



Softball Rules

Softball is a contact sport and injuries are a possibility. The department of University Recreation, Intramural Sports assumes no responsibility for injuries; however basic, first aid will be available.

Regulations published in the Intramural Sports Handbook will be the governing policies for all intramural sports. Participants are responsible for possessing a thorough understanding of these regulations and their implications.

Softball will be conducted under the rules of the National Intramural and Recreational Sports Association published rule book. A review of these rules, along with the Intramural Sports modifications are as follows:

All Rule and Policy and Procedure updates/changes are highlighted in yellow.

ELIGIBILITY AND GUIDELINES

All participants must meet the eligibility guidelines as outlined in the Intramural Sports Participants Handbook.

PLAYERS AND ROSTERS

1. The game shall be played between two (2) teams of 10 players each. Eight (8) players are required to begin a game.
2. If, due to injuries, a team drops below the minimum number of players, eight (8), it may continue if the Intramural Sports staff deems the game still competitive.
 - a. In co-rec the team **MUST** maintain the plus one (+1) ratio for males to females (See *Players and Substitutions*).
3. Roster limit will be 25 players.

UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

1. All teams are required to furnish their own jerseys.
 - a. All jerseys must be of the same color.
 - b. All jerseys must have numbers on the back.
 - i. Numbers 0-5 are preferred.
 - ii. No three digit numbers
 - iii. Numbers may **NOT** be taped.
 1. Numbers that are painted, sharpie, marker, etc. are acceptable.

2. If a participant is bleeding or has blood on their jersey they will be removed from the game until the bleeding is under control. Prior to any participants re-entering a game the bleeding must be stopped, cleaned and any cuts or lacerations must be covered. Participants will not be allowed to participate in any activity until the above conditions are met.
3. **Jewelry:** Jewelry or hard hair control devices will not be allowed. This includes but is not limited to necklaces, earrings, newly pierced earrings, facial piercing, rings, bracelets & watches. Individuals will not be allowed to tape over any jewelry item. If you cannot remove the item you cannot play.
 - a. The only type of permissible jewelry are medical alert bracelets. These bracelets must be taped down to the participant's wrist, with the important medical information showing.
4. **Shoes:** Athletic style shoes are preferred. Cleats are allowed, but metal cleats are not.
5. **Supports, Braces, & Pads:** No casts/splints will be allowed under any circumstances. No pads or braces will be allowed above the waist. Players who wear a knee brace with exposed metal or metal hinges are required to cover it. Kneepads of a soft pliable nature will be allowed below the waist. Any player wearing illegal or dangerous equipment shall not be permitted to play. All equipment shall be subject to the approval of the Intramural Sports Staff and their decisions shall be final.
6. **Headwear:** Players may wear a one-piece elastic headband made of a soft pliable material. They may also wear knit stocking caps in cold weather. Rubber or elastic cloth bands may be used to control hair. For Softball ONLY, baseball caps/hats are permitted.
7. **Bats-** All bats must be ASA Certified. UREC Intramural Sports will provide bats for teams. If a team wishes to use a personal bat, both teams must agree to its use. If a bat makes a cracking, rattling etc. noise it may not be used.
8. **Balls-** UREC Intramural Sports will provide all game balls.
9. **Gloves-** ALL defensive players must provide their own glove.

PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

1. A team consists of 10 players, all of which must bat and play defense
 - a. Co-Rec: five (5) males and five (5) females with the batting order alternating between male and female.
2. Co-Rec modifications: Field positioning must include two (2) females in the infield, Pitcher and Catcher will count as infield positions
Shorthanded Rule:
 - i. Teams in all divisions may begin the game with eight (8) players.
 1. Co-Rec Combinations:
 - a. Four (4) males and four (4) females
 - ii. Teams in all divisions may begin the game with nine (9) players.
 1. Co-Rec Combinations:
 - a. Five (5) males and four (4) females (automatic out)

- b. Four (4) males and five (5) females (automatic out)
 - ii. Once a player arrives, he/she can be added to the bottom of the batting order. The automatic out rule will still apply if the same gender bats back to back.
- b. Extra Player Rule:**
 - i. A team may have as many extra player(s) within the roster limit.
 1. All players must bat and any 10 can play defense
 2. Co-Rec: all players must bat and any five (5) males and five (5) females can play defense.
See Batting: Batting Order for more information.
1. A substitute may take the place of any player in the batting order of the team. When a substitute is announced, after the substitute enters the game, any play that the substitute makes is legal. A substitute may take the place of any other player during a dead ball situation.
 - a. Co-Rec: Substitutes must be of the same gender that they are replacing.

