

## Frequently Asked Questions [Version 12 updated 1-19-25]

### General Questions

What does 'Senior Softball League' mean to EMASS members?

**Community, Sportsmanship, Competition.**

*Mission Statement: EMASS provides a safe, well-organized opportunity to play competitive slow-pitch softball. Our priorities are **Community**, **sportsmanship**, and **competition**...in that order.*

*We are all at least 50 years old and appreciate that we are still able to play this game we love. We enjoy competing with similarly skilled teammates and we welcome everyone (even Yankee fans).*

How many divisions are there in EMASS?

*We have 6 divisions to accommodate players of diverse skill levels. All divisions play double-headers in the morning. There are 2 Saturday divisions and 4 weekday divisions. In each division, returning and new players are assigned to new teams every year to balance the competition and to allow players to play with one another as teammates and, in another year, against one another as competitors.*

What are the age restrictions in each division?

*Players who reach age 50 or older during the year of play can enroll in whichever divisions they prefer regardless of age. The only exception is the Wednesday Pioneers Division which is restricted to players 65 and older.*

What are the different skill levels and specifics of each division?

*Weekend Divisions:*

**Saturday Colonial:** 5 teams, average age = 60. Saturdays, 9 AM in Framingham and Medfield. The Colonial Division is generally made up of younger and higher skilled players in their 50s and 60s. There are a few in their 70s. Players are assigned to rosters through a draft by managers. Undrafted players are moved to the National.

**Saturday National:** 8 teams, average age = 68. Saturdays, 9 AM in Framingham, Wayland, Ashland, or Marlborough. The National Division encompasses a wide range of skills and abilities with players in their 50s, 60s, and 70s. There are a few in their 80s and they inspire us all.

*Weekday Divisions:*

**Tuesday Pacific:** 4-5 teams, average age = 64. 10:00 am in Wayland and Medfield. The Pacific Division is our top weekday A level division, with the higher skilled players in their 50s, 60s, and 70s. Players are assigned to rosters through a draft by managers. Any player not drafted by a Pacific team will be placed on an Atlantic Division roster.

**Thursday Atlantic:** 6-8 teams, average age = 68. 10:00 am in Wayland and Medfield. The Thursday Atlantic is our B+ level division for players in their 50s, 60s, and 70s, encompassing a wide range of skills and abilities (including many Pacific Division players). Players are assigned to rosters through a draft by managers.

**Monday Minuteman:** 6-8 teams, average age = 72. Mondays, 10:00 am in Wayland and Medfield. The Monday Minuteman is a mid-level B division, encompassing a wide range of skills and abilities (including many Wednesday Pioneers Division players). Players are assigned to rosters by the Division Coordinator.

**Wednesday Pioneers:** 6-8 teams, average age=78. 10:00 am in Wayland and Medfield. The Wednesday Pioneers Division is for players 65 and older. The Wednesday Pioneers division encompassing a wide range of abilities for elder players who still have the physical skills and desire to play competitive softball.

Many players play in multiple divisions. Since skills vary widely by age, you may find younger (under 60) and older players (over 75) in any division, but the descriptions above of each division give you some idea of the relative level of competitive skill.

- Many players enroll in both Tuesday Pacific and Thursday Atlantic.
- Many players enroll in both Monday Minuteman and Wednesday Pioneers.
- There are many players who enroll in the Monday Minuteman and the Thursday Atlantic and don't play either the Pacific or Pioneers.
- Many players enroll in a Saturday division and one or more weekday divisions.

We have scheduled all divisions so that most players who play in multiple divisions have a day off between playing days.

Please feel free to speak to a Division Coordinator, Registrar, or Commissioner if you have any questions about which division is best for you.

### Why do some divisions end up with an odd number of teams?

The number of teams is determined by enrollment. Most EMASS teams have a roster of 14-15 players. In some cases, the number of players who register for a particular division is not sufficient to build rosters for an even number of teams. An odd number of teams is favored by many of our players and Division Coordinators. An occasional bye week allows time to plan family outings, vacations and physical rest. A bye team provides Division Coordinators with a source for pool players to accommodate other player absences.

### Is EMASS just for men, or are women allowed too?

We are a league for men and women who love to play competitive softball. We do not play co-ed rules. There are a few women playing in EMASS today and we would love to add more.

### I haven't played softball in 20 years. Can I really do this?

Many of the players who come into our league haven't played in a long time. Your instincts and skill don't return immediately, but they will come back! The most important thing is to warm up properly, stay smart and don't overdo it.

