

2018 ATLANTA MEN'S SYNAGOGUE SOFTBALL LEAGUE, INC. RULES

The purpose of the Atlanta Men's Synagogue Softball League, Inc. is to foster brotherhood among the members of the various synagogues in the metropolitan Atlanta area while competing in a spirit of fairness and sportsmanship.

1. To the extent they do not conflict with and are not modified by these Rules, official Amateur Softball Association ("ASA") softball rules shall apply.
2. This is an adult men's softball league established for the purpose of fostering brotherhood among the adult members of the various synagogues. All players must be regular, dues-paying members of the synagogue for which they play (i.e., there are no so-called "softball memberships" allowed). Managers/captains are strongly encouraged to play only adult (18 years or older) players on their team(s) and utilize younger members only in an emergency. In no event shall any manager/captain utilize a player under 16 years of age. A student whose parent(s) is/are members is considered a member for the purposes of this league if his respective synagogue considers the student a member. If a team is found to have played with a non-member, that team will receive an automatic loss for the game. Members of multiple Synagogues may play for either synagogue, but not both in the same year. The same applies for Synagogues with multiple teams, in that a member may play for either team, but not both in the same year, unless approval is granted by the Commissioner. Depending on the circumstances, the Commissioner will have the discretion to take whatever further action is appropriate (e.g., not playing in the playoffs, being removed from the league). Coaches are responsible for checking the synagogue directory or communicating with the appropriate membership official at their synagogue to make sure all players are members.
3. The AMSSL Commissioner, with the consensus of the board, has authority to remove anyone as captain at any time due to behavior unrepresentative of the AMSSL values. This includes, but not limited to acting disrespectfully towards the board, displaying poor sportsmanship, altering lineups illegally during a game, or any behavior or action deemed unbecoming of a team leader of our friendly league. Any captain vacated of his position will be required to sit out as captain for the current season and the following season. If he continues to display this behavior as a player during the season, he will be banned from the league for the current year plus the next full year, and will not be permitted to be a team captain in the league for 2 additional years. The team's named co-captain or assistant captain will step in as the team's head captain.
4. If an emergency comes up before a game and a forfeit is imminent, CALL the opposing coach and/or the Commissioner in advance, BEFORE the game (and before arriving at the field), and hopefully everyone can come to some mutual resolution. **An effort should be made to implement the Forfeit Prevention Rule (Below)** If not, then every effort will be made to replay the game with the following rule imposed: The forfeiting team will be eligible for a TIE at best (if they win) and a LOSS if they lose. The opposing team will be guaranteed a TIE if they lose or a WIN if they win the game. The Commissioner has discretion about the interpretation and mediation of the execution of this rule.

5. Forfeit Prevention Rule – (New in 2018) – If your team only has 6 or 7 players, you may contact captains from other teams to ask for help in getting 1 or 2 subs for your game. This rule applies only to REGULAR SEASON
 1. The subs must play either Catcher, 1st Base, Right Field or Pitcher.
 2. The subs must occupy the last position(s) in the batting order
 3. You must alert the opposing team captain AND the Commissioner who your subs are and for what team they play.
 4. If you now have 8 players, you can borrow a player from the opposing team to play catcher, so you will have 9 players in the field...You will only have your 8 players in the batting order

The intent of this rule is to eliminate forfeits in the league. Forfeits have an unnecessary burden on the league – both financially and logistically, and need to be avoided.

