

# MENIFEE VALLEY UPPER DIVISION SENIOR SOFTBALL

## SPRING SEASON 2024

### BIG LEAGUE DREAMS, PERRIS, CA



#### LEAGUE RULES

1. Senior Softball USA (SSUSA) tournament rules unless otherwise noted.
2. All SSUSA-approved bats are allowed; e.g. Miken Ultra II

The MVUDSS Board (Board) categorically states that the use of an ALTERED BAT by a MVUDSS player is unacceptable behavior and profoundly contrary to the fairness, good sportsmanship, and concern for player safety expected of all MVUDSS players.

The Board acknowledges that a MVUDSS player using an altered bat (rolled, shaved, or changed/doctored in some other fashion) does so to gain an advantage in hitting performance, while simultaneously exposing other players to potential harm. The Board lacks the technical knowledge and financial resources to independently determine if a MVUDSS player has used an altered bat in games.

If a MVUDSS player is found to have used an altered bat in an SSUSA-sanctioned tournament, and SSUSA takes disciplinary action, the Board will presume, until convinced otherwise, that the player used such a bat in MVUDSS games.

The Board recognizes that SSUSA has the means to detect altered bats and will use this information to decide if disciplinary action is warranted against the MVUDSS player. At its sole discretion, the Board will consider and weigh any disciplinary action imposed by SSUSA using SSUSA Rule 3.4(6) as a guideline to determine the extent, if any, of discipline against the MVUDSS player. The Board reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to follow, impose a greater, lesser, or no penalty based on the SSUSA guideline.

3. Age Qualification: A player must become 55+ years of age during the current calendar year to be eligible to play. A player attaining age 55 in any particular calendar year is eligible to play during the Fall Season of the previous calendar year.
  4. Rosters:
    - a. Local Teams: Local team rosters are limited to 12 players. An eligible player not on a roster may become a “full-time” player replacing another full-time player if the latter resigns from the league. Refer to the Player Resignation Policy under the Rules and Policies page on the league website. The new full-time player’s rating must be within one of the resigned full-time player’s rating. Exception: A 4 may replace a 6.
    - b. Out-of-Area (OOA) Teams: Out-of-area team rosters are limited to 12 players. An eligible player not on a roster may become a “full-time” player replacing another full-time player if the latter resigns from the league. The new full-time player’s rating must be at, or below, the resigned full-time player’s rating
- Teams are required to submit a roster of no more than 12 players to the Board for review/approval. The submittal of the roster is to include a 1-6 “provisional rating” (1 is the highest) of each roster player, as follows: two 1s, two 2s, two 3s, two 4s, two 5s, two 6s, with the final approval of such ratings to be made by the Board. If a player leaves the roster, any future replacement player(s) with his provisional rating must be submitted to the Board for review/approval.
- (If the rating is rejected, the player is not allowed to play in the league as relates to the resigned player he was designated to replace unless the Board’s rating is lower than the manager’s provisional rating. The manager can then decide if he wants the player to replace the resigned player at the lower rating.)