### How good do I have to be to play in EMASS?

*We expect everyone to have some minimal skills for safety reasons, but we welcome anyone who can compete.*

New Members must be able to meet the following five required skills:

Have sufficient mobility and reaction time to field balls without being a safety concern;

Consistently throw a ball over 50 feet in the air with reasonable accuracy;

Consistently catch a ball thrown from more than 60 feet away;

Consistently hit a slow-pitch softball out of the infield;

Run to first base in under 10 seconds.

#### When is the EMASS season?

*EMASS divisions play from mid-April through October. We generally have practice games as soon as weather and field conditions permit in April. The regular season begins around May 1<sup>st</sup>. Playoffs are scheduled in September. Once the playoffs end, many league members continue to play Fall Ball into November, if weather and field conditions permit.*

#### What if I need to miss some games?

*We all have other commitments and most players miss a few games during the season. We target our team rosters at 14-15 to accommodate these absences. By joining EMASS you are making a commitment to your teammates. Each team depends on about 75% participation, so we ask everyone to manage conflicts as best they can, and to let your manager know well in advance if you will be unable to attend a game.*

#### What about equipment and shirts?

*Each new player is provided with 2 dry-fit shirts (navy blue and gray) and a league cap. Home teams wear Navy shirts and visiting teams wear Gray shirts. EMASS provides bases, balls, screens, fields and mats for well-defined batter's boxes. Members provide their own gloves, masks and other optional equipment. Many players have their own bats (USA/ASA approved). You may use your own or borrow from teammates until you decide what type you prefer. You can buy additional shirts and other clothing items with the EMASS logo once a year when we open up an EMASS online store for a couple weeks.*

#### Are there umpires?

*We use paid umpires in all our divisions. We use USA Softball certified umps and EMASS umpires. EMASS umpires are members who know how to call a game and are trained and certified by the Board each year.*

#### What are the rules?

*We generally follow USA Softball rules with a few EMASS specific rules. EMASS specific softball rules are available [here](#). We follow well-established senior softball rules with a few special adjustments to match our culture of fun, safety and balanced competition. Most notably are these EMASS-unique adjustments:*

1. *We use mats for batter's boxes to ensure good footing while hitting.*
2. *We use safety bases at 1<sup>st</sup> base and Home Plate.*
3. *We don't break up double plays. We veer off or slide into bases on force plays.*
4. *Everyone bats in one continuous batting order. We play with 11 fielders and free substitution.*
5. *We don't allow intentional walks so everyone gets to hit.*
6. *Pitching screens for safety are used in some divisions.*
7. *USA/ASA certified bats are allowed, senior bats are only allowed for players over 75 in the National division.*
8. *You can get a courtesy baserunner in all divisions.*

#### Can friends and family come and watch me play?

*Absolutely - we'd love to have them there cheering you on!*

#### Does EMASS have a social media presence?

*Yes. Here are links to our [Facebook](#) page and [Instagram](#) page.*

#### I'd like to do some part time work for the league? What jobs are available?

*We recruit new and experienced umpires and managers every year. Please talk to any division coordinator or board member if you are interested. In the meantime, please offer to help with routine operations like field set-up, and ask your manager about delegated responsibilities like coaching bases, keeping the scorebook, etc.*

#### Does EMASS sponsor tournament teams?

*EMASS does not explicitly sponsor tournament teams, but many of our members organize teams that play in local tournaments (New England area) as EMASS teams. Many players participate in travel teams that play in Cuba, Florida, New York, Las Vegas and other locations.*

#### What other special events does EMASS sponsor?

*EMASS sponsors an end-of-year Banquet on a weekend in November where we provide food, an interesting speaker, and a celebration of division winners and award winners. Other events have included July Fourth Family Day, EMASS Night at Polar Park, and some post-game BBQ's.*

#### How is EMASS governed?

*EMASS is a nonprofit 501(c)(7) Corporation and is administered by a Board of Directors who serve without compensation. Our board is mostly invisible to the membership but takes responsibility for:*

1. *Establishing an EMASS culture and a vibrant community of members;*
2. *Governing and coordinating fields, equipment, membership, recruiting, communication, umpires, schedules, roster formation, board members, division coordinators, and team managers;*
3. *Maintaining a firm financial foundation;*
4. *Governing play with safe, fun and fair rules; and*
5. *Resolving conflict.*

What is the EMASS Mailing address?

*EMASS Senior Softball, PO Box 5069, Wayland, Massachusetts 01778-4837*

## **Field Questions**

Where are the EMASS fields?

*In the past few years, in Framingham, Wayland, Medfield, Marlborough, and Ashland. We are always considering new locations in Metro West Boston. You can find the specific locations [here](#).*

How good are the EMASS fields?

