

RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE METRO NASHVILLE SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

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SECTION 1 RULES AND REGULATIONS OF MNSA

- A.** A League, in order to function smoothly, must have a set of documents that govern the organization and its operation. The governing documents of Metro Nashville Softball Association (MNSA) are the Constitution and the Rules and Regulations. League Rules must be understood by members, managers and players. A copy of the Rules and Regulations adopted each year by the Managers Council will be provided to each team representative at the Spring General Membership meeting.

- B.** Amendments to the Rules and Regulations can be made pursuant to article VIII of the MNSA Constitution.
- C.** A minimum of two (2) Executive Committee members shall be at the park at all times during league play. In the event two (2) Executive Committee members cannot be present, the Executive Committee shall appoint one (1) or two (2) Manager's Council members to serve as officer(s) of the day in order to fulfill those duties.
- D.** A business day is any day excluding Saturday, Sunday or national holidays.

SECTION 2 DIVISIONS OF PLAY

- A.** MNSA will be comprised of levels of competitive play to be aligned with IPRIDE SOFTBALL divisions of play. There are currently 7 divisions in IPRIDE SOFTBALL: A, B, C D, E, Legends C and Legends D. None of these divisions is considered recreational.
- B.** Player and team eligibility to play in a specific division will be determined based on current IPRIDE SOFTBALL Player and Team Rating Guidelines.

SECTION 3 MNSA MEMBERSHIP

- A.** "Team Membership" in the Organization shall require dues in an amount per team, per season, as set by the Executive Committee. Team membership dues may be paid by an individual or group or by a sponsor from the local business community. Divisional declaration must be made upon payment of team dues.
- B.** "Playing Membership" in the Organization shall require dues in an amount per person, per season as set by the Executive Committee. "Playing" Membership shall be defined as:
 - 1. An eligible player.
 - 2. Permitted to participate fully in all activities of the Organization, including voting privileges.
- C.** "Non-Playing Membership" in the Organization shall require dues in an amount per person, per season, as set by the Executive Committee. "Non-Playing" Membership shall be defined as:
 - 1. Any person other than an eligible player.

2. Permitted to participate fully in all activities of the Organization, including voting privileges.
- D.** No refunds of membership dues will be made by MNSA after the start of regular season play.
- E.** Only MNSA members are allowed on the field and bench area.
- F.** Authorization must be obtained before the name or photograph of any MNSA member may be published or announced by MNSA. MNSA cannot be held responsible for the actions taken by any media that does not have MNSA approval.
- G.** Any person, team, or sponsor who presents a check to MNSA that is not honored by the bank will be required to pay a \$30 (thirty dollar) fee and any dues via certified check or money order before that person or team is allowed to participate in MNSA. Any person, team, or sponsor who presents more than one (1) check in a calendar year, which is not honored by the bank, may be required by the Executive Committee to pay any monies due MNSA via certified check or money order for the remainder of that year and the following year.
- H.** The Executive Committee may declare any person or sponsor ineligible for membership in MNSA if such person has any debt to MNSA and has failed to make satisfactory arrangements for repayment of such debt. Any such declaration of ineligibility will require the affirmative votes of 75% of the Executive Committee.
- I.** Playing and Non-Playing members in possession of assets belonging to MNSA shall return such assets to MNSA on demand. Any problems regarding assets shall be resolved by the Managers Council with the approval of the Executive Committee.
- J.** The Executive Committee may declare any person ineligible for membership for sufficient cause. Membership may not be denied on the basis of gender, race, color, age, national origin, religion, creed or sexual orientation.

SECTION 4 TEAM MEMBERSHIP

- A.** Team membership shall be limited to twenty (20) active players per roster in all divisions. Team membership shall include two (2) “non-playing” members.

