



# Community Softball League

## 2026 Eligibility, Playing Rule Amendments, and Clarifications

### *Diamond Set-up and Pitching Distances*

DIVISION	AGES* PRIOR to Jan. 1st NO overage allowance	DATE OF BIRTH	BASE DISTANCE	PITCHING DISTANCE	BALL SIZE Core .47
U9	7-8	2017, 2018	45 feet	30 feet	11"
U11	9-10	2015, 2016	45 feet	35 feet	11"
U13	11-12	2013, 2014	55 feet	38 feet	11"
U15	13-14	2011, 2012	60 feet	40 feet	12"
U17	15-16	2009, 2010	60 feet	43 feet	12"
U19	17-18	2007, 2008	60 feet	43 feet	12"
U21	19-20	2005, 2006 (NO age extension)	60 feet	43 feet	12"

**\*NOTE: All ages PRIOR to January 1st, of the current year (2026).**

Our focus in CSL is to be a COMMUNITY recreational league with RESPECT for all of its participants.

\*The CSL does not permit any team or individual of a team to Live Stream or record video any portion of a game. Spectators are not permitted to use recording devices on tripods, mounts or attached to netting/fencing. A warning will be issued to the coach. Failure to adhere to this rule and the warning may result in disciplinary action (forfeit of the game and/or coach suspension).

### **Eligibility**

The Community Softball League is for house league players only and is meant to be an enjoyable learning experience for all of its participants. CSL is based on providing a house league recreational experience, for teams and players from London and the immediate

surrounding area member associations, as a player's alternative to playing on a competitive (rep/selected) team. We offer a full season schedule, including a mid-season tournament, and playoffs, to meet the need for play. It is intended that each team commits to our program, NOT in conjunction with OR in preparation for other leagues of play or competitions (qualifiers or finals).

\*Players who played as a member of a "higher level" (above HL) team (previous season), that have TWO or more seasons experience as a player at that level, are accepted at an AGE ABOVE their registration age.

\*Players who played as a member of a "higher level" (above HL) team, that have TWO or more seasons experience as a pitcher at that level, are only eligible to pitch at a DIVISION ABOVE their registration age, and must remain in this division or higher to be eligible to pitch in subsequent years.

\* A MAXIMUM of THREE "rep" (league above HL) players (from previous season) will be allowed per team.

1. Any player in the league may participate in a maximum of five\* (5) competitive games as a call up player. Any player having participated in six\* (6) competitive league games will no longer be eligible to play in the CSL. \*A Tournament will count as 1 game.

2. Participation is to be arranged through the CSL coach and must be reported to the Association Convenor.

3. Any CSL team using an ineligible player (as per CSL policies) will forfeit all games that the player was involved in after the player became ineligible.

4. The Area Convenor is responsible for keeping, and providing on request, a list of all league players being used on competitive teams including the number and dates of competitive games in which they have played.

5. No new players may be added after June 30th. Finalized rosters must meet the established criteria. Only CSL approved, registered players listed on submitted team rosters will be allowed participation. A complete and final team list (not to exceed 15 players) of CSL players' names and birth dates must be submitted to CSL by July 1st.

## **Playing Rule Amendments and Clarifications**

The health and safety of our community is important to us. To that end, all participants will be required to respect the individual associations' Return to Play protocols, prepared with reference and guidance from the government and health units, as accepted by local authorities (of London and Middlesex).

In the event that issues arise between any individual associations and a resolution cannot be resolved through the convenors of those associations, further attention is to be directed by the convenors to CSL for further attention. Noncompliance may result in banning from attendance.

Rule #1: Obey the rules.

Rule #2: Rules are NOT made to be broken.

Rule #3: Rules apply to all, not just those who choose to follow them.

Rules and policies are in place to provide an established environment for ALL our participants (past, present, future) to have an even and fair playing field. They address circumstances in advance (where possible) to keep "circumstances" from becoming an "advantage" for some and a disadvantage for others.

