CITY OF ORANGE & MAJOR LEAGUE SOFTBALL ADULT SOFTBALL LEAGUE RULES

All league games are governed by the current S.C.M.A.F. Rule book, except when superseded by these ancillary rules.
S.C.M.A.F. Rule books are available to order for $12 each. Contact S.C.M.A.F. at 626-448-0853 Ext. 15
Any rule or situation occurring on or off the fields that are not covered here or in the S.C.M.A.F. rulebook will be handled at the discretion of the MLS Officials present and/or MLS Administration.

1.0 OBJECTIVE

LAST UPDATED: APRIL 2026

To offer a wholesome program that is primarily concerned with safety, fair play, and sportsmanship.

2.0 MLS ADMINISTRATION & CUSTOMER SERVICE

The administrative duties and final authority shall be vested in Major League Softball, whose representatives will be responsible to set forth and maintain such rules and regulations as are necessary to govern safe & competitive leagues. The duties shall include but are not limited to settling disputes and defining rules as set forth in these articles and in the S.C.M.A.F. Rule Book, rule on protests, and take appropriate action on all problems that may arise from competition among members of the league including player/team suspensions or permanent removal.

Major League Softball's Customer Service department may be reached by phone or email (EMAIL IS FASTER):

714-289-1983 x103 or **customerservice.OC@mlsoftball.com**

Our office hours are Monday – Friday / 9:00am – 5:00pm. We are closed Saturday – Sunday and most major holidays.

3.0 LIABILITY

1) As participants in the Adult Softball League, and in consideration of the value received as participants in the league, each participant agrees to exonerate, defend, indemnify, and hold harmless Major League Softball, Inc. and the City of **ORANGE** and its officers, agents, employees and game officials from all claims and actions based upon, or arising out of, any damage or injury to persons or property caused by, or sustained in connection with, their participation in the Adult Softball League.

2) All participants understand and accept the fact that neither Major League Softball nor the City of **ORANGE** and their respective agents, employees, contractors, or insurers provide any form of medical or accident insurance for bodily injury, illness, or death sustained while participating in the Adult Softball League. All participants should thoroughly investigate the terms and conditions of their personal health insurance policies to verify that they will receive coverage for any claims arising out of or connected with their participation in this program.

3) Player's Medical Benefit Fund (PMBF) coverage is available through the Southern California Municipal Athletic Federation (S.C.M.A.F.). PMBF provides a maximum benefit of $500.00 per calendar year for each rostered player. The PMBF coverage is extended for one (1) season only. It must be understood that the PMBF is NOT a health or accident insurance policy and must be purchased separately by writing a check in the amount of $46.00, made payable to SCMAF. Such payments may be submitted to Major League Softball, Inc. and MLS will forward the payment and PMBF registration paperwork to S.C.M.A.F. PMBF coverage will not be in effect until payment is received and processed. PMBF claims that occur prior to payment and processing will not be forwarded to S.C.M.A.F. https://www.scmaf.org/pmbf

MLS OFFICIALS CANNOT PROVIDE OR ADMINISTER ON-FIELD FIRST AID.

4.0 TEAM ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA

1) MLS reserves the right to reject **ANY** team's acceptance into the league for reasons including, but not limited to:

- Failure to register online and submit a current roster for each season **by the deadlines**.
- Failure to pay the required deposit **by the deadlines**.
- Previous overdue payments, bounced checks, unpaid forfeit fees, and/or unpaid Registration Fee balances.
- Previous history of team DROP-OUTS.
- Previous history of forfeits, ejections, on-field alcohol/smoking, aggressive verbal or physical on-field behavior, poor on-field sportsmanship, continued conflict with other teams/players/officials/MLS Staff, or unruly fans, etc.

2) The roster of a team that is not in good standing may be evaluated, and each player listed may be in jeopardy of being banned from all MLS programming. All decisions regarding team/player eligibility will be determined solely by MLS Administration.

5.0 TEAM MANAGERS

1) Each team is required to have a team manager, which will be recorded per the information provided under the MANAGER section at the time of registration.

2) The team manager is responsible for seasonal registration, fees, rosters, player conduct, and all other aspects of the individual team. The team manager will be held responsible for the full registration fee, regardless of their team's status or ability to play.

3) If a team changes its manager at any time during the season, the new manager must notify MLS Customer Service via EMAIL immediately and provide their contact information: phone, email & mailing address. The previous Manager must be copied as well for full disclosure of the change being requested.

5.1 TEAM NAMES & ROSTERS

1) **TEAM NAMES**: team names should not be offensive, explicit, or culturally insensitive. Teams may be asked to pick a new name if deemed necessary by MLS Administration or the city. Team names must be kept to 20 characters or less with no abbreviations used. Our computerized scorekeeping system will not accept duplicate team names. If you select a team name that is already in use (even if it is on a different day of play) you will be asked to change it, or MLS may modify it to add a "descriptor word" … example BLUE JAYS will now be BLUE JAYS **MENS** or BLUE JAYS **SUN**.

2) **ROSTERS:** Each team shall be allowed to roster a maximum of 20 players.

- All players must have a full first & last name provided that matches their legal photo ID (no initials / no nicknames).
- **All players must be at least 18 years of age – NO EXCEPTIONS**. We do not accept parent/guardian waivers.
- All players must be free from any disciplinary penalties/suspensions to participate in play.
- Players may not participate while under the influence of alcohol/narcotics. If intoxication is suspected, an MLS Official may remove the person from play. Failure to comply may result in your team's immediate forfeit and possible additional disciplinary actions against the player/team.
- **Women are allowed to play on MENS teams**. Just please note that we do not allow for any special considerations for any player who is not "traditionally" male when choosing to play in a men's league.

3) **PLAYING ON MULTIPLE ROSTERS**: If a player's name is listed on two (2) rosters on the same day & in the same division, whichever team that player played with first will be their legal team for the remainder of the season. No player

may be on 2 rosters within the same league division, on the same day/night. If a player is caught playing illegally under another name, that player may not play for their "rostered" team later that day/night within the same division.

4) **ROSTER CHANGES:** if you have not reached your max of 20 players **ADDITIONS MAY BE MADE BY THE SCOREKEEPER ON THE FIELD UNTIL THE ROSTER ADD DEADLINE** *(See below)*. If you need to **DELETE** players, please ask your scorekeeper for a ROSTER CHANGE form to fill out and it will be sent to the office to process. Roster changes submitted to the office may take up to 7 days to process, as stats are only processed once weekly.

5) **ROSTER ADD DEADLINES**: No roster additions may be made to the roster after the fourth (4th) week of the season for 6 - 8 GAME SEASONS or after the fifth (5th) week of the season for 9 - 10 GAME SEASONS.

6) **NON-BINARY PLAYERS:** for COED league play there is a requirement to alternate "male/female/male/female" in the batting lineup + there must be a certain ratio of male to female when playing defense. If a player's state issued ID reads male or female, they must play as listed … if it reads 'X' or 'non-binary', they must notify MLS Administration, ***before the season begins***, and provide us with their 'identifier' (male or female), and we will use that for the entirety of the season. We want to include everyone we can, but there are requirements we must follow in COED play.

- If you have a player(s) who simply cannot identify as male or female, you may register your team as a MENS team and play in a MENS league. Men's play does not have the same offensive or defensive requirements as COED. Just please note that we do not allow for any special considerations for any player who is not "traditionally" male when playing in a men's league.

7) **REGARDING COVID-19, ILLNESS & VACCINATIONS:**

- **For everyone's health and safety, we continue to ask our participants, officials, and spectators to stay home if they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 (or any contagious illness).**
- Hand washing / sanitizing is strongly recommended if contact is made with any surface, equipment, or personal items related to another participant or MLS Official.
- **If players and/or spectators come to any park facility, MLS Officials must assume they are healthy & fully vaccinated** – we cannot ask anyone if they are vaccinated, and we cannot ask anyone to put on a face mask. If players and/or spectators are exhibiting **obvious** symptoms of illness, MLS Officials may ask that they leave the vicinity for the health and wellness of others, at their discretion.

