

New Milford Parks & Recreation

Slow Pitch Softball Rules for 2025

1. **Eligibility Rule:** The league will follow the Player Eligibility Rule established by the New Milford Parks and Recreation Commission for all Adult Athletic Leagues. This rule is explained in detail in a separate publication available from the Parks and Recreation Office. A player's eligibility can be questioned at any time. A request protesting a player's eligibility must be submitted in writing to the Parks and Recreation Department with a \$20.00 fee. If the player is found ineligible, the fee will be returned. If a player's eligibility is questioned, then the information that must be provided to Park and Recreation in order to establish eligibility status is as follows: for residency, two forms of proof are necessary. These forms can be any combination of: driver's license, rental agreement, tax bill if a property owner, W-2 tax form (this can be copied and cover/cross out the dollar amounts), or if a registered voter, we can confirm with the Town Clerk or Registrar's office; for employment, a W-2 tax form, or if unavailable because player was not working there in the previous year, two recent pay stubs.
2. **Alcoholic Beverages:** It shall be the responsibility of the team manager to ensure that there is no consumption of alcoholic beverages by his/her team members or fans before, during, or after the game as long as the players and fans are on the public fields. Consumption of alcohol will result in a forfeit against any team that breaks the rule. Also, Town Council passed an ordinance that affects the drinking of alcoholic beverages in areas next to the public fields after games. This is explained in a separate publication available at the Parks and Recreation Office.
3. **Shoes and Equipment:** Proper footwear is required. Any player detected playing with illegal metal spikes will be ejected from the game and the league shall suspend him/her from the next game the team is scheduled to play. Shoes that have exposed metal on the sole are illegal.

Any player detected playing with illegal equipment must be removed from the game immediately until the equipment is changed. The game will not be delayed for the equipment change, and the player that has to come off the field to change equipment shall be considered substituted for and must re-enter in accordance with USA Softball rules. If a player refuses to remove illegal equipment, the umpire shall eject him/her from the game and the league will suspend him/her from the next game the team is scheduled to play. The umpire's discretion in determining improper equipment cannot be protested. The umpire has the discretion to have players remove jewelry, (including watches), or clothing, such as dresses, skirts, or loose-fitting pants hanging from below the waist, if deemed inappropriate, unsafe or too loose. If a player refuses to remove clothing and/or accessories deemed inappropriate, unsafe or too loose, the umpire shall eject him/her from the game and the league will suspend him/her from the next game the team is scheduled to play. Casts or splints must not have any exposed metal or hard edges and the player must check with the umpire before entering the game if he/she is wearing a cast or splint. Again, the umpire's

discretion as to whether a cast or splint is safe cannot be protested. Managers are requested to assist in enforcing this rule.

4. **Uniform:** All team members must have the sponsor's logo or same primary color team shirt by the last Friday in May in order to legally play. If a team has enough players to field a team, but not enough shirts, then they will forfeit the game. **Not having the proper color shirt can be protested.**
5. **Masks:** If a catcher chooses to squat behind the plate, then he/she is required to properly wear a protective mask. The game will not begin without a mask. A player refusing the mask will immediately be ejected from the game. **However, if a catcher chooses to stand behind the plate at a distance of three feet or more, that catcher is not required to wear a mask. Any player playing a position other than catcher is not required to wear a mask, but may if they so choose.**
6. **Ball:** The ball is to be furnished by the league. The league will provide two new balls per game for the men and one new ball per game for the women. If a back-up ball is needed, the umpire will decide on its suitability.

Men – .44 core, 525 compression Dudley Thunder ZN #43-055

Women – .44 core, 375 compression Dudley.

The umpire will bring balls to the field for the game.

