

**Lehigh Valley Coed Softball League
2012 BYLAWS**

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GENERAL

1. These bylaws were approved by consensus on DATE TBD, 2012.
2. The Lehigh Valley Coed Softball League will play softball in accordance with the Official Rules of Softball of the Amateur Softball Association of America (ASA, www.asasoftball.com). Each team captain will be provided a copy of the rule book for the current year and is responsible for having them available at every game. The captains must resolve problems or questions arising during a game immediately. This is a no protest league. League bylaws override any conflicting ASA rules.
3. It is important to note that we strictly follow rules affecting game play, but do not necessarily follow non-playing rules, e.g. uniform requirements.
4. This is a no-protest league. All disputes must be resolved before play continues.
5. A single league commissioner is in charge of all league activities, but the general philosophy is to make decisions by consensus or majority of all team captains.
6. The league executive committee consists of 4 people chosen annually by consensus at the captain's meeting. The executive committee will assist the commissioner in making high priority decisions in situations where an emergency or immediate decision is required, or the delays of enlisting feedback from all league captains is not feasible.
7. Decisions made by the executive committee require at least 3 votes to take effect. The commissioner will only vote in the event of a 2-2 tie, or when an executive committee member is disqualified from voting.
8. This is a recreational league whose purpose is to have fun. Fighting and arguing calls will not be tolerated. Any other actions detracting from this purpose will not be tolerated either.
9. Any team not following League bylaws, ASA rules, and general philosophy of the league can be subject to ejection from the league. If a complaint is received about a team, the team will receive a warning. Any team, which consistently does not follow the rules, will be ejected from the league.
10. All players at league sponsored events are expected to behave in a manner which represents the league in a positive fashion. Any team or individual who jeopardizes the league, its events, or its reputation in any way are subject to permanent ejection from the league without prior notice or warning.
11. The decision to eject a player or team from the league can be made by consensus of all captains, majority vote of all captains, executive committee decision, or in extreme situations, by the commissioner alone.

OPERATION

12. The league website, www.lvcoedsoftball.com, is the official reference for all documents. Email is the official means of communication from the league to each team.
13. All teams must pay their registration fee prior to the annual captains' meeting; the amount is determined annually. The non-refundable registration fees are used to purchase trophies, tournament and playoff game balls and fields, playoff umpires, website hosting, etc. Teams not paid in full at (or prior to) the meeting will lose their place in the league. Please make checks payable to Lehigh Valley Coed Softball.
14. Teams must acquire the use of a home field for at least one night per week during the season, preferably Tuesday or Thursdays. Games will not be scheduled for other days of the week unless necessary. First-year teams may exercise a "bye" year in lieu of a field, but will reimburse the league accordingly.
15. Fields which do not have a game scheduled may be used by the league for makeup games.
16. Teams will submit a roster by August 1 each year. Roster will include first and last names as well as any nickname used in a scorebook.
17. The league will supply game balls for playoff games and the entire tournament.
18. Both captains are responsible for reporting game results, including the score and number of half innings played, by email, web, text message or phone within 24 hours, to the captain selected at the captains' meeting.
19. The home team captain must report cancellations and postponements. The league will reschedule all cancellations and postponements. In extreme cases it may not be possible to reschedule all makeup games. It is also possible makeup games may be rescheduled at a different field.

ELIGIBILITY

20. Team members must be at least 18 years of age. No one under 18 may play at any time.
21. Players MUST read and understand the league bylaws prior to the start of the season.
22. Players play at their own risk and are responsible for acquiring their own insurance coverage.
23. To be eligible for the playoffs or league tournament, a player must appear on the team roster, and must have batted in one-third of all scheduled regular season games, rounded down to the nearest whole number. Post-season games, including tiebreaker games, do not count. Exceptions to this eligibility rule can be made for hardship reasons with approval of the commissioner and 3 other team captains. Challenges to player eligibility require proof of identity and a scorebook which clearly shows a sufficient number of games played. The burden of proof is on the player/team being questioned. Other team captains may be consulted if necessary, and their input may be considered in making a final decision.