1. A team roster must be presented to the MNSA Board via electronic mail at board@mnsasoftball.com before the MNSA regular season begins. A due date for roster submission will be set by the Executive Committee at or before the annual winter council meeting each year. The final team roster and player ratings must be presented to the MNSA Board by July 1 unless otherwise stipulated by the Executive Committee. MNSA Board reserves the right to adjust this date in conjunction with IPRIDE SOFTBALL roster submission deadlines.
 2. A revised team roster and player ratings form must be submitted to the Secretary on the Friday preceding the next scheduled game in order for the revision to be in effect.
 3. A player must satisfy other requirements for participation as may be established by IPRIDE SOFTBALL or MNSA.
- B.** A player may not change teams without being released. A player may not change teams after the start of the third week of play of the regular season. To change teams, a player must inform both coaches and the MNSA Secretary of his/her intent. A new registration form must be completed and approved by the MNSA Commissioner or Assistant Commissioner before that player is eligible. A player may plead a hardship case to the Executive Committee to waive this rule.
- C.** New players may not be added to the team roster after the team has played 50% of its scheduled games. Cases of hardship may be appealed to the Executive Committee.
- D.** If a player is injured and provides medical proof of injury to the Executive Committee, the coach may petition the board to remove the player from active status and to add an additional player in their spot. The added player must become an MNSA member, not on a current MNSA Roster. The injured player may not be reactivated during that season. This action must result in team not falling below 12 players.
- E.** After the new player deadline has passed, if a player who has been playing in another IPRIDE SOFTBALL member city league in the current year moves into our region, that player may petition the Board to be placed on an active team. This will only be considered if the player has a signed release from the former member city league and has an official rating in the IPRIDE SOFTBALL database

SECTION 5 INDIVIDUAL REGISTRATION

- A.** Every member must be listed on an MNSA team roster form, pay membership dues, and any other document deemed necessary by the Executive Committee before he/she is eligible to participate. It is the coach's or manager's responsibility to submit any registration forms and dues to an MNSA Executive Committee ("Board") member before that member participates. Every player must show ID and sign the roster and release forms in the presence of a member of the Executive Committee.
- B.** In any case where this procedure is not followed properly, the coach accepts the personal responsibility for any consequences that may result in terms of liability. The member and the coach in question would both face possible disciplinary action.
- C.** A playing member must have an approved IPRIDE SOFTBALL rating on file with MNSA before he/she is eligible to play. MNSA players must use their approved rating when traveling to play in tournaments that use IPRIDE SOFTBALL ratings guidelines. Players who play with other teams in tournaments where IPRIDE SOFTBALL ratings are utilized are encouraged to verify their rating with the MNSA Commissioner prior to attending tournaments.

SECTION 6 PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

MNSA Rules and Regulations will govern player eligibility. Violation of these Guidelines will make the player in question ineligible for participation in that particular category of competition.

Any fall season sanctioned by MNSA will abide by regular season guidelines unless otherwise determined by the Executive committee.

A. Regular Season Guidelines

- 1. A player must be duly registered and on only one (1) MNSA competitive team. in the A, B, C, D, E or Legends division.
- 2. A player must be at least eighteen (18) years of age by the date he/she joins the league.
- 3. A player must not be on suspension on game day.

4. Players under twenty-one (21) years of age are not allowed to participate in functions that are hosted at establishments that require a minimum age of twenty one (21) to enter.

B. Gay Softball World Series (GSWS) Tournament Guidelines (If Applicable)

1. A player must be duly registered and on only one (1) MNSA team in the A, B, C, D, E or Legends divisions.
2. A player must be at least eighteen (18) years of age by the date he/she joins the league.
3. A player must not be on suspension during the dates of the GSWS.
4. Players under twenty-one (21) years of age are not allowed to participate in functions that are hosted at establishments that require a minimum age of twenty-one (21) to enter.
5. A player must have been present and listed for participation in a minimum of 50% of his/her MNSA Division team's regular season schedule as determined by the official MNSA scorebook or scorecard.
6. A player must satisfy any other requirements for participation as may be established by IPRIDE SOFTBALL.
7. MNSA shall be responsible for the method of determining which of its teams will represent the Association in the GSWS. The applicable IPRIDE SOFTBALL requirements shall be met including, but not limited to, "no more than three (3) non-LGBT players may be on a team's roster."

SECTION 7 SCHEDULES AND STANDINGS

- A. The MNSA season schedule will be prepared by the Commissioner or his/her designee after the deadline to register teams. The schedule must be approved by the Executive Committee. MNSA Team Representatives will be issued a season schedule as soon as it becomes final.
- B. A season schedule shall be prepared and distributed by the Commissioner or his/her designee after the second week of regular season games. If after the third week of play a team dissolves, every remaining opponent of that team will receive a 7-0 victory for their scheduled games.
- C. It is the responsibility of the MNSA Commissioner or his/her designee to inform the team representatives as to whether or not the field is playable. It is the team representative's responsibility to inform the players. When possible MNSA will

provide a phone line with accessible information regarding canceled games. MNSA will also publish rainout notices on the MNSA Facebook page as well as the MNSA Website.