7. **Bases:** The New Milford Parks & Recreation Softball league uses double first base units. Runners must make contact with the orange part of the base when there is a play at first base, otherwise he/she may make contact with either part of the base. If a runner does not go to the orange part of the base and makes significant and/or malicious contact with a fielder, he/she can be called out and may be ejected from the game at the discretion of the umpire. The League will also use a mat behind home plate. Both the defense and offense must use the plate for force plays. Park and Rec will set the bases when the fields are groomed on Young's field to avoid clay build up around, particularly, second base. Umpires will pick up the bases with the safety plug installed for each game and install foam plugs at the end of the evening. On Pettibone fields, second and third base are not attached to the ground, while first base is stabilized with metal pegs through the base straps. A hammer is available in both A and C field boxes.
8. **Game Reports:** Umpires will be submitting an Umpire Score Card with the score for league standings. Managers, or a team representative, must sign the umpire's game card after checking accuracy of the card, including correct teams, correct score, and correct information in cases of protest or ejection.
9. **Umpire Rating:** If a team feels an umpire is not calling the game according to the rules but is not protesting the game, then that team needs to email the Commissioner with the following information: the date of game, the teams playing, the name of the umpire, and the call and situation that warrants evaluation. This will help us to evaluate our umpires.
10. **Managers Meetings:** There will be two managers meetings, one in February and one in March, to be held either on the 1st or as close to the first of each month as permitted by meeting room availability. Each team must have its manager or designated representative at these meetings. If a team fails to have representation at these meetings, that team forfeits its rights to ask for scheduling requests.

February Meeting: Information will be distributed as to important dates, manager responsibilities, and necessary forms. Forms will be available at the meeting. Rule changes will be reviewed. Deposits will be due and a Park and Recreation representative will be at the meeting with receipt forms.

March Meeting: Balance of fees unless already submitted will be due at this meeting. The placement of teams will be announced. Following adjournment of the managers meeting, the governing board will meet, will listen to any team's argument about placement and make its final decision concerning division placement of teams. Teams will have 48 hours to agree to the division placement decisions of the governing board. If a team decides that it does not want to play because of the governing board's decision as to division placement, then it must submit in writing to the Park and Recreation Director its intent to pull out of the league within 48 hours of the board's final decision as to placement.

11. **Refunds:** The deposit, one hundred and fifty dollars (\$150.00), to secure a place in the league is non-refundable. Any fees, other than the deposit, will be returned, if a team chooses to withdraw from the league because of division placement and if the team has notified the Director in writing within 48 hours of the Governing Board's final decision. Withdrawal after that time will have a \$100.00 penalty, reducing the refund amount. Any player on a roster of a team that withdraws from the league because of a division placement dispute will be free to add-on to another roster only if the governing board approves that move. There will be no refund to a team sponsor if, due to scheduling conflicts created by weather or other undue circumstances, a team is unable to play the full complement of regular season games.
12. **Team Rosters:** The number of players that can be placed on a roster is limited to 25.
 - a.) The manager must submit the "manager's roster" by the second Friday of February. This roster must include the names of all the players the manager expects to play, whether as a starter or a substitute, during the regular season or the playoffs. This roster is what the Softball board will consider when placing teams in divisions
 - b.) In order to be eligible to play in New Milford and be considered a legal rostered player, each participant must fully complete the registration process found online on the Park & Rec website under myrec.com. If an individual plays in a game without having completed the registration process the team will forfeit the game. The official team roster will be the players that complete the registration process and are listed on the Park & Rec website. Players are allowed on only one roster. It will be the responsibility of the team manager to make sure all players on their roster meet the eligibility requirements. Player eligibility can be questioned at any time (see Rule 1).
13. **Additions to Rosters:**
 - A. Managers may add new players (not transfers from another team) to their rosters following the February managers' meeting without having to seek board approval. The complete manager's roster is due at the Park & Recreation Office before 4:00 p.m. on Friday, **February 28**. No players can be added to a roster between this date and the March meeting.