## PLAYING RULES

NOTE: Every effort is made, when developing these Rules and Guidelines for the League, to make the game of fastball playable and fun. However, situations may arise that are not covered or are ambiguous. If necessary, the Executive, and/or a committee appointed by the President, will address these situations, and provide a decision that will be considered final.

Softball Canada playing rules will apply in all divisions. The Softball Canada rules may be amended, deleted or added to by the operating rules of the Community Softball League. Any amendments, deletions or additions will be found in the following rule amendments:

### 1. GAME TIME

1.1. Games will be forfeited 15 minutes after the start time found on the game schedule if the team or teams are not ready to play. It would be wise to have teams in attendance at least 30 minutes prior to game time so line-ups can be exchanged

1.2. Games will have a time limit **from the time of the first pitch** of:

- 1 hour and 15 minutes at U9
- 1 hour and 30 minutes at U11, U13, and U15 levels.
- 1 hour and 45 minutes at U17, U19 and U21 levels.

NO inning will start AFTER that time has elapsed. An inning started is to be finished **without time restriction**. The umpire will be the official timekeeper and will inform both scorekeepers of the official start time early in the game (first inning). The score at the end of the last completed inning will count in the standings.

1.3. The umpire may start the game earlier than scheduled if both teams are ready to start.

### 2. NUMBER OF INNINGS

A full game consists of:

- U9, U11 level: 5 innings OR time limit.
- U13, U15, U17, U19 and U21 levels: 7 innings OR time limit.

Minimum number of innings:

- U9 division: No minimum
- U11 Division: 3 complete innings OR time limit
- U13, U15, U17, U19, and U21 Divisions: 4 innings OR time limit

The umpire may call the game earlier due to rain, lightning and/or darkness that may create a safety concern. If the minimum number of innings have been played, the game will be considered complete. The score from the last complete inning played will be the official score and will count in the standings. Any game not completing the necessary number of innings at the time the game was suspended/called will be rescheduled and played as a new game.

### 3. NUMBER OF PLAYERS

3.1. A game will be forfeited if either team cannot field a team of at least 8 players, 15 minutes after the scheduled game time or during the course of the game. There will be no out counted for an absentee 9th player.

**Exception U9 ONLY:** The minimum number of players needed to start a game is 6 players on each team. If agreed upon, coaches can lend players to a team who is short players. \*This is not required and must be agreed upon by the coach of both teams.

3.1.1 A game forfeited at the diamond (for lack of players or umpires) is to be declared an exhibition. Teams are encouraged to engage in friendly scrimmage or drills to take advantage of player and diamond time.

3.2. Substitute players may be borrowed from any CSL member association team in the immediate division below, to make a roster of a **maximum of 11** players. Exception: U11 ONLY may borrow players from any other U9 and/or U11 team (NOT including the opposing team for that game).

3.2.1 All player call-ups are to be arranged through the player's COACH not through the player directly and must be reported to the Association Convenor. The coach is responsible for notifying the convenor of their need for call-ups at the earliest opportunity. If a call up situation arises at game time, the coach may use one available legal player, provided the Coach is notified after the game. Every effort should be made to contact the players' coach ahead of time.

3.2.2 A player may not serve as a call-up at any level when their own team has a game to play.

3.2.3 Call-ups are to be reported WITH the scores, by BOTH teams.

3.3 Borrowed players (including U9 & U11) are not allowed to pitch.

3.4 One team may call up the same player from a lower division (or other U9/U11 division) a maximum of five times (see Eligibility 2).

3.5 Borrowed players will be a regular part of the batting order and defensive positioning on the diamond.

3.6 U9 & U11 ONLY - An extra "Rover" player may be used in the outfield only. The Rover player may only be inserted at the beginning of an inning or game.

3.7 Coaches must notify the opposition coach 24 hours prior to the scheduled game time if they are unable to field a team and reschedule the game.

**\*\*Teams are encouraged to borrow players rather than reschedule or forfeit. \*\***

## **4. RESCHEDULED GAME**

4.1 Schedule changes are to be reported to CSL scheduler/scorekeeper, within 7 days of the original game date, by the home team.