24. Players from one team may not play for another team, except in the case where a team is short players and both captain's agree.
25. To be eligible for playoffs, tiebreakers, or league tournament, a team cannot forfeit more than 3 games in the regular season. A team that forfeits more than 3 regular season games will finish in last place regardless of its record and will not be entitled to a refund of any kind.

SAFETY

26. Metal spikes are prohibited. If you wear metal spikes during the game, you will be immediately ejected and cannot play for the remainder of the game. Captains must report offenses to the league immediately. Subsequent offenses by a single player in a season will result in the team's forfeiture of affected games.
27. FIGHTING IS PROHIBITED. Any player involved in a fight will be ejected from the current game and suspended for: one game for the first offense, remainder of the season and the tournament for the second offense, permanently banned from the league for the third offense
28. No collisions are allowed on the base paths. Fielders may not make fake tags or otherwise trick the runner into thinking they have the ball.
29. No smoking or alcohol shall be in the field of play, which includes foul territory, coach's boxes, and anywhere else a ball would be considered "in play".

GAME PLAY

30. All games will start at 6:30 PM. There is NO grace period. Both teams must share time available for batting and fielding practice prior to the game.
31. Game postponements must be made prior to 3:00 p.m. on game day by the captains involved. If the weather or field conditions are questionable, both teams must assume the game can be played as scheduled, report to the field, and make a decision at game time.
32. Games can only be postponed if the field is unplayable or unusable due to weather or other uncontrollable circumstances, including the presence of lightning. Games postponed for other reasons will result in a forfeit loss to one or both teams depending on the circumstances and will not be rescheduled. Games cannot be postponed because the temperature is too hot or too cold.
33. In games with official umpires, if captains ask the umpires to allow a game to continue after the umpires "call" a game for darkness, rain, or other reasons, players acknowledge they play at their own risk and by continuing to play, waive any claims against the league and the umpires.
34. The league will schedule all makeup games. The home team captain must report cancellations and postponements. Both team captains must report final game scores and number of innings played.
35. Games which cannot be finished due to weather, darkness, or other circumstances will be called complete or replayed as per the ASA rules, but with two exceptions: continuations of incomplete games begin immediately following the last complete inning, and the roster can be different than the original game.
36. The field uses 60 foot base paths. Field setup is as follows: front edge of pitching rubber is 50 feet from the back point of home plate; the back edges of first and third bases are 60 feet from the back point of home plate. The back corner of second base is roughly 84 feet 11 inches from home plate. A coed line in the outfield is 150 feet from home plate. The coed line should be marked with cones, chalk, or paint, on at least five points—one on each foul line, and at least three points inside the foul lines.
37. A "double first base" is required. The orange portion of the base will occupy foul territory, while the white portion of the base will occupy fair territory.
38. Bases must be fastened securely with equipment in reasonable working condition.
39. Home team supplies bases, foul line markers, home plate mat, home plate, pitching rubber, and coed outfield line markers. Home team must also provide the game ball, which must be a new, restricted-flight, **Dudley SB 12 L RF** softball, slow pitch (.44 COR) version, model 4A-137Y, 12 inch, yellow leather cover, red stitch, cork center, .44 COR, 375 Compression. For home teams that do not have their own field, the team "owning" the field will supply the equipment, if necessary, but not the game ball. It is the home team's responsibility to repair major damage to a field prior to game time, but both teams shall share general field prep equally. ***NOTE: For 2012, teams are allowed to use up existing supplies of the white version of this ball.***
40. EACH TEAM MUST FIELD TEN (10) PLAYERS, WITH AT LEAST THREE (3) WOMEN. A minimum of eight (8) players, including two (2) women, is required to start a game. If a team is short players, there are three options: Play short, if possible, until additional players arrive, Accept players from the opposing team, at the opposing captain's discretion, Forfeit the game
41. Any team consistently not playing three (3) women may be subject to suspension or ejection from the league. If a team forfeits, captains can choose to scrimmage.
42. Players arriving after a game starts cannot begin to play until the next top of an inning.
43. Teams starting a game with 8 or 9 players can only play 8 or 9 fielders respectively and must provide their own catcher.

