

# Arizona Men's Senior Baseball League Rules

## Revised January 2020

### GENERAL AND PLAYING RULES

The League was created to provide recreation for adults who want to play baseball. All age divisions are competitive and adult attitudes must always prevail no matter which age division a player plays within. The responsibility for maintaining this ethical behavior resides with all participants. Anyone who abuses the League's Code of Conduct or Rules can be suspended or expelled from the League. The AZMSBL reserves the right to fine, suspend, expel, or ban anyone from future play whose actions violate the rules set forth.

Any player, who feels he has complaints, grievances, criticisms or suggestions, should pass them on to his respective team manager. The manager is the spokesman for the team and player. The manager is responsible for all information being conveyed from the AZ MSBL Board to the players and players to the Board. If problems arise between player and manager, then any AZ MSBL Board member can be contacted. Attempting to discuss and solve League problems during a ball game is not the acceptable place or time. Only the manager may DISCUSS a close call or other disputes with the umpire.

In order of precedence, the rules of the League are to be as follows:

- 1) Rules as set forth in this AZ MSBL General and Playing Rules document.
- 2) The playing Rules of Major League Baseball shall apply unless modified by a specific AZ MSBL General and Playing Rules change.

### 1. TEAM MANAGER(S)

1.1 Each team can have a manager and assistant manager to represent their respective team, and must be listed on the website complete with contact information. Either the manager or assistant manager or a duly appointed representative will represent their team at League meetings and functions. Specifically, only one representative per team is allowed at those meetings unless otherwise approved by the League. Team managers are accountable to the Board for the accuracy of all record keeping, filing of registration and waivers and other administrative duties. If a manager is asked to make comments about a game infraction that manager may elect not to comment, but they may not lie to the Board or its agents. **Each team manager must read and acknowledge they have read and fully understand the League rules.** Each manager and assistant manager has the responsibility to have conveyed the rules to their team.

1.2 All managers, assistant managers and players participating in the Arizona MSBL must be a member of MSBL unless exempted from this provision by the Board.

1.3 Each team shall have an e-mail address, street mailing address and a cell phone number on file with the League for communication of routine and emergency matters.

## **2. PLAYING FACILITIES**

2.1 There will be no contraband on the playing field, in the dug outs, around the field, in the stands, or in the parking lot. Contraband shall be beer, alcoholic beverages, drugs or tobacco products. If this situation arises and the player is notified and refuses to adhere, the player is subject to expulsion and/or suspension. If a manager allows a player to bring any contraband his team may be fined and forfeit games, or be ejected from the League.

2.2 Team Etiquette: Because our league is a private league and not under the jurisdiction of city parks and regulations, we have to solicit available baseball fields. Proper consideration must be given to the facilities we are using. Destruction of property will not be tolerated. Let's all do our share in keeping and respecting the facilities we are utilizing. If there is something broken, let the League offices know. No team shall make corrections to the field of play without the supervision of park personnel, including adding dirt to wet ground.

2.3 There will be no non-rostered MSBL personnel allowed in the playing dugouts during game time unless authorized by the manager. Anyone non-rostered allowed by the manager in the playing dugout shall be governed by League rules for behavior and shall be in the dugout at their own risk.

## **3. UNIFORMS/EQUIPMENT**

3.1 All teams must have matching, numbered, complete baseball uniforms unless it is a new player and then must be in uniform by the second game after June 1.

3.2 Any player without a uniform will not be allowed to play without the opposing manager's consent.

3.4 Wearing of hats are mandatory in the field.

3.5 Steel cleats are permitted.

3.6 All batters and runners must have helmets in good condition with at least one earflap facing the pitcher; there is no option to this rule. Each team is required to supply its own first aid kit.

3.7 No white pitching sleeves allowed.

3.8 No player may play in shorts – uniform pants only must be worn.

3.9 "Composite Wood bats" shall be determined to be wood. Bats may be of any weight so long as the weight is not lighter than "-3". Therefore a bat that is 34 inches and 30 oz., or -4, would not be legal. Striking a ball with a bat lighter than -3 shall be deemed striking a ball with an illegal bat (see the Rules of Major League Baseball {Rule 6.06 (d)} for the consequences and effect of this act).

