

Softball Rules

Revised 2/22/23

GENERAL RULES & REGULATIONS

GENERAL INFO

1. All participants must meet the eligibility requirements listed in the Intramural Sports Captains' Guide. **Each player must be a current UVA student or IM-Rec Member.** All expired memberships must be updated before the individual may play in any game. Each player must present a valid UVA Student ID or current IM-Rec Membership Card before each contest in order to be eligible to participate. Any games in which an ineligible player signs in will be considered a forfeit.
2. **Teams are responsible for keeping their