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# Scheduler Notes to 6U Managers

Welcome to the 2011 season of MV-LA Girls Softball! I'm sure we're all looking forward to a fun (and rain-free) season of softball. If you're an "old-timer," I apologize if the following information is redundant. Even if you are a long-time experienced manager or coach, please take the time to read through this in case anything has changed from prior years.

First, the schedules will come out as soon as possible. With around 50 teams and nearly 450 games across six or more fields, it's not a trivial job. It's my goal to help all teams play all of their games this season, and to do that, I will very much appreciate your help when it comes to trying to limit changes to the schedule and, when that is not possible, to identify the challenge and work with the opposing team manager early to reschedule a game (the procedure will be outlined below).

A change for a single team affects many people beyond that one team — the umpire staff, and the field crew, the snack bar, and particularly the girls on the opposing team. The League discourages canceling a game as it deprives the girls from an opportunity to play. While your team may not want to play, please be considerate of your opponents and make every effort to come to an early and cooperative resolution, including the option to play shorthanded. Rescheduling early and only if absolutely necessary will make this easier on all. And, if a reschedule does not work out, then the teams should play a scrimmage instead, as scheduled.

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## Immediate Actions

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Even before the schedule becomes available, I would encourage you to poll all your players and parents as soon as possible regarding commitments that will conflict with your scheduled games. Some conversation starters might include: LASD Jr. Olympics, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, Girl Scout Camporee, and family plans. As soon as you determine that you will be unable to field a team for a particular game, you can begin the rescheduling process.

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## Rescheduling Process

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Rescheduling for 6U teams is very simple, as a reschedule does not impact the field crew, umpires, or the snack shack staffing. To reschedule, follow the simplified five-step process:

- Step1: Learn that you have a need to reschedule

- Step 2: Contact the other team's manager
- Step 3: Contact the Scheduler
- Step 4: Scheduler confirms change
- Step 5: Play the game

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### **Step 1: Learn that you have a need to reschedule**

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This is still the hardest one. You have to hear from the players or parents well before the game that they won't be able to make it on a given day.

- How much is well before? A week is preferred. Four days (96 hours) is minimally acceptable in an emergency situation
- How many players do you need? At least 7
- How do you find out people will not be showing up? Manager intuition. An awareness of the likely conflict dates (school functions like Open House and Walkathon, Girl Scout events, religious milestones such as First Communion, etc.). And relentless communication.

We've tried to take into account the big events that affect the majority of our families, like Junior Olympics and Spring break. However, please understand that it is not possible to avoid conflicts with all school and community events.

Step 2: Contact the other team's manager

Contact the other manager to let her know your team can't make it and ask for her support and understanding. Then brainstorm one or (ideally) two alternative dates when both teams can play and a field is available.

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### **Resources for selecting a field and time**

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To determine which dates/fields are available, please see the website, [www.mvlags.org](http://www.mvlags.org), and click on "Master Field Schedule" under the "Calendars" or "Resources" menus. Here you will find the latest listing of all scheduled and rescheduled games, showing date, time, and field.

There is typically field space available to reschedule 6U games on Saturday in the late afternoon or weeknights at 5:30pm.

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### **Step 3: Contact the Scheduler**

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While it is unlikely that you would run into a conflict with another team wanting to use the same field at the same time, you can help avoid this by communicating your mutual agreement to the Scheduler.

Since the Scheduler receives a lot of email during the season, it is important to follow a standard format for communicating the request which highlights the from, to, and agreement from both managers. To do this:

- Manager 1 sends a message to Manager 2. The subject line must be of the form: RESCHEDULE: <visitor team> v <home team> <original date> <original time> / <original field> TO <new date> <new time> / <new field>. You can include any commentary in the body of the message, including the manager's name, email, and phone number. In addition, if you have a second choice that you've agreed on, please include that in the body of the message in case the first choice is unavailable.

Example subject line:

RESCHEDULE: 6U02 v 6U07 04/05 9:00AM @ M1 TO 04/05 3:30PM @ M2

- Manager 2 forwards the message to the Scheduler with a brief note indicating their agreement with the request and their contact information. Please send these requests to [scheduler@mvlags.org](mailto:scheduler@mvlags.org).

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#### **Step 4: Scheduler confirms change**

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Once the Scheduler receives the email from Manager 2, the Scheduler will process the request. The Scheduler will determine if the first choice is available and, if so, the Master Field Schedule will be updated and a confirmation sent to both managers.

If the first choice is not available, then the Scheduler will attempt a fit with the second choice if available. If no choices match, the Scheduler will send a note back to both managers for them to look for other alternatives.

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#### **Step 5: Play the game**

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Remember to treat the game as though it was played at the originally scheduled time. That is, a game scheduled for a given week still counts in that week (i.e. for pitch counts, etc.) no matter when it is played.

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### **Other Rescheduling Considerations**

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Every year, we seem to encounter situations where one team wants to unilaterally cancel a game, usually with little notice to the other team. This results in unhappy players, unhappy parents, unhappy team staffs, and is, therefore, considered poor form by the League. Please keep in mind that all families and players count on a stable game schedule and being able to play. Please be considerate of everyone on all the teams and work cooperatively to ensure games get played.

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#### **Rescheduling Consequences**

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The consequences of making a reschedule request depend on the division. In the 6U and 8U divisions, there are no League standings, so the concept of a forfeit is irrelevant. The managers should make every effort to reschedule the game so that the girls don't miss an opportunity to play.

If the best you can come up with is a date when the combined number of players is enough to play, or if on game day, one team shows up short of players, the game should be played using players borrowed from the other team. If there are not enough combined players from the two teams to meet the minimum players required, the teams should play a scrimmage with the players that are available. Playing a scrimmage is much preferable to canceling the game altogether.

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## **Rainouts or field closures**

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In the event that the weather looks questionable on game day, make certain that you check the Field Status Hotline (650-964-6489) to determine whether your game will be on or rescheduled. Note that a single team, or team staff, MAY NOT cancel a game due to weather, as this leads to the “unilateral cancelation” problem previously described. No matter what the weather looks like at your house, it is likely different at the field. The League will determine playability. Check the web site often for updates.

In the event that the League cancels a game due to poor field conditions, the Scheduler will contact both managers to initiate discussion of a make-up date. If both managers are unable to agree on a reschedule date, the game will be recorded as a “no-game” in the standings.

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## **Final words**

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The overall goal of MVLAGE is for the girls to play softball and have fun. If we can remind ourselves of this when things get a bit crazy, it will help put things back in perspective.

Bottom line is, rescheduling a game can be quite a hassle, for everyone involved. Canceling a game is a missed opportunity for the girls to play. If you can't field a full team, then play a scrimmage (on the originally scheduled game day) instead.