

# 2017 Dunn County 4-H Softball League | Rules and Guidelines

Please see 2017 Softball Chair Chad Amundson (715-556-5614) for questions, concerns, & reporting scores.

**Motto: "It's not whether we win or lose, its how we play the game that counts!"**

## **Objectives of 4-H Softball Are:**

1. To teach boys and girls how to play ball.
2. To develop sportsmanship and leadership.
3. To provide companionship.
4. To provide a place for meeting new friends.
5. To teach life-long leisure skills.
6. To teach understanding of others.
7. To learn to compete in a positive way.
8. To help youth with physical development.

**League Rules:** The rules below were set up and approved by the 4-H Softball Committee.  
All games shall be played in accordance with these rules.

## **SECTION I.**

### **ELIGIBILITY TO PLAY**

1. All clubs will be required to select one or more leagues and designate a coach's name and phone number to the Extension Office by May 9<sup>th</sup>. The club will also submit a list of 4-H members playing softball (any league) to the Extension Office by May 9<sup>th</sup>. Members on initial rosters are cleared to play- members added to rosters after the due date are subject to committee approval. A club playing a game with youth not on this list will forfeit that game. Not all youth on the club list need to be present at every game. All youth must meet the criteria listed below.
2. A 4-H member is a young person who is enrolled in a 4-H club.
3. All players and coaches must sign the Dunn County 4-H Softball Program Code of Conduct by the first game of the season. (Code of Conduct located in Appendix A.)

### **Jr. League Eligibility:**

1. All 4-H members ages **8-12 years old as of May 1.**
2. Because of safety issues, members are encouraged to wait until 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to start playing.

### **Intermediate League Eligibility:**

1. All 4-H members ages **11-14 as of May 1.**
2. At the coaches' and parents' discretion, any younger youth may play on the intermediate league as needed.

### **Sr. League Eligibility:**

1. All 4-H members ages **13-19 as of May 1.**
2. At the coaches' and parents' discretion, any youth may play on the senior league as needed.

### **Exceptions:**

1. Any youth not fitting these requirements must appeal, in writing, to the softball committee by June 1.
2. Any 4-H member who transfers from another community, county, or state will be eligible to play softball. A transfer of his/her membership will be done by letter from the agent in his/her former county.

### **Co-ed Leagues:**

1. During games, there should be a 50/50 mix of boys and girls at bat and on the field when possible. **A minimum of three girls are needed to be on the field at all times**, for a regulation game. It is at the coach's and parent's discretion if a player can be in one or two leagues. If three girls are not present at the beginning of the game, the team forfeits the game.

## **SECTION II.**

### **PRE GAME**

1. **All managers/coaches need to have parent consent forms for all players before the first game.** The manager/coach needs to keep them in their softball file and bring them to each game in case they are needed.
2. Official starting time for games is 7:30 p.m. for Junior leagues
3. Official start time for Intermediate and Senior league is 8:30 p.m.
4. The home team pitcher and catcher may practice on the infield for 15 minutes starting 30 minutes before game time. 15 minutes prior to game time the visiting team pitcher and catcher shall have the opportunity to practice on the infield.
5. All batting and other throwing practice must take place in the outfield prior to the game.
6. Any team may start the game with a minimum of seven players (see league rules for explanations and exceptions).
7. If a team refuses to start the game by 7:30/8:00pm or 8:00/8:30 p.m., an automatic forfeit shall be called. The game may start at 8:30p.m. if mutually agreed upon by both coaches.

