MILLCREEK MODIFIED CHRISTIAN SOFTBALL LEAGUE -- RULES & BYLAWS

The latest revision changes will be highlighted in color to indicate what has changed specifically.

Revision	Revision Date	Responsibility	Description of Revision
-	Mar-6-2014	Mike McCullough	Rules for 2014 Season
A	Apr-14-2014	Mike McCullough	Updates to coaches
B	May-19-2014	Mike McCullough	Updates to LM women's coach
C	May-23-2014	Mike McCullough	Updates to FAC coach
D	Apr-12-2016	Wes Palmer	Name change; Board updates
E	Jun-8-2017	Wes Palmer	Updates
F	May-29-2018	Mike McCullough	Board updates; update to section 1, 1, 2
G	Apr-3-2019	Wes Palmer	Updates
H	Jul-14-2020	Brad Moore	Updates
I	Apr-21-2024	Wes Palmer	Review of all rules; Updates to sections; Added section 15; Added links to sections 10 and 14
J	Apr-6-2025	Wes Palmer	Update to Run Rule (Mercy Rule); Game time;
K	Apr-16-2026	Wes Palmer	Multiple updates: 1.2, 1.3, 1.10.1, 5.1.1, 6, 9.2, 9.4, league website

MMCSL LEAGUE RULES

Rules for game play in the MMCSL league shall comply with the 2023 USA Softball rules for ten players, men's modified play. The following rules apply as well and are meant to highlight and supplement the ASA rules. Where the rules in this document conflict with the ASA manual, the rules listed here shall take precedence over ASA. **Please keep a copy of these rules with you for games. Any questions or comments contact the League Commissioner.** The rules are as follows:

1. GAMES

1.1. A game shall consist of seven innings.

1.2. All games shall consist of a 1.5 hour time limit.

1.2.1. In case of a tie at the end of the permitted time limit, there are NO TIES. The following tie-breakers shall be determined by the following methods, in order:

1.2.1.1. Team who led most of the game (by innings).

1.2.1.1.1. Example: Team 1 led the game for 5 innings. Team 2 led the game 2 innings. Team 1 is declared the winner.

1.2.1.2. If a winner is not determined by method #1, the team with the largest lead differential is declared the winner.

1.2.2. In case of a tie at the end of seven innings AND while the permitted time limit is not exceeded, the game shall continue until a winner is declared.

1.2.2.1. When a game is tied at the end of seven innings, the International Tie Breaker rule goes into effect. At the start of each inning, each team will start with a

runner on second base and 1 out. The base runner will be the last batted out from the previous inning. Any eligible player may be substituted for this runner.

1.2.3. Coaches (or backups) may call a game in case of rain / darkness, etc. Games may be played in light to moderate rain, but ANY lightning or thunder shall stop the game immediately for 30 minutes with no evidence of lightning or thunder.

1.2.4. Games start promptly at 6:30 pm unless discussed previously by both managers.

1.2.5. A fifteen-minute grace period shall be allowed if one team is in a forfeit situation.

1.2.6. The 8+1 rule is in effect. The only exception is if the last batter for the team in the lead hits an **over the fence** home run. All runs shall count in this case. This does not apply to "inside the park homeruns" for fields with or without a fence.

1.3. Foul Ball Limit - the batter shall be called out after the SECOND foul ball AFTER TWO strikes.

1.4. Any fair ball hit that goes out of play is designated a ground rule double.

1.5. Only approved ASA/USA softball bats shall be allowed — no "triple wall" bats.

1.6. No metal spikes or cleats allowed.

1.7. There shall be free substitution of any player at any time in the game. He must play defense first and bat at least once before being removed from the game. Any player that has been subbed for MUST complete one full inning of play (offense and defense) before being removed again (with exception to injury and the like). If a player is injured and there is no sub available, the injured player's spot in the batting order shall be skipped with no penalty. A person coming out shall sit out a full inning — meaning one team's turn at bat and one team's turn in the field. This does not apply to a pitcher who gets shelled in one inning. Once a game has started — a team that is shorthanded may insert a player (late) at any time. Anywhere on defense but at the bottom of the batting order.

1.8. The tenth player is able to play any place on the field.

1.9. A catcher must wear a facemask with throat protector as the minimum required equipment. Additional equipment shall be used at the discretion of the player / team.