It is not the intent of this rule to use your potential forfeit as an opportunity to stack your team with “ringers”

For example, a team in League C should NOT be seeking out a sub from League A. It is just not the right thing to do. We need to all adhere to an honor system and stick to the VALUES of the AMSSL league, while engaging in fair play. If a team is caught violating these rules, there will be consequences imposed by the AMSSL board

6. If a team forfeits a game or games on more than one day, that team will not be eligible to play in the playoffs, subject to the discretion of the league board of directors. If a team forfeits games on more than two days, the team shall not be eligible to play in the league next year, subject to the discretion of the league board of directors.
7. In order to be eligible for the playoffs, a player must have played in a minimum of two regular season games on two different weeks during the season.
8. Hitters start out with a count of 1 ball and 1 strike. If a hitter hits a foul ball with 2 strikes he gets one courtesy foul (unless it is a foul tip, as defined by ASA rules, i.e. caught by the catcher, in which case the batter is out and the ball is dead). The 2nd foul ball with 2 strikes is a strikeout, though the ball is live on a caught foul fly in this situation (runners can tag up).
9. The only softballs allowed are .520/COR, 300 PQI compression max, 12" balls, which will be provided by the commissioner. Each team shall be responsible for supplying one new ball at the beginning of every game to the umpire. Thereafter, each team shall supply as many additional new or used balls as necessary to complete the game. Additional balls can be obtained upon request for approximately \$5.00 per ball.
10. The bases should be 65 feet and the pitching rubber should be 50 feet per ASA rules.
11. A 13-player batting order maximum. Players may serve as an Extra Hitter (EH) the entire game and rotate positions (including being EH) as desired. Batting order, of course, stays constant. The spirit of this rule is to encourage the participation of all players. [The ASA re-entry rule applies – for both starters and substitutes]. Late arrivals can be added to the end of the line-up if they are added immediately upon arrival (otherwise, they only may enter as a substitute for a starter).
12. Re-entry rule: Starters can be removed once and later re-enter in same spot in batting order. Substitutes can enter the game to replace someone, then get removed, and later re-enter in same spot in batting order. There is no requirement that someone must be in the field for an inning if they want to hit, or vice versa.
13. Games are 7 innings. During the regular season, no inning may start after 1 hour and 5 minutes. In the case of a tie during the regular season, additional extra innings shall be played if the time limit has not expired. Otherwise, the game is declared a tie.

14. Playoff Time Limit: The first playoff day will be 1 hr 5 minutes. The next week it will be 1 hr 15 minutes. The third week would be No Time Limit (Losers bracket “semifinals” and “final”) The final week is the championship week - NO TIME LIMIT for championship games. Please try to keep the games moving along quickly, though, as in regular season.
15. Mercy Rule: The game will be called if a team is winning by 15 runs or more after the 5th inning. This will make certain that all games last at least 5 innings. The only exception to this rule will be the time limit rule. The time limit rule takes precedence no matter what the inning is.
16. Only softball bats which are ASA approved are allowed. Umpires will check all bats prior to each game to ensure that bats meet league requirements. Go to the official synagogue softball website at: www.amssl.org for the link to the ASA website for banned bats. This link will be updated by the ASA on a regular basis.

To be legal, the bat:

(1) Must bear either the ASA approved 2000 certification mark or the ASA 2004 certification mark as shown on the above ASA web link or the current ASA rule book (Rule 3, Sec. 1.A.), and must not be listed on the current ASA non-approved list, or

(2) Must be included on the current list of approved bat models published by the ASA National Office (see above web site), or

(3) Must, in the sole opinion and discretion of the umpire, have been manufactured prior to 2000 and if tested, would comply with the ASA bat performance standards then in effect.

The ASA non-approved list may expand if additional bats are found to be out of compliance with bat standards, so please check the non-approved list frequently. The non-approved list is somewhat confusing because people recognize bats by color and name, not by model number, and the ASA site often lists bats only by model number. Adding to the confusion, some bats that were on the “banned” list last year are ok to use this year, such as DeMarini Doublewall, even without the previously required re-certification stamp (shaped like a baseball field) from last year. But some bats still require the re-certification stamp, as noted on the list of approved bats on the ASA web site. Also, some of the approved and non-approved bats have similar names and model numbers. For example, Easton’s Synergy and Synergy Plus are not approved, but Synergy 2 is approved. In addition, some bat companies, such as Miken, have some non-approved bats, but they also have a number of legal bats.

