



Billerica Softball Association 2021 Coaches Kickoff Meeting



Agenda

- ▶ Welcome
- ▶ Spring Ball Timelines, Dates and Teams
- ▶ Rules and Umpire payment
- ▶ Practice times and fields
- ▶ Coaching Requirements, Core Coaching Principles and Skills by Age
- ▶ Covid and Safety
- ▶ Field Cleanup and Equipment Pickup
- ▶ Q and A

THANK YOU!!!

- ▶ Volunteers run Youth Sports Organizations and YOU are the Ambassadors of the Organization
- ▶ Be our Friend!
 - ▶ Find us on Facebook
 - ▶ visit <http://www.billericafastpitchsoftball.org>
 - ▶ Email us at billericagirlssoftball@gmail.com
- ▶ Here to support you - store these numbers now so you have them for any in the moment field/umpire issues
 - ▶ 2021 Executive Board
 - ▶ Mike Donati 978-314-5962
 - ▶ Kristina Boldebuck 978-808-4937
 - ▶ Jayme Laurenza 617-710-4212
 - ▶ Christine Downs 781-258-1755





Welcome to Billerica Softball where we seek to provide girls opportunities to:

- have fun and make friends
- learn the game of softball, and,
- promote the ideals of good sportsmanship, loyalty and responsibility

Billerica Softball has opportunities for girls from kindergarten through high school to play in leagues in the Spring, Summer and Fall as well as on tournament teams.

Spring Softball

Traditionally our largest recreation league, most girls begin by playing spring softball which runs from late April to mid-June.

U8 - Instructional league for K and 1st grade

U10- 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade

U12 - 5th and 6th grade

U14 - 7th 8th and 9th grade



Summer Softball

U10, U12, U14, U18

Girls can register to play on Billerica Teams in the MiddleEssex Summer Softball League which runs from late June to early August. Once registration closes, teams are compiled and entered into the league. Games are Monday to Thursday, twice a week, typically one home and one away.

Fall Softball

U10, U12, U14, U18

Girls can register to play on Billerica Teams in the Billerica Fall Ball League which runs from early September to mid October. Once registration closes, individually registered girls are placed onto a team and entered into the league. There are over 50 teams in this league. Each team plays 2 games on Saturdays for 6 weeks with time limits of 1.5 hours per game. Registration options include by team or per person. The organization supplied all umpires, balls and individual registrations get a tee-shirt. All ASA rules.

Spring Ball Timelines, Dates and Teams

▶ Merrimack Valley Softball League

- ▶ In order to promote and grow the sport of girls fastpitch softball at a recreational and competitively balanced level, in 2016, Billerica and Tewksbury Girls' Softball Leagues began to play inter-league games at the 10U, 12U and 14U Divisions.
- ▶ The collaboration was a success and in 2017, with assistance from the Greater Lowell Umpires Association, teams from other towns were added and ***The Merrimack Valley Girls Softball League*** was established.
- ▶ Since then interest continues to grow - this yearWilmington, Tewksbury, Bedford, Carlisle, Concord, North Reading have joined
- ▶ The majority of our games are played at home in Billerica but each season girls U10 to U14 will occasionally travel to another town for 2 to 4 games.
- ▶ Allows enough teams for a rebalance of teams after 4 weeks in case there is a discrepancy in dominance of teams

Spring Ball Timelines, Dates and Teams

► Leagues

- U8 - grades K and 1
- U10 - grades 2, 3 and 4
- U12 - grades 5 and 6
- U14 - grades 7, 8, 9

► 8U Instructional

- Sessions run on Tuesday and Thursday nights 6-7:30 at the Main Complex for the first three weeks and then moves to the Ditson Elementary School Fields
- The U8 Instructional level is operated as a clinic that starts with teeball / coach pitch with half practice of needed skills and half games (head coaches will be provided a tee to transport)
- 45 minutes of drills and skills, 45 minutes of game play

