



# Co-Ed Kickball League Rulebook and General Information

## Purpose and Scope of This Document

This Rulebook and Registration Information booklet is intended to give all participants a broad overview of how the league operates and explain most rules and procedures that govern the league. This document is not intended to cover every last detail, such as dates and times of Postseason parties, schedules for each team, and various other procedural and administrative items. Many additional details for the league will be disseminated via e-mail and on the Club website, so please check both frequently. If you have a SPAM filter on your e-mail, please add [patrick@madisonssc.com](mailto:patrick@madisonssc.com) to your list of safe senders to ensure you receive all e-mails pertaining to the league.

## Code of Conduct

Madison Sports and Social Club does not tolerate discrimination, racism, sexual harassment, unwelcome sexual advances, violence, threats, or any other type of behavior that may make any player or official feel uncomfortable or threaten his or her health and well-being. We expect all players to treat everyone with respect and abide by common standards of decency and good sportsmanship.

Team names must not be offensive toward any race, nationality, gender identity, or any other group of individuals. They must not contain profanity. Please use tact and common sense when choosing a team name. MSSC reserves the right to reject any team name it finds offensive. You will be asked to supply a new name in the event your team name is deemed inappropriate.

**Players will read and understand the rules.** They are sent to all roster players prior to the season and are available on the MSSC website as well. Team captains are responsible for ensuring that rules are provided to any subs their team uses. Not reading rules is the single biggest cause of problems in our leagues. If players have a question about the application of any given rule, they can ask an official during a break in play or after a game if time allows. They will not argue calls with officials or ask to have rules explained to them during play unless an official feels an explanation is necessary before play continues. Officials are human and make mistakes and MSSC does not tolerate abuse of its officials.

All participants must refrain from threatening, taunting, name-calling, put-downs, intimidation, violence, harassment, and other inappropriate behavior toward teammates, opponents, and officials. Everyone makes mistakes, and we will not tolerate criticism or intimidation of anyone involved with our leagues due to differences in skill level or any other factor. Coaching, tips, and helpful hints are welcome, provided they are relayed in a constructive and friendly manner.

All players are encouraged to report offensive behavior to the Club President, Patrick Fosdick, via e-mail at [patrick@madisonssc.com](mailto:patrick@madisonssc.com). All reports will be kept anonymous and taken seriously, and appropriate action will be taken if deemed necessary, including, but not limited to warnings, suspension, and removal of the offending individual(s) from league play

## Registration and General League Information

- Registration is only available on our website: <http://www.madisonssc.com>
- Full teams will be enrolled in the league before Free Agents. In the event that we fill up with teams, Free Agents will unfortunately not be able to participate, unless any teams are looking for additional players
- Captains must indicate the team's preferred t-shirt colors when registering. Teams composed of Free Agents will need to select a captain and decide on a shirt color
- Team captains may choose to divide up the team registration fee amongst their players online by using TeamPayer. This service allows the captain to send an e-mail to each member of the team and indicate an amount for him or her to contribute towards the entire team fee. TeamPayer charges an additional fee on each transaction, whereas options like Venmo are free. Any outstanding balance may be charged to the captain's credit card after the second game of the season
- Leagues will be segmented into separate divisions whenever possible if we have multiple fields. Most times we can segment for the regular season, but if not possible for the regular season, the playoffs may be segmented into separate brackets based on final regular season standings
- Teams must maintain complete and accurate rosters. All players should be listed on a team's roster, and players who play in any number of games should complete the waiver, which is accomplished through accepting a spot on the team from a captain's e-mail invite. Teams in violation of waiver policies will be subject to forfeiting games at MSSC's discretion
- Following the regular season, an appropriate postseason structure will be established. In leagues where there are multiple divisions, there may only be a traditional playoff bracket among the top teams in the league. Other teams may just receive 1-2 games against a team of similar skill level. In general, all teams are eligible for postseason play with the following exceptions:
  - Any team forfeiting two or more regular season games may be left out of the postseason at MSSC's discretion
  - If time or space constraints arise, teams may be left out of the playoffs to allow completion of the league in a timely and/or efficient manner. This rarely ever happens. Depending on the reason for the exclusion, a team may be refunded for a postseason game.
  - Any team determined to have exhibited extremely poor sportsmanship or other conduct detrimental to the league on a regular and consistent basis may be left out of the postseason at MSSC's discretion. Refunds will NOT be issued to any teams under these circumstances, as this is a violation of our Code of Conduct
  - Any team who does not wish to participate in the postseason may be excluded at the captain's request. There is no requirement to participate

## Prizes

Prizes will be announced in the playoff email that goes out to all registered participants. In the past they've generally included gift cards to sponsor bars or cash prizes processed as refunds to the captain, but prizes are subject to change any given season. We only award prizes to the first and second place teams in the entire league and do not award prizes in each division if there are multiple divisions.