## **4. AGE REQUIREMENTS**

4.1 An individual must be of a certain age to be able to participate in the summer season.

The player must be:

- a). 18 years or older during the calendar year to participate in the division unless the player has been granted a specific exemption. There are two 18 and over divisions, an American Division, and an advanced National Division.
- b). 35 years or older during the calendar year to participate in the division unless the player has been granted a specific exemption. Each team participating in this division has the option to have two players aged 33 on the roster at the start of the season, but they are ineligible to use them to pitch or catch until they reach the minimum age of 35. There are two 35 and over divisions, an American Division, and an advanced National Division.
- c). 45 years or older during the calendar year to participate in the 45 and over division unless the player has been granted a specific exemption. Each team participating in this division has the option to have two players aged 43 on the roster at the start of the season, but they are ineligible to use them to pitch or catch until they reach the minimum age of 45. There are two 45 and over divisions, an American Division, and an advanced National Division.

- 1) All National Divisions shall observe all rules of the AZ MSBL with the exception of the rule governing players that have been professional players in the past. For this matter the MSBL rule for former professional players shall be observed rather than the AZ MSBL rule. A ex MLB player must be out of the game for at least 10 years in order to be eligible to play in the league.
- 2). The League may schedule play between age divisions or between divisions within the same age, as part of the Summer Season.

4.2 Exemptions may be granted for players that are not of the minimum age of the division to be playing within the division. These exemptions are:

- a) No one not of the minimum age of the division may pitch or catch, despite their exemption. Until they reach the age limit of their division.
- b) An existing team that has two rostered players that are under the age of the division cannot have any additional players on their roster qualify for an exemption under the division age.

4.3 Division of the play shall be designated by age groups. The League Board will meet before the summer season commences, and may divide the age division into two or more playing divisions. The Board will do this with an eye toward parity based upon its assumptions of the team's composition, and previous year's record.

4.4 Use of professional players is limited to certain divisions and under certain situations. If you were a professional baseball player and want to play in the League at any position, you must wait to be out of pro baseball. Any team having ex-pro players must play in the National Division within their age group. A professional baseball player is defined as a person that has played for

any league providing compensation of any kind for any time including, MLB, Mexican Baseball leagues or any minor league team.

4.5 Players must have identification with them that clearly shows their legal age and must present that if called upon. This identification must have a picture, such as a driver's license. Managers may collect copies of this identification for their team and keep this to present if questions arise. Failure to present valid proof of age when requested, the opposing manager may protest the game. If that player who cannot demonstrate proof of age would be entered into the game in any position offensively or defensively a protest may be entered by the opposing team. The manager of the team for the player who cannot demonstrate proof of age will be held responsible for the costs of the protest regardless of the outcome of the protest.

4.6 Failure to abide by the age regulation: The managers must all recognize their responsibility to the League. An opposing manager may at any time question a player's age and get his name. A protest of a player's age should be filed with the League in writing by e-mail within 24 hours of a game's conclusion. The responsibility of proving the proof of age then rests with the player, the team manager, and the team. The manager or player must submit ID upon a request to prove age protest proper proof of age to a League officer. Any false filings will be dealt with severely including but not limited to forfeits, ejections, or banning a player or manager guilty of knowing that a false identification was provided. Furthermore, following the filing of a protest and the detection of an underage player, the offending team will forfeit all winning games played up to that point in the season, regardless of the participation of the underage player. The underage player and any party who knew they were an under aged player will be ineligible to continue and may be, at the Board's discretion, suspended from future participation in the League.

## **5. BASE RUNNING**

5.1 Our league has a specific Slide Rule. On a force play at any base, a sliding player must slide (see 5.3) directly toward the base, so long as the player is not sliding with intent to injure. The penalty for disregarding this Rule shall be the umpire will declare an out regardless of the outcome of the play, and the batter/runner may be ruled out as well in a double play situation. Exception: A runner may slide or run in a direction away from the fielder to avoid making contact or altering the play of the fielder.

5.2 Avoiding contact is the responsibility of the runner. A play at a base or home plate will require all runners to avoid contact by sliding (see 5.3) or giving themselves up. If the defensive player is blocking the base without the ball, or not in the act of receiving the ball then the umpire should declare defensive obstruction, it is still the runner's obligation to avoid contact. Incidental contact does happen. It is the Umpire's discretion if the contact is incidental. Intentional contact at any base will result in an out call and ejection from the game plus further game(s) suspension (see AZ MSBL Code of Conduct).