PLEASE CHECK THE ASA WEB SITE AND UNDERSTAND THE RULES TO AVOID USING AN ILLEGAL BAT OR MAKING UNINFORMED ALLEGATIONS THAT A BAT IS NOT LEGAL WHEN IN FACT IT IS.

As a general rule, if a bat is not listed on the non-approved list, it’s going to be legal 99% of the time. Check the approved list to make sure it does not need a re-certification stamp to be legal.

17. A game is “official” after 5 innings, or 4 ½ innings if the home team is winning. Even though the game is official, every effort will be made to complete the game at another time, subject to Commissioner’s discretion. A game called due to rain before becoming a regulation game is to be rescheduled for another time and will be resumed from the specific point that the game was stopped. During the playoffs a game must go 4 1/2 innings to be official; every effort will be made to resume play at a later date, subject to Commissioner’s discretion.

18. Game Flow and Timing of Game – In an effort to improve the flow of the game, each team must change sides quickly between innings. Also, teams must have an on-deck batter in the on-deck circle, and be ready to bat as soon as it is his turn. There should be no intentional (or unintentional) stalling during the game. If, at the umpire's discretion, a player is stalling or taking too long, the umpire will issue a warning to the player's team. If there is a 2nd team infraction, the result will be an out if it is an offensive team. (An out will be recorded at the time of the infraction – no batter will lose his at-bat). If the 2nd infraction is ruled against the defensive team, then the penalty will be a runner on 1st base for the offensive team. (the runner will be the last batted out from the prior inning).
19. Flip-Flop Rule (NEW) – This rule has been established to allow for games to be played to completion before time expires. Our field resources are more limited and this is a way to maximize our time on the fields. This rule applies only to REGULAR SEASON
Here are the parameters:
- A) 5 minutes or less remaining on the game clock (to start an inning)
 - B) One team is winning by 7 runs or more
 - C) The team that is losing shall bat first in the final inning of play.
 - D) If the team that is losing comes back to tie or take the lead, the team that was ahead at the start of the inning will get their final at bat.
20. If a player who reaches base safely is injured (on that at bat) while hitting or running to a base, then a courtesy runner may be used after time is called. The courtesy runner must be the player who made the last batted out. The injured player may not re-enter the game for the remainder of his team's at-bat that inning. If his turn comes up again during that inning, then his turn may be skipped without penalty, but he may not play the field in the next half-inning. The courtesy runner rule is intended for injuries which occur during the game and should be limited to one time per game per player. It is not intended for players who merely have trouble running the bases or who are attempting to play despite a pre-existing injury. Note: If a team has a substitute player available (a player that was not in the game at the time of the replacement) the substitute player may enter the game and avoid the courtesy runner situation. Of course, the substitute player is then in the game replacing the injured player and the normal re-entry rules apply. The substitute player must be inserted as a runner for the injured player and cannot be inserted for the courtesy runner later in the inning. See rule #33 for substitute runner rule
21. If a player is injured and can no longer continue to play, and the team has no substitute players remaining, the team captain must notify the other captain and the umpire. As long as this notification has taken place, when the player's subsequent turns in the batting rotation come up, the team can skip that turn in the rotation without being penalized with an automatic out.
22. A player who is ejected from a game must sit out the remainder of that game and the next scheduled game. Any player who is ejected from more than one regular season game shall be barred from playing for his team for the rest of the season (including the playoffs). Umpires will notify the commissioner regarding ejections. A player may appeal this ruling to the league board of directors.
23. The minimum number of players with which a team can start or continue a game is 8. A team can play with 8 or 9 players without being charged any automatic outs, unless there was an ejection. Also, a team is not allowed to play with less than the number of players they started the game with in order to gain an advantage after starting with more players (e.g. #9, #10, #11, #12, or #13 batter cannot leave the game near end of game, so #1 batter gets up sooner – in such cases, at the umpire's discretion, an automatic out will be charged for each such player leaving the game). During the regular season – but not the playoffs – it is within the discretion of a team to offer to loan the opposing team one or more players to make the game more competitive, assuming that the opposing team has the required 8 players to start the game, and the game will still be an official game; however, there is no requirement that the team with sufficient players do so.