## Shirts

Each player on a team's roster will be provided with a t-shirt. Shirt colors will be assigned on a first registered, first awarded basis, unless a returning team is using a color from a prior season. Shirts are generally available at the fields by the second game of the season, depending on the schedule of the printer. **Please wear league shirts every week. Teams at every level of organized sport – from T-ball through Major League Baseball – all wear the same shirt/jersey/uniform**

## Rules and Regulations

### 1. General Rules

- A. All games in the league shall be governed by the rules outlined herein.
- B. Kickball is meant to be a social sport, but since play may become intense at times, please try to remember that we are here to have fun. All players must refrain from any action that is considered poor sportsmanship. Such actions include, but are not limited to: arguing with umpire's calls, running into other players in the field, and yelling at opposing players in an attempt to distract them
- C. Players must respect the authority of the umpires to regulate the games and abide by their decisions. Umpires have the authority to eject players from the game for detrimental conduct. All decisions of the umpires are final. Any situations not specifically covered in the rules are up to the discretion of the umpire

### 2. Team Size and Forfeits

- A. A full team will consist of 10 players in the field. Eight players must be present to start and continue each game (including at least 4 females). If a team wishes to add a player (or players) after the start of the game, the players may be added at the end of the kicking order, while still taking into account the appropriate kicking order (see section 8: "Kicking")
  - If one team decides to take a forfeit win, this must be decided and captains must sign to acknowledge the forfeit before the game begins. It is the responsibility of the team taking the forfeit win to ensure this happens
  - Teams who no-show games or show up with fewer than seven players may be charged a forfeit fee according to the procedures outlined on the Forfeit Fees page of the MSSC website (<https://madisonssc.leaguelab.com/page/forfeitfees>)
- B. At least five fielders must be female for a full team, but a team may have as many females as it wants in the field. If a team does not have at least five female players, they must play shorthanded in the field
- C. If a player leaves a game for any reason and no substitute is available, or a team is shorthanded, the game may proceed as long as there are at least 8 players present with at least 4 females. The kicking order may need to be changed to ensure an appropriate kicking order
- D. If a team is not ready to play at game time, they may play shorthanded with the opposing team's consent. The opposing team has the option to accept the forfeit win or allow the opposing team to play shorthanded

- E. Teams may recruit subs from other teams to play with them during the regular season. Subs from other teams are not allowed at all in the playoffs unless the opponent consents to the use of those subs
- F. Any roster requirements may be disregarded with consent of the other team

### 3. The Player

- A. The maximum number of players on the field is 10. A legal game can continue with a minimum of 4 females
- B. There is no requirement to have a certain number of any given gender in the outfield or infield
- C. A player must specifically identify as a female in order to count toward the minimum number of females required for purposes of co-ed participation. The rest of the team can be any number of males and/or non-binary individuals
- D. It is the responsibility of the team captain to communicate with the umpire regarding team composition when it comes to co-ed participation rules. The captain must make the umpire aware of any situations in which the identity of any given player(s) could be misconstrued

### 4. Equipment

- A. Team shirts are provided by MSSC. Players and coaches must wear shirts and shoes at all times while on the field. No sandals or open-toed shoes of any kind are permitted
- B. **Metal cleats are not allowed.** Umpires will inspect the cleats of all kickers. Baseball and Softball cleats are permitted as long as cleats are plastic
- C. The league will provide the official 10" game ball. No other ball will be used