- D.** Games cancelled will be rescheduled at the discretion of the Executive Committee. The Secretary will notify in writing the team representative of each team involved in the revised schedule.
- E.** In the event of change in weather conditions after a game has started, the umpire can suspend a game until weather conditions improve, or cancel a game. If 4 complete innings are played then the game is considered complete. If fewer than 4 innings are played the remaining time will be recorded and the game will be finished at a later date based on the adjusted time. If fewer than 2 innings are completed, the entire game will be played over.
- F.** Request for schedule changes will be decided by the Executive Committee. Teams must give a 30-day written notice for a possible schedule change. Schedule change requests on less than a 30 day notice may be considered in extreme circumstances. The Executive Committee has the right to refuse a schedule change request. The Commissioner has the right to grant a schedule change in less than 30 days if there is due cause.
- G.** If a team leaves the league during the season for any reason; all teams in that team's division shall receive a win whether or not they have played the team in question.
- H.** Standings will be kept by MNSA and will be published regularly.

SECTION 8 LENGTH OF GAME

- A.** Time Limits: The length of games will be 55 minutes (finish the inning). No inning will start after the time has expired; if there is at least one (1) second of time left on the official game clock when the last out is made, a new inning will begin provided a complete game has not been played. After time expires, the inning must be completed unless the home team is ahead. The Commissioner may change the time limit if needed for scheduling purposes and rescheduling of games.
- B.** All tie games will utilize the universal tie breaker rule. The last out, not necessarily the last batter, will go to second base so the tie breaker innings start with a runner on second and no outs.

C. Run Rule: 20 run lead after 3 full innings, 15 run lead after 4 full innings and 10 run lead after 5 full innings. Completed innings must be played, unless the home team takes the lead after time expired.

D. Rule changes related to time limits and scheduling may be implemented by the Executive Committee as deemed necessary before and during the season and/or postseason.

E. If games are delayed for rain or other inclement weather, the MNSA Commissioner may change the format of games in order to try and complete all the games of the day.

SECTION 9 PLAYING RULES

MNSA will abide by the official softball rules adopted by the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) now USA Softball with the following exceptions:

- A.** MNSA Rules and Regulations and an official USA Rulebooks are available online and may be referenced on demand to assist in resolving any potential rule conflicts.
- B.** All MNSA games shall be officiated by a USA or other accredited umpire. If such an umpire is not available, any knowledgeable member of MNSA mutually agreed to by both coaches, having both signed the official scorecard prior to the game, with 1 of the 2 Executive Committee members on duty present, will be allowed to officiate.
- C.** The Home Plate Umpire will be the official scorekeeper unless a paid scorekeeper is provided. Prior to the start of each game, the coaches, using the MNSA Line-up Card, must provide the Home Plate Umpire and the opposing coach with the official line-up including substitutes and players present but unable to play due to injury. If an official scorekeeper is not provided, the home team's scorebook will be the official scorebook. If the home team does not have a scorekeeper, then the visitor's scorebook will become the official scorebook at which time the umpire will note this on the official scorecard. The official MNSA Line-up Card will determine MNSA standings and player participation. It is recommended that the score be verified at the completion of each half inning. Both team scorekeepers should agree and then verify with the umpire.

- D. Official Line-up** – A team shall consist of no fewer than nine (9) players. A team shall not be allowed to start or continue a game with fewer than nine (9) players. A team that begins with nine (9) players may add a tenth (10) player during the game. Such tenth (10) player must bat in the tenth (10) position in the line-up. A team that begins play with nine (9) players will be penalized with an automatic out in the tenth (10) spot in the line-up until the tenth player arrives. A team that begins play with ten (10) players may end the game with nine (9) players, but the missing player becomes an automatic out in the line-up. Line up cards must include the date, time, both team names, each eligible player's first initial or full first name, and full legal last name as well as the player's jersey number.
- E.** Teams may bat no less than 9 and no more than 12 players at the coach's discretion. If a player leaves the game **because of injury** and there are still 10 players in the lineup, there is no out charged to the team in the injured player's batting spot. If the player leaves the game because of injury the coach must notify the plate umpire and the opposing team that the player has left the game because of injury. If the spot comes up in the order and the coach has not identified the injured player leaving the line up, then it is the responsibility of the coach on the opposing team to appeal batting out of order. That will follow USA guidelines.
- F.** A team must have enough players to field a team at the designated starting time of their game or the umpire will call an official forfeit.
- G.** Uniforms must consist of matching team shirts with 6" or larger numbers on the back. If a team has more than one uniform shirt, a player may be allowed to wear either team shirt. However, players on the same team may not wear identical numbers. The USA Uniform Rule will be superseded by USA Rules related to blood stained uniforms and open wounds (replacement uniforms will not have to match). The uniform rule will not be mandatory until the 4th week of play.
- H.** If a player is ejected from a game and after his/her ejection, his/her team has less than nine (9) players; the team of the ejected player will forfeit that game, regardless of the score. The ejected player will be suspended for the remainder of that game and two (2) complete games immediately following the ejection. If a player is ejected from a second game in one season, the player will be suspended for the remainder of the season.
- I.** The courtesy runner must be a rostered player and listed on the lineup as a player or substitute. If the runner comes up to bat while still on base, the runner will be declared out.

