

University of Washington Bothell

Intramural Sports

Softball Rules

1. TEAM REQUIREMENTS

- 1.1. Each team may have up to 10 players and as few as 6 to start a game. A team must have at least 6 players on the field to continue playing, if a team only has 6 players and a player is ejected or injured and unable to continue, then the team must take a default. If a team starts a game with less than 10 players they may add up to 10 players anytime during the game. Each additional player must be added to the bottom of the line-up.

2. EQUIPMENT

- 2.1. A regulation softball and bases will be provided by the Intramural Activities Program and a regulation batter's helmet and catcher's mask will be provided upon request. Bats and gloves may be checked out with proper identification at the field.
- 2.2. Athletic shoes must be worn by all participants. Rubber cleats on shoes will be allowed. Metal cleats/spikes of any kind and open heel and/or toe shoes are prohibited.
- 2.3. All jewelry, headphones, or rubber bands are prohibited and will result in an automatic out at the time of infraction.
- 2.4. All bats will be provided by Intramurals. No outside bats are permitted.
- 2.5. If caught using an illegal bat, the player will be ejected from the game and must set up a reinstatement meeting with the Program Manager of Intramurals and Facilities. To prevent any possibility of ejection, please do not bring the bat into the softball complex or use it for practice swings or anything of that nature.
- 2.6. Knee braces made of hard, unyielding substances covered on both sides with all edges overlapped and any other hard substances covered with at least ½ inch of slow recovery rubber or similar material will be allowed. A player may not remove a knee brace and continue to play.

3. SUBSTITUTIONS

- 3.1. Players can substitute in at any time. A substitute will be considered any player not in the original batting lineup. A substitute must inform the home plate umpire if they are replacing a starter in either the lineup or in the field. They must hit the same slot as the player they are replacing. The starter may re-enter the game after one turn through the batting order. They must return to their original spot in the lineup.
- 3.2. A base runner may only be replaced by a courtesy runner if the umpires deem it is for injury reasons.
- 3.3. An automatic out will be awarded if a player who is listed in the batting order is unable to bat (assuming a substitute is not available). An automatic out will also be awarded at the time of the player's at bat if that player has been ejected from the game. No substitute will be permitted to take an ejected batter's place.
- 3.4. **If a walk is issued prior to any automatic out, the out will count unless it is the third out of the inning.**

4. LENGTH OF THE GAME

- 4.1. A regulation game consists of a maximum of seven innings. No innings will be started after 50 minutes of playing time has elapsed. If an inning is started, it must be completed. Innings are considered started once the third out of the previous inning is made. Completed games which end in a tie during the regular season will stand. Two warm up pitches will be allowed due to the time limit. Teams should warm up in the designated areas off the field before their game.

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- 4.2. If a fifteen run difference occurs during a contest after five innings, or 4 ½ with the home team winning, the game will be stopped and considered complete.
- 4.3. A game is considered official after five innings
- 4.4. No time limit will be in effect during playoff games, but the mercy rule still applies.

5. SPORTSPERSONSHIP

- 5.1. At the umpire's discretion, a player may be warned, called out, and/or ejected from the game for swinging or throwing the bat in a dangerous manner. All runners must return to their original bases. If the bat was thrown in a malicious manner, then the offending player will be ejected and cannot be replaced.
- 5.2. If at any time a team has two (2) players and/or coaches and/or spectators ejected from the game, the offending team will immediately default the game.
- 5.3. The offensive team is responsible for retrieving all foul and homerun balls.
- 5.4. Teams must leave the dugout and remove all trash and equipment immediately following their game.
- 5.5. During the game, all equipment must remain in the dugout; gloves will not be permitted on the fence.

6. RUNNING

- 6.1. No stealing is allowed. Runners may leave the base when the pitch is hit. If the runner is off the base before the pitch reaches the plate, the runner is out and no pitch is declared by the umpire.
- 6.2. The base distance is 65 feet.
- 6.3. When the ball is thrown over the fence or into the dugout, all runners will be awarded two bases, and the award will be governed by the positions of the runners when the ball left the fielder's hand. If two runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner. The base to which the runner is running has no effect on the award.
- 6.4. Any runner who deliberately runs into a fielder (waiting to make a tag or a force out) will be called out immediately and each runner will return to the last base occupied at the time of the collision. If the runner's act is flagrant, they will be ejected. Other runners involved in the play may be called out at the umpire's discretion.
- 6.5. Any runner who is not in contact with a base and is in fair territory when struck by a batted ball, and the ball had not passed a defensive player other than the pitcher, will be called out. An immediate dead ball should be called, the runner is out and the batter is awarded first base.
- 6.6. A runner may choose either to slide into a base or simply avoid contact. Please always be aware that sliding into a base may cause injury. Intramurals does not require players to slide, however, if a runner chooses not to slide, they must still avoid contact and may be tagged out. Collisions may result in immediate ejections. A runner who leaves the base path will be called 'out.'
- 6.7. In the case of a possible double play, the base runner must slide directly into the base (rather than the fielder) or get out of the way of the thrown ball or both they and the batter-base runner may be called out.
- 6.8. A defensive player cannot stand in the base path or obstruct the path of a base runner unless they are making a play on the ball. In the event of an obstruction, the umpire shall award the obstructed runner and each other runner affected by the obstruction the bases they would have, in his/her opinion, reached had there been no obstruction.
- 6.9. The base runner MUST use the red bag and the 1st baseman MUST use the white 1st base bag during a close play. We strongly encourage base runners to use the red bag and fielders to use the white bag at all times to avoid any possible collisions.
- 6.10. Fake tags by any fielder are illegal. Penalty for a fake tag is that the player committing the infraction is ejected from the game. The ejected player may be replaced.