### 5. The Playing Field

- A. The kickball field consists of one softball field. Some diamonds have outfield fences and some do not. Field dimensions are not always the same from park to park
- B. There are safety bases at first base and home plate. The fielder at first base must stand on the white portion of the base, while the runner must run to the orange portion of the base. The catcher must stand on home plate while attempting to field the ball and the runner must run to the black mat. If a defensive player blocks the black mat, the runner will be safe
- C. Beverages (in non-glass containers) are allowed at games. If players choose to take beverages on the field, containers must be at least six feet from any base or base path. All beverages (including empties) must be removed when the team leaves the field to kick. If a kicked ball strikes a beverage container of the fielding team, the umpire has discretion to make a call that will be the most advantageous to the kicking team, depending on the situation

### 6. Officials

- A. All games will be officiated by an impartial umpire supplied by the league. The umpire governs all game playing issues and has authority for final rulings

- B. The umpire is not a babysitter and is not expected to police immature behavior. MSSC expects all players to read and understand the rules and act like adults and respect their teammates, opponents, and the umpire. The umpire may intervene in situations where a player's conduct is deemed dangerous to anyone else at the field or violates MSSC's sportsmanship terms mentioned earlier in this document

## 7. Pitching

- A. No bouncy pitches are allowed. Any pitch that is higher than mid-shin is a ball. Mid-shin is measured at the bottom of the ball as it crosses the plate (or an invisible line that would extend across the strike at the front of the plate). Curves are allowed. There is no limit on pitch speed
- B. The pitcher must keep one foot on or behind the pitching rubber when rolling the ball, and must be within a reasonable distance of the pitching rubber when starting the pitching motion. "Reasonable distance" is about one foot. A player may not run up from several feet behind the pitching rubber when rolling the ball
- C. The strike zone extends roughly 18 inches on both sides of home plate and to mid-shin on a player's leg. The chalk line is part of the strike zone and a ball rolled over the line (any part of the ball) counts as a strike. See Appendix A at the end of this document for a visual on balls and strikes
  - a. The ball must cross the plate (or an invisible line across the front of the plate extending the width of the strike zone) to be considered a strike. This means that a pitcher cannot roll a ball that barely touches the front corner of the chalk line before rolling foul and be awarded a strike
- D. The umpire may award balls or walks to the kicker if the pitcher is taking too long to pitch or otherwise delaying play

## 8. Kicking

- A. This is kickball, and the objective of the game is to kick the ball. When up to kick, a player must make a motion the umpire interprets as a kick intended to propel the ball forward. A ball that does not make a noticeable move forward will be ruled a strike if there is no obvious kicking motion from the kicker
- B. Any player who plays in the field must kick. In the case of injuries or other special circumstances (i.e. pregnancies), the following options apply:
  - The player can kick, but may use a pinch runner if he or she reaches first base
  - Any player who does not feel safe kicking may abstain from doing so, but the team will take an out for that spot in the order
- C. The foot or lower leg must make all kicks. A "double-kick" will result in a strike
- D. Bunting is allowed by females only. When anyone other than a female is at bat, a kicked ball must advance past the chalk line between home plate and the pitcher's mound to not be considered a bunt. A ball not crossing this line will be a strike. Any player may pick up the ball in this area, which will result in a strike being called as soon as the ball is picked up. The line itself is still considered foul
  - The umpire has discretion to prohibit bunting by all individuals if there is improper communication regarding roster composition

- E. All kicks must occur at or behind home plate. A kick in front of home plate will be ruled a strike and a re-kick will occur, with any runners on base returning to the base they occupied before the kick. The kicker's plant foot determines the location of the kick. Anything more than roughly a toe length in front of the plate is considered a foul
- F. Kickers will get 3 strikes before being called out. All foul balls count as strikes. If the pitcher rolls 3 balls, the kicker will take first base
- G. When the catcher is fielding to the side of the kicker: A kicked ball that is touched in the air will be called fair or foul depending on which side of line it was touched. For example, if a ball is kicked down the third base line to the right of the foul line (in fair territory), and the catcher reaches out and knocks it down, this is considered a fair ball, even if the ball falls in foul territory
- H. The kicking order must alternate so that a female kicks every other "at bat." If there are more females than other genders on a team, females may kick back-to-back. Non-female players may only kick back-to-back at the bottom and top of the kicking order. Females may be rotated throughout the order as necessary if there are not enough to fill the batting order. A team must have at least four females present to rotate them through the lineup