6.0 GENERAL LEAGUE RULES

1) No infield practice, pitching warm-ups, or batting practice will be allowed **prior to game time**. No infield warm-ups are permitted between innings. Pitchers are allowed three (3) warm-up pitches at the beginning of each game and one (1) warm-up pitch between innings.

2) **COURTESY RUNNERS:** A manager may use a courtesy runner for any batter/runner in an inning. A courtesy runner may only be used after a batter/runner has reached their base and the play is dead. There is NO limit to the number of courtesy runners that may be used every inning, but a player may only run ONCE per inning (no "rabbits"). If a runner is on base when it is their turn at bat, an out will be called for failure to bat. **A pinch runner cannot be requested for a courtesy runner.**

3) **PITCHER'S BOX & DELIVERY:** this is an "imaginary" box that extends back from the pitcher's plate along the width of the pitcher's plate for six (6) feet. The dimensions of the pitcher's box are twenty-four (24) inches wide by six (6) feet long with the front line fifty (50) feet from the outside corner of home plate and the rear line fifty (56) feet from the outside corner of home plate.

The pitcher may deliver the pitch from any point inside the pitcher's box and for the purpose of rule enforcement, the pitcher's box is treated the same as the pitcher's plate. The pitcher may never pitch from IN FRONT of the pitcher's plate. The ball must be pitched underhand in a lob-motion. A 'windmill' wind-up is illegal.

4) **PITCH HEIGHT**: a pitched ball must clear the top of the batter's head and not go over 16 FEET. Any pitch that does not meet these requirements will be declared an ILLEGAL PITCH by the umpire and will count as a BALL in the pitch count if it is not swung on. Should a batter choose to swing at a declared ILLEGAL PITCH, the result will be LIVE.

5) **PITCH COUNT**: Each batter will start their plate appearance with a 1 Ball / 1 Strike count. The four (4) strike rule will be in effect for all leagues.

- On first pitch, if the batter receives a **STRIKE** (swung or called) **or** they hit a **FOUL**, they now have a 1-2 count and "***1 to waste***" – so they can hit 1 more foul at this point.
- If they receive another **STRIKE** now (swung or called), they will be **OUT**. If they hit another **FOUL** now, they will still have a 1-2 count, but it is now "***got to be***" – so any further FOUL balls hit after this will be an **OUT**.

6) The HOME TEAM will be listed FIRST on the game schedule. The Flip-Flop rule is NOT allowed.

7) **MINIMUM PLAYERS NEEDED**: All teams must start and finish each game with a minimum of 8 players. Fewer than 8 players will result in a forfeit. (see section 6.1 for min coed requirements)

8) **SLIDE RULE**: Sliding is not mandatory, but we do enforce a "***slide or avoid***" rule, meaning anyone choosing NOT to slide will need to **avoid** any fielder that is attempting to make a play to prevent issues. The umpire has sole discretion on any call pertaining to interference when contact is made and their judgement is final and will not be contested. Below are the rules regarding interference and/or contact via the SCMAF rulebook:

A. Any batter or runner who has just been put out that hinders or impedes any following play being made on a runner. Such runner shall be declared out for interference.

B. If, in the judgement of the umpire, a baserunner willfully and deliberately interferes with a batted ball or a fielder in the act of fielding a batted ball with the obvious intent to avoid an out or break up a double play, the ball is dead. The umpire shall call the runner out for interference and call out the batter-runner because of the action of his or her teammate. In no event may bases be run or runs scored because of such action by a runner.

9) **DUGOUT ETIQUETTE**: Only rostered players are allowed in the dugouts. Visitors, fans, children, and/or pets must always stay OFF the field and out of the dugout. ***MUSIC or TV/Radio broadcasts are allowed unless the opposing team objects, then it must be turned off***. If you have an objection to noise from the other team's dugout or fans, the manager should address the umpire (calmly) and request it be silenced. **At no time will EXPLICIT music be allowed**. **NO BULLHORNS /NO AIR HORNS.** *When a team is up to bat, only the batter, the on-deck batter, current base runners, + one 1st base coach & one 3rd base coach may be out of the dugout … all other players must remain **INSIDE** the dugout.*

10) **LOITERING**: Players must leave the playing area and clear the dugout **immediately** after each game to allow for the following teams to occupy the space.

11) **DOUBLE SAFETY BASE:** whenever available, a double safety base shall be used at 1st base. These bases are typically colored white (inside base) and orange (outside base). For safety reasons, when a play is ***actively being made on the batter-runner***, the batter-runner MUST step on the outside (orange) base only – should they step on any part of the inside (white) base, they will be called OUT (which side the runner touched will be solely the umpire's judgment). If there is no play being made, they may touch either base.

12) **MIDDLE COMMENTARY:** Any comments overheard by any MLS Official such as "MIDDLE IS OPEN" referring to *hitting up the middle* in ANY WAY, will result in the player who said it being EJECTED … this is unsportsmanlike behavior and will not be tolerated. ***If an MLS Official ever feels a ball was hit intentionally up the middle (with or without commentary), the player who hit the ball will be ejected and possibly subject to further penalty at the discretion of MLS Administration.***

13) **HOMERUN BASE TOUCHING POLICY:** For home runs hit over a home run fence or into an area that has been pre-determined to be a ground-rule "HOMERUN" area, the batter need only advance to and touch first base, and all baserunners must advance to and touch one base. All runners may then proceed to the dugout & all runs will count.

14) **BAT FLIPPING:** is NOT ALLOWED – this is a demonstration of unsportsmanlike conduct and dangerous. If an MLS Official feels a "bat flip" was done intentionally, that player may be ejected from the game – **NO WARNINGS NEEDED**.

15) **STEALING and LEADING OFF:** No baserunner may **LEAD OFF** until a pitch has been fully released from the pitcher's hand. **STEALING** is not allowed. Base runners may only advance on playable HIT BALLS, or when forced due to a walk, or an interference call by the umpire that may also advance runners.

There is 1 instance where "stealing" could be permitted, and that is: after a **legal pitch that is NOT HIT**, if the ball is thrown to anyone **other than the pitcher** (this is usually an attempt to pick off a runner who may have been leading off too far), and that throw results in an error (bad throw, lose ball) runners MAY advance at their own risk, and must be tagged for an out.

6.1 ADDITIONAL COED LEAGUE RULES

1) The standard configuration for coed consists of five (5) females and five (5) males. However, a game may always be played with a minimum of eight (8) players on the batting lineup without forfeit as long as there are no less than 5 males / 3 females **OR** 5 females / 3 males. You may bat up to 20 total players, as long as the minimum is met.

2) The following defensive configurations are allowed in COED play:

- **(10) 5 males / 5 females – STANDARD**
- (10) 6 males / 4 females – 6TH MALE MUST PLAY CATCHER
- (10) 4 males / 6 females – 6TH FEMALE MUST PLAY CATCHER
- (9) 5 males / 4 females
- (9) 4 males / 5 females
- (8) 4 males / 4 females
- **(8) MINIMUM** 5 males / 3 females – 5th MALE MUST PLAY CATCHER
- **(8) MINIMUM** 3 males / 5 females – 5th FEMALE MUST PLAY CATCHER

***** If there are at least 5 MALES and 5 FEMALES in the batting lineup, you must use the **STANDARD 5/5 defensive configuration**. To use any of the other configurations your batting lineup must reflect the need.

