



To: 2010 MSCR Softball Managers and Umpires
From: MSCR Sports Staff
Subject: **2010 Softball Rule Changes, Clarifications and Points of Emphasis**

ASA & MSCR RULE CHANGES THAT EFFECT MSCR PLAY

- **NEW - (all SP only)** The pitched ball must be delivered with a perceptible arc and reach a height of at least 6 feet from the ground while not exceeding a height of **10 feet** from the ground.
- **NEW – (FP, SP and COED)** All levels of MSCR play will use an optic yellow colored softball—*new color for SP & Coed*. If neither team is able to supply an optic yellow ball, a previously issued MSCR white ball, in good condition is permitted, so the game can be played. “In good condition” is the sole discretion of the umpire.
- **NEW – (Women’s FP only)** The pitching distance for Women’s Fast Pitch will be 43 feet (previously it was 40 feet).
- **NEW - Rule 3, Sec. 1.A.** The official bat shall be free of burs, dents, cracks, sharp edges and audible rattles and show no sign of excessive wear.
- **NEW – Rule 3, Sec. 1.D.** The safety grip shall not be less than 10 inches and not more than 15 inches. There shall be no exposed metal in the 10-15 inch area. The safety grip may be a molded finger formed grip as long as it is permanently attached to the bat or attached with safety tape. Resin, pine tar or spray substances are permissible on the safety grip only. Any tape applied to the safety grip must be a continuous spiral. A bat having a flare or coned shaped grip attached is legal.

MSCR PROGRAM RULES OF NOTE FOR CLARIFICATION OR EMPHASIS

Rule 1 – Definitions - Foul Ball/Foul Tip – (Emphasis) The reference to the “height of the batter’s head” as it relates to a Foul Ball and Foul Tip no longer applies. This ASA rule allows more opportunity for the catcher to obtain “outs” by catching foul batted balls the same as the first and third base person.

***Umpires only need to judge whether the ball moves from the bat “sharply” and “directly” (foul tip, a strike, only an out if it is the 2nd strike in SP or the 3rd strike in FP and caught by the catcher) versus a ball that has a perceptible arc and/or if the catcher moves their glove to catch the ball after contact with the bat (foul ball - an out, if caught).*

Rule 8, Sec. 2M.1-9 (CLAR) A "double first base" will be used on all MSCR softball diamonds.

- Whenever a play is being made on the batter-runner at first base, the fielder must touch the *white* portion of the base while the batter-runner must touch the colored portion of the base. **When there is NO play** being made at first base (such as balls hit to the outfield), the batter-runner may touch either base.

The base runner may return to either portion of the base when s/he:

- *overruns first base or rounds first base and returns to first.*
- *tags up on a fly ball.*

Comment : The double-base rule applies whenever the batter-runner is advancing to first base regardless of whether the ball was hit to the infield or outfield.

(Clar-Excep. 1) If a play is made at 1st base, and the ball is overthrown or the fielder is pulled off the base by an errant or missed throw, this allows the batter-runner to use the white portion of the base **if trying to advance to 2nd base**.

(Clar-Excep. 2) On **any play attempt** on the batter-runner **from the foul side of first base, or by an errant throw** pulling the fielder off the base into foul ground, the batter-runner and the fielder can use either white or colored portions of the base.

- The batter-runner is allowed to legally return to either color after he or she has touched or missed first base. After returning to either portion of the base, an appeal cannot be made.

APPROVED BATS

Rule 3 Sec. 1 (CLAR) LEGAL BAT - Emphasis – All bats used in the MSCR softball program must be marked “Official Softball”, bear the ASA 2000 or 2004 certification mark and appear on the ASA list of approved bats. Bats manufactured prior to 2000 will be allowed if, in the sole opinion and discretion of the umpire, it would comply with the ASA bat performance standards, if tested.

