Minor League Softball: Local Rules

1. All National Little League rules, as described in the rulebook, apply unless specifically addressed here or by past WMLL custom. What follows are notes of emphasis.

2. **Stealing:** Stealing is <u>not</u> allowed. Runners may leave the base when the ball crosses the plate. Players detected leaving early will be called out. If the ball is not hit into play, runners must return immediately to their original base(s) when the ball is returned to the pitching circle. Note: "pickoff" throws (by catchers, for example) are allowed and runners may NOT advance on pickoff throws.

3. **Dropped 3rd Strike:** Batters <u>may not</u> advance to 1st base on a dropped 3rd strike.

4. **Bunting:** Bunting is <u>not</u> allowed.

5. **Players:** Teams can play with up to 10 players on defense. Teams forfeit the game if they have fewer than 8 players to start. Teams that start the game with 8 players but lose one or more players during the game may continue. If the number of players drops below 8, an out is recorded each time a missing player's turn to bat occurs A courtesy runner for the catcher is recommended when there are 2 outs. The player making the last out will be the runner.

6. **Substitutions:** . All players will be included in the batting order. Free defensive substitution of all players is allowed. All players must play at least one inning in the infield (including pitcher or catcher) and at least one inning in the outfield in each game. No player should be out of the game for two fielding innings before each player has been out once.

7. **Infield:** No more than 6 players may begin a play in the infield. All outfielders (4, if 10 players are on defense) must be on the outfield grass when the ball is pitched

8. **Time Limit:** Games will consist of up to 6 innings. A new inning may not start after 1 hour 15 min. An inning is started immediately after the 3rd out is registered on the home team. If the score is tied at the end of 6 innings or at the time limit, the game is a tie. Games will end promptly at 1 hour 30 minutes unless the outcome is still in question.

9. **Runs Scored:** A maximum of 5 runs can be scored per half inning.

10. **Sliding:** On close plays at 2nd base, 3rd base or home plate, the runner is required to slide or to avoid collision with a defensive player who has the ball while located within the batter's box area or within the vicinity of another base. If a contact is made and the runner did not slide, the umpire shall call the runner out for offensive interference. The runner has the primary responsibility to avoid a collision with the defensive player. No headfirst sliding is allowed. Players should be taught and encouraged to slide properly.

11. **Hit Batters:** A batter will be awarded first base when hit by a pitch unless the ball is called a strike or the umpire decides an attempt should have been made to avoid the ball.

Please note: a ball that bounces and then hits the batter is no different than any other pitched ball that hits the batter. The ball is dead immediately on hitting the batter.

12. **Play Stoppage:** Play stops when the pitcher has control of the ball in the circle area, approximately a 10-foot circle centered by the pitcher's plate. The umpire will return runners that are not in stride and more than halfway to the next base to the preceding base.

13. **Pitching:** A player-pitcher may pitch a maximum of 2 innings in a game. One pitch in an inning will count as a full inning pitched. Pitching distance will be 35 feet. Any underhand style pitching motion is allowed. Once a pitcher is removed from pitching, she cannot return as a pitcher in that game.

14. **Ball**: 11-inch softie ball.

15. **Walks**: There are no walks. There are two kinds of games: player pitch, and coach pitch.

Player pitch: Pitchers will pitch until there are 4 balls, or the ball has been hit into fair territory, or the batter strikes out. If 4 balls are pitched, a coach from the batting team will pitch to the batter. The coach must pitch from the designated pitcher's plate and the defensive player that was the pitcher must have one foot in the pitching circle. Strikes carry over from the original count. The umpire should call coaches' pitches in the strike zone strikes. A ball that hits the coach inadvertently remains in play. If a coach intentionally touches a ball in play, the batter is out and runners are returned to their bases.

Coach pitch: Coaches will pitch to their own teams. Coach pitcher will stand on a line at 35' from home (i.e. in front of the 40' pitching plate). Umpires will call strikes on pitches in the strike zone. See above for further coach pitch rules.

16. **Infield fly rule**: There is no infield fly rule.

17 **Inning Switch:** Coaches are encouraged to hustle players on and off the field. The first pitch of a half inning must be delivered not longer than 60 seconds after the third out of the previous half inning**. Penalty:** the umpire <u>may</u> call a strike on the batter if the violation is by the offensive team, or a ball on the batter if the violation is by the defensive team. The umpire <u>may</u> continue to call strikes or balls each 20 seconds until the first pitch is delivered.

18. **Bat throwing:** A player will receive one warning each game for inappropriately throwing the bat. For any subsequent instance of throwing the bat in that same game the player will be called out. The warning and out can be on the same at bat. If a hitter is called out for throwing the bat the ball will be dead and any runners must return the base, which he/she occupied prior to the pitch. Note: this rule applies to accidental bat throwing, not to bat throwing in anger or protest.