THE GAME

1. A regulation game consists of seven (7) innings or 45 minutes, whichever comes first. If an inning has started before the time limit has expired, then the inning will be completed. Teams need not play seven full innings if:
 - a. The home team scores more runs in six and one half innings;
 - b. The home team scores more runs before the third out in the last half of the seventh inning; or
 - c. The mercy rule can be applied:
 - i. If a team is up 20 or more runs at the conclusion of the 4th inning; or
 - ii. If a team is up 12 or more runs at the conclusion of the 5th inning or later.
2. **5-Minute Rule and Forfeits**
 - a. If one team has below the minimum number of players at game time, the 5-Minute Rule will come into effect.
 - i. The team with less than the minimum will have 5 minutes to accrue the minimum number of players to begin the game
 - ii. In this 5 minutes, the other team will accrue one (1) run for each minute that passes.
 - iii. If the 5 minutes expires and the other team does not have the minimum number of players, the game will be forfeited and the team charged the forfeit fine.
 - iv. If the team gains the minimum number of players within the 5 minutes, the game will begin. The score will stand for the first set and the clock will begin at its current time.

- v. If NO participants appear from either team, the game will be a double forfeit
- vi. If both teams have below the minimum number of players at game time, the 5-Minute Rule will go into effect for both teams.
- vii. Example: Team A is on time and checked in prior to game time and Team B gains the minimum number of required players, 3 minutes late. The game will still be played but the starting score will be 3-0 and the game will begin with 42 minutes remaining.

Note: If the visiting team reaches the run-ahead limit in the top half of the inning, the home team still has the opportunity to reduce the deficit below the limit in the bottom half of the inning. If the home team reaches the run-ahead limit while at bat, the game ends and the home team is declared the winner.

If the game is tied at the end of seven (7) innings or after time expires, the teams continue to play until one team has scored more runs than the other team at the end of a complete inning or until the home team has scored more runs. **EXTRA INNINGS ARE ONLY PLAYED IN THE PLAYOFFS.**

PITCHING

Preliminaries: The pitcher must begin with both feet firmly on the ground, and with one foot or both feet touching the pitcher's rubber. The pitcher's pivot foot must stay in contact with the pitcher's rubber throughout the delivery. The pitcher must not perform any motion to pitch while not touching the pitcher's rubber. NO walkthrough pitching. The pitcher must be a rest, in contact with the rubber, before starting their pitching motion.

Start of Pitch: Before the delivery, the pitcher may hold or grip the softball in any manner. The pitcher must use a definite underhand motion in delivering the pitch. The pitcher may release the softball in any type of manner using any type of motion.

Legal Delivery: After making any motion to pitch, the pitcher must immediately deliver the ball to the batter. The pitcher must perform the delivery in a continuous motion. In delivering the pitch, the pitcher must not stop or reverse the pitching motion. The pitcher may not pitch the ball through the legs or behind the back. The pitcher must deliver the ball with a perceptible arc. The ball must reach a height of at least six (6) feet from the ground and cannot exceed a height of 12 feet from the ground. If the ball does not reach the height range, an illegal pitch will be called. For illegal pitches, a ball will be awarded if the batter does not swing at the pitch. If the batter swings at the pitch, the batter will take the result of the play.

BATTING

1. Batting Order

- a. Only 10 players will be placed in the batting order, if a team fields 10 it will be the 10 they field
 - i. All other players may pinch hit or sub and replace an original batter
- b. The official score sheet must list the batting order of each team. The captain must fill out the batting order before the start of the game.
- c. Players must bat in the order that they are listed on the score sheet unless a substitute enters the game. The substitute must appear in the batting order in the place of the player that he/she is replacing.
- d. The first player who bats in each inning shall be the player whose name follows the last player who has completed a turn at bat in the previous inning. When the 3rd out of an inning occurs before a batter has completed his or her turn at bat, that player will be the 1st batter in the next inning and will start with a count of one ball and one strike.
- e. **COREC**: The batting order for co-rec games must alternate from male to female. Anytime back to back genders bat in the lineup, there will be an automatic out in between them. (Ex. MFMFMFMF(out)M)
 - i. If a team has more of one gender than the other, once they have 10 players in the batting line up, they can sub the additional players into the lineup throughout the game.
 - ii. Each sub will be award the opportunity to pinch hit twice in a game. (Exception: If they replace a fielder, they will hit in place of the fielder in the batting order, for the remainder of the game.)