1.10. PRAYER is to be conducted by the visiting team before the game with both teams meeting at the pitcher's mound. The home team will be responsible for a DEVOTION and closing prayer at the end of the game. All players from both teams are to attend and participate in the devotion.

1.10.1. Exception: During playoffs, no post-game devotion and prayer is conducted.

1.11. While not ideal, games may be played with one umpire. When ASA/USA umpires are officiating, the use of one umpire is widely accepted.

1.12. <u>For Self-Umpiring Only:</u> If no umpires show up, then BOTH players shall be suspended the next game played.

1.13. At the start of the 1st inning, both teams are permitted to throw at most 5 pitches to warm up. Between innings, pitchers are permitted to make at most 2 pitches.

1.14. To conserve time: "huddles" (or any of the liking) are not permitted between innings. Throwing the ball "around the horn" after an out is not permitted. Throwing the ball to second after the last warmup pitch ("coming down") is not permitted.

2. BATTING & BASERUNNING

2.1. A Batter, a player warming up on deck and all base runners must wear a batting helmet while on the field. A base coach is not required to wear a helmet. Additionally, a base coach should not be holding anything while coaching the base. For example, holding a glove would not be permitted because if it were dropped in a moment of haste to avoid a line drive, a fielder could

trip on it and injure themselves.

2.2. To maximize the safety of our players, once a Batter squares to bunt a ball, he must either commit to bunt that ball or pull back and refrain from swinging until the next pitch.

2.2.1. Failure to do so shall result in an automatic out or ejection from the game, at the discretion of the umpire, depending on potential severity of play. No exceptions.

2.3. A base runner must keep at least one foot on the base until the pitcher has released the ball. Once the Pitcher has released the ball a base runner may lead off. Leaving the base early shall result in a warning and then an out as the umpires feel is necessary. If the runner leaves the bag excessively early, then a warning may be forgone, and the infraction can result in an out directly.

2.4. Any play that is deemed close should result in the base runner either sliding or giving themselves up for the out assuming that is necessary to avoid a collision (intentional or inadvertent). The intent is to protect players and avoid collisions / injuries.

2.4.1. Intentional collisions between base runners and a field position shall not be allowed.

2.4.2. Avoiding a collision (intentional or inadvertent) is a shared responsibility between the runner and fielder. Either player can be penalized for causing a collision.

2.4.3. A fielder must always provide a clear path to the base for a runner if the fielder does not possess the ball. Intentionally blocking a bag shall result in the runner being called safe when the fielder does not possess the ball.

2.4.3.1. Blocking the base shall be defined as a fielder standing, kneeling or crouching completely in front of or in the path of the runner to the base without possession of the ball. In front of or behind a base also constitutes as blocking as it would inhibit the runner from running without impediment. Standing with one foot on the baseline and one foot off the baseline would be considered legal.

2.4.4. A runner who intentionally or unintentionally collides with a fielder shall be called out (as they deviate from the previous clarifications).

2.5. A runner can advance (steal) at any time after the ball has left the Pitcher’s hand as long as the play is still live. This includes a passed ball, overthrow and the like.

2.6. The batter becomes a runner when the third strike called by the umpire is not caught, providing

2.6.1. first base is unoccupied, or

2.6.2. first base is occupied with two outs;

2.6.3. When a batter becomes a base runner on a third strike not caught by the catcher and starts for the dugout, or his position, and then realizes his situation and attempts then to reach first base, he is not out unless he or first base is tagged before he reaches first base. If, however, he actually reaches the dugout or dugout steps, he may not then attempt to go to first base and shall be out.

2.7. Extra players

2.7.1. A designated hitter (DH) may be used. He can replace any player in the batting line up. The DH can only hit, he cannot play defense.

2.7.2. Teams may also use an extra hitter (EH). This player can bat anywhere in the lineup. An EH may play defense only if there is a player to replace the EH in the lineup.

2.7.3. Pinch running shall be permitted for any player where health or age concerns

exist. Pinch running should not be used to gain strategic advantage (i.e. for someone who is slower than desired). If a player has a health issue and is incapable of running, then a pinch runner may be used to substitute. In order of precedence the pinch runner should be:

2.7.3.1. the last batted out that occurred when your team was on offense. This shall eliminate overlapping when a runner is on base and the batting order would require them to bat and be substituted again.

