

2025 ABL SOFTBALL RULEBOOK

League Website: www.joinABL.com

Emergency Phone (game-day): Mens 201-978-6042 Coed 732-272-6003

Rainout Hotline: 201-224-7431

Email Contact: info@joinABL.com

ABL Rules & Regulations are complete and in-depth for a reason: to protect our players, umpires and field owners. Rules are listed to cover any possible circumstance regarding play, and are broad for that reason. We provide these rules to enhance the enjoyment for our players and to ensure the integrity of our league.

RULE 1: ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, BARBECUES, PARKING & SMOKING –

- (1) Alcoholic beverages or glass of any kind are not permitted on school or park grounds.
- (2) Barbecuing, or any open fires of any kind are not permitted on school or park grounds.
- (3) Smoking, of any kind, is not permitted on school or park grounds.
- (4) Any alcoholic beverages, barbecues, open fires of smoking found on park grounds will result in the automatic termination from the league.
- (5) Park at your own risk. If your car is parked near the field, and suffers damage from errant softballs, the league will not reimburse nor be held responsible.

RULE 2: AWARDS

- (1) The following awards will be presented:
 - a. Individual and Team trophies
 - b. Future league discount
 - c. League MVP, Outstanding Manager, and or Outstanding Achievement
- (2) Division Champion will be determined upon winning division championship in playoffs! Winners receive Division Champion T-Shirts and Large Team Trophy.
- (3) League Champion is determined upon winning the Diamond Cup Champions Tournament. Winner receives Team Apparel for all members on active roster for that season (applicable to Summer Season only)
- (4) Each team will be responsible for selecting one MVP from their team and submitting the League MVP ballot by the date designated by the league office. The league will select one winner from the league.
- (5) The League will select the Individual Winners.

RULE 3: BASES

- (1) Both teams are responsible for providing white, padded bases (including home plate and pitcher's rubber)
- (2) Bases are 65' feet apart. Pitchers mound to Home plate: 50' feet.
- (3) The 'Black' beveled edge around home plate is not part of home plate as it relates to balls and strikes.
- (4) A 'Double-First base' is highly recommended for league play. When a Double-First base is used, the following rules will apply:
 - a. Any batted ball hitting the white (or inner) portion should be fair and any ball hitting the orange (or outer) portion should be foul. On the initial play to first base from the infield or outfield, the batter-runner **MUST** touch the orange (or outer) portion of the base.
 - b. The defensive player **MUST** always touch the white (or inner) portion. This rule is in effect only on the initial play at first base which does not include:
 - Returning to the base after over running
 - Running on a base hit to the outfield (runner may touch the orange/outer or white/inner part)
 - Re-tag to advance on a fly ball
 - The only exception to this, is if the throw takes the first baseman into foul territory. In this case, the first baseman may touch the orange bag to record the out.
 - c. Effect: If a base runner uses the orange (outer) portion at any time after the first attempt at first base and is not in contact with the white (inner) portion, then he is considered off the base
 - d. Penalty: The batter/runner is called out. This is not an appeal play. Play continues, ball is alive and in play and

RULE 4. BATS all other runners are in jeopardy.

- (1) USSSA Approved Bats will designate any bat legal for play. Bat must be marked "Official Softball Bat" and must have the USSSA stamp. Teams should refer to the USSSA Licensed Bats List to determine which bats are legal for composite league play. That list can be found at www.ussa.com.
- (2) Altered bats will not be tolerated in ABL play. ABL will attempt to crack down on "altered bats" to enhance the enjoyment and purity of the game. Use of an altered bat will result in immediate suspension. For more on Altered Bats, please visit <http://www.ussa.com/sports/AlteredBats.htm>.

- (3) Authorized bat manufacturers shall mark their products with the words "Official Softball" or words to that effect. When a bat does not meet the specifications as defined, has flat spots or pronounced dents, or if in the Umpires judgment, the bat has been altered, the Umpire shall prohibit the bat in question. Cracked, worn, or damaged bats are not altered bats, but will be removed from play. Such cracked, worn or damaged bats will not result in a player suspension (unlike an altered bat), unless the player returns the offending bat into ABL play after it has been removed. Paint or lettering wear is not a problem so long as the bat can be identified and has the appropriate BPF marking.
- (4) If a player comes to the plate with an illegal bat, that player will be ejected and subject to ejection/suspension rules (see Rule 13)

RULE 5. BLACKOUT DATES

- (1) There are no regular season games on: Easter Sunday, Memorial Day Weekend, 4th of July and Labor Day Weekend, along with any school holidays closings that affect a specific field.
- (2) All other holidays (i.e. Mother's Day, Father's Day, Halloween, religious holidays, etc.) must be requested off at time of registration.
- (6) If a team requests a BLACKOUT DATE (A.K.A bye week, in writing at time of registration), that team may or may not make up those games. Playoffs are decided based upon 'Winning Percentage' regardless of the number of games played.

