



MASTERS (38+) RULES AND REGULATIONS

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The Boston MSBL Masters Division (“MSBL”) is a recreational baseball league for men ages 38 and older. It is part of the Boston Men’s Baseball League (“BMBL”), a non-profit recreational baseball organization centered in Boston Massachusetts. The MSBL offers ballplayers the opportunity to participate in competitive baseball games from the Spring to the Fall each year. Adult attitudes must always prevail. The league President and his Officers will have the responsibility of upholding this ethic. Anyone who abuses the league’s code of conduct (section 7) can be suspended or expelled from the league at the sole discretion of the league officers.

League rules are established in the following manner:

- Default is the Major League rule book
- MSBL National rules, which override major league rules, as defined in the official scorebook
- Boston MSBL rule exceptions, described below, which override Major League and MSBL National rules

1.00 ELIGIBILITY

1.01 Player Eligibility

- (a) To be eligible to play in the 38+ Masters Division, the player must turn 38 by December 31 of that season (ex. To play in the 2021 season, you must turn 38 by 12/31/21).

1.02 Roster Size

- (a) The roster size is limited to 25 active players (inactive players are not included).

2.00 EQUIPMENT

2.01 Baseballs

- (a) Teams will use the official league approved baseballs which will be purchased through the league; currently Rawlings RMSBL or Diamond D1 Pro.
- (b) The home team is responsible for supplying the game balls.

2.02 Helmets

- (a) All batters and runners must wear helmets with at least one ear flap facing the pitcher for both at bats and on base – there is no exception to this rule.
- (b) Full double-ear flap helmets are encouraged for at-bats and are encouraged for the bases. At minimum, single-ear flap helmets are required.
- (c) Catchers must wear a helmet underneath their mask.

(d) All base coaches are required to wear helmets while on the field of play.

2.03 Bats

(a) The Masters Division is a wood bat-only league. Composites made of wood or fiberglass are not allowed.

3.00 GAME FORMAT AND POSTPONEMENT

3.01 Lineup

(a) Each manager can bat as many players as he desires, with a minimum of nine.

(b) Teams can play an official game with eight players and bat only eight players if that is all they have in uniform at the game, though the opposing team must still bat a minimum of nine batters (override to National Rule 3.e which states 10).

(i) An OUT is recorded each time the 9th position comes to the plate. It will be recorded as a strikeout for recordkeeping purposes.

(c) If a team has less than eight players, the game is declared a forfeit and the forfeiting team must pay all umpire fees. This call shall be made no later than 15 minutes after the scheduled start time.

(d) Games cannot be rescheduled because a team does not have enough players.

(e) If, during the game, only 8 players are available and one player is removed for any reason (injury, ejection, etc.), the game will be forfeited at that time.

(f) A/B batting system can be used for any batting position desire. The "A" hitter bats during the first time through the lineup, with the "B" batter hitting the second time through the order, continuing in alternating fashion until the game is complete. Once a team declares the use of this A/B system, it must continue using it for the remainder of the game in the batting slots for which it was designated. Hitters in an A/B position may be pinch hit for, just as any other player. A/B slots may only be added on the initial lineup card. Additional batters can be added to the lineup as A/B or single hitters.

(g) If a batter is forced to leave a game for any reason, a reserve player, not previously entered into the game as a hitter, must hit in that batter's place. If there are no reserves who can replace the individual, the spot is skipped and all hitters below that position move up. The hitting team will be docked an out the first time through the order but will not be assessed any further penalty. For instances other than injury or emergency, forfeit rules apply.

(h) Teams agree to abide by the COVID-19 rules put in place by the league, and any additional restrictions put in place by the community where the game is taking place.

3.02 Courtesy Runners

- (a) Each team is allowed to designate two courtesy runners.
- (b) Players needing courtesy runners must have their manager notify the opposing manager before game time.
- (c) If not so notified, the opposing manager may deny the request.
- (d) The player to make the last batted out must be the courtesy runner. If no out has been recorded, the last hitter in the lineup will be deemed the courtesy runner.
- (e) If a player is legitimately hurt during the game and his team has already used two courtesy runners, then the team is allowed a third courtesy runner.
- (f) Pitchers and catchers may be skipped over as courtesy runners. If players are removed from those positions, they become eligible to serve as a courtesy runner.
- (g) The catcher may be provided with a courtesy runner (per rule 3.02d) once the 2nd out of the inning has been recorded. Failure to declare this at the first instance removes the option for the rest of the game.

3.03 Game Length

- (a) All games shall be seven innings.
- (b) No inning shall start two hours and 50 minutes after the first pitch of the game.
- (c) Both teams can agree to play beyond this curfew if no other teams are waiting to use the field and there are no local restrictions; this should be discussed prior to the game.
- (d) A game can end in a tie.
- (e) Mercy Rule: If a team is winning by 12 runs or more after 4 ½ innings (home team leading) or 5 full innings (away team leading), the game is both official and over. The only exception to this is if both teams agree to waive the rule BEFORE the game starts.

3.04 Called Game

- (a) Seven inning games called on account of rain or darkness will be considered complete if:
 - (1) Four innings have been completed
 - (2) The home team has scored more runs in three or three and a fraction (3+) innings than the visiting team has scored in four completed half innings

- (3) If the home team scores one more runs in its half of the fourth inning to tie the score

3.05 Rainout/Poor Field Condition Notification

- (a) The home team manager must notify the Umpire-In-Chief, the opposing manager, and the league office of any cancelation due to field conditions a minimum of ONE HOUR before game time.
- (b) Once the game begins, the umpires will be responsible for calling a rain delay or rainout after consulting with the managers.

4.00 UMPIRES

4.01 Umpire Fees

- (a) Home team is responsible for paying home plate umpire, the away team shall pay the base umpire.
- (b) The umpire fee is \$85.00 for 7 innings.
- (c) Umpire fees are to be paid IN CASH prior to the start of the game.
- (d) If there is only one umpire who shows up for a game, they are to be paid 1 ½ fee (\$127.50 for 7 innings). Teams should notify the Umpire-In-Chief and the league commissioner if only one umpire shows up.
- (e) Once an umpire shows up at the field, they must be paid, even if the game is called before a single pitch is thrown.
- (f) If the game is postponed by rain or field conditions before the game starts, each umpire is due a ½ fee.

5.00 PLAYOFFS AND TIEBREAKERS

5.01 League Standings

- (a) Final league standings will be determined by the following point system: 2 points for a win, 1 point for a tie, -2 (minus 2) points for a forfeit.

5.02 Team Playoff Qualification – 8 teams will make the postseason

- (a) If 8-team league – all 8 teams make playoffs
 - (i) #1 plays #8; #2 plays #7; #3 plays #6; #4 plays #5
- (b) If 9-team league – #8 and #9 play a 1-game play in game to determine who plays #1 seed

- (c) If 10-team league or more – the top 6 teams make the playoffs with the next four teams competing in a play-in game for the 7th and 8th seeds.
 - (i) Play-In Game #1: 7th Place Finisher vs. 10th Place
 - (ii) Play-In Game #2: 8th Place Finisher vs. 9th Place
 - (iii) The team with the best regular season record of the play-in winners will be granted the 7th seed, the other team will be seeded 8th
 - (iv) Playoff seeding will then be set per item (a)(i)
- (d) We will reseed after each round of playoffs so the highest seed will play the lowest seed after the completion of each round
- (e) First round series will be best 2-out-of-3, with the higher seed being the home team for games 1 and 3; the lower seed will be the home team for game 2
- (f) Second round and league finals will be best 3-out-of-5, with the higher seed being the home team for Game 1, 3, and 5. The lower seed will be the home team for games 2 and 4.

5.03 Playoff Tiebreakers

In the event of a tie for playoff spots, the following procedures, in the order they are listed, will be used to break the tie:

- (a) Two Teams:
 - 1. Head-to-head
 - 2. Fewest runs allowed in head-to-head games
 - 3. Fewest runs allowed against all teams – if teams have played an uneven number of games then average runs allowed will be used.
 - 4. One game play-off for final playoff spot; to break seeding tie, there will be a coin flip.
- (b) Three or More Teams:
 - 1. Runs allowed (all games) – if teams have played an uneven number of games then average runs allowed will be used.
 - 2. One game play-off for final playoff spot; to break seeding tie, there will be a coin flip.

5.04 Player Playoff Eligibility

- (a) To be eligible to play in the playoffs, players must be registered on their team's roster, entered into 400Hitter, and completed an MSBL waiver before the team has played in at least half of its games (ex. in a 16-game schedule the player must be on the roster before the start of the 9th game).

- (b) Games Played Rule: To be eligible to play in the playoffs a player must have played in AT LEAST 50% of the team's games (ex. in a 16-game season a player must have played in at least 8 games).
- (c) There will be NO exceptions to the Games Played Rule.
- (d) Forfeits: The winning team in a forfeit is allowed to give a 1-game credit for everyone on the Active roster; 400Hitter must be updated accordingly. The losing teams will not be allowed to give any member of their roster game credit. This applies to games forfeited before first pitch, and once play has commenced.
- (e) Game Credit: The player must appear in the lineup card in order to receive credit for games played. This means a plate appearance, pinch running (not courtesy running), or throw to at least 1 batter while pitching. Appearing in the field ONLY does NOT constitute game credit unless that person enters into the official line up as a replacement to a player who has a spot in the official hitting lineup (and it must happen before the completion of the 6th inning).
- (f) Player Found to be Ineligible for Playoff Participation: If a player who is not eligible for the playoffs per Rule 5.04 is found to have participated in a playoff game, that player shall be suspended for the remainder of the playoffs. In addition, the player designated as manager shall be suspended for two games for the first offense, with subsequent offenses resulting in additional penalties at the discretion of the League President. Any playoff games won by the team who employed the ineligible player in which the ineligible player participated either as a batter or fielder shall be forfeited to the opposing team.

Rule 5.04 Note: The spirit of this rule is to prevent late season "ringers" that have not played most of the year in our league and also to eliminate end of season forfeits as a determiner of playoff eligibility.

6.00 GENERAL LEAGUE RULES

6.01 Preliminary Rosters and Fees

- (a) Preliminary rosters and league fees are due by Opening Day.
- (b) Rosters, with complete addresses and date of birth, must be entered into 400Hitter.
- (c) It is permissible for a player to participate in a game before his information is entered into 400Hitter as long as player information is entered before the team's next game.
- (d) Each team will be assessed a \$125 per team fee (subject to change) for the MSBL Affiliation Fee.

6.02 Player Waiver

- (a) Players are not permitted to participate in league games unless they have completed the online waiver form.

6.03 Multiple Forfeits

- (a) If a team forfeits 3 or more games in a season, they are ineligible for the playoffs.

6.04 Use of the Field Prior to the Game

- (a) The home team shall have use of the field for pre-game warm-up 30 minutes prior to the start of the game for a period of not more than 15 minutes, provided that the home team has the required number of players for an official game to begin. The away team shall have use of the field for the final 15 minutes before game time, provided the visiting team has the required number of players for an official game to begin.

6.05 Protests

- (a) All protests are first brought to the League Commissioner.

- (b) The League Commissioner's ruling can be appealed to the President. If the President's ruling is appealed, then the President will then appoint a 3-member, Independent Appeals Board to hear the protest and vote. The decision of the Independent Appeals Board is final.

6.06 Score Reporting and 400Hitter

- (a) Winning manager MUST report scores after each game on 400Hitter and write a summary if desired (losing manager may also enter the score if desired) within 48 hours of the game being played.

- (b) Teams that are unable to enter game results must e-mail the League Commissioner by 10:00am on the day following the game.

- (c) The winning team is responsible for writing the game summary on 400Hitter but if no summary is entered by the winning team, then the losing team can enter a summary.

- (d) Failure to enter stats within 48 hours will result in that game being disallowed in the determination of playoff eligibility. The stats would count but the game credit would not.

7.00 CODE OF CONDUCT

7.01 Fighting

- (a) Fighting before, during or after a game earns a six (6) game suspension and may result in additional penalties, up to and including expulsion, at the discretion of the League President.

7.02 Physical Attack against an Umpire

- (a) Striking an umpire earns a one (1) year suspension and forfeiture of any money paid to the league.

7.03 Verbal Attack against an Umpire

- (a) Verbal abuse of an umpire or failure to leave the field after an ejection is subject to additional suspensions at the discretion of the League President.

7.04 Player Ejection

- (a) Any player who is ejected from a game will receive an automatic one-game suspension effective with that team's next scheduled game. Regular season and post-season will be considered as the same season. Suspensions can carry over from one year to the next. Repeat offenders may be subject to additional discipline at the discretion of the League Commissioner and League President.
- (b) Any player who participates in a league game while under automatic suspension will be subject to additional penalties, and his team will be stripped of any wins gained during the use of an ineligible player (impacted games will count as a loss, not a forfeit).
- (c) Manager of ejected player must notify the Commissioner with the ejected player's name. Failure of manager to notify the Commissioner could lead to additional penalties.
- (d) EXCEPTION TO 7.04(a): If the player designated at the beginning of the season as the team manager is ejected from a game due to his actions as a manager rather than a player (such as questioning a call on the field), there will be no automatic game suspension. However, the league reserves the right to introduce a suspension or expulsion on the basis of further review.

MSBL National Rules of Note:

- 3.f -- A manager may add batters to the bottom of the lineup at any time but if a batter is pinch hit or pinch run for (except under courtesy runner rule), the player may not re-enter the game as a hitter.
- 3.j -- If the pitcher is removed, he may re-enter the game only one time during the game but not in the same inning. Only one pitcher per team, per game, can re-enter.
- 4.e -- Players shall not intentionally collide with any other players. In the case of a runner intentionally colliding with a fielder, the runner will be called out and may, at the umpire's discretion, be expelled from the game. All runners must either slide or give up their right to a base if the defensive player has possession of the ball, is in the act of

receiving the ball, or is about to immediately receive the ball. If a defensive player is not in the possession of the ball, is not in the act of receiving the ball, or is not about to immediately receive the ball so that he is able to record an out, he cannot block the base or be in the base path so as to impede the base runner's right to that base. Under such circumstances, the defensive player shall be responsible to avoid collision. If a collision does occur under these circumstances, the runner will always be considered safe and the obstruction rule shall be enforced. The defensive player may be ejected from the game (if the action is intentional, he must be ejected), and will be suspended from league play if the obstruction is judged to be flagrant. Updated 8/1/2014

- 6.a -- No player while pitching may wear white or gray sleeves, nor may a pitcher wear a batting glove or wristband while pitching.
- 6.c -- If a pitcher hits 4 batters in any game, the pitcher must be removed from the game.
- 7 -- Infielders are not allowed to decoy a throw or catch. If a decoy throw or catch is detected, all runners shall be allowed to advance one base beyond the base held after all play stops. If the same fielder decoys twice in the same game, the fielder shall be expelled from the game. Decoying is referred to a false catch or throw done in an attempt to get the player to slide unnecessarily, where no strategic value is gained. An example of a legal "strategic" decoy is with a runner on first stealing, an infielder yells, "I got it," on a single to the outfield in order to make the runner stop or go back to first base. An example of an illegal decoy is with a runner stealing second and no throw is made by the catcher, the infielder cannot fake a tag on the runner resulting in the runner sliding unnecessarily.