3) **BATTING ORDER:** Two separate batting line-ups will be used, one for females and the other for males. The manager shall indicate which sex will lead off the game and the sexes shall alternate from that point. Two players of the same sex may never bat in consecutive order unless a rule violation or automatic out is being enforced.

4) **COURTESY RUNNERS (additional to the GENERAL rule listed in section 7.0/item 2):** a courtesy runner must be of the same sex.

5) A male that is walked on a count of three (3) balls and no strikes shall be awarded second base, and all base runners will advance accordingly.

6) A minimum of three (3) outfielders must remain behind the outfield restriction line (180 feet from home plate) until the batter hits the pitch - with four outfielders your rover can come in front of the line (**rover may be male or female**). If this rule is violated, the batter will be awarded first base unless their batted ball results in their safe advance past first base.

6.2 ADDITIONAL '2-PITCH' LEAGUE RULES (no leagues currently playing in this city)

1) All games will be 45 minutes.
2) Every batter starts with a 2-2 COUNT … If the first pitch is a STRIKE, the batter is OUT.

6.3 ADDITIONAL WOMEN'S LEAGUE RULES (no leagues currently playing in this city)

1) In the interest of safety, common sense and fair play, male players may not "fill in" or participate in a Women's League game. In the event that a team attempts to play a male player(s), that game will be immediately forfeited.

2) **7-RUN SCORING RULE:** In the **UPPER DIVISION** no "run rules" will be in play – ALL INNINGS ARE OPEN.

For **ALL OTHER DIVISIONS**, a maximum of seven (7) runs per inning will be allowed. After the seventh (7) run is scored, the opposing team shall come to bat, regardless of the number of outs. An OPEN INNING will occur after 60 MIN playing time has expired according to the scorekeeper's clock **OR** the 7th inning (whichever comes first). During open innings a team at bat is NOT LIMITED in the number of runs it may score. **NOT optional.**

6.4 ADDITIONAL SENIOR'S LEAGUE RULES (no leagues currently playing in this city)

1) **AGE GROUP**: The age group shall be 50 years or older. The age a player attains on their birthday in any particular year is considered to be their age for that entire calendar year.

2) **SLIDE RULE**: Runners may slide anytime coming or going to second and third base. Runners may also slide when RETURNING to first base, never during the approach to first base as a batter/runner. **Runners may never slide at HOME.**

3) **PITCHER'S BOX**: A pitcher's box is used that extends 6 feet behind the rubber, 1 foot on each side of the rubber and 3 feet (imaginary) above the pitcher's head. Any ball hit inside the box and beyond the rubber will result in an automatic out and will be declared a dead ball. All runners go back to the base at which they started. If the ball hits the ground before the rubber, the ball is live and in play.

4) **COMMITMENT LIN**E: A commitment line shall be marked across and perpendicular to the foul line and placed twenty (20) feet from home plate. Once a runner crosses this line they may NOT double back to third base.

5) **SCORING LINE**: A ten (10) foot scoring line shall extend from the corner of home plate (closest to third base) at a 90-degree angle to third base foul line, starting at the batter's box. To score, the runner's foot must be on the ground on or beyond the line before the defensive player touches home plate with the ball in possession. *If the runner touches home plate or the extension mat, THEY WILL BE AUTOMATICALLY OUT. **Runners may never slide at HOME.**

6) **PLAYS AT HOME**: All plays at home shall be by force out, only provided the runner from third has crossed the commitment line. **Runners may never slide at HOME.**

7) **LEAD OFFS**: A runner may not leave their base until a pitched ball is **hit** by the batter.

8) **HOME RUN RULE**: Teams are allowed to hit only 3 over the fence home runs per game. Once the allotted number of home runs have been reached by a team, any additional home runs will be considered an out. The batter-runner is required to touch "FIRST" base only, all other players are required to touch the "NEXT" base only.

9) **5-RUN LIMIT**: During innings 1-6, a team at bat may score a MAXIMUM of five (5) runs per inning. After the fifth run is scored, the opposing team shall come to bat, regardless of the number of runs it may score.

10) **BAT RULE**: Players may use USSSA and/or Senior Bats as defined by SSUSA Equipment Rules. Wood bats are not permitted.

7.0 LINE UP CARDS All teams will be provided a lineup card to fill out on the field at each game – just visit the scorekeeper's table to pick one up.

1) You may bat up to 20 players, but a minimum of 8 must be listed to start & finish a game.

2) Each player is required to personally sign the official lineup card form (which also contains a Release, Hold Harmless and Indemnity Agreement) EACH GAME before they will be eligible to play in any MLS programming.

3) **Managers may not sign for their players. Everyone must sign for themselves.**

4) If a signature is perceived as illegible or 'forged', the player(s) will be asked to re-sign, and possibly show ID as well to prove they are who they are.

5) **PLAYERS THAT HAVE NOT YET ARRIVED SHOULD NOT BE PLACED ON THE LINE-UP CARD or penalties may be enforced (see below).** Late arrivals should visit the scorekeeper's station to check in and only then should they be added to the bottom of the lineup.

- **PENALTIES:** any player on the lineup that is NOT present when their time AT BAT comes up, the team must make a choice of one of the following PENALTIES **(this choice may not be reversed once made):**
  - The team will choose to take an AUTO OUT **every time** that player's spot comes up until they arrive (this could be 1 out, or 4+ outs). **OR**
  - The team will choose to take a **ONE TIME** AUTO OUT and the player will be dropped from the lineup. If the player arrives later, they are no longer eligible to play in the current game.

6) **PLAYERS WHO LEAVE A GAME**: If a player must leave the game, for any reason (including injuries or ejections), and a "straight-sub" cannot be produced to take their spot in the batting lineup, that player will be an OUT the next time their spot comes up in the lineup. This is a ONE-TIME out, after that, they will simply be dropped from the lineup. ***If a straight sub is available, there will be NO PENALTY enforced***.

7.1 PICKUP PLAYER RULE - This rule is to minimize, or prevent, on-field forfeits.

1) **ONLY WITH THE OPPOSING MANAGER'S CONSENT**, a team may utilize up to four (4) pickups MAX to bring the total number of players to ten (10). The total # of pickup players allowed is also at the Opposing Manager's discretion, they can limit you to playing with ONLY the minimum requirement of eight (8).

WITHOUT OPPOSING MANAGER CONSENT A FORFEIT MAY BE INCURRED AND/OR PENALTIES MAY BE APPLIED.

2) If a rostered team member(s) arrives late, the corresponding number of pickups must leave the game & the rostered player(s) will take their position(s) in the batting lineup – straight substitution ONLY.

3) **PICK UP PLAYER CONDITIONS:**

- Pickups may only play the following defensive positions: CATCHER or RIGHT FIELD (center field/rover or left field will be allowed only if **more than 2** pickups are being used).

- Pickups must always bat at the BOTTOM of a lineup.

- Pickups must be 18 or older & must sign the lineup card using their LEGAL name (same as any rostered player).

- During REGULAR season games pickups may be **ANYONE**, from **ANYWHERE** if all rules are followed & the opposing manager consents.

- **PLAYOFFS**: During PLAYOFF and/or CHAMPIONSHIP games pickups may only come from your **CURRENT SEASON ROSTER**. Meaning rostered players that are NOT eligible due to a lack of plate appearances (PA's) per the stats MAY be used as pickups. Again, all rules must be followed & the opposing manager must consent.

4) **LINEUP CARD REQUIREMENTS:**

- Managers, you MUST make it clear to the Scorekeeper when using pickups.
  - List them on the lineup card with their legal name and CIRCLE **"PICKUP"**.
  - Pickups must sign the lineup card using their legal names.
  - Pickups may not be placed onto a lineup under a rostered player's name. **This is ILLEGAL**.