- *All bats used in MSCR play must be on the ASA Approved Bat List. The ASA no longer displays or publishes a complete “Banned or Non-Approved” Bat list. At each diamond, a complete list of ASA Approved Bats will be inside the base (equipment) box.*
- A list of approved ASA Softball Bats can also be viewed on the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) website, www.asasoftball.com/about/certified_equipment.asp, or accessed through the MSCR website, www.msqr.org, select *Adult Summer Softball Leagues, Information.*

- Local (Emphasis) For safety reasons, players are reminded to **swing bats only inside the protective fences** at Elver, Olbrich, Bowman and Goodman diamonds. Each team will be allowed one warning. Violation, after the team warning, will result in disqualification of the offending player for the remainder of the game.
- Local (Emphasis) Metal spikes are not allowed at any level of the MSCR softball program. LOCAL PENALTY - must remove to continue participation, refusal to do so will result in disqualification from game.
- Local (Emphasis) All jewelry must be removed when possible. Rings or earrings that cannot be removed must be covered with tape. LOCAL PENALTY - Must remove or tape to continue participation; unable or refusal to do so will result in disqualification from game.

SLOW PITCH – MSCR HOME PLATE RULE

- Local (Emphasis) **At home plate, in all levels of slow pitch and at all times (whether a play is being made or not) the base runner must touch the BLACK mat while the catcher has the WHITE home plate.**
- Men, *Catching the ball and stepping on the plate before the base runner arrives at the mat is all that is required to record an out. The catcher can tag the runner to record the out and sliding is allowed.*
- Women
- Coed MSCR has used this rule since 1996 to reduce unnecessary collisions in plays at home plate.
- All plays at home plate in Slow Pitch are force outs whether or not a “force situation” exists.**
To create the “force situation”, a chalk line will be placed approximately 20 feet from home plate, across the baseline.
- Once a base runner has touched or crossed the line, s/he must continue toward home plate and cannot return to third base.
 - If a base runner touches or crosses the “force line” and goes back to third base, the defense may use the appeal process to record the out. If the defense does not appeal, the runner is safe on third.
- If the runner touches the WHITE home plate instead of the BLACK mat, the play is treated as a missed base and the defense must use the appeal process to record an out. Sliding is allowed at home plate. When sliding, baserunners should slide toward the black mat, to prevent as much contact at home plate as possible.*

PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES

- 4-5 (Emphasis) **Any** player (starter or substitute) may be substituted for and re-enter once, provided the player occupies the same spot in the batting order whenever in the line-up.
- 4-9B. (Emphasis - **ASA rule, FP & SP**) Any arguing the judgment of balls and strikes will result in a team warning. A repeat offense by the same team results in ejection of that team member. The rule prohibits any player, manager or substitute (not just the pitcher, batter or catcher) from arguing balls and strikes.

RULE 5 - THE GAME

- Local (Emphasis) A tie-breaker rule for **both FP and SP** will be used:
 For TIE-BREAKER PROCEDURE, please refer to MSCR Local Rules IV. C. 4. a-d.

NOTE: MSCR is unable to provide first aid kits at playing sites. Teams are encouraged to have their own first aid kit which could include a towel, gauze pads, rubber gloves, band-aids and athletic tape. Also, bring ice for injuries and water, as some fields do not have a water fountain.

RULE 6 - PITCHING (Men’s & Women’s Fast Pitch)

- Local (Clar) **MSCR will follow the Men’s ASA Pitching Rule.** For a complete description of pitching regulations refer to #21 Pitching (Fast Pitch) on the *yellow Commonly Occurring Rules* handout that you received with your team’s allotment of softballs.

Highlights of the A.S.A. Pitching Rule -- All rules apply to both Men’s & Women’s Fast Pitch

- ◆ The pitcher shall take a position with his/her pivot foot in contact with the pitcher’s plate and their non-pivot foot on or behind the pitcher’s plate.
- ◆ If the pitcher decides to pitch with the non-pivot foot to the rear and off the pitching plate, a backward step may be taken before, simultaneous with or after the hands are brought together.
- ◆ The toes of the pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher’s plate or be pointing downward if contact is lost, when pushing off from the pitching plate, prior to the front foot touching the ground. ***The pitcher may “leap” from the pitcher’s plate, provided the pitcher keeps the toes of the pivot foot pointing downward.***

RULE 8 – BATTER-RUNNER AND RUNNER

- SP only (Emphasis) **There are no stealing of bases in MSCR Slow Pitch. MSCR has not adopted ASA Rule 8-4F.**
- 8-5G. (Emphasis) **Overthrow Rule** -- When the ball is in play and is overthrown or is blocked beyond the boundary lines, all runners will be awarded TWO BASES. *Awarded bases will be governed by the position of the runners when the ball left the fielder's hand.*