4.2 Within 7 days of the original game date, the home team coach is responsible for making arrangements for playing that game before the end of the regular season (of that division).

4.3 Season rainouts are to be played WITHIN the regular season.

## **5. GAME REPORTS**

**Games not played according to CSL rules are to be declared and reported as exhibition participation. Make full use of the facility and playing time available to the players for their commitment.**

5.1 BOTH teams are required to report the results of the game within 48 hours of the completion of the game. Refer to contact information package for website and/or contact information.

5.2 Any games that are tied at the curfew will be considered complete and each team will be awarded 2 points. Exhibition games will count for 1 point.

5.3 Games will be scored as follows:

**Win (including by forfeit): 3 points**

**Tie: 2 points**

**Loss: 1 point**

**Not played: 0 points**

## **6. MERCY RULE**

The game will be considered complete and the score will become official if after 5 complete innings for the visiting team and 4½ innings for the home team, there is a 10 point difference or if either team is ahead by 15 runs after 3 complete innings.

## 7. PITCHERS

**U9 ONLY:** Pitching will be a combination of player and coach pitch. The first 3 pitches thrown by the defensive pitcher. If after the first 3 pitches, there is no hit, the offensive coach will come onto the field to throw 3 more pitches. If at the end of 6 pitches, the batter has still not put the ball into play (except for a foul ball), the batter is out. The umpire will still continue to call balls and strikes, but the batter will receive 6 pitches regardless of the count.

### **U9 & U11 ONLY:**

7.0 Pitchers are not permitted to pitch in consecutive innings, for the first 3 innings of each game.

### **U11, U13, U15, U17/U19 combined division.**

7.1 A MINIMUM of 2 pitchers must be used in a regulation game.

7.2 A pitcher can pitch 2 consecutive innings for a total of 4 innings in a regulation game (for U9 & U11 it is 3 innings maximum WITH attention to 7.1 above).

7.3 A single pitch to a batter is considered an inning pitched. If a pitcher is replaced in an inning and returns in the same inning, they will be charged with pitching 2 consecutive innings.

7.4 A pitcher who has pitched 2 consecutive innings cannot pitch again until one complete inning has passed.

7.5 Coaches and/or team scorekeepers are responsible for keeping track of the number of innings the opposing pitcher has pitched. If a pitcher erroneously pitches in 3 consecutive innings, or for a 5th inning, the pitcher will be immediately removed from the pitching position for the remainder of the game but will be allowed to play in any other fielding position. A warning to the coach will be given and if this player returns to pitch, the coach will be ejected.

7.6 At U9, U11 or U13 levels, an illegal pitch will be ruled as a "No pitch".

### **U21**

7.7 Upon the coach's second visit to the mound in the same inning, the pitcher must be removed for the remainder of that inning.

### **ALL LEVELS**

7.8 Adoption of Softball Canada ruling requires ONE foot to be on the rubber, to start the pitch. The ball is to be presented with hands apart. After the pause, all motion with feet is to be forward and restricted to the width of the rubber. In delivering the ball, the pitcher is allowed a single forward step along with release of the ball. No toe drag is required.

7.9 At U9, U11 & U13 ANY pitcher who hits a batter with a pitch three times in the same inning (ball in the air, not rolling on the ground), will be replaced for the remainder of the inning. At the umpire's discretion, this may be waived, **IF** it is determined that the batters are not attempting to avoid the hit. The pitcher may play any other position in that inning. The pitcher may return to the pitching position in another inning, based on the number of innings already pitched.

7.9.1 At U15, U17, U19 & U21 ANY pitcher who hits a batter with a pitch three times in the same **game** (ball in the air and not rolling on the ground), will be removed as a pitcher for the remainder of the game. The pitcher may play any other position in that game.

7.10 NO intentional walks. A batter is entitled to 4 pitches, not rolled or bounced to the plate.

## **8. BATTING ORDER**

8.1 The batting order will consist of all players present at the start of the game.

8.2 Late comers are to be added to the bottom of the line-up upon arrival.

8.3 All players in the line-up are to play a minimum of 2 innings in defensive positions (an exception MAY rarely result in a game of less than 4 innings).