- B. After division placement has been announced at the March Meeting, teams who wish to add players must submit a request to the commissioner and the softball board must then approve all such requests. Managers must submit a complete player add-on form and indicate in writing why this player is being added to their team's roster. Each team may only add a maximum of THREE (3) players by this method. Roster and add-on sheets are available at the Parks and Recreation Department.
 - C. If, after the season has started, a team may request the softball board to allow emergency add-on players. Emergency add-on players must be residents of New Milford to be considered eligible. For each emergency add-on player approved by the board under these conditions, the manager must remove from the roster the player the emergency add-on player is replacing. No more than two emergency add-ons will be allowed per team. The softball board will only consider emergency add-ons if it is apparent a team is in danger of forfeiting games.
 - D. If a person contacts Park and Recreation, looking for a team to play on and a team chooses to add that person to their roster, then that player will not be counted as one of the three add-ons.
14. **Transfers to Another Roster:** Anyone who is on a team roster and would like to change to another team may do so if the change takes place before May 31. Such a change must be approved by the Parks and Recreation Department and/or the Softball Board. Any request for a transfer to another team roster must be approved by the Parks and Recreation Department and/or the Softball Board. The player in question must first notify his/her manager of his/her desire to transfer before the request can be acted upon and then the Commissioner will contact the manager before the Board acts upon the transfer request.
15. **Division Placement in Men's Divisions:** The division placement of teams will be decided by the Softball Board in March. Once the season has started, the league reserves the right to adjust team placement if it becomes clear that teams were placed in the wrong division. If such a determination is made that teams need to be repositioned into a different division the team's win/loss record will remain intact at the time of the division switch.
16. **Game Times:** Teams must have enough eligible players on the immediate field, dressed and ready to play at the designated start time. Teams that are not ready to play at the designated start time will face a forfeit. Start times for games are 6:30, 7:45 and 9:00pm. If a home team does not have the required 9 players by game time, they can become the away team and bat through the top of the first. If they do not have the requisite number of players at the end of their half inning, a forfeit will be declared at that time. If a previous game goes beyond the scheduled game time, teams must field a team immediately, or face a forfeit. There will be no infield practice for the second and third game unless the previous games finish sooner than the 7:45pm and 9:00pm game times. If time does remain, the time will be divided evenly between both teams. No new inning will be played after 90 minutes from the start of the game. Example: if the second game on D field begins at 7:30, and at 9:00 the game is in the sixth inning, there will not be a seventh inning. Even if the game ends in a tie.

17. **Protests:** All protests must be made by the team manager to the umpire in accordance with USA Softball rules. Any protest must be submitted in writing by the manager to the Parks and Recreation Office with a \$20.00 fee attached within 48 hours after the protested game has been played. The Commissioner and Director will determine if the protest is properly submitted and will then decide on whether the protest is valid or not. If the team wins the protest, the team will be returned the protest fee.
18. **Player Ejections and Suspensions:** Nowhere in the USA rule book does it say that an umpire must or should warn a player that their actions, be it disputing a call or verbally or physically accost the umpire or any other player or fan before, during or after a game while on the public playing field, might result in an ejection. Any player who is ejected from a game by the umpire will be suspended for the next game their team plays. Upon ejection the player must leave the park immediately or his/her team will forfeit the game. If any player is ejected from two games during the season, he/she will not be allowed to play for the remainder of the current season, play-offs included. Fighting of any kind will not be tolerated. Should a physical altercation of any type occur all parties shall be ejected from that game, and the following game, with the possibility that the suspension for fighting could be extended up to and including the entire season. A hearing will be held by the Governing Board to determine the actual length of the suspension. Inappropriate behavior is not tolerated. Any player who verbally or physically abuses or threatens an umpire before, during, or after a game shall be suspended from all Park and Recreation Leagues for one year. After one year, the suspended player must meet with the Parks and Recreation Department before they can be reinstated. There is no right of appeal. However, any decision of the Board with respect to discipline may be reviewed by the Commission, and may be overturned only by an affirmative vote of at least five commissioners.
19. **Foul Language:** Any player using foul, obscene or vulgar language will be ejected from the game at the discretion of the umpire. The umpire does not have to give the player a warning about foul language.
20. **Cancellations:** In the event of inclement weather, the Parks and Recreation Department will make a decision to cancel games no later than 4:00 pm. If games are being canceled, an announcement will be placed on the Parks & Recreation answering machine, please call 355-6050 **after 4:15 pm** and follow the prompts to hear softball updates. If games are not called by the Park and Rec office, it is then the responsibility of the umpire to make the decision at the scheduled game time. Umpires must remain at the playing field at least 15 minutes past the scheduled game time or field conditions dictate cancelation due to unsafe playing conditions before declaring the game canceled. If a game is in progress and is stopped due to inclement weather, the umpire must wait 15 minutes past the stoppage time or field conditions dictate cancelation due to unsafe playing conditions before declaring the game canceled. If the first game on any field where more than one game may be scheduled except for weekend play is canceled due to weather or other field conditions by either the Parks and Recreation Department or the umpire, then the second and third games are automatically canceled as well.