- c. A violation of Rule a. or b. above which causes the use of an ineligible player may result in disciplinary action as solely determined by the Board.
  - d. An eligible player not on a roster may become a “pickup” player in a game replacing a missing player after meeting all Pool Player Policy requirements. The “pickup” player must have a rating at, or below, the missing player’s rating.
  - e. The league fee for each full-time player will be determined prior to the start of each season. A player must pay his league fee prior to his game(s) in the 3rd week of the season and will not be allowed to play until the fee is paid.
  - f. Teams will be charged for awards over the number of roster players on the team. Awards will be presented to all winning team(s) roster players.
  - g. No new player may be added to the pool with less than 4 weeks left in the regular season. However, the 4-week restriction does not apply for:
    - (1) a player coming back into the league as a pool player or as a replacement player, or
    - (2) a new player coming into the league as a replacement player where there is an opening appropriate to his rating.
5. Defense: 10 defensive players, though a team may play with a minimum of 9.  
 There will be a 10-minute grace period for the first game for teams unable to field 9 players.  
 After the first inning there will be no infield practice unless the defense brings in a new infielder, who then may field two warm-up ground balls and make two throws to first base.  
 At the beginning of each half-inning, including the first inning, a pitcher may take no more than three (3) warm-up pitches, and must do so within a one (1) minute time frame.  
 A pitcher who relieves another pitcher, during or between innings, may take no more than five (5) warm-up pitches, and must do so within a one minute and 30 second time frame.  
 A pitcher relieved in an inning that comes back in to pitch in that same inning will receive no warm-up pitches.  
 A pitcher may take one (1) warm-up pitch to the first batter requesting he move due to the effects of the sun. This will be for one batter only, irrespective of the number of innings that the sun rule stays in effect, and irrespective of whether it's a right or left-handed batter.
- Offense: All teams (including OOA teams) must bat all active players on their roster identified on their lineup card. Managers must include on the lineup card:
- a) all roster players attending the game, unless injured or have other valid excuse, must be included in the batting order,
  - b) all non-roster substitute players who may have to replace other players later in the game. See Rule #6 below.
6. Substitute (“Sub”) Players  
 The sub’s name must appear on the lineup card.  
 2 types of subs:  
Rostered Subs may not participate in the game except as a base coach, courtesy runner, or late arrival (see 7. below).  
Non-Rostered Subs may not participate in the game except as a base coach, unless he is replacing a player (with the appropriate rating) who is injured during the game or must leave early.  
 Subs may play in a suspended version of the game if necessary.
7. Late Roster Arrival:
- a. If a team is playing with all roster players, a late arrival roster player must be added to the bottom of the batting order. In such a situation, the late arrival roster player may be added to the game at any time.
  - b. If a team is playing with pickup players, a late arrival roster player must replace the pickup player substituting for him, and will assume the batting order position of the pickup player leaving the game. In such a situation, the late arrival roster player may be added to the game at any time.  
 Reminder: All teams may “pick up” players until they reach 12.
- c. If a team picks up a player who, subsequently, is unable to start the game, the manager may pick up another, appropriately rated, player to start the game in his place. At such time as the original pickup player is able to join the game, he may do so, at any time, and replace “his replacement” in the game/batting order.
- d. When known, pickup players must be identified on the lineup card prior to the start of the game. If the game has started, and a player is picked up based on the applicable criteria in Rule 8, the pickup player's name will not be required to be added to the lineup card.

8. **Pickup Players:**  
All teams may “pick up” players until they reach 12 players. A pickup must be a waiting list, pool, or full-time player. Players are BOD-rated 1 (highest), 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6.
- a. Each player will receive a **Draft Position** and a **BOD Rating**:  
(1) **Draft Position** determined by the order in which he is drafted and (2) **BOD Rating** determined by the league board. When missing a player, the Draft Position of the pickup player must be the same or lower than the Draft Position of the missing player. Exception: A 5 Draft Position may also replace a 6 Draft Position.  
The BOD Rating is provided only as an aid to league managers during the player draft.
- When a local team already has three (or more) rostered 1s by virtue of having replaced a 2-rated player(s) from its roster with a 1-rated player(s) from the waiting list, it may not pick up a 1 to replace a missing 1 unless it falls below two 1s. (This rule also applies to 2 thru 4-rated players.)
- b. Picking up players during a game
- (1) If a manager starts a game with 11 or 12 players, and loses a player at any time during a game, the manager may select any available player whose rating is equal to or higher (lower-rated player), to replace the lost player.
- (2) If a manager starts a game with 11 or 12 players, and loses a player at any time during a game but chooses not to replace that player if that player is rated 5 or 6, then during the same game loses a second player rated 1-4, the manager cannot replace that second missing player.
- (3) If a manager starts a game with 10, or fewer players, and loses a player at any time during a game, the manager forfeits the right to pick up a replacement player under these revised rules. The exception to this will be if a manager starts a game with 10 or fewer players, but identifies a replacement player on the lineup card with an appropriate rating, he may pick up a replacement player.
- c. Pickup Players for Tournament/Playoff Format: See Schedule.
9. Games will be seven (7) innings; however, after 1 hr 15 min the umpire will inform the players that they will complete the current inning plus one more unless they’re already in the 7th. International Tiebreaker while time is remaining. If the score is tied after the open inning and time has expired, one extra inning will be played.
10. Managers must submit lineup cards to the umpire and opposing manager.
11. All batters start with a 1-1 ball/strike count with a “waste foul” after two strikes.  
Rule 21. below, regarding a batted ball hitting the pitching screen twice in the same at bat, is not affected by this change; it is still an out.  
A couple of examples are cited below:  
Example 1: Batter has a 1-1 count, next pitch is a called strike. Now he has 2 strikes with a “waste foul” coming. Next pitch, he hits the screen. That became his waste foul. Next pitch the batter fouls off. The batter is declared out.  
Example 2: Batter has a 1-1 count, hits screen with next pitch. Now he has 2 strikes with a “waste foul” coming. Next pitch, he hits the screen again. Since he hit the screen a second time in the same at bat, he is declared out. The waste foul is negated in this example.
12. a. **Run Limit Rule:** 5 runs/inning in all but the open and extra innings.  
b. **Mercy Rule:** no mercy rule.
13. **Flip-Flop Rule:** At the start of the open inning if the visiting team is leading by 10 or more runs, the flip-flop rule will be invoked.
14. **Courtesy Runners:** Unlimited, but no player may be used as a courtesy runner more than once per inning.
15. **Base-running:** No run-throughs. Sliding OK at all bases except 1B and scoring line unless it is to avoid a collision. Judgment call.

