

Blue Water Church Softball League

Constitution and Rules

Unanimously approved Spring 2009

ARTICLE I

League Purposes

The purposes that prompted the formation of the Blue Water Church Softball League and for which it will continue in operation from year to year are as follows:

1. To promote the spiritual growth of all participants by exposing them to teammates and opposing players who demonstrate, through their words and actions, their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and their desire to serve Him.
2. To exemplify through gentlemanly conduct and good sportsmanship the fact the softball can be played to the glory of God.
3. To provide a wholesome means of releasing energy and developing physical stamina.
4. To enable persons to further develop their ability to play softball through practice, managerial instruction, and the observation of skillful players in action.
5. To encourage its participants to attend church regularly and take part in church activities.
6. To foster leadership ability and a strong sense of responsibility in those who serve as managers and especially those who are elected to the Executive Board, consisting of a President, two Vice Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer. The Secretary and Treasurer positions may be combined if one person is willing to accept this responsibility and the Managers Association approves the nomination.
7. To develop a spirit of friendliness and cooperation between the churches represented in the league.
8. To provide entertainment and excitement for spectators.

ARTICLE II

Officers' Qualifications

1. An officer must be knowledgeable of the game and the rules of softball.
2. An officer must have maintained a satisfactory attendance record at Managers Association meetings.
3. An officer must be able to testify to his having established a personal relationship with Christ.

**Official duties
President**

1. To call meetings of the Managers Association and the Executive Board.
Whenever possible, he will notify the appropriate persons at least one week in advance of the meeting and supply them with copies of the agenda.
2. To preside at Managers Association and Executive Board meetings.
3. To appoint committees to meet and devise solutions to problems rose at Managers Association and Executive Board meetings.
4. To supervise the awarding of trophies to the Division Winners and the League Champions at the end of the playoffs.
5. To communicate with the managers of teams seeking admission into the league.
6. To notify the appropriate persons of Executive Board rulings on protests of games and penalties for misconduct.
7. To arrange for the preparation of the season's schedule.
8. To conduct the election of officers at each September Managers Association meeting.
9. To appoint persons to the Executive Board to serve the remaining terms of Executive Board members who have resigned or ascended to the Presidency.

Vice President

1. To preside at Managers Association and Executive Board meetings when designated to do so in the absence of the President.
2. To obtain pertinent information about the games played from the managers of the winning teams and to organize and submit this information to the Times Herald.
3. To make certain that all playing fields used by teams in their conferences are in playable condition and to communicate with the Port Huron Recreation Department and the Port Huron Area School District when necessary to request improvements in the condition of playing fields.
4. To allow players' names to be added to team rosters upon notification by managers in their conferences.
5. To advise managers in their conferences regarding the make-up of postponed games.

Secretary

1. To take minutes, including a record of those present, at all Managers Association and Executive Board meetings and to keep all such minutes in some orderly form for future references.
2. To read the minutes of previous meetings when requested to do so by the President at Managers Association and Executive Board meetings.
3. To compile a record of all Executive Board rulings on protests of games and penalties for misconduct.

4. To count the votes in secret ballot elections.

Treasurer

1. To keep an accurate record of the league's income, expenditures and current balance.
2. To present a report of income, expenditures and current balance when requested to do so by the President at Managers Association and Executive Board meetings
3. To maintain a checking account at a bank so that the league's money can be deposited and checks written to cover bills.
4. To collect the league entry fee and players' fees from each team's manager prior to the start of the season.
5. To reimburse Executive Board members for expenses incurred in the exercise of their duties.
6. To call a Managers Association meeting for the purpose of conducting an election involving the Vice President to fill a vacancy in the office of President.

Trustees (3)

1. To be present when possible during disciplinary hearings.
2. To keep the website current and up to date.

Terms of Office

1. Officers will be elected at the September meeting of the Managers Association held at 7:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday after the last complete game of the season. They will assume office immediately.
2. Officers will hold office for one year until the following September Managers Association meeting or until their successors are elected and assume office.