2.7.4. Please refer to section 1.7 concerning substitutions for how to apply these rules to a game in process.

2.8. An infield fly is a fair fly ball, NOT including a line drive or attempted bunt, which can be caught by an infielder, pitcher, or catcher with ordinary effort when first and second OR first, second, and third base are occupied with less than two outs. There is judgment by the umpire what ordinary effort is. The ball must be fair. Sometimes if it's close to fair/foul the umpire shall say "infield fly, the batter is out if fair" or something similar. The intention of the rule is to protect the runners. Even if the ball is not caught the batter is out. Once caught or the ball hits the ground, runners can advance at their own risk. An infield fly is not a dead ball.

3. PITCHING

3.1. Players pitching in other leagues are eligible to pitch in the MMCSL. They must be a regular attender (all references to “attender” throughout this document) of the church for which they are pitching – refer to the bylaws to understand what constitutes a regular attender. In the case of a two-church team any player on the team may pitch (bylaw 8.1.3.2.).

3.2. Pitches must be thrown in the modified style. This is detailed as:

3.2.1. The pitcher must start with his shoulders square to home plate (in line with first and third base).

3.2.2. The pitcher must start with both feet on the pitcher’s plate.

3.2.3. The pitcher may not take a step backward, only forward motion is permitted during the delivery.

3.2.4. The pitcher may take the ball behind the back during the backswing.

3.2.5. The pitcher may not use a windmill or slingshot style pitch, nor shall they make a complete revolution in the delivery.

3.2.6. The ball must not be outside the pitcher’s wrist at any point during the delivery.

3.2.7. The delivery must be an underhand motion with the hand below the hip.

3.2.8. The pitcher’s palm may be pointing down.

3.2.9. The pitch must be delivered on the throwing arm side of the body; not between the legs or behind the back. On the forward swing, the elbow must be locked at the point of release and the shoulders and driving hip must be square to home plate when the ball is released.

3.2.10. As the pitcher steps forward during the delivery, the pitcher may not cross his feet.

3.3. When a pitcher is substituted, he may not return to the mound in the same inning. He may return at a later inning at any position including pitcher.

4. PROTESTS

4.1. If the decision is in favor of the protesting team the fee shall be returned.

4.1.1. The League Board shall serve as the protest committee.

4.1.2. Protests must be filed in writing within 72 hours of game completion and also with the umpire at the time of the incident being protested (before the next pitch is thrown).

4.1.3. Protests are strongly discouraged; this league is meant to be fun and not so competitive that protests are necessary.

5. FORFEITURES

5.1. Teams must start the game with EIGHT (8) players, no later than fifteen minutes past the scheduled start time.

5.1.1. Games must be forfeited if teams cannot field 8 players. Lack of players does not constitute rescheduling games.

5.2. If a team plays a game with an ineligible player, the game shall be declared a forfeit. An ineligible player is someone not on the roster or a pitcher who is not a regular attendee.

5.3. The score of the forfeited game shall be 7-0.

5.4. Once a team forfeits more than 25% of their regularly scheduled games during the regular season their season will immediately end and they will be ineligible for the playoffs (rounding up). For example, if a team has 13 games to be played, 25% would equal 4 games forfeited to end their season.

5.4.1. This can be overturned if extenuating circumstances exist and the League agrees to overlook any number of forfeitures from the team in question.

5.5. During the playoffs, forfeitures shall not be permitted unless extreme circumstances present themselves. This does not include absences that could have been planned ahead of time. The league has agreed to set a playoff start date at the beginning of each season. By doing so, every player should have ample time to make the necessary arrangements such that they can be present for the playoffs. In the case of an extreme circumstance, a forfeiture shall be granted:

5.5.1. pending agreement from both teams involved in the game to be forfeited

5.5.2. the commissioner

5.5.3. and assuming that this does not affect future postponements in the playoff schedule

6. POSTPONEMENTS

6.1. Only team managers and umpires are permitted to postpone games. Players should contact their managers if they have any questions about game status.

6.2. It is the LEAGUE'S responsibility to reschedule games.

6.3. Games shall be rescheduled no sooner than TWO (2) days from postponed game.

6.4. Teams unable to field enough players shall follow the FORFEITURE rules.

6.5. Any game called after the fifth inning has started and the home team is winning shall be considered a full game. The team leading when the game is called is the winner and the score shall be considered the final score. To clarify, the minimum number of innings required to consider a game a full game due to weather is 4-1/2, within the time limit. The intent when deciding a game in this fashion is that both teams receive an equal number of turns at bat.