44. A 15-run mercy rule after 5 innings (4½ if home team winning) applies to all regular season games and all regular tournament games. The mercy rule does not apply during season playoffs or tournament playoffs.

UMPIRING

45. Umpires are responsible for making ALL calls. First base coach calls plays at first base and second base. Third base coach calls plays at third base and second. A person supplied by the batting team will umpire and call balls, strikes, fouls and home plate from behind the batter. Captains can and should overrule obviously errant calls made by their own umpires.
46. There will be no arguing any calls; a close call must go to the batter or runner.
47. Only regular season games and regular tournament games are self-umpired. The league will supply outside umpires for playoff games and for the tournament semi-finals and finals. 1 umpire will be provided for semi-final rounds, and 2 umpires for finals.

PITCHING

48. Required slow pitch will have a minimum arc of six (6) feet and a maximum arc of twelve (12) feet (height above ground at home plate). If a pitch does not meet the above height restrictions, the umpire will call "ILLEGAL". The pitch will count as a ball. If the batter swings anyway, it's a live ball, whether it is a strike, foul or fair.
49. Pitchers must have one foot touching the rubber when the pitch is released from the hand.
50. A ball and strike will be determined by using a regulation size mat, which will be placed behind home plate. If the ball hits the mat or home plate it is a strike; if the ball does not hit the mat or home plate, it is a ball. A ball that hits the black angled edge of the home plate is a strike. The mat must be regulation size, but can be made of variety of materials. A close call will go to the batter, but will be determined by the umpire.
51. Each inning is limited to two (2) walks without regard to who is pitching. After the second walk, the umpire will stop counting balls after ball three.
52. If a pitcher chooses to intentionally walk a batter, the pitcher can inform the batter to proceed to the base. The pitcher is not required to pitch to the batter. Intentional walks count towards the 2-walk-per-inning limit.

BATTING

53. The only bats which may be used are those with an ASA certification dated 2000 or 2004, and are not on the ASA Illegal Bats list. All unmodified, solid wood bats are allowed. Bats that are not marked or cannot be verified to comply may only be used at the discretion of the opposing coach.
54. Batting line-ups must contain at least 10 players. To encourage participation, there is no maximum number for line-ups.
55. Free same gender substitution is allowed, however, someone removed from the lineup cannot be reinserted into the lineup until his/her old batting position has had at least 1 at bat. No more than 7 men can bat in a row.
56. Batters start with a 0-0 count in all games except tournament.
57. There are no foul-outs, except for bunting a foul with two strikes already.
58. There is no home run limit.
59. Throwing the bat is prohibited. If a player throws their bat while batting, they will receive a warning. Subsequent offenses will cause the batter to be called out and the play ruled dead.
60. Women are allowed to bunt. Bunting foul with 2 strikes is a strike out. Once a batter shows a bunt during a pitch, the batter must either bunt that pitch or take that pitch; the batter cannot fake a bunt and then swing away during the same pitch. If a batter fakes a bunt and then swings, regardless of whether they hit or miss the pitch, the fielding team has the option of keeping the play as is or calling the pitch a strike, which would cause a strikeout if two strikes already.
61. If a bunted ball, untouched by a fielder, hits the batter outside of the batter's box and in fair territory, she's out. If a bunted ball, untouched by a fielder, hits the batter outside of the batter's box and in foul territory, a foul is called and, if applicable, is counted as a third strike.
62. The coed outfield line is placed 150' from home plate. Three of the four outfielders must remain behind the coed line (the side opposite home plate) until the ball is hit. If a team is playing short and has less than four outfielders, all the outfielders must remain behind the coed line.
63. The batting team monitors this line for violations. If less than three outfielders are behind the line when the ball is hit, the batting team can choose to take the play as it ended, or award the batter first base automatically. The one player who is allowed to be in front of the coed line before contact does not have to reveal themselves in advance; in other words, they can cross the line while the pitch is in the air. If a team takes an automatic first base award following a violation, the effect is like that of an intentional walk.
64. A player who bats does not have to play the field. Any player who plays at least one pitch in the field must bat at least once, unless extenuating circumstances prevail.
65. Teams starting a game with 8 or 9 players can only have 8 or 9 batters respectively in the line-up.