16. Base Runner Safety Rule - 1st and 3rd Base: A runner occupying 1st or 3rd base has the option, for safety reasons only, to vacate his base by moving into foul territory when the pitcher releases the pitch while facing a left-handed or right-handed batter, respectively. A runner on 1st base does not have this option with a right-handed batter and a runner on 3rd base does not have this option with a left-handed batter.
- The runner in so doing must not intentionally distract any fielder. The umpire may rule interference.
- The runner must reacquire the vacated base before he can advance to the next base, but need not return to the base between pitches.
- The runner is subject to being put out by a defensive player, either by tagging him or by touching the previously occupied base (whether a true force out technically exists or not) while in possession of the ball, prior to the runner reacquiring the base.
- This rule is offered as an option to a base runner solely for safety reasons. If the runner vacates a base, he does so at his own risk in terms of the potential of being put out during a subsequent play.
- Injury Rule - If, in the umpire's sole judgement, a player appears to be seriously injured during a play, whether or not timeout had been called on the play, timeout will be assumed to have been called in order to permit attendance to the injured player. When play is resumed the umpire may, at his own discretion, award bases which, in his judgment, would have occurred had a timeout not been called. An example would be a batter striking a ball that hits the pitcher, and the batter forsakes advancing to first base, and, instead, rushes to the aid of the pitcher.
- Sun Affecting Batters Rule - If, in the sole judgment of the umpire, the sun is adversely affecting the ability of batters to see the ball, the batter may require the pitcher to pitch from up to six feet on either side of the pitching rubber, on the side chosen by the batter. A batter may have a pitcher move according to the prior sentence only one time during a given at bat.
- The decision of the umpire to apply this rule is final and not subject to protest or appeal. If the rule is applied, it shall be imposed only at the top of a new inning and applied on a full-inning basis only. The umpire, at his sole discretion will determine how long this rule will apply during a game. Managers do not have input as to whether this rule will be applied; and if applied, when its application will cease during a game.
17. Over-the-Fence Home Run Rule: 5 HRs/team. After both teams hit 5 HRs, the 1-up rule will be invoked.
- The home team may go 1 up in an open inning. Each HR over the limit is a single with runners advancing only if forced.
- Any fair ball touched by a player on either side of the fence that clears or has cleared the fence in fair territory before touching the ground will be a "four-base award", and will not be included in the total over-the-fence home run count. The batter-runner and base runners will be allowed to "hit and sit".
18. Double Base Rule: A defender can record an out at first base if his foot touches ONLY the white base or a portion of the white and orange bases. If his foot touches ONLY the orange base, no out will be recorded.
19. Commitment Line Rule
- Once a runner has touched or crossed the commitment line, the runner **MUST**:
    - Continue to run/advance toward the scoring line/plate;
    - Not stop. If he does so, the umpire will, immediately, declare the runner out. The ball remains live.
    - Not re-cross the commitment line to return to third base. If he does so, the umpire will, immediately, declare the runner out. The ball remains live.
  - Once the runner has touched or crossed the commitment line:
    - The defensive player cannot tag the runner. If he does so, the umpire will, immediately, call the runner safe. The runner need not advance to the scoring line/plate and his run will be scored. The ball remains live.
    - The defensive player's only play is to touch the strike zone mat with the ball in hand before the runner touches on, or across, the scoring line/plate. The ball remains live.
  - Determining whether the runner has stopped, continues to run/advance/move forward or if the defensive player has correctly/incorrectly tagged the runner is at the sole discretion of the umpire.
20. Wet Base/Bag Rule - There is no specific SSUSA rule. Judgment made by SSUSA umpire.
- In the interest of maintaining the safety of players, and with the concurrence of both managers, if bases are wet as result of misty, foggy, rainy (list not all inclusive) conditions, the umpire will allow all runners and defensive players to touch the ground close to the base in order (1) to advance to the next base in the case of the runner and (2) to effect a putout in the case of the defensive player.
  - However, the exception to (1) above is if there is a play at a base, both the runner and the fielder must touch the base.
  - Closeness to the base and determining whether there is a play at the base will be at the sole discretion of the umpire.
  - The umpire will recommend the discontinuance of this rule, but must have the concurrence of both managers, and will only be discontinued after the completion (use) of a full inning.