5.3 Sliding which causes contact is acceptable under certain situations. Sliding into the defensive player is acceptable contact so long as no other condition of this Rule is violated. A slide is illegal if:

- a.) The runner uses a rolling, or cross body slide, or
- b.) The runner's raised leg is higher than the fielder's knee when the fielder is standing up,
- c.) The runner slashes or kicks the fielder with either leg, or
- d.) The runner tries, in the opinion of the umpire, to injure the fielder.

The Penalty for the above offenses: Any of these will result in the ejection of the player, and the player will be reported to the League for any additional sanctions (see AZ MSBL Code of Conduct).

5.4 Fake Tags / Decoys are not allowed. Just as the runner is required to avoid contact, the defensive fielder also has the responsibility to avoid any deliberate act that may force a runner to 'slide' when it is not required. Any action by the fielder, i.e. a fake tag, or fake throw without the ball that causes the runner to slide unnecessarily will result in obstruction on the fielder. The player will be warned, and repeated offenses will result in an ejection from the game and possible further disciplinary action (see AZ MSBL Code of Conduct). The umpire will have the discretion to place a player at an advanced base, if the decoy interfered with the runner arriving at a base safely. This would be determined by the MLB Rule for "Fielders Interference".

## **6. FORFEITS**

6.1 A complete defensive team consists of nine (9) players. A team can play with only eight (8) players present, and if this situation occurs a team can, by agreement between the managers, borrow a player from the opposing team and start the game, or play the game with the eight (8) players. The opposing manager shall be under no obligation to agree to provide an additional fielder to a team with eight (8) players. In the event that a team is playing with eight (8) players,

- a) If a team plays with only 8 players – the team must take an out each time the absent 9th player would have come to bat or
- b) By agreement between the managers, bat the borrowed 9th player in the vacant position. If a manager agrees to give a player for use throughout the game, on offense and defense, and the granting team has an injury bringing them below 9 players, they may recall the loaned player to play with their rostered team.

6.2 If seven (7) players or less are present, the opposing manager has the option of taking the forfeit or lending the short team enough players to play the game. This decision to lend the opposing team spare players implies that the manager will accept the outcome of the game (win or lose) as official. If a manager agrees to give players for use throughout the game, on offense and defense, and the granting team has an injury bringing them below 9 players, they may recall either of the loaned players to play with their rostered team.

6.3 Umpires will allow fifteen (15) minutes from scheduled game time for the 8th player to arrive. If at the end of the 15-minute grace period the 8th player has not arrived, or the managers

have not reached an agreement on lending players, a forfeit is declared. **Note: If the game does not start on time due to the late arrival of players, the delay does not extend the game time beyond the scheduled completion time.**

## **7. SUBSTITUTIONS**

7.1 Batting Order: Substitution of players within the League will be based upon a re-entry rule in the batting order. All starters who have been substituted for may re-enter the batting order only once. Those starters must re-enter in the same batting position from which they left. A substitute may not re-enter the batting order once he is substituted for, except in rule 7.3.

7.2 Fielding Lineup: Free substitution is the rule for a defensive line-up. This means that a manager may use separate defensive and offensive line-ups. The offensive batting order is subject to the rules as stated in 7.1. The defensive lineup can be substituted at will.

7.3 In the event all players have participated in a game, the re-entry rule has been exhausted, and an injury or ejection occurs, the opposing manager will select a player from the affected team to re-enter the game, in order to continue with nine players per team. The re-entering player does not have to play the same position as the injured player, but he must take the same place in the batting order.

**7.4 Each team manager is expected to allow each player ample playing time whenever possible. It is the responsibility of each team manager to determine how each player is used to allow for Serious deviation from this policy could result in the suspension and/or removal of the team manager.**

7.5 In the event the starting pitcher is removed from the position, the Major League rule prevails. Because we allow for unlimited defensive substitution we must enunciate the reentry of the former pitcher to be able to pitch again. Specifically, a pitcher may be removed but shall be able to come back to pitch later in the game. There is no regulation as to how many innings a pitcher may pitch in a game.