1. One courtesy runner will be allowed per inning except for true Legend Division teams playing against their respective division counterpart teams. True Legends teams may have two courtesy runners per inning as permitted by IPS.
 2. Any request for a courtesy runner rule modification must be presented to the MNSA Board at board@mnsasoftball.com prior to the beginning of the season and must be accompanied with support from medical providers who've treated the player within the last year.
 3. MNSA Executive Board will rule based on the support provided and other conditions and circumstances related to the request.
 4. Forms, support and approvals from other leagues will not be accepted.
 5. No player who plays on defense at any time will be granted a courtesy runner from home plate.
 6. Any player approved by the MNSA Executive Board to serve as a batter only may have a courtesy runner from home plate.
 - a. The runner's starting position will be from the baseline on the side of the batter's box where the batter stands.
 - b. However, said runner may not advance beyond first base regardless of the outcome of the hit, except where the umpire calls dead ball and runners advance by rule.
 - c. This runner must be the last recorded out and will not count against the courtesy runner limit of one per inning.
 7. The coach of approved courtesy runner rule modification player must present to umpire and opposing team coach during umpire meeting prior to the start of each game.
 8. If the player is not presented prior to game start, the player will, by default, follow 9.I.1.
- J.** Homerun limits per division will align with IPRIDE SOFTBALL rule. Any over-the-fence homeruns over the division limit results in an inning ending out. MNSA follows IPRIDE SOFTBALL rule regarding players who have the ability to hit a ball 300 ft in the air.
- K.** All MNSA teams must be IPRIDE SOFTBALL GSWS or IPRIDE SOFTBALL Cup qualifying teams and are limited to three (3) Non-LGBT players on their roster. A team in violation of the Non-LGBT player guidelines shall be subject to disciplinary action that may include but is not limited to:
1. Permanent suspension of the Non-LGBT player from future MNSA activity.
 2. Disqualification and forfeiture of all the offending team's games.
 3. One-year suspension of the team's Coach and/or Manager.
- L.** There will be a zero tolerance policy towards "hate" speech:
- 1st offense – Suspension (Current game and following 2 complete games)
 - 2nd offense – expulsion from the organization

SECTION 10 FORFEITS

- A.** A team will forfeit a game for any of the following:
- 1.** Failure to have and maintain a minimum of nine (9) players on the field.
 - 2.** Quitting in defiance of an umpire's decision.
 - 3. 3.** Fielding a player who is ineligible on game day.
- B.** A team with five (5) forfeits may be dropped from the league for the remainder of the season. Appeals for reinstatement may be made, in writing, to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall hear the appeal within (3) business days. If a Member of the Executive Committee is affiliated with a team in question they will recuse themselves from discussions regarding expulsion.
- C.** If a team is disbanded, players shall automatically be released from that team and are eligible to join another team after two (2) games have passed. The disbanded team cannot reform during the season.
- D.** A team with more than two (2) forfeits will be declared ineligible for the GSWS participation.
- E.** A team may plead a hardship case, in writing, to the Executive Committee to waive any of these sanctions. Executive Committee will have sole authority to rule based on evidence presented. Executive Committee ruling is final and may not be further appealed.
- F.** Any team who voluntarily forfeits a game after the Friday preceding the scheduled game will incur a fine equal to the cost of the umpire fees paid per game forfeited. This rule is installed, as umpires must be paid unless given at least a 2-day notice of game forfeiture.