5) If the opposing manager consents to the PICKUP PLAYER RULE they have waived any win by forfeit they may have received, and the game will be played as normal. The game will be considered a LEGAL game.

7.2 ILLEGAL PLAYER PENALTIES

1) At any point during a game, if an ILLEGAL player is discovered by any MLS Official and/or Opposing Manager, the Opposing Manager will be consulted as to whether they wish to:

(A) remove the ILLEGAL player from the game, which may result in a forfeit if the team no longer has 8 players

(B) continue playing using the PICKUP PLAYER RULE

(C) receive an automatic win by forfeit due to cheating. NO EXCEPTIONS / NO DISCUSSIONS.

No protests related to player eligibility will be considered after a game is played.

7.3 ID CHECKS & PROCEDURES

1) All players must be able to produce a valid PHOTO identification at each game in the event an opposing team and/or an MLS Official want to verify a person's identity/eligibility. Both the opposing Manager AND any MLS Officials may request an Identification Check at any point during a game.

2) The opposing manager and/or MLS Official must clearly specify which players' I.D. they would like to have checked.

3) There is no limit to the number of I.D.'s that may be checked.

4) The Scorekeeper and/or League Director will conduct I.D. checks for each player in question to determine if the player(s) match a name on the roster. If neither a scorekeeper nor League Director are present, the Umpire will conduct the I.D. check.

5) Players who cannot produce a positive picture I.D. matching a rostered player's name will be deemed ILLEGAL and may be disqualified from playing + penalties may be enforced (**see above for ILLEGAL PLAYER PENALTIES)**.

PLAYOFF & CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES WILL HAVE MANDATORY "PRE-GAME" ID CHECKS ENFORCED FOR ALL TEAMS / PLAYERS INVOLVED. No player will be allowed to participate in either without a valid Photo ID.

8.0 EQUIPMENT / UNIFORM RULES

1) **SHOES**: Metal cleats and open-toed shoes are never allowed. Rubber cleats and/or turf shoes are OK.

2) **JEWELRY/ACCESSORIES & ELECTRONIC/RECORDING DEVICES**: any loose or bulky items should be removed before play. This includes cell phones, handhelds, Go-Pros, watches, bracelets, or any dangly necklaces or earrings, etc. An MLS Official may request you to remove any such items if they feel they are distracting and/or may pose a safety issue to you or others – this is left to their discretion. No recording devices may be set up anywhere within the field of play, including being attached to field fencing or the backstop as this may cause play interference (this includes spectator's devices). **Devises set up OFF the field & BEHIND fencing are permitted**. Anyone not complying with an official's request to remove or move an item may be subject to ejection or game forfeit, this is not up for discussion.

3) **CASTS / INJURIES / BLOOD RULE**: (common sense should be applied here) if you are on crutches, or in a cast, you should not be playing. If an MLS Official feels it is unsafe for you to participate due to an injury, they can request you sit out at their discretion. If at any time you have BLOOD showing, you will be asked to leave the field to clean and/or cover it up. This may include having to remove an item of clothing if blood is present.

4) **UNIFORMS & HELMETS:** MLS does not require teams to wear matching uniforms or have their uniform # on their shirts. Players may wear whatever they want so long as it is not offensive, dangerous or a distraction, and covers all pertinent body parts (common sense should be applied here). Helmets, face masks, and any other safety equipment are also not required but may be worn if participants chose to do so.

5) **GLOVES vs MITS**: The main difference between baseball gloves and mitts is that **gloves have fingers and mitts do not**. MITS may be used by the **CATCHER or FIRST BASE only**. Gloves may be used in any position, including catcher & first.

6) **GAME BALLS**: MLS will provide ONE (1) NEW game ball for each scheduled game that is not a forfeit. MLS Officials will also have an adequate # of backup balls on hand to ensure games may continue without interruption if balls go foul and may not be retrieved immediately. Only balls furnished by MLS may be used. Players who hit a foul ball are expected to retrieve their ball as soon as possible.

8.1 BAT RULES

NO BASEBALL, YOUTH or LITTLE LEAGUE BATS ALLOWED. All questions regarding the legality of a bat should be addressed to either the MLS League Director or Umpire ***before the game begins***.
No questions regarding the legality of a bat will be considered AFTER a game has been played.

- All bats must have a legible ASA or USA stamp to be deemed "legal" for play. **NO STAMP = NO PLAY** All bats must also comply with the S.C.M.A.F. rule book, Rule 1, Sec. 27. If a make or model cannot be determined due to wear & tear OR if any MLS Official suspects any modification, they can remove it from play at their discretion … no protests over bat removal will be considered.

- **ALL ONYX** and **SICC** bats are prohibited, across all leagues/all nights.

- **FASTPITCH BATS** … only **FEMALE BATTERS** may use these, male batters may not, across all leagues/all nights.

- The ASA/USA periodically, and randomly, tests samples of bat models bearing the ASA or USA approved certification mark (stamp) to verify compliance with the ASA/USA bat performance standards. This means that occasionally even a stamped bat may be deemed ILLEGAL after the fact, please refer to the ASA/USA website's LIST OF **NON**-APPROVED "stamped" BATS. https://usa.asasoftball.com/e/BB1P2000.asp (this list updates often).

- This is a good resource to check for legal bats: https://usa.asasoftball.com/e/equipmentBatTypes.asp From the drop down list, select the type of bat you are looking for. Once your choice is made click **SUBMIT** – any bats shown are currently LEGAL to play with.

- **Or to search by a MAKE** (such as MIKEN) go here: https://www.usasoftball.com/certified-equipment/ and click BATS (on the left side). Then a box will pop open … if you scroll down within that box to the APPROVED BATS section there is a dop down menu where you can select a certain MAKE (such as MIKEN) and then click **GO** and it will display legal MIKEN bats only.

8.2 ILLEGAL BAT PENALTIES

Each Manager is responsible for inspecting their own player's bats

- **FIRST OFFENSE:** Any player who walks up to home plate with an illegal bat in their hands will be ejected from the game **along with** the Team Manager. The offending player and Team Manager will be eligible to play in the team's next scheduled game.

- **SECOND OFFENSE:** If a team has a second incident where a player walks up to home plate with an illegal bat during the same season, that game will be declared a forfeit and the offending player **along with** the Team Manager shall be suspended for the following game. (suspensions will include playoff/championship games)

- **THIRD OFFENSE:** If a team has a third incident where a player walks up to home plate with an illegal bat during the same season, the game will be declared a forfeit, **and the team will be expelled from the League for a period of one (1) year**.

9.0 PROTESTS

1) All protests must be handled in strict accordance with APPENDIX A of the S.C.M.A.F. rule book.

2) A Manager wishing to file a protest must notify the Umpire **at the time of the dispute before the next pitch is made**. You must clearly state, ***"I wish to play this game under protest"*** (or something similar) and provide the reason.

3) **UMPIRE JUDGMENT CALLS ARE NON-PROTESTABLE AND WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED OR REVIEWED**.

4) We also will **NOT** review or consider any protests after a game has been played related to ILLEGAL BAT USE, PLAYER IDENTITY, or PLAYER ELIGIBLITY. Those issues are to be handled ON THE FIELD, at the time the bat or player is questioned, and a ruling will be made right then.

5) **After the game concludes and before leaving the field, a $40 CASH protest fee must be paid to the Scorekeeper or League Director ON SITE in exchange for a PROTEST FORM**. The completed Protest Form must then be emailed to the MLS Customer Service Department ***no later than 48 hours after the game concludes***. The protest fee will be refunded ONLY if the protest is upheld, and the game will then be replayed from the POINT OF PROTEST at a future date set by MLS Administration.