ARTICLE III

Eligibility Rules

1. A team must have at least twelve players on its roster.
2. Players must be 14 years old by July 20th of the current season.
3. Players under 18 years of age must wear a protective cup.
4. Teams must have matching jerseys (same color) and non-repetitive numbers. Hats are not mandatory, but if they are worn they must all be the same color. Players not in proper uniform may only play if their team has fewer than seven players in attendance without them.
5. Shorts may not be worn under any circumstances.

6. Rosters must be submitted to the league secretary one-week prior to their season opener. They should be typed or printed and turned in with signed Liability Releases (contracts) and players' fees. A copy should be initialed by the league Secretary and kept by the team manager, available for inspection at each game.
7. Players added to a team roster after the provisions of Rule 6 must wait seven days or sit out one game, whichever occurs first, before becoming eligible to play.
8. All league fees must be paid by the date selected for the upcoming season.
9. All players must be on their team roster.
10. Players may be included on state rosters of another team and still play in the Blue Water Church League. These players become ineligible for Blue Water Church League play when they appear in a regular season game for any other men's recreational softball team. This does not include weekend tournaments but does include all other playoff games, regular season games, or rain make-ups played on weekends. Coed softball will be exempt from this rule.
11. Players may not be added to a team's roster after June 20th, except if a team's roster falls below twelve players due to injury. Such additions must be approved by a majority of the Executive Board. This rule also applies to trades under Rule 14 of this Article.
12. Players must meet the requirements of attendance or membership established and expected by the pastor or board of his respective church. Managers are expected to enforce these requirements. Failure to do so may result in a report being filed with the pertinent pastor or church board. If there is still an unresolved problem, Article 8, Section 3 may apply.
13. All players must sign a Liability Release Form (contract). Minors must have a parent or legal guardian sign their contract.
14. A player who has played on one church team and then starts attending another church may play for his new church after obtaining a signed release from his original team's coach and after sitting out all games for one week (seven days) immediately following his last game for the original team.

ARTICLE IV

Rules of Play

1. For game purposes a team must have at least seven players to begin play. A team will forfeit if they do not have enough players on the field by 6:10 p.m. (first game) or 7:20 p.m. (second game). If the home team for the 6:00 p.m. game is short players they may execute the "option" of allowing the visiting team to become the home team and take the field first. This will allow the shorthanded team to begin the game batting the players they have on hand. As additional players arrive they must be inserted at the bottom of the batting order without penalty of up to nine (9) batters. If the shorthanded team does not have seven players when they have made three outs, they forfeit the game. This is an option and must be exercised at 6:00 p.m. start time, not at the 6:10 p.m. grace time.
2. Game line-up sheets given to opposing scorekeepers before each game must show players names and uniform numbers.