21. **Tie Breakers:** Tie breakers will be used to determine final regular season standings in order to seed teams for the playoffs. The following rules shall be followed:
- A) The first tiebreaker for all ties will be the team's record against each other.
 - B) The second tiebreaker will be the least number of runs allowed against each other.
 - C) The third tiebreaker will be the least number of runs allowed in all division games
 - D) The final tiebreaker will be determined by a coin toss.
22. **The league will be governed by USA Softball Rules with the following exceptions:**
- A. **Legal Team:** A team is allowed to have ten (10) players on the field at one time. Ten players constitute a legal team. A team may, however, play with a minimum of nine (9) players, only if their other players are not in attendance at the game. This means that all players must be dressed, ready to play and on the immediate playing field. **EXCEPTION:** If a team is short players and they are HOME team, they can give up being the home team and bat first. If the 9th player is not there by the time of the 3rd out, then the game becomes a forfeit. Same for the visiting team, if they do not have 9 players after the third out of the top of the first, then the game is over and recorded as a forfeit. Any team that starts the game, whether they have 9 or more players in the starting line-up, may add additional players who subsequently arrive at the field after the game has started as soon as those players arrive at the field and are ready to enter the game. These players will be added to the bottom of the batting order. Any team that fields less than nine (9) players will not be allowed to play by the umpire and their game shall be forfeited to the other team.
 - B. **Courtesy Runners:**
MEN: 3 individual players per team may request a courtesy runner for the entire game. The runner will be the last out (not last batted out!), unless he/she is also in need of a courtesy runner. In this case the last out prior to the previous out will be chosen. If a courtesy runner is on base when it becomes his/her turn to bat, a new courtesy runner shall be chosen. If selected to run, the designee must run unless he/she has also requested a courtesy runner. A player may run only one time per inning as a courtesy runner. If a second courtesy runner is needed in an inning, then the last out not already selected will be the second courtesy runner. If a player enters the game as a pinch hitter for a player who has taken a courtesy runner and also needs a courtesy runner, a team cannot reenter the original batter to avoid using a second courtesy runner. A 4th courtesy runner will be eligible under two conditions: A) If a player becomes injured during the game, and all three courtesy runners have already been used, then a 4th runner can be used; however, in this situation, the opposing team gets to choose the runner. B) If a team begins the game with a line-up of 13 or more batters, then that team may use 4 courtesy runners during the game. The 4th courtesy runner will not be allowed when a team begins the game with less than 13 batters in their line-up, but add late players subsequent to the start of the game.