2. Ball and Strike Count

- a. The batter starts with a one (1) ball and one (1) strike count.

3. Extra Foul Ball Rule

- a. After a batter has two strikes, he or she is allowed one free foul ball on the first foul ball. The second foul ball is strike three, and the batter is out.
- b. *Example*: The count is one and one. The batter hits a foul ball on the first pitch. The umpire calls "foul ball, strike two!" The batter then hits a foul ball on the second pitch. The batter has two strikes, the extra foul ball rule applies, and the umpire should verbalize "first foul ball!" On the third pitch, the batter hits a foul ball; the result is strike three, and the batter is out.

4. Strike

- a. The umpire calls a strike:
 - i. For a legally pitched ball between six (6) and 12 feet from the ground that strikes any part of the plate or the strike zone and is not swung at by the batter.
 - ii. For a legally pitched ball that the batter swings at and misses.
 - iii. For a foul ball not caught by a fielder when the batter has one strike.
 - iv. For a pitched ball that the batter swings at and misses and that touches any part of the batter.

5. Ball

- a. The umpire calls a ball:
 - i. For a pitched ball that does not hit any part of the plate or the strike zone.
 - ii. For an illegally pitched ball (not between 6 and 12 feet from the ground) not swung at by the batter.
 - iii. For a pitched ball that hits the batter when he/she is outside of the strike zone.
- b. **CoRec walk:**
 - i. Anytime a male is walked, they automatically get 2nd base.
 - ii. When there are two outs and a male is walked, the following female has the option to walk or attempt an at bat.
 - As soon as the female batter gets one pitch, she cannot change her mind.

6. Homeruns

- a. A team can only hit 7 out of the park homerun per game. Any additional homeruns will result in an out.
- b. Teams can have unlimited in the park homeruns.

OUTS

1. The batter is out in the following circumstances:
 - a. When the batter enters the batter's box with an altered or illegal bat or is found using an altered or illegal bat. If the batter hits the ball with an altered or illegal bat, the batter is out and base runners return to the bases that they occupied before the batter hit the ball. Alternatively, the defense may accept the results of the play. (Note: once the next pitch legal pitch has occurred, all plays before are legal and cannot be appealed)
 - b. When the batter bunts or chops at the ball.
 - c. When the batter's entire foot touches the ground completely outside the batter's box when the batter hits the ball.
 - d. When the batter hits the ball and any part of his or her foot is touching home plate.
 - e. When a member of the team at bat interferes with a defensive player who is attempting to field a batted ball (individual will be ejected).
 - f. When the batter hits a fair ball with the bat a second time in fair territory no matter if it is on accident.
 - g. When the batter's own batted ball hits him or her outside the batter's box in fair territory.
 - h. When a batter hits a fly ball in the infield that can be caught with ordinary effort with less than 2 outs and runners on first and second or bases loaded.
 - i. When the batter inadvertently or intentionally throws a bat.

Procedure: The umpire should give the delayed dead ball signal and allows the play to continue. At the conclusion of the play, announce the batter is being called out.

 - i. *Intentional/inadvertent:* If the player intentionally throws a bat in anger, that player is ejected. If it is an inadvertent act, the player should receive a warning. If the warned player throws his bat after being warned, that player is ejected.