SECTION 11 PLAYER RATINGS

- A.** Coaches are responsible for creating and maintaining a rating for each player on their team roster as set forth by the IPRIDE SOFTBALL Player and Team Rating Guidelines. Final ratings are approved by the League Commissioner. If a player has not ever played in MNSA or other IPRIDE SOFTBALL member city and does not have a current IPRIDE SOFTBALL rating the player is to be rated by the

coach. If a player has been rated in another IPRIDE SOFTBALL league within the previous two years that rating must be used to begin the season. Requests for ratings changes may be made after the player has played 4 games.

- B. A player's coach may change a rating question for a player with an existing rating from a "No" to a "Yes" in conjunction with notifying in writing by submitting the Player Rating Change Request Form to the Commissioner. A player is deemed to have an existing rating if a rating from the current year or prior two years is on file with MNSA or IPRIDE SOFTBALL.
- C. A coach seeking to change a rating question for a player with an existing rating from a "Yes" to a "No" must obtain approval from the Commissioner who may refer it to the Executive Committee or Judiciary Hearings Committee (JHC). This request should be submitted to the Commissioner using the Player Rating Change Request Form along with supporting documentation for review to substantiate the change.
- D. The Commissioner may elect to change a rating question from a “No” to a “Yes” or “Yes” to “No” after reviewing any evidence which substantiates the change. The Commissioner must submit in writing the change and substantiating evidence to the impacted player’s coach. An appeal may be made, in writing, to the JHC within 5 days of notification of the decision. If an appeal to the JHC is successful, the Commissioner cannot alter the appealed rating until the following summer season. If the rating change is not successfully appealed, it may be changed according to the provisions of Section 11.
- E. **Ratings Committee**
Objective: To adopt a ratings review and approval process for all players competing in the Metro Nashville Softball Association (MNSA) that is fair and consistent with International Pride Softball (“IPS”) ratings guidelines.

Purpose: To have a panel made up of players, coaches and/or board members within the MNSA league to oversee ratings disputes and protests and to aid in the ratings of individual players as requested by the players’ coach.

Formation of the Committee:

1. A ratings committee shall consist of at least three and no more than five individuals who are listed as a player, coach or board member in good standing with MNSA.
2. The ratings committee shall be formed by appointment of the Executive Committee prior to the league starting play.

Rules and Guidelines:

- I. The Ratings committee may conduct a ratings clinic open to the league prior to the start of each season.
- II. While it is highly recommended that each player be involved in his or her own rating, it is the responsibility of each coach to submit his/her player's ratings by the deadline as defined in the MNSA rules and regulations.
- III. Any coach may ask any member or members of the appointed ratings committee to assist him or her in the rating of his players only. The ratings committee has the right to refuse, but is highly encouraged to assist.
- IV. Coaches must turn their ratings in to the ratings committee Chair and MNSA Board.
- V. The ratings committee will review all ratings turned in for accuracy and address any questionable ratings with the coach and the player in question. This is not an official protest this is for accuracy and to make sure we are doing our ratings properly. We need a check and balance system and that is the purpose for this committee. The committee will have 4 games to conduct their review and approval process and to make any recommendations. Prior to the 5th game after the coach submitting the ratings the R & R committee shall have the ratings submitted to the commissioner for approval.
- VI. After all ratings have been verified and double checked by the committee the ratings are then given to the commissioner for approval and submission. This shall be in Excel format and completed electronically to the commissioner as an attachment.

SECTION 12 JUDICIARY HEARINGS COMMITTEE

- A.** The Assistant Commissioner shall serve as the Chairman of the Judiciary Hearings Committee (JHC). The Chairman will preside over a committee consisting of representatives of each team from each active division of play, elected by the Managers Council, which will listen, debate, and decide on requests for ratings reductions and protests.
- B.** The JHC will be made up of representatives appointed by the coach/manager of each team. The team Coach/Manager must notify the Board of their team JHC representative via electronic mail at board@mnsasoftball.com. Such notification must be made at or before the annual spring meeting prior to the start of the season. Each team in each division will have one JHC representative. Changes in team JHC representative may be made at any time during the year, but must be communication to the Executive Board in writing via electronic mail. Each team representative will have one vote during JHC meetings/hearings. No member of the Executive Committee, may serve on the JHC.
- C.** Each member of the JHC except the Chairman will serve a term of one (1) full year beginning immediately following his/her appointment by the Managers Council and ending when a new member is appointed.
- 1.** In the event a member of the JHC cannot complete his or her term and a vacancy is created, the Executive Committee must appoint a replacement to complete the vacated JHC member's term. Such appointment must be approved by majority vote of the Managers Council.
 - 2.** The JHC Chairman may request the Executive Committee to remove any member of the committee for excessive non-attendance and appoint a replacement to fill the newly created vacancy.
- D.** The Chairman will preside and keep order during JHC meetings, but will not vote, unless there is a tie. In the event that the Chairman cannot preside or attend a meeting, a Chairman Pro-Temp shall be assigned by the Chairman to act in the absence of the Chairman. The Chairman Pro-Temp shall be a member of the Executive Committee.
- E.** The Chairman will call a meeting of the JHC and notify the JHC Representatives, the representatives of the team(s) involved in the protest or ratings reduction request at least five (5) days before the meeting as to the date, time, place, and reason for the meeting, including allegations.