## **9. Running**

- A. Leading off or stealing is not allowed. Runners must be on the base when the pitcher pitches the ball or they will be called out. A player may not leave the base until the pitch reaches home plate
- B. Hitting a runner's neck and above is not allowed. Any runner hit in this area will be ruled safe. This rule does not apply if a runner slides or ducks
- C. The umpire may call an automatic out or double play if it's determined that "interference" has occurred. Interference takes many forms, the most common of which include sliding in an attempt to take out a short stop or second baseman or purposely putting one's self in the way of a fielder's throw to another base
- D. Colliding with the catcher or any other player is not allowed. Runners must give defensive players the opportunity to field the ball, regardless of the location of the fielder. A runner who intentionally collides with any defensive player will be out and possibly disqualified from further play. Umpires will have discretion to determine if a fielder is only trying to impede the progress of a runner as opposed to attempting to field the ball
- E. Runners may run through first base just like baseball or softball. Once runners have touched first and been ruled safe by the ump, they continue to be safe unless they round first base with the obvious intent to run toward second base (i.e. run several feet in the direction of second base). If the runner simply turns around and walks back to first base, the runner is safe regardless of which direction they turned on the way back to first
  - Runners who do round first and head toward second must be tagged or hit with the ball before returning to first base to be out
- F. There is a line  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way between third base and home plate. Runners who touch or cross this line must proceed to home plate, and an automatic force-out comes into play at home. Every play at home plate is a force out, and a catcher may not tag a runner coming home, as it is not necessary and may result in an injury to one or both players

- G. There is a safety base at home plate. The catcher must stand on home plate itself, while the runner must run to the black mat. This rule is in place to avoid collisions and injuries. If the catcher blocks the black mat on a play at the plate, the runner will be safe
- H. Sliding is allowed, provided it is not in an attempt to knock a ball loose or break up a double play. Aggressive sliding deemed to be an attempt to take out or injure a player in any situation will result in the runner being called out and possibly ejected from the game
- I. Pinch runners are allowed in the case of injury. The last female out will pinch run for an injured female runner. The last male or non-binary individual out will pinch run for an injured male or non-binary individual

## **10. Fielding**

- A. If a team has ten players on the field, they must have someone at the catcher position
- B. Balls may be kicked to teammates in an attempt to get a player out. Balls may not be kicked at a runner in an attempt to get him or her out. Runners hit by a ball kicked by a fielder will be ruled safe at whichever base toward which they were advancing
- C. The catcher may field behind or to the side of the kicker (on the third base line only). The catcher must not be positioned forward of the kicker in fair territory before the ball is kicked. Failure to abide by this rule will result in a ball. The catcher must also be between home plate and the chalk line between 3<sup>rd</sup> base and home plate
- D. There is a safety base at home plate. When making a play at the plate, the catcher must stand on home plate itself, while the runner must run to the black mat. This rule is in place to avoid collisions
- E. The catcher is the only person normally allowed to make plays at the plate. The only exception to this rule is if the catcher has to leave the home plate area to chase down a ball. Then the pitcher may cover home. No one other than the pitcher or catcher is ever allowed to cover home plate
- F. If a ball leaves the infield (defined as the area composed of dirt between the foul lines), and is thrown or kicked back in, the play will be dead and runners may not advance once the pitcher has possession of the ball. The pitcher must be within the area bounded by the four bases for this rule to apply (i.e. cannot go into the outfield and retrieve a ball to stop play). If a player had already advanced past a base when the pitcher receives the ball, the runner may advance toward the next base at their own risk.
- G. Defensive players (with the exception of the catcher) may not field in front of the “bunt line” until the ball is kicked
- H. Runners get one extra base on an overthrow that leaves the field of play. The runner will get the base he or she was running to (if proceeding forward), plus one extra base
  - a. If a runner was running back to a base instead of proceeding to the next base, he or she only gets the next base. Example: A runner rounds second base and continues for ten feet past the base toward third but then turns around and starts running back to second when the ball leaves the field of play. This runner is only awarded third base and may not proceed home
- I. A ball that starts in foul territory and rolls fair before passing first or third base is a fair ball
- J. There is no official infield fly rule. Umpires may apply discretion to calling runners and kickers safe or out in instances where it is apparent that a defensive player has intentionally dropped an easy pop-up

