

Melrose Youth Softball

Rules & Handbook

Table of Contents

General Rules & Regulations	2
House Rules/Ground Rules	4
Specific Rules for the Minors Division	5
Specific Rules for the Majors Division	6
Specific Rules for the Junior Division	9
Specific Rules for the Seniors Division	11
Playoff Rules for Majors, Juniors and Seniors Divisions	13



Melrose Youth Softball

Rules & Handbook

1. General Rules & Regulations Governing Melrose Youth Softball

The Melrose Youth Softball League (MYS) generally follows the rules of USA Softball, except as noted or clarified in this Melrose Youth Softball Rules & Handbook.

- 1.1. The philosophy of Melrose Youth Softball is that fundamentals should be stressed.
 - 1.1.1. Coaches are expected to make a best effort for all players to receive equal playing time (bench vs field).
 - 1.1.1.1. In Minors and Majors, coaches are expected to provide opportunities for all players to receive time in the infield and outfield.
- 1.2. Placement of players within divisions
 - 1.2.1. Melrose Youth Softball organizes its divisions according to the player's current grade in school as follows:
 - 1.2.1.1. Tee Ball: Pre-K and K
 - 1.2.1.2. Minors: Grades 1 and 2
 - 1.2.1.3. Majors: Grades 3 and 4
 - 1.2.1.4. Juniors: Grades 5 and 6
 - 1.2.1.5. Seniors: Grades 7 and 8
 - 1.2.2. Generally, the league seeks to keep players within the bounds of their age/grade group. Exceptions can be made to this per parent/coach/Board request to move a player up or down. Requests should be made to the League's registration manager and will be subject to Board Approval.
- 1.3. Player Draft:
 - 1.3.1. Prior to the season each year, a draft will take place assigning players to teams. Drafts will take place at each level with the primary objective at Tee Ball, Minors and Majors level to create enjoyment of the game and accommodate requests to pair with friends, while at the Junior and Seniors levels with the primary objective of achieving competitive balance across the division.
 - 1.3.2. Siblings, when eligible for the same division, will always be placed together on the same team unless the parent requests otherwise.

Melrose Youth Softball

Rules & Handbook

1.4. Base Coaches:

1.4.1. Coaches may act as base coaches at all divisions.

1.4.2. Players may act as base coaches at the Junior and Senior League Divisions. Players must wear batting helmets when acting as base coaches.

1.5. All levels shall use a continuous batting order for all games

1.6. Metal cleats are not allowed

2. House Rules / Ground Rules (All Fields Covered)

2.1. The home team dugout is the first base side. The visiting team dugout is on the third base side.

2.2. The home team is responsible for providing new softballs at the start of each game and paying the umpires

2.3. Both teams are responsible for field maintenance and setting up/cleaning up after each game.

2.4. The winning team is responsible for entering the score into SportsEngine at the conclusion of the game for Majors, Juniors and Seniors games.

3. Player Accommodations

3.1. Our league is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive environment for all participants. Reasonable accommodations will be made for players with disabilities or special needs to ensure they are able to safely and meaningfully participate.

3.2. The Board will communicate approved accommodations to the applicable division coaches prior to the start of the season.

Melrose Youth Softball

Rules & Handbook

4. Specific Rules for the Minors Division

4.1. Game structure:

- 4.1.1. The game usually lasts between 60-90 minutes. The goal is that each player gets 2 at bats per game.
- 4.1.2. Coaches are encouraged to stand on the field during play to help teach players.
- 4.1.3. In a typical inning, half the team will have an at bat. The inning ends when three outs are recorded or each player for that inning has had an at-bat.
- 4.1.4. Batters and baserunners are allowed to advance one base on a ball in play.
- 4.1.5. Leading, stealing and bunting are not allowed.

4.2. Pitching:

- 4.2.1. Coaches pitch for all at-bats. Coaches are not required to pitch from the pitching circle. They can get closer to home plate as needed.
- 4.2.2. Each player receives a maximum of five pitches per at-bat. This encourages players to swing and keep the game moving.
- 4.2.3. There are no strike outs. After five pitches, a player will use a tee to place the ball in play.

Melrose Youth Softball

Rules & Handbook

3. Specific Rules for the Majors Division

3.1. Game structure:

- 3.1.1. Game length is six innings or 1 hour 30 minutes. No new inning can begin after the 1 hour 20 minute mark of the game or due to darkness at the umpire's discretion.
- 3.1.2. Umpires for Majors games are generally Junior Umpires (high school aged)
 - 3.1.2.1. Umpires for Majors games should be encouraged to have a large strike zone to encourage the batters to swing at pitches from player pitchers.
- 3.1.3. Five rule run per inning
- 3.1.4. Continuous runs are not allowed
- 3.1.5. Runners are not allowed to advance on overthrows. Coaches should encourage their infielders to make a throw to a base as it will help develop key fundamentals.
 - 3.1.5.1. The play ends when the ball is thrown to a base or returned to the infield.
- 3.1.6. Runners can advance multiple bases when a ball is batted into the outfield. Runners are permitted to keep advancing until the ball crosses into the infield.
 - 3.1.6.1. Outfielders should throw the ball back to the infield as opposed to running it back.
- 3.1.7. Coaches can play four outfielders if they have more than nine players.
- 3.1.8. If a team has less than nine players, they are expected to make a best effort to call a player up from the Minors.
 - 3.1.8.1. A game can be played with eight players if a call up is not available.
- 3.1.9. Fielding masks are required for all players during defensive innings.
- 3.1.10. Batters are not allowed to advance on a dropped third strike.
- 3.1.11. No infield fly rule
- 3.1.12. Bunting is not allowed.