► 10U to 14U

- Umpired games (with ASA patched official umpires) begin at the U10 level
- Games start week of 4/26; 2 to 3 games a week
- Heavy on home games but all teams will travel to surrounding towns 2 to 4 games of their 12 games
 - *less younger, more older*
- Schedules will be out and finalized hopefully end of next week

Spring Ball Timelines, Dates and Teams

- ▶ Teams have been formed
- ▶ Available in our management site - Sportsmanager - this is where you will find your roster, eventual schedule and score games
- ▶ You'll get a manual tonight for how to
- ▶ Dates
 - ▶ Now - Contact Your Team, Practice Times
 - ▶ Sunday, April 11 - Field CleanUp
 - ▶ Tuesday, April 13th and Thursday April 15th - 10U and new 12U pitching clinic 5-6pm - Shea field - 19 Campbell Road
 - ▶ Monday, April 26 - First Games
 - ▶ Monday, May 31st (Memorial Day - late afternoon) - AllStar Games
 - ▶ Week of June 7th - Last Regular Season Games - End of U8 is 6/10
 - ▶ Week of June 14th - InTown Playoffs for U10-U14

Rules and Umpire Payment

▶ Umpires

- ▶ We are awaiting final info from Umpire's Association but typically coaches give umpires checks before game - if this is still the case we will issue you enough checks for your home games

▶ Rules

▶ Scoring and Schedule System

▶ Sportsmanager Overview

▶ Rainouts

- ▶ If fields close due to inclement weather, games will be canceled in Sportsmanager by 4pm and you will receive an email
- ▶ Rescheduling will be done by the league
- ▶ There are typically no spring recreation ball games scheduled on Friday nights or weekends - those field slots are good times for rainout makeups and practices

Coaching Requirements, Core Coaching Principles and Skills by Age

► Coaching Requirements:

1. All Coaches must pass a Background Check - <https://forms.gle/23J2tgK4hTsFWVng7>
2. All Coaches must complete concussion training and submit proof to billericagirlssoftball@gmail.com (if you have taken any concussion training in the past year, you can submit that as evidence) <https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/coach.html>

► To Be Emailed After the Call

- Coaching Creed
- Skills and Standards by Age Group
- Rules for your League

Billerica Softball Association: Core Coaching Principles

Volunteering to coach is both an honor and a great responsibility. Whether you have been coaching for 20 years or 2 weeks, the Core Coaching Principles should be reviewed at least once per season to continue to develop and grow as a Coach and leader. Discuss these principles with your fellow Coaches and bring any questions or concerns to the Board of Directors. To succeed, athletes need to feel safe, supported and respected. Coaches need to understand and be aware of the powerful role they hold with their players. And we all need to remember that at the end of the day, win or lose, we are influencing and developing these young players.

#1 - Teach Love and Respect of the Game Demonstrate positive conflict resolution skills (or simply walk away) when disagreeing with other coaches/umpires.

- ▶ Demonstrate compassion towards opponents (e.g. do not run score up unnecessarily, after slaughter differential is reached do not continue to steal bases if run differential does not matter).
- ▶ Ensure as equal as possible playing time for all players at the recreation level; if you have a child on the team, use fellow coaches as a barometer to guide you if you are either favoring or being too hard on your player.
- ▶ Adhere to and model all rules from USA Softball, the Town and the Organization.

#2 - Establish Trust and Pay Attention to Athlete's Feelings There is never to be any touching/physical contact between Coaches and Players.

- ▶ Players are not to be left under the care of a person who has not passed a USA Softball background check.
- ▶ Speak in a positive way, do not use sarcasm or demeaning talk to motivate players.
- ▶ Address and report any direct or indirect bullying (verbal, physical, social or property damage/theft) behavior including name calling, teasing, intimidation, leaving out individuals, embarrassing someone, ignoring a teammate, or hazing.
- ▶ Understand that weight is a sensitive topic for girls and refrain from overemphasizing athlete's weight/size or athleticism, instead educate them about nutrition, unhealthy practices; report any concerns to parents
- ▶ Respect and honor the gender identity of any player/coach/umpire.
- ▶ Include a parent should you ever need to text with an individual player.

