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CMSA Open Division Softball Rules and Regulations

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I. 2008 CMSA Open Division Softball Committee

Commissioner: Chad DePauw
Assistant Commissioner: Jack Neilsen
Treasurer: Shawn Albritton
Scheduling Director: Greg Segó
Fields/Equipment Directors: Scott Fiero
Umpire in Chief (UIC): Chris Vernald

Other Key League Information

CMSA 12" Softball Web Site: www.chicagomsa.com
Rain-Out Phone Number: 312-409-7932

II. GENERAL RULES

1. **ASA Rules.** ASA rules will apply unless the Chicago MSA Open Division Softball League Rules and Regulations conflict with the ASA Rules in which case the local rule will supercede the ASA rule.
2. **CMSA MEMBERSHIP.** All players appearing on a team's roster and all team participants (including managers, coaches and base coaches) must be members in good standing of CMSA. All players that take one of ten playing positions on the field or bat in the line up must be a paid member of CMSA Open Softball before he/she steps onto the field or the batter's box. Any team that plays a game with a non-member will forfeit that game as soon as the infraction is noticed – during the game or any time thereafter. If a team loses a game in which an infraction on their part is later discovered, that team will then forfeit its most recent regular-season intra-division winning game.
3. **Metal cleats or spikes are illegal.** Anyone found wearing metal spikes or cleats will automatically be ejected from the game. The player will not be replaced in the lineup and an out will be recorded each time that player would come to bat. Also, if that player is on base at the time of the ejection, an out will be charged to the offensive team and the player will not be replaced on the bases.
4. **Forfeit Time.** Game time, plus 5 minutes, as determined by an official umpire, will be considered forfeit time. A team forfeiting a game, for any reason, will be assessed a fine of \$25.00 if the team does not notify the Commissioner or Assistant Commissioner within 48 hours of the scheduled game time. All fines must be paid to the Commissioner or Assistant Commissioner before the teams next scheduled game. If there is a double forfeit, both teams will be assessed the \$25.00 fine.
5. **Videotaping.** Videotaping of any CMSA game is prohibited without the prior written approval of the CMSA Open Division Softball Committee, and the written consent of the teams participating in the game that is the subject of the request as well as any other persons who may be taped.
6. **Slaughter Rule.** The ASA run rule is in effect:

If a team is leading by 20 or more runs at the completion of the 3rd inning, 15 or more runs at the completion of the 4th inning or 10 or more runs at the completion of the 5th or 6th innings (2 ½, 3 ½, 4 ½, 5 ½ innings if the home team is leading), the score will be posted and the game will be called as official and play will be ended.
7. **Forfeits.** Any team that forfeits 3 games, occurring over a minimum of two (2) weeks, not necessarily consecutive, for any reason, **WILL BE DROPPED FROM THE LEAGUE**, and fees will not be returned. Should a team forfeit out of the league, that team's record, regardless of standings at the point of forfeiture, will revert to 0-0 win/loss. All other teams' records affected by the forfeiting team will be adjusted accordingly. Teams subsequently scheduled to play said forfeited team will be issued a 'bye' with its final roster considered as signed in. A dispersal draft will be implemented for those players wishing to continue playing for the duration of the season. Each player interested in continuing will enter the draft, and possibly, be picked up by another team, in the following manner:
 - a. The team with the worst win/loss record within the disbanding team's division will choose one player from all the names listed. The team with the next worst record within the disbanded team's division will choose next, and so on, until there are no more players listed, or until all teams in that division have been afforded the opportunity to draft one player. If additional players remain from the disbanded team, the teams in that division will have the opportunity to draft additional players in the same order as in the first round of the draft. If players remain after all teams in the affected division have had the opportunity to choose additional players and the teams in that division do not want to

draft any more players, the teams in the division below that division may pick up disbanded players in the same manner starting with the last place team in that division and moving up the standings. This procedure will continue until no players remain.