NO $40 CASH PAYMENT RECEIVED = NO PROTEST
NO PROTEST FORM EMAILED TO MLS WITHIN 48 HRS = NO PROTEST

10.0 OVERLY STRONG TEAMS ~ 5 RUN-RULES & HYBRID LEAGUES

1) **HYBRID LEAGUES:** these are leagues that are made up of teams that have a "mix" of playing levels where we cannot form 2 separate independent leagues so they participate in inter-league play throughout the season and end in **2 SPLIT PLAYOFF GROUPINGS of TOP3/BOT3 or TOP4/BOT4** with all teams participating (some variations may occur). The "splits" will be determined by the final standings for the season. For awards purposes there will be 2 sets of 1st place awards given to the Champions of each Playoff Grouping. **NO 2nd place awards will be given out.**

- **10 GAME SEASONS**: teams will play 9 games, and the 10th game will start the SPLIT ***ALL-PLAY*** Playoffs Groupings.
  - *players MUST HAVE a minimum of 8 plate appearances (PA) to participate in Playoffs.*
- **8 GAME SEASONS**: teams will play 7 games, and the 8th game will start the SPLIT ***ALL-PLAY*** Playoffs Groupings.
  - *players MUST HAVE a minimum of 6 plate appearances (PA) to participate in Playoffs.*

2) **TEAMS WHO ARE TOO STRONG:** League classifications are done at the sole discretion of the MLS League Directors and Administration. Any team who is deemed **by MLS** to be on a "higher level of play" and is thus unable to compete fairly with the other teams participating, may be subject to a 'handicap' being placed on them – as follows:

"**5 Run Rules"** and/or "**playoff ineligibility"** restrictions may be implemented on an overly strong team(s) to make play more competitive for all teams involved. If either of these are in place, it will be stated on the league game schedule. ***If teams refuse to play with the 'handicap' OR the 'handicap' does not work to even up play, the team may not be accepted into future seasons.*** ****If any added restrictions are applied to your league, they will be noted on your league schedule ****

- **PLAYOFF INELIGIBILITY:** when a team(s) is required to play with this restriction they will play the season out but come playoff time, ***regardless of where they placed in the standings***, they will be ineligible to participate, and playoffs will be scheduled excluding that team. (this restriction may be in place for any league, including ALL-PLAY leagues & HYBRIDS – the team will not be included in playoffs)

- **RUN-RULE:** when a team(s) is required to play with this restriction they are allowed to score 5 RUNS per inning **OR** to catch up, whichever is more. When they reach the MAX runs allowed the opposing team shall come to bat, regardless of the number of outs. This will be enforced for all games that season, including PLAYOFF and CHAMPIONSHIP games. ***If the non-restricted team chooses to "waive" this rule and play the game with no "run-rule" enforced, they may do so, but they give up any right to protest after should they lose*** … examples:
  - If they are down by 3 RUNS, they can score a MAX OF 5 that inning.
  - If they are down by 7 RUNS, they can score a MAX OF 7 that inning.

  THERE WILL BE NO OPEN INNINGS (the restricted team has a chance to catch up each inning & yes, this does mean the restricted team may only be able to end a game with a TIE if they are trailing in the last inning).

10.1 CLASSIFICATION MISPERCEPTIONS

Below explains some common misperceptions teams have regarding ***why*** they were placed into certain divisions. Some teams may not agree with our methods, but we always try to be as fair as possible for EVERYONE playing each season (not just 1 or 2 teams).

WHY YOU WERE MOVED UP OR DOWN – MLS does not place teams willy-nilly. Our League Directors, the ones who watch you play week after week, handle the classifications. Teams are grouped into divisions based on their previous performances AND which teams returned to play that season. Too many teams focus on the "WORD" **upper, middle, lower, rec** and do not bother to LOOK at the teams they are playing against. It's highly likely you will see you are still playing with teams you played with last season, or a team that was in a higher division was moved into your division because they got hammered in the higher division … or vice versa and a team from a lower division was moved up because they did very well in the lower division. This is a difficult and THANKLESS process. We cannot please everyone, but we do the best we can. Please remember that even if you lose games, if you are not losing by mercy every single week, you are still competing, and that is the goal: COMPETING. Even if you are in an UPPER division, it is all still Recreational Softball.

WHY CAN'T WE PLAY WHERE WE WANT – WE PAID FOR IT? **WE DO NOT PLACE TEAMS FOR A GUARANTEED WIN** – we place teams where we feel they will be able to compete. We also have certain guidelines to stick to too; we cannot just have 10+ teams in a LOWER division because everyone wants to play LOWER. We must have a certain # of teams / leagues grouped together every season to schedule correctly based on the # of fields, # of game slots, and # of dates we have to play each season. **It's a giant puzzle**, and if your team happens to be a "tweener" team (meaning you could play UP or DOWN and do just fine in either), you may be moved UP or DOWN to fit that missing puzzle piece.

MY ROSTER CHANGED – MOVE US DOWN – we do not move teams up or down because they tell us they have new players. Having NEW players does not necessarily mean your team will perform at a different level. Teams with roster changes will need to play a full season with their NEW roster, and then MLS will determine if a move may be necessary for a future season. If we notice an immediate & obvious change in playing capacity, we may move you sooner, but this is 100% at the discretion of MLS Administration.

WHY WAS I PLACED INTO A HYBRID, OR A 4-TEAM, ETC … & WHY WASN'T MY PERMISSION ASKED – MLS retains sole discretion on league/division formations, we form the leagues into groupings that work best for the teams playing that season. We do not need to ask permission to form a HYBRID league, or a 4-TEAM league, or to name it LOWER instead of REC, etc. The only time teams will be consulted is if their division has only 3 teams. 3-TEAM leagues are not the greatest; we understand that, and we do not want them either. MLS never intentionally builds 3-team leagues, but if that is our only option & we have teams wanting to play, we may run it *if all 3 teams agree to it*.

WHY DID MY FIRST GAME WIN / LOSS NOT COUNT, WHERE IS MY $30 REFUND – Occasionally MLS determines that a team needs to be moved for better classifications after we watch them play WEEK 1 **OR** a team drops out and we cannot always keep the win/loss records if it creates an uneven # of games in the scheduling to do so (see above item #2 where we mention scheduling being a giant puzzle). In these cases, we will BLOW OUT that game, and re-schedule one or both teams involved to play another game. When this happens, ***MLS will not reimburse your $30 Official's Fees paid that night because we do not have that money, AND YOU STILL PLAYED THE GAME.*** That $$ went to the officials who worked that game, not 1 penny of it went to MLS or the city. We understand that means you will have another $30 Official's Fee to pay when you play the "re-scheduled" game … most teams appreciate the extra game and understand, some don't. We cannot foresee teams dropping or moves needed after the fact. **We will not ask our officials to give back money they earned for a game you played.**

11.0 DISCIPLINARY EJECTIONS/SUSPENSIONS + SPECTATOR HARASSMENT

MLS Officials will not tolerate UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT, or disruptive / aggressive behavior on the fields at any time … whether involuntary or 'defensive'. A courtesy warning prior MAY be given but is NEVER required.

Any player / team may be ejected or suspended from play indefinitely if MLS Administrative Staff feel it is warranted and this will be based SOLELY on the Official's or City Staff's recollection of the events who were present at the time (as neutral parties).
Ejected/Suspended players are NOT allowed at the fields while serving their suspension.

1) All grievances shall be conducted in a CALM manner with the team MANAGER / COACH ONLY.

2) **It is the MANAGER / COACH's job to control their players. MLS officials will simply get rid of the problem(s)**.

3) **EJECTIONS:** Any player ejected from a game will be automatically suspended for the next TWO (2) additional games minimum. NO EXCEPTIONS.

- If any ejected player(s) does not leave the field and proceed with exiting the park within 60 seconds after the ejection, ***or if the game is out of control***, the game will be declared an immediate forfeit. Further penalties or suspensions may be applied at the discretion of MLS Administration.

