

# 2026 East Shore League Softball Rules

## General

1. WIAA rules will be followed except for league rule changes or additions.
2. Rosters are **due by June 1st**. No additions or changes can be made, unless a player moves into your community mid-season. Only players on your roster are eligible for tournament play. **Exception: Players are automatically eligible to play on a higher level team ("play up"). Said players can only be pulled up to play on a higher level for one team.**
3. Player/s on a higher level team are not eligible to play down on a lower level team strictly for the tournament. DISCREPANCIES MUST BE CALLED OUT/CAUGHT DURING GAME PLAY ONLY, NO EXCEPTIONS. Player/s will be ineligible for the remainder of the tournament and the team is given a loss (automatic forfeit).  
**Ex: A girl playing on the A team all year, but also on the B team roster. She does not play any season games with the B team WILL NOT be eligible to play for the B league tournament.**
4. Rosters not turned in by June 1<sup>st</sup> will result in a \$100 late fee per team. "A" league teams will drop a seed in the tournament, if the team is last seed, they will forfeit their first game.
5. Clubs with multiple teams at the same level are to divide the teams equally by skill level.
6. **No metal spikes are allowed on the B, C and D level.** If a player cannot change into shoes or molded spikes, they are unable to play the game. **Metal spikes are allowed on the A level.**
7. Helmets – A, B and C level must have a face mask but chin straps are optional. D level a face mask and chin straps are optional. Exception: If a club requires their teams to have a face mask and chin strap, the player should follow their club's guidelines.
8. **Bats must be softball bats. No baseball bats are allowed.**
9. **Batters can use either on deck circle.**
10. **Sliding is permitted at all levels.**
11. A base runner **MUST** slide if a play is being made at the base. If a runner does not slide, it is the umpire's discretion on whether a warning or an out will be called.
12. Home teams must supply both a home plate and base umpire. Umpires must be a minimum of 1 year older than the game they are calling. A and B home plate umpires must also be certified. Ground rules will be discussed with the umpires and coaches before the start of the game. Coaches will discuss a call during the game with the umpire.
13. A team not present and ready to play 15 minutes after scheduled game time shall forfeit.
14. Rain games will be called off 1 ½ hours prior to game time.

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15. League Tournaments: Hosting club will determine the bracket and schedule. Hosting clubs can alter time limits for tournament games, if necessary.
16. Competitive Games (wins / losses count toward league standings or tournament): Players may only play on one roster per level.
17. Hit by pitch: Batters must attempt to avoid a pitched ball. The attempt will be determined by the umpire. If determined that the batter did not attempt to avoid the pitch, the umpire will rule the play dead. The pitch will be called a ball, unless the pitch is within the strike zone.
18. All teams must start with a minimum of 9 players. A team unable to start a game with 9 players will forfeit.

## A Team Rules

1. A girl is eligible to play on the "A" team if she is in 9th grade or less on May 1st of the season of play, as long as they do not play high school softball. **9th graders are not allowed to pitch.**
2. The home team will furnish two raised seam yellow 12" balls for each game. One of these must be new.
3. The distance from the pitching mound to home plate will be **43'** from the back corner of home plate to the front of pitching rubber.
4. A team may play 10 players in the field. They must all be in the batting order.
5. Teams may choose to bat a 10 player lineup or bat the entire roster. If batting a lineup, substitution must follow WIAA rules. The choice to bat a 10 player lineup or roster will be used for the entire game.
6. If batting the entire roster, a courtesy runner will be allowed for the catcher and pitcher only. The courtesy runner shall be the player that made the last out.
7. Runners can leave the bases when the ball leaves the pitcher's hand (per WIAA rules).
8. Games are 7 innings. No new innings shall start after 2 hours of play if 4 complete innings have been played. A game ends if there is a 15 run deficit after 4 innings of play or a 10 run deficit after 5 innings. If the game is in a tie, no 2 hour time frame applies and teams will keep playing until a winning team is determined. Rain games shall go a full 4 innings 3 ½ innings shall be considered complete if the home team is winning.
9. A run limit of 8 runs per inning will be enforced.
10. Rain dates/make up games: MUST be made up by Tuesday EOD (End of Day) the week prior to the tournament. If unable to make up the game by the Tuesday before.
11. Tournament will be double elimination.

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12. Tournament is seeded at the end of the season.
  - a. The seeding will be based off league record.
  - b. In the event of a 2-team tie for any seed, the tiebreaker is head-to-head winner during league play.
  - c. In the event of a 3-team tie for any seed, the tiebreakers are as follows:
    - i. Record.
    - ii. Head to head winner.
    - iii. Blind draw

13. Scores must be turned in to the league President by both teams within 1 week after the game.

## B Team Rules

1. A girl is eligible to play on the "B" team if she is in 6th grade or less on May 1st of the season of play.
2. A girl in 7<sup>th</sup> grade may play down to "B" team **but she cannot pitch**. If multiple 7<sup>th</sup> grade girls are on a team, they must be separated by 2 batters in the batting order. Once a girl plays down to the "B" Team, she will be ruled ineligible to play for the "A" Team during the "A Tournament."
  - a. A club wishing to have a girl/girls play down to "B" Team, must submit that move for league approval at the spring meeting. A girl will be approved to play down if a club receives a majority vote at the spring meeting.
3. The distance from the pitching mound to home plate will be **40'** from the back corner of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber.
4. The home team will furnish two raised seam yellow **12"** balls for each game. One of these must be new.
5. Walking is allowed until the bases are loaded. Once the bases are loaded, a coach will come in to pitch on the 4<sup>th</sup> ball. During coach pitch, no bunting is allowed. The coach must pitch from the rubber at all times, no exceptions. When the coach is pitching, no one can steal a base or advance on a passed ball. Hit by pitch will not apply. **If the coach gets hit with the batted ball it will be considered "no-play" and the coach will re-pitch.** While the coach is pitching the respective player (pitcher) must remain in the circle. The coach should remain in the circle until the play is completed.
6. Stealing is allowed. The runner may lead off when the ball leaves the pitchers hand.
7. Sliding is permitted and required under certain circumstances (see general rule #10)
8. Bunting is allowed, however a batter is not allowed to square to bunt and then swing at the same pitch. A batter doing so will be called out. Bunting will not be allowed during coach pitch
9. The runner may advance one base on a passed ball, except the runner at 3rd base. (unless coach is pitching: Rule #9) A runner cannot steal home unless a play is attempted on 3rd base. A batter may advance to 2nd base on a walk at her own risk.
10. Infield fly rule does not apply.

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11. Windmill or moderate pitching is allowed.
12. pitcher will receive no more than 5 warm up pitches each inning except the first inning.
13. The games are 6 innings. No new innings shall start after 1 hour 45 minutes if 4 complete innings have been played. A game ends if there is a 15-run deficit after 4 innings of play or a 10 run deficit after 5 innings. Rain games shall go a full 4 innings 3 ½ innings shall be considered complete if the home team is winning.
14. A 16' circle will be placed around the pitcher's mound. If the pitcher has the ball inside the circle and the runner is off the base she must either advance to the next base at her own risk or go back to the base they were on. No dancing around between the bases or the runner will be called out.
15. Outfielders must play at least 15 feet behind the baseline.
16. A maximum of 10 players may be on the field at one time (4 outfielders must be used). Each player must play a minimum of one full inning on defense. Every player bats before the batting order is repeated.
17. A pitcher may pitch in no more than a maximum of three innings per game. In the event of extra innings, a pitcher shall be allowed to re-enter the game, provided she has had one inning of rest from pitching her third inning in the game and then may pitch a maximum of three more innings, before having to rest again.
18. Once a team has batted through the roster, no new batter may be added.
19. There will be a maximum of 11 batters per inning.
20. If the catcher drops the ball on the third strike, the batter cannot advance to first base.
21. If any player in the line-up leaves the game due to injury, she cannot return. Teams will not be penalized an out (at her place in the batting order) as long as the minimum number of 9 players can be maintained.
22. A courtesy runner will be allowed for the catcher and pitcher only. The courtesy runner shall be the player that made the last out.
23. Tournament will be double elimination.

## C Team Rules

1. A girl is eligible to play on the "C" team if she is in 4th grade or less on May 1st of the season of play.
2. A girl in 5<sup>th</sup> grade may play down to "C" team **but she cannot pitch**. If multiple 5<sup>th</sup> grade girls are on a team, they must be separated by 2 batters in the batting order. Once a girl plays down to the "C" Team, she will be ruled ineligible to play for the "B" Team during the "B Tournament."

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- a. A club wishing to have a girl/girls play down to "C" Team, must submit that move for league approval at the spring meeting. A girl will be approved to play down if a club receives a majority vote at the spring meeting.
3. The distance from the pitching mound to home plate will be **35'** from the back corner of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber.
4. The home team will furnish two raised seam yellow **11"** balls for each game. One of these must be new.
5. **Stealing is allowed, unless the coach is pitching (rule #11). The runner may only leave the base when the ball crosses the plate. Runners may only advance one base per at-bat. Runners can only advance home on a batted ball.**
6. Bunting is allowed except when the coach is pitching, however a batter is not allowed to square to bunt and then swing at the same pitch. A batter doing so will be called out.
7. **The runner may only advance one base on an overthrow of a batted ball.**
8. Infield fly rule does not apply.
9. Windmill or moderate pitching is allowed.
10. The pitcher will receive no more than 5 warm up pitches each inning except the first inning.
11. No walks allowed. After 4 balls, the respective coach will pitch (resumes pitch count). The coach must pitch from the rubber at all times, no exceptions. When the coach is pitching, no one can steal a base or advance on a passed ball. Hit by pitch will not apply. **If the coach gets hit with the batted ball it will be considered "no-play" and the coach will re-pitch.** While the coach is pitching the respective player (pitcher) must remain in the circle. The coach should remain in the circle until the play is completed.
12. The games are 6 innings. No new innings shall start after 1 hour 30 minutes if 4 complete innings have been played. A game ends if there is a 15 run deficit after 4 innings of play or a 10 run deficit after 5 innings. Rain games shall go a full 4 innings 3 ½ innings shall be considered complete if the home team is winning.
13. A 16' circle will be placed around the pitcher's mound. If the pitcher has the ball inside the circle and the runner is off the base she must either advance to the next base at her own risk or go back to the base they were on. No dancing around between the bases or the runner will be called out.
14. Outfielders must play at least 15 feet behind the baseline.
15. **A maximum of 11 players may be on the field at one time (5 outfielders must be used). Each player must play a minimum of one full inning on defense. Every player bats before the batting order is repeated.**

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16. A pitcher may pitch in no more than a maximum of two innings per game. In the event of extra innings a pitcher shall be allowed to re-enter the game, provided she has had one inning of rest from pitching her second inning in the game and then may pitch a maximum of two more innings, before having to rest again.
17. Once a team has batted through the roster, no new batter may be added.
18. There will be a maximum of 11 batters per inning.
19. If the catcher drops the ball on the third strike, the batter cannot advance to first base.
20. If any player in the line-up leaves the game due to injury, she cannot return. Teams will not be penalized an out (at her place in the batting order) as long as the minimum number of 9 players can be maintained.
21. A courtesy runner will be allowed for the catcher and pitcher only. The courtesy runner shall be the player that made the last out.
22. Tournament will be double elimination.

## D Team Rules

1. A girl is eligible to play on the "D" team if she is in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade or less on May 1st of the season of play.
2. A pitcher's rubber will be placed at 35'. Pitcher's helper (defense) must play even with the rubber. The coach will pitch to his/her own players. The coach will not field the ball. If the coach gets hit with the batted ball it will be considered "no-play" and the coach will re-pitch.
3. No walks. Five swinging strikes for a strikeout or a maximum 10 pitches for an out, unless the 10th pitch is a foul ball. A foul tip on the 5th strike or 10th pitch will be considered an out. **Foul tip is a batted ball that tips off the bat and travels directly into the catcher's hand or glove.**
4. Games will be 5 innings or 1 hour 15 minute time limit. No new inning shall start after 1 hour 15 minute time limit.
5. A maximum of 10 batters per inning. Every batter will be in the batting lineup regardless of whether or not they are playing the field.
6. Runners may not leave a base until the ball crosses the plate.
7. If a ball is overthrown, whether fair or foul territory, the runner or runners cannot advance.
8. A maximum of 13 players may be on the field at one time (7 outfielders must be used). Each player must play a minimum of one full inning on defense. Every player bats before the batting order is repeated.

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9. Outfielders must play at least 15 feet behind the baseline.
10. An 11" ball will be used.
11. It is optional to keep score. Coaches may turn off the scoreboard if the game is out of hand.  
Scorekeeping and scoreboard will be used during tournament play.
12. Runners cannot advance after the batted ball is thrown inside the baseline after the player has control of the ball, unless the runner or runners are already in the process of advancing. However they are doing so at their own risk.
13. One coach is allowed in the outfield during season play. No coaches allowed in the outfield during tournament play
14. Tournament will be a consolation tournament.