- K. Sequence plays will apply where appropriate. For example: If a ball is kicked, the kicker runs to first, the runner on first does not advance, and the ball falls in fair territory, the defensive player must tag the runner first, then step on the base for both players to be out if the kicker had not yet reached first base

## **11. Timekeeping and Length of Games**

- A. Each game is allotted nine innings or approximately one hour – whichever comes first. No new inning may begin after 55 minutes of actual playing time have elapsed, but a game in progress may continue as long as needed to complete the final inning. All diamonds have a count-down timer that will be displayed behind home plate and will make an audible sound when 55 minutes have elapsed (if a game lasts that long)
- The one hour period starts at whatever time the game starts. If the start of a game is delayed for any reason, teams will still get to play for one hour. Example: If a game begins at 6:35, the game can go until 7:35, with the 55 minutes applying at 7:30
  - A game may last longer than one hour provided the last inning started before 55 minutes had expired. Example: Game starts at 6:30. Last inning begins at 7:23. The game may continue as long as needed past 7:30 to finish the current inning
- B. If a game is tied after nine innings of play or one hour, the game will result in a tie for the regular season, while playoff games will result in extra innings until a team wins. Extra innings are played the same as all previous innings (i.e. there is no runner on second base to start each half inning). Ties will also apply in regular season games cut short by weather
- C. If a team is up by ten or more runs, the game may be called if it's already at or past the time the next game is scheduled to begin. The game may continue if time remains before the next game is scheduled to begin. The game will end after any subsequent half inning (regardless of the score) if it has reached the time the next game is scheduled to begin

## **12. Additional Rules**

- A. Players may point out and enforce corrections with illegal substitutions and improper kicking order
- B. The home team is determined by the schedule in league play. The team at the bottom of any given matchup is the home team. The higher-seeded team is the home team for tournament/playoff play
- C. In situations where a game is called early due to rain, lightning, or other dangerous weather, a game will be considered final if seven full innings were completed, 45 minutes of real time has elapsed, or the captains otherwise agree to consider the game final

## **Miscellaneous Administrative Rules and Notes**

- MSSC encourages Free Agents (or players without a team) to register. Full teams will be placed first, followed by Free Agents in the order they registered
- Free Agents are welcome to form teams on their own or request to play with friends; otherwise they will be assigned to a team by MSSC. It is possible that Free Agents may not be assigned to a team if no teams request additional players and/or there are not enough Free Agents to compose an entire team.

- Spectators are welcome at games provided they also abide by our code of conduct. Teams are responsible for the conduct of their spectators, and spectators can and will be asked to leave if they engage in unacceptable behavior. Athletic fields are reserved spaces, not “public parks,” and anyone present must abide by our rules or we can and will call authorities to have them removed
- Club management reserves the right to alter the setup of the league at any time before or during the season. This includes, but is not limited to, league rules and prizes
- Umpires are provided by MSSC and should have no affiliation with any particular team in the league

## **End of the Game**

At the completion of the game, the score card will be signed by each captain and submitted to MSSC as proof of the game’s final score. All players are expected to shake hands or high five and otherwise show good sportsmanship, regardless of the final score or any disagreements or situations that may have arisen during the game.

## **Results and Standings**

Results and standings will be posted on the Kickball page of the MSSC website (<http://www.madisonssc.com>) following receipt of the official scorecard from each game.