- b. Teams are not obligated to participate in the draft.
 - c. Teams may only make selections based on roster openings.
 - d. Teams may not “trade” or otherwise transfer their position in the draft.
 - e. Any team adding disbanded players to its roster must maintain its NAGAAA rating regarding its declared division.
 - f. A dispersal draft cannot occur within the last two weeks of the regular season.
8. **Ejections.** An umpire may eject any player, manager, coach, scorekeeper, or spectator on or off the field for unsportsmanlike conduct at any time before, during, or after a game. Anyone ejected by an umpire will AUTOMATICALLY be suspended from the team’s next scheduled game within its division, whether it is a regular season, playoff, or championship game. In addition, that player will be placed on probation for one month from the date of the ejection. If, during the period of probation, the player is ejected a second time, he/she will be suspended from participation in all CMSA-affiliated softball activities for the longest of either a 30-day period or the team’s next five CMSA-affiliated games. A third ejection in the course of the same season will result in his/her suspension from participation in all CMSA-affiliated softball for the next 120 days of CMSA-affiliated softball play. Additionally, the Commissioner will be required to present the matter to the CMSA Board of Directors for consideration of revocation of that players’ CMSA membership. Disciplinary periods will carry over into the following softball season in the event that the season concludes before they can be completed. The CMSA Open Division Softball Committee reserves the right to revoke a person’s CMSA Open Division Softball membership for due cause at any time.
9. **Umpire Complaints.** Complaints about an umpire are to be made in writing by a manager to the Umpire-in-Chief within 2 days of the game(s) in question. In the event that the complaint concerns the Umpire in Chief, the written complaint must be made to the League Commissioner. Complaints must include the specific umpire’s name and a full description of the reason behind the complaint.
10. **Extra Players.** Teams may bat a maximum of 12 players.
11. **Batter’s Box.** While batting, a batter must stay within the batter’s box or the batter will be called out and all runners returned to the bases where they were prior to any batted ball. This rule will be enforced whether the batter’s box is chalked or not.
12. **Roster Limit.** A team’s roster is limited to 18 players. A player may occupy a spot on only one (1) team’s roster at any time and may only play for the team on whose roster he/she appears. Roster changes may only be made by contacting the League Commissioner at least 48 hours prior to the next scheduled game time of the team on whose roster the player originally appeared.

Roster Lock is the Fourth Week of League Scheduled Play

13. **Injured Player/Game.** If a team is playing with a signed-in roster of 10 players and a player is injured during the game, the injured player, after being removed due to injury, may re-enter the game once in the same spot in the batting order but only if another rostered player is not available at the time.
14. **Courtesy Runner.** A team is allowed one (1) courtesy runner per inning. The courtesy runner will be the player who was last called out in the current or previous inning. If no out has been recorded in a game, the courtesy runner will be the last batter in the order.

15. **Rescheduling.** In the event that a team wishes to reschedule a regular season game, the team manager must notify the Director of Scheduling at least one week prior to the time of the scheduled game. The Director of Scheduling will make every effort to propose an alternative day and time for the game to be played. Both team managers must agree to a reschedule date and time or the original scheduling will remain in effect. Any decision to reschedule a game is within the sole discretion of the Director of Scheduling.
16. **Time Limit.** A one-hour time limit will be applied in all regular season games. No new inning may begin after 55 minutes have elapsed in a game. If a team is winning by 10 or more runs when 60 minutes have elapsed in the game, the game will end and the team in the lead will be declared the winner.
17. **No Contact Rule.** When a runner is approaching any base or home plate where a play (i.e., a ball either in the fielder's possession or in flight to said fielder) is involved, the runner must slide **or** avoid *initiating solid* contact with the defensive fielder. If the runner fails to slide or fails to avoid initiating solid contact with the fielder, the runner *is* out. The purpose of this rule is to protect the safety of the fielder. However, the runner shall not be deemed to have initiated contact if the fielder stands in the base path without there being a "play," steps into the path of the runner to field an errant throw, or attempts to field a thrown ball not at or near a base. This decision is in the sole discretion of the umpire
18. **Rules.** It is the COMPLETE responsibility of the MANAGER/TEAM CAPTAIN of each team to be sure that his/her players are fully aware of ALL rules, regulations, and guidelines of CMSA and CMSA Open Division Softball.
19. **Voting.** Manager votes will be decided by a majority of those present. In the case of a tie, the Commissioner will cast the deciding vote.
20. **Inter division play.** In games between teams in different divisions, the team from the lower division will be given the choice of being the home or visiting team.
21. **Injury/Rosters.** If, due to injury or illness, a team is in jeopardy of forfeiting the remainder of its games and is therefore in jeopardy of suspension from the league, that team may revise its roster and add players after the roster due date if it obtains approval in the following manner. A team may only add players once during a season and must notify the Commissioner in writing that it seeks approval to add players to its roster. The Protest Committee will rule on whether the circumstances call for a roster change and whether the players being added have skills that are appropriate to the division in which the team plays. The Commissioner or Protest Committee can deny the team's request to add players for reasonable cause.
22. **Bats.** NAGAAA and ASA rules apply. If NAGAAA and ASA equipment rules conflict, the NAGAAA rule will take precedence. Thus, no titanium bats are allowed.
23. **1 and 1 Pitch Count.** Batters begin their at-bats with a "1-and-1 count" (i.e., 1 ball and 1 strike). All other strike-ball rules remain.
24. **Tie Breaker Rule.** If a game is tied after 7 innings or after the time limit has expired, the International Tie-breaker will be used to break the tie: the batter in the lineup immediately preceding the first batter in the next inning will be placed at second base and innings will be played until a team is leading at the end of a full inning.
25. **Heterosexual Players.** Each team is allowed a maximum of 3 heterosexual players on their roster