66. Teams starting a game with only 2 women will add an additional batting position for the third woman. Until the third woman arrives, a team has three options: one women bats twice in the line-up, two women alternate in the third spot, the batting team can take an automatic out in the third spot
67. Teams starting a game with 8 or 9 players can add players arriving late to the bottom of the batting line-up (except in the case where a third woman arrives late and fills the additional position already created in the batting line-up,) provided all other bylaws and rules are followed.
68. Teams starting a game with 10 or more players can add players arriving late to the bottom of the batting line-up, provided all other bylaws and rules are followed.
69. If a team loses a player and cannot fill the batting position, the team may shrink (contract) the batting lineup up to the point at which a game would be forfeited.

RUNNING

70. No leaving the base before the ball is hit. Each team will receive one warning for leaving the base early the first time; only one warning can be given to a team on a single pitch. After that warning, any runner leaving the base before contact will be called "Out"; more than one player can be called out on a single pitch. Any umpire on the field can make this call. This offense can only occur from the time the pitcher is ready to begin the delivery of the pitch, until either the ball touches the bat or the ball hits the ground.
71. Runners approaching bases, including home plate, are not required to slide. If a runner chooses to slide they must slide as safely as possible. If a runner chooses not to slide, they must get out of the fielders' way as soon as possible when it is clear they are out. The intent of this rule is to prevent injury. Collisions or sliding which in any way endangers a fielder will not be tolerated. When a runner intentionally collides with a fielder or slides dangerously, a warning will be issued to the team. Any subsequent offense by any player on that team will be an out. Flagrant or intentional acts will result in ejection from the game and may involve being suspended from future games.
72. Fielders must never block bases, including home plate. Fielders may straddle, stand aside of, or stand behind, the bases, including home plate, but must give the runner a clear path to the base.
73. Same-gender pinch running is allowed for any reason. For female runners, any female on the team can pinch run. For male runners, the pinch runner will be the last male to have made an out, or in the event that person cannot run, then it will be the male farthest away in the batting lineup.

SEASON TIEBREAKERS

74. These tiebreakers apply to the standings, playoffs, and seeding for the tournament. The tournament has its own tiebreakers defined.
75. When comparing records among tied teams, the best won-lost-tied percentage is used. Tie games count as one-half win and one-half loss.
76. If regular season games that would be counted in a head-to-head tiebreaker have not been played, then the tiebreaker is applied only if the results of such games would not change the outcome of the tiebreaker. If, however, the results of such games could change the outcome of a head-to-head tiebreaker, then skip the tiebreaker step and proceed to the next step.
77. Runs Allowed per Defensive Inning Ratio defined: (a) the total number of runs given up by that team in applicable games, divided by the number of half-innings played on defense by that team in applicable games. (b) any part of a half-inning played on defense counts as a complete half-inning for the purposes of this tiebreaker. (c) games which are forfeit at any time before a game can be considered complete do not count in this tiebreaker. (d) games which are forfeit but are complete by regulation will count in this tiebreaker.
78. Tiebreaker 1. TIEBREAKER FOR 2 TEAMS: 1a: The team with the best head-to-head record advances. 1b: The team with the lowest Runs Allowed per Inning Ratio for the entire season advances. 1c: Flip a coin.
79. Tiebreaker 2. TIEBREAKER FOR 3 OR MORE TEAMS: 2a: The team with the best combined head-to-head record among tied teams advances. If 2 teams have the same best combined head-to-head record, they advance and start at 1a. If 3+ teams have the same best combined head-to-head record, eliminate all others and repeat 2a. If you have 3+ and can no longer eliminate teams, advance to 2b. 2b: The team with the lowest Runs Allowed per Inning Ratio for the entire season advances; remaining teams start over. If 2 teams have the same best ratio, they advance and start at 1a; remaining teams start over. If 3+ teams have the same best ratio, eliminate all others and repeat 2a. If you have 3+ and can no longer eliminate teams, advance to 2c. 2c: Draw straws for one winner. Remaining tied teams start tiebreakers over.