F. The Chairman will preside over the meeting. In the case of a game protest, a representative of the team filing the protest will present the case for the protest. The team representative of the team being protested will then respond. There will be a maximum of thirty (30) minutes allowed for questions and comments from the JHC. The team representatives will then leave the room for a maximum of thirty (30) minutes to allow for discussion by the JHC. At the end of the discussion by the JHC, the Representatives will vote by secret ballot to decide whether the game protest is upheld or invalid. In the case of a ratings reduction request, a similar hearing process will take place with the exception that there typically will be no presentation against the ratings reduction request. The JHC at its discretion may allow the presentation of evidence against the ratings reduction request.

G. A game protest will be upheld if a simple majority of the JHC representatives voting concur with the protest. A ratings reduction request will be granted if a majority of the JHC representatives voting concur with the request. In the event of an upheld protest, the effect will be in accordance with IPRIDE SOFTBALL rules.

H. Any JHC member must permit an alternate (if available), designated by the Chairman to vote in his place or abstain from a vote where a conflict of interest is determined. A conflict of interest is defined as, but not limited to, the following: the player in question is on the same team, a roommate, co-worker or partner of the JHC member.

I. At the end of the vote tabulation by the Chairman, the Chairman will assemble all persons involved and the decision of the JHC will be presented.

J. An appeal can be made to the Executive Committee by submitting convincing new evidence within three (3) days of JHC ruling.

K. Any person or team who becomes ineligible for play within a division as a result of a JHC decision will remain so until they successfully appeal the JHC decision to the Executive Committee.

L. The Chairman is responsible for maintaining official minutes of each JHC meeting and its subsequent decision. The minutes will be submitted to the Secretary to be stored in the MNSA records.

SECTION 13 RULE VIOLATIONS

There will be three (3) types of rule violations – Minor, Major, and "Bad Standing". The Managers Council will determine into which category a situation will fall based on the specific details involved and the parties will be notified in writing by the Managers Council.

A. Bad Standing - Any action determined by the Managers Council to be intentional, flagrant, and/or detrimental to the best interests of the MNSA Organization will result in penalties assessed by the Executive Committee which may include but are not limited to: reprimand, probation, suspension, loss of voting privileges, or expulsion. Any MNSA Member put on "Bad Standing" will be notified in writing by the MNSA Commissioner and may be appealed to the Executive Committee after probationary period is over for reconsideration.

B. Minor Violations – A minor violation of MNSA Constitution and Rules and Regulations determined by the Managers Council not to be intentional or flagrant will result in a reprimand, probation or suspension for a period not to exceed two (2) games. The severity of the consequences will be determined by the Managers Council.

C. Major Violations – Any violation of MNSA Constitution and Rules and Regulations determined by the Managers Council to be intentional or flagrant will result in a severe suspension for a period lasting from six (6) games until the end of the season. A year on probation will accompany any such suspension. Further violations while on probation will result in prompt expulsion from MNSA.

D. Special Conditions –

1. Unsportsmanlike conduct at any MNSA function or facility will not be tolerated.
 - a. Such actions as spitting, excessive use of profanity, obscene gestures, or throwing of objects will result in a hearing by the Managers Council in accordance with procedures outlined in the MNSA Constitution Article XI Grievance/Appeal Process. Any such behavior determined to be minor in nature will result in one (1) warning by the umpire or Executive Committee. The warning will be logged onto the Official Scorecard for use at the subsequent hearing.
 - b. Any further infraction by a player, coach, or MNSA member will result in expulsion from any game, facility, or function in question and suspension from MNSA pending a hearing. Any MNSA member involved in such activity will be asked to leave the ballpark or facility. Failure to leave, when asked, will result in expulsion from MNSA.
 - c. Any verbal abuse or hate speech (provoking or retaliating), fighting, physical abuse, or damage to property involving an umpire, officials,

players, members, or fans by any MNSA member will result in an immediate expulsion from any game in question and immediate suspension from MNSA. Any MNSA member involved in any such activity will be asked to leave the ballpark or facility. Failure to leave, when asked, will result in expulsion from MNSA.