- WOMEN:** Each team can use up to 5 courtesy runners. It is up to the team's manager to choose their own courtesy runners. If a team has chosen a courtesy runner who is still on base when it becomes that player's actual turn to bat, then that player remains on base as a courtesy runner, but an out will be recorded for their turn at bat.
- C. **Batting Order:** Teams, if they so choose, may begin the game and bat as many players in their batting order as are at the field even if this number exceeds 12. None of the players in the batting order at the start of the game may be used as a substitute runner or a substitute hitter. If a batter is injured and cannot continue to play, and there are no other substitutes available, then that batter's next turn at bat will be an automatic out. Any subsequent turn at bat in that position of the batting order will skip over and will not count as an out.
 - D. **Game called by Run Rule:** If either team is ahead by 12 runs or more at the end of the fifth inning (5th) inning, then the game is over.
Any game stopped because of darkness will be a suspended game.
 - E. Any player can be intentionally walked only once in a game (WOMEN'S ONLY).
 - F. The bases will remain at 65'.
 - G. New Milford Adult Softball uses a 6' to 12' arc as the limits of a legal pitch. The legality of the height of a pitched ball is at the discretion of the umpire as it is a judgment call. A legal pitch that hits any part of the mat or home plate will be called a strike.
23. **Illegal Bats:** If you have any questions regarding the legality of any bat or the possibility of future banning, please contact the Parks & Recreation Department before using or purchasing a bat. Any player caught using an illegal bat will be immediately ejected from the game. Use of an illegal or altered bat may be justification of game forfeiture and possible suspension. Employees or Officials of the Parks & Recreation Department may confiscate a bat at any time if they suspect it to be illegal in any way; failure to turn over bat will be just cause for immediate game forfeit and player suspension.
- A. **Men's League:** The Men's League shall only use bats made of wood. All bats should be labeled **official softball** (no baseball bats allowed). Bats can be laminate and be made of a combination of the following woods: maple, ash and/or bamboo. No other materials shall be used in or on the bat including but not limited to metal, synthetic materials, cork etc. Bat handles may have fiberglass grips in order to strengthen the bat. Bats shall meet USA Softball dimensions and this will be checked at the field. Wood bats can be no longer than 34" and the diameter can be no larger than 2.25".
 - B. **Women's League:** The Women's league will follow the USA rule in regard to the legality of bats being used with the following exceptions: **The use of composite, titanium and triple wall bats are not allowed in the New Milford Parks & Recreation Department Softball League.**
24. **Umpires:** The league will use only 1 umpire for all regular season, playoff and championship games.
25. **Ball/Strike Count:**

The Men's Softball League will begin with a **1 ball and 1 strike count**. The first foul ball after a batter has two strikes will be considered a waste pitch, but any subsequent foul ball will be a third strike.

The Women's Softball League will begin with a **1 ball and 1 strike count**. The first foul ball after a batter has two strikes will be considered a waste pitch, but any subsequent foul ball will be considered a third strike.

26. **Warm up Pitches/Infield Balls:** Each team's pitcher will be allowed 5 pitches in the first inning and 1 pitch for all other innings. In the event of a pitching change the new pitcher may have 5 warm up pitches. Infielders/outfielders may make use of a warm up ball for the first inning only.
Batting: If a team arrives early and wants to have batting practice, they can use the outfield. Do not use the infield for batting practice.
27. **Forfeits:** Any team having two forfeits will not be eligible for the playoffs and any team who forfeits four games will not be allowed to finish the season.
28. **Trophies:** The men will have a regular season first place trophy and a championship playoff trophy for each division. The women will have a single regular season first place trophy, but if there are two separate (North and South) playoffs, each will have its own trophy.
29. **Clean up:** Please do not congregate or dispose of garbage near the Public Works Department garage. Please use garbage receptacles provided.
30. **Governing Board (men):** The Governing Board will include the league coordinator, one umpire, a representative from each division and the Parks & Recreation Director. The primary purpose of the governing board is to help the Director and the Commissioner determine the division placement of teams. Board members need to attend the two managers meetings held in February and March. The governing board will meet the week following the deadline for unsigned rosters and determine division placement. The Governing Board will also help advise the Commissioner approve add-on requests if the add-on request might create an imbalance in terms of team abilities within a specific division. Finally, the Governing Board, in cases of possible player suspension, will meet with the Park & Recreation Director and the Commissioner to hold a hearing to determine the consequences. Board members will be selected by the Director and the Commissioner from volunteers or by invitation so that each division is represented by one person knowledgeable about the players in that division. Board members are expected to attend the division placement meeting, the March managers meeting and the end of the year meeting as well as any disciplinary meetings that arise. Board members also will be expected to vote on add-on requests in a timely fashion.
31. **Governing Board (women):** The manager, or designated representative of each woman's team, shall make up the composition of the board. The board will meet with the Commissioner and determine the make-up of the schedule and the playoff format for the women's division. Finally, the Governing Board, in cases of possible player suspension, will meet with the Park & Recreation Director and the Commissioner to hold a hearing to determine the consequences.

Approved by Parks & Recreation Commission October 9, 2012; Updated by the Softball Board February 2019; Updated by the Parks & Recreation Commission February 21, 2023; Reviewed by the Softball Board & approved by the Parks & Recreation Commission February 18, 2025.