

# Softball Rules

**All players must be registered on Imleagues.com and on their team's roster prior to being eligible to participate in any games.**

Intramural softball contests are governed by the official rules of the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) with the following modifications:

**Official Game:** Seven innings constitute an official game unless a time limit, darkness, rain or run rule prevails. Five innings (4 1/2 if the home team is ahead) is an official game. No new inning will be started after **50 minutes**. At the end of the time limit (upon completion of inning started), the game will be called, unless darkness, rain or run rule have been invoked. *If a game in progress is postponed, it resumes at the point at which it was stopped.*

Teams must be ready to play at scheduled time with a minimum of eight players. Any team that is not ready forfeits the game. "Home team" is determined by a pre-game coin toss.

All players in the field (maximum of 10, minimum of eight) must appear in the batting order. If a team begins the game with less than 10-players, they may add a 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> player to the bottom of their order at anytime without penalty. (No out will be recorded in the unoccupied spots in the batting order)

**CoRec Rule:** A team will be permitted to play with less than the required two non-male players. If two non-male players are not present, a team may play with 8-males on defense. A team that does not have any non-males will be required to take an out in the batting order in the #5 spot as well as the #10 spot. If a team has only one non-male, they will be permitted to field 9-players, and will be required to take an out in the #10 spot in the batting order.

**Forfeit/Default:** Teams must have eight players present to avoid default/forfeit. If a team does not have the required minimum number of players present at game time, the following penalties will be enforced:

1-2 minutes late = 1-run; 3-4 minutes late = 3-runs; 5-minutes late = 5-runs and game is over.

**Attire:** Non-metal cleats or athletic shoes must be worn. Metal cleats are not permitted.

All jewelry must be removed with the exception of wedding or engagement bands.

Base Running: Stand-up collisions will NOT be tolerated; player will be ejected. Sliding is encouraged, but not required. It is the runner's responsibility to avoid contact. If, in the umpire's judgment, the runner fails to take the necessary steps to avoid contact, and causes contact, the umpire will call the runner out.

**Bats:** All bats must be ASA certified slow-pitch softball bats and not appear on the ASA banned bat list. For a full list of legal and illegal ASA bats, please visit

<http://www.teamusa.org/usa-softball/play-asa/certified-asa-equipment>

**Batters Count:** When the batter enters the batter's box they will have the count of one ball and one strike. After the batter has received a count of two strikes, they will be given a courtesy foul and will be called out on the next foul ball.

**Batting Order:** A team may place a maximum of 12 players and minimum of eight players in the batting order. If a team begins with only eight players, it may add a 9<sup>th</sup> and/or 10<sup>th</sup> batter to the

bottom of the batting order at any point during the game. An 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> batter must be present at the beginning of the game in order for the EH to be utilized.

If a team drops below its starting number of players due to injury, the team is allowed to continue the game with as few as eight players and no EH. There will be no penalty. If a player is ejected or leaves for any reason other than injury, the spot in the line-up that was occupied by that person will be declared an out if a legal substitute is not available.

**Bunts, slaps, or Intentional Chops:** The batter will be called out if while attempting to bunt, slap, or intentionally chop at the ball, contact is made.

**Courtesy Runners:** Courtesy runners will be allowed once per inning. All courtesy runners must be the last player of the same gender to have made an out, if no outs have been recorded, the last player due to bat of the same gender will serve as the courtesy runner. If a team bats through its order, the same courtesy runner may run for the same person without penalty.

**Extra Hitter Rule (EH)** The EH must be declared on the line-up card prior to the game, and must be present when the first pitch is thrown. Once the game has started, a team may not add an EH. An EH may hit any place in the batting order and is considered eligible for re-entry like any regular position. The EH rule allows 11 or 12 players to hit in the batting order. Once the EH is indicated on the lineup card, the EH cannot be eliminated at the discretion of the coach. The EH is eligible to be placed into the game at any time. If this happens, the batting order does not change. For example, if the EH goes into Left Field, the Left Fielder now becomes the EH.