- Ejections may occur at any time BEFORE, DURING or AFTER a game. If a player is ejected **AFTER** the conclusion of a game (including during the end-of-game "handshake line"), the player(s) will be automatically suspended for the next THREE (3) games minimum. NO EXCEPTIONS.

- If the same player is ejected more than once (any day/any city) they may be suspended for an extended period of time at the discretion of MLS Administration.

4) *Suspensions include playoff/championship games, they can roll over into the next season, and BYE weeks do not count as a game*.

5) **EXTENDED SUSPENSIONS** for vulgar/threatening/aggressive behavior may be issued by MLS Administration as needed and at any time – these typically are enforced after games have played and the decided course of action has been made.

6) **PHYSICAL CONTACT**: **AGGRESSIVE PHYSICAL CONTACT WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. PENALTIES WILL BE SEVERE**.

INDIVIDUALS: Any team participant who physically abuses (in any manner & for any reason) an MLS Official, another player, or city staff, shall be suspended from ALL MLS sponsored programs indefinitely. ***In addition, any individual who is guilty of such action will be subject to criminal prosecution as per the State of California Penal Code.*** Re-instatement **may** be considered if the suspended player(s) email a **written** "request for review" to MLS CUSTOMER SERVICE. A decision will be determined by MLS Administration, and the request may be denied. ***No reviews will be considered until a minimum of ONE FULL YEAR of suspension has been served.***

TEAMS: If multiple players engage in a physical incident, the TEAM will be subject to the same suspension as individuals.

7) **SPECTATOR HARASSMENT**: In cases of spectator harassment, when an MLS Official has determined that the spectator is associated with one of the teams, the MLS Official will use the following course of action:

- FIRST & ONLY WARNING - the team manager will be asked to take care of the problem spectator, or the game will be a forfeit.

- FINAL SOLUTION - the game will be declared a forfeit and depending on the severity of the event, the team may may also face further suspension at the discretion of MLS Administration.

12.0 GAME TIMES & MERCY RULES

1) A typical game shall consist of seven (7) innings or 70 minutes, whichever comes first. *(see exceptions listed below)*

2) Games tied after seven (7) innings will only be continued if **5 or more** minutes remain on the scorekeeper's clock. Each regular season game that ends in a tie will be counted in the League Standings as ½ a win, ½ a loss.

3) The Official Scorekeeper is responsible for keeping the game time. All questions related to time should be addressed to the scorekeeper, **not the umpire**. Only if a scorekeeper is not present will that responsibility fall to the Umpire.

4) There will be a ten (10) minute grace period for ALL games. **Any time used for the grace period will be subtracted from the official game clock (playing time)**.

5) Official's Fees, Forfeit Fees, League Fees, and lineup cards are all due BEFORE game time. **Any time spent waiting for team(s) to pay or submit their lineup card will be subtracted from the official game clock (playing time)**.

6) **GAME TIME EXCEPTIONS**: On weekdays (mon-fri) **when 4 games are scheduled**, the game time will be reduced to 60 minutes and no new inning will be played with less than 5 minutes remaining on the scorekeeper's clock.
Additionally: for 2-PITCH leagues, games will be reduced to 45 minutes.

7) **MERCY RULES**:

- **65MIN or MORE GAME TIMES:** 20+ runs after 4 innings / 15+ runs after 5 innings.
- **60MIN or LESS GAME TIMES:** 15+ runs after 4 innings / 12+ runs after 5 innings / 10+ runs after 6 innings.

13.0 MAKE UP GAMES, COMPLETE vs INCOMPLETE GAMES & WEATHER HOTLINES

1) **MAKE UPS**: It is our intention to play all scheduled games. Every effort will be made to reschedule games that are missed due to inclement weather, field unavailability, or any other unavoidable issues that arise. Major League Softball reserves the right to reschedule games *in any order, and at any date/time, that we determine optimal* … **any previous or NEW schedule requests will not be considered on these revisions**.

2) **COMPLETE GAMES**: Any game that ends before the time limit has elapsed and/or 7 innings have been played that is called for **ANY** reason shall be considered a COMPLETED Regulation Game, and will not be re-scheduled, as long as one or more of the following criteria are met:

- MERCY or FORFEIT has been called.
- The losing team has batted a minimum of four (4) complete innings. *(in this case the score will revert back to the last complete inning)*.

- The game has reached the following MINIMUM PLAYING TIME mark:
    - 35 minutes for 45-minute games / ***2-pitch*** games
    - 40 minutes for 55/60-minute games
    - 45 minutes for 65-minute games
    - 50 minutes for 70-minute games
  - *(in these cases, the score will revert back to the last complete inning)*

3) **INCOMPLETE GAMES**: If any game does not reach completion (see above) the Official's Fees are to be returned to both teams and the game will be wiped out completely and re-scheduled from the beginning – as a NEW GAME.

- Each team will be required to pay Official's Fees again on the date/time of the re-schedule.
- **PLEASE RETRIEVE YOUR OFFICIAL'S FEES FROM THE SCOREKEEPER BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE FIELD THAT DAY**.

14.0 WEATHER HOTLINES & HOW TO CHECK FIELD CONDITIONS

In case of inclement weather OR un-safe conditions, the decision to cancel fields will be made ONLY once the fields become un-playable. MLS does not cancel games due to "expected or forecasted" weather. At times this decision may not be made until games are already IN-PLAY. To find out if your field is still playing …

- **WEBSITE**: please visit https://www.mlsoftball.com/programs-listing and **select your city of play**, then **click on FIELD CONDITIONS**. Please wait until after 3PM for an update to be posted for EVENING GAMES. For SUNDAY AM/AFT GAMES, please wait until after 8AM for an update to be posted. We recommend teams check again ***just prior to leaving for your game*** to make sure you have the most recent information, conditions may change.

- **PHONE**: you may also call the MLS Field Condition Hotline at **714-289-1983**. When the message starts you may **dial 1** and then you will be asked to **enter the first 3 letters of the CITY** you are inquiring about. If you hear OLD INFORMATION, this means nothing has been cancelled and all games are still playing as scheduled at that time. Please wait until after 3PM for an update to be posted for EVENING GAMES. For SUNDAY AM/AFT GAMES, please wait until after 8AM for an update to be posted. We recommend teams call again ***just prior to leaving for your game*** to make sure you have the most recent information, conditions may change.

15.0 OFFICIAL'S FEES

1) Both teams are required to pay a $30.00 Officials' Fee before the start of every game (this includes playoff and championship games). These fees go to pay the Official's that work each game – no portion of these fees go to MLS or the city. **These fees will not be refunded after a game has been played**, even if a game ends up being re-scheduled later due to League changes as a result of teams dropping out or re-classifications.

2) **For 2-PITCH leagues the Official's Fee will be lowered to $27.00 per team/per game.**

3) Official's fees must be paid in cash so we can pay the official's that night before they leave. Please bring exact change – our Officials are not required to carry change and cannot break large bills.

- If change cannot be made, MLS is not responsible for "owing you at a later date."
- Change will not become a "credit" or "roll over" to next week's fees due.

16.0 FORFEITS & FORFEIT FEES

1) A team that does not submit their lineup card AND any fees due (Official's fees, forfeit fees, league fees, etc.) to the official scorer at least five (5) minutes before game time may be subject to forfeiting the game.

2) A team may start and finish a game with eight (8) players. If at any time you fall below the required minimum of eight (8) the game will be declared a FORFEIT (this includes player injuries and/or ejections).

3) **FORFEIT FEES:** A team will be responsible for paying **BOTH TEAM'S Official's Fees** every time they forfeit, due to insufficient number of legal players **at game time**.