26. **Division standings.** In the case of any ties, **division** standings will be determined as follows (in descending priority):
- Division record
 - Head-to-head record
 - Head-to-head total runs
 - Average runs scored per game in division play
 - Overall record
 - Average runs scored per game in all games played
27. **No Alcoholic Beverages.** Alcoholic beverages are prohibited on or around the field of play at all times. Anyone caught with alcoholic beverages will be ejected from the game and/or field.
28. **Division Make-up.** Prior to the beginning of each season, teams state at what level of play they would like to be. The first 4-5 weeks of season play will be used to determine whether the teams are appropriately placed. If a team clearly belongs in a division higher or lower than where it was originally placed, the CMSA Softball Committee reserves the right to move a team up or down to the appropriate division. This type of decision will be based upon consultation with the committee members and the team captain who is involved and team performance through the first 4-5 weeks.

III. CMSA GAY SOFTBALL OPEN DIVISION WORLD SERIES QUALIFIER

1. **NAGAAA RULES.** Only players that qualify to play in the Gay Softball World Series (GSWS) will be permitted to play in the CMSA GSWS Qualifier (Qualifier). In accordance with NAGAAA rules, only two (2) Heterosexual players may appear on a team's Qualifier roster. The term "Heterosexual" shall be defined as provided in the NAGAAA Instruments of Governance. If a team has more than 2 Heterosexual players on its Final Regular Season CMSA roster, the team manager must notify the CMSA Rules Director before the team starts its first Qualifier game as to which of its Heterosexual players will remain on the team's roster for purposes of the Qualifier.
2. **CMSA and League Membership.** All players appearing on a team's Qualifier roster and all team participants (including managers, coaches and base coaches) must be members in good standing of CMSA. All players that take one of ten playing positions on the field or bat in the line up must be a paid member of CMSA Open Softball before he/she steps onto the field or the batter's box. A member on probation may participate unless the terms of the probation prohibit it. A member under suspension may not participate.
3. **Final Regular Season CMSA Roster.** Only players whose names appear on a team's Final Regular Season CMSA Roster are eligible to play in the Qualifier. NO ADDITIONS to a team's Final Regular Season CMSA roster will be allowed. Rosters must conform to the specifications of the GSWS division that the team seeks to enter as provided in the NAGAAA Instruments of Governance. If a Final Regular Season CMSA Roster does not conform to these specifications, the team's manager must inform the Rules Director as to what adjustments will be made to the roster to bring it into compliance for purposes of the Qualifier.
4. **Rules.** All CMSA Open Division General Rules, Regulations and Guidelines will be in effect during the Qualifier to the extent they are not inconsistent with the provisions of this section.
5. **Time Limit.** There is no time limit unless deemed necessary by the Director of Scheduling.
6. **Tie Breaker.** The International tie breaker is in effect for all games (See Section I for definition.).
7. **Participation.** To be eligible to play in the Qualifier, a player must appear on the roster of the team with which he is participating AND have signed in for at least 51% of that team's Regular Season CMSA Open Division Softball games as of the date of the Qualifier.
8. **Slaughter Rule.** No Slaughter Rule will be in effect for the Qualifier.