- d. This incident must be witnessed by more than the parties involved.

SECTION 14 PROTESTS

- A. The official MNSA protest must be filed in writing by the coach or team manager with the Game Umpire by the end of the game in question. It must be accompanied by a protest fee as set forth by Rule 14B. The game umpire will deliver all game protests to the Commissioner at the end of that game day.
- B. The protest fees are as follows:
 - 1. Rating protests will be \$50 per protested question.
 - 2. If a protest is upheld, the protest fees are returned.
 - 3. If the protest is denied, all fees are nonrefundable.
- C. The Judiciary Hearings Committee, according to the process in Section 12, will hear protests.
- D. A protest of a player and/or team's IPRIDE SOFTBALL rating will be considered as a USA eligibility protest and the protest fee applies.
- E. Any Ratings Protest that results in a ratings increase shall not result in a forfeit unless it moves the Player or Team to a higher division.

SECTION 15 SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES GREIVANCE/APPEAL PROCESS

- A. The person or team in question must be challenged in writing by a current member of MNSA to the MNSA Commissioner.
- B. The written challenge must state the name of the person or team in question, the reason for the challenge, and a specific list of charges that prompted the challenge.

- C.** The challenge must be presented to the MNSA Commissioner for a challenge of any Executive Committee member(s) for presentation to the Managers Council. The MNSA Commissioner shall not preside over any meeting in which the MNSA Commissioner is the person being challenged, in which case the Assistant Commissioner shall preside.
- D.** The Commissioner will call a meeting of the Managers Council and notify the Managers Council, the person or team representative of the team in question, and the person issuing the challenge at least five (5) days before the meeting as to the date, time, place, and reason for the meeting.
- E.** The Commissioner will preside over the meeting. The person issuing the challenge will read his or her challenge. The person or team representative of the team being challenged will respond to the challenge after such reading is finished. There will be a maximum of thirty (30) minutes allowed for questions and comments from the Managers Council. The person issuing the challenge and the person or team representative for the team being challenged will both leave the room for a maximum of thirty (30) minutes to allow for discussion by the Managers Council. At the end of the discussion by the Managers Council, a vote will be taken by secret ballot to determine whether the person or team in question is in violation of MNSA Guidelines.
- F.** A person or team will be considered in violation if seventy-five (75%) of the Managers Council in attendance votes in favor of the challenge. The specific penalty assessed for the violation will be determined by the nature of the infraction, based on the MNSA Constitution and Rules and Regulations. Possible penalties include, but are not limited to, reprimand, probation, suspension for a period not to exceed five (5) games, severe suspension lasting from six (6) games to the end of the season and a year on probation, loss of voting privileges, expulsion, removal from office, ineligibility for membership or ineligibility to compete in a particular division. The period of time associated with the penalty, if applicable, will be determined at the time the penalty is assessed.
- G.** Votes will be tabulated by the Commissioner and witnessed by one representative from each of the aggrieved parties. At the end of the vote tabulation by the Commissioner, the Commissioner will assemble all persons involved and the decision of the Managers Council will be presented.
- H.** Any person or team declared ineligible for membership will remain so until they petition the Executive Committee for reinstatement.

- I.** Any person or team declared ineligible for membership may petition the Executive Committee for reinstatement by filing such a petition with the MNSA Commissioner before said person or team begins MNSA play. Any reinstatement will follow the grievance/appeal process guidelines above, except the person issuing the challenge need not appear.
- J.** If a person or team being challenged does not cooperate with the guidelines stated above, that person or team shall be considered ineligible for membership for the rest of the season.
- K.** If the person issuing the challenge does not cooperate with the guidelines stated above, the challenge will be dropped and that person issuing the challenge will be suspended for a period to be determined by the Executive Committee.

SECTION 16 MNSA CHAMPIONS AND GSWS REPRESENTATIVES (IF APPLICABLE)

- A.** Each division of MNSA will recognize League Champions
- B.** The winner of the most regular season games in each division will be declared the MNSA League Champion for that division. In case of a tie of season record, the final placement will be determined as follows,
 - 1. Season Record
 - 2. Head-to-Head Match-ups
 - 3. Run Differential
 - 4. Coin Toss

If there is only one (1) team within a division, that team shall be declared the MNSA League Champion for that division upon the completion of their regular season scheduled games.