7. BATTING

All rules not mentioned in the following will be governed by the NIRSA slow pitch softball rules

- 7.1. The batter starts with a count of one ball and one strike.
- 7.2. Chopping and bunting are not allowed. The batter must take a full swing. The penalty for bunting is that the batter is called out and base runners must return to their original bases.
- 7.3. Once the batter has two (2) strikes, they are declared out if they hit a foul ball. Runners may still tag if a ball is caught in foul territory.
- 7.4. When batting, a team may only have the current batter, the on-deck batter, and base coaches outside of the dugout. The rest of the team must stay in the dugout.
- 7.5. Batters cannot be called out on batted foul balls that makes contact with the backstop or surrounding facility

8. PITCHING

- 8.1. Preliminary to pitching, the pitcher shall come to a full and complete stop with both feet firmly on the ground, and with one or both feet in contact with the pitching rubber. The ball must be held in the pitching hand or both hands in front of the body. This position must be maintained at least one second but not more than 10 seconds before starting the delivery. The pitcher has 20 seconds to pitch the ball and this time starts when the previous pitch ends.
- 8.2. In the act of delivering the ball to the batter, the pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's rubber until the ball leaves the hand.
- 8.3. A legal delivery shall be a ball that is delivered to the batter underhand. The pitch shall be what is commonly known as a slow pitch.
- 8.4. The ball must be pitched with a minimum arc of at least 6 feet from the ground and must not reach a height of more than 12 feet at its highest point from the ground. Penalty: Illegal pitch. The batter has the option to swing at an illegal pitch or take it as a ball.
- 8.5. 2 illegal pitches in an at-bat equal a walk
- 8.6. In order to be ruled a strike the ball must land on home plate or the attached strike mat. It is the umpire's discretion on close pitch landings.

9. INFIELD FLY RULE

- 9.1. An infield fly is a fair fly (not including a line drive) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort provided there are runners on first and second, or first, second and third with less than two (2) outs. The umpire will declare the infield fly rule and the batter is immediately out. Base runners cannot be forced out and may advance at their own risk.

10. APPEAL PLAY

- 10.1. An appeal play is a play in which an umpire cannot make a decision until requested by a coach or player. The appeal must be made before the next legal or illegal pitch, or before the defensive team has left the field. The defensive team has left the field when the pitcher and all the infielders have left fair territory.
- 10.2. There are 3 types of appeal plays:
 - 10.2.1. Missing a base
 - 10.2.2. Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched
 - 10.2.3. Batting out of order
- 10.3. Once a dead ball has been called, any infielder (including the pitcher and catcher), with or without possession of the ball, may make a verbal appeal on a runner missing a base or leaving a base too soon. The plate umpire should acknowledge the appeal, and the administering umpire should make a decision on the play. Base runners cannot leave their bases during the appeal.

11. RULE CLARIFICATION

All rules not mentioned in the following will be governed by the NIRSA slow pitch softball rules

- 11.1. A ball that slips from the pitcher's hand during the back swing, is dead and no pitch is declared. All subsequent action on that pitch is canceled.
- 11.2. Any runner who is physically assisted by a coach or anyone except another base runner is to be declared out. The ball is dead and runners must return to the last base they touched.
- 11.3. A missed base must be appealed. An umpire cannot call a player out unless the offended team appeals.
- 11.4. If a batting team has an "automatic out" due to an ejection or injury following the current batter and the current batter is walked, the "automatic out" will NOT be counted and the batting order will continue, skipping the out.
- 11.5. If a team goes through 10 spots in their lineup, the inning will end regardless of number of team outs.

12. CO-REC MODIFICATION

- 12.1.1. If a male batter walks and is followed by a female batter, he automatically advances to second base. The following female batter must hit UNLESS there are two outs, and then she has the option to take first or to hit.

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