

Middle River Girls Softball (MRGS)



Program Principles and Guidelines

Version 1.0

Change History

Version	Status	Date	Description of changes
1.0	Approved	18-NOV-25	Approval of the new Program Principles Handbook



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1 Program By-laws

Article I: Name & Organization

1. This organization shall be known as "Middle River Girls Softball," hereafter referred to in the bylaws as "MRGS."
2. The MRGS Program is managed and administered via the MRGS Board headed by a Commissioner of Softball Operations, hereafter referred to in these By-laws as the "Board".
3. MRGS has been organized as a youth sporting activity under the auspices of the Middle River Recreation and Parks Program. It shall be a nonprofit and nonpolitical organization.
4. "Robert's Rules of Order" shall be in effect for all MRGS meetings unless suspended by a majority vote of eligible voting members in quorum and in session.

Article II: Philosophy

1. MRGS supports excellence in athletics by promoting commitment to our teams, sportsmanship, character in our athletes, and building community involvement.
2. MRGS is dedicated to supporting, encouraging, and advancing our softball program and their related activities.
3. It is the goal of MRGS is to provide a safe and positive environment where players can have fun, make new friends, and enhance skills while learning about the importance of teamwork, sportsmanship, and the game of softball.

Article III: Board of Directors

Section 1: Board Members

The Board of Directors for MRGS shall consist of the following elected officials which will serve two-year terms as outlined in these bylaws: Commissioner of Softball Operations, Assistant Commissioner of Softball Operations, Director of Finance, Administrative Assistant, Director of Developmental Activities, Director of Fund-Raising Activities, and Director of Equipment Management.

Section 2: Commissioner of Softball Operations

The Commissioner of Softball Operations shall convene and preside at each meeting and represent the organization where representation is deemed advisable. The Commissioner shall preside over all operations and activities of the organization. The Commissioner shall supervise all other offices in execution of their duties. The Commissioner of Softball Operations shall also appoint/dissolve committees and their associated chairpersons as necessary.

Section 3: Assistant Commissioner of Softball Operations:

The Assistant Commissioner of Softball Operations shall assist the Commissioner in the performance of duties. The Assistant Commissioner of Softball Operations, in the absence of the Commissioner, shall have powers and perform such duties as may be delegated to them by the Commissioner of Softball Operations.



Section 4: Director of Finance

The Director of Finance shall keep the budget and any financial records of the organization,, submit check requests on approval of the Board. The Director of Finance has no custody of funds. The Director of Finance shall report the amount of money available in the general fund and encumbered funds at each monthly meeting. The Directory of Finance shall submit request for payments and deposit funds.

Section 5: Administrative Assistant

The Administrative Assistant shall maintain all correspondence of the Board with outside entities. The Administrative Assistance shall also keep the minutes of all meetings, special recordings, and other necessary records as deemed appropriate by the board. The Administrative Assistant shall maintain the public voice of the organization and produce/receive all correspondence and material on behave of MRGS. The Administrative Assistant is the keeper of all MRGS paper/electronic property.

Section 6: Director of Developmental Activities

The Director of Developmental Activities shall be responsible for developing and implementing strategies that assist with sponsorships, player and coaching development, as well as other community activities including fund raising to support the advancement of MRGS objectives.

Section 7: Director of Fund-Raising Activities

The Director of Fund-Raising Activities shall be responsible for planning, developing, and implementing activities and events, in conjunction with the Director of Developmental activities, that assist with organizational fundraising as well as other community activities to support the advancement of MRGS objectives.

Section 8: Director of Equipment Management

The Director of Equipment Management shall be responsible for the coordinating, ordering, surveying, and maintenance of all player and field equipment. The Director of Equipment Management also ensures all equipment is deemed safe for playing.

Section 9: Committees/Committee Chairs:

Special committees for MRGS shall be initiated and dissolved, as needed, by the Commissioner of Softball Operations, with Board approval. At the time of initiation, the Commissioner will assign a committee chair. Committee Chairs do not have voting rights unless voting is open to all membership.

Section 10: Appointees

An individual or individuals that are needed to accomplish a specific task for the MRGS Program may be assigned by the Commissioner of Softball Operations, with Board approval. Such appointments may be, but not limited to, coaches, softball clinic manager, etc. Said appointees shall have their duties, authority limits, and length of time appointed fully specified at the time of appointment.



