



## **SLOWPITCH COMPETITION BYLAWS**

**NOTE: red text throughout this document indicates updates affected November 2025**

### **1. GAME RULES**

All games will be played in accordance with softball rules as set down by Melbourne Softball Association ("MSA") in the document "Slowpitch Softball Rules of the Game", unless otherwise detailed in these Bylaws.

### **2. COMPETITION AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**

#### **2.1** There may be three Leagues:

- Tuesday Night
- Wednesday Night
- Thursday Night

The number of teams participating each night may be capped. If warranted one or two nights may be cancelled.

**2.1.1** Teams may apply for entry into the Season's competition on a first-come first-served basis.

**2.1.2** There will be no switching of teams between nights, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

#### **2.2** The management personnel comprises of:

**2.2.1** Competition Co-ordinator is a member of the MSA Executive Committee and has the overall responsibility for the management of the Slowpitch Softball Competition.

**2.2.2** The League Manager/s is/are recruited and appointed by MSA Executive for the management of each nightly leagues.

**2.2.3** Umpires for all games are recruited by the Competition Co-ordinator and shall be allocated by the League Manager/s prior to the games.

### **3. FIXTURING OF REGULAR SEASON GAMES**

#### **3.1** FIXTURES

Once team entries are finalised, games shall be rostered in a fixture which will be available on MSA's website and app and posted at the Fawcner Park Clubrooms.

### **4. REGISTRATION**

#### **4.1** TEAM REGISTRATION

Each team entered in the competition shall meet their duty of care by ensuring all individuals participating with their team are registered online. New players can be added to the register at any time.

#### **4.2** PLAYER REGISTRATION

Every individual participating in the competition must complete an online registration form prior to first participating.

**4.2.1** All players shall be sixteen (16) years of age or older at the time of participation.

**4.2.2** In extraordinary circumstances written applications may be lodged with the Competition Co-ordinator requesting prior permission for a player to play contrary to Bylaw 4.2.1, provided that such player is not under the age of 14 as at the first day of the current Season that the request is made and only plays in an Outfield position.

## **SLOWPITCH COMPETITION BYLAWS**

*NOTE: red text throughout this document indicates updates affected November 2025*

### **4.3 CLEARANCES AND PERMITS**

Participants who are registered to play fastpitch softball, or slowpitch in another association, will require either a clearance or a permit to play Slowpitch Softball. This can be applied for online at the time of registration for Slowpitch Softball

## **5. TEAM COMPOSITION**

- 5.1 For each game a team of ten players must comprise mixed gender.
- 5.2 Teams may not **field less than four (4) female players** at any time.
- 5.3 A team which consists exclusively of female players may seek an exemption to Bylaw 5.1
- 5.4 Contrary to Bylaw 5.1, a team may start and continue a game with **seven (7)**, eight (8) or nine (9) players
- 5.5 Additional players may be interchanged throughout the game, providing the overall composition adheres to Bylaws 5.3 or 5.4.
- 5.6 Pick-up players from other teams or spectators may be used to make up numbers provided they comply with Bylaw 4.2 and either of Bylaws 5.1 or 5.5.
- 5.7 Provided that both teams have the minimum number of players to start and continue a game, a player is permitted to field for both teams in the same game, but they are not permitted to bat for both teams.
- 5.8 When neither team can field ten players, each team's Automatics Outs shall be offset against one another:
  - a) If Team A and Team B both have **7**, 8 or 9 players, there shall be no Automatic Outs
  - b) If Team A has 9 players and Team B has 8 players, there shall be one (1) Automatic Out given against Team B
  - c) **If Team A has 8 players and Team B has 7 players, there shall be one (1) Automatic Out given against Team B**
  - d) **Each 'automatic out' shall be placed in the batting order to retain the required gender alternation**
- 5.9 The forfeit rule shall apply should a team have fewer than **seven (7)** players by 6:50pm to start a game.