RULE 6. CANCELLATION OF GAMES

- (1) Any team that must cancel a game for ANY reason after the schedule is announced will lose that game(s) 12-0. Making up this game IS NOT an option.
- (2) However, any team that must cancel their game may do so without paying the \$45 Game Forfeit Fine if:
 - a. The manager calls in the forfeit to the league at (201) 978-6042 (Mens) or 732-272-6003 (Coed) or emails pilla32@gmail.com (Mens) more than 72 hours prior to game time, **AND**
 - b. The manager receives confirmation from the league office that the request was received. *If you don't receive confirmation from the league office, then your cancellation request was not received!*
- (3) Any team that cancels their game with the league office less than by 4pm Saturday for a Sunday game will be subject to pay a Forfeit Penalty Fine (see FORFEIT RULE), received by credit card within 72 hours before your next game or else your game will be cancelled automatically!
- (4) The score will be 12-0 in favor of the team not at fault and will be recorded in the standings as such.
- (5) For Cancellation of Games due to weather, please see: "Inclement Weather Rule" for further details.

RULE 7 COED RULES (Manasquan Only)

Coed format is minimum 3 girls. You may play more than the minimum if you choose. For this league, the girls will hit in the batting spots #2, #5, #8. If a male batter is walked in front of a female, the male batter gets 2 bases. If there's less than 2 outs, the female will hit. If there are 2 outs, the female has choice to hit or draw a walk to first base.

- (1) BASE ON BALLS: On any walk to a male batter (intentional or not), the next batter - if a female - has her choice of walking or hitting up until the first pitch is thrown ONLY if there are two outs. If there are less than 2 outs and a male batter is walked before a female, he will go to second base, but the woman must bat. Runners will move only if they are forced.
- (2) BATTING ORDER: Minimum 3 Female players in the lineup, all must play defense and they will bat in the #2, #5 and #8 spots in the lineup. Two female batters may bat 'back-to-back' at any time. Teams can hit an unlimited amount of batters, but may never have more than 2 men batting 'back to back', except for when the lineup flips.
- (3) DEFENSIVE ALIGNMENT: 10 players can take the field. Teams may position players any way they wish as long as there are a maximum of (7) men, and minimum of (3) women on the field at all times. There is no need to alternate the sexes by defensive positions. You cannot have 8 men in the field. There is no maximum # of women; you may play as many women as necessary.
- (4) COURTESY RUNNER: The last recorded out of the same gender shall be the courtesy runner. (see Courtesy Runner rule for further details).
- (5) OUTFIELD POSITIONING: All outfielders must remain a minimum of 10 feet beyond the infield (umpire's discretion) when a female is at bat.

RULE 8. COIN TOSS

- (1) Regular Season: the winner of the coin toss decides to be home team 1st or 2nd game of the doubleheader (also applies to single-games)
- (2) Playoffs: the team who finishes higher in the (regular season) standings selects whether they want to be home or away for two out of the three games. They must announce their decision to the umpire prior to game one. Team may choose to be home team for games 1 & 2, 1 & 3, or 2 & 3 or the team may choose to be away in any or all games.

RULE 9. COMMUNICATION WITH LEAGUE

- (1) Only (1) member of the team shall call the league office to discuss team/league matters. The league will discuss these matters with either the manager or assistant manager, as noted on the registration form. The reason for this rule is to eliminate any confusion in communications between the league and teams.
- (2) All teams should have at least one representative who will be able to regularly check email and utilize the league website. This person should be designated as Team Manager or Assistant Manager. Please be sure to check your junk email folder in case our emails get sent there. All communication will be via email, and updates will be posted at joinABL.com

RULE 10. COMPLETE GAMES

- (1) A regular season game is considered complete after the losing team has batted 4 or more times
- (3) Games will be 7-innings, unless shortened due to weather or time-limit has been reached (**see Rule 51**)
- (4) In the event a game is not completed, teams will not receive a credit or refund for those games.
- (5) If a game in progress gets called due to darkness, then the score will revert to the last completed inning. If the game is not considered complete, it will continue where it left off, if time in the season permits.

