

Spring 2024 MTBSA Softball Program Descriptions

Softball Programs:

<i>program</i>	<i>player age range</i>	<i>type of play</i>	<i>find details</i>
7U	for players aged 7 through kindergarten	Introductory/Developmental (MT In-House Program)	p. 2
8U	See chart below	Introductory/Developmental (Travel)	p. 3
10U	See chart below	Developmental-to-Competitive (Travel)	p. 4
12U	See chart below	Competitive (Travel)	p. 5
14U	See chart below	Competitive (Travel)	p. 6

2024 USA Softball Age Chart



Match month (top line) and box with year of birth. The player's age and division is indicated on the right.

SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	AGE	DIVISION
2015	2015	2015	2015	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016	7	8U
2014	2014	2014	2014	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	8	8U
2013	2013	2013	2013	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	2014	9	10U
2012	2012	2012	2012	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	2013	10	10U
2011	2011	2011	2011	2012	2012	2012	2012	2012	2012	2012	2012	11	12U
2010	2010	2010	2010	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	12	12U
2009	2009	2009	2009	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	2010	13	14U
2008	2008	2008	2008	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	2009	14	14U
2007	2007	2007	2007	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008	15	16U
2006	2006	2006	2006	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	16	16U
2005	2005	2005	2005	2006	2006	2006	2006	2006	2006	2006	2006	17	18U
2004	2004	2004	2004	2005	2005	2005	2005	2005	2005	2005	2005	18	18U

Note: This age chart is for USA Softball, and only for the 2024 season
(September 1, 2023 – August 31, 2024)

Lancaster County Travel Teams:

Except for 7U, the programs described below participate in the Lancaster County Girls Softball League (www.lancoyouthsoftball.org) which exclusively serves Lancaster County, so 'travel' is restricted to county-based softball fields during the regular season. The league prioritizes geographically smart scheduling, so 'travel' for MT teams typically means games with/at nearby school districts like Hempfield, Manheim Central, Conestoga Valley. MT Softball 'travel' does not mean several weekends away per month as it may with other associations, leagues, or sports.

7U: 'Tee Ball' – *MT-based introductory/developmental program*

The 7U program is introductory-level softball for girls in kindergarten-second grade with no experience: we emphasize fun, safety, and skill-building in an active, positive environment. The season is typically heavy on practices and clinics with some scrimmages against other MT 7U teams (pending registration numbers) or those from nearby districts.

A few practice/schedule/equipment details:

- Season begins in April and concludes around Memorial Day
- Scrimmages are held late season and managed/officiated by coaches, who also do all the pitching (or players use a tee)
- Practices and scrimmages consist of 1-hour sessions 1-2 times per week, commonly one weeknight and one weekend morning
- All sessions are led by MTBSA volunteer coaches who make every effort to ensure equal playing time for each player
- Balls are a smaller, softer-type softball ideal for small hands and limited impact
- Softball gloves are required for each player
- Bats and batting helmets will be supplied by MTBSA for players that don't have their own
- Softball face masks are optional for each player

A few gameplay details:

- Games are designed so each player bats in each inning.
- Players typically begin the season hitting off the tee and by midseason are hitting pitches from coaches
- Players typically rotate field positions every inning

Participation in 7U softball is suitable for:

- girls aged 5-7 (as of September 1) with no softball experience
- girls aged 6 with some experience may be better suited to 8U
- girls aged 7 with some experience are ideally suited to 8U

8U: 8 & Under – *Developmental/Introductory*

The 8U program introduces softball to girls with limited or no softball experience: we begin with a series of clinics and practices and then play 12-14 games vs. local teams in the Lancaster County Girls Softball League. The season typically runs early March-early June. Emphasis is placed on learning fundamentals in a positive and fun learning environment.

A few practice/schedule/equipment details:

- Practices begin in March, with multiple weeks of practices at a local athletic facility (TBD).
- Games begin mid-April and conclude early June: game schedules are usually released by the league mid-March.
- Early season practices consist of 1-hour sessions 1-3 times per week
- Once games begin, schedule commonly shifts to 2 games per week and 1 practice per week
- Practices will be a combination of drills/fundamentals and short scrimmages
- All sessions are led by MTBSA volunteer coaches who make every effort to ensure equal playing time for each player
- Balls are a smaller, softer-type softball ideal for small hands and limited impact
- Softball gloves are required for each player
- Softball face masks are optional for each player, but highly recommended for infield positions, especially pitcher and 3rd. base
- Bats and batting helmets will be supplied by MTBSA for players that don't have their own

A few gameplay details:

- Games are typically 90 minutes long
- Games are officiated by coaches
- Team coaches do all of the pitching to their own players (or players use a tee)
- All players bat regardless of field assignments
- Players typically rotate field positions every inning
- Each inning is played to either five runs or three outs, whichever comes first
- Rules may be slightly different for postseason tournaments (longer games, stricter scoring rules)

Participation in 8U softball is suitable for:

- girls aged 6-8 (as of Sept 1)
- girls aged 6-7 (as of Sept 1) with no prior softball experience may be better suited to 7U

10U: 10 & Under – *Developmental-to-Competitive*

The 10U softball program is intended to solidify softball fundamentals, further develop individual skills, and acclimate players to competitive play managed by an independent umpire. 10U is where pitching and catching skills are developed, and players interested in either are strongly encouraged to begin working on these skills independently.

