



## SOFTBALL RULES

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*All players must show their Blugold ID Card before every game to participate.*

### A. PLAYER ATTIRE

- a. Knee braces must be covered by – or be made with – a soft pliable material
- b. Metal spikes, sandals, and bare feet are not permitted
- c. Baseball bats and non-certified softball bats are not legal. If a batter hits the ball with an illegal bat, it is a dead ball, and the batter is out. ASA/USA certified bats can be found at <https://www.teamusa.org/usa-softball/certified-equipment>

### B. THE GAME

- a. Each team will consist of ten (10) players with a maximum of twenty (20) on the roster
- b. If a single sex team chooses to use an extra hitter (EH), they will have eleven (11) players; a co-rec team using an extra hitter (EH) will have twelve (12) players.
- c. Each team must have a minimum of eight (8) players on the court to play. Teams having less than eight (8) players are subject to forfeiture of the game.
- d. Each team shall designate a captain. The captain will act as the spokesperson for the team and help make necessary decisions. Only the captain should talk to officials.

### C. CLOCK

- a. For all games, no new inning will start 55 minutes after the game begins. If the time limit has not passed when the third out of the bottom half of the inning is completed, a new inning will be played.
- b. A complete game consists of:
  - i. Completion of seven (7) innings or 6 ½ innings with the home team winning
  - ii. Game called on account of weather and one (1) complete inning has been played
  - iii. Game completed when 55-minute time limit has expired
  - iv. Game completed in situation of a mercy rule

### D. SUBSTITUTIONS

- a. A substitute may take the place of a player whose name is in their team's batting order. The following regulations govern the substitution of players:
  - i. The team captain of the team making the substitution shall immediately notify the plate umpire
  - ii. Violation of the re-entry rule results in the use of an ineligible player and the player is ejected
  - iii. Violation of the re-entry rule is handled as a protest and can be made up at any time during the game
  - iv. The illegal substitute is considered in the game if the pitch has been made
  - v. Substituted players will be considered in the game when reported to the plate umpire
  - vi. Any player may be removed from the game during a dead ball
  - vii. The original player and substitute may not be in the lineup at the same time
  - viii. Once a team goes through the batting order for one full rotation, no additional players may be added to the lineup
- b. Offense:
  - i. If the illegal player is discovered by the defense after one (1) pitch, legal or illegal, has been thrown while they are at bat, they are ejected, and a legal substitute assumes the ball and strike count.
  - ii. If the illegal player is discovered by the defense after they have completed their turn at bat and prior to the next legal or illegal pitch, or before the defensive team has left the field, the illegal player is called "out" and ejected. Any advance from a walk or hit is nullified.

- iii. If the illegal player is discovered by the defense after they has completed their turn at bat and after the next legal or illegal pitch, or after the defensive team has left the field, the illegal player is ejected and any advance by runners while the illegal batter was at bat is illegal.
  - c. Defense:
    - i. If the illegal player is discovered by the offense after they makes a play prior to the next legal or illegal pitch, or before the defensive team has left the field, the offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play or having the last batter re-bat and assume the ball and strike count at which he was, prior to the play. The illegal player is ejected.
    - ii. If the illegal player is discovered by the offense after a legal or illegal pitch to the next batter, all plays stand, but the illegal player is ejected.
  - d. The Pitcher:
    - i. If the pitcher is taken off the mound but remains in the game, they may return to the mound any time later in the game.
    - ii. If the pitcher is replaced by a substitute, they may not pitch again the rest of the game unless due to injury.
- E. SCORING
  - a. Each run is worth one (1) point.
- F. MERCY RULE
  - a. The game shall end if one team is ahead by:
    - i. A team is ahead by twelve (12) or more runs at the completion of the fifth inning.
    - ii. A team is ahead by twenty (20) or more runs at the completion of the fourth inning.
  - b. Game time is forfeit time. Teams should report to the court a minimum of 15 minutes before the scheduled start of the game.
- G. PLAYER CONDUCT
  - a. Abusive or insulting language, acts of unfair play, and managers, coaches, or substitutes on the field of play will result in suspension.
  - b. Team conduct will be registered, by the officials, following the game, on a 0 to 6 scale.
  - c. Teams need a minimum of four (4) for a sportsmanship rating to qualify for playoffs.
- H. TEAM BOX
  - a. The only persons allowed in the dugout at a given time during a game are the players listed on the roster
  - b. Teams are allowed two base-coaches, all players not playing in the field must stay in the dugout
- I. DEFINITION OF PLAYING TERMS
  - a. The batter: is automatically out, and the ball is called dead on any attempted bunt.
  - b. The batter starts their at-bat with a count of one ball and one strike.
  - c. Any foul ball after two strikes is considered an out.
  - d. A foul tip is a batted ball that goes directly into the catcher's glove, is caught by the catcher, and did not go any higher than the batter's head. A foul tip before two strikes is not an out.
  - e. Overthrow Rule: (Anytime a thrown ball goes out of bounds)
    - i. The runner shall receive the base they were in motion to plus an additional base from the time of the throw if a ball is thrown out of play.
  - f. Obstruction: Obstruction is defined as the "act (intentional or unintentional, as well as physical or verbal) by a fielder, any member of the defensive team or its team personnel that hinder a runner or changes the pattern of play." If obstruction occurs, the umpire shall have the authority to determine which base or bases shall be awarded to the runners when the play becomes dead.
    - i. If the runner advances further than the official would have awarded and the runner is thrown out, the play will stand.
  - g. Offensive Interferences:
    - i. Interference is defined as the "act of an offensive player or team member which impedes, hinders, or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play." Defensive players must be given the opportunity to field the ball anywhere on the playing field.
    - ii. Base running interference includes a runner or batter-runner who interferes with a fielder, a runner, or runner-batter who is hit by a fair, untouched batted ball or a thrown ball which strikes any illegal loose equipment, detached part of a uniform, or miscellaneous item left in playable territory by the offensive team.

