

**2017 SHENANGO VALLEY MODIFIED
SOFTBALL LEAGUE
BY-LAWS**

THE LEAGUE

1.01 NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Shenango Valley Modified Softball League, a non-profit organization affiliated with USA Softball (formerly ASA) of Pennsylvania. Our purpose is to promote softball and recreational activity in and around Mercer County, Pennsylvania.

The League shall be a 10-man modified pitch organization that utilizes the rules and regulations set forth by USA Softball. All churches, organizations or just a group of players (8) are always welcome to enter new teams. All managers should be a salesperson for the League at all times. Males 16 years and older are eligible to play.

1.02 ORGANIZATION

The League will have officers (President, Vice President, etc.) who shall be elected by the League managers. The voting can either be through roll call or written ballot.

The President shall be responsible for the following duties:

- *Presiding over, maintaining order at and recording minutes of all regular and special League meetings
- *Represent League at outside functions
- *Maintaining all League financial transactions and League budget
- *Prepare League regular-season schedule
- *Settle any scheduling disputes/conflicts between teams
- *Maintain League won-lost records
- *Act as liaison to COG and to local USA Softball umpire chapter

The League's Executive Board consists of one (1) representative from each of the League teams. The vote of the majority shall prevail in all matters.

1.03 ORDER OF BUSINESS

The order of business at each meeting shall be: Call to order, roll call, reading of Minutes, treasurer's report, committee reports, announcements, old business, new business and adjournment. This order may be suspended or changed by a majority vote. Roberts Rules of Order shall be followed during meetings.

Unless otherwise waived, no more than two representatives (Manager and/or Assistant Manager) from each team should attend League meetings. The By-Laws of the League may be amended or changed by a majority vote of the commissioners and Executive Board as long as the total number of teams present represents a quorum. Voting on issues will be by roll call but a written ballot will be used if two or more board members desire so.

Once a By-Law is approved for a season, it shall remain in effect for the entire season. League By-Laws can only be changed during the off-season.

2.01 LEAGUE STABILITY

All teams are held bound to the League. Every effort between managers, assistant managers and players to secure team stability must be made.

2.02 SPLITTING/COMBINING TEAMS

Any team with an excess of players that desire to split to form two separate teams shall notify the League commissioners at least two months before the regular season. The teams should also include a proposed plan of player distribution.

Two teams with a shortage of players that must combine in order to field a team shall also notify the League at least two months before the regular season. The Executive Board shall discuss and vote upon all team splitting and combining.

2.03 TEAM DISBANDMENT

Any players on a team that disbands before the midway point of regular season (June 15) shall be placed into a special dispersal draft. The team with the lowest winning percentage in the league at that time shall have first pick in the dispersal draft. The team with the second-lowest win percentage shall pick second. This will proceed until the team with the best percentage makes its first pick.

The dispersal draft continues until all players have been chosen or all remaining teams decline to make further selections.

2.04 PLAYER DRAFT

The League shall hold a draft for all unaffiliated players prior to the start of the regular season. Prospective players with no team preference should submit their name, phone number, and other pertinent information to the League before the draft.

Players from teams that disband during the previous offseason are also eligible for the draft if they have not joined another existing or new team in the League. Selection order will be determined by reverse order of finish from the previous season. The previous year's League champion shall have the final pick in each round.

THE RULES

3.01 PLAYING RULES

A. All rules of the current season USA Softball “Official Rules of Softball” for 10-player modified pitch softball shall be in effect for all League regular season and playoff games, except where otherwise noted in the League By-Laws.

B. Any team unable to field at least nine (9) eligible players within 15 minutes after the scheduled game time shall forfeit. The forfeiting team is also responsible for paying both umpires.

C. The home team shall have the field for warm-ups for the first 30-minute period before the game. The visiting team will then have the field for the next 30 minutes. If there is less than one hour available due to weather/field conditions or previous games, the teams shall evenly divide the available warm-up time.

D. The home team shall be responsible for contacting the umpires and visiting team manager at least 75 minutes before the start of the game if it must be postponed due to weather/field conditions. After this point, the umpires shall determine the playability of the field. Players should not assume a game is postponed until they have been notified by their manager.