Article IV: Nominations & Elections of the Board

Section 1: Nominations

1. Nominations for office will take place at the May meeting for the positions up for nominations.
2. Nominees must be present at the meeting or, if unable to attend, must have consented in writing beforehand to be nominated for any office.
3. All nominations must be made by an MRGS voting member in good standing and receive a second by another MRGS voting member in good standing, before the nominee's name may be placed on the ballot.
4. Nominations shall occur as follows:
 - All odd numbered positions shall be nominated and voted on in years ending in odd numbers
 - All even numbered positions shall be nominated and voted on in years ending in even numbers.

(1) Commissioner of Softball Operations	(2) Assistant Commissioner of Softball Operations
(3) Director of Finance	(4) Administrative Assistant
(5) Director of Developmental Activities	(6) Director of Fund-Raising Activities
(7) Director of Equipment Management	

Section 2: Elections

1. The election of the board members up for nomination will take place in the month of June during the Annual Membership Meeting.
2. No new nominations for office will be accepted from the floor during the Annual Membership Meeting.
3. Voting privileges will be extended to all coaches present, as well as to any softball volunteer who has attended a minimum of four (4) general meetings for that seasonal year.
4. The new MRGS Board will begin their two-year term of office immediately following the election

Section 3: Resignation/Vacancy/Removal from Office

1. In the event of resignation/removal of any elected board member or the vacancy of such office, the vacant office shall be filled by an appointment of the Commissioner for the unexpired term of office. If a new officer is a non-elected member of the Board, the Commissioner of Softball Operations has the discretion to end the appointed term with approval from the Board.
2. Any Board member that resigns or is removed from office must wait a mandatory three (3) year grace period before said individual is permitted to hold office with MRGS. Said person can still perform voluntary duties such as coaching. A Board vote will determine eligibility after the grace period. The Board may waive the grace period if it is in the best interest.



Article V: Membership

1. Membership of MRGS consists of its board members, coaches, other individual appointees, and parents of registered MRGS players.
2. MRGS Board Members, Coaches, and other appointed individuals may be dropped from the Program and program membership "For Cause". "For Cause" includes, but is not limited to, actions and or activities that are detrimental to the goals and objectives of MRGS, failure to abide by the By-laws, failure to abide by the Coaches Code of Conduct, failure to abide by the rules and policies set forth by the Board, conviction of a criminal activity, and/or failure to perform the tasks and duties to which elected, appointed, entrusted or assigned. Removal "For Cause" requires a simple majority vote of the Board in quorum.

Article VI: Meetings

Section 1: General/Board Meetings

1. Meetings shall be held on the third Monday of each month during the months of January through July, unless otherwise noted by the Board. Meeting will occur at 8:00pm when in-season; 7:00pm when out-of-season.
2. All meetings should include a review of the minutes from the previous meeting, presentation of the current financial report, reports from active committees, and open and new business.
3. Meetings shall be presided over by the Commissioner. The Assistant Commissioner or Director of Finance may preside over regular meetings in the absence of the Commissioner.
4. General Meetings are open to all who wish to attend>Board Meetings are closed to all but board members and invitees.

Section 2: Special Board/Coaches Meetings

1. A special meeting or coaches meeting may be called by the Commissioner of Softball Operations when deemed desirable or necessary. Notice of the special meeting will be transmitted by the Administrative Assistant of the Commissioner in the most expeditious means available.

Section 3: Annual Membership Meeting

1. The Annual Membership Meeting of MRGS will be held in June of each year. In addition to the MRGS Board, all coaches, appointed staff personnel, etc, are required to attend. The Annual Membership Meeting will be an Open Meeting, however, only those who meet eligibility requirements can vote on any business.



Article VII: Voting Eligibility

Section 1: Eligibility

Everyone attending a General Meeting who has been present for at least two general meetings and 50% of all eligible general meetings is qualified to vote on motions during a general meeting; elections are not included.

Section 2: Quorum

A quorum must be available for any voting to occur. A quorum shall be met when four of the Board members are present.

Article VIII: Finances

Section 1:

The financial stability and accountability of the MRGS Program rests with the Director of Finance, with oversight by the Rec Council. No funds will be requested from the MRGS account without the Commissioner of Softball Operation's approval. All expenditures over \$500 must be approved by the Board, and the minutes of all meetings shall record the details of all expenditures for record.

Section 2:

The Director of Finance shall provide a financial report at every monthly meeting as well as the Annual Meeting.

Article IX: Complaint Procedures

All persons involved in the MRGS Program have the right to grieve an issue with the Board to redress a real or perceived problem. We encourage all issues to be addressed with the head coach first. However, the Board of Directors have a process to address unresolved issues. The MRGS Program Complaint and Appeals process has two (2) steps, and it outlined below:

STEP 1:

The grieving individual shall contact the Commissioner of Softball Operations and inform the Commissioner of the particulars of the problem. The Commissioner will attempt to resolve the problem. If the grieving party is not satisfied with the Commissioner's decision, they shall be informed they have the right to present their complaint to the Board. If the grieving party takes that course of action, the Commissioner is required to schedule a hearing at the next regular meeting of the Board.

