

# **2017**

## **Central Mass League**

**Northborough**

**Southborough**

**Westborough**

**Hudson**

**Shrewsbury**

## **Girls 12U Division Softball League**

**Objectives**

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For all the latest 12U Division Softball League news and team information visit the appropriate Youth Softball website listed on the last pages of this document.

# Objectives

## Have fun

Reinforcement of advanced play

Introduction of more advanced concepts (unlimited steal, double steal, bunting, etc)

Improvement of ability and skill on an individual and team level

Development of good sportsmanship and proper conduct

Understand the importance of commitment, teamwork and respect

# Guidelines

Coaches and parents are looked upon as role models and are expected to conduct themselves properly and promote good sportsmanship at all times.

Umpires are to be treated with respect and are not to be intimidated, threatened or ridiculed in any manner.

Players are encouraged to cheer for their own team in a positive nature. Negative cheers, directed at an opposing team and/or player, are not allowed. Any coach, parent or player making discriminatory or derogatory remarks directed at another individual during the course of a game or practice will be removed from the league.

When not in the field, all players are required to be in the bench area. Each team is responsible for ensuring that their bench area is clean after all games and practices. Food is allowed in the bench area for medical necessity only.

ASA rules apply except for several local rules, which ensure fair playing time and a fun experience for all. If a rule interpretation cannot be agreed upon at a game, the game should not be delayed. At the conclusion of the game, the Head Coaches of both teams in addition to the umpire will meet with the Minor League Director to discuss and resolve any issue. The rules are guidelines to fair play. Coaches should use good judgment during the course of play to abide by the "spirit" of the rules.

Programs should have yearly evaluations and drafts to ensure the teams are of equal strength, thus keeping the playing field equal.

# Parents

- Attend and volunteer your assistance at practices and games – share in your child's successes. Those working directly with the girls are **required** to submit a CORI form to their respective organization
- Make sure your child is on time for practices and games
- Ensure that your child will be picked-up when a game or practice is scheduled to end
- Inform the coach when someone other than yourself is picking up your child or when you are not going to be present at a game or practice (in case of an emergency).
- Have your child inform her coach when she will be late or cannot attend a practice or game.
- Inform your child's Head Coach of any medical conditions that he/she should be aware of in the event of an emergency (asthma, diabetes, allergic reactions to bee stings, etc.). The Officers, Directors and Coaches of **CML** Youth Softball are not allowed to administer advanced first aid to any child. In the event of an emergency, the proper emergency personnel will be notified as soon possible. The information provided will only be used to assist emergency personnel.
- Thank your child's coaching staff on occasion. Without their dedication and commitment there would be no softball program.
- Be a good fan to your child and her team. Yelling at your child from the stands not only embarrasses your child but also reflects upon yourself – learn to love the game for what it is – a game!

# Official Rules

1. Games will be up to 7 innings with no inning starting after 1 hour and 45 minutes from the first pitch. Head Coaches and Umpires are responsible for the coordination of the time being kept. The Umpire will keep the official time. Both coaches should note start time to avoid any confusion.
2. Weekday games will begin as close to 5:45 as possible but no later than 6:00 p.m. (Exception; scheduled night games at any town's field participating in the program that has lights.)
3. In the event of rain or darkness, four (4) innings (3 ½ if the Home Team is ahead) will be considered a complete game. Playoff games will not be delayed for player availability-teams not able to field six players must forfeit.
4. A team must have six (6) players to begin a game. If a team has less than six (6) players by 6:00 p.m. (see exception in rule 2) the team must forfeit. The game should still be played and, the forfeiting team may be loaned a player from the opposing team. Game results will be included in league standings
5. Every effort must be made to avoid rescheduling games. However, if a Head Coach knows within 36 - 48 hours of a game that he/she will not have enough players to play, he/she may reschedule the game. Any game, rescheduled at the request of a Head Coach, must be made up within ten (10) days of the original schedule date or it will be considered a forfeit by the team requesting the alternate date. All games must be played prior to the last scheduled game of the season.
6. Games may be terminated due to rain, darkness or field conditions at the discretion of the umpire.
7. **No player shall sit twice until everyone has sat at least once.**  
**Exception:** If a player does not attend a practice or game and the absence is not within the guidelines established by the head coach (ex. not calling, soccer game, etc.). The head coach has the option to sit the player as he/she sees fit. Players and parents should understand this is a team sport that requires a certain level of commitment.