Qualifier Tournament Structure (This tournament structure applies for each GSWS division)

- A. If two teams enter the Qualifier to vie for one GSWS berth, the teams will play a best of three series to determine which team will win the berth. The higher seed will be the home team for Games 1 and 3 and the visiting team for Game 2.
- B. If three teams enter the Qualifier to vie for less than three divisional berths, a round robin tournament will determine the winners of the berth(s). The CMSA Open Division Softball Committee in consultation with the managers of the teams that entered the Qualifier in the affected division will determine the procedure for determining the home team in each game and breaking a tie in the event one should occur.

- C. If more than three teams enter the Qualifier in any division, double-elimination bracketing will be implemented with the highest seeded team in each game in the winner's bracket serving as the home team. Home team and visiting team in the loser's bracket will be determined by a coin toss.

Seedings for Double Elimination Brackets

- A. Division records as of the date of the Qualifier will determine seedings. If teams in different divisions enter the Qualifier in the same division, the higher regular season division team is always seeded higher.
- B. The highest seeded team in each game in the winner's bracket will be the home team. Home team and visiting team in the loser's bracket will be determined by a coin toss.

IV. CMSA LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP PLAYOFFS

Participation. To be eligible to play in the League Championship Playoffs, a player must appear on the roster of the team participating AND have signed in for at least 51% of that team's games. All teams will compete in the playoffs if scheduling and weather permits. The CMSA Open Division Softball Committee reserves the right to limit playoff participation if scheduling and/or weather so require.

1. **Seeding.** The team with the better regular season intra-division record will be designated the home team throughout the winner's bracket of the Playoffs. Home team and visiting team in the loser's bracket will be determined by a coin toss.
2. **Time Limit.** No new inning will begin after 55 minutes have elapsed in a game. There is no time limit in the Championship Round.
3. **Tie Breaker.** The International tie breaker applies in all games in which there is a time limit. (See Section I for definition)
4. **Slaughter Rule.** There is no Slaughter rule.

V. CMSA OPEN DIVISION SOFTBALL GROUND RULES - 2008

1. FIELD GROUND RULES

- a. No spectators will be allowed on the north side of the south field. The area that is designated as out of play areas, generally the backstop extended, will be marked off with orange cones and managers and umpires on the south field will be responsible to keep players and spectators from this area.
- b. If a ball hit in fair territory on either field is picked up by a spectator or player on another field, a dead ball will be called and all base runners will be awarded two additional bases from the base last crossed when the ball was picked up.
- c. If a live ball is overthrown and goes out of play, a dead ball is called and all runners advance two bases from the base last crossed when the ball left the throwers hand.
- d. If a fielder is in possession of a live ball and carries the ball out of play, all runners advance one base from the base last crossed when the fielder went out of play. A fair ball that deflects off a defensive player and goes out of play results in all runners advancing two bases from the base last crossed before the ball went out of play.
- e. If a batted ball hits any tree in foul territory, a foul ball strike is called. If a batted ball hits any tree in the air in fair territory, a dead ball is called and the batter is awarded a ground rule double with all runners moving up two bases.
- f. If a batted ball hits any obstacle on the playing field, i.e., base, pitcher mound, manhole, debris or umpire, the ball is live and runners advance at their own risk. If any fielder collides with any obstacle in pursuit of a fair ball, play continues, the ball is live and all runners advance at their own risk. This includes the ball or fielder striking benches, tree trunks, bicycles, spectators or players from other fields. The only time play will be stopped is when a person picks up the ball.
- g. A double first base will be used in order to reduce the risk of injury at the first base position. The outside base will be demarcated in orange and will be used by the runner running through the base and not attempting to round first to get to second. If the runner is running round first base to second, it is acceptable to touch the inside first base. It is the umpire's judgment when an infraction occurs in following the double first base rule. The main issue to remember is that the intent of the double first base is to avoid risk of injury and interference. **Exception:** It is expected that the runner will avoid contact with the first basemen when there is a play at first base. If touching the inside base will avoid contact, then the runner should follow the No Contact Rule and do what he/she needs to avoid contact, including touching the inside first base.

