

# BOYS' AND GIRLS' SOFTBALL STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

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All coaches are required to read and be knowledgeable in implementing information included in the MCPS Middle School Athletics Handbook, on the MCPS Athletics webpage, and national rules and procedures described in the appropriate NFHS rules book.

Coaches are also required to read and adhere to the following standards and procedures:

1. Coaches are required to attend the mandatory coaches' meeting on September 4, 2024, at 3:30 p.m., via the MCPS Zoom platform.
  2. Tryouts will begin on September 10, 2024, and the fall season runs through October 31, 2024.
  3. Roster day for softball is September 19, 2024. Refer to the Coach Responsibilities section of this handbook for more information regarding roster day.
  4. The season will consist of five games with a maximum of two scheduled games per week.
  5. The starting time for all games will be 3:30 p.m. Exception: John Poole Middle School home games will begin at 3:15 p.m.
  6. Neelsville will play all home games at 3:15 p.m. at Ridge Road Park.
  7. Teams will have a minimum warm-up period of 15 minutes.
  8. All games have a two-hour time limit. Innings started before the two-hour limit will be completed, including extra innings in the event of a tie. Thunder and lightning delays are included in the time limit.
  9. National Federation slow pitch rules will be used with the following exceptions:
    - The pitching distance for girls is 40 feet (boys' distance is 46 feet).
    - The 12" regulation, .44 cor, .375 compression, yellow restricted flight ball, will be used by both teams.
    - All softball bats must be marked with either the ASA 2000, 2004 or the USA Softball All-Games Certification Mark.
- The pitch must be delivered with a minimally perceptible arc not to exceed 12 feet.
  - There will be no sliding, diving, leading, stealing, or bunting.
  - There shall be ten fielders per team. No game shall begin with less than eight student-athletes per team.
  - Middle school teams will play a limit of 10 (or 11 if the extra hitter is used) batters for each team in each inning. After play has ended following the turn of the last batter, the teams will exchange offense/defense roles. When the team comes to bat in the inning following the one in which the last batter rule was enforced, the inning will begin with any base runners (or their substitutes) who were on base at the end of the preceding inning resuming their place on base. This rule is waived in any extra inning or in the 7th inning of the game. Three outs will be played.
  - If a student-athlete has two strikes, the next pitch that results in a foul ball shall be considered a "courtesy foul." The next foul ball will cause the student-athlete to be out.
  - If after five complete innings one team is ahead by 15 runs, the game will be considered complete.
  - Shin guards for catchers are optional.
  - Coaches shall wear an identifiable uniform in school colors. This may include a collared shirt or t-shirt in the school colors with the school name or the title 'coach' on it.



10. The double safety-first base may be used. Canvas bases should be secured in the ground with two spikes. Hollywood bases are permitted.
11. Catchers on both boys' and girls' teams must wear the following protective equipment: throat protector, NOCSAE approved helmet with mask, and chest protector. Catchers on boys' teams must wear a protective cup. Student-athletes will be disqualified if the required protective equipment is not worn.
12. Student-athletes may wear shoes with molded rubber cleats. Shoes with screw in or metal cleats may not be worn. Cleats may not be worn on buses or in school buildings.
13. Teams must provide their own batting helmets for home and away games. All batting helmets must be NOCSAE approved. Helmets must be worn by student-athletes at bat, on base, in on-deck areas, and coaching at first or third base.
14. Responsibilities of the home team:
  - Ensure that the field is playable and properly lined. Minimal field markings must include:
    - Foul lines extending 200 feet from home plate with traffic cones or soccer flags marking the ends
    - Two batters' boxes–3 feet by 7 feet
    - Restraining line for spectators–cones may be used
  - Supply two new restricted-flight .44 cor leather softballs for each game.
  - Secure home plate, the pitching rubber, and bases in the ground.
  - Provide a responsible person (parents may be used) to keep the official scorebook. The home team's scorebook is the official scorebook.
15. The coaches' postseason evaluation is due November 7, 2024.