### SECTION III. GENERAL RULES

1. **Junior league** will be "coach's pitch." The coaches of the team batting would pitch up to 8 pitches to a child. At the conclusion of the 8<sup>th</sup> pitch the batter is considered out if the ball is not hit into fair play. A defensive pitcher will play the position directly next to the coach (who does not field).
2. Intermediate and Senior leagues will play 2 strikes for an out and 3 balls for a walk.
3. Any portion of the ball hitting the mat will be a strike (example: when the ball deflects off the edge of the hard mat it is a strike).
4. The National Softball Pitching Rule will not be used. A pitcher who is removed can reenter a game as a pitcher, as long as he/she was not removed for discipline reasons.
5. Minimum pitching distances for 4-H softball: all teams -- 40 or 46 feet – with discretion of the pitcher and the umpire must be informed prior to the start of the game if they are pitching at 46 feet. They must stay at this distance for the entire game.
6. Pitching guideline: One foot must be on the pitching rubber at the beginning of the pitch and when the ball is released.
7. Seven innings shall constitute a game for all leagues. At least 4 innings constitute a complete game in case of rain. Ties must be played out. No new innings will begin after 10 p.m. unless both coaches agree to play longer before the game starts.
8. **Twenty-run rule:** For all leagues, when the fourth inning is completed and both teams have been up to bat an equal number of times, and one team is 20 or more runs ahead, the leading team wins and the game is over. If both teams mutually agree to continue, they may, however, continue play if it is for fun and will not influence the result of the game.
9. *There is a limit of ten runs per inning/per team.*
10. Any of the ten starting players may withdraw and reenter later in the game. **This rule is invalid if a player is removed because of behavior problems.**
11. All players must wear tennis shoes or rubber/plastic spiked shoes. **Metal core spikes and sandals are not allowed.**
12. Only official softball bats are to be used. No double wall baseball bats allowed! Little League Bats are allowed only for Junior League.
13. A team should use ten players in the field, if available. All team players must be placed in the batting order even if they aren't playing in the field. Players must bat in order.
14. There should be an orange cone (supplied by home field) set up halfway between third base and home plate. If a runner runs past the cone, he/she must continue to go home and the play is a force out (not a tag out).
15. No player, coach, parent, umpire, scorekeeper, or spectator shall have and/or use laser lights during softball games.
16. Alcohol and tobacco is prohibited on the playing field by players, coaches and spectators during game or ejection will result. Any player under the influence will be ejected. Spectators under the influence may result in a forfeit
17. Ball diamonds used are considered youth athletic fields during 4-H softball games and therefore shall be tobacco-free.
18. **No player, coach, umpire, parent, or scorekeeper shall do the following:**
  - a. Use profane language
  - b. Harass players, coaches, umpires, or scorekeepers
  - c. Use name calling
  - d. Wear clothing with words, letters, pictures and/or symbols that are offensive to the 4-H Program (themes related to drugs, alcohol, violence, and tobacco products and/or are sexually explicit in nature.)
19. Only players, coaches, scorekeepers, and umpires may be inside the fence and on the field during the game.
20. Home plate and first base should be umpped the same. Coaches should advise their catchers to not block home plate. Runners who run over catchers (who are not blocking the plate) should be called out. The runner and catcher are encouraged to use common sense. If a play is in front of the plate the catcher should use the plate and the runner the mat for home, on a play behind the plate, the catcher should use the mat and the runner should use the plate. This is to avoid contact.
21. Batters shall not be called out if the batter steps on the plate in his follow-through of the swing. Any obvious jumping out of the batter's box will be called out.
22. All players must play at least two innings in the field.
23. There will be no infield fly rule for all leagues.
24. In the interest of safety all teams should consider providing a properly fitting helmet each for the batter and the on-deck hitter.
25. Catchers behind home plate are *required* to wear a properly fitting safety mask in all leagues.

## SECTION IV. SPECIFIC SLOW-PITCH RULES

1. There must be a minimum of a six-foot arc and maximum of a 12-foot arc with the pitched ball. If the ball is high or low, the umpire will yell "high" or "flat." If the batter swings, it will be a live ball.
2. If the umpire yells "no pitch" it is a dead ball and play stops. Slow-pitch strike mats will be supplied as agreed upon by the coaches (9-15-94). Mats will be kept at each field with the bases.
3. In slow-pitch, there is no stepping off base until the ball is hit. There is also no stealing. It will be up to the umpire to call the player out.
4. Sliding is permitted on all bases (1-3).
5. A batter who hits a foul on the second strike is out.
6. Home base consists of both home plate and the mat.
7. The softball to be used for games needs to be a standard  
(*Seniors & Intermediates – 12" max 47 core*) (*Juniors – 11" 47 core*).