We begin with a series of clinics and practices and then play 12-14 games vs. local teams in the Lancaster County Girls Softball League. The season typically runs early March-early June.

A few practice/schedule/equipment details:

- Practices begin March, with multiple weeks of practices at a local athletic facility (TBD).
- Games begin mid-April and conclude in June: game schedule is usually released by the league mid-March. Playoffs (pending record extend to mid-June)
- Early season practices consist of 1 to 1 ½ hr. sessions 1-3 times per week
- Once games begin, schedule commonly shifts to 2 games per week and 1 practice per week.
- Practices will be a combination of drills/fundamentals and short scrimmages
- All sessions are led by MTBSA volunteer coaches who make every effort to ensure equal playing time for each player
- Balls are standard size/density softballs
- Softball gloves are required for each player
- Softball face masks are optional for each player, but highly recommended for infield positions, especially pitcher and 3rd. base
- Bats and batting helmets will be supplied by MTBSA for players that don't have their own

A few gameplay details:

- Games are typically 2 hours long
- Games are officiated by members of the Susquehanna Valley Umpire's Association
- Players pitch to each other until the ball is batted into play, the player strikes out, or four balls are called, at which point offensive team coaches pitch to their own players until the ball is batted into play or the player strikes out (no walks)
- Excessively wild pitchers can be removed at the umpire's discretion
- Each inning is played to either five runs or three outs, whichever comes first
- Rules may be slightly different for postseason playoffs (longer games, stricter scoring rules)

Participation in 10U softball is suitable for:

- girls aged 9-10 (as of September 1) – see age chart on page 1

12U: 12 & Under – *Competitive*

The 12U softball program is intended to build upon softball fundamentals and enable players to become proficient at one or two fielding positions, develop team play strategies, and compete at higher level under close officiating. Developing pitching and catching proficiency is a featured 12U objective, and players interested in either are strongly encouraged to develop these skills independently.

We begin with a series of clinics and practices and then play 14–17 games vs. local teams in the Lancaster County Girls Softball League. The season typically runs early March-early June.

A few practice/schedule/equipment details:

- Practices begin in March, with multiple weeks of practices at a local athletic facility (TBD).
- Games begin mid-April and conclude in June: game schedule will be released by the league mid-March. Playoffs (pending record extend to mid-June)
- Early season practices consist of 1 to 2 hr. sessions 1-3 times per week
- Once games begin, schedule commonly shifts to 2 games per week and 1 practice per week.
- Practices will be a combination of drills/fundamentals and short scrimmages
- All sessions are led by MTBSA volunteer coaches who make every effort to ensure equal playing time for each player
- Standard softballs are used in both practices and gameplay
- Softball gloves are required for each player
- Softball face masks are optional for each player, but highly recommended for infield positions, especially pitcher and 3rd. base
- Bats and batting helmets will be supplied by MTBSA for players that don't have their own

A few gameplay details:

- Games are seven innings long or 2 hours long.
- Games are officiated by members of the Susquehanna Valley Umpire's Association
- Players pitch to each other under typical three strike/four ball rules
- Excessively wild pitchers can be removed at the umpire's discretion
- Each inning is played to either five runs or three outs, whichever comes first, except for the seventh inning, which is unlimited runs/three outs
- 15-run mercy rule applied after the 5th inning

Participation in 12U softball is suitable for:

- girls aged 11-12 (as of September 1) – see age chart on page 1

14U: 14 & Under – *Competitive*

The 14U softball program is the highest level of softball before players enter the High School program, and expectations of players time and effort are higher. Emphasis is placed on winning games as a team and elevating individual skills in the field, on the mound, and in the batter's box. Games are very competitive.

We begin with a series of clinics and practices and then play 15-18 games vs. local teams in the Lancaster County Girls Softball. The season typically runs early March-late June.

A few practice/schedule/equipment details:

- Practices begin March, with multiple weeks of practices at a local athletic facility (TBD).
- Games begin mid-April and conclude late June: game schedule will be released by the league mid-March. Playoffs (pending record extend to late June)
- Early season practices consist of 2-hour sessions 1-3 times per week
- Once games begin, schedule commonly shifts to 2-3 games per week and 1 practice per week.
- All sessions are led by MTBSA volunteer coaches who make every effort to appropriate playing time for each player
- Standard softballs are used in both practices and gameplay
- Softball gloves are required for each player
- Softball face masks are optional for each player, but highly recommended for infield positions, especially pitcher and 3rd base
- Bats and batting helmets will be supplied by MTBSA for players that don't have their own

A few gameplay details:

- Lancaster County Girls Softball League splits 14U into two groups: A and B, with slightly different playing rules for each: if MT has ample players, we will form both an A (older players) and B (younger players) squads
- Games are seven innings long and not restricted by time
- Games are officiated by members of the Susquehanna Valley Umpire's Association
- Players pitch to each other under typical three strike/four ball rules
- 14U-A has no run-per-inning limit
- 14U-B innings are played to either five runs or three outs, whichever comes first, except for the seventh inning, which is unlimited runs/three outs
- 15-run mercy rule applied after the 5th inning for both 14U-A and 14U-B
- 14U-A games are played with nine fielders instead of 10 as is typical in USA Softball

Participation in 14U softball is suitable for:

- girls aged 13-14 (as of September 1) – see age chart on page 1