*Our fields are usually well-groomed before each game, chalked and dragged, and well-maintained by the local communities. Some of our fields have fences and some are open without reachable fences.*

Are there facilities nearby?

*There are clean restrooms at all our fields. There are not snack-bars or convenience stores nearby, so most players bring their own snacks and drinks.*

## **Player Questions**

I'm ready to play. How can I join EMASS and get on a team?

*All you need to do is register. If you are unsure of which division, just contact a division coordinator and they will help. Go to our [Registration](#) page. Yearly registration takes place in March.*

How are new players evaluated?

*EMASS conducts a New Player Showcase early in spring. We will take a look at basic running, fielding and hitting skills through some short drills. Initial assessments are made so that the division coordinators and managers can balance skills across all teams and so that we can ensure a new player is in the right division. We also monitor new players during the first month of play. If an adjustment is necessary, we may ask a player to switch teams or switch divisions.*

How are teams formed?

*The primary role of a division coordinator is to ensure balanced teams across a division. Coordinators along with managers make roster assignments of players so that each team has approximately the same talent and good coverage across all positions. Managers and division coordinators make an initial assessment of skills and they work together to balance all the teams based on skill levels and positional needs.*

Are mid-season adjustments made to rosters?

*Occasionally, after initial team rosters have been assigned and a few games played, division coordinators and managers may execute a few targeted trades to rebalance teams that are considered obviously too weak or*

*too strong. Injuries, skills, and balance are considered throughout the year and further adjustments may be made as needed, including assigning players who register after the season has started.*

[I have a team that would like to join EMASS. How can I register a team?](#)

*Please contact the division coordinator for the division that you would like to join. EMASS strives to create balanced competition in each division. Adding a pre-existing team is likely to disrupt this balance so we would work with you to integrate a team of players in the most welcoming manner without disrupting a division's balance. While this may be possible initially, our EMASS divisions shuffle rosters each year to grow our community and enable members to compete against each other as well as competing as teammates.*

[How are ages determined in EMASS?](#)

*For purposes of assessing age eligibility, your "Senior Softball Age" is the age you attain during the calendar year of our season. For example, anyone born in 1975 who reaches the age of 50 by December 31, 2025 is considered 50 for the 2025 season.*

[I'm not quite ready to play full-time but I'd like to play occasionally. Do you support that?](#)

*You can join as an "Associate Member" and fill in on occasion when teams need to add players. Associate Members can sign up to play in pickup games where you can get a taste of the competition, community and culture of our league. We do ask that full-time players commit to participate in 75% of their team's games.*

[Can I play on more than one team?](#)

*Yes, you can play in as many divisions as you can handle. We have over 100 players who play in both a Saturday division and a weekday division and we have over 100 players who play in 2 or more weekday divisions.*

[Are teams maintained from year to year?](#)

*No. Each year, EMASS strives to create balanced teams with skills evenly matched and positional strength evenly distributed. Each division shuffles up team rosters each year either by a draft or assignment by the division coordinator.*

[My buddy and I would like to be on the same team; is that okay?](#)

*If you enroll in the same division, we will consider such requests. Just register and let us know that you want to be on the same team; we will try and make that happen in the first year. In following years, we will balance team skills by shuffling up rosters each year.*

[How does EMASS deal with occasionally short-handed teams?](#)

*Pool players can be recruited from members not on a team as a temporary fill-in, if a team is likely to be short-handed in some specific week during the season. Pool player policies are described [here](#).*

## **Money Questions**

[How much does it cost to become an EMASS member?](#)

***The basic registration fee for EMASS membership is \$35. You must first be a registered member of EMASS in order to sign up to play in any division. Any member can play in EMASS pick-up games, be assigned to a team as coach or manager, or fill in as a pool player and attend EMASS events like the year-end banquet.***

How much does it cost to play in divisions?

*Each division fee is \$150. You may register in as many divisions as you wish, at a cost of \$150 per division. You must be a member to play. The registration program may be accessed [here](#).*

What forms of payment do you accept?

*Our website's secure online payment system (Payrix) accepts all Visa, MasterCard, and Discover cards.*

Are there any discounts or 'payment plans' available?

*We welcome anyone who wants to play senior softball, and we don't want to exclude anyone because they can't afford it. EMASS may waive or reduce fees for any member who is experiencing financial hardship. Please contact the Commissioner to discuss.*

What about refunds?

*Members who incur an injury that prohibits play for a substantial portion of the remainder of a season may petition to receive a refund.*