

# OFFICIAL RULES METROWEST GIRLS SOFTBALL

## MAJORS DIVISION

Grades 5 and 6

Spring 2022 – Updated March 2022

To develop and maintain consistency in the operation of the Metrowest Girls Softball League, a statement of League Philosophy, Rules and Regulations has been put together based upon a consensus of representatives from the participating towns.

### PHILOSOPHY

Metrowest 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 AND REGULATIONS

If rules are not specifically covered, USA Softball U12 rules shall govern play. The table below summarizes the key rules, for more details see Sections A - E below.

Rule #	Rule	Explanation
C1	Pitching Distance	40 feet
C2 & C4	Pitching Limit	<b>Unlimited</b>
C3	Pitching Limit <b>Exception</b>	A pitcher who has pitched at least 3 innings and whose team is leading by 9 runs or more cannot continue to pitch. This pitcher may re-enter, but only if her team leads by 7 runs or less.
C5 & C6	Illegal Pitch	Any illegal pitch will be considered a ball. Runners do NOT advance on an illegal pitch
C7	Hit By Pitch Limit	3 batters in an inning; 5 in a game
C12	Ball	12" .47 core USA/ASA Approved
D3	Dropped 3 <sup>rd</sup> Strike	<b>Batter does NOT advance to 1B</b>
D4	Infield Fly Rule	<b>Infield Fly is in effect</b>
D6	Bunting	Bunting is permitted
D7	Slashing	Is NOT allowed
D8	Stealing	Stealing will only be allowed upon pitchers release
D9	Stealing <b>Home</b>	<b>Stealing home successfully is permitted twice per inning. There shall be no stealing home when a team is ahead by 7 or more runs.</b>
D10	Runners	Runners are allowed to advance only 1 base on an attempted steal. Once the runner has advanced one base they are not allowed to advance again until another pitch has been thrown (unless they are advancing due to a batted ball).
D11	Bunting/Stealing Run <b>Limit</b>	Bunting and stealing are NOT allowed when the team at bat is ahead by 7 or more runs. Runners are only allowed to advance on a batted ball.
D14	Inning Run Limit	4 per half inning
D15 &	Game Time Limit	6 or more completed innings not ending in a tie or 1 hour and 45

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D16		minutes from the start of the game, whichever comes first
D17	Mercy Rule	15 or more runs after team that's behind has batted at least 5 times

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### A. Scheduling

1. A league representative should be consulted to confirm postponement of a game.
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. The umpire will use discretion in deciding if a game is to be postponed.
4. 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.
5. It is the home team's responsibility to reschedule a game no more than two weeks after the postponement for any spring softball game (there are **no** makeup games for **Fall softball**).
6. Each game is 6 innings long. To be official, 4 innings must be completed (or 3 1/2 innings in the event the home team is ahead).

### B. Players

1. Each team will play up to 10 players in the field at a time.
2. No more than 6 players are allowed to be on the infield before the pitcher releases the ball.
3. There will be no substitutions allowed using players from higher divisions. Players from lower divisions can be used to prevent a team from forfeiting.
4. Added players must be declared prior to the start of a game, placed at the end of the batting order, and regular team players must get their first choice of field position.
5. 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.
6. A team expecting to have fewer than 7 players is obligated to contact the opposing coach at least 24 hours before game time to reschedule the game.
7. 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.
8. Each player must play 2 complete innings in the field unless the coach has a valid reason for not playing her.
9. Free defensive substitution rules will be in effect.
10. For spring playoff games: (There are **no playoffs for fall softball**).
  - i If a team is unable to field at least 7 players at any point during the game, that team will forfeit.
  - ii Players may be promoted from lower divisions only if there are not enough players available from the original roster.
  - iii Players from other teams within the same division are NOT allowed to play on a playoff team.
  - iv Players from lower divisions are NOT allowed to pitch.
  - v Players from higher divisions are NOT allowed to play.

### C. Pitching

1. The pitcher's plate will be 40 feet from the apex (point) of the plate.
2. **ANY player can be re-inserted as a pitcher** during a game.

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3. A pitcher who has pitched at least 3 innings and whose team is leading by 9 runs or more cannot continue to pitch. This pitcher may re-enter, but only if her team leads by 7 runs or less.
4. The pitcher can pitch unlimited innings per game.
5. Any illegal pitch will be considered a ball.
6. Runners do NOT advance a base on an illegal pitch.
7. If a pitcher hits 3 batters in one inning she will be taken out for the rest of the inning. The pitcher can return to pitch during the game. However, if she hits 2 additional batters (or 5 total for the game) she must be taken out (from the pitcher's position) for the rest of the game.

### Equipment & Field of Play

8. The bases will be 60 feet apart.
9. Double safety base is required at 1st base.
10. Batting helmets with face masks are mandatory for batters, base runners and players waiting on deck.
11. Throat protectors, shin guards, chest protectors, and catcher's helmets with masks are required for catchers.
12. Twelve-inch .47 core softballs will be used.
13. All bats must visibly display a USA Softball approval stamp.



### D. 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. If a player stands still or changes direction she will be called out UNLESS the pitcher makes a play for the runner.
3. A dropped 3rd strike by a catcher is a strike and an out.
4. The infield fly rule is in effect.
5. 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.
6. Bunting is permitted.
7. Slashing (i.e. squaring to bunt then pulling back and swinging away) **is not allowed**. The ball is dead and the batter is out.
8. Stealing will only be allowed upon the pitcher's release.
9. Stealing of any base is permitted. Stealing home successfully is permitted only twice per inning.
10. Runners are allowed to advance only 1 base on an attempted steal. Once the runner has advanced one base they are not allowed to advance again until another pitch has been thrown (unless they are advancing due to a batted ball).

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11. Bunting and stealing are NOT allowed when the team at bat is ahead by 7 or more runs. Runners are only allowed to advance on a batted ball. For additional bunt attempts, the ball is dead and the pitch is called a strike.
12. Runners are allowed to tag up on fair and foul balls.
13. The continuation rule is **NOT** in effect. A batter who receives a base on balls is required to stop at first base.

### Run/Time Limits

14. 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.
15. 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.
16. Any tied games, including those in **extra** innings at the 1 hour and 45 minute mark, **will be declared a tie**.
17. *Mercy rule is in effect once the losing team has batted at least 5 times and they are down by 15 or more runs.*

### E. Safety Rules

1. All players must remove ALL jewelry to be eligible to play. Taping over **stud** earrings is allowed.
2. Metrowest softball strongly recommends the use of mouth guards and fielders' masks on the playing field.
3. 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.
4. If the defensive player blocks the base path without possession of the ball, the runner will be safe.