RULE 11. COURTESY RUNNERS

- (1) Two batters per inning are permitted a courtesy runner. Runners are designated by **being the last recorded out** (**NOT** Last Batted Out).
 - a. In the event a player reaches base and requests a courtesy runner, that player(s) is allowed (not mandatory) to request a courtesy runner each time he reaches base in the same inning (i.e. a team bats around in the batting order and a player reaches base more than once in an inning).
 - b. If there is no last recorded out (i.e. the beginning of the game), the manager may choose any player as a courtesy runner without penalty.
 - c. If the last recorded out also requested a courtesy runner, then the manager may choose any player as a courtesy runner without penalty.
- (2) A courtesy runner may only be granted if requested before a pitch is thrown to the next batter.
- (3) If a player is injured while on the base paths, that player may receive an injury replacement if the umpire believes the injury is serious enough to warrant a change. This change will be permitted even if the injury takes place after the subsequent at-bat has begun. The injury exception is also good even if the 2nd courtesy runner has been taken in the inning.
- (4) In a COED Game, if a courtesy runner is requested, the last recorded out of the same gender shall be the courtesy runner.
- (5) If a courtesy runner is on base when his/her time at-bat comes up, that player must be replaced on base by the most recent last recorded out, whether that out came before or after the runners prior turn at-bat.

RULE 12. "CRASH RULE"

- (1) When a defensive player clearly has the ball and is waiting for the runner and the runner deliberately with great force crashes into the defensive player, the runner is declared out.

- (2) The offender shall be ejected, the ball is dead and all other runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the collision.

RULE 13. EJECTION & SUSPENSION PROCEDURES

- (1) Any player thrown out of a game by an umpire/league official may not be eligible to play for the next 2 games in addition to the game they are being ejected in (i.e. Player A gets thrown out Game #1 on Sunday. He cannot play until Game #2 of the following week) and must immediately leave the park or a forfeit will result.
- (2) Any player assaulting (or attempting to assault) an umpire is permanently banned from league competition, will receive a minimum of 1 year suspension from all sanctioning body competition, and a team termination may result with forfeiture of all league fees.
- (3) Any player fighting with another player or team will result in the following:
 - a. 1st offense: 20 game suspension (minimum)
 - b. 2nd offense: Permanent ban from the league
- (4) Any team that attempts to play regardless of park closing will be terminated from the league
- (5) Any player causing a disturbance over league suspensions or ejections will be terminated from the league.
- (6) Any player that is ejected 3 times in a season may be permanently banned from the league.
- (7) Any player or team that is terminated will forfeit all money paid.
- (8) If a player(s) is ejected from a game and the team does not have another player to replace him, an out will be recorded EVERY time that player is due up in the batting order.
- (9) When a team starts a game with 8 players and 1 player is ejected by an umpire, a forfeit will result.
- (10) The ABL League Office reserves the right to reduce or increase a suspension on a case-by-case basis.

RULE 14. ELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS

- (1) All players are required to complete the team roster form & sign the liability release waiver prior to participating.
- (2) An individual is not eligible to participate unless they have signed both the team roster form and liability release waiver. In addition, these forms must be received by the league office prior to any individual participating in league play.
- (3) Any team that allows an ineligible individual to play will result in an immediate forfeit.
- (4) Women are eligible to participate on a Men's team.
- (5) **Rostered players are required to have legal photo identification with them at all times.** If proof of identification is not provided upon request from an umpire or league official, that player will be immediately ejected from that game and subject to all the above ejection/suspension procedures listed above (in Rule 13).

RULE 15. EQUIPMENT

- (1) All catchers are advised to wear a mask.
- (2) Metal spikes are not allowed.
- (3) All teams are required to bring their own equipment (including bases and home plate). Failure to do so may result in a forfeit.

RULE 16. EXTRA HITTER/BATTING ORDER RULE

- (1) For Men's teams, up to 3 Extra hitters (EH) may be used in any spot in the batting order (for a total of 13 batters).
- (2) For Coed teams, unlimited extra hitters may be used, but you may never have more than 2 men batting 'back to back'
- (3) The EH must remain in the same spot in the batting order for the entire game.
- (4) When using up to 3 or 4 EH's, a team will bat up to 13 or 14 players (all fielders, pitcher, and EH's must bat)
- (5) When using 3 or 4 EH's, a team must have at least 13 or 14 players respectively at the live area of the field prior to the start of the game.
- (6) In a COED game, a team may not exceed (10) male batters in the batting order at any time.
- (7) Teams may play with 8 players and take an out in the 9th position
- (8) Teams may play with 9 **players without penalty. You may add to 10 batters in the order at** any point in the game.

