



Babe Ruth Softball



NCMS Town/Cities

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|------|-------------|------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| East | Ayer | Fitchburg* | Lunenburg | Pepperell | Shirley | Townsend/Ashby |
| West | Ashburnham* | Gardner | Hubbardston | Narragansett | Westminster* | Winchendon |

*Fitchburg is placed in the East division and Ashburnham and Westminster is placed in the West; however, their teams can be either East or West, for scheduling purposes, to balance the league if either division has significantly more teams at a particular level.

NCMS Board Director Positions

Voted and approved on January 31, 2017

Starting in the 2017 season it has been approved by North Central MA Softball League that each town/city 1 (one) from the East and 1 (one) from the West will take a 2 year rotating position as a NCMS Board Director.

Each town/city when it is their year to be Directors will take on the responsibilities of the administrative roles of the NCMS League. Representatives will be chosen by the individual town/city during their year to serve on the Board no later than January 1st. If any new town/city joins NCMS, that town/city will go to the bottom of the rotation. If a town/city leaves NCMS the rotation will move up.

The rotation will be as follows:

| | | | |
|-------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| WEST | | EAST | |
| 2018-2019 | Gardner | 2019-2020 | Townsend/Ashby |
| 2020-2021 | Winchendon | 2021-2022 | Ayer |
| 2022-2023 | Westminster | 2023-2024 | Fitchburg |
| 2024-2025 | Narragansett | 2025-2026 | Lunenburg |
| 2026-2027 | Hubbardston | 2027-2028 | Pepperell |
| 2028-2029 | Ashburnham | 2029-2030 | Shirley |

NCMS Kick-Off Meeting/Playoff Meeting/Wrap-Up Meeting

The mandatory kickoff meeting for NCMS Town/City Directors will be held before January 31st each year to go over Rules and Dates for the season. Playoff meeting will be held 1 week prior to the playoff schedule start date each year. Wrap-Up meeting will be held each year at the end of the fall season.



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Manager/Coach Interpretation Meeting

There will be one meeting scheduled before the season starts (typically at the winter kick-off meeting) to provide an overview of Official Babe Ruth rules and the locally adopted NCMS rules for all coaches (excluding coach pitch). This will allow for consistency across all participating divisions and teams.

2019 North Central Mass Softball League Rules

Babe Ruth Rule(s) will be the primary governing document describing the rules to be adhered to for this year's season. To supplement this book, the Directors of each town have agreed on the following rules and clarifications in addition to the standard rules.

Therefore, the Babe Ruth Official Rule Book along with the items below are the criteria that will be used by all towns for this year's 2018 softball season. If it is not specifically addressed in these local options rules, the Official 2018 Babe Ruth Softball rules apply for that division. Any exception to this must be approved by the "Inter-League Committee" which formulated them. If there is a tie presented during the vote the NCMS Board will be the vote of the tie breaker.

All Games / All Leagues:

5:30pm = Warm-ups for Home team (they are closest to the field)

5:45pm = Warm-up for Visitor team

6:00pm = Review Ground Rules with Managers and Umpire

6:00pm = Play Ball

6:15pm = Grace period ends – (Major and Senior only) must have at least 8 players or the game will be a forfeit. Team managers should exhibit good sportsmanship about grace period. **Prior to each game, review and discuss ground rules and play times with umpire and other team manager.**

ALL DIVISIONS - Softballs at Minor, Major and Senior league divisions MUST BE RAISED SEAMED Balls.

- No new inning shall start after 1 hr. and 45 mins from the start of the game. Per Babe Ruth rules, no game shall last longer than 2 and ½ hours. Umpire makes the final determination of when game ends. On weekends when there is no field schedule conflicts the managers of both teams can agree to play past the 1 hour and 45 minute time limit. This must be discussed and agreed to **PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING** of game. Whenever possible, coaches should attempt to play to the natural end of the game. (Exception: Playoffs = no time limit)
- Line up shall be exchanged as soon as possible.
- Home Team Provides 2 Game Balls as noted in the age bracket
- Protests: (Major and Senior Only) the team managers and the umpire should make every attempt to resolve the conflict and continue the game. Protests have to be made to the umpire



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before leaving the field. NCMS League Director(s) should be notified ASAP. Protest will follow Babe Ruth Rules.