8.4 Any player who must leave the game before completion will be scratched from the line-up without any penalty to their team (no out recorded for the player's turn at bat). However, if the 8th player and before the completion of the game, the game is forfeited.

8.5 The first time a bat is thrown in a game, the umpire will issue a warning to the player. A second occurrence will result in being "called out". No runner advances.

## **9. EQUIPMENT**

9.1 Regulation approved batting helmets must be worn by all batters, runners, on-deck batters and minor age base coaches.

9.1.1 Cages are required on batting helmets at all levels.

9.2 Deliberately removing the helmet on the diamond while the ball is in play is an automatic out.

9.3 To ensure the safety of all the batters and base runners, the batting helmet chinstraps must be done up at all times, at all levels.

9.4 Defensive face protection for pitchers (ex. Rip-it) is required in all divisions, as a safety precaution. The CSL strongly encourages all defensive players to wear face protection, however, the requirement for other defensive players is according to the expectation of your Local Association.

9.5 NO METAL CLEATS allowed on the diamond, at any division, by any player or coach.

9.6 Softball bats only (not hardball). Bats will be required to pass a visual inspection.

## **10. INFIELD FLY**

NOTE: The Infield Fly rule states, "An infield fly is a fair ball (not including a line drive or an attempted bunt) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort, when first and second bases are occupied, before 2 are out. The ball is alive, and runners may advance at the risk that

the ball will be caught or they may retouch and advance after the ball is touched, the same as on any fly ball." -Softball Canada Official Guide and Rule Book

The infield fly rule will NOT apply to the U9, U11 and U13 divisions.

## **11. THIRD STRIKE**

The dropped third strike rule will NOT apply to the U9, U11 and U13 divisions.

## **12. BASE STEALING**

Bases will be awarded to all base runners on overthrows out of bounds as per Softball Canada rules (except U9, U11 and U13 from 3rd to home).

### **U9 Only:**

**12.0** There are no home runs. The runners may advance 1 base from the hit on a batted ball to the infield. Runners may advance a maximum of 2 bases from the hit on a batted ball to the outfield (no matter how much the defensive team throws the ball around).

### **U11 Only:**

**12.0** On a batted ball, if the ball is thrown over the head or past the defensive player at any base (including home) when an attempt is made by the defensive team to throw out a runner, runners on 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> can advance one base with the liability to be put out. If the ball is thrown a second time, during one play, and is not caught, the runners are not eligible to advance. A runner on 3<sup>rd</sup> base must be hit or forced home; they can not advance to home on any overthrow.

### **12.1 U15, U17, U19, and U21**

Players may steal a base after the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.

### **U13**

Players may steal a base after the pitch has crossed home plate.

### **U11**

Players may steal a base after the pitch has crossed home plate.

### **U9**

Players may not steal.

### **12.2 U11 & U13 only**

Runners may NOT steal from 3rd to home. One steal per pitch, per player is allowed (i.e. If catcher throws to second and the runner has stolen from 1st to 2nd, that runner may not continue to 3rd).

**12.2.1** After a pitch and all play has stopped and the catcher is throwing the ball back to the pitcher, the ball will be dead. Anyone stealing on the pitch will be allowed the base, except from

3rd base to home.

## **13. RUN RULES**

13.1 **U9, U11 & U13:** Max of 5 runs per inning for all innings (No "open" inning).

13.2 **U15, U17, U19, U21:** Max of 5 runs per inning for innings 1-5; 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> innings are open (no run limit).

## **14. JEWELLERY RULE**

Any dangling jewellery must be removed. This includes hoops, dangling earrings, necklaces, bracelets and watches. No exposed items (including jewellery) judged by the umpire to be distracting to opposing players or unsafe for any player, may be worn or displayed. Any other items must be either removed, or taped, at the discretion of the umpire. If a player is requested by the umpire to remove or cover the jewellery and they refuse, the player will be removed from the game and ruled ineligible. Each time their spot in the batting order comes up it will not be considered an out. Medic alert bracelets and medallions should be worn if required and should not be taped. There is no penalty for medic alert jewellery.

