled, the batter shall be called out.
  - The coach who is pitching shall make every effort to avoid interfering with the defensive play on a batted ball, including balls returning to the pitcher from the

fielders after a play. If in the umpire's judgment a coach intentionally interferes with a defensive play, the play shall be called dead, the batter shall be called out, and the runners shall be returned to the bases they occupied prior to the play.

- Windmill pitching is encouraged, but shall not be required.
  - A pitcher shall pitch no more than two (2) innings during a game. The innings do not have to be consecutive. One pitch thrown in an inning shall count as an entire inning for eligibility.
  - There shall be no maximum number of innings pitched in a week.
  - At least one (1) 4<sup>th</sup> grade player shall pitch prior to the 4<sup>th</sup> inning.
  - The pitcher shall take a position with the pivot foot on or partially on the pitcher's plate and the non-pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate. The pitcher shall present the ball prior to delivery. One step may be taken forward to deliver the ball and a follow-through step after the ball is released. There shall be neither crow hops nor steps backward prior to releasing the ball.
  - The pitcher shall be relieved if she hits three (3) batters in an inning or four (4) batters in a game.
  - There shall be no intentional walks.
- **Batting**
    - "Cinderella" batting shall be used. All players shall bat in order and the batting order shall be maintained. Batting out of order shall result in an out if called before the second pitched ball.
      - If a player leaves the game early for any legitimate reason, the batting order shall move up and no out shall be assessed.
    - Players may bunt at any time.
    - Batters shall not advance to first base on dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strikes.
    - There shall be no infield fly rule.
- **Base Running**
    - Play shall end when the pitcher has possession of the ball in the pitching circle, the ball is in the pitching circle or a fielder has attempted to throw the ball to the pitcher in the pitching circle and the ball passes through the circle.
      - A base runner may proceed to the next base if she is more than halfway at the time the ball has been returned to the pitching circle.
    - Runners shall advance only one (1) base on an overthrow.
      - For example, if a batter hits a ball to the shortstop and she overthrows first base, the batter may advance to second base. If the first baseman, upon retrieving the ball, attempts to throw the batter out at second and the throw goes into the outfield, the batter shall not advance any further since she has already advanced one base on the original overthrow.
    - Runners shall not leave a base until the pitcher releases the ball. Runners leaving the base prior to the release of the ball shall be called out.
    - Runners may attempt to steal from 2<sup>nd</sup> base to 3<sup>rd</sup> base on the release of the ball by the pitcher when there are two (2) outs. There shall be no advance on overthrows on steals and pickoffs.
    - A courtesy runner may be used for the catcher and/or pitcher at any time. The courtesy runner shall be the last batted out.
    - Runners shall stop at first base on a walk.

- **Field and Fielding**
  - There shall be a distance of 60 feet between bases.
  - Ten (10) players shall play defense: 1 pitcher, 1 catcher, 4 infielders and 4 outfielders.
  - Outfielders shall play at least 10 feet behind the bases.
  
- **Calling Up Players During Season**
  - When a team is unable to field the minimum of eight (8) players to start a game, the team may call up players.
  - Teams may call up players to field a team of eight (8), nine (9) or ten (10) players.
  - A League may call up players from the C League.
  - The head coach of the team needing players shall notify the league coordinator with his/her request to ensure there is a rotation of players who play up.
  - Players called up shall play only the outfield and shall be placed at the bottom of the batting order.
  
- **Revision History**
  - 3/24/08      Replaces 2/19/08; typo corrected in Pitching section regarding number of batters walked.