

# SOFTBALL



## Safety Procedures:

- As in all large muscle group activities, ample warm-up time should be given prior to activity.
- Whenever possible gloves should be used.
- Catcher's masks should be used.
- Teammates should clear foul line areas at all times. Often time, bats "slip" from the batter's hands and go sailing down the foul lines.
- Benches should be maintained away from the batter's box.
- Students should be made aware of the danger of standing in the paths of the base runners.
- Equipment should never be thrown.
- All fielders should "call for" the ball prior to making the play.
- Diamonds and backstops should be inspected on a regular basis for damaged or dangerous areas.
- Stay clear of batting area until time to bat.

## History

Historically, it is impossible to separate the game of softball from its older, more formal ancestor, baseball. Baseball, derived from the English game of "cricket," was formalized into playing rules and diamond design by Abner Doubleday, in Cooperstown, New York in 1839, and Alexander Cartwright of the Knickerbockers Club of New York in 1845.

The Playground Association of America (now the National Recreation Association) carried the development of softball through the early 1900's. During this time, the game was known as "cat," "town ball," "Massachusetts Ball," "Four Old Cat" and "Rounder's."

Finally in 1933, at the World's Fair in Chicago, Illinois, Leo J. Fischer and M.J. Pauley organized the National Softball Association. At the World's Fair, the world's championship was played at the insistence of Walter Hokinson of the Denver YMCA. The rules were standardized largely through the efforts of Fischer, Pauley and Hokinson between 1926 and 1933.

The game of softball grew out of the depression prior to World War II. Because little equipment is needed and because of its wide appeal, softball gained in popularity and soon became a game enjoyed by thousands of people. Today, softball is the number one recreational activity in the United States.

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## Basic Rules

An official game consists of seven innings. A full seven innings need not be played if the team second at bat has more runs after six and a half innings or before the third out in the bottom of the seventh inning. A game tied at the end of seven innings shall continue until one team has more runs at the end of a complete inning or until the team second at bat has scored more runs.

Each team of ten players may have substitutes. Once a player is removed, she may not re-enter the game.

The following simplified rules cover the frequent situations:

**A. Strike** - This is called when one of the following situations occur:

- 1) A batter swings at a pitched ball and misses.
- 2) A pitched ball is delivered over home plate between the top of the knees and the armpits of the batter.
- 3) A fly ball goes foul and is not caught and the batter has less than two strikes.
- 4) A batter with less than two strikes is hit by her own batted ball.

**Ball** - A ball is any of the following:

- 1) A pitched ball that does not go over the plate in the strike zone and at which the batter does not swing.
- 2) A ball that touches the ground before reaching home plate.
- 3) An illegally pitched ball.

**Fair Ball** - This ball is any of the following:

- 1) Settles or is touched on fair ground in the infield.
- 2) Is on fair ground going out of the infield. }
- 3) Touches first, second or third base.
- 4) Lands in the outfield in fair territory between the extended lines from home to first and home to third.
- 5) Lands behind a fence or in a stand at a distance of more than 200 feet from home plate after traveling on or over fair ground.

**Foul Ball**. A batted ball is foul if:

- 1) It settles in foul territory between home and first base or between home and third base.
- 2) It first touches on foul ground beyond first or third base.
- 3) It bounces past first or third on or over foul ground.

**Batter Out**.

- 1) The third strike is caught by the catcher.
- 2) He/she has three strikes, there are less than two outs, and first base is occupied.
- 3) He/she swings at and misses the third strike.
- 4) He/she bunts foul after the second strike.
- 5) A foul ball is legally caught.
- 6) He/ she hits an infield fly with base runners on first and second, or on first, second and third with less than two outs. (This is the infield fly rule).

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## Rules Continued:

### **Base runner Out.** He/she is out when:

- 1) The catcher drops the third strike but the runner is touched with the ball by a fielder before touching the base.
- 2) The ball reaches first base and is caught and held before the runner reach base.
- 3) He/she is tagged with the ball before reaching first base or at any time when not in contact with a base.
- 4) His/her fly ball is caught.
- 5) He/ she interfere with a fielder trying to field a ball.
- 6) When running to any base, he/ she runs more than three feet outside a baseline.
- 7) He/she is forced out at base.
- 8) He/she passes a base runner ahead of him/her ..
- 9) He/she leaves his base before the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
- 10) He/she fails to return to his base before the ball reaches the baseman following fair fly that is caught.
- 11) He/ she is hit by a fair batted ball while off base before it is touched by or passes a fielder.

### **Scoring**

- 1) A base hit results when a batted ball permits a hitter to reach first base safely when no fielding error is involved. A base hit shall not be recorded when a base runner is forced out by a batted ball, or would have forced out -- except for a fielding error.
- 2) Sacrifices are scored when, with less than two out the batter advances on or more base runners with a bunt and are retired at first base, or when runners are advanced after a fair fly ball is caught.
- 3) Assists are scored to each player who handles the ball in any play or series of plays which results in a put-out but only one assist is credited to a player in anyone out.
- 4) Errors are recorded for the player who commits a misplay that prolongs the turn at bat of the batter or the life of the base runner.
- 5) Put-outs are credited to players who catch a batted fly ball, catch a ball thrown to a base that retires a base runner, or touch a base runner with the ball while the runner is off the base.

### **B. Slow Pitch Softball.** In the "slow pitch" version of softball certain deviations from the above rules are observed. In brief, these differences are:

- 1) No stealing of bases is permitted.
- 2) The base runner cannot leave his base until the pitched ball has crossed home plate.
- 3) Bunting is not allowed.
- 4) In delivering the ball, the pitcher must pitch underhand with a perceptible arch six feet minimum and 10 feet maximum.
- 5) A team shall be composed of ten instead of nine players.

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## Terminology:

- A. **Ball:** When the pitched ball fails to cross the plate in the strike zone.
- B. **Base (bag):** The points which must be passed in order to score a run.
- C. **Base on Balls:** Walk, the batter is allowed to go to first base when four balls are called.
- D. **Batter's Box:** The area designated as a proper area for the batter to stand while batting.
- E. **Bunt:** When a pitched ball is "tapped" gently into the field of play, using a short stroke or "punch" as opposed to a full arm swing.
- F. **Choke-Up:** When the batter grips the bat away from the end of the handle, thereby, shortening the length of the bat from "top" end to grip.
- G. **Diamond:** The playing area.
- H. **Double:** A two-base hit. A ball hit which allows the batter to advance to second base.
- I. **Double Play:** When two base runners are declared "out" on the same play sequence.
- J. **Fair Ball:** A ball which is hit between the foul lines.
- K. **Foul Ball:** A ball which is hit outside the foul lines.
- L. **Home Run:** When the ball is batted sufficiently to allow the runner to score a run by touching all bases.
- M. **Infielder:** The defensive player who positions himself on or near the bases.
- N. **Infield Fly:** Fly ball to the infield which is caught, or in the opinion of the umpire could be caught by an infielder.
- O. **Inning:** One of seven sections of the game in which teams alternate offensive and defensive turns.
- P. **Out:** When a batter is retired from the bases or receives three strikes.
- Q. **Outfielder:** The defensive players who position themselves beyond the infield positions.
- R. **Pitcher's Plate or Rubber:** The starting point of the pitcher from where he must deliver the ball.
- S. **Single:** A-hit which allows the batter to advance only to first base.
- T. **Strike:** When a batter misses a pitched ball, hits a foul ball, hits a foul tip or allows a pitch to pass the plate in the strike zone without attempting to hit the ball.
- U. **Strike Zone:** The area bounded by the plate edges laterally and the knees and shoulders of the batter vertically