## **15. UNIFORMS**

15.1 Players are required to wear association uniforms. Long baseball pants must be worn during games at the U9, U11, U13, and U15 levels. BASEBALL uniform shorts may be worn by individuals at the U17, U19, and U21 level. No other shorts are to be allowed. Shirrtails may be required, by the umpire, to be tucked in.

15.2 Only baseball style hats/visors may be worn. "Same team" baseball hats are not mandatory and will be the decision of the team coach. Any baseball hat (including visors) worn, must be in good taste and worn in the proper manner (peak forward and down).

## **16. MISCELLANEOUS**

16.1 The home team will supply: two (2) umpires (a minimum of an age division older), one new ball, one good ball and diamond preparation, bases, and pegs. A safety bag is required at 1st base.

- The defensive player (typically the first baseman) must use only the white/fair portion of the base. (see Exception below)
- The offensive player must use only the orange/foul portion of the base on the player's first attempt at first base when a play is being made on the player. This includes when the batter/runner runs on a dropped third strike. (see Exception below)
- On a ball hit to the outfield with no play being made at first base, the offensive player may touch either portion of the base on the player's first attempt at first base.
- Once an offensive player has touched the orange/foul portion of the base on the first attempt at first base, the runner must then use the white/fair portion of the base:
  - Exception:

- On any live ball play made from first base foul territory, the batter-runner and the defensive player may use either base. When the defensive player uses the foul portion of the double base, the batter-runner can run in fair territory and if hit by a throw from the foul side of first base, it would not be interference (unless it is an intentional act like throwing up their arms, etc.)
- It should be clear the runner or the fielder can use either base on a ball fielded on the foul side of first base. Both the runner and fielder could be touching the same base. If the fielder uses the orange base in this situation and the runner makes contact with the fielder it is interference on the runner. If both players use the white portion and the fielder causes the runner to hold up or change direction, it is obstruction on the fielder.

16.2 No smoking and/or liquor and/or drugs shall be allowed on or near the benches or playing and practice areas by either players or coaches (Please also see Rule #21).

16.3 Charged conference game limit is waived.

16.4 Sliding is NOT required at any base.

## 17. PROTESTS

*\*There are no protests.*

## 18. UMPIRES

18.1.1 IF time is remaining at the last out of an inning, play continues to the next inning (unless waived by agreement of both coaches) without time restrictions.

18.1.2. Length of game (**Refer to 1.2**)

18.2 For safety reasons, the umpire may call the game due to rain, lightning and/or darkness that may create a concern. (see "Number of Innings" for outcomes).

18.3 The umpires will identify out of bounds to both teams during the pre-game rules meeting.

18.4 Umpires are required to be an age division older than the team players.

18.5 Only under extreme circumstance and agreement of both teams, should the umpire be related to a participant in the game.

18.6 Reports of player removal, coach ejections, etc., at a game are to be submitted to the association convenor and the league president.

## 19. COURTESY RUNNERS

Injured Player: A courtesy runner may take the place of an injured base runner or batter. Please let the umpire and the opposing team know, at either the beginning of the game or at the time of

the injury, that you will need to use a courtesy runner. Both the courtesy runner and the original runner are eligible for further participation in the game. The last out prior to the player being substituted for, will be the courtesy runner. The injured runner/batter may advance to 1st base ONLY (if the hit is a double, triple or home run, the runner must stop at 1st base).

Catcher: With 2 outs and the catcher on base, the catcher MAY be substituted with a courtesy runner (the available player who was the last out) to allow the catcher to dress for the next inning.

## 20. WARMING UP A PITCHER

Any person that is warming up a pitcher in a crouching position, either on or off the playing field, must wear a catcher's mask with throat guard.

## 21. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

All participants (coaches, parents, players, and umpires) need to understand and respect the role of the umpire in exercising judgment and applying the rules set by the league. Only the interpretation of a rule may be subjected to question by the coach.

Request for clarification may be carried out by either the coach or the umpire if done in a cordial manner (non-demeaning or challenging manner). RESPECT IS EXPECTED.