- If the forfeit fee is not paid by the team's next scheduled game, the team will be suspended from playing until the balance is paid in full, and they will incur an additional $10.00 for collection fees.

- If the forfeit fee remains unpaid the team may be dropped from the league at the discretion of MLS Administration.

4) Forfeit fees will not be charged if a team has enough players to start a game and then forfeits during the game due to no longer having enough to complete the game, but **Official's Fees WILL NOT be returned to either team in this case**.

5) If a team forfeits due to ALCOHOL, they will be responsible for paying **BOTH TEAM'S OFFICIALS'S FEES** – regardless of when the "Alcohol Forfeit" is called: ***during, before, or after the game***.

6) **WAIVED FORFEIT FEES:** The forfeit fee may be waived if the forfeiting team notifies MLS Customer Service by the following deadlines:

- **MON-FRI games:** EMAIL CUSTOMER SERVICE no later than 3:00pm the day of the game.
- **SAT-SUN games:** EMAIL CUSTOMER SERVICE no later than 3:00pm **the Friday prior**.
- If you contact the office after hours or anytime on the weekend to forfeit, your message will not be received, and you **WILL BE CHARGED A FORFEIT FEE**.

NOTE: Middle game forfeits and/or forfeits bringing the schedule down to 1 game do not qualify for waived fees as our officials are still required to be present to officiate the games before & after in the case of middle games and must be compensated fairly for their time in the case of 1-game shifts.

7) **UMPIRES & SCOREKEEPERS WILL NOT WORK FORFEITED GAMES**.

17.0 DEPOSIT & REGISTRATION FEE PAYMENT POLICIES

1) **DEPOSITS (GFD)**: **NEW** teams must pay a non-refundable "Good Faith Deposit" (GFD) of no less than $100.00 before the registration deadline to be accepted. **RETURNING** teams *in good standing* may pay the GFD at their first assigned game that season.

2) **REGISTRATION FEE BALANCE**: all remaining Registration Fees may be paid anytime AT or BEFORE the first pitch of each team's 3rd game (during 10-Game seasons) or 2nd game (during 6 or 8-Game seasons) – no exceptions.

3) **PAYMENTS ACCEPTED**: we accept cash, money orders, and personal checks on the fields (just pay your scorekeeper and ask for a receipt & be sure to keep this for the entirety of the season). We also accept electronic payments for registered teams (login to your team portal and select "MAKE A PAYMENT": https://www.mlsoftball.com/login). Anyone who **disputes** an electronic payment (for any reason) will be subject to an additional **$50.00 Rejected Item Fee (RIT)** which must be paid, along with any balance still due, **IN CASH,** before any further games may be played. If the dispute is not cleared, your team will no longer be in good standing with MLS.

4) **CHECKS**: make checks payable to **Major League Softball, Inc**. MLS will not honor post-dated checks. Returned Checks will be subject to a $50 Returned Check Fee (NSF) and no further personal checks will be accepted. Please write your team name + season + city in the MEMO LINE. ***Example: BIG BATTERS, Spring 2025, Cerritos***

5) **LATE PAYMENTS**: Past due balances will incur a $50.00 late fee, and your team may be suspended until the balance is cleared up. LATE PAYMENTS will only be accepted via CASH or electronic payment through team portal. **NO CHECKS!**

6) **NEW TEAM FEES (NTF)**: NEW teams incur an additional $35 "New Team Fee" (NTF) that goes towards the set-up fees incurred for each new team accepted into the MLS Online and Accounting Database. **If you are a returning team, and you sign up as a NEW TEAM you will incur this additional fee as well – no exceptions**. (Returning teams, if you forgot your login, please contact MLS Customer Service to retrieve it.)

7) **REFUNDS:** If a team declares that it cannot play **after** it has registered and **before** the League begins, a refund of less 30% of the Full Registration Fee will be issued (**this refund does not apply to the "Good Faith Deposit"**). The total amount of the Registration Fee is fully earned (even if it has not been paid) and is due and payable in full after a team's first scheduled game.

18.0 GAME SCHEDULE REQUESTS

1) **BYES**: Each team will be allowed ONE (1) BYE request per season as long as it is received by the set deadline(s); any additional requests will not be considered. **DEADLINES**: **week 1** BYE requests must be emailed to Customer Service by the Registration Deadline for that season. Other BYE requests must be emailed to Customer Service no later than 12 noon after the first week plays (even if your team does not play week 1).

2) **GAME TIMES**: MLS will not accept game TIME requests; all teams must be prepared to play at any of the scheduled game slots available for the entirety of the season. We always try to spread this out as equally as we can across all teams playing. Sometimes the split cannot be equal across the board, but we do the best we can. MLS will not revise schedules after they have been made because your team received 1 more early/late game than someone else did, etc.

3) **SHARED PLAYERS**: MLS will not manipulate game schedules (times or fields) for any team using shared players that are playing on multiple teams on the say day. All teams need to have enough players to stand alone.

NO ADDITIONAL SCHEDULE REQUESTS WILL BE CONSIDERED ONCE A FULL SEASON SCHEDULE HAS BEEN POSTED

NO SCHEDULE REQUESTS WILL BE HONORED IF THE DATE(S) END UP BEING MAKEUP GAMES OR PLAYOFFS

19.0 ALCOHOL & SMOKING/VAPING POLICY

1) **SMOKING & VAPING ARE NOT ALLOWED IN ANY CITY PARK**. Any participant and/or spectator caught smoking/vaping will be asked to stop IMMEDIATELY or to leave the park. Failure to do so will result in that person's ejection from the game and removal from the park or FORFEIT. Repeating offenses may result in player / team suspensions.

2) **ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ARE NOT ALLOWED IN ANY CITY PARK**. THIS IS STATE LAW! No one may possess, exhibit, transport or drink any alcoholic or intoxicating beverage within any city park or city facility (parking lots included). Warnings before action are not necessary but may be given at the MLS Official's discretion. If a program participant, or spectator associated with a team, is discovered with alcohol, the following action will result:

- The team whose players(s) and/or spectator(s) is/are found to be in violation of this rule will forfeit the game that is scheduled on the day of the infraction **+ FORFEIT FEES WILL BE INCURRED.**
    - Your team will not be allowed to play again until the fee is paid in full.
    - Teams/individuals may also be referred to law enforcement.
    - Any team with multiple alcohol infractions may be suspended from MLS play indefinitely.

3) **COOLERS / ICE CHESTS / BAGS / RED CUPS / KOOZIES:** If someone brings any BAG/CONTAINER up to the field, an MLS Official may ask you to show them what is inside. If there is alcohol inside, or you refuse to open it, you will be asked to remove it from the park immediately or risk forfeiture of the game as well as the next scheduled game **+ FORFEIT FEES WILL BE INCURRED**. Same goes for Red Cups or Koozies, attempting to **hide** alcohol is still alcohol – IT IS NOT ALLOWED!

4) Be aware that smoking/vaping and/or alcohol violations may be discovered by either City Staff or MLS game officials (including the score keepers and league director). There will be no exceptions for any failure to comply with this rule.

20.0 PLAYERS CODE OF CONDUCT - FROM THE S.C.M.A.F. RULE BOOK, Rule #9.

The Official's jurisdiction to enforce the Player's Code of Conduct shall extend prior to, during, and after the ballgame. Said jurisdiction exists from the Official's arrival at the game site to their departure from the game site.

Sec. 1. NO PLAYER SHALL: At any time lay a hand upon, push, shove, strike, or threaten to strike an official.

Sec. 2. NO PLAYER SHALL: Refuse to abide by an official's decision.

Sec. 3. NO PLAYER SHALL: Be guilty of objectionable demonstrations by throwing gloves, bats, or any other forceful action.

Sec. 4. NO PLAYER SHALL: Be guilty of heaping personal, verbal abuse upon any official for any real or imaginary wrong decision or judgment.