Once teams have entered the 4th inning you may not add any (EH) to the bottom of the batting order. Players may arrive late but must be substituted in after this point.

RULE 17. FIELD MAINTENANCE (VERY IMPORTANT, PLEASE READ & INFORM PLAYERS!!!)

- (1) All Field Maintenance is done by the Field Owner only! The league and its participants are not authorized to touch any field at any time. If the umpire, league office, or authorized park personnel deem a field unplayable, please contact the league office so that we can move your game and contact the field owner. However, Field Owners do not have maintenance crews working on fields during the weekend.
- (2) Under no circumstances may any person(s) attempt to "repair" a field! Any team or person found to have "swept, raked, shoveled, pushed, pulled, or otherwise" water off of a field will be terminated from the league and will be subject to a fine from the Field Owner. What you may deem as simply sweeping water off a field is considered field damage by the field owner! Team Managers are responsible for the actions of their players and will be fined and/or prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Furthermore, the league will take legal action if any person is responsible for the loss of a field permit. There will be no additional warnings. First time offenders will be subject to all of the above actions.

RULE 19. FORFEITS

- (1) All teams have a **15-minute grace period** to field a minimum of 8 players for the 1st game.
- (2) After 15-minute grace period, the team has an additional 15 minutes to field 8 players for game 2. After such time, if a team is still unable to field 8 players, then that team will forfeit both games.
- (3) The forfeiting team is responsible for paying the entire umpire fee for both teams (\$90 doubleheader, \$45 single-games) at the field. If the forfeiting team does not pay at the field, then the team will have to pay a Fine equal to both teams' umpire fees. The league office must receive this "fine" via credit card payment or by mail (money order) or phone (Visa, Mastercard, Discover, or American Express), 3 days before your next game or else your next game will be automatically canceled. It is the **team manager's** responsibility to call the league office to confirm receipt of the forfeit fine. The league office will automatically cancel your game if payment is not received.
- (4) It is highly recommended that a team, who forfeits, pay the umpire AT THE FIELD so that the need to pay the fine is eliminated.
- (5) Any team that forfeits will lose 12-0 for each game forfeited.
- (6) Any team that forfeits two games or two doubleheaders may be terminated from the league, and forfeits all league fees.
- (7) When a team starts a game with 8 players and an umpire ejects 1 player, a forfeit will result.
- (8) A forfeit (umpire judgment) will result in the event a team intentionally stalls or slows down the game.
- (9) If your team forfeits with 2 weeks or less left in the regular season (and no chance to make the playoffs), you will be automatically terminated unless you call the league office at the time of your forfeit.

RULE 20. FOUL LANGUAGE

- (1) Foul language will not be tolerated. If an umpire deems an individual to be offensive, the player(s) will be ejected. An individual or team using excessive foul language (umpires judgment) will forfeit their games and may be terminated from the league with forfeit of all league fees.

Rule 21A. GAME MANAGEMENT

Due to time restraints we are instituting speed up rules to insure teams will have as much time as possible to play their scheduled games within the time allotted.

- 1) Teams may only take infield practice during the first inning of each game. Infield practice will not be permitted after the first inning of each game
- 2) Pitchers will be granted only 1 warm-up pitch prior to the start of each inning following the first inning.
- 3) There will be a 5-minute maximum break in-between games of a doubleheader; teams will be expected to begin play immediately once the 5 minutes are up.
- 4) Once the umpire calls "Batter-up" the batter will have 10 seconds to step into the box, or a strike will be called.

RULE 21. GAME TIME

- (1) A team must start the game with a **minimum of 8 players** to avoid forfeit (see Forfeit Rule for details).

RULE 22. GROUND RULES –

- (1) Home Run Limit - All games played on fenced fields will be subject to a limit of 6 over the fence home runs per team, per game, (unless the field has an otherwise specified ground rule). Any HR over 6 will be an out.
- (2) See last page for ground rules to specific field locations.