E. Ground rules for each League field shall be determined at a League meeting before the first game. If a situation arises that requires special ground rules for a game, they shall be set by the home team in conjunction with the umpires.

F. Use of the USA Softball Extra Hitter (EH) rule is optional by either team. Teams may use one Extra Hitter in their lineup. The Extra Hitter is permitted to enter the field as a defensive player at any time during the game. The replaced player then becomes an “EH.” Each team must keep the same number of batters in the lineup for the entire game and batting positions may not change.

G. Use of the USA Softball Designated Player (DP) rule is optional by either team. A team may have one (1) player bat for another player who will play only defense (the “flex” player). The DP and the flex may not be in the batting order at the same time. The flex player can enter the batting order only in the spot of the player who was originally named as “DP” at the beginning of the game. If a team inadvertently writes “DH” on its lineup, the DP rules will still apply to that player.

H. USA Softball Substitution Rule: Starting players may be removed from the lineup and reenter only once at any time. Starting players must re-enter into their original place in the batting order. Substitutes may also re-enter the game once in the same place of insertion in the order.

I. USA Softball Courtesy Runner Rule: Teams may utilize the USA Softball Courtesy Runner for the catcher and the pitcher. The Courtesy Runner must be an eligible

substitute. If the DP is batting for the catcher or pitcher, a Courtesy Runner cannot be used for the DP.

J. Once a pitcher is set on the rubber, a batter who is squared around to bunt must either bunt or pull back. Any player who shows bunt and then swings away (“slashing”) is automatically out and ejected from the game, whether he makes contact or not with the ball. The play is automatically dead and all runners return to their base. The player is subject to all penalties assessed against ejected players.

(If you square to bunt, you must bunt or take the pitch.)

K. If a team has nine (9) players, they can begin the game but must take an out in the 10th batting position. A player who shows up after the game begins automatically goes into the 10th spot. This is USA Softball Rule 4.1.D. Teams may agree to waive this rule before the game.

L. If a player must leave and no substitute is available, an out is recorded each time his place in the batting order is passed.

M. If a team has eight players or less for any reason, they must forfeit.

3.02 PLAYING RULES

A. The home team is responsible for supplying bases (60 feet) and straight base lines. The base lines should include the runner’s lane down the first base line. The pitching rubber must be secured to the ground at a distance of 46 feet. The umpires may suspend games if the home team does not supply proper field equipment.

B. Both teams will provide one new ball for each game. Each team will use a new ball in its half of the first inning. Each team should also provide a good backup ball. The umpire may request additional balls if the others become lost or unusable. The umpire should keep the newer balls in play as much as possible. The pitcher may not request an older ball without valid reason.

C. In regular season games, each team is responsible for paying one umpire.

D. Team managers must have their starting lineup submitted to the opposing team at least five minutes before the start of the game. The lineup should include player last names. First initial/name should be used to distinguish players with the same last name.

E. The “run-ahead” rule for the League shall be 12 runs after five innings. If losing, the designated home team shall have an equal number of at-bats as the winning visiting team. The “run-ahead” rule shall be in effect for all regular-season and playoff games.

F. Any game that is shortened because of weather or darkness is an official game if the losing team has had at least five at-bats. If a team takes the lead in the top half of an inning and the game is then halted, the game shall be suspended at

that point and resumed at a later date. Games that are stopped before the fifth inning shall be resumed from the point of interruption.

3.03 PROTESTED GAMES

All protests must be reported to the League within 24 hours of the completion of the protested games. Protests will only be accepted on the misinterpretation, omission or misapplication of a League or USA Softball rule, or the use of an ineligible player. The protesting manager must notify an umpire before the next pitch or play for a protest to be valid. (Exception: ineligible player). The umpire(s) must sign both scorebooks at that time.

3.04 DISCIPLINE

Runners are not permitted to “bull over” a defensive player. Runners who do not slide and then initiate contact with a defensive player are subject to ejection. Vulgar swearing and unsportsmanlike conduct toward any player or umpire will not be tolerated.