## SECTION V. TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

1. All teams shall furnish 2 leather, official softballs for each game. It must be in good condition acceptable to both teams.
2. More than one Dunn County 4-H Club may combine to form a softball team.
3. Each team will play as scheduled. Any postponement will have to be approved by both teams, except in the case of bad weather or a muddy field. All postponements must be made up as soon as possible. Make-up games must not conflict with any scheduled games. Make-up games should be played at the scheduled field if possible.
4. If a cancellation is necessary, notify the opposing manager/coach and ball-field manager as soon as possible.
5. When a game is postponed, both managers/coaches must agree on the time and field of the make-up game. The host field must be notified immediately. Failure to comply shall result in a forfeit for both teams. Every scheduled league game should be completed by the scheduled All-Star game. All other games will be cancelled. In case of a tie in a league, a playoff will decide the championship.
6. Each team is responsible for cleaning up after themselves. Coaches and parents should make sure the players do not leave before things are cleaned up.
7. It is the responsibility of the home team to make sure that the fields are clean and suitable for play.
8. Each team must have one or more adults in charge of the team to be responsible for the players and the team's actions. **Each team must provide an adult who is capable of being an "unbiased" umpire.** A home plate umpire and at least one base umpire are a must! The team managers/coaches will set up the ground rules before the game. Junior League umpires must have completed 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Intermediate and Senior League umpires must be over 18 years of age.
9. It is the responsibility of the 4-H Softball Chair, **Chad Amundson**, to document and the final scores throughout the season. This should happen before the teams next game. The 4-H Softball chair will report scores by documenting scores on shared Google Doc, or by contacting the Extension Office at 232-1636 (after hours - follow voice mail prompts) or e-mailing 4-H program Assistant [smhintz@co.dunn.wi.us](mailto:smhintz@co.dunn.wi.us).
10. Teams need to notify the 4-H Softball Chair, **Chad Amundson**, soon as possible if a softball problem arises. This will allow the softball committee to act in a timely manner.
11. Any team not complying with the rules will forfeit the game.
12. Teams must use coaches that have completed the 4-H Volunteer Orientation process and currently enrolled as a 4-H Leader.
13. **First Aid Kit: Each team will be responsible to work with its club to provide its own First Aid Kit** This rule is for safety reasons and, cannot be ignored. For suggestions of supplies that should be included, contact the Extension Office.
14. **Each team will pay for their own lights and fields.**

## SECTION VI.

### RIGHTS and RESPONSIBILITIES of UMPIRES

1. Although it is expected, the umpires will do their best to use and enforce all rules in this handbook; **all youth and adults need to remember that umpires are people too and are not perfect.**
2. **All adults and youth must respect the umpires.**
3. **Umpires need to be encouraging and pay attention while the game is being played.** Umpires should remain standing while the game is being played. Umpires should not block game plays.
4. The umpire and managers/coaches have the duty of expelling any player after a warning for using any unsportsmanlike conduct (see Rules Section III (15-19)).
5. The umpires have the right to expel any team whose players, coaches, parents and/or fans that excessively use unsportsmanlike conduct (see Rules Section III (18)). Any team expelled will automatically forfeit that game. If umpires expel a team, they need to contact the Extension Office as soon as possible and describe the situation(s) that led up to the expulsion.
6. If a coach is concerned with a particular call an umpire is or is not making, he/she may ask to speak to the umpire about this call. This shall be done in a non-confrontational way and the opposing team's coach needs to be invited to hear the conversation.