**CoRec EH Rule:** If a team is playing with less than two females, they may still use the EH rule. A maximum of 10-males may be in the batting order. If a team has one female, that female must bat in the top 5-spots in the batting order, and the team will take an out in the #10 spot, with the two EH's hitting in the #11 & #12 spot in the order. If a team has zero females, the team will take outs in the #5 spot and #10 spot, and males will occupy the other 10 spots in the order (including the #11 & #12 spots).

**Extra Innings:** If the game is tied at the end of seven innings, the last person who had a legal at bat during the previous inning will be placed on second base to start the beginning of the extra inning. This will only take place during the postseason tournament unless time still allows within the 50-minute time limit.

**Infield Fly:** A batter is called out on an easily caught pop fly to any defensive player near or in the infield when runners are on first and second, or the bases are loaded and there are less than two outs. The batter is called out and all base runners advance at their own risk once the fly ball has been touched. When such a hit is made, the umpire should immediately yell, "Infield fly the batter is out."

**Interference:** A fielder has the right to go into the base path when (a) they have the ball, (b) they are in the act of fielding the ball or (c) they are in the act of fielding a thrown ball. If accidental contact is made under these circumstances, the umpire will call an immediate dead ball and declare the runner out. If the contact was deemed to be blatant, the runner will be called out and may be ejected.

**Obstruction:** If a defensive player illegally hinders a batter or base runner, the base runner has the opportunity to advance to the base that in the umpire's discretion, they would have obtained had the obstruction not occurred. If the runner attempts to gain more bases than the umpire judges they would have gotten, the runner becomes eligible to be put out. **A fake tag to induce**

**the runner to slide is considered obstruction and the runner will be awarded an extra base.**

**Overthrows and Out of Play:** When a ball is overthrown into foul territory, the advancement of the runner is unlimited. The ball is considered in play, and runners can be tagged out while advancing. Overthrown balls going beyond the out-of-play line, or fenced area (depending on facility), will award base runners two bases from the last base they occupied when the ball was thrown. If a ball is carried out of play, the base runners are awarded one base. Any balls caught beyond the out-of-play line will count as foul balls.

**Mercy Rule:** A team leading by 20-plus runs after three innings, 15-plus runs after four innings or 10 runs after the fifth inning wins. (If the team that is trailing is the home team, they are guaranteed their last at bat)

**Strike Zone:** A legally delivered pitch with the proper arc requirement that crosses the plate within the strike zone is called a strike. The strike zone is that space over any part of home plate, between the batter's front shoulder and back knee, when he/she assumes a natural batting stance. The pitch, delivered with an underhand motion, must have a perceptible arc and reach a height of at least 6-feet from the ground, while not exceeding a maximum of 12-feet. A strike zone mat behind the plate is also used. ***When a strike-mat is used: All catchers are to allow the pitch to drop onto the mat instead of catching the pitch. If a catcher touches a pitch before it hits the mat, the pitch will be ruled a ball.***

**Substitutions:** Any of the starting players may be substituted or replaced and re-entered once, provided players occupy the original positions whenever in the line-up. The starting player and their substitute may not be in the line-up at the same time. Non-starting players may not re-enter.

**Time-Outs:** Time-outs may be called on defense if there are no plays and the ball is in the infield. The ball will not be live, and no pitch will be made until the umpire indicates time-in. An umpire must grant a time-out.

**Umpire's Judgment:** An umpire's judgment should not be contested. Failure to adhere to an umpire's judgment may warrant ejection. However, official appeals may be made only when the pitcher has the ball on the pitching mound and timeout is called. Only rule interpretations may be protested by the Team Captain immediately following the issue in question, and must be brought to the umpire's attention prior to the next pitch being delivered. Once the next pitch is delivered, no protests or rule challenges will be heard.

**Co-Rec restrictions:** Each team is required to have at least two non-males in the batting order and in two of the defensive positions on the field at all times. One female must occupy one of the top 5 positions in the batting order.

A team will be permitted to play with less than the required two non-male players. If two non-male players are not present, a team may play with 8-males on defense. A team that does not have any non-males will be required to take an out in the batting order in the #5 spot as well as the #10 spot. If a team has only one non-male, they will be permitted to field 9-players, and will be required to take an out in the #10 spot in the batting order.

- There are no restrictions on which positions any players play on defense.