Ejected players must leave the field/complex in a timely fashion or his team will forfeit the game. An ejection will also result in a one-game suspension. A player may appeal his suspension to the League’s Executive Board and/or League President. A player who is ejected from a second game during the season will subject to a suspension of at least one game as determined by the League President and/or Vice President. Any player who is ejected three times in a season is suspended indefinitely.

If a player or manager makes any unsportsmanlike contact with an umpire, he shall be ejected from the game and suspended from league activity for one year. The offending person may also be subject to further sanction from the USA Softball.

If a player or manager is involved in a physical fight with an opposing player/manager, both are ejected and suspended for a minimum of three (3) games. Any player or manager who engages in excessive or egregious unsportsmanlike conduct (such as – but not limited to – abuse/throwing of equipment, violent behavior, etc.) will be suspended for three (3) games.

3.05 PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

Players must participate in/attend (and be listed as an eligible substitute) one-third of the regular season games to be eligible to participate in the playoffs. League rosters must be submitted to the President by June 30. Teams will forfeit any game played after that date if their League roster is not submitted.

Games that are forfeited or called due to rain do not count toward the playoff minimum unless the umpire(s) sign both teams’ scorebooks to verify the lineup. A game that is forfeited or called before the scheduled start time cannot be counted toward the playoff minimum.

THE SCHEDULE

4.01 SCHEDULE STRUCTURE

A. The League shall be divided into two divisions (American and National) each season. The previous season's won/lost records will determine divisional placement. American: 1st, 4th, 5th, 8th, 9th (12th). National: 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 7th, 10th (11th). The League may elect to use a one-division format on a year-to-year basis if a majority of the Executive Board votes in favor.

B. If a game is postponed due to weather/field conditions, the managers have five days to establish a makeup date. If the managers cannot agree on a date, the President will select a date and time for the game.

C. Games will be scheduled all days, except Fridays and Saturdays. Teams may play makeup games on Fridays, if desired. No team shall be required to play on a Friday or Saturday in the regular season. In terms of League scheduling, Sunday shall be the "next day" after Thursday.

D. Teams must play all scheduled games in regular season.

4.02 PLAYOFF STRUCTURE

A. The stepladder format will be used for each division, based on teams' regular season won/lost record until there are four teams remaining in each division (5th vs. 4th, loser eliminated, winner vs. first-place team in a best-of-3 series; 3rd vs. 2nd in a best-of-3).

If the League uses a one-division format, the stepladder will be used to reduce the number of teams to eight (8th vs. 1st in a best-of-3, etc.)

B. The League will supply new balls for each playoff game. A new ball will be introduced in the top of the first inning and the other new ball will be put in play at the beginning of the bottom of the first inning. No new balls can be introduced after the first two new balls are gone unless both teams agree. All game balls are to be taken to the next game for use as backup balls.

C. The League will pay for all umpires in the playoffs.

D. No team shall be forced to play three consecutive calendar days during the playoffs. Playoff games will not be played on Friday or Saturday.

E. The higher-seeded team in each playoff game will be home team. In a series, the higher seed will be the home team in the first, third and fifth games. The lower seed will be the home team in the second and fourth games. The teams may adjust this to accommodate the needs of the League and/or host facilities.

F. The League reserves the right to utilize a double-elimination tournament format for the playoffs.

G. The following tiebreaker system will be used for ties in playoff seeding, player drafting or division setup:

a. Head-to-head competition

b. Matching wins tie-breaker (record against first-place team in League/division; record against second-place team, etc. until one team has a better record than the other). If tie cannot be broken, then proceed to coin toss.

H. Teams must have met all of their financial obligations to the League prior to the start of the playoffs or that team will not be eligible for the playoffs.

2017 PLAYOFF FORMAT

All teams qualify for the playoffs. The League will utilize a double-elimination tournament format to determine the champion. The higher-seeded team will be the home team in each game. In the championship game, the undefeated team will be home team while the one-loss team will be the visitor.

If the "if necessary" game is needed, the higher-seeded team will be the home team for that game.