RULE 23. HOME RUN LIMIT –

- (1) See Rule 22

RULE 23. INCLEMENT WEATHER

- 1) Call The Rain Out Hotline Number at **201-224-7431** (1) hour prior to game time. ****Please input this # into your Cell Phone!**
- 2) IF THERE IS NO RAIN OUT MESSAGE...THEN YOUR TEAM MUST GO DOWN TO THE FIELD!
- 3) Games will be canceled due to poor field conditions. It is each player's responsibility to call the rain out hotline to check on game status regardless of the weather on game day.
- 4) **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO "REPAIR" (rake, shovel, add dirt, etc.) ANY FIELDS.** IF A FIELD NEEDS TO BE REPAIRED IT IS UNPLAYABLE. Do not dig or add dirt! Tampering with fields will lead to suspension and possible termination from the league, as well as, potential fine from the field owners.
- 5) Park authorities have the final say as to whether a field is playable or not.
- 6) Any team that refuses to leave a field after it has been declared "unplayable" will be automatically terminated from the league with forfeiture of all league fees.
- 7) Under no circumstance will any team take it upon themselves to cancel any games. Any violation of this will result in doubleheader forfeit by the guilty team.

- 8) League officials reserve the right to reschedule any game to a new time and field if necessary to complete league games.
- 9) If games are moved, extra time will be allotted for both teams to get to the field.
- 10) Any team failing to show up after a game has moved will have a double-header forfeit levied against them.
- 11) Rainouts **may or may not** be made up depending upon permit time. There are no guarantees to the minimum number of games played nor are there any refunds or credits for games not played. Field Permits are allocated by a block of time, not by number of games. Therefore, Field Owners require that all leagues complete activity by expiration date with no refunds or credits of any kind.

RULE 24. INJURIES

- (1) **Personal liability and medical insurance is not included in the league fee. However, if you wish to purchase medical and / or liability insurance for your team, we will refer you to our Preferred Insurance Carrier. Please email us at info@joinABL.com for details.**
- (2) An injury must be reported to the League Office within 24 hours.
- (3) Any team that has purchased insurance, and has a claim, must fill out the claim form and mail it to the insurance company directly. In addition, please contact the league office immediately so that we are aware of the injury.
- (4) In the event a player is injured and cannot continue he must be replaced with another player. Otherwise, an OUT will be recorded each time he comes up in the batting order.
- (5) When starting a game with 8 players, and a player gets injured (and can not continue), that game will continue with either:
 - a. Replacing him with another eligible player, or
 - b. Allowing his next turn at bat an automatic out and continuing with 7 players.
- (6) An injury is the only time a team can continue with only 7 players.

RULE 25. INSURANCE

- (1) **Personal injury and liability insurance is not included in the league fee.** (See 24.1)
- (2) All team managers are required to inform players regarding the insurance options.
- (3) Do not take it upon yourself to decide whether or not your team wants the insurance. It should be a team decision. There are several companies that offer team insurance, please conduct your own research and contact them directly.
- (4) Liability and medical insurance may only be purchased for the entire team (not individual players).
- (5) Liability and medical insurance may be purchased at any time and applications (with payment) must be sent to the insurance company directly! Do not send insurance applications or payment to the league office. Applications sent to the league office will not be processed and are invalid.
- (6) Each player plays at his or her own risk and must sign off on the electronic waiver

RULE 26. LEAGUE FEES

- (1) All league fees and deposits are non-refundable under all circumstances.
- (2) All forfeits bonds will be placed in a non-interest bearing account.
- (3) All league fees must be paid in full by the final registration. Any team that is not fully paid by the deadline will not be put on the schedule.
- (4) Any player or team that is terminated from the league will forfeit all fees paid.

RULE 27. LEAGUE RULINGS

- (1) Teams or players that do not comply with ABL or sanctioning body rules will be terminated from the league
- (2) Any matter regarding ABL will be made by league officials and their decision is final.
- (2) League officials reserve the right to revise rules and/or schedule at any time.

RULE 28. LITTER

- (1) All litter must be cleaned up by the responsible team before leaving park grounds. Failure to do so may result in a team termination.
- (2) If an area was littered when your team arrived, please notify the league office or you will be held accountable.