- iii. When a runner interferes with a fielder, it may be in the form of physical contact, verbal contact, visual distraction, or any other type of distraction that would hinder the fielder in the execution of a play. The umpire must determine if the interference occurred before or after the runner who interfered was put out and then apply the proper rule.
    - iv. It is also considered interference, if, in the judgment of the umpire, there is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play. In such a situation, the runner closest to home plate shall be called "out."
  - h. If an offensive player causes excessive contact with a defensive player, the offensive player is called "out."
    - i. However, **PLAYERS MUST SLIDE INTO HOME PLATE ON CLOSE PLAYS.**
  - i. The base runner cannot run over or through a fielder. The result is an automatic ejection from the game and suspension. If the base runner runs around a fielder and is put out, it is up to the discretion of the umpire to determine if the detour caused the runner to be put out. If the umpire feels that the runner would be safe if they did not have to run around the fielder, the base runner will be declared safe.
  - j. Out of Play:
    - i. Any ball that goes into foul territory beyond the out-of-play line or fence is considered "out of play." If an overthrown ball at first or third goes beyond the out-of-play line or fence, the ball is dead and all runners advance according to the overthrow rule (listed above). A ball that goes into the dugout is considered out of play. When a fair-batted ball passes over the out-of-play line, the batter shall be entitled to only two (2) bases.
  - k. Safety Base:
    - i. The orange safety base that is attached to first base in foul territory is suggested for the runner to use to avoid collisions. Once first base is legally occupied, the orange base is nullified and is no longer considered "safe." If a runner returns to the orange base after attempting to advance to second base and is tagged while only touching the orange base, they will be out.
  - l. Courtesy Runner:
    - i. A courtesy runner may be used by any player if they were the batter who made the last out.
  - m. Ground Rules:
    - i. If the ball is knocked out of play by an infielder, the batter is entitled to two (2) bases. If the ball is knocked out of play by an outfielder, the base runner is entitled to as many bases as they can advance to, or "all they can get."
    - ii. If the fielder leaves their feet to catch a ball, the first foot touching the ground must be in the playing area, or the ball is considered out of play. The ball is out of play if one or both of the fielder's feet touch the line or the area beyond the line when the ball is caught.
    - iii. If a fielder catches a fly ball in a playable area and unintentionally carries it out of play with their momentum, the batter is called "out," and the fielder must return into the field of play prior to throwing the ball into play.
    - iv. A fly ball caught in the air on the rebound from any object is not a legally caught ball; the batter is not out, and the ball remains in play. Should the ball hit a tree outside the fence in fair territory it shall be ruled a "homerun," based on the judgment of the umpires.
  - n. Fair/Foul Hit Ball:
    - i. The definition of a foul hit ball is as follows: a foul hit ball is a legally batted ball that settles on foul territory between home and first base, or home and third base, or that bounds past first or third base, or that while on or over foul ground touches the runner, umpire, or any other player. A fair fly ball must be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, and not as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul ground at the time, they touch the ball.
  - o. Pitching Regulations:
    - i. The pitcher shall take a position with both feet firmly in the ground and with one or both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate. The pitcher's pivot foot must be in contact with the pitcher's plate throughout delivery.
    - ii. Preliminary to pitching, the pitcher must come to a full and complete stop, with the ball in front of the body, facing the batter.
    - iii. The pitcher shall not be considered in pitching position unless the catcher is in position to receive the pitch.
    - iv. The pitch starts when the pitcher makes any motion that is part of their windup after the required stop. Prior to the required stop, any windup may be used. The pivot foot must remain in

contact with the pitcher's plate until the pitched ball leaves the hand of the pitcher. It is not necessary to step, but if a step is taken, it can be forward, backward, or to the side, provided the pivot foot is in constant contact with the pitcher's plate and the step is simultaneous with the release of the ball.