## **Cancellation/Rainout Policy**

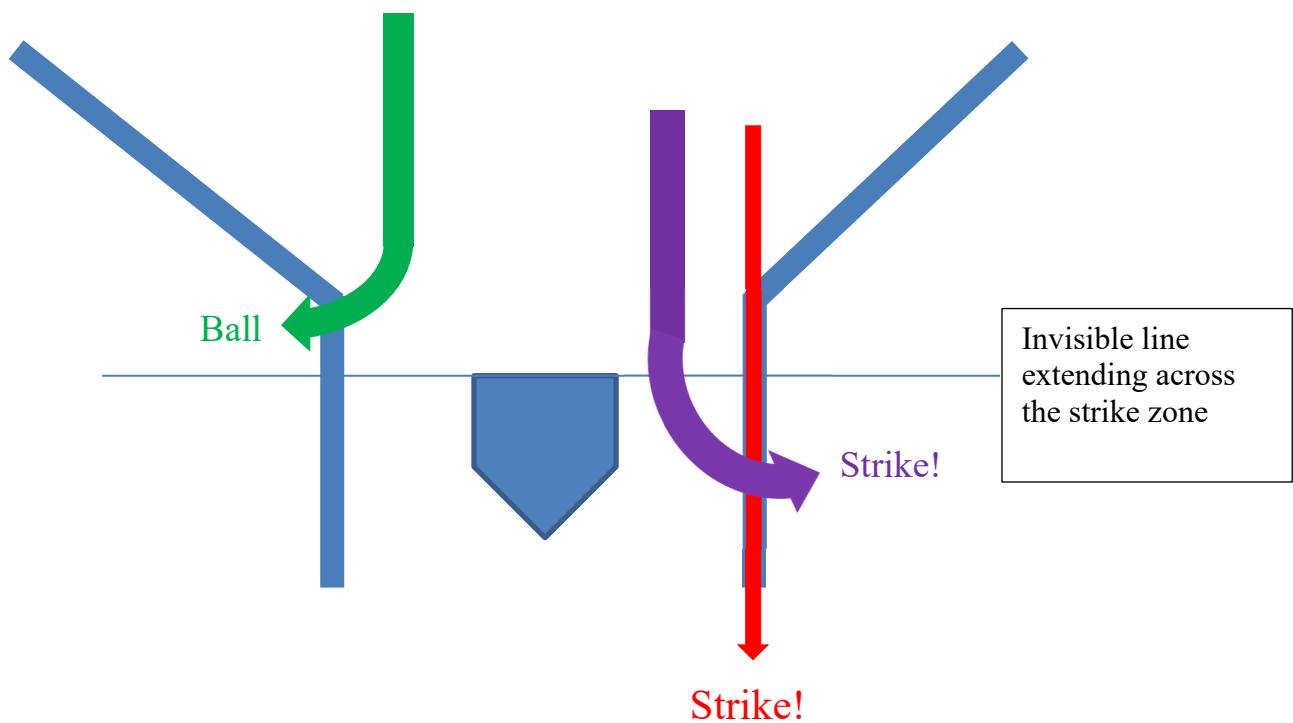
Games may be postponed or canceled due to dangerous weather, poor field conditions, or a number of other factors. MSSC must abide by the city’s determination of unplayable fields. Any violation of their rules jeopardizes our ability to reserve fields in the future. MSSC will make every attempt to reschedule games on the same day of the week as games are normally played, but other days may be used if agreed upon by both teams. A game will be considered complete and no rescheduling will occur if five full innings are completed before a game is called due to weather. Rescheduled games are not required to be played at the regular field, and any location must be agreed upon by both teams. Any cancellations will be posted on the MSSC website and Facebook page as well as e-mailed to all registered players.

## **Good Sportsmanship**

The final section of the rules and regulations of the league will reiterate what was stated at the beginning of this document: The purpose of our kickball league is first and foremost to have fun. Winning should always come second. All participants must realize that not all players will be on the same skill level, and that there may be vast differences in skill level between members of the same team or between two teams in the league. Boasting, bragging, taunting, verbally abusing, or otherwise putting down other players will not be tolerated. The referees and/or a representative of MSSC reserve the right to issue warnings, penalties, and ejections if any of the above-mentioned behavior becomes too severe. Winning may be important to you, but good sportsmanship must take priority over wins and losses.

## Appendix A

# Balls and Strikes



### Explanations:

1. **Red arrow:** A ball that touches the chalk line of the strike zone is a strike. In this example, a ball rolled straight down the line is a strike since it broke the invisible line extending across the strike zone and never rolled foul. The ball does not need to be *inside* the chalk lines
2. **Purple arrow:** The ball broke the plane of the plate (the “Invisible line extending across the strike zone”) before rolling foul. This is a strike
3. **Green arrow:** This pitch touched the chalk line but did not break the plane of the plate before rolling foul. This is a ball

Disclaimer: This extremely crude illustration is not drawn to scale and does not include every possible type of pitch (just the ones people complain about the most). Balls and strikes are umpire discretion. If you are a pitcher who is not putting the ball over the plate, you are subject to umpire discretion on balls and strike calls. If you are the kicker and the pitch is at least halfway decent, you should kick it.