7.6 If a pitcher hits 4 batters in any one game, the pitcher must be removed on the fourth hit batsman. The opposing manager should notify the League of the number of innings pitched, number of batters faced and any field conditions that may have explained the pitcher hitting that number of batters. If this occurs numerous times, the League may not allow this person to continue to be a pitcher on their team. The Board will review when conditions warrant.

## **8. COURTESY RUNNERS**

8.1 Courtesy Runners are allowed to be used in a line-up. Each team is permitted (2) two courtesy runners per game. Under certain circumstances a team may qualify for more than two

Courtesy Runners (see 8.2 below). The Courtesy Runners must be designated prior to the start of the game during the exchange of the line-ups by players name or playing positions.

a) Courtesy Runners are to be the last recorded out (**many people interpret this as the last batted out, but it is the last out, regardless if the batter was out or not**).

b) In the case of the first inning and no outs, the last man in the batting order will be used.

c) The designated runners are either named player(s) or referred to by Pitcher position, or Catcher position. Any combination that equals two, see examples:

Example 1: Pitcher position, Catcher position

Example 2: Bill Smith, Pitcher position

Example 3: Bill Smith, Catcher position

Example 4: Bill Smith, Bob Jones

d) If the Pitcher or Catcher position is named, this will apply to the player playing the position, regardless of the number of substitutions that have occurred for the position.

8.2 Additional Courtesy Runners are available on an age basis. Any player in the batting order, over the age of 60, regardless of the Age Division, can receive an additional courtesy runner. This is in addition to the two allowed per team. These players over the age of 60 must be identified to the opposing manager at the start of the game if the manager wants to claim the Additional Courtesy Runner for this player.

8.3 Notification must be given to the opposing manager for the election to use a Courtesy Runner. Courtesy Runners must be identified prior to the start of the game. If this is not done, then the opposing manager must give permission to allow a Courtesy Runner during the game. Note: Occasionally, due to heat related concerns or even slight injuries, a manager may request of the opposing manager a change in which player is being run for. The AZ MSBL Board recommends that such requests should be honored. Abuse of this for competitive reasons can result in a manager's suspension. Such abuse should be filed as a protest (see section 11).

8.4 Courtesy Runners are used in an attempt to speed up play by rule. Runner for the catcher and pitcher with two outs **MUST** be employed. There are no exceptions. a) If the Courtesy Runner is being designated by position or the mandatory use of a Courtesy Runner for a pitcher or catcher in this section, the player must have participated in that position in the last inning for that rule to prevail.

8.5 Forfeit of Courtesy Runner is possible. The player in the position that has been selected for a Courtesy Runner, and qualifies according to any provision of this section must be run for if they reach base safely. If they are not run for, then the Courtesy Runner is lost for that position for the rest of the game (except for 8.4 which is mandatory).

8.6 There is a penalty for failing to properly conform to the Courtesy Runner rule. The penalty for using a player other than the last recorded out as a courtesy runner is that the runner will be declared out after the next pitch, if the opposing manager brings it to the umpire's attention, just as if in the Major League Rules, a player batted out of order.

## **9. BATTING LINE-UP**

9.1 Both managers must exchange batting orders before a game begins. The home team cannot wait until they come to bat to present their line-up to the opposing team.

a:) A manager has the option of batting more than nine (9) players. New players can be added at the end of the batting order after the game has started.

b:) Shrinking the Line-up: In the event a team is batting more than nine (9) players, and one or more of the players has to leave, or is ejected, the batting order can be reduced so long as the team does not have any bench players who can replace the departing player(s). If a team has available players on the bench, they must substitute into the departing players spot in the lineup. If the team does not have any substitutes on the bench, and is forced to reduce to less than nine (9) players in the batting order, they will be subject to an automatic out when the vacated position comes to bat for the first time. Each succeeding at bat will be skipped. This flexibility exists to accommodate the varying schedules of MSBL players. Under this rule, however, the possibility does exist for abuse in falsely shrinking a batting order to bring favorable hitters to the plate. Where an opposing manager deems this to have occurred, a protest can be filed (see section 11- Protests). This rule has been modified for 2020 summer season – please make sure you understand and relay to your teams.

9.2 A/B Rule – A manager may alternate batters in the line-up beginning at batting position #10. The first time through the batting order, batter 10A would bat, and the second time through the order, batter 10B would bat. In the event a team uses an A/B batting arrangement, and one of the players in the slot has a designated runner, both batters would be subject to the runner rule. The A/B players will need to be designated before the game starts during the manager meeting.