21. Pitching Screen: The sole purpose of the pitching screen is to provide a level of safety to the pitcher against batted balls. It is not intended that the screen be used by the defense as an extra fielder or to unnecessarily restrict a batter's hitting options.  
If a batter hits the front of the screen, it's a foul ball. If he hits it again on the same at bat, he is out.  
If a batted ball, deflected by the pitcher, hits the front of the screen, it's a live ball.
- a. If, during a play, a defensive player hits the screen with the ball or causes it to land in the well, the ball is considered live and in play.
  - b. Extra game balls are not to be retained at/on the pitching screen during play.
  - c. Location (Placement) of pitching screen:
    - (1) The pitching screen must be utilized during a game. Players may not intentionally move pitching screen during play.
    - (2) Placement of pitching screen – viewed from pitching rubber toward home plate:
      - (a) Horizontal plane – The right rear leg of the pitching screen must be placed within a space of  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  the distance, (approximately 6 to 12 inches) from the right side of the pitching rubber for a right-handed pitcher, and similarly for a left-handed pitcher.
      - (b) Vertical plane – The end of the legs of the pitching screen ~~may~~ must be moved forward approx. 12 inches maximum from the front of the pitching rubber.
    - (3) Once the pitching screen is set per c.(2) above, it must be set as close to parallel to the pitching rubber as possible.
    - (4) Pitchers are allowed to pitch over the pitching screen. All pitching rules apply and must be observed.
    - (5) When the pitcher is requested to move due to the effects of the sun, the pitching screen must be moved in a corresponding distance in the direction the batter moves the pitcher, such that the integrity of the pitcher's safety and not having a “second” defensive player (i.e. the screen) is maintained.
22. Tournament:  
A single-elimination tournament may be held during seasons with less than 15 regular season games per team. The Board will consider all factors which may impact whether to conduct a tournament and, at its sole discretion, will determine whether a single-elimination tournament is practical. No consideration will be given toward conducting a double-elimination tournament.  
Tournament format TBD based on the number of teams. See Schedule.  
Tied teams will be seeded using the following SSUSA tiebreaker criteria:
  - a. Won/Loss record
  - b. Head-to-head, only when each team plays every other team an equal number of times
  - c. Least runs allowed in games played between the tied teams
  - d. Run differential in games played between the tied teams  
If necessary, the tournament schedule will be modified to allow all teams still tied for the “final” tournament spot after the fourth tiebreaker (d. above) to participate in the tournament.
  - e. Coin flip  
The higher seed will have its choice of home or visitor.Playoffs: Will occur ONLY in the event of a 1<sup>st</sup> place tie. The tied teams will be seeded using the following SSUSA tiebreaker criteria for a single-elimination playoff:
  - a. Won/Loss record
  - b. Head-to-head
  - c. Least runs allowed in games played between the tied teams
  - d. Run differential in games played between the tied teams
  - e. Coin flip  
The higher seed will have its choice of home or visitor.
23. Scorekeeping: Both managers are required to verify the umpire's score just prior to the open inning. Unless a discrepancy can be resolved at that time, the umpire's score will stand.
24. Protests: A rule misinterpretation will be resolved immediately at the field by the umpire assisted by at least two league board members not involved in the protested game.
25. Rainouts/Cancellations: Some of the games will be made up by adding them to the remaining schedule. Preference will be given to those games that may impact 1st place.
26. New players (full-time or pool players) desiring to enter the league must be approved in advance, preferably by the full Board, but at least by a quorum of the league board.
27. Waiting List: When all teams reach their maximum 12-man roster, new eligible players desiring to play full time will be placed on a waiting list.