3. The EP or extra (10th) player option when used is a regular position and can be substituted to form either the bench or by switching positions with a player on the field. (I.e. the right fielder and the EP could switch positions, but the batting order must stay the same.) If substitution is from the bench, the rotating order will be changed accordingly.
4. “Total Free Substitution” for defensive positions is allowed. The batting order is not affected by the defensive line-up. It is not required to designate the battery (pitcher-catcher) in the batting order, as only those players batting should be listed in the order. All others even though playing defensive positions including pitcher and catcher should be listed as substitutes until they are used offensively.
5. Teams may use a **courtesy** base runner for both their pitcher and catcher or any player above the age of 55 years if they desire. The **courtesy** runner must be ready to take the field immediately at the stoppage of play. The game should not be delayed for this change. Any player not in the batting order may be used and their eligibility to play later in the game will not be affected. If there is not an extra player (not in batting order) on the bench then the player who made the last out prior to the pitcher or catcher may be used.
6. Umpires will notify both managers prior to the start of the last inning due to time or darkness.
7. The 6:00 p.m. game will start no inning after 7:20 p.m.
8. The 7:20 p.m. game will be played until completed or 8:50 p.m., whichever comes first.
9. The decision to call a game due to darkness or weather is that of the umpire.
10. Three illegal pitches called during a game, after a verbal warning, will result in the pitcher being removed from pitching. He may play any other position but cannot return to pitching for the rest of the game. A legal pitch is defined as shoulders square to first and third at the beginning of the pitch and the release of the ball to the catcher. This is at the umpire’s judgment.
11. No extra inning will be played if the score is tied at the end of regulation (seven innings). Even if time has expired **with the exception where the lighted field rules apply**.
12. A ten run mercy rule will apply after completion of five innings.
13. An eighteen run mercy rule will apply regardless of innings completed after one hour has elapsed.
14. With runners on base, the pitcher must throw at least four pitches for an intentional walk. The pitcher may motion a batter to be awarded a base only if all bases are unoccupied at the time.
15. Umpires may stop teams from throwing the ball around after an out if they feel the game is progressing too slowly.
16. Batters may not step out of the batter’s box between pitches without prior permission from the home plate umpire. If they do and a pitch is thrown, it will be a strike even though it may result in a called third strike.
17. Players must cover any wounds or blood. Another player may be used to fill in until this condition is met without affecting the substituting player’s eligibility.

18. Teams may exercise the right to have any game rescheduled if there is only one umpire in attendance. However, the team must have 9 players present in order to do this.
19. Titanium bats are illegal.
20. If a player throws his bat or helmet on the back to the bench, because he was disgusted with himself he will be warned and the team put on notice. If he throws his helmet or bat because of a third strike call by an umpire he will be warned and if he says anything in disgust to the umpire he will be ejected.
21. If a fielder throws his glove in disgust with himself for an error he committed he will be warned and the team put on notice. If he does it on an umpire play-call in disrespect to the umpire he will be ejected.
22. Bats that are old but have no disfigurements and no loose tape can be used at the umpire's discretion. All new bats should have the Embossed 2000 or 2004 emblem or sticker on them.
23. If someone gets hurt and there is no one to replace him, that spot in the batting line-up will be an automatic out each time at bat.
24. If a player is ejected and the team has no one to replace him, the game will be a FORFEIT. The opposing team will be awarded a 7-0 victory.
25. Before game start, managers will tell umpires and opposing managers that he is batting more in the game, up to 12.
26. If the manager is playing an outfield position during the game he will assign a person to be the liaison to the umpire.
27. **Fake bunting is illegal.**
28. Rule involving time limit
 - A. If there is still a minimum of 5 (five) minutes of game time left (1 hour 20 minutes) then a new inning may be started with the remaining time.
 - B. This new inning will have a 15 (fifteen) minute time limit from the start of the inning.
 - C. If the inning is not complete at the end of the fifteen minutes the game is over and the score then goes back to the last complete inning.
 - D. This trial rule is for regulation time only and in the event of a tie the tie break rules will take precedent.
 - E. The 15 minute time limit will only be in effect for the new inning started and at the end of that inning a new inning may be started only if regulation game time is left.
 - F. The umpires will inform both managers of the official time at the start of the inning.

ARTICLE V

Standings

1. Team standings will be based on a point system with two (2) points being awarded for a win and one (1) point for each team in the event of a tie.
2. If two teams are tied in the standing at the end of a season the winner of the season series between the two teams will be the determining factor. If the season series is tied then the team scoring the most total runs in their head to head games (run differential) will prevail. If the total is equal and a playoff position is at stake there will be a one game tiebreaker to determine position. If the standing position does not involve a playoff berth a coin toss will be the tiebreaker.