## **10. TIME LIMITS AND SUSPENDED GAMES**

10.1 All games are nine (9) innings or 3 hours from the scheduled **start time**. **EXCEPTIONS:** Fields are not ready for play, or umpires are not present or ready. No inning may begin after the scheduled end time or 3 hours have elapsed. Additional / extra innings must start before the end of the 3 hours.

a). Once an inning starts it must be completed in full, exclusive of time limit.

b) Complete Games - Umpires have discretion regarding darkness, lightning, or rain and other hazards. A complete game is five (5) innings with the visiting team being ahead, or four and a half innings (4 ½) with the home team being ahead. This rule will apply during the winter, spring, or summer regular seasons only. In the event a summer playoff game is suspended due to a condition listed above, the game will not end until the 9 innings, or 3 hour time limit has been



reached (whichever comes first). If the game is suspended, the rescheduled game will continue from the point of suspension until completion.

c) Upon agreement, managers can end a game at any time that the score has “gotten out of hand”.

d) Failure to have mutual agreement shall result in the AZ MSBL rules prevailing.

10.2 If the game is tied, regardless of what inning the game is in, and the three (3) hour time limit expired, an official ‘tie’ will be declared.

10.3 If the game is tied after 9 innings have been played and there is time remaining in the three (3) hour time limit, the game will continue into extra innings.

a) If after one additional inning and there is no winner, additional extra innings may be played if the time limit has not expired.

b) Once the three (3) hour time limit expires and the game is still tied, then 10.2 takes precedence.

10.4 Most fields do not allow infield practice. Assume that there will be no infield unless there is specific permission granted from a field supervisor or Board member. Five (5) minutes prior to the scheduled start time, representatives for the opposing teams will meet at home plate with the umpires to review game rules and exchange lineups. Games may begin before the scheduled start time upon agreement among managers and umpires. If games begin before the appointed time, the end time is not affected. EXAMPLE: Published start time is 7 pm – three (3) hour playing time – 10 pm end time. If managers and officials agree to start at 6:55 pm, the playing time becomes 3 hours 5 minutes. The end time remains at 10 pm.

10.5 If the game has been delayed due to potential forfeiture, the game clock will begin at the scheduled time. The maximum delay of fifteen (15) minutes will be allowed before a forfeit is awarded. The time of delay, up to and including 15 minutes, will be on the game clock and playing time will be reduced by a time equal to the delay. (Refer to Rule 6.3 under Forfeits).

10.6 In the event a game is delayed due to late arrival by the umpire(s) or field prep not being completed, the three-hour time limit will remain in effect beginning at the new announced start time.

10.7 Rainouts: Every attempt will be made to reschedule a rained out game so as not to conflict with other previously scheduled games.

10.8 Lights: Should the lights fail to fire up during a game or turn off before its completion while there is still time on the clock, the game will be suspended. The league will, as soon as possible, schedule a time for the teams to resume play and complete the game. The game clock will restart at the time at which it had been stopped. The same players, on defense and offense, will take their same positions and the game will commence and be played to its completion, as time allows.

10.9 Sprinklers: Should sprinklers turn on and because a delay of game, the umpires shall note the time of delay and that time will be added to time remaining when play resumes. If after the sprinklers have stopped and play is ready to resume and the umpire determine that the field is not playable, the game will be suspended. (See rule 10.8 – suspended game).

NOTE: No player is ever to touch a sprinkler or any other irrigation equipment in an attempt to turn off or adjust said equipment. No player is ever to add dirt or compound to the field in an attempt to make the field playable.

## **11. PROTESTS**

11.1 All game protests must be brought to the attention of the home plate umpire at the time of the incident and before the next pitch, legal or illegal, or the next play and the game should then continue under protest. Note: A feint by a pitcher who assumes a stretch position and feints to first is considered a play. The protest should then be filed with the League by e-mail within 24 hours of the protested games conclusion.

11.2 A \$25 fee is due to the league within 48 hours in order to protest to be heard by the board. Once the fee has been received by the league, the rules committee will convene to judge the merits of the protest. The only exception to the \$ charge for the protest will be for any protest questioning the proof of age of a player, where that player did not have proof of their age to present when requested, either during or before a game. In that case the team who elected to play that player shall be responsible for the protest fee, regardless of the outcome of the protest.