- C.** Any team winning their division in the GSWS will be required to move up to the next division of play immediately, including any tournament play. Requirement is for one rolling calendar year. In the event that the GSWS is held later than the prior year GSWS, this period will be extended until the week following the next year GSWS.
- D.** Or in the alternative the team may split leaving no more than 4 players from the GSWS winning team on the team roster. If a team from that division goes to the GSWS they may pick up some of the players from the previous winning team;

however no more than 4 including the players picked up may be on the GSWS roster turned in the previous year.

- E.** Participation of MNSA in the GSWS will be determined by guidelines provided each year by MNSA and IPRIDE SOFTBALL.
1. The number of teams MNSA can send to the GSWS will be determined pursuant to the guidelines set forth by IPRIDE SOFTBALL.
Any additional berths will be alternated between divisions (C, D, E) in that order, starting with D Division in 2019.
 2. The regular season MNSA League Champion for each division will be declared the GSWS representatives. The placement of the teams in the regular season will follow 16B above for berth allocation. This is only the case where 16.E.2 above does not apply.
 3. If an MNSA team awarded a berth is ineligible or otherwise unable to represent MNSA at the GSWS, then the bid will be made available to the other teams in the division based on the final regular season division standings.
- F.** Any team earning the right to represent MNSA in the GSWS will be required to demonstrate “Financial Ability” and “Player Commitment” to participate by a deadline set by the Executive Committee. Should a team be unable to demonstrate their ability to participate in the GSWS, the next highest team in the standings will have the opportunity to participate in the GSWS.
1. “Financial Ability” requirements will be set each year by the Executive Committee based on league funding and the GSWS Host City.
 2. “Player Commitment” requires a minimum of seven (7) players from the regular season roster attend the GSWS.
 3. Failure of any MNSA team to participate in the GSWS after meeting the qualifications and stating their commitment to participate will result in a financial penalty equal to the hotel deposit made and probation to be established by the Executive Committee.
 4. Additionally, any IPRIDE SOFTBALL fines will be incurred by the teams in violation.
 5. If multiple berths are allotted in one division, the second berth will go to the second highest IPRIDE SOFTBALL qualifying team in that division at the end of regular season play.
- G.** Any team earning the right to represent MNSA in the GSWS must satisfy all other requirements for participation as may be established by IPRIDE Softball, included but not limited to:

1. Teams may add up to four (4) eligible additional players, replacing active players on their rosters or filling empty slots, as long as no more than twenty (20) players participate in the GSWS.
 2. The team must meet current IPRIDE SOFTBALL player and team rating guidelines.
- H.** Any team(s) that do not participate in League Sponsored Fundraisers during the year will be ineligible to receive funding for the GSWS from the League. This would include both the GSWS entrance fee and the USA card fee.
1. Participation for this rule is defined as each team must have 25% of roster at each league sponsored fundraising event.
 2. The only exception would be if a team(s) are attending another iPride member association tournament.
- I.** Any Protest fines that occur during the GSWS will be split as follows:
- 50%- League Responsibility
 - 50%- Team Responsibility
1. All fines must be paid to the league before the iPride Winter Delegate Meetings.
 2. If fines are not paid that Team will not be eligible to play until the fines are paid.

SECTION 17 MNSA OPEN DIVISION TOURNAMENT

Each year the league may sponsor a tournament. It is the responsibility of the Assistant Commissioner to appoint a Tournament Director or to assume the responsibility of running the tournament. A separate account will be established for the tournament proceeds.

The proceeds will be utilized as follows:

- A.** A minimum of 10% of profits from monies raised will be donated to the designated charitable organization for that year. The organization is chosen by vote of the Manager's Council. This will only be done after the fund for start-up and operating expenses for next year's tournament is reached.
- B.** \$5,000 will remain in the fund for start-up and operating expenses for the next year's tournament. 25% per year until the \$5,000 is met.
- C.** Remaining funds will be divided evenly among the teams representing MNSA in the National Championship, not to exceed \$3000.00 per team. The money will

not be distributed until after the teams have shown reasonable commitment that they have enough players available to make the trip. This commitment must be made prior to the deadline set by the National association for the fees to be paid for participation in the World Series.