BASERUNNING

1. **Advancement:** A base runner can advance or return only by touching the bases in legal order, from first base, to second base, to third base, to home plate. A base runner advances to the next base by touching it before being put out. The player may hold a base until he/she legally touches the next base or until the batter becomes a base runner and forces the player to leave the base.
2. **Batter Awarded First Base:** The batter-runner is awarded first base in the following circumstances:
 - a. When the umpire calls four (4) balls
 - b. When the catcher or other defensive players interferes with the batter's attempt to hit a legal or illegal pitched ball
 - c. Any walk to a male batter will result in a two (2) base reward. The next batter (a female) will bat. With two outs the next batter (a female) has the option to walk or bat and must notify the umpire BEFORE she enters the batter's box.
3. **Batter- Runner Call Out:** The batter-runner is called out in the following circumstances:
 - a. When the batter-runner's own batted ball hits him or her when the batter-runner is in fair territory and out of the batter's box
 - b. When the batter-runner drops the bat in fair territory and the bat makes contact with a fair ball
 - c. When the fielder catches a fly ball with his or her feet within the boundaries of the field
 - d. When after the batter hits a fair ball, a fielder holds the ball on first base before the batter-runner touches first base
 - e. When after reaching first base, the batter-runner attempts to go to second base and is tagged or put out
 - f. When the batter-runner runs out of the three (3) foot running lane and interferes with a fielder taking a throw or attempting to make a play
4. **Base Runner Called Out:** A base runner is called out in the following circumstances:
 - a. When a base runner leaves the base before a pitched ball contacts the bat
 - b. When the base runner interferes with a thrown ball or interferes with a fielder who is attempting to field a batter ball, catch a ball, or throw a ball
 - c. When a fair batted ball hits a base runner or a base runner intentionally interferes with a ball
 - d. When a base runner intentionally kicks a ball that is in play
 - e. When a coach intentionally interferes with a live ball
 - f. When a base runner is attempting to score and the next batter or another teammate interferes with the play
 - g. When a fielder touches a base runner with the ball when the base runner is not on a base and the ball is in play
 - h. When a fielder tags or holds a ball on a base to which the base runner is forced to advance before the base runner reaches that base (force play)

- i. When the base runner runs more than 3 feet outside the path between the bases to avoid being tagged
 - j. When a base runner passes the base runner ahead of him or her before that runner is put out
 - k. When a base runner does not return to a base after a suspension in play caused by a dead ball situation
 - l. If a base runner leaves a base before a caught fly ball and a fielder holds the ball on the base and correctly appeals the play, or if a fielder tags a base runner before he or she returns to the base.
 - m. If a base runner fails to touch a base and a fielder tags or holds the ball on the base before the base runner returns to the base
 - n. If a base runner intentionally and forcefully makes contact with a defensive player who is clearly holding the ball. The base runner is called out. The ball becomes dead, the base runner is ejected, and other base runners return to the last bases that they occupied at the time of the collision.
5. Base stealing is NOT permitted in Intramural Sports Softball.
6. A base runner must stay in contact with a base until the ball crosses the plate or the batter hits the ball.
7. A pitch that the batter does not hit is dead. Base runners must return to their bases. They cannot leave again until the ball crosses the plate or the batter hits the ball.
8. **Courtesy Runner**
 - a. A courtesy runner may run for any batter who is injured and is unable to run the bases safely. The injury may be an existing injury or occur during the game or play.
 - b. The batter must reach the base legally and be ruled safe before the courtesy runner can take the batter's place.
 - c. When no eligible substitutes are available, the courtesy runner must be the player who made the last out of the previous inning.
 - d. The umpire must be notified before a courtesy runner replaces a teammate. This replacement can occur only during a dead ball and before the first pitch to the next batter.
9. **Over Throw Rule**
 - a. If a fielder throws the ball past the "out of play" line each base runner will be awarded the base they are running towards plus a base from the last legally touched base when the throw was made.
 - i. Ex: Base runner is running to first base when the over throw occurs, the base runner would be awarded 2nd base.

10. **Out Field Line Rule**

- b. If the ball rolls over the outfield line, the outfielder must throw their hands up. Once their hands are thrown up, the umpire will call time. Ground Rule Double will be called.
- c. All baserunners will be awarded 2 bases from the base they were on when the ball was pitched.
- d. If the ball is touched by a defensive player then rolls over the line, the ball will remain live.
- e. Anytime that the umpire rules that the outfielder threw their hands up early:
 - i. The first offense is a warning and the runner gets the base they were running toward.
 - ii. The second offense is an ejection and the runner gets the base they were running towards.

12. **Outfield Fence Rule (WHEN THERE ARE FENCES)**

- a. A ball that is hit over the fence is considered a homerun. (Exception: see homerun rule).
- b. If the ball rolls under or between the fence, and does not go over the fence, outfielders should put their hands in the air. All baserunners will be awarded two bases from the base they were on when the ball was pitched.
- c. All defensive players should avoid contact with the fence AND should not attempt to jump over the fence. If either happen and the umpire deems that it was avoidable, it will result in an automatic ejection.