2. RE-ENTRY RULE

- a. A substitute may enter for a starter and bat in that position and field in any position. If the starter re-enters the game, he must re-enter for the substitute and bat in his original position. He may field any position in the field.

3. THE STRIKE ZONE

- a. The strike zone is any ball that passes over the plate in an area lower than the top of the batters high shoulder and higher than the bottom of the front knee. The black border is not a part of the plate.
- b. There is no marked batters box. By rule it is 3' wide and 7' long. The umpire will determine if the batter is in a legal position.
- c. The pitch arch is a 6 foot minimum and a 12 foot maximum.
- d. If a pitch is illegal, the umpire will call "illegal" before the pitch has crossed the plate. The batter may swing at the pitch. If there is no swing, the pitch is called a ball.

4. PITCHING POSITIONS, MOTIONS

- a. Prior to releasing the ball, the pitcher must have one foot in contact with any part of the pitching rubber. It must remain in constant contact until the ball is released.
- b. Prior to beginning the pitching motion, the pitcher must present the ball in front of his body for at least one second. Within 10 seconds, he must face home plate, pitch the ball in an underhand motion, below and within 6" of the hip.

5. PLAYER LIMITS TO START AND PLAY A GAME

- a. Teams must have 9 players to start the game. A team starting with 9 players will not be penalized via an automatic out for the vacant 10th position. A 10th player may be added at any time during the course of the game, but must bat in the 10th position.
- b. Teams may bat 11 or 12 players and must fill all batting places throughout the game. If a team loses a player due to injury, or any other reason and cannot substitute, that player's spot shall be an automatic out each time it is their turn at bat. If a team walks the batter (intentionally or otherwise) before the automatic out WITH TWO OUTS in the inning, the automatic out is bypassed and the next regular batter bats.
- c. An extra hitter may go into the field to play a defensive position but must continue batting in his same position.
- d. If a team is leading by 20 or more runs at the completion of the 3rd inning, 15 or more runs at the completion of the 4th inning or 10 or more runs at the completion of the 5th or 6th innings (2 ½, 3 ½, 4 ½, 5 ½ innings if the home team is leading), the score will be posted and the game will be called as official and play will be ended.

6. COURTESY RUNNERS

- a. A limit of one courtesy runner may be used per inning. There are no exceptions. If a runner is used and there is an injury, he must be replaced by a substitute and or an in/out for a runner.
- b. The opposing manager does not have to agree to the use of the courtesy runner.
- c. The courtesy runner will always be the player making the last out prior to the courtesy runner getting on base.

7. TIME LIMITS FOR GAMES

- a. Each game has a 60 minute time limit. Games begin at game time. Game time is forfeit time plus 5 minutes. No exceptions. **(See 60 minute rule change in first section of this manual)**
- b. Any inning started before the time limit has expired will be completed. If the home team is ahead, the bottom of the inning is not played. No new inning will be started with less than 5 minutes left in the time limit.
- c. Two warm-up pitches will be allowed by the pitcher at the start of each inning.
- d. No infield or outfield warm-up between innings.
- e. Relief pitchers get three warm-up pitches when entering the game.
- f. No on-field conferences of players or coaches will be permitted during the last 10 minutes of the time limit.
- g. The game clock will be suspended only for the following reasons:
 - 1.) Treatment of injury to a player on the field.
 - 2.) Suspension of play due to bad weather.