STEP 2:

The Board shall hear the individual's complaint and render a decision. If the grieving party is still not satisfied with the decision, they shall be informed to contact the President of the Middle River Recreation and Parks Council for redress.

Article X: Auditing

1. The Director of Finance will be required to submit a detailed report at the end of each fiscal year.
2. A monthly financial review is held between the Council Treasurer and Director of Finance.
3. All audits required occur at the Council level.



Article XI: Dissolution

Section 1:

The existence of MRGS shall be perpetual and a motion, resolution, or other such act to dissolve the program cannot be made if there is a volunteer adult, appointed by the Middle River Recreation and Parks Council, willing to administer and manage the program.

Section 2:

However, if the program should be dissolved, all the assets shall revert to the Middle River Recreation and Parks Council care of the General Fund.

Article XII: Amendments

Section 1:

Amendments to the By-laws may be proposed at any Board meeting by any member of the membership in good standing at the time of proposal.

Section 2:

Amendments shall be presented to the membership over three meetings where they can be discussed. Upon the third reading, the Amendment is approved by a majority vote of the membership and take effect immediately.



2 Program Policies

2.1 Affiliation

1. Middle River Girls Softball operates as an organized youth sporting activity under the guidance of the Middle River Recreation and Parks Program.
2. Middle River Girls Softball plays recreational softball under a joint Region 3/Region 4 league. Said league is managed by the Commissioners of participating programs.
3. Middle River Girls Softball plays Summer and Fall Recreation Ball under the Upper Chesapeake Softball League solely managed by that Commissioner.

2.2 Player Eligibility

1. Any female player between the ages of four (4) and eighteen (18) is eligible to register to participate in the Middle River Girls Softball program regardless of residency.
2. The cutoff date to determine a player's age is the January 1st preceding the beginning of the regular season for all age groups.
3. A player may not be registered to play on more than one recreation team within the Region 3 & Region 4 League.
4. Players must be properly registered at their eligibility age. Players may not play down an age group for any reason. Players may be granted the ability to play up in age group, but requires an assessment during winter sessions.
5. Players primary team is decided by the team said player is rostered. Said player will be designated as "secondary" for all other rosters.
6. If players are permitted to play at a higher age group, or a player is used as a substitute, for either a higher/lower age group, said player cannot pitch or catch for the secondary team, per league rules.
7. Players who play Junior Varsity or Varsity Softball with their High School are still eligible to play.
8. Players who play travel ball with other organizations are eligible to play
9. If any team within our program is found guilty of using an ineligible player, all games played by that team will be forfeited. Additional penalties may be assessed by the Board against the team and the coach.

2.3 Player Registration

1. Player registrations must be submitted online via the Middle River Recreation and Parks Council Web Site during open registration; there is no paper registration.
2. All players must be registered according to their true age group.



2.4 Coaching Requirements

1. Any individual that may come in contact with children as part of our program must adhere to a certification process:

Coaches/Assistant Coaches

1. Coaches are required to complete the following items prior to April 1:
 - ✓ Baltimore County Recreation and Parks Background Check
 - ✓ National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)
 - Protecting Students from Abuse
 - Concussion in Sports
 - Heat Illness Prevention
 - Sudden Cardiac Arrest
2. New coaches will serve a probation period of two (2) seasons.
3. Background Checks must be recertified every year prior to any interactions with players
4. NFHS Classes must be recertified when a coach moves to a new age group.
5. All Coaches are required to attend all scheduled Coach's meetings.
6. All Coaches are expected to attend all Winter Clinic Sessions.

Volunteers

1. Any individual that is not a head coach/assistant coach, including team parents is considered a volunteer.
2. Volunteers are required to complete the following items prior to April 1:
 - ✓ Baltimore County Recreation and Parks Background Check
3. It is recommended that Volunteers take the following NFHS classes:
 - ✓ Protecting Students from Abuse
 - ✓ Concussion in Sports
 - ✓ Heat Illness Prevention
 - ✓ Sudden Cardiac Arrest
4. New volunteers will serve a probation period of two (2) seasons.
5. Background Checks must be recertified every year prior to any interactions with players
6. NFHS Classes must be recertified when a coach moves to a new age group.