## **12. FREE AGENCY**

12.1 Free agency allows a player to make himself available to another AZ MSBL team. Free agency declaration and team change must be declared to the current manager by March 15. If a player does not declare such intention prior to March 15, they will remain with their current team. The manager acquiring a free agent shall notify the League of this fact. The League will stop the free agency of any player if the player owes money to his former team.

## **13. ROSTER AND PLAYER REPLACEMENT**

13.1 Waivers: All players must sign and file with the League waiver forms prior to playing any games. The player must also be on the team's website, and listed with full name and number. Any deviation from this policy could result in legal liability for the team manager, or cause the League to forfeit the games won as the team would be deemed to be playing with an illegal player.

13.2 Roster size: A minimum of fourteen (14) players is encouraged, although rosters are unlimited.. Should a team get below 14 players, they shall be able to add players from the player pool, as available. If a team has more than 20 players those players above 20 will require the team to pay an additional \$100 league fee per extra person.

13.3 Teams that require player replacement during the year will first notify the League of their requirement. A specific date will be established for the replacement to occur. The team manager must supply the name of the player that is to be removed from his roster. Player replacement will then be provided by the League from a waiting list of players.

13.4 Rosters will become fixed on June 1st or upon a published alternative League designated date. Any violation of this rule should be directed to the Board for consideration on a case by case basis. Unauthorized roster modifications will result in forfeiture of the game in question.

13.5 No player may move from a team once the summer season has begun without the advance written approval of the Board and explanation as at the request of the manager the player is leaving and the manager of the team the player desires moving to. Such player, if approval is given shall also have to sit out the next two games of the team they are moving to from the date of the request.

#### **14. GAMES SCORES AND STATISTICS**

14.1 The manager of the winning team will have the responsibility to post the game results to the League approved web site within 48 hours. Failure to post the results will carry an administration fee of \$25.00, and will be assessed if not posted within 48 hours.

14.2 Individual team statistics may be posted to the web site at the team manager's discretion. Managers should do so as honestly as they can with regard to batting average, and pitchers earned runs. The league does not have any responsibility for updating stats, it is solely the discretion of the participating teams managers.

#### **15. DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

15.1 Discipline of any player in the League shall be referred to the League Rules Committee. Any player who has been ejected from a game shall automatically be suspended for the next game. Any player who has been ejected from two (2) games within the season shall automatically be referred to the League for review, which could result in suspension for the rest of the season. Any player, who acts in a manner contrary to the rules, or detrimental to the League, will be reported to the Board and subject to possible discipline. Any Manager, Umpire, or League member may report a player's unacceptable conduct.

15.2 Penalties imposed by the League may include censure, suspension, or expulsion. Severe actions could result in a lifetime ban from the League, or a long term ban requiring Board approval at a later date to readmit the player or manager.

#### **16. POST SEASON QUALIFICATION**

16.1 Each of the Arizona MSBL age divisions and conferences will conduct their own championship playoff. Teams will be seeded in their division based on their regular season standing point total, with the higher seed being the home team for each game played. Ties will be broken according to the tiebreaker rules in section 16.2. The number of teams from each of the

divisions, and games to be played will be determined before season's end by the League depending upon our ability to secure fields and umpires for the post season.

16.2 If two or more teams end the season with identical regular season standing point totals, the following tie-breakers will be applied in this order:

1. Head-to-head record.
2. Greater number of wins within division. (i.e. If two teams end up tied at the seasons end, and team 1's record is 12-8-0 for 24 points, and team 2's record is 11-7-2 for 24 points, Team 1 would be determined the division winner based on higher win total.).
3. Record within division (if applicable).
4. Runs Allowed Head-to head.
5. Runs Allowed within the division.
6. In the event of 3 or more teams tying at seasons end MLB rules will be applied to break the tie.

\*\*Should two or more teams remain tied after application of the tiebreakers, the League Board will rule on the situation.

## **17. OTHER MATTERS**

17.1 The Board of Directors of the League shall have full authority to conduct any and all investigations. If any player or manager is requested to be interviewed for a review, they shall be expected to provide any honest testimony. Anyone League member found to have intentionally perjured themselves may be penalized by suspensions or ejection without refund.