- v. A legal delivery shall deliver to the batter with an underhand motion.
  - vi. The pitch shall be released at a moderate speed. The speed is left entirely to the umpire's judgment. The umpire shall warn the pitcher who delivers a pitch with excessive speed. If the pitcher repeats such an act after being warned, they shall be removed from the pitcher's position for the remainder of the game.
  - vii. The hand shall be below the hip.
  - viii. The ball must be delivered with an arc that reaches a height of at least six (6) feet and a maximum height of twelve (12) feet from the ground.
  - ix. The pitcher has ten (10) seconds to release the next pitch after receiving the ball, or after the umpire indicates "play ball."
- p. The pitcher may use any windup desired, provided.
- i. They do not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.
  - ii. Their windup is continuous motion.
  - iii. They do not use a windup in which there is a step or reversal of the pitching motion.
  - iv. They deliver the ball toward home plate on the first forward swing of the pitching arm past the hip.
  - v. They do not continue to windup after they releases the ball.
  - vi. They do not pitch the ball behind their back or between the legs.
- q. There will be no quick pitches.
- i. The pitcher will wait until the batter takes position in the batter's box or when the umpire says, "play ball."
- r. No pitch shall be declared when:
- i. The pitcher pitches during a suspension of play.
  - ii. The pitcher attempts a quick return of the ball before the batter has taken position or is off balance because of the previous pitch.
  - iii. The runner is called out for leaving the base too soon.
  - iv. The pitcher pitches before the base runner has retouched their base after a foul ball has been declared and the ball is dead.
  - v. The ball slips from the pitcher's hand during their windup or during the back swing. Effect: The ball is dead and all subsequent action on the pitch is cancelled.
- s. Batting:
- i. The batter shall not have their foot touching home plate when the ball is hit. The batting box lines are not evident; judgment by the umpire will be used whether the batter was inside of the batter's box on the hit. Effect: The batter is out, and the ball is dead and all subsequent action on the pitch is cancelled.
  - ii. The batter shall not step directly across the front of the catcher to the other batter's box while the pitcher is in position ready to pitch.
  - iii. Batters are not permitted to throw the bats at any time. The umpire will issue a warning upon the first infraction; any subsequent infractions will result in outs.
  - iv. The batting order delivered to the umpire must be followed throughout the game unless a player is substituted for another. When t their occurs, the substitute must take the place of the removed player in the batting order.
- t. Re-entry Rule:
- i. Starting players may leave the game and re-enter once in the same batting position that they left the starting game and must replace only the person that substituted for them.
  - ii. Substitutes may enter the game only once and must bat in the same position as the player they replaced. Once the substitute leaves the game, they are done playing that game.
  - iii. Violation of the re-entry rule results in the use of an ineligible player. Violation of the re-entry rule results in the ejection of the illegal player when the violation is brought to the attention of the umpire by the offended team.

- iv. Violation of the re-entry rule is handled as a protest and can be made at any time during the game. However, all play that occurred while the illegal re-entry was in the game will stand.
- u. Base Stealing:
  - i. Under no condition is a runner permitted to steal a base. They may leave their base when a pitch has reached or passed home plate but must return to that base immediately after each pitch not hit by the batter, as the catcher is returning the ball to the pitcher.
  - ii. The base runner is out when:
  - iii. In running to any base, they run more than three (3) feet from a direct line between a base and the next one in regular or reverse order to avoid being tagged or touched by the ball in the hand of a fielder.
  - iv. They interfere with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball. If the interference is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the succeeding runner shall be called out.
  - v. They are struck with a fair-batted ball while off the base and before it passes an infielder, excluding the pitcher.
  - vi. The base runner is not out when:
  - vii. They run behind the fielder and outside the baseline to avoid interfering with a fielder attempting to field the ball in the base path.
  - viii. More than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball and the base runner meets the one who, in the umpire's judgment, was not entitled to field the ball.
  - ix. When a base runner is hit with a fair-batted ball that has hit a fielder first, before striking the runner.

#### CO-REC RULES

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- A. Teams can play with any of these combinations: 5M/5W, 5M/4W, 4M/5W, 4M/4F
- B. The batting order must alternate except for if a team is playing with an odd number of players (i.e., playing down a player). In this case, the first and last batter can be the same sex
- C. Teams must have two men and two women in the infield (i.e., 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, SS, and 3<sup>rd</sup> base) – excluding the pitcher and catcher – and two men and women in the outfield.
  - a. Unless playing down with less than ten (10) players in which case only one player of each in required the infield and outfield

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Competitive Sports