RULE 29. MAKE-UP GAMES

- (1) If a team cancels a game, they will receive 2 losses, will not be allowed to makeup these games, and may have to pay a forfeit bond (see Forfeit Bond rule for clarification).
- (2) Regular season games may or may not be made up based upon availability of fields, officials, permit time, etc.
- (3) Teams will not receive a credit or refund for games not made up since field permits, insurance and other fees incurred are non-refundable.
- (4) Rainouts **may or may not** be made up depending upon permit time. There are no guarantees to the minimum number of games played nor are there any refunds or credits for games not played. Field Permits are allocated by a block of time, not by number of games. Therefore, Field Owners require that all leagues complete activity by expiration date with no refunds or credits of any kind.

RULE 30. OFFICE HOURS

- (1) Monday-Friday (9:00am until 6pm);
- (2) For all inquiries, email pilla32@gmail.com during business hours as listed above. All communication during business hours is done via email.
- (3) However, in the event of an 'Emergency at-the-field' during after-hours, then call **(201) 978-6042**. An 'Emergency at-the-field' during after-hours includes: no umpire (15 minutes past game time) or field permit conflict at the field. Under no circumstances should you call after-hours for any other purpose. Do not call for any reason after 9pm at night.

RULE 31. PARKING

- (1) All team members and spectators must abide by each school / town parking laws.
- (2) Any player(s) that parks in a fire zone, no parking zone, grass, etc. will be ticketed, towed, and/or suspended from the league. It is the manager's responsibility to inform his players of where to park.

RULE 32. PERMITS

- (1) Both managers are responsible for carrying ball field permits at all times when applicable.
- (2) The Umpire is not responsible and will not have any field permits in his possession.
- (3) Permits will be provided to team captains. If there is no permit presented to you, then it is on file at the park office.

RULE 33. PITCH (TYPE PERMITTED)

- (1) The ball must be Pitched Underhanded at a Slow Speed.
- (2) The Pitched ball must arc at least three feet, after leaving the Pitcher's hand and before it passes any part of home plate. The umpire has the option to call illegal pitch. If this is the case, the batter has the option to swing or take.
- (3) The Pitched Ball shall not rise higher than ten feet above the ground.
- (4) Pitchers mound to Home plate distance is: 50' feet.
- (5) See USSSA Rulebook for all other pitching rules. (Depending on which umpire association is at your game)
- (6) Pitcher fakes are permitted in accordance with USSSA Rules and Regulations.
- (7) Base-runner cannot leave the base until batter makes contact, or an out will be called

RULE 34. PITCH COUNT

- (a) A base on balls will be the result of 3 balls.
- (b) A strike out will be the result of 2 strikes, unless: a foul ball is hit on the second strike. Then the batter is entitled to another strike.
- (c) Baserunner cannot leave the base until contact is made by the batter.

RULE 35. PLAYOFF FORMAT

- (1) Top four teams in each division qualify for the playoffs (**League office reserves the right to modify this in-season**)
- (2) Playoffs are decided based upon 'Winning Percentage' regardless of the number of games played.
 - (a) In the event of 2 team tie, head-to-head results decides winner.
 - (b) In the event of 2 team tie (& they split), best plus/minus rating for the season decides winner.
 - (c) In the event of 2 team tie (still after a and b), then best plus/minus rating vs. each other decides.
 - (d) In the event of a 3 or more team tie:
 - i. The tiebreaker is plus/minus for the season
 - B. In the event of 3 or more teams tie and 2 of them have identical plus/minus rating, then it

will revert to head-to-head between those two teams

C. In the event none of the above tiebreakers settle all ties, total runs for will determine the winner

- (3) There are a total of (2) Playoff Rounds following Summer & Fall season play:
 - (a) Round 1: Divisional Playoffs- 1st place vs. 4th place; 2nd place vs. 3rd place (Best 2-out-of-3 Game Series)
 - (b) Round 2: Divisional Playoffs- Winners from Round 1 play each other (Best 2-out-of-3 Game Series)
- (4) Summer play will include a Tournament of Champions- Divisional Winners play Tournament for League Championship (barring excessive inclement weather throughout the season)
- (5) When available, two umpires will be used for all playoff games (\$35 per team, per game).
- (6) All playoff rounds are Best 2-out-of-3 Game Series (mini-season will consist of (1) 9 inning game per round), however the league office reserves the right to modify the format due to time and/or daylight constraints

RULE 36. PRE-GAME CONFERENCE

- (1) Prior to Double Header, both managers or a representative will meet with the umpire at home plate to execute the coin toss, discuss ground rules, and discuss dead ball areas.