## **6. TEAM UNIFORMS**

- 6.1 All players are strongly encouraged to wear uniform tops alike in colour and/or design, but there is no requirement for them to be numbered.
- 6.2 Team uniforms or any item of clothing worn shall not have offensive words, mottos, logos or slogans. Players will be directed to turn such uniforms inside out or remove them.
- 6.3 METAL CLEATS or SCREW IN PLASTIC STOPS are NOT to be worn by any person participating in the competition.

## **7. GAME TIMES FOR REGULAR SEASON GAMES**

- 7.1 Games shall promptly commence at 6:45pm and proceed for:
  - a) Seventy-five (75) minutes; or
  - b) Seven (7) equal innings; or
  - c) A forfeit by one or both of the participating teams.
- 7.2 For a result to be obtained, a game needs to proceed for thirty (30) minutes.
- 7.3 No game which commences late shall be extended to make up the time lost at the start of the game.
- 7.4 A five (5) minute period of grace will be given for starting time should a team find themselves waiting on the arrival of a player/s to enable a game to commence with minimum of seven (7) players.

## **SLOWPITCH COMPETITION BYLAWS**

*NOTE: red text throughout this document indicates updates affected November 2025*

- 7.5** Any innings incomplete after the scheduled game finish time shall continue until an equal number of innings have been played, **except when the team second at bat is already ahead at that time the game shall be complete.**
- 7.6** Should an equal inning be completed and there is less than five (5) minutes to the scheduled finish time of the game, game shall be called, ie: a new inning shall not commence.
- 7.7** The duration of a game may be varied, and a game may be cancelled or called by the Competition Co-ordinator or League Manager in the case of:
- a)** Climatic conditions; or
  - b)** Air pollution; or
  - c)** Interference by an outside party (including spectators who may or may not be associated with a team); or
  - d)** Any other just cause.
- 7.7.1** The game shall be called if, in the judgment of the League Manager and after consultation with the Competition Co-ordinator, conditions for play are too dangerous to start or continue.
- 7.7.2** If in the judgment of the Umpire, a game is too dangerous to continue, they must suspend play and advise the League Manager, who shall then make a decision, as for Bylaw 7.7.1
- 7.7.3** If a game is suspended due to conditions as outlined in Bylaw 7.7, teams will not be permitted to resume play until approval from the League Manager has been expressly given.
- 7.7.4** MSA adheres to the Softball Australia Thunder and Lightning Policy. If there is lightning within 10 kilometres (less than 30 seconds between a lightning flash and a thunderbolt), the umpire **MUST** call time and the game is to be suspended by a mandatory thirty (30) minutes. In the case of a second instance of lightning, the game is to be called.

## **8. SCORES, SCORERS, SCORESHEETS, AND FORFEITS**

### **8.1 Scores**

- 8.1.1** The final score is the score at the end of the last complete inning if a game fulfils Bylaw 7.1.
- 8.1.2** An Incomplete Innings Rule shall apply in the case of a game which has been played within the provisions according to Bylaw 7.2 but which is called early
- 8.1.2.1** The Incomplete Innings Rule is as follows:
- a)** If the team second team At Bat has scored more runs than the first team At Bat in the incomplete inning, the score of the incomplete inning shall stand, and the bottom of the inning does not need to be played out.
  - b)** If the team second Time At Bat draws level or gets in front, then the score stands.
  - c)** If the team first Time At Bat draws level or gets in front and the game is then called, the score reverts to that at the end of the last complete inning.

### **8.2 Scorers**

Each team shall provide a member, who may be a player, to score the game on the official scoresheet brought to the diamond by the umpire.

### **8.3 Scoresheets**

- 8.3.1** Every scoresheet must have the players' **full name** listed, i.e. as registered online with no abbreviations or nicknames.
- 8.3.2** The Manager shall ensure that the total score for their team is correctly tallied, and the Umpire shall verify this before they lodge the results with the League Manager.