## SECTION VII.

### OTHER NOTES

1. County Wide League Awards will include: League Champion Plates for Club Plaques, and League Sportsmanship Award
2. In lieu of end of the season tournaments, there will be an end of the season match-up between the league championship teams and a "select" team from the remaining teams.
3. Representatives for the select team will be determined by a blind vote of their respective teams. Teams are encouraged to select gender balanced representatives. The number of all-star players from each team is determined by the number of teams in the league. Teams cannot send more than this number of players to the all-star game.
4. The 2<sup>nd</sup> place team coach shall coach the all-stars with the assistance of the other coaches.
5. Date and location will be announced when more information is available.
6. The All Star Game will be considered an exhibition; gender rules will be relaxed if deemed necessary.
7. Junior All Star Game will be hosted at the home field of junior team with the best record of the season. Each team will provide three girls and three boys to participate in the friendly all-star team.

### DIRECTIONS TO BALL FIELDS:

**Colfax Comets/22ers:** The field is located just West of Colfax on the North side of Hwy 170.

**Little Elk Creek:** Take CTH J East of Menomonie about 4 miles. Watch for the sign and turn onto 410th Ave, field is on the left. You'll be able to see the field from "CTH J"

**Sneen Field (Elk Meadow/Rock Falls Rockets):** Take Hwy H South of Elk Mound. Go S of Hwy C – turn right at the bottom of the hill (930 St.) The field is behind the church on the right approx. 1/8 mile down the road.

**Moose Lodge Field (Millroad Rockets/Cedarlings/Ideal):** Located in Menomonie on 9<sup>th</sup> Street approx. 1 block south of Dick's Fresh Grocery Store.

**Segar Field (Missouri Valley):** The field is located on the North Side of Highway Z, West of 340<sup>th</sup> street, near the town of Eau Galle.

**Downsville Rec. Park (Willing Workers):** N2307 Hwy 25, Downsville, WI, ¼ mile south of Downsville on Hwy 25-watch for big blue sign.

# Appendix A

## DUNN COUNTY 4-H SOFTBALL CODE OF CONDUCT

"Players Play, Coaches Coach, Parents Cheer"

As a player or coach of the Dunn County 4-H Softball program I am in agreement:

- A. That it is a privilege, not a right, to play youth sports with the Dunn County 4-H Softball program.
- B. That sportsmanship and fair play are essential to the Dunn County 4-H Softball program.
- C. That sportsmanship and fair play are the most important skills that I can possibly gain from youth sports.
- D. I agree to exemplify the highest level of sportsmanship by supporting my teammates, opponents, coaches, team managers, referees, directors and parents. THEREFORE, I agree to follow Dunn County 4-H Softball Program's Code of Conduct.

**This Code of Conduct will be enforced for the period of one full 4-H Softball Season.**

1. All players are expected to attend all scheduled team events in a punctual manner unless they have notified the head coach.
2. All players will encourage good sportsmanship through their actions by demonstrating positive support for all Players, parents, spectators, coaches and officials at every team event.
3. Players who create public displays of anger directed toward coach(es), their team or individual members of their team will automatically be disciplined. If such an occurrence takes place, disciplinary action may include up to a MINIMUM of two game suspensions from the Dunn County 4-H Softball program.
4. There will be Zero Tolerance of abusive behavior from any Dunn County 4-H Softball program player toward any referee, coach, another parent or player of Dunn County 4-H Softball program, board member, and/or another parent or player from another or opposing team. Abusive behavior shall include, but is not limited to, harassment, bullying, obscene language or gestures, verbal abuse, threats of physical abuse online or in person and/or actual physical abuse. If such an occurrence takes place, disciplinary action may include suspension from Dunn County 4-H Softball program events indefinitely until such time as the Dunn County 4-H Softball program leaders and Softball Chair discusses the matter and disciplinary actions is communicated to the individual(s) involved.
5. Only players on the roster are allowed on the bench during scrimmages and games.
6. All players will respect the property and equipment used at any sports facilities, both home and away. If such an occurrence takes place, disciplinary action may be taken.
7. All players agree to follow the team rules, as set by softball committee.
8. If I do not abide by the Code of Conduct policy, I realize that I may face disciplinary action.
9. All players will shake hands with the other team at the end of a game or scrimmage. Spitting in hand before the handshake is not acceptable; slapping the opposing team hand is not acceptable.

Player's Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Player's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent of Player's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Coach's Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_