8. SLIDE RULE, OBSTRUCTION AND INTERFERENCE

- a. If there is a play on a runner, the runner must AVOID CONTACT. A slide is not required but if there is excessive contact and no slide, the runner is called out. Be aware that the rule is excessive contact not any contact. It is up to the umpire to determine if the contact is excessive and could cause injury. If the runner slides, contact is allowed and is normally not going to be considered excessive. In the case of excessive contact, the runner is called out, the ball is dead and base runners return to the base last crossed before the play.
- b. If a runner purposely attempts to obstruct a fielder from making a play by running, stopping or waving arms in a manner to affect the players fielding opportunity, the runner is declared out, a dead ball is declared and runners return to their bases last crossed. In the case of a possible double play, the runner at the completion of the play is also called out.
- c. If a fielder who is not attempting to field a batted ball interferes with a runner running the bases, obstruction is called. If the runner, after advancing as far as possible have not reached the base, they would have had without this obstruction, the umpire shall declare the ball dead by calling "time" and award the runner the bases they would have reached. This play is most common when a runner is rounding first base and the first baseman fails to get out of the way after going to the base for a possible play.

9. ADDITIONAL SITUATIONS

- a. Player ejections: All CMSA umpires have the ability to eject a player from a game before, during and after a game while in the immediate area of the field. This ejection results in a suspension from the next game. The committee would suggest you take charge early in the game and be consistent with your rules enforcement. If any undue criticism is given, take any action needed to maintain control. This action is backed by the Umpire In Chief and the CMSA Softball Committee.
- b. Metal cleats or spikes are illegal and will result in an automatic ejection of the player if found. There will also be an out declared if the player is at bat or on base when it is discovered.

- c. All divisions will use the gold stitch (.44 rated) ball. There will be no exceptions. There will be 2 balls provided for each game. The umpire will insert a new ball when one goes out of play. The intent is to keep the game moving due to the one hour time limit.
- d. All bats must have stamp of approval or a rating of 1.2 or lower to be legal. Do not go looking for illegal bats. Only inspect if requested by other team.
- e. Game card must be filled out after each game to record score. This is also required for payment of the umpire's fee. This card is used for standings and future tie-breakers, so it is vitally important and MUST be done.
- f. Chicago MSA's official website, with scheduling and other info, is www.chicagomsa.com
- g. Rainout number is 312-409-7932.

Special Ground Rules for North Field on Clarendon Only

1. If a ball is hit left (west) of the light pole and goes over the fence on the North Field, it will be ruled a ground rule double whether or not it touches a tree. If it hits a tree left (west) of the light pole and does not leave the park, the ball will be ruled dead and a ground rule double will be awarded. If a ball is hit right (east) of the light pole and clears the fence without touching a tree it will be ruled home run. If it clearly hits a tree and clears the fence, it will be ruled a ground rule double. If it hits a tree right (east) of the light pole and does not leave the park, the ball will be ruled dead and a ground rule double will be awarded.

Home Run Limit for North Field on Clarendon

- A/B Division: 3 per team per game
- C1 Division: 2 per team per game
- C2 Division: 1 per team per game
- D1 Division: 0 per team per game
- D2 Division: 0 per team per game

A home run towards the home run limit is one that flies over the fence without touching the ground or a player in the field of play. If a ball touches a player and then carries over the fence, it is a 4 base error and it does not count toward the home run limit. Home runs that hit the top of the fence and then bounce over the fence count toward the limit. Inside the park home runs do not count towards the limit. Anytime a batter is ruled out because of the home run limit rule, the ball is dead and no runners may advance.

Special Ground Rules for Middle Field on Clarendon Only

- 1) Any ball hit against the wall on the large portion of the building will be considered a live ball and playable.
- 2) Any ball hit on the roof of either building, the tall or short, will be considered a home run. Teams in A/B and C will be allowed one of these per game, after that, they will be considered an out. There will be no homeruns allowed in the D division, rather they will be considered an out.
- 3) Any ball that rolls into the stairwell next to the building will be considered a ground rule double.
- 4) Any ball that rolls under the metal rail, near the alley / parking lot will be considered a ground rule triple.