It is our responsibility to set a good example and be a positive role model for our players. As such, the umpire will warn/eject any coach, parent and/or player who fails to comply with this conduct. The umpire may stop the game if necessary.

Foul language, unsportsmanlike behaviour of any kind and/or any conduct deemed detrimental to the CSL, participating associations, umpires, coaches, or players on or off the field including on social media platforms **will not be tolerated**. Any situation of such behaviour should be reported to your convenor and the CSL president immediately.

No inebriated or inappropriate spectator, coach or player will be tolerated. Coaches should take the initiative to speak to any spectator conducting themselves in an inappropriate manner. The umpires have the authority to eject spectators, parents, coaches and/or players, if necessary. The umpires have the authority to call a forfeit to the offending team, if necessary. The police should and will be called in extreme situations. The CSL will remove a team from the league if it is deemed necessary.

Coaches are responsible for their players, coaches, and fans. No disrespect and/or unsportsmanlike conduct toward the umpires/players/coaches/league officials will be tolerated.

In order to keep the integrity of this league, to create a positive and fun experience for our children, there will be a **Zero Tolerance Policy** in effect.

## **Suspensions**

The CSL reserves the right to suspend or expel any team, coach, or player for disrespect and unsportsmanlike conduct or conduct deemed detrimental to the CSL, participating associations, umpires, coaches, or players. This includes conduct on or off the field including social media platforms. When a team is suspended, the scheduled games will be forfeited to the opposing teams. Teams using suspended coaches or players shall automatically forfeit the games in which the suspended persons participated. Such teams/players will NOT be eligible for a refund.

Teams disregarding CSL policies and decisions are at risk of game forfeits and team disqualifications.

## **22. CONCUSSION PROTOCOL**

Associations are responsible to make sure that all registered athletes, as well as their parent (for athletes under 18), provide confirmation that they have reviewed Concussion Awareness Resources.

Associations must also not allow coaches, team trainers and officials to serve as a coach, team trainer or official unless they have provided confirmation that they have reviewed one of the Concussion Awareness Resources, every year.

### **EXTRA INFORMATION PAGE**

NOTE: Every effort is made, when developing these Rules and Guidelines for the League, to make the game of softball playable and fun. However, situations may arise that are not covered or are ambiguous. If necessary, the Executive, and/or a committee appointed by the President, will address these situations. The decision will be final.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **1. SCHEDULES**

- BE sure to always check the schedule for location, time, etc. of all home and away games. You may have a week with no games or a week with two games. The location of a team's game could be different from game to game.
- Inclusion into the Community Softball League means CSL games and finals take priority over others. Rescheduling within the regular season will be accepted but should not interfere with the completion of the season.

### **2. MID-SEASON TOURNAMENT**

Provided, this year, by B.O.M.B.A and S.L.B.A. for CSL teams

- all CSL registered teams participation.
- round robin format (adjusted as required for number of teams, diamonds and time availability).

- DATES:
  - June 5 to 7: **divisions TBA**
  - June 12 to 14: **divisions TBA**

### 3. PLAYOFFS

NOTE: Dates are based on accommodations.

- Each association is required to provide umpires and on-site assistance during playoffs.
- Teams not meeting eligibility expectations will be excluded from playoffs.
- Round robin format (adjusted as required for number of teams, diamonds and time availability).

### ALL TEAMS

Final Standings will be available after all scores have been received and tabulated.  
All scores are to be received by:

- **July 30 –divisions TBA**
- **Aug. 6 – divisions TBA**

Tiebreakers (by need and approval only): following these dates

#### 2026 Playoff Weeks/Weekends:

\* It may be necessary to run some first rounds of playoffs throughout the week before the playoff weekend. ***All teams must be available and prepared to play on the dates listed below:***

- **July 25 – U9 Wrap up Day (One day only)**
- **Aug. 4 to 9 – divisions TBA**
- **Aug. 10 to 16 – divisions TBA**

**ENJOY A HEALTHY, HAPPY, AND SAFE SEASON!**