3.2. Pitching:

- 3.2.1. Pitchers pitch from a distance of 35 feet

Melrose Youth Softball

Rules & Handbook

3.2.2. Players pitch during games

3.2.2.1. Walks are not allowed. If a pitcher throws four balls to a player before the conclusion of the at-bat, the batter's coach comes in to pitch for the remainder of the at-bat.

3.2.2.1.1. The number of strikes carry forward in the at-bat when a coach comes in to pitch..

3.2.2.1.2. The at-bat will conclude with the batter getting a hit or striking out swinging/looking.

3.2.2.1.3. Coaches must pitch from within the pitching circle.

3.2.3. Pitchers are allowed to pitch up to three innings per game. The innings do not have to be continuous (i.e. a pitcher may pitch the first, second and fourth inning of a game).

3.2.3.1. One pitch equals one inning pitched. If a pitcher throws a pitch in an inning, it counts as one inning towards their allowed three innings.

3.3. Stealing

3.3.1. Stealing is allowed only on a passed ball when the ball clearly gets away from the catcher.

3.3.2. Teams are limited to two successful steals per inning

3.3.2.1. Runners may not attempt to steal second base. Steals of third base and home are allowed.

3.3.2.2. Stealing is not allowed when a coach is pitching.

3.3.3. Players must make their best attempt to slide when stealing home if the catcher or pitcher are approaching the plate to make a play. Failure to slide may result in the running being called out.

Melrose Youth Softball

Rules & Handbook

4. Specific Rules for the Juniors Division

4.1. Game structure:

- 4.1.1. Game length is six innings. No new inning can begin after the 1 hour 30 minute mark.
- 4.1.2. Five rule max per inning. Continuous runs are not allowed.
- 4.1.3. Unlimited runs are allowed in the sixth inning if the sixth inning starts prior to 1 hour and 30 minutes.
- 4.1.4. Mercy rule is triggered if a team is winning by 15 or more runs after five innings.
- 4.1.5. Play ends when the ball is within the pitcher's possession in the pitching circle
- 4.1.6. Coaches can play four outfielders if they have more than nine players. If a team has less than nine, they are expected to make a best effort to call a player up from the Majors.
 - 4.1.6.1. A game can be played with eight players if a call up is not available.
- 4.1.7. Fielding masks are required for all players during defensive innings.
- 4.1.8. Batters are not allowed to advance on a dropped third strike.
- 4.1.9. Infield fly rule is in effect
- 4.1.10. Bunting is allowed

4.2. Pitching:

- 4.2.1. Pitchers pitch from a distance of 40 feet
- 4.2.2. Pitchers are allowed to pitch up to three innings per game. The innings do not have to be continuous (i.e. a pitcher may pitch the first, second and fourth inning of a game).
- 4.2.3. Pitchers may be removed from a game after either hitting three batters in an inning or five in a game at the discretion of the umpire.
 - 4.2.3.1. Batters are expected to attempt to avoid getting hit by the pitch.

4.3. Stealing:

- 4.3.1. Stealing is allowed to any base upon the release of the ball by the pitcher.
- 4.3.2. Players must make their best attempt to slide when there is a play at the plate. Failure to slide may result in the runner being called out.

Melrose Youth Softball

Rules & Handbook

5. Specific Rules for the Senior Division

5.1. Game structure:

- 5.1.1. Game length is six innings. No new inning can begin after the 1 hour 30 minute mark.
- 5.1.2. Five rule max per inning. Continuous runs are not allowed.
- 5.1.3. Unlimited runs are allowed in the sixth inning if the sixth inning starts prior to 1 hour and 30 minutes.
- 5.1.4. Mercy rule is triggered if a team is winning by 15 or more runs after five innings.
- 5.1.5. Play ends when the ball is within the pitcher's possession in the pitching circle
- 5.1.6. Coaches may only play three outfielders. A game can be played with eight players.
- 5.1.7. Fielder's mask is required for all infielders
- 5.1.8. Batters are allowed to advance on a dropped third strike.
- 5.1.9. The infield fly rule is in effect.
- 5.1.10. Bunting is allowed.

5.2. Pitching:

- 5.2.1. Pitchers pitch from a distance of 43 feet
- 5.2.2. Pitchers are allowed to pitch up to four innings (12 outs) per game. The innings do not have to be continuous (i.e. a pitcher may pitch the first, second and fourth inning of a game).
- 5.2.3. Pitchers may be removed from a game after either hitting three batters in an inning or five in a game at the discretion of the umpire.
 - 5.2.3.1. Batters are expected to attempt to avoid getting hit by the pitch.

5.3. Stealing:

- 5.3.1. Stealing is allowed to any base upon the release of the ball by the pitcher.
- 5.3.2. Players must make their best attempt to slide when there is a play at the plate. Failure to slide may result in the runner being called out.

Melrose Youth Softball

Rules & Handbook

6. Playoff rules for the Majors, Juniors and Seniors Divisions

- 6.1. Playoff games played on a weeknight, including the Championship Game, will follow the standard rules for runs, game length and time as are used during the regular season.
- 6.2. In the event of a delay due to rain or lightning, the delay will count towards the game time limit. The delay is not a pause in the time limit.
- 6.3. If the game is called due to time or weather and the score is tied or the inning has not completed, the teams will complete the game on another day
 - 6.3.1. The game will resume at the point where it was stopped: same score, pitcher, runners on base, batter, # of outs and count of balls & strikes
- 6.4. The intent is for the Championship game to be played on a weekend. If that's the case, the game will play the full 6 innings. During the 6th inning, teams can score unlimited runs.
- 6.5. During the Championship game, a mercy rule will be triggered if a team is winning by 15 or more runs after five innings.