

ESSEX COUNTY WOMENS SOFTBALL LEAGUE

Revised April 2018

ECWSL is an organized group of individual towns joined together for the betterment of girls' softball. Each town has a coordinator/commissioner that is considered to be part of ECWSL Board of Directors. It is the Board of Directors that dictates league policy. The ECWSL President does not have the authority to make judgment calls or to settle disputes. The President's role is to coordinate, organize, and communicate the league philosophy only. Each town coordinator is responsible to communicate league rules to their coaches, and to enforce those rules when deemed necessary.

All game decisions are made by the USA umpires. Game results cannot be overturned.

Code of Conduct: Each team will be held wholly responsible for the actions of their players, coaches and fans. Excessive arguing in an unsportsmanlike manner on any game related topic can be brought to the ECWSL board of directors for review and can result in forfeiture of the game or expulsion of the town from the league if deemed appropriate. Any player using social networking sites to make inappropriate remarks, comments or posting of pictures or even appearance of inappropriate remarks or comments will be suspended for 2 games. If a second offense occurs, that player will be suspended for the remainder of the season and playoffs.

To maintain the instructional nature of the league, towns with multiple team entries must ensure that a draft process is utilized in selection of players that participate in the league. The utilization of an "A" or "B" team or an uneven loading of talent onto one team or the other is not in accordance with the league philosophy. The ECWSL board will appoint a three-person draft board to ensure proper drafting procedures have been followed. This draft board will review each team/division status at the end of each season. If a town has two or more teams with drastically different standings, they will contact that town director and coaches to explain the gap in standings (example: injury, coaching, superstar pitcher). If the draft board determines that improper team stacking has occurred, then that team will not be allowed to compete in the playoffs. Commissioners/Board members have the right to notify the board of any potential violations of league philosophy. Blatant repeat offenses will be addressed by the board and with majority vote determine appropriate course of action.

The season runs adjacent with many year-end school and non-school functions. ECWSL allows rescheduling of games ONLY if teams do not have enough players to field a team due to a school function, or due to bad weather. If a team has enough players to play a game (7 or more) then that game needs to be played. Example: Coaches are not allowed to reschedule a game because their best players will not be there. Play the games as scheduled. Wins are worth 2 points. No points will be given for games that are not played.

Towns and teams will be separated into North and South Conferences. Inter-conference play will be determined by logistics and number of teams; otherwise teams play games within their respective conferences. The top 8 Senior & Junior teams with the best records in each conference will participate in the playoffs.

ECWSL is an instructional league, and therefore coaches should strive to have players play multiple positions during a game/season. It is detrimental to your entire softball program to stick a player in one position all season long.

ECWSL strongly suggests that all pitchers and infielders wear a protective face mask. Players should own their own.

League Rules for all Divisions

In general, the league will follow all USA rules except where listed by exception below:

- A player from a league town cannot play for another town's team without permission of that town's hometown coordinator / organization. No players are allowed from non-league towns.
- 7th and 8th graders are allowed to play even if they are associated with a school team.
- A player must play ½ the regular season games to be eligible for the playoffs.
- Each player must play at least every other inning in the field unless restricted by injury.
- A team will forfeit the game if less than seven players are available.
- Make up games must be rescheduled within 1 week of cancellation.
- Players can only play for one team per division...Town teams cannot share players. Farm teams can share players.
- To avoid a forfeit, a player can play up.
- A player coming late to the game is added to the bottom of the batting order.
- A player leaving early from the game is skipped in the batting order. There are no automatic outs.
- Unlimited free substitution, including pitchers
- Home team gets to practice on the field until 5:45 pm
- Visiting team gets the field from 5:45 – 6:00 pm
- Games start at 6:00 pm
- No new inning can start after 7:30 pm prior to Memorial weekend, then 7:45 pm will be the cut off time. This should be discussed with the umpire prior to the game start.

- All divisions will be required to wear helmets with facemasks, chin straps are optional.
- The ball utilized is defined as: Optic Yellow with Red Seams COR 0.470 / Compression 375 lbs. 11 inch for Junior and Farm, 12 inch for Seniors.
- A safety bag (double bag with Hi-Vis Orange) at first base will be required for all divisions.
- All fields must have movable or breakaway bases to ensure the safety of runners.
- Any pitcher that directly hits (ball goes from pitcher's hand, and in flight, hits batter) 4 batters in a game, that pitcher shall be removed from the game by her coach. Note: batters need to attempt to get out of the way.
- Batting order is continuous.
- Maximum 6 runs can be scored per inning, inning ends when 6th run crosses the plate. The six run rule is lifted in the 7th inning only for Seniors, and 6th inning only for Juniors. It is not lifted for the agreed upon last inning, or due to darkness or time limit.
- 15 Run mercy rule after 5 innings.
- Only 4 infielders, plus 1 pitcher and 1 catcher are allowed in the infield.
- 4 outfielders must be on the outfield grass and cannot make a primary play in the infield (e.g. cover second on a force out)
- A win is worth 2 points and a tie is worth 1 point.
- Senior's will pitch from 43' - A pitcher can move 1 step in, if they are struggling to throw strikes.

Additional Junior Rules

- 6 inning game
- Stealing is allowed on a limited basis – Runner cannot leave until the ball reaches the plate. Runners may only steal second and third base and cannot advance an additional base on an overthrow or pass ball. (Catchers are encouraged to make the throw). An unlimited amount of steals is allowed per inning / per game.
- Runners can only advance to home on a batted ball or a bases loaded walk.
- A batter cannot attempt to run to second base on a walk. No continuous steals.
- No dropped third strike
- 40 foot pitching distance - a pitcher can move in 1 step if they are struggling to throw strikes.
- No infield fly rule
- The ball is dead when the pitcher has the ball, or has attempted to catch the ball within the 8-foot radius of the pitchers rubber. Once the ball is within the circle, runners must return to the previous base unless they are at least half way to the next base. A pitcher cannot attempt to put the ball back into play once she has the ball inside the 8 – foot radius.

Additional Farm Rules

- 35 foot pitching distance. If pitcher walks 3 consecutive batters, then coach comes in to pitch to his own team to finish out the inning. Coach cannot field the ball. Pitcher may pitch again at any point in the game.
- 50 foot base distances
- No bunting & No stealing
- Maximum 4 runs can be scored by one team per inning.
- 2nd graders may play, but coaches must assess her ability, so she can field a defensive position safely.

Additional Playoff Rules for Juniors & Seniors

- ALL TEAMS IN JUNIOR & SENIOR DIVISIONS MAKE THE PLAYOFFS.
- SEEDING FOR TEAMS WITH EQUAL RECORDS WILL BE DETERMINED BY COIN FLIP.
 - DIVISIONS WILL BE SPLIT INTO A AND B PLAYOFF BRACKETS
- HOME TEAMS SECURE FIELDS AND ARRANGE AND PAY FOR USA UMPIRES.
- GAME UMPIRES' HAVE FINAL SAY - NO CONTESTING FINAL GAME RESULTS.
 - MUST PLAY GAMES ON SCHEDULED DAY OR FORFEIT (excluding rain).
 - IF A PLAYOFF ROUND GETS RAINED OUT, HIGHER SEEDS MOVE ON
 - UNLIMITED RUNS CAN BE SCORED PER INNING - NO LIMIT.
- SLAUGHTER RULE IN EFFECT - 15 RUN LEAD AFTER 4 INNINGS, GAME IS OVER.
- ALL GAMES WILL BE PLAYED WITHIN THEIR CONFERENCE UNTIL THE FINALS.