PLAYOFFS

80. Playoff games begin at 6:00 PM.
81. The playoffs are a seeded, single-elimination event. Playoff seeding is applied only after the playoff teams are conclusively determined. When comparing records among teams, the best won-lost-tied percentage is used. Tie games count as one-half win and one-half loss.
82. The semi-final playoff games will be setup as follows:
 - 82.1. The first (highest) seed plays the fourth seed.

82.2. The second seed plays the third seed.

82.3. Highest seeds are home teams.

83. The league championship game will be setup as follows: The higher seed team is the home team.

TOURNAMENT

84. The format and rules for the League's Annual Tournament are published on the League's website, www.lvcoedsoftball.com, as soon as the logistics are confirmed. Approval of these bylaws indicates general, advance acceptance of the tournament format and rules as discussed during the captain's meeting. In the event of conflicts between other versions of the tournament rules, the version on the league website shall be the sole authority.

85. The tournament is a rain or shine event. All teams must be prepared to play at all times.

86. The tournament is a two-division, round-robin with a single-elimination, four-team playoff.

87. All batters begin with a 1-and-1 count.

88. Games start immediately upon field availability. There is no grace period.

89. Coin toss determines home and away for all games, except semi-finals and finals.

90. Seeding is based on the standings after all regular season games have been played, unless a predetermined date was selected at the captains meeting.

91. Bracket one consists of seeds 1, 4, 6, 7, 9, 12. Bracket two consists of seeds 2, 3, 5, 8, 10, 11.

92. The top two teams from each division advance to a single-elimination semi-final. For example: Red seed #1 plays Blue seed #2 and Red seed #2 plays Blue seed #1.

93. The league provides one ASA umpire for each semi-final game, and two ASA umpires for the championship game.

94. The higher seed teams are the home teams in the semi-final games. In the championship game, a 1 seed is always home against a 2 seed; but if the seeds are equal, a coin toss determines the home team.

TOURNAMENT TIEBREAKERS

95. Tournament Tiebreakers: any time a team or teams are advanced or eliminated by tiebreaker, the remaining tied teams start again from the first applicable tiebreaker rule.

96. 1st tiebreaker: combined head-to-head tourney record among tied teams:

96.1. (1a) if 2 teams tie for first place, the winner of head-to-head game advances as the first seed, the loser as second seed

96.2. (1b) if 2 teams tie for second place, the winner of head-to-head game advances as second seed

96.3. (1c) if 3 teams tie for first, a team that beat both others advances as the first seed, then (1b)

96.4. (1d) if 3 teams tie for second, a team that has beat both others advances

97. 2nd tiebreaker: rank tied teams by runs allowed per inning for combined head-to-head tournament games among tied teams -- the one team with lowest ratio advances and remaining tied teams start over

98. 3rd tiebreaker: rank tied teams by runs allowed per inning for all tournament games -- the one team with the lowest ratio advances and remaining tied teams start over

99. 4th tiebreaker: chance. if 2 teams remain tied, flip a coin. if 3 or more teams remain tied, draw straws.