

# OFFICIAL RULES METROWEST YOUTH SOFTBALL

Seniors Division (Grade 6-8)

*Updated 3/1/26*

## PHILOSOPHY

Metrowest Youth Softball is not in existence to promote competitive play. Every child who wishes and can commit to play for the season will have a place on a team roster and will be provided equitable opportunity to play. The primary goal of the league is to promote a love for the sport while developing the skills of young players. In that spirit, roster moves, and coaching decisions should align with providing opportunities to develop rather than winning or losing games. Our collective efforts to support this philosophy offer all players an opportunity to develop and improve as they consider participation in more competitive settings elsewhere.

## RULES & REGULATIONS

If rules are not specifically covered, USA Softball **U12** rules shall govern play. The table below summarizes the key rules.

Seniors	Grades 6-8
<b># Innings</b>	7
<b>Time Limit</b>	1 hr 20min last inning; hard stop 1hr 45 min
<b>Run limit/inning</b>	4
<b>Players Needed</b>	8
<b>Max Players on the field</b>	10
<b># Players batting</b>	All
<b># Bases on Overthrow/Out of Play</b>	No limit
<b>Stealing?</b>	Yes, unless team is ahead by 8+ runs. All bases unlimited
<b>Slashing</b>	No
<b>Bunting</b>	Yes
<b>Infield Fly rule</b>	Yes
<b>Dropped third strike?</b>	Yes
<b>Ball</b>	12" ASA ball
<b>Pitching distance</b>	Grade 6/7 40' Grade 8 43'
<b>Pitching limit</b>	Unlimited
<b>Safety</b>	Fielding masks infield required; outfield masks or mouthguards recommended Batting Helmet with Masks required
<b>Run Ahead (Mercy) rule</b>	If a team is leading by 15+ after the losing team has completed 4 at bats, game is called; if team is leading by 10+ runs after the losing team has completed 5 at bats, game is called
<b>Continuation</b>	No

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Walks	Yes
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## SCHEDULING

1. A league representative should be consulted to confirm postponement or rescheduling of a game; there are no make ups games for fall softball.
2. The visiting coach and the umpire must be notified at least 2 hours prior to game time if a game is to be postponed due to weather conditions.
3. A team expecting to have fewer than 8 players is obligated to contact the opposing coach & town representative at least 24 hours before game time to reschedule the game.
4. The umpire will use his/her discretion in deciding if a game is to be postponed due to weather conditions at the beginning of or during the game.
5. Games must be stopped immediately upon sighting of lightning or upon hearing thunder. Fields must be cleared for at least 30 minutes AFTER the last time thunder is heard or lightning is seen.

## PLAYERS

1. Each team will play up to 10 players on the field at a time.
2. There will be no substitutions allowed using players from higher divisions. Registered players from the same town, but different teams (including younger players), may be used to play a game only as a last effort to prevent forfeiting a game.
3. Added players must be placed at the end of the batting order and regular team players must get their first choice of field position.
4. Coaches should do everything they can to play the game as scheduled even if they are short-handed. If one team is short-handed the opposing team is strongly encouraged to send players to the short-handed team to increase opportunities for balanced play and playing time for players.
5. All players will be included in a continuous batting order. The initial batting order reflects those players ready to play at game time. Late arrivals must be placed at the end of the batting order. If an injured player in the continuous batting order is unable to play she will be skipped in the order and the opposing team will not get an automatic out.
6. Each player must play 2 complete innings in the field unless the coach has a valid reason for not playing her.
7. Free defensive substitution rules are in effect.
8. Defensively a coach will position players in the following universally accepted infield positions: pitcher, catcher, first base, second base, third base and shortstop. Additional defensive players are outfielders. All outfielders must start each pitch with both feet on the outfield grass.

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## PITCHING

1. The pitcher's plate will be 43 feet from the apex (point) of the plate if the pitcher is grade 8. A younger pitcher may opt to pitch from 40'. The mound may need to be moved during the game to allow for different pitching ages. The pitcher's feet always must start from the pitching rubber.
2. Balls and strikes will be called.
3. Players pitch the entire game.
4. ANY player can be re-inserted as a pitcher during a game

## EQUIPMENT

1. Double safety base is required at 1st base.
2. Fielding masks are required for all infield players, Masks or mouthguards recommended for outfield.
3. Batting helmets with face masks are mandatory for batters, base runners and players waiting on-deck.
4. Throat protectors, shin guards, chest protectors, and catcher's helmets with masks are required for catchers.
5. 12-inch ASA softballs will be used.
6. All bats must visibly display a USA Softball approval stamp. .



## OTHER GAME RULES

1. The home team score book shall govern the score of the game.
2. The look back rule is in effect. When a pitcher has the ball within a 8-foot radius around the pitcher's rubber, the base runner is obligated to proceed in either direction to a base. Play freezes when the pitcher has control of the ball.
3. Any tied games (at the end of playable conditions or 7 innings) are declared ties.
4. A courtesy runner will be encouraged for the catcher with 1 or more outs to allow for equipment change. The courtesy runner will be the latest recorded out.
5. The infield fly rule is in effect.
6. Bunting is permitted; Slashing (i.e. squaring to bunt then pulling back and swinging away) is not allowed. The ball is dead, and the batter is out.

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7. Batter is awarded one base if hit by the pitcher. Pitcher must be removed from pitching for the inning after 3 hit batters in one inning, removed from the pitching for the remainder of the game after 5 total hit batters.
8. A batter that throws the bat will be given a warning (the umpire will inform the coaches and the player of the warning). The second time a batter throws the bat the player will be called out.
9. If the defensive player blocks the base path without possession of the ball, the runner will be safe. The defensive player is not allowed to stand on or straddle the base path, a base or home plate unless they have possession of the ball.
10. ASA rule on avoiding collisions states:  
In an effort to prevent injury and protect a defensive player attempting to make a play on a runner, a runner must be called out when they remain on their feet and crash into a defensive player who is holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag. To prevent the out ruling, the runner may slide, jump over the defender holding the ball, go around the defender or return to the previous base touched.
11. There is a **4** run per inning rule. Once a team has scored 4 runs, the half inning will be terminated, regardless of the number of outs. This applies to all innings including the final one.
12. At the 1 hour and 20-minute mark of the game, you will finish the inning you are currently playing. The next inning will be your last inning. If the inning ends before the maximum time limit of 1 hour and 45 minutes, the game is over. If there's a batter up at the 1 hour and 45-minute mark, that batter may finish the at bat.
13. Games may end in a tie after 7 innings or 1 hour and 45 minutes.