#3 - Help Athletes Control Their Emotions Regulate your own emotions, demonstrating respect toward athletes, coaches and umpires especially when athletes ignore directions or make mistakes.

- ▶ Offer support after mistakes or losses, making them teachable moments.
- ▶ Encourage positive self-talk amongst all team members.
- ▶ Celebrate individual and team success.

#4 - Promote Team Cohesion Ensure that all team members share responsibility for the outcome of the game.

- ▶ Encourage girls to encourage each other in a positive way.
- ▶ Establish and model expectations for being a good teammate showing respect, listening, treating others as you want to be treated, and demonstrating care and concern.

#5 - Support Athletes to Make Responsible Decisions Do not share personal experiences with players other than those that are about sports (ex. drug use, relationships, criminal history).

- ▶ Teach players how to deal with anger or frustration if a teammate is not performing well.
- ▶ Teach that bullying behavior of any kind will not help them cope with any feelings of jealousy or inadequacy.
- ▶ Encourage players to talk to an adult if they or someone they know is not safe.

- ▶ Always be the adult in the room (or on the field)
- ▶ Control yourselves - kids take lead from you
- ▶ Control your coaches & parents.
- ▶ Work together with other team to ensure a fun time. This is all about FUN
- ▶ As you go to higher divisions - know the rules and clarify any items at ground rules meeting
- ▶ If keeping score, keep a good “book” (can be an app these days) so to help track score
- ▶ Please make sure all kids have left field before you do
- ▶ Watch language - any signs of disrespect, hate or hurtful speech or actions from anyone inside or outside of field will not be tolerated and should immediately be reported to a member of the Executive Board
- ▶ Have at least 1 other adult with you to help manage the bench. Up to 4 coaches are allowed per team inside the fence
- ▶ NO alcohol, smoking, drugs, vaping are allowed at the field or surrounding facilities
- ▶ Keep an eye on girls treating one another poorly, foster inclusiveness; sometimes girls need support on how to healthy ways to deal with feelings of jealousy or hurt

Covid and Safety

- ▶ Please actively communicate with parents
- ▶ All attendees (players, coaches and spectators) **MUST** wear a mask at all times
- ▶ Players should **STAY HOME** if they or any family member are ill and experiencing any type of COVID-19 type symptoms
- ▶ Parents should arrive at the field no more than 5 - 10 minutes ahead of practice and player should wait in car until the field is clear of all players and coaches from the previous practice
- ▶ Players must bring to practice:
 - ▶ A face covering that can go over their nose and mouth
 - ▶ Their own personal hand sanitizer
 - ▶ Water
 - ▶ Their own equipment (which must not be shared) including glove, bat and helmet
 - ▶ Reminder - players may not wear shorts, no jewelry (unless medical) allowed
 - ▶ No seeds, gum or other snacks that can be shares are allowed

- ▶ Clean up and empty trash
- ▶ Players should place their equipment inside fence 6 feet apart (down the left / right field lines)
- ▶ No equipment sharing
- ▶ Have players sanitize hands before and after practice / game, at all water breaks and between innings of games (frequent water breaks - please)
- ▶ No physical contact of any kind (high fives, fist bumps etc.)
- ▶ Balls provided by defensive team and switched
 - ▶ Each team needs to provide their own game balls or are given them by the competition. Teams are responsible for switching out the game balls and sanitize them as best as possible each half inning. Team on defense will be responsible for supplying and sanitizing the game balls for that half inning as well as bringing them off the field when the team goes on offense. Should a game ball be hit foul, it will be returned to the defensive team's dugout who will sanitize the ball before it is allowed back into play. A designated competition field rep may be used to handle all sanitizing of game balls and making sure each team uses their own game ball when on defense in lieu of the teams handling the game balls.