Sec. 5. NO PLAYER SHALL: Discuss with an official, in any manner, the decision reached by such official **unless you are the manager or team captain**.

Sec. 6. NO PLAYER SHALL: Be guilty of using unnecessarily rough tactics in the play of the game against the body and person of any opposing player.

Sec. 7. NO PLAYER SHALL: Be guilty of physical attack upon any player, official, or spectator.

Sec. 8. NO PLAYER SHALL: Be guilty of abusive verbal attack upon any player, official, or spectator.

Sec. 9. NO PLAYER SHALL: Use profane, obscene, or vulgar language in any manner, or at any time.

Sec. 10. NO PLAYER SHALL: Appear on the field of play at any time in an intoxicated condition.

Sec. 11. NO PLAYER SHALL: Be guilty of gambling upon any play or the outcome of the game with any spectator, player, or opponent.

Sec. 12. NO PLAYER SHALL: Smoke while going on or coming off the field of play, or while on the field of play.

Sec. 13. NO PLAYER SHALL: Be guilty of discussing publicly with the spectators in a derogatory or abusive manner any play, decision, or opinion of other players, during the game. Players shall not mingle or fraternize with spectators during the game but shall remain on the player's bench (dugout) or on the field of play.

Sec. 14. NO PLAYER SHALL: Permit anyone to remain in the dugout or on the player's bench during the game who is not a playing member of the team.

Sec. 15. NO PLAYER SHALL: Permit the use of any equipment or device which, in the sole judgment of the umpire, compromises the safety of the participants. This includes the use of radios or similar devices on the person of a player, in the dugout, or in the spectator viewing area, which might inhibit the ability of players to hear verbal calls and/or instructions by the umpire.

Sec. 16. NO PLAYER SHALL: Be guilty of using a bat that has been altered in any way. Altering includes, but is not limited to sanding, filing, shaving, lengthening, shortening, weight-altering, heating, and cooling.

NOTE: The term PLAYER as used in Rule 9 shall apply to all team personnel, such as manager, coaches, batkeeper, scorekeepers, sponsors, etc.

21.0 PLAYOFFS & CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES

PLAYOFF & CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES WILL HAVE "PRE-GAME" ID CHECKS ENFORCED FOR ALL PLAYERS INVOLVED.

1) **Due to constraints on timing & field usage per season, playoff and/or championship games will only occur if time/field space allows.** Playoffs are not included in the Registration Fee costs, these are considered "bonus" games. If a season goes long, playoffs may be cancelled at the discretion of MLS Administration (this is usually when 2 or more cancellations have occurred due to weather, or field malfunctions during a season). When this happens, all regular season games are played out, and then the top 2 finishers in the standings will be awarded 1st & 2nd place … NO PLAYOFFS. ***If this occurs, it will be noted on your league schedules***

2) Playoff and/or championship games will be scheduled the week following the conclusion of the regular league games and any teams involved must be ready at the time and location decided by Major League Softball. **Previous or new BYE or time/field requests will not be considered for playoff and/or championship games**.

3) **GAME TIMES**: Playoff and/or Championship games will have the regular game times you played with for the season, and both the mercy rules and MINIMUM PLAYING TIME marks will still be in effect.

4) Playoff and/or championship games may NOT end in a tie. In situations where we are short on time or field space, tie-breaking methods may be used to determine a winner – determined by MLS Administration and/or the League Director.

5) **PLAYER ELIGIBILITY**: in 10-Game seasons, players must have a minimum of 9 plate appearances (PA) … 8-Game Seasons players must have a minimum of 7 plate appearances to participate in the playoff and/or championship games. The number of PAs for each player is calculated by adding the # of At Bats (AB), Base on Balls / Walks (BB), and Sacrifice Flyouts (SAF) together. PA numbers will be determined solely by what is shown on the official MLS "stats" and cannot be contested on the field. **Corrections to STATS will not be adjusted or discussed unless they are brought up to the MLS Customer Service prior to your last "regular" season game.** NO EXCEPTIONS.

*NOTE: if your team **WON** by a forfeit during the regular season, 3 PAs **per forfeit WIN** can be added to each ROSTERED player to help with the minimum PA eligibility. All players must be on your current roster for this to apply.*

6) **SEEDINGS:** All seedings will be determined by the season's FINAL win/loss records ONLY and using the tie breaking policy as needed. Playoff and/or championship games will be scheduled as follows but not necessarily in the order shown – again NO game time requests during playoffs will be considered, teams must play as they are assigned:

*** IF A TEAM FINISHES THE REGULAR SEASON UNDEFEATED & UNTIED**
THERE WILL BE NO PLAYOFFS or CHAMPIONSHIP GAME – EXCEPT IN HYBRID LEAGUES *

Playoff formats for "special League configurations", not listed below, will be noted on your League Game Schedule.

4 TEAM LEAGUES – **NO PLAYOFFS UNLESS TEAMS ARE TIED FOR FIRST -** if TIED there will be a 1 game tiebreaker
#1 seed vs #1 seed – CHAMPIONSHIP

5 - 6 TEAM LEAGUES – **TOP 3 TEAMS MAKE PLAYOFFS**
#2 seed vs #3 seed
#1 seed vs winner – CHAMPIONSHIP

6 - 9 TEAM LEAGUES – **TOP 4 TEAMS MAKE PLAYOFFS**
#2 seed vs #3 seed
#1 seed vs #4 seed
(winner) vs (winner) – CHAMPIONSHIP

6 TEAM "HYBRID" LEAGUES	8 TEAM "HYBRID" LEAGUES
(2) 3-team divisions, TOP 3 and BOT 3 will each be:	**(2) 4-team divisions, TOP 4 and BOT 4 will each be**:
#2/5 Seed vs #3/6 Seed	#2/6 Seed vs #3/7 Seed
#1/4 Seed vs (winner) – CHAMPIONSHIP	#1/5 Seed vs #4/8 seed
	(winner) vs (winner) – CHAMPIONSHIP

7) **TIE BREAKING POLICY**:

In the event of a 2 or 3-way tie, MLS will break the tie as follows:

1. Head-to-head win-loss records between the teams tied (***who beat who***).
2. Highest run differential in the games played between the teams tied (***how much each TIED team won & lost by***).
3. Lowest *overall* total runs allowed (RA) between teams still tied.
4. Highest *overall* run differential between the teams that are still tied. (***calculated by RF minus RA in standings***).
5. If any teams remain tied, MLS will do a **BLIND DRAW** in the office to determine seeds – 1st team drawn is higher seed, and so on as needed.

In the event of a 4 to 7-way tie, MLS will break the tie as follows:

1. Highest run differential in the games played between the teams tied (***how much each TIED team won & lost by***).
2. Lowest total runs allowed (RA) between teams still tied.
3. Highest *overall* run differential between the teams that are still tied. (***calculated by RF minus RA in standings***).
4. If any teams remain tied, MLS will do a **BLIND DRAW** in the office to determine seeds – 1st team drawn is higher seed, and so on as needed.

22.0 CHAMPIONSHIP AWARDS & ORDER FORM

1) If you are the Manager / Coach of a team who won a recent season, you may submit your order online here: https://mls-dugout.vercel.app/awards

2) Please remember, this order form must be submitted **WITHIN 45 DAYS** of your team's Championship win. Any orders submitted after 45 days will not be honored.

3) If you have any questions regarding an awards order, or want an update on the status (delivery time), please email: awardsorders@mlsoftball.com

THANK YOU & PLAY BALL!

714-289-1983 x103 or **customerservice.OC@mlsoftball.com**

Our office hours are Monday – Friday / 9:00am – 5:00pm.
We are closed Saturday – Sunday and most major holidays.