## **SLOWPITCH COMPETITION BYLAWS**

*NOTE: red text throughout this document indicates updates affected November 2025*

### **8.4 Forfeits**

- 8.4.1** All teams participating in the competition are expected to make every effort to play a fixtured game. Wherever possible, a team unable to compete in any scheduled game should give as much advance notice as possible to the Competition Co-ordinator.
- 8.4.2** A pre-game forfeit is scored as a 7-0 loss. Games shall not be rescheduled.
- 8.4.3** A forfeit which is given prior to games being cancelled shall still be regarded as a forfeit.
- 8.4.4** If both teams give pre-game forfeits, the result of the game will be declared a 0-0 double forfeit.
- 8.4.5** If a team withdraws from a League, all of their remaining games shall be recorded as a 7-0 forfeit unless another team takes their place in the fixture.
- 8.4.6** A forfeit given during a game is scored as a 7-0 loss. However, if a team is leading by more than 7 runs and is declared the winner by forfeit, the game score will be the score at the time that the forfeit was awarded.

### **9. UMPIRES**

- 9.1** Where possible, an official umpire shall be appointed to all fixtured games.
- 9.2** During the first three weeks of the competition, leniency shall be given to both teams, and after that time only to those players who have been identified at the plate meeting by the managers as new players. Rather than calling 'out', the umpire shall give a warning to the offending team.
- 9.3** All effort should be made by the Umpire not to eject a participant. However, there will be times when this is necessary to maintain the safety, good conduct and integrity of the game.
- 9.4** As MSA is affiliated with Softball Victoria, all ejections shall be dealt with as per Softball Victoria Judiciary Regulations.
- 9.5** Verbal notification must be given to the League Manager of any ejections on the night that they occur.

### **10. DETRIMENTAL AND DEROGATORY BEHAVIOUR**

- 10.1** Behaviour by participants or spectators that is detrimental to the sport or derogatory to participants, umpires or spectators shall not be tolerated.
- 10.2** The umpire at any time can warn a participant, and or may eject them (either with or without warning) if their behaviour warrants an ejection.
  - 10.2.1** Any aggressive physical and/or verbal abuse directed towards the umpire or other participants is mandatory ejection.
  - 10.2.2** An umpire shall forfeit the game against any team whose ejected member/s do not remove themselves to a location that is out of sight of the game after they have been ejected or if they do not remove spectators who breach Bylaw 10.
  - 10.2.3** If an Umpire or Participant decides during the Season that the actions of a team or participant has caused them enough distress so that they are unable to continue umpiring or playing, the complaint shall be dealt with as per Softball Victoria Judiciary Regulations.

### **11. ALCOHOL**

Responsible drinking of alcohol is the responsibility of each individual and each team participating in the competition.

- 11.1** The Umpire shall order a team to restrict an intoxicated participant from playing or coaching for all or part of the game.

- 11.2** The umpire has the power to request that a team relocate away from the diamond a spectator/s who relates to their team and is intoxicated. If a team does not comply, the Umpire shall forfeit the game.

### **12. SMOKING/VAPING**

- 12.1** MSA adheres to a Smoke Free Policy. The use of tobacco or nicotine in any form, including pipes cigars cigarettes, cigarillos, or vaping on both the field of play or team benches is forbidden. Failure to comply with a direction to stop smoking will result in an ejection.
- 12.2** Bylaw 12.1 extends to players, umpires, and league officials, who may not smoke on any playing fields, at Fawkner Park (Playing fields shall be the diamond, bench area and immediate surroundings). Smoking shall not be permitted in the Clubrooms at the eastern entrance or on any of the concrete surrounds of the Association rooms.

### **13. PROHIBITED EQUIPMENT**

Participants shall not carry or hold any item (e.g., drink containers) within the parameters of the dead ball line, other than approved softball equipment.

### **14. PRE-GAME PROCEDURE FOR EACH GAME**

- 14.1** It is recommended that all team members participate in general warm-up exercises prior to the commencement of the game.
- 14.2** First name team shall arrange to collect from the Clubroom - equipment bag and diamond bases.
- 14.3** It is that team's responsibility to check all equipment provided against the list in the bag.
- 14.4** Both teams are to utilise equipment for pregame warmup.
- 14.5** The umpire shall provide the official score sheet and two (2) match balls.