8. Each player must play **at least one inning in the infield** during the game and **one inning in the outfield**.
9. The outfield shall be defined as “on the outfield grass”, and outfielders must position themselves before the pitch is released.
10. Free substitution is allowed. Substitutions during an inning are only allowed in the event of injury, except for the pitcher who is governed by additional rules. Defensive players must remain in the position they began the inning unless she is relieved by the pitcher, or there is an injury.
11. A continuous batting order will be used. Any player showing up after the game’s start will be added to the bottom of the order. Lineup cards (names and numbers) should be exchanged at least 10 minutes prior to the schedule start time.
12. Only the batter and one (1) on-deck hitter will have bats in their hands. Each Head Coach will designate an on-deck area (if available). All other players are to be in the bench area.
13. All bats must visibly display an ASA approval stamp
14. Players must wear their uniforms correctly at all times (not backwards, sideways or inside-out). Shirts must be completely tucked in. Players should wear the uniform provided to them by the respective towns. It is strongly recommended that any player wearing shorts should also wear compression shorts (sliding shorts) and a knee slider.
15. The Home Team is responsible for supplying game ball(s) and bases. Only 12” ASA optic yellow softballs designated by the Senior League Directors shall be used during games.
16. Profanity by any coach, parent or player will not be tolerated.
17. Coaches must be in the dugout area or at the edge of the dugout away from home plate (no closer to the field than the dugout fence line) while his/her team is in the field.
18. All players and coaches will shake hands at the end of every game.
19. Only the Head Coach is allowed to speak to the umpire or opposing team’s Head Coach. Assistant Coaches are there to assist the Head Coach.

20. Mouth guards (internal) and face masks, although not required are strongly recommended.
21. Each team is allowed only 1 Head Coach, 2 Assistant Coaches and a scorekeeper in the bench area at any time. All other parents and spectators must be in the stands away from the bench area
22. Helmets with metal cages and chin straps are required for all batters, on deck batters, and base runners.
23. Bunting is permitted, however the batter may not assume the hitting position after squaring to bunt.
24. Slash bunting/hitting is not permitted. Slash bunting is defined as a batter showing bunt and then pulling back the bat and taking a full swing. Drag bunt is permitted.
25. Base stealing limits per inning is 3 attempts to first and home every inning. Should the base runner attempt to steal and it results in an out, it still counts as one of the 3 attempts. After 3 steal attempts, runner on 3rd can only "steal" home on a pickoff attempt to 3B. Taking a base on a passed ball is considered an attempt of that base. Both teams should be scoring the stolen bases p/inning to avoid controversy.
26. There are unlimited steals to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> base
27. A runner must slide into home plate to avoid contact with defensive players if there is going to be a play at the plate. The runner can be called out at the umpire's discretion. The defensive player should not stand on or straddle a base or home plate unless there is going to be a play at that base.
28. Stealing 1<sup>st</sup> base is allowed on a dropped third strike, providing 1<sup>st</sup> base is not occupied at that time. Stealing 1<sup>st</sup> base is limited to three times per inning.
29. Catchers will have a free throw to second base with no advancement of the base runner on an over throw. Exception: If there are base runners on any base other than first base these runners will be allowed to advance if the catcher decides to throw to second base. If a catcher decides to throw the ball to first base or third base when a runner has a lead then it is a live ball and the runner can advance.

30. Base runners are not allowed to lead and may only leave the base after the pitch has left the pitcher's hand. If a base runner leaves any base prior to the ball being pitched she will be declared out and the play will be dead (no pitch).
31. Batters must attempt to get out of the way of errant pitches. It is the umpire's decision to walk a batter who has been hit by a pitch (a reasonable attempt to evade the pitch must have been made in order to walk)
32. Each team is limited to four (4) conferences (defensive or offensive) per game. Conferences will be limited to approximately 1 minute by the umpire. Removal of the pitcher by a Head Coach does not constitute a conference. This does not apply for an injured player. Deliberate attempts to delay the game will result in a warning from the umpire for the first occurrence. The Head Coach will be removed from the game for a second occurrence.
33. Catchers must be in full gear, including a throat protector. Catchers should stand and throw the ball back to the pitcher.
34. Each team will be responsible for cleaning up their own bench.
35. Eating on the bench is not allowed unless it is for medical purposes.
36. No courtesy runners are allowed unless a girl is hurt on that play or has a medical condition. The last player to make an out should be used as the runner. Courtesy runners are encouraged for catchers in the following inning, to speed play.
37. Any team with a ten (10) run lead or larger in any inning may not steal or advance on a wild pitch or pass ball, including a dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike.
38. A 15 run mercy rule is in effect after 5 innings (4 ½ if the home team is ahead).
39. A 5 run mercy inning rule is in effect for all innings. The only exception is a team that is behind entering the agreed last inning (or 7<sup>th</sup>) can score as many runs as needed up to a tie in the game if they are behind by more than the 5 run per inning limit. (Example 1: the away team is down by 7 runs in the last inning. The run limit doesn't apply to them as they are behind by more than 5. Instead they can score 7 runs to tie the game and

then their half of the inning is over. If they do tie, the home team gets a chance to score and would only need 1 run to win. Example 2: The away team is ahead by 3 going into the last inning. They score 5 and hit the inning mercy rule which ends them ahead by 8 runs. The home team now has the opportunity to bat and can score up to 8 runs to tie the game).

40. Maximum of 7 innings will be played. Games can end in a tie (except playoff games).
41. The "Infield fly rule" is in effect. In the event of an infield fly the batter is out and the runners may advance at their own risk. For the infield fly rule to be in effect, there must be runners on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> base, or runners at 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> base with less than 2 outs and an infielder in position to make the catch.
42. If a team requires substitute players in order to play a game, it is permitted. A coach should make an effort to maintain the approximate skill level of the team when calling a sub to ensure the balance of play is not impacted. Players may be called up from another 12U team or a lower division. Substitutions are NOT allowed for playoff games.

# Pitching

1. The pitcher's plate will be forty (40) feet from the back of the home plate. It will consist of an 8-foot radius around the pitcher's plate.
2. The pitcher may not take the pitching position on the pitcher's plate without the ball.
3. The pitcher must have both feet in contact with the pitching plate before starting her delivery.
4. Both feet must remain in contact with the pitching plate at all times prior to the forward step.
5. The pitcher must not make two revolutions of the arm on a windmill pitch.
6. The delivery must be an underhanded motion with the hand below the hip. Slingshot pitching is accepted, however, it is not recommended.
7. In the act of delivering the ball, the pitcher must take one step while releasing the ball. The step must be forward and toward the batter within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. Raising the foot off the pitching plate and returning it to the plate creates a rocking motion and is illegal.
8. Pushing off with the pivot from a place other than the pitcher's plate is illegal and will be deemed NO PITCH. The pivot foot must remain in contact with or push off and drag away from the pitcher's plate prior to the front foot touching the ground, as long as the pivot foot remains in contact with the ground. (No crow hopping)
9. If a ball slips from a pitcher's hand during her delivery (prior to her release to the plate) it will be deemed NO PITCH (this would include hitting the hip during the release of the ball).
10. A pitcher can only pitch three (3) innings per game. The starting pitcher may leave the position and return to it one time per game (i.e. they may pitch one inning, then another position in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and come back to the pitcher position in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and pitch 1 or 2 innings). No other pitcher can leave the pitching position and return later in the game. One pitch in an inning constitutes an inning pitched.

11. It is **STRONGLY SUGGESTED** for all pitchers to wear a Mouth Guard (internal) and face mask.
12. Pitchers can be substituted at any time during an inning. One pitch thrown in an inning constitutes an inning pitched (if a pitcher is substituted after throwing 30 pitches and the replacement pitcher throws only 2 pitches, both will be charged with an inning pitched).
13. A starting pitcher may not re-enter in the same inning.

## **Bulleted Rules Highlights:**

1. Games will be 7 innings with no inning starting after 1 hour 45 minutes after first pitch.
2. A team must have minimum of 6 players to begin a game.
3. Steals p/inning: 3 attempts of 1<sup>st</sup> and Home every inning. Taking a base on a passed ball is an attempt.
4. Stealing 1<sup>st</sup> base is allowed on a dropped third strike, max 3 per inning, even when there is 2 outs
5. The Pitcher's plate will be forty (40) feet from the back of the home plate.
6. A pitcher can only pitch three (3) innings per game. One pitch in an inning constitutes an inning pitched.
7. Only the starting pitcher can re-enter a game as pitcher one time.
8. Infield fly rule is in effect
9. Look back ruling should be at the umpires discretion

*The Massachusetts Junior Olympic Amateur Softball Association "Taunting Policy" will be enforced:*

***Taunting shall include any actions or comments intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule, or demean others, whether or not the deeds or words are vulgar or racist.***

*All coaches, players, spectators, etc. will refrain from any type of taunting as described above.*

**CENTRAL MASS LEAGUE** Youth Softball is committed to high standards of sportsmanship from all its members. The Division League **Commissioner**, in conjunction with the Executive Board of CML Youth Softball, reserves the right to request the removal of any person not abiding by the rules and policies as so stated. **Each town's respective Code of Conduct will apply.**