24. The ASA rule requiring a forfeit due to a player ejection shall not apply, as long as a team is left with at least 8 players. If there is an ejection and that team does not have a substitute to allow the team to continue with the same number of players as it had before the ejection, an automatic out shall be recorded every time the ejected player's turn at bat comes up.
25. Each team is responsible for maintaining a scorebook during the offensive half of its inning. At a minimum, the scorebook shall record the team's runs and outs for that team's offensive half inning. The captains should confirm the score at the end of every inning.
26. There is a limit of 2 out-of-the-park home runs/team/game. **Subsequent home runs will be ruled a foul ball. According to the rule, a home run hit over the fence with the batter already having 2 strikes and one foul will result in an out.** Inside-the-park home runs are not subject to any limits. **The batter and base runners need not run the bases after an out-of-the-park homerun is hit.**
27. Rule disputes can be appealed via protest to the commissioner who, along with the Umpire-In-Chief from the umpire's association, will make a binding and final decision on how the dispute is resolved. If the commissioner's team is involved, the league board of directors will serve as commissioner. Protests must be made (1) to the game umpire in the manner, and within the time limits, stated in the ASA rule book, or (2) to the commissioner by e-mail within 24 hours of the game (or, in the case of a playoff game that determines which team advances to a subsequent game that same day, immediately to the commissioner via cell phone). A \$50 protest fee must be paid by the protesting team. If the umpire's call is reversed (i.e. the protest is accepted) the fee will be refunded.
28. The official website of the Atlanta Men's Synagogue Softball League is www.amssl.org. Please check the website for updated information and scores. Announcements will be posted to the website regularly. In case of rain, captains and co-captains will be notified via WhatsApp Group Text. Download the App and follow this link from your smart phone to join the AMSSL group: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/AEpC0vS9NesHs4V77aHsyi> - this will be the main source for all league communication
29. During the regular season, a coin toss will decide home/visitor for the first meeting. If the same teams play twice during the regular season, the team that was home team the first game will be the visitors the second game. During the playoffs, the team with the better seed has the choice of home/visitor, except for the first championship game, in which case the team that has advanced through the winner's bracket without a loss will have the choice of home/visitor regardless of seed. If the second championship game is necessary then the team with the better seed will have the choice of home/visitor for the final game.
30. If the umpire on the field calls a game or games due to weather or field conditions, the captains involved in those game(s) must immediately notify the commissioner, who will make a decision as to games later that day.
31. Metal cleats or metal spikes are not allowed.
32. There will be no **Base Stealing**
33. Any eligible player on the official line up (we don't use line ups in AMSSL) including substitutes may be used as a courtesy runner. A courtesy runner may be used once per inning". A courtesy runner is in the game when reported to the plate umpire. A courtesy runner whose turn at bat comes while on base will be called out and removed from base. They may take their turn at bat. A second courtesy runner is not permitted at this time". A courtesy runner may not run for an existing courtesy runner except for an injury. A courtesy runner never has to play the field and never has to bat. He can be your official courtesy runner every inning if you want. This does not replace the rule regarding an injured player getting a runner. Please see rule # 17. If someone is injured on the play the last out can run for the injured player but the injured player cannot play the field the next inning. In the event that a courtesy runner is used, one cannot use the "substitution rule" to replace the courtesy runner with another player in order to avoid an out in the likelihood that the courtesy runner comes to bat while on base. Once a

courtesy runner is chosen, unless he becomes injured running the bases, he must remain a baserunner.

34. **Obstruction and Interference Rules**

The following rules are being highlighted to ensure that our games are as safe as possible and that injuries are avoided as much as possible. The rules do have some gray areas and there is some umpire discretion involved. Regardless of these uncertainties and any rule technicalities and whether a runner ultimately is called out or safe, though, all players should make safety their first priority. Players should make every effort to avoid placing other players and themselves in positions where injuries are likely.