### **15. POST-GAME PROCEDURE**

- 15.1** At the conclusion of the game it shall be the umpire's responsibility to record the game results on the official game register.
- 15.2** *It is that umpire's responsibility to check that all equipment as detailed on the provision list is in the bag. Any item/s found to be missing should be reported on the reverse of the League Results Sheet.*
- 15.3** The second-named team shall be responsible for arranging the return of the equipment bag and diamond bases to the Clubroom within fifteen (15) minutes of the game's conclusion.
- 15.4** Competing teams shall be responsible for the cost of any unreturned equipment.

### **16. INJURED PARTICIPANTS AND UMPIRES**

- 16.1** Any Participant or Umpire injured during pre-game warm-up, or the course of a game, must submit details on the appropriate report form, which may be found on MSA's website or app.
- 16.2** All Insurance claims that arise from an injury suffered during pre-game or the game need to be filed through MSA's insurer within 30 days of the injury. Insurance claim forms can be accessed on MSA's website and may be found at <https://vic.softball.org.au/insurance-2/>.
- 16.3** MSA adheres to Softball Australia's Concussion Policy. It is mandatory that any participant suspected of having suffered a concussion be immediately removed from the game. They must lodge a Medical Clearance form with the Competition Manager at least 24 hours before they play again. In every case the decision regarding the timing of return to play must be made by a medical doctor with experience in managing concussion.
- 16.4** Participants are strongly encouraged to seek medical treatment if necessary and wait until they are fully recovered from injury before they resume softball-related activities.
- 16.5** The wearing of casts and braces which contain metal is prohibited on the Playing Field.

## **SLOWPITCH COMPETITION BYLAWS**

*NOTE: red text throughout this document indicates updates affected November 2025*

- 16.6** Umpires must abide by Bylaws 16.1 to 16.5.
- 16.7** MSA adheres to the Blood Rule. If a player is bleeding, they will be directed to stop playing, treat the bleeding, and to change any bloodied clothing. A player shall not return to the Playing Field until this has been done. Any piece of bloodied equipment shall be removed from the game.
- 16.8** Participants are not permitted to play if they are wearing a sling. However, they are permitted to coach 1<sup>st</sup> Base or 3<sup>rd</sup> Base.
- 16.9** Any team who wishes to use a Designated Runner for a player who has sustained an injury before pre-game warm up or other pre-existing medical condition must apply to the League Manager for approval before the start of a game. Once approved, this will be noted on Scoresheet, and the Umpire will be directed to allow such use of a Designated Runner

### **17. PREGNANT PLAYERS**

- 17.1** MSA adheres to Softball Victoria's Pregnancy Guidelines, which form part of its Member Protection Policy.
- 17.2** MSA is committed to providing an inclusive sporting environment for pregnant women involved in its activities.
- 17.3** MSA recommends that pregnant women wanting to participate consult with their medical advisers, ensure they are aware of the facts about pregnancy in sport and ensure that they make informed decisions about participation in Slowpitch Softball.

### **18. NON-BINARY PLAYERS**

- 18.1** MSA adheres to Softball Victoria's Non-Binary Player Guidelines, which form part of its Member Protection Policy.
- 18.2** MSA is committed to providing an inclusive sporting environment for non-binary participants involved in its activities.

### **19. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

- 19.1** MSA adheres to Softball Victoria's Social Media Policy, which forms part of its Member Protection Policy.

### **20. PLAYOFF GAMES**

The structure and format for Playoff Games shall be determined and advised by the Competition Co-ordinator.

### **21. CHANGES IN BYLAWS**

- 21.1** Any proposed changes in Bylaws 1 through 20 must be submitted to the Competition Co-ordinator no less than 5 weeks before the first scheduled game of each Season. A panel of reviewers shall meet either in person or by electronic communication device and consider the proposed changes and may either reject accept or suggest a modification of such Bylaws.
- 21.2** All changes in Bylaws shall be reviewed annually and shall be changed where appropriate.

*Melbourne Softball Association Inc.*

*Reviewed November 2025*

*Revised November 2022*

*Reviewed: October 2020*

*To be read in conjunction with Slowpitch Rules of the Game*