In order to encourage new players to join our league and to enlist positive “public relations” for our league, managers will make every effort possible to first pick up a waiting list player prior to picking up a pool player or player from another team. Managers will be on the honor system in this regard.

28. Ejections: A player ejected from a game for violating the SSUSA Players' Code of Ethics will, at a minimum, be ineligible to play for the remainder of the game from which he was ejected. The Board will, subsequently, review the ejection to determine if the ejection was warranted, and, if so, and at its sole discretion, whether further disciplinary action is appropriate.

When evaluating possible further disciplinary action, the Board will consider, but not be limited to reviewing: the severity/flagrant nature of the incident; whether this was a repeat offense; the length of time between repeat offenses; whether the person had committed similar offenses; when such offenses were committed; etc. The Board will also utilize, as appropriate, the Player Discipline Policy.

29. Illegal Player: If it is discovered during a game, by a player, manager, umpire, board member, etc. (i.e. not only by the offended team), that a team is using an illegal player, the following will apply:
- DEFENSE: If the illegal player is on defense at the time of discovery, he will be removed from the game and an out recorded every time his position comes to bat.
  - OFFENSE: If the illegal player is on offense and the infraction is discovered before or during his at bat, a. above will apply.

If the infraction is discovered after his at bat, in addition to his removal from the game and an out recorded every time his position comes to bat, any positive offensive outcome resulting from that at bat and before the next batter has completed his at bat will be nullified.

No player will be allowed to substitute for the illegal player in the lineup.

Ejections (Rule 28) may apply. If such an infraction is alleged, the MVUDSS Board will review all facts surrounding the infraction and, at its sole discretion, will determine if disciplinary action is warranted.

30. Batting Position:

The batter must have **at least** some portion of both feet on or inside the lines of the batter's box at the start of the pitch. A batter who steps out of the batter's box at any time during the pitch and then hits the ball, fair or foul, shall be called out. Steps out means touching the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box.

**MVUDSS does not follow the SSUSA December 2023 rule change regarding the position of the batter's back foot.**

Obliterating the Batter's Box: A batter, or any player, who in the umpire's judgment, deliberately erases any portion of the batter's box will be called out. A second offense by the same batter/player, in the same game, will result in an inning-ending out. If the person who erases the box (such as a manager or a catcher) is not due to bat next, the next batter for that team will be declared out.

31. Code of Conduct: In addition to following the SSUSA Code of Ethics, the MVUDSS league adheres to basic rules of conduct as identified in its governing document, Code of Conduct.
32. Any questions regarding rules not explicitly covered here should be directed to the league board: Steve Baranick, Joe Hansell, Glenn Stevenson, Ron Barnhart, or David Bates.