2.5 Rosters & Player Drafts

1. Rosters will be updated once registration is closed.
2. Where possible, players will remain on their previous rosters within the same age group.
3. Upon registration, players can request upcoming coaches.
4. Players will not be allowed to play down in age group. Players may be allowed to play up in an age group with evaluation and approval during winter clinics.
5. To finalize rosters, a draft will take place to ensure all teams have approximately the same number of players. New coaches will draft first; followed by coaching moving up in age group. Next, coaches will draft in order of the previous year record with the first place team drafting last.



2.6 Code of Conduct

1. Middle River Girls Softball has a high expectation for the proper conduct of all coaches, players, parents and spectators participating in the program.
2. As a Middle River Recreation and Parks Council-oriented youth program, Middle River Girls Softball shares common goals:
 - ✓ To promote the physical, moral, mental, social, and emotional well-being of our youth participants
 - ✓ To stress the highest ideals of ethical conduct, sportsmanship, and fair play
 - ✓ To show courtesy and respect to all visiting teams and umpires
 - ✓ To encourage the development of leadership, initiative, and good judgment in all team members
 - ✓ To be gracious in defeat and modest in victory
3. Policies outlined apply to Middle River Girls Softball participants and spectators. Programs outside Middle River Girls Softball may have other rules and consequence that we must adhere. League Umpires and Program Commissioners may overrule items outlined.



Coaches' Conduct

As a Coach with Middle River Girls Softball and the Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks Council, I will:

- ✓ Consider it an honor and a privilege to coach young people in our community always keeping in mind that I am a youth sports coach, and that the recreation experience is for the children, not the adults.
- ✓ Place the emotional and physical well-being of my team ahead of a personal desire to succeed.
- ✓ Strive to make each player feel as if she is a valuable member of the team regardless of any physical or developmental limitations she may have.
- ✓ Use positive coaching methods to make the experience enjoyable for my players, increase their self-esteem, and foster a true sense of enjoyment of the sports in which they are engaged.
- ✓ Emphasize teamwork in team sports with my team, teaching them to think "we" instead of "me."
- ✓ Accept the responsibility of team leadership and be accountable for the conduct of players, team officials, and spectators affiliated with their teams.
- ✓ Teach the principles of fair play and sportsmanship to my players and always model these principles for them.
- ✓ Treat officials, opposing coaches, and opposing players with respect and dignity, and instruct my players and their parents to do the same.
- ✓ Always encourage safe play and report any unsafe playing conditions to the appropriate Recreation and Parks staff as soon as I am able.
- ✓ Refrain from contacting players on my team, understanding that all players are considered minors, and any information, conversations, and contact outside of team practices and games must go through or be accompanied by parents/guardians.
- ✓ Help ensure a drug, alcohol, tobacco, and vape-free environment for my child's team.
- ✓ Refrain from all manners of bullying, personal abuse, and harassment of others whether verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual.
- ✓ Refrain from using any illegal substances or tobacco/marijuana products, vape products, or imbibing alcohol in the presence of my players or on school or park property.
- ✓ Report any conduct that violates this code or adversely affects the positive nurturing and encouraging environment intended by this sport/program.



Players' conduct

All players shall...

- ✓ understand that it is a privilege to play on the team.
- ✓ understand that I must conduct myself with honor and dignity and treat other players the way I would want to be treated.
- ✓ will always practice good sportsmanship, to win without boasting, lose without excuse, and never give up or quit.
- ✓ will support and encourage my teammates, always do my best, and try to keep a positive attitude.
- ✓ attend and be on-time at all games, practices, and I will try to tell my coaches in advance of when I will miss practice or a game.
- ✓ understand that I must be ready to play/practice once I arrive to the field. I will arrive early enough to ensure that I am ready to play/practice at the scheduled time.
- ✓ understand that playing time is earned in practice through challenging work and positive attitude.
- ✓ understand that unexcused absences from practices and games may affect my role on the team.
- ✓ always sprint on and off from the field. The effect of hustle in a game is contagious and positively impacts my team and shows my opponent I am not willing to give up.
- ✓ always exercise self-control, refrain from bullying, never use offensive language, and set a positive example for others to follow.
- ✓ NOT throw equipment in anger and will follow team/league rules to ensure safe play.
- ✓ control my temper and not retaliate, even if I believe I have been wronged.
- ✓ NOT leave the bench area to speak to my parents or guardian unless specifically authorized by a coach.



Parents' Conduct

As a parent, I ...