Practice Times and Fields

- ▶ Open Pitching Clinic - Tuesday and Thursday nights - 4/13 and 4/15 - 5 to 6pm
- Shea Field - led and supported by High School student athletes
- ▶ You will receive practice slots tonight for the next two weeks
- ▶ For any future practice requests after games start, please email mdonati@yahoo.com

General Guidelines

▶ Arrival:

- ▶ Check field for any safety issues
- ▶ You will need to put out bases that are located in the blue bin
 - ▶ First base 60 feet from back of home plate to back of the bag - orange safety bag is in foul territory (bag splits the line)
 - ▶ Second base is 60 feet from 1st and 3rd and 84'10" from back of plate to middle of the base
 - ▶ Third base is 60 feet from back of home plate to back of the bag P
 - ▶ Pitching distance (back of plate to front of pitching plate):
 - ▶ U10 - 35 feet (Donati field pitching plate is set; adjustable plates are in the blue bin for Lampson and Shea)
 - ▶ U12 - 40 feet (need to measure and install removable at Lampson and Shea and Locke)
 - ▶ U14 - 43 feet (Lampson, Shea, Locke and Marshall are all set at 43 feet)
- ▶ Fields most of time will be ready to go, but if we have rain or town is shorthanded some times you need to prep field yourself (lining machines)
- ▶ Ensure kids are appropriately distanced as they arrive

▶ Departure:

- ▶ Clean up field all equipment stored (i.e. bases, pitching plate, measuring tape)
- ▶ Equipment containers appropriately locked.
- ▶ Clean and empty trash from dugouts, stands, barrels etc.

General Guidelines

▶ Game Safety Rules & Conduct

- ▶ Continuous batting order - 9 defensive out minimum playing time.
- ▶ Free defensive substitution. Track your time - no excuse not to get each kid a “full game” every three or so games
- ▶ Everyone should be practicing good sportsmanship - no yelling at pitcher when he /she is in their windup
- ▶ Focus on hand sanitization - we all forget
- ▶ Slide or avoid
- ▶ Base coaches have to be careful to not obstruct / impede players
- ▶ Courtesy runners are allowed for pitchers / catchers when 2 outs - always last batter to make an out 1

▶ Games:

- ▶ Game shirt is required (any pants/socks fine - we prefer black pants)
- ▶ NO jewelry of any kind (including earrings, chains) EXCEPT medical ID bracelets
- ▶ NO shorts
- ▶ Cleats are recommended - plastic molded cleats
- ▶ Face masks are recommended
- ▶ OK to wear layers under uniform shirt and to bring sweatshirts / coats

General Guidelines

- ▶ If an Injury Occurs:
 - ▶ Icepacks & first aid kits are at every field in the blue bins (if you notice that they are missing, please let us know)
 - ▶ Do not immediately move an injured player - assess what happened and communicate with player
 - ▶ If ambulance required - call 911 and make sure large gate areas are open for ambulance to drive on field in necessary
 - ▶ Call Jayme Laurenza or Mike Donati as soon as possible

Field Cleanup and Equipment Pickup

▶ FIELD CLEANUP

- ▶ Sunday 4/11 12-2pm
- ▶ 8U - Ditson
- ▶ 10U - Lampson
- ▶ 12U- Locke
- ▶ 14U - Lampson, Shea, Donati *Change*
- ▶ Leaf blowers, loppers, rakes, gloves, barrels
- ▶ Coaches and Parents can grab helmets, bats, catchers equip to issue out NO SHARING
- ▶ Returning coaches, please clean your garage, bags, sheds and return all catchers equipment that you're not using/ or donate personal
- ▶ Pick up - blue bin keys, score books, rule books, practice balls if needed (possibly game balls if they are in), bats and any new pants needed for players

Q and A