RULE 37. PROTESTS

- (1) All protests must be made in writing. Failure to do so will result in void of the protest.
- (2) A protest announcement must be made by the manager to the umpire at the time of incident (before the next pitch is thrown) or else the protest is invalid.
- (3) After a protest has been declared, the game continues.
- (4) Do not call the league office to explain a protest. It must be in writing only! (Email to: jross@joinABL.com)
- (5) Any protest concerning umpires judgment is not valid.
- (6) Any protest submitted to the league office will be subject to a \$25 protest fee to be paid when the protest is filed. There will be no exceptions to this rule.

RULE 38. RE-ENTRY

- (1) Any of the starting players may withdraw and re-enter once, provided such player occupies the same batting position whenever he is in the line-up. A substitute who is withdrawn may not re-enter.
- (2) All re-entry by any starter should be reported to the Umpire at the time of re-entry.
- (3) Any player found to not properly re-enter will be ejected

RULE 39. ROSTERS

- (1) The League Office must be in receipt of the Team Roster prior to date specified by League Office at time of registration and the Manager must keep a copy for himself/herself. You may mail or email your roster to the League Office. Please await instructions from the league office prior to the start of the season.
- (2) Teams must post the roster on your team page at www.joinABL.com (First name, Last name, Email address) or in a document emailed to you
- (3) Any team that does not submit their roster for approval prior to dates indicated will forfeit all subsequent games until a legal roster is submitted and approved
- (4) If an approved Roster is not provided upon request from an umpire or league official, the team will immediately forfeit. If it is the second game of a DH, only the second game will be counted as a forfeit (7-0).
- (5) Some divisions may require a lineup card to be handed to the umpire.
- (6) The maximum number of players allowed on a team roster is: 20.

- (6) Any team using illegal players during the regular season will result in the following:
 - (a) 1st offense: Forfeit the game in question
 - (b) 2nd offense: Forfeit the remainder of season/playoffs with forfeiture of all fees and awards.
- (6b) Any team using illegal players during the playoffs will result in the following:
 - (a) Forfeiture of playoffs, fees, and awards earned.
- (7) Any roster found to be falsified will result in that team being terminated from the league with forfeiture of all fees and awards.
- (8) Rostered players are required to have legal photo ID with them at all times. If proof of ID is not provided upon request from an umpire or league official, that player will be immediately ejected from that game and subject to all of the above ejection/suspension procedures. **If the player can produce a valid ID prior to the next scheduled game, and the valid ID proves that player is a rostered team member, that player will be allowed to play the subsequent game.**

RULE 40. ROSTER CHALLENGE PROCEDURE

- (1) In the event you believe your opponent is utilizing illegal players, please see the following procedure:
 - (a) Identify the player(s) in question to the Umpire directly.
 - (b) The Umpire shall ask those players for identification (i.e. driver's license, etc.) to prove who they are, and will also ask the manager to produce his approved roster.
 - (c) In the event the player in question cannot produce proper identification, the player will be immediately ejected and the game will continue from that point. The game will not be considered a forfeit by the offending team.
 - (d) In the event the manager cannot produce his approved roster, he will be ejected and his team will automatically forfeit (7-0).
 - (e) If the player(s) are found to be ineligible, than that team will lose by forfeit (7-0). If it is the 2nd game of a DH, and the player participated in both games, only the 2nd game will be counted as a forfeit (7-0).
- (2) Please keep in mind that most teams have (20) players on a roster knowing full well that many of those players will be available as needed (i.e. playoffs).
- (3) Players are *not* required to play a minimum number of games to be eligible for playoffs.

- (4) Roster challenges can only be made after the roster submission dates listed for each specific season.
- (5) A roster challenge protest **MUST** be made prior to the completion of the 5th inning of a game, and while the player in question is playing. No roster challenge will be accepted once the game has finished or if the player in question is not playing.

RULE 41. ROSTER CHANGES

- (1) Roster changes are allowed until the league roster deadline date, after which all rosters will be frozen and no changes will be allowed.
- (2) Each season (Spring Training, Summer, Mini, Fall) is independent from one another. Therefore, you may completely change your roster from one season to another. However, you need to complete only one roster per year if there are no changes from one season to another within the same year. If there are changes between seasons, teams must submit their updated roster for League Office Approval, prior to that season deadline, to be made valid.

RULE 42. RULE BOOKS

- (1) Each manager is responsible for knowledge of league rules and having the rulebook present at all games.
- (2) In case of Rules interpretation questions, be sure to have this rule book with you at all games!