- ✓ understand that as a team parent, I am responsible for the behavior of *all* my visitors who watch my child play.
- ✓ will introduce myself to my child's volunteer coach and will exchange pertinent contact information with them and understand that communication is paramount.
- ✓ will know who will be transporting my child to/from all softball activities.
- ✓ will know my child's schedule – game/practice days, dates, and times and will do my best to have my child prepared for every game/practice. I will let my child's coach know in advance of my daughter's inability to participate in any games/practices. I understand that unexcused absences from practices and games may affect playing time.
- ✓ will help ensure a drug, alcohol, tobacco, and vape-free environment for my child's team.
- ✓ will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child ahead of any personal desire to succeed.
- ✓ will provide support for any coaches working with my child to provide a positive, enjoyable experience for all.
- ✓ will not tolerate bully of any one and treat other participants, spectators, and officials with respect regardless of race, creed, religion, color, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, physical, or mental disability.
- ✓ understand that my child's playing time is not guaranteed. I understand that the team will play to win to the best of their ability, and coaches will use team members in the fashion that will lead to a positive outcome for both the team and players. Playtime is earned in practice and through player's attitude, work ethic, and teamwork.
- ✓ will respect coaching decisions regarding playing time, positions, and line-ups and will refrain from coaching any player; thus, leaving the coaching to the coaches during the game.
- ✓ will NOT enter the bench area/backstop area or talk to a player during the game. I will do my best to provide water or sports drinks before the game/practice. I will discourage my daughter from leaving the bench area to speak with me.
- ✓ will NOT approach players or coaches before, during, or immediately after games and practices with anything other than support. All questions/concerns regarding players or coaches will be addressed the day after the game/practice in an atmosphere conducive to problem solving (24-hour rule).
- ✓ know although Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks requires background checks on all volunteers, experts, including the Baltimore County Police Department, agree that parental involvement is a more effective means of protecting children.



2.7 Disciplinary Action

1. Middle River Girls Softball has authority to issues consequences to coaches, teams, players, parents, and/or spectators for conduct or actions that are deemed to be offensive or unbecoming of a participant in Middle River Softball.
2. Middle River Girls Softball Board of Directors will try to resolve all issues within the program as follows:

- **First offence:** verbal warning, removed from/asked to leave the game
- **Second offence:** 2-game suspension from games
- **Third offence:** report offence to Middle River Recreation and Parks Council

3. In addition, if needed, Middle River Girls Softball can escalate such behaviors to the Middle River Recreations and Parks Coucil. Consequences of escalated behaviors will be in line with Baltimore County Recreations and Parks.

Suspensions are handed out by Baltimore County Recreation and Parks are set for a minimum length and are immediate. Actual suspension may be higher than those set by MRGS based upon the situation and facts gathered.

Only the Director of Baltimore County Recreation and Parks has the ability to permanently ban any individual.

- Level I Offense

The following actions will result in a **one-month suspension**:

- Use of profane, obscene, inappropriate, or unacceptable language, remarks, or offensive gestures (written or spoken).
- Arguing with spectators or staff.
- Causing a disturbance.

- Level II Offense

The following actions will result in a **three-month suspension**:

- Direct or implied threats or innuendos.
- Inappropriate or threatening gestures.
- Abusive ongoing behavior.
- Repeated Level I infractions.
- Possession of alcohol beverages or illegal drugs in or on county or permitted facilities.

- Level III Offense

The following actions will result in a **minimum one-year suspension**:

- Physically striking a person; issuing a verbal or written threat to one's life.
- Willful or malicious destruction of recreation or school facility property.
- Repeated Level II infractions.

4. Any disciplinary action handed down from Middle River Girls Softball can be appealed in accordance with the Middle River Girls Softball Bylaws. Actions handed down from Baltimore County Recreation and Parks has an appeals process as outlined in the Facility Rules of Behavior.



3 League Rules

3.1 Recreation League Rules

USA Softball

Unless otherwise stated, USA Softball rules apply for all MRGS League Games.

Region 3/Region 4 Rules

Final Region 3/Region 4 Rules will be provided along with schedules before the start of the Rec Season

3.2 Summer League Rules

Affiliation

Middle River Girls Softball considers Summer Ball a recreation league and should be coached/governed as such.

USA Softball

Unless otherwise stated, USA Softball rules apply for all MRGS League Games.

Summer Ball Rules

Final Summer Ball Rules will be provided along with schedules before the start of the Summer Rec Season

3.3 Fall League Rules

Affiliation

Middle River Girls Softball considers Fall Ball a recreation league and should be coached/governed as such.

USA Softball

Unless otherwise stated, USA Softball rules apply for all MRGS League Games.

Fall Ball Rules

Final Fall Ball Rules will be provided along with schedules before the start of the Fall Rec Season