1. "Interference is defined as the act of an offensive player or team member which impedes, hinders or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play. It may be in the form of physical contact, verbal distraction, visual distraction, or any type of distraction which would hinder the fielder in the execution of the play. Defensive players must be given the opportunity to field the ball anywhere on the playing field or throw the ball without being hindered."
2. "In order to prevent injury and protect the defensive player attempting to make a play on a runner, the runner must be called out if he remains on his feet and crashes into a defensive player holding the ball and waiting to apply the tag. In order to prevent the crash ruling, the runner can slide, jump over the top of the defender holding the ball, go around the defender (if outside the three-foot lane the runner would be called out), or return to the previous base touched. If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender will be ejected. A runner may slide into a fielder [in the base path]."
3. "Obstruction is the act of a fielder (a) not in possession of the ball, or (b) not in the act of fielding a batted ball, which impedes the progress of a batter-runner or runner who is legally running the bases." In other words, the defender must have possession of the ball to legally block a runner's base path. Any other action or lack of, could constitute obstruction. Contact is not necessary for obstruction to be called. In addition, there is no intent required; a fielder can be called for obstruction even if unintentional.

"If a defensive [player] is blocking the base or base path without the ball, this is impeding the progress of the runner and, in most cases, this is obstruction." [Note: When there is no play being made on the runner, the runner is allowed to and often does make a wide arc around the bases. First basemen and other fielders often are guilty of obstruction here (even if accidental) and need to be careful here, or the fielder and the runner may get injured. However, just because the defensive player is guilty of obstruction does not give the runner license to intentionally crash into the fielder, aggressively push the fielder, or otherwise escalate the situation; in some situations, depending on the umpire's judgment, the runner could be called out and even ejected, and the obstruction ignored. On the other hand, just because there is contact or a collision does not mean it is the runner's fault; the obstructing fielder may be entirely at fault. Even if obstructed and technically ruled safe, it is recommended that runners exercise caution to attempt to avoid or minimize potential injury. Sometimes, contact cannot be avoided due to the fielder's improper actions, but sometimes contact can be avoided or minimized].

"If the defense is reaching for a thrown ball and the runner has a clear lane to the base [where contact will not occur] and the runner contacts the defender while on his [the runner's] feet, this would be interference on the runner in most cases. A legal slide would not be interference."

"If, in the umpire's judgment, the thrown ball and runner arrive at the same time within the base path and contact occurs, this is not considered interference or obstruction." [Note: runners do not necessarily know when the ball will arrive, so the best course of action is to slide or avoid contact; otherwise, a runner risks injury to himself and the fielder, and also risks being called out and/or ejected if he mistakenly believes that that he will beat the ball and in fact the ball beats him].

“Whenever obstruction occurs, whether a play is being made on a runner or not, the umpire will declare obstruction and signal delayed dead ball (left arm extended parallel with ground). The ball will remain live...” [Note: If an obstructed runner is put out or does not reach the base he would otherwise have reached, the umpire will make the proper award. An obstructed runner generally cannot be called out between the bases between which he was obstructed {there are some exceptions}, though he can be called out if he tries to advance past the base the umpire would have awarded due to the obstruction.] “If the runner committed an act of interference after the obstruction, this would overrule the obstruction.”

32.4 Plays at home plate – *In the event of a play at home plate, it is the catcher’s responsibility to deter a potential collision. The catcher is supposed to stand slightly in front of home plate in fair territory, so as not to block the baseline. He can catch a ball and try to tag the runner attempting to touch home plate. The runner has the right to run the bases and have a clear path to home plate. If, at the umpire’s discretion, the catcher was impeding the runner from his path to home plate, the umpire may call the runner safe due to obstruction. On the converse, if the catcher is allowing a path for the runner, but the runner, in the umpire’s judgement, tries to make contact with the catcher, the umpire may call the runner out, and depending upon the severity of the contact, may penalize the runner with anything from a warning up to an ejection.*