MANAGERS PLEASE REMEMBER

1. All umpires will:

- a. Be in uniform
- b. Hustle at all times to cover the field
- c. Be on time
- d. Enforce rules consistently

2. All managers will:

- a. Be responsible for his/her team. Any abusive conduct or language will not be tolerated and any player abusing an umpire or player is subject to ejection from the game and suspension from additional league games.
- b. Understand that our umpires are at different levels, just like your players. Some are new, some are experienced, but all are members of the local gay community and are umpiring in this league to give us all a more enjoyable experience.
- c. Please direct any comments or concerns about umpires to:

Umpire-In-Chief
Chris Vernald
Phone: 630.330.7191
Email: go2cvern@aol.com

Commissioner
Chad DePauw
Phone: 773.640.2227
Email: opensundaysoftball@chicagomsa.com

Assistant Commissioner
Jack Neilsen
Phone: 773.793.4000
Email: opensundaysoftball@chicagomsa.com

VI. CMSA Open Division Softball Protest Committee Rules and Procedures

1. **Protest Committee:** The Protest Committee will consist of the members of the CMSA Open Division Softball Committee and the Umpire in Chief.
2. **General Issues:**
 - a.) Grounds for a protest include challenges to players' eligibility/ineligibility and rules misinterpretation by an umpire.
 - b.) A \$25.00 filing fee is required to initiate a protest, which also must be paid within three calendar days of the game being protested.
 - c.) The CMSA Open Division Softball Committee members may request that the Protest Committee review a player's rating. The Softball Committee members are not required to pay the \$25.00 filing fee.
 - d.) Rulings of the Protest Committee are FINAL.
 - e.) In any case involving a tie vote by the Protest Committee, the Commissioner will be the tiebreaker, unless his team/division is involved in which case, the Assistant Commissioner or other Softball Committee members who are not affiliated with the division in question will serve as tie-breaking votes.
3. **Player eligibility protest:**
 - a.) The coach/manager must notify the Commissioner by e-mail or in writing within three calendar days following the protested game.
 - b.) The Commissioner will notify the Protest Committee, the coach/manager, and the player that is being protested immediately when protests or rating review is filed.
 - c.) The Protest Committee will meet within 7 days of the protest (Committee members that are players/coaches in the division will be excluded from that meeting).
 - d.) The coach/manager and player being protested will be invited to participate in the initial part of the meeting to answer questions or provide feedback, as related to the protest.
 - e.) The person filing the protest will also be invited to the meeting.
 - f.) The Commissioner has final approval for NAGAAA ratings. There is the potential that a League rating established by either the coach or Protest Committee may be different than the rating submitted to NAGAAA.
4. **Rules misinterpretation protest:**
 - a.) Register the protest with the umpire before the next live ball;
 - b.) Note the essential facts in the official scorebook (the home team's book);
 - c.) Have the umpire(s) and both coaches sign the official scorebook. If either coach refuses to sign the official scorebook, the umpire will note that it is a refusal, rather than an omission, in the book;
 - d.) The official scorebook will be made available to the Commissioner.
 - e.) The Commissioner will refer the matter to the Protest Committee for a ruling.

5. Rulings:

- a.) The Commissioner or his/her designee will respond verbally or in writing within 7 calendar days after the protest is registered, as to the ruling of the Protest Committee;
- b.) If a rule misinterpretation is upheld, the Commissioner, in conjunction with the Director of Scheduling, will coordinate rescheduling as soon as possible based on team, field, and umpire availability. Based on ASA rules, the game will be replayed from the point at which the incorrect decision was made, with the decision corrected.
- c.) If a protest of player ineligibility is upheld, the team with the ineligible player shall forfeit the game being protested.

6. NAGAAA Qualifier and League Playoffs:

- a.) If a protest is filed during the NAGAAA Qualifier and/or the League Championship playoffs, play will be stopped.
- b.) The Protest Committee (or a quorum, if all are not available) will be called together by the Commissioner or the Assistant Commissioner, to make a ruling.
- c.) All procedures described above will be followed. In the interest of expediting the process and allowing games to continue play, a decision will be made immediately, after all sides have been heard by the Protest Committee.
- d.) The \$25.00 filing fee applies to protests filed during the NAGAAA Qualifier and the League Playoffs.