ARTICLE VI

Play Offs

1. All teams will be in the playoffs. The two teams who advance to the finals will play a two out of three series for the Division Championship.
2. The team with the better regular season record will be the home team in **the first round of the playoffs. A coin toss will determine home team on all following brackets.**
3. In the event of identical records a coin toss will determine the home team.
4. Each division will have its own champion. There will be no crossover games.
5. All league rules apply during play-offs.
6. There will be no time limit for the Championship series.
7. The brackets will be as 1 v last and on up the rankings.
8. **For the 2009 season the playoffs will be a double elimination tournament.**

ARTICLE VII

All Star Game

1. A player must meet all league rules for eligibility, be on his team's final roster as listed by the June 20th cut-off date, and be selected by his teammates.
2. The All-Star Game will be nine innings. Extra innings will be played in the event of a tie.
3. All players except pitchers must play no fewer than three innings or more than six innings unless the game goes into extra innings or injury to a player occurs. In these cases the maximum number of innings will be waived.
4. Pitchers will play no less than one-third or more than three innings except in cases of extra innings or injury. In these cases the maximum number of innings will be waived.
5. Two players excluding pitchers will represent each team.
6. The All-Star Game managers will select pitchers.

7. The highest place managers from each division **as of the July 4th weekend** will be managers of the All Star Teams. If one of these managers cannot participate the next available manager (3rd place, 4th place, etc) will replace him.
8. The All-Star teams will be chosen by rankings as of July 4th weekend. Each team will be assigned a 1 or 2 throughout the league **standings** to make up the teams.

ARTICLE VIII

Misconduct-Ejections-Suspensions

1. Players must slide or attempt to avoid contact on any play at home plate when a collision could occur. If a player fails to slide and a collision occurs it's under the umpire's discretion. If intentional contact is made the Intent to Injure Rule will apply umpire's discretion.
2. When a player is EJECTED from a game for any reason the player must sit out the remainder of the game in which he was ejected in, PLUS the next playable game (excluding All-Star game). Another game may be added at the discretion of the umpires who officiated the game. They will meet with the board and the determination will be made in cooperation with the board and umpires association. **If the infraction is deemed excessively severe the player must leave the field/park immediately. If the manager makes no attempt to remedy the situation he may be ejected as well.**
3. The following infractions could result in additional games to be added to a player's suspension for being ejected from a game. Depending on the severity of the infraction.
 - A. Swearing
 - B. Excessive arguing
 - C. Smoking beyond the parking lot
 - D. Fighting
 - E. Deliberate spiking of another player
 - F. Fake tags (after one warning to player and both teams)
 - G. Drinking alcoholic beverages
 - H. Any play determined by umpire to be intent to injure
 - I. Wearing metal spikes
 - J. Use titanium bats
 - K. **Fake bunts**
4. A. If offenses by a player, **manager**, or team are considered too serious for normal ejection and suspension (Article VIII Para 2), those present at the incident (players, umpires, fans) may request that the President call an Executive Board meeting to which he will invite all persons directly involved in the incident for a hearing.

- B. When the Board has heard from all parties who wish to be heard, all other will be asked to leave the room while the Executive Board discusses the misconduct among them selves. The Board will have the option of requesting all team managers not involved in the incident to participate in the deliberation and voting.
- C. Any Board member directly involved in the alleged incident may attend the hearing but may not take a part in the deliberations or voting.
- D. If the Board determines that more severe penalties are warranted the following penalties may apply:
 - 1. A player or team may be placed on probation for any specified term up to one year. At the end of the period of probation the player or team may be restored to regular status or suspended depending on progress during the probationary period.
 - 2. A team or player may be suspended if the infraction is considered to be more serious or the team or player is already on probation at the time of the misconduct being considered. A suspended player or team may not participate in any league games during that time.
- 4. A player or team may be expelled from the league permanently if:
 - A. They have been guilty of serious breaches of good conduct on numerous occasions during the past season.
 - B. After being on probation for the term specified, there is no improvement in conduct. Expulsion may occur sooner if continued severe misconduct is observed. Expulsion shall be reserved for extreme or continuous infractions.
- 5. **If the ejection causes the entire team to be ejected during playoff games only then the President will be notified immediately. He will set up a protest hearing board consisting of 4(four) managers from opposite leagues and 3(three) umpire representatives to hear all sides and vote on the infraction. The Executive board will oversee the hearing but not take part in the vote.**
- 6. Any team forfeiting more than three games in one season will be suspended from the league for one year. Individual players from a suspended team may play for another team during the suspension if they meet all other eligibility requirements.

ARTICLE IX

Use of an Ineligible Player

- 1. A forfeit will be declared if it is discovered that the winner of a game used a player who was according to any of the provisions of this constitution declared ineligible. The opposing team will be awarded a 7-0 victory.

2. The result of a game will not be changed in any way if a player whose team lost is found ineligible.
3. If both teams are found to have used ineligible players both teams will be charged with a loss.

ARTICLE X

Filing Protests

1. Official Rules of Softball will apply in total to any protest filed.
2. A protest must be filed within forty-eight hours after the completion of the game.
3. The manager of the team wishing to file protest will call the President and summarize the events.
4. A fee of \$25.00 must accompany any protest filed. If the protest is upheld the fee will be refunded.

ARTICLE XI

Constitutional Amendments

1. Proposing of Amendments:
 - A. Any member of the Managers Association may propose an amendment at any time.
 - B. An amendment to the Constitution may not be voted on at the meeting at which it is proposed unless at least two-thirds of the total membership is present and at least two-thirds of the total membership approves the amendment (i.e. 15 of 20 present, 14 must approve). If less than two-thirds of total membership approve a subsequent meeting will be held at which a vote of those present will decide the acceptance or rejection of the amendment.
2. Passage of Amendments: Any amendment must receive a two-thirds majority of the votes cast by those present at a Managers Association meeting to gain passage.

ARTICLE XII

Miscellaneous

1. The Fort Gratiot Field Caretaker decides if the fields are playable. The umpire can cancel a game even if the caretaker does not.
2. No infield practice before games.
3. Regular season games will not be scheduled on Saturdays. This day will be reserved for rainout make-ups. These games will be scheduled for 5:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. start times.
4. Teams with hearing impaired players will be given special consideration to insure the hearing impaired players are aware of the umpires' calls.
5. A scheduled game can only be postponed due to weather (umpire's call) or a team participating in a church related function when at least seven days notice is given to the league President.
6. New teams will be placed in the division they are granted from the League Board.
7. Each team will be responsible to bring five batting helmets to each game. The batter, each base runner, and the on-deck batter must each wear a helmet.
8. The two lowest placing teams in the A Division will play in the B Division the following season. The two highest placing teams in the B Division will play in the A Division the following season. If necessary to balance the divisions in a given year, the Executive Board may move additional teams up or down.
9. The first league meeting each spring will be at 7:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of March.
10. The second meeting with \$100.00 deposit due will be at 7:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of April, unless it is Easter weekend. In this case the meeting will be held on the Tuesday following Easter. All requests for dates off during the season must be submitted at this time in order to be considered in scheduling.
11. All team league fees will be due by selected date in May. This will also be the date for a final pre-season league meeting, if all business has not been completed by the April meeting.
12. Each season will begin the week before Memorial Day weekend.
13. It is understood that in the ASA rulebook if a player or catcher blocks the base without the ball, it is called obstruction and it will be the umpire's discretion whether or not it was an obstruction.
14. A .44 core "optical" ball will be used for league play.
15. For the 2008 season an additional set of rule will apply for the regular scheduled games played on diamonds with lights:
 - a. Time limit will be raised to one hour and thirty minutes (1:30)
 - b. International tie break rules will be in effect for one (1) inning in the event of a tie
 - c. Each team will be scheduled one (1) home and one (1) away game for this season
 - d. Rain makeup's will not adhere to these special rules