RULE 43. RUN RULE (MERCY RULE)

- (1) A 12 run rule will be observed after the losing team has been up to bat 4 times (5 times for Coed games). If the Visiting Team goes ahead by 12 or more runs during an inning, the home team will STILL GET TO BAT in the bottom half of that inning! If the home team goes ahead by 12 runs in an inning, the game is over (once the 12th run scores!).
- (2) For a 9-inning game, the losing team will have to have batted 6 times, with the above parameters remaining the same.

The flip-flop rule is in effect and can be called by the umpire automatically. If the visiting team is winning by an equal amount to or greater than the mercy rule going into an inning where the run rule is in effect, the visiting team will become the home team.

RULE 45. SCHEDULE REQUESTS

- (1) All schedules that are distributed at the start of the season are final.
- (3) Any team that has a special request (ex: black out date, time request, etc.) **must** make their request in writing on the registration form only. Only requests on the registration form will be considered.
- (4) Only changes due to field permit modifications will initiate a schedule change.
- (5) Once the season has begun, do not call the league office to request a schedule change. It will not be considered.

RULE 46. SCORES

- (1) The League will post final scores at www.joinABL.com. However, if there is no statistician at your game, the team Captain will be responsible for posting the final scores on the website.
- (2) Scores not reported will result in loss by forfeit for either or both teams.
- (3) Confirm your final scores with the other manager upon completion of your games at the field.
- (4) The league office will not be responsible for inaccurate standings if your team does not call in its scores every week.
- (5) For more accurate (and immediately updated) scores, please submit online at: www.joinABL.com.

RULE 47. SCORE BOOKS

- (1) When available the League Office may furnish each team with a scorebook for the Summer, Mini & Fall League.
- (2) Scorebooks must be kept up to date and available for inspection to league officials or umpires upon request.

RULE 48. SMOKING

- (1) It is a Federal, State, and Local law that smoking and any use of tobacco products are prohibited on school grounds.

RULE 49. SOFTBALL (TYPE OF)

A) The league office will supply each team with approved softballs as determined by their program. Men's in Bergen County uses a USSSA Classic M softball.

B) All leagues which play exclusively in Hoboken will use a Clincher softball (Coed and Summer Men's league.)

- (2) Each team will present the umpire with one new ball and one good backup per game.
- (3) Only softballs approved by the league office are eligible for use.
- (4) Any team that runs out of the allotted softballs will have to purchase balls at their own expense.

RULE 50. TIE GAMES

- (1) In the event a game is suspended (i.e. inclement weather, darkness) during the middle of an inning and the game is tied, the score will revert back to the last full-completed inning. If the score at that point is tied than, the game may be resumed from the point of the last pitch.
- (2) May only be made up if sufficient time and field space is available.

RULE 51. TIME LIMITS

- (1) No inning may start 10 minutes prior to the next time session. This is in effect whether or not there is a scheduled game behind on your field.
- (2) Time limits are setup due to field permit time allowed as set by the County, Town, or School Districts.
- (3) There are no time limits for playoff games. All Playoff games must be played to completion (see Rule 10A)

RULE 52. TOURNAMENTS

- (1) League play takes precedent over all tournaments.
- (2) Visit joinABL.com for information regarding upcoming tournaments.

RULE 53. UMPIRE FEES / SERVICES

- (1) Each team will pay the umpire prior to the start of the first game.
- (2) Umpires will receive full game fee if a game is canceled after it has started (i.e. rain, forfeit, etc.).
- (3) Umpire will receive full fee in the event there is a forfeit. (see forfeit rule)
- (4) Umpire fees are as follows
 - a. Regular Season Double headers (\$50 per doubleheader, per team for a 1 man crew) (\$40 per game, per team for a 2 man crew)
 - b. Single 9-Inning playoffs (\$25 per team for one man crew, \$40 per team for a two man crew)
 - c. Best 2-of-3 series (\$22 per team, per game for a one man crew, \$35 per team, per game, for a two man crew)
- (5) Umpires are instructed to arrive on time for your game, in the unlikely event the umpire is late, please call (201) 978-6042. **PLEASE DO NOT CALL BEFORE GAME TIME LOOKING FOR YOUR UMPIRE!**

RULE 54. UNIFORMS

- (1) It is recommended that all players wear jerseys (not required!). The league will provide each team with numbered Shirts for the season.

