

CORTLAND SOFTBALL LEAGUE
16U EMPIRE DIVISION RULES

Goal

To teach the fundamentals of softball and to develop a positive attitude towards sports and team play. **OUR MOST IMPORTANT GOAL IS TO HAVE FUN!**

Conduct Rules

1. The goal of the Cortland Softball League is to teach the fundamentals of softball and to develop positive attitudes towards sports and team play. Most importantly, we want to foster a playing environment where everyone has fun.
2. Teamwork and building an enjoyable experience for all the girls in the league is our desired goal.
3. Coaches are expected to know and abide by all rules.
4. Coaches are responsible for the safety and conduct of their team.
5. Good sportsmanship and good behavior are expected from all players, coaches, and spectators, always.
6. Cheering for your own team is highly encouraged, but cheers against the other team will not be tolerated.
7. Sudden noises (shouts, horns, foot-stomping, yelling "swing", or other chants or noise-making devices) will not be tolerated.
8. Players and coaches should not purposely distract the other team's pitcher.
9. There will be no arguing with umpires. Inquiries and discussions about calls (other than balls and strikes) are okay, but arguments will not be tolerated.
10. Coaches are responsible for adherence to these conduct rules for themselves, their players, and the spectators.

Player Eligibility

1. All players must be in 11th grade or lower.
2. A player must play for the town they reside in unless they qualify for one of the three exceptions listed below:
 - a. A town is unable to field a team for the player to play on.
 - b. A player "school choices" into another town, then they can play for that town. Documentation of school enrollment would be required.
 - c. Priority is given to town players before non-resident players can be registered.
3. If a player's parents each live in two different towns, the player can choose to play for either town.
4. Both Cortland town league reps and Cortland League Steward must approve the player transfer to the other town.

General Game Preliminaries

1. The home team head coach is responsible for postponing a game due to weather/field conditions and contacting the umpires and the opposing coach.
2. Prior to each game, batting orders must be exchanged and recorded into the

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respective scorebooks.

3. Teams should be ready to play at the scheduled time.
4. No game shall be started without a minimum of 8 players on a team. A forfeit can be called; however, we are here to let the kids play, so do your best to work it out.
5. Forfeits require a full game fee for the umpire.
6. The home team is responsible for acquiring and paying the umpire.
7. If there is no umpire present at game time, both coaches must agree on a substitute, or the game should be made up.
8. Home team supplies at least two game balls. A 12" traditional (optic yellow) softball will be used.
9. Catchers must wear full protective equipment, even when warming up.
10. All infielders including the pitcher, are required to wear a fielding mask. It is strongly recommended that the entire outfield wear one as well.
11. All batters and base runners must always wear a NOCSAE league-approved helmet. Helmets must contain a face mask.
12. No jewelry, metal cleats, or casts.

Game Rules

1. All rules not specifically noted here will follow USA Softball rules.
2. There are 6 innings per game (if time permits). No new inning may begin after 1 hour and 45 minutes has elapsed from the start of the game.
3. Three outs or 4 runs end an inning. The final play of the inning should be allowed to finish even if more than 4 runs are scored. However, only 4 runs should be officially recorded. If time allows, the sixth inning (**and ONLY the 6th inning**) is an unlimited-run inning.

Playoff rule modification: In the playoffs only, there will be 6 innings per game with no time constraint. Three outs or 4 runs will end all innings except in the sixth inning which will be unlimited runs. If the game ends before the sixth inning due to darkness or other circumstances, the three outs or 4 run rule is still in effect. It is only lifted in the sixth inning.

4. The "mercy rule" for the game is invoked when a team is ahead by 15 or more runs after 4 complete innings.
5. Ten players on the field, the short fielder must stay in the outfield.
6. All players must be in the batting order whether they played in the inning or not. Pinch-hitting is not allowed. No batting out of order. Late arrivals must be placed at the end of the batting order.
7. There will be no penalty if a team has less than 9 players available for the game.
8. Free substitution for defensive positions.
9. Bunting is allowed.
10. Infield fly rule is in effect.
11. Dropped third strike rule is in effect.
12. A batted ball in the playing field is live until returned to and controlled in the pitching circle.

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Clarification: On overthrown balls begun by a batted ball (i.e. balls overthrown in attempt to make a defensive play), runners may attempt to take as many bases as they desire, provided the ball is still within play and not controlled and within the pitching circle. Once the ball is controlled and within the pitching circle, no further advancement can be made other than the base they may be in the process of reaching at the time. If the ball is out of play, it becomes a dead ball and the appropriate out of play advancement is instituted. (One base on an overthrow that goes out of bounds).

13. When the ball hits a batter, the umpire will call "dead ball". If a batter is hit by a pitched ball within the batter's box and can continue, the batter is awarded 1st base. If a batter is hit by a pitch in the strike zone while attempting to hit the ball, the pitch is ruled a "strike." If a batter cannot continue her at bat or take her base, the last batted out can take her place as pinch batter or pinch runner, respectively.
14. Runners may leave the base (lead or steal) when the ball leaves the pitchers hand.
15. If a runner cannot continue her place at any base, the last batted out can take her place as a pinch runner.
16. A team may **NOT** steal once they are up by 10 runs.
17. No pitcher will appear in more than 4 innings. A pitcher may leave the game and return in later innings if she doesn't appear in more than 4 innings per game. One pitch thrown in an inning constitutes an inning of pitching.
18. Pitching distance is 43 feet – no exceptions.
19. For the safety of all players, any pitcher who hits 3 batters in a game **must immediately be removed from the pitching position for the rest of the game** (she may play any other position). Hit by Pitch (HBP) is determined by the umpire – i.e., at the umpire's discretion, the batter has made a legitimate effort to avoid being hit by the ball. Coaches should review this rule with the umpire before each game.