7. STRIKE ZONE GUIDELINES

7.1. The pitch shall be judged to be a strike or a ball as it crosses home plate, not where it is caught by the catcher nor in relation to the batter's position in front of or behind home plate.

7.2. The pitch shall be judged a strike or a ball in relation to the batter's natural position as the pitch crosses home plate. An example to emphasize the point would be if a batter took a natural standing position and then significantly changed their stature after the pitch was thrown in an attempt to alter the strike zone and draw a ball, the pitch should be evaluated in relation to the batter's natural stance.
7.3. A piece of the ball must be within the horizontal limits defined as any piece of the plate including the black trim if one exists (horizontal limits implying the right and left sides of the plate).
7.4. The entire ball must be within the vertical limits defined as the armpits to top of knees.
7.5. See the following diagram for a visual reference to match the text. The lettered circles are out of the strike zone while the numbered circles are considered in the strike zone.
7.6. The strike zone is at the discretion of the home plate umpire. The coaches and umpire should review this at the start of every game.
7.7. Ultimately, consistency is valued over accuracy. If you happen to call a strike zone that is a little wider than someone else, so long as it's consistent, then the pitcher and batters can learn and adjust. Consistency is the key.
7.8. We encourage the home plate umpire to be pitcher friendly. We want people to swing at the ball, not rely on a walk. Do not be afraid to call strike three.
7.9. If a batter is in the strike zone (i.e. his hands) and gets hit by a pitch, the pitch does not result in a walk but is in fact a strike.

MMCSL BYLAWS

8. TEAM

8.1. A team can carry 24 players on the roster; 25 including the manager who must be registered and signed up.
  8.1.1. All players must be listed on the team roster. One roster must be turned in to the commissioner by the date determined each year (typically before the season begins).
  8.1.2. 40-60 Rule: The team may carry 40% of their roster from outside the affiliated church. Non-attenders must be noted on the roster.
    8.1.2.1. Any non-attenders cannot pitch.
    8.1.2.2. Non-attenders must attend a church that is not currently participating in the league. If a player attends Church A and Church A has a team in the league, then he must play for Church A; he cannot play for another team.
    8.1.2.3. Where a player has previously been with a team as a non-attender and then his base church joins the league, it will be at the player's discretion which team he will play for (but it's strongly encouraged that he plays for his base church team). An example would be that John plays with Church A but attends Church B. Church B joins the league the following year. John can choose which team he plays for. Once John chooses to join his base church though, he will not be permitted to switch back to Church A while church B is participating.
  8.1.3. Where there are not enough players to constitute a team from a single church, two churches may combine to form a joint team. In this case, 40-60 Rule does not apply and the roster must consist of players from the two

churches. Any additional players (“non-attenders”) from outside those two churches shall not be permitted to play.

8.1.3.1. A combination team must consist of four players minimum from one of the two churches. Less than that would classify them as a regular team.

8.1.3.2. Since neither church has a complete representation, any player can pitch on a combination team.

8.1.4. The League Board shall vote on any roster that does not comply with the previous two rules.

8.1.5. Goal of MMCSL: All attenders should maintain attendance at a CHRISTIAN worship service every other week in order to maintain league status.

8.2. It is the HOME team’s responsibility to update the scores on the league website and report the win within 24 hours after game.

8.3. Teams shall have their own scorebook. The home team’s scorebook shall be the official for that game.

8.4. A player must participate in at least 25% of the games to qualify to play in the playoffs / tournament (rounded up). For example, if the season consisted of 16 games per team, each player would need to participate in 4 games each, if 17 games, then 5 would be required for eligibility. Participation constitutes as one full inning of play.

8.5. Players must be at least 16 years of age before the season starts.

8.6. All fees must be paid to the League Treasurer before the start of the season. Any payments made after 14 days from the start of the season shall be assessed a $20 penalty fee.

8.7. Teams are required to be in uniform. Team shirts must be the same color. Hats for teams are strongly encouraged and it’s preferable that they match within the team. Teams may have outside sponsors, but the League Board must approve them. Refer to Section 11.

8.8. Both teams shall furnish a new softball, provided by the league for each game. Home team is responsible for preparing the field for play; to include setting up the bases, raking if necessary & lining the batter’s box & foul lines.

8.9. All teams must comply with the league Statement Of Faith as detailed in Section 14 each year to remain in the league. The Senior Pastor of the affiliated church(es) must sign the agreement.

9. UMPIRES

9.1. Umpire(s) shall be paid at the start of the game. It is the responsibility of Home team to pay the umpire(s) at the start of the game.

9.2. MMCSL contracts with USA officials for regular season and playoffs.

9.3. Self-Umpires – when necessary.

9.3.1. Umpires do not have to be players. Each team has the option to add “all time” umpires.

9.3.1.1. These individuals shall be noted as such on the roster.

9.3.1.2. They shall not be permitted to play.

9.3.1.3. They shall comply with all other rules that a player would such as regular attendance, liability waivers, etc.

9.3.1.4. As these people cannot play, item 1.10 shall be modified as such for this case. In the case that both umpires do not show up to umpire a scheduled game and one or both of them is an “all time” umpire, the team that they represent shall suspend two players for their next scheduled game. In the case of an “all time”

umpire, the opponent shall select the person(s) to sit out for that game.

9.3.2. The home plate umpire shall wear a mask during game play.

9.3.3. Unless good reason such as injury or agreed upon by both team coaches, umpires should finish the game in the position they started. Meaning that if an umpire starts the game as the home plate umpire, they should remain in that role for the entire game.

9.4. USA umpires have the discretion to position themselves either behind home plate or behind the pitcher's rubber. No MMCSL team can dispute or challenge this decision by USA umpires.

9.4.1. When two (2) USA umpires are used, one umpire shall be positioned behind home plate and one umpire shall be positioned in the field.

10. CONDUCT

10.1. All players and coaches must sign the league Code Of Conduct Agreement prior to any practices and/or games, whichever comes first. No player shall participate without signing this agreement.

10.1.1. Code Of Conduct can be found at: https://www.htosports.com/mmcsl

11. SPONSORS

11.1. Teams may have a sponsor or sponsors contribute to their costs such as league fees, equipment fees, etc. A sponsor would constitute as a for-profit organization (not a church).

11.2. Any sponsor must be approved by the League Board before a team can accept contributions from them.

11.3. Teams may not carry their sponsor's name as their team name. Team names should be the church represented by that team. In the event that this is not desired, a neutral name shall be selected.

11.4. Teams may carry logos or the like for their sponsor on the sleeve of their shirts and / or the side or back of their hats. Teams may not carry sponsor logos on the front or back of their shirts. While sponsors are greatly appreciated, this league is not an advertising mechanism.

12. NEW TEAMS

12.1. The League Board must vote any new team, which desires to participate in the league.

12.2. New teams must comply with the league Statement Of Faith as detailed in Section 14 before further consideration for admittance. The Senior Pastor of the affiliated church(es) must sign the agreement.

12.3. It is customary to allow new teams into the league with a probationary period of one year. This is done to evaluate the new team such that the league may be preserved. The League Board will ensure that the new team will cohesively fit within the league while maintaining strict focus on Christ.

13. LEAGUE BOARD

13.1. The League Board will consist of a member from each team and the League Commissioner, League Treasurer, and League Field Director, if different than team manager/coach. The team member is typically the coach but could be a delegate who may speak on behalf of the team.

13.1.1. The Commissioner, Treasurer, and Field Director may also serve as coaches for their teams.

13.1.2. The Commissioner, Treasurer, and Field Director shall be represented by different individuals.

13.2. Each team will receive one vote on matters where voting is necessary. Teams on probation (indicated by asterisk) may not vote on rules changes, matters concerning league financials

and the like. Teams on probation may contribute opinions, as they feel appropriate, but may not vote on protests, voting new teams in or out of the league, or similar governing matters.

13.2.1. Any votes ending in a tie shall be decided by the Commissioner's final decision.

13.3. Any notation in these rules and bylaws that references "the league" shall be assumed to refer to the League Board.

13.4. League Board consists of (can be found at): https://www.htosports.com/mmcsl

14. STATEMENT OF FAITH

14.1. Any church representing a team (a team represented by a single church body or a team comprised of multiple church bodies) must agree with the league's Statement Of Faith.

14.1.1. Signatures by the Senior Pastor and coach of each church/team represented in the league must sign the agreement.

14.1.2. The Statement Of Faith can be found at: https://www.htosports.com/mmcsl

15. LEAGUE WAIVER

15.1. All players and coaches must sign the league waiver form prior to any practices and/or games, whichever comes first. No player shall participate without signing this agreement.

15.1.1. The waiver form can be found at: https://www.htosports.com/mmcsl