- **ALL PLAYERS** must play at least 60% of all regular season games to be eligible to participate in playoffs, **excluding documented medical circumstances. In the case of medical circumstances Town/City Director is expected to keep documentation and notify NCMS Board by email.** At the end of the NCMS regular season, all Official Scorebooks will be made available to check by the NCMS Board if there are any issues. Issues need to be brought to the attention of the Board in writing by the Town/City Director before the Playoff schedule is set. Date will be determined at NCMS kickoff meeting each year.

- **New Rules:**

- At all levels the Pitcher, 1st baseman, and 3rd baseman must wear a fielder's face mask ("rip it").
- NCMS overruled Babe Ruth rule that there is no geographical boundary for 14U and older divisions. In other words, a player must play for the town in which they reside unless that town does not offer a team at their age level. Some exceptions apply and must be approved by NCMS board prior to player being rostered and able to play.
- Mercy Rule (Senior only): A game is an official complete game if a team is winning by 15 or more runs after the completion of 3 innings or winning by 10 or more runs after 5 innings. At that time the game is officially over and the score is frozen. The contest may continue as a scrimmage provided the time limit rule is not met, both team's coaches agree, and the umpire also agrees (not needed if the coaches agree not to use an umpire).
- Playoffs: The top two (2) teams from the East and the top two (2) teams from the West divisions for Minor, Major, and Senior will automatically make the playoffs. Then the next top four (4) teams from the East and West combined will make the playoffs. At most, eight (8) teams from each division (Minor, Major, Senior) will be in the playoffs. In the event of a tied record, our normal tie breaker will come into play.

*** GAME CANCELLATIONS & MAKEUPS ***

Game Cancellations / Make-Up Games: In the event of inclement weather, it is the HOME TEAM MANAGER'S responsibility to initiate the communication process for game cancellation (prior to 4:15 pm at a minimum on weekdays, 1 hour and 45 minutes before game time on weekends). The manager will contact the opposing manager and umpire when cancellations occur. If a game needs to be called for inclement weather the two managers will have 3 days (72 hours) to reschedule the game and 14 days to play the game.



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If after 3 days the game has not been rescheduled the softball directors for each town will get involved. The teams can switch fields and move game to another town to ensure the game is played within 14 days. If a game that has been called due to weather cannot be made up. And every reasonable attempt has been made to reschedule the game prior to the 14 days, (or end of the season, if within 14 days of close of the season) then it is recorded as a 1-1 tie.

If a manager wants to reschedule a game for a reason other than weather. The manager can request to reschedule the game with the opposing manager as long as the rescheduled game is played within 14 calendar days of the original game. If they cannot work out a new date then the game will be played when scheduled. If a manager cannot field a team on the scheduled date or work out a new date then that game will be considered a forfeit and recorded as a 6-0 loss for the forfeiting team except in 16u, it will be recorded as a 7-0 loss.



Babe Ruth Softball



North Central Mass Softball Instructional (Rookie) League (8U) - League Age 6-8

- Innings = 6 Innings
- Each inning all players bat.
- Ball Size = 11" Safety Ball, Optic Yellow, Raised Seam
- No Stealing / No Bunting
- Every player is in the batting order (continuous batting order)
- Batters and runners shall only advance 1 base at a time.
- Coaches may substitute players in and out of the game and from position to position freely
- Pitching Distance = 35 feet (from back tip of home plate) The intent of this distance is for safety of the pitcher. Coaches may pitch from a distance which will allow the best chance to put the ball in play.
- Adult pitchers may not field batted balls. A defensive player should be placed beside (not behind) the pitching adult. At midpoint of the season, and at coaches' discretion, players may be allowed to pitch. Five pitch per batter max
- No strike outs
- Pitch Count: To keep the game flowing and prevent kids from getting bored, there will be a 6 pitch limit for each batter. If the batter has not hit the ball by the 6th pitch, the tee will be placed at home plate for the batter to hit off, she will run to 1st base to attempt to become a base-runner. The defensive team may attempt to make an out on any base/base-runner that is in play at that point in time. Players should be encouraged to swing at pitches since there is no penalty for missing.
- Softball skills should be taught/developed in practices at this level
- NO OFFICIAL SCORING. Keeping an accurate account of the game should be done as this can be used as a learning tool for the coaches, both in terms of learning to do the scorebook and for subsequent review to see where there may be specific areas that need to be worked on in practices
- A maximum of 10 players on the field defensively. Players should be positioned at "normal" playing positions, not bunched up in certain spots, i.e.: outfielders must play in the outfield. The idea is to get them to learn the various positions appropriately.
- The player positioned next to the pitching coach MUST wear a fielder's face mask, as well as the 1st and 3rd baseman.



Babe Ruth Softball



North Central Mass Softball Minor League (10U) League Age 8-10

- Innings = 6 Innings
- Mercy Rule = 4 runs per inning, except 6th inning which is unlimited. If after 3 innings or later it is decided that the next inning is the last inning, then it can be unlimited if agreed upon by both managers and umpire.
- Pitching Distance = 35 feet (from back tip of home plate).
- Pitchers are limited to 10 pitched innings per calendar week (Monday thru Sunday Per Babe Ruth)
- **If batter is hit by a pitch AFTER it bounces, batter does NOT take first base, dead ball.**
- **A base runner at second base may attempt to steal 3rd base after ball crosses home plate. The catcher can attempt to throw out that runner at 3rd base. The runner cannot advance home on an overthrow. Runner can advance to home if ball is hit.**
- **Advancement on overthrows - A runner may advance 1 base on an overthrow. Exception: runner cannot advance if the overthrow is from the catcher in the act of a runner trying to steal 3rd.**
- Ball Size = 11" Ball, Optic Yellow, Raised Seam
- Continuous Batting Order: All players will be placed in the batting lineup and bat in their appropriate slot, whether they are currently playing a defensive position or not.
- Mandatory Play: Every player on a team will participate in each game for a minimum of six (6) defensive outs. Coaches may substitute players in & out of the game & from position to position freely.
- When there is going to be a play at a base other than 1st players are encouraged to slide to avoid contact.
- Bunting is allowed
- If any combination of pitchers walk and/or hit batter happens (4) times any time in ANY inning, the batting team's coach will come to pitch to all batters until 3 outs occur, or 4 runs are scored, to end the inning. Coaches can NOT WALK a batter. The batter must either hit the ball, strikeout swinging or be called out on strikes by the umpire. The pitcher removed can re-enter to pitch again in the next inning.
- Umpires will be scheduled for these games. Please remember these umpires are usually kids and are still learning. If you feel a call (not balls or strike) was improper, call time out and the two managers and the umpire can discuss the call - the umpire has the final say. Should an umpire not show, please designate a volunteer to call balls & strikes. If umpire gear is not available or the volunteer is uncomfortable, he/she may call balls/strikes from behind the pitcher's mound.
- If a player becomes injured after safely reaching a base, a courtesy runner may be put in to run for the injured player ** the courtesy runner MUST be the player that was the last out**. If the injured player is unable to run on their own, they will be removed from the batting order for the remainder of the game.
- A courtesy runner may be put into the game for the catcher after the 2nd out of the inning. **the courtesy runner MUST be the player who made the last out**



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- 9 players. 10 Players may be utilized if mutually agreed upon by the managers prior to the game. The extra player needs to be placed in the outfield. This 10 player rule is to maximize playing time to the extent possible.
- The goal is to PLAY each game as scheduled - if a team has only 7 players, a player from the opposing team can fill the open field position or the team can field 7 – no forfeit. *“Do what it takes to play a game”* (borrowing players from opposing team)
- The Pitcher, 1st, and 3rd baseman MUST wear a fielder’s face mask.



Babe Ruth Softball



North Central Mass Softball Major League (12U) League Age 9-12

- Innings = 6 Innings
- Mercy Rule = 5 Runs per inning except the 6th inning and beyond which is unlimited. If after 3 innings or later the next inning is going to be the last then, it can be unlimited if agreed upon by both managers and the umpire.
- Ball Size = 12" Ball, Optic Yellow, Raised Seam
- Pitching Distance = 40 feet (from back tip of home plate)
- Pitchers are limited to 10 pitched innings per calendar week (Monday thru Sunday Per Babe Ruth)
- Continuous Batting Order: All players will be placed in the batting lineup and bat in their appropriate slot whether they are currently playing a defensive position or not.
- Mandatory Play - every player on a team will participate in each game for a minimum of six (6) consecutive defensive outs. Players may be entered or reentered defensively in the game anytime, provided they meet the conditions of mandatory play.
- Stealing A runner may steal as soon as the ball leaves the pitchers hand.
- Bunting is allowed
- Maximum number of the player in the field is 9 at anytime
- Dropped 3rd Strike Rule = Batter CAN advance to 1st base after passed/dropped ball on 3rd strike providing (1) first base is not occupied or (2) first base is occupied with two outs. Runner may advance from 1st base at own risk of out if desired.
- If there is going to be a play other than 1st, players are encouraged to slide to avoid contact.
- If a player becomes injured after safely reaching a base, a courtesy runner may be put in to run for the injured player ** the courtesy runner MUST be the player that made the last out**. If that injured player is unable to run on their own, they will be removed from the batting order for the remainder of the game.
- Patched umpires will be scheduled for these games. In the event the umpire does not show up, a parent or league representative, knowledgeable of the rules can umpire the game if agreed upon by both managers.
- If during a game either team is unable to field eight (8) players whether due to injury, ejection, etc. the game will END at that point, and that team will forfeit the game.
- If game is called due to darkness or weather in an incomplete inning, the score will revert the last full inning of play.
- Game must be 4 innings to be considered complete game (3 ½ innings if home team is up.
- The Pitcher, 1st, and 3rd baseman MUST wear a fielder's face mask.



Babe Ruth Softball



North Central Mass Softball Senior League (16U) League age 13-16

- Innings = 7 Innings
- Mercy Rule = 7 Runs per inning except the 7th inning and beyond which is unlimited. If after 4 innings or later the next inning is going to be the last, it can be unlimited if agreed upon by both managers and the umpire.
- Ball Size = 12" Ball, Optic Yellow, Raised Seam
- Pitching Distance = 43 feet (from back tip of home plate)
- Continuous Batting Order: All players will be placed in the batting lineup and bat in their appropriate slot whether they are currently playing a defensive position or not.
- Mandatory Play: Every player on a team will participate in each game for a minimum of six consecutive (6) defensive outs. Coaches may substitute players in and out of the game and from position to position freely as long as they meet the conditions of mandatory play.
- Stealing: A runner CAN leave the base to advance as soon as ball leaves the pitchers hand.
- Dropped 3rd Strike Rule = Batter CAN advance to 1st base after passed/dropped ball on 3rd strike providing (1) first base is not occupied or (2) first base is occupied with two outs. Runner may advance from 1st base at own risk of out if desired.
- If a player becomes injured after safely reaching a base, a courtesy runner may be put in to run for the injured player ****the courtesy runner MUST be the player that made the last out****. If that injured player is unable to run on her own, she will be removed from the batting order for the remainder of the game.
- Patched umpires will be scheduled for these games. In the event the umpire does not show up, a parent or league representative, knowledgeable of the rules can umpire the game if agreed upon by both managers
- If during a game either team is unable to field eight (8) players whether due to injury, ejection, etc. the game will END at that point, and that team will forfeit the game.
- If game is called due to darkness or weather in an incomplete inning, the score will revert to the last full inning of play.
- A game must go 5 innings to be considered a complete game (4 ½ if home team is winning)
- The Pitcher, 1st, and 3rd baseman MUST wear a fielder's face mask.