

LEAGUE RULES: Official rules enforced will be those in the USSSA Official Rule Book and the Minnesota Recreation and Park Association State Tournament Rules and Guide Book. The following are Hopkins-Minnetonka rule exceptions:

1. A minimum of eight players are required to play a league game. Games will start precisely as scheduled when a team has eight players. A 5-minute grace period will be granted to teams who do not have enough players to start. After the 5-minute grace period the game will be forfeited and the option of a scrimmage will be provided. The scheduled umpire will be the game official. An umpire will not officiate a game forfeited due to the ejection of a player.
2. A player arriving late may immediately enter the game. The player is to be immediately slotted at the end of the batting order regardless of the order status at the time the player arrives.
3. Games are limited to 1 hour in length. If a game is tied after 7-innings with time left, play will continue using international rules (excluding championship games in the playoffs). Tie games will stand as a tie with each team receiving ½ a win and ½ a loss. **With the exception of playoff games,** a minimum of 4 innings or 40 minutes is required for a regulation game. Games not of regulation length due to interruptions by rain, darkness or protest, will be rescheduled and most often played as a new game, but may be continued from the point of interruption should the program director deem the situation appropriate. Teams must make their best effort to field the same team as the original game.
4. Run Rules:
 - a. Games will be automatically terminated when a team is 10 or more runs ahead after 5 innings, 15 or more runs ahead after 4 innings, and 20 or more runs ahead after 3 innings.
 - b. Flip-Flop rule - When the visiting team is five or more runs ahead entering the final inning of play or when the visiting team is ahead and the run differential meets or exceeds the designated run-rule entering a run-rule inning, a flip flop situation exists. The home team will then remain at bat and automatically become the visiting team. Should the new visiting team not score sufficiently to either take the lead in the final inning, or reduce the run differential below the designated run-rule, the game is over. Should the new visiting team score sufficiently, the game proceeds as normal. The flip-flop situation can reverse should the game-score so dictate.
5. All men's leagues will use a three-ball/two-strike count with NO courtesy foul. Women's leagues will use a three-ball/two-strike count with one courtesy foul (2nd strike hit foul is a dead ball). USSSA does not allow a courtesy foul in qualifiers and post-season play.
6. It is assumed that a team will use a round robin batting format. If a team elects to use an alternatively approved batting order, they must inform the umpire and other team prior to the start of the game:
 - a. **Round Robin:** All players **present at game time** are eligible to play using a continuous batting order. A player may be removed from the order only if due to an injury or having previously informed the umpire of the pending change. A player leaving without notification will be declared out. Teams may field any 10 players defensively as long as the batting order remains unchanged.
 - b. **Additional Hitter:** Teams may employ an additional hitter, allowing them to bat 11 players. Any 10 of the 11 players may play in the field as long as the batting order does not change. **Teams must be able to complete the game with 11 players or the game will be forfeited.**
 - c. **Batting 8, 9, or 10:** Teams may play with as few as eight players if that is all that is available at game time. Additional players may be added as they arrive, but a team may play with no more than ten.
7. Limited free substitutions will be allowed only when teams choose the additional hitter batting method or bats ten players. A starting player is allowed to be withdrawn then re-enter one time provided they occupy the same spot in the batting order. Violation of this rule is considered use of an ineligible player, causing a forfeiture of the game.
8. If a team is forced to play with less than 10 players as a result of the ejection of a player for unsportsmanlike conduct, the ejected player will be considered an out when it becomes their turn in the batting order. A team will not be penalized if they have a legal substitute for this player, or if the player is forced to leave a game due to injury or other circumstance.
9. A courtesy runner may replace an injured or handicapped base runner during a game (max of two per game). The courtesy runner must be a substitute from the bench who has not played, or if no substitutes are available, a team must use the player who has made their last out.
10. Home Run Limits:
 - a. **NEW:** All leagues will implement the plus-1 rule (starting 2022). Teams are limited to three homeruns per game. Should both teams hit three homeruns, the plus-1 rule will take effect. The home team CAN go plus-1 in the bottom of the last inning (HAMMER). A homerun hit outside of the rule's parameters is an out.
11. Teams that hit homeruns or foul balls over the fence must send a player to retrieve the ball and return it to play.

12. At all fields without fences, if a fly ball is caught in foul territory and the player's momentum carries the player across the out-of-play line, the ball is dead and all runners are awarded one base. If the ball is intentionally kicked or carried across the out-of-play line, two bases are awarded to all base runners.
13. Following the initial touch at first base, a runner may then use the white and orange portions of the bag interchangeably.
14. No player is allowed to disrupt the solid materials within the confines of the batter's box. Loose material may be spread with the foot, but no digging will be permitted. On the first offense, the umpire will warn the batter and the team. On each subsequent offense by any member of the team, the batter will be declared out.
15. A Four-Base Error, or a ball that touches any part of the player's equipment or body and then ricochets over the fence in fair territory prior to touching the ground, is a hit-and-sit play and does not need to be run out by the batter or any baserunner(s).
16. Pitchers will be allowed to deliver the ball from a distance of 50' (pitching rubber) and up to 56' provided they stay within the dimensions of the rubber. The pitcher still must present the ball and pause before making their delivery.
17. Only rostered players and managers, as well as one scorekeeper, are allowed on a team's bench during the game. Non-rostered individuals are restricted from the field of play at all times. No pets allowed.
18. Rosters are frozen at the start of the seventh league game. No additions can be made after that time. If an unrostered player competes in a playoff game for a team, the team will be disqualified from the playoffs immediately.
19. It is the responsibility of the home team to supply a new ball and keep the official score. The visiting team must supply a good used ball for each game. Teams must provide their own balls for all playoff games.
20. If a player develops bleeding during a game, the player must be removed from play until bleeding is controlled and dressed. In this case, the player may leave the game and return without penalty. Game time will not be stopped for injuries. It is the responsibility of the teams to bring first aid supplies to the field.
21. Umpires will determine if a player's physical condition and attire will enable them to be allowed to participate in a league game.
22. Should an umpire not show up for a game, teams should appoint a volunteer umpire, if possible. The volunteer umpire will be paid and the game will count. In this case, the game results must be phoned into the Program Manager at 952-939-8351 along with the name and phone number of the volunteer.
23. Batting practice is not permitted at Big Willow #5 or #6 or on the soccer field.
24. Big Willow Park closes at 10:30 p.m. Games will end and field lights will be shut off by this time.
25. Smoking is allowed on city property, however it is not allowed on the playing field or in the dugouts.
26. If a team withdraws from the league prior to May 12, their past record will be canceled and will not count toward their opponent's record.
27. Teams finishing in 1st place in each league will receive a gift card to a local restaurant.
28. In the case of ties in the standings at the end of the season, the tie breakers are as follows: 1) Win/Loss Record; 2) Head to Head; 3) Run differential (of season); 4) Total runs for the season. In the instance that one team has played more games than another, final standings will be determined by overall winning percentage.
29. Teams forfeiting a game are assessed a \$20 forfeit fee if the forfeit is not reported to the Program Manager by 3 p.m. on the day of the game. If a fee is assessed to a team, the team's manager will be notified and payment must be made to the Recreation Services office by 12 p.m. on the team's next game day. Failure to pay by this time results in another forfeit. Any team with three forfeits will be dropped from the league.
30. League scores and standings will be updated and posted weekly on the city of Minnetonka website – www.minnetonkamn.gov/adultsoftball.
31. Participants must be at least 18 years old to participate in a league.

EQUIPMENT:

1. BATS: A list of legal bats can be found at www.ussssa.com. The listed bats are legal to use in the Hopkins-Minnetonka leagues. Bats need to have the old or new USSSA watermark on them. Any bats not listed are not legal in any USSSA program. Players attempting to use illegal bats may be suspended from the league.
2. Gloves & Mitts: Players at all positions may wear either a glove or a mitt while playing defense.

PLAYER CONDUCT:

1. **Alcohol/Beer:** There shall be no alcoholic beverages, including beer, at any city of Minnetonka parks, Hopkins School District facilities, or Minnetonka School District facilities. This includes the playing field, bleachers, and parking lot area. Do not bring alcohol to these locations.

Beer and wine is permitted in Hopkins Central Park, but only to teams having first obtained an approved Alcohol Permit. In these cases, alcohol is restricted to the picnic area only. No glass bottles are allowed in Hopkins parks and no alcohol is permitted in the parking lot or in the park after 10 p.m. Alcohol permits can be obtained through the Recreation Services office by calling 952-939-8203. The permit fee is \$25 and applicants must provide a copy of a form of state issued government identification with their application.

2. The conduct of teams playing in Hopkins-Minnetonka Recreation Services leagues must be above satisfactory. Managers must set examples of fair play and sportsmanship for their players. The Hopkins-Minnetonka Player Code of Conduct is as follows: *"At no time shall any person lay a hand on, shove, strike, use abusive language, or threaten an official of the Hopkins-Minnetonka Recreation Department on park or school property."* Such incidents will require persons to be suspended until the Program Manager considers the case. Maximum penalty shall be suspension from local league play for one season or up to suspension for life. The umpire's authority at a game shall not be questioned. They have been instructed to enforce the league rules. The umpire has the authority to remove a player, coach, or manager from the game for violation of the rules. Players removed from the game for unsportsmanlike conduct will not be allowed to compete in the following game and a \$20 conduct violation fee will be assessed. A second ejection from a game by any one player will result in suspension for the remainder of the season.
3. Profanity on or around the playing field, even casual profanity, is not permitted. It is sufficient grounds for expulsion from the premises. Casual profanity pertains to expletives not necessarily directed towards an umpire or player, but made out of frustration for a bad play. In these cases, if the offending team is at bat and the player uttering the profanity has made an out, the following player will also be declared out. If the profanity is made by a defensive player, the first player to bat in their half of the inning will be declared out.
4. Please be respectful of the game facilities and remove all litter from your team's bench and the surrounding area before leaving the game site.

PROTESTS:

1. Notification of intent to protest must be made to the umpire immediately before the next pitch or the protest will be invalid.
2. Protests on rules of the game will not be considered unless they in some way affect the outcome.
3. Legitimate protests must be made in writing within 24 hours after the scheduled time of contest. A \$20 deposit is required for each protest filed. If the protest is won, the protesting team will be refunded the deposit.

If you have any questions, please contact Jesse Izquierdo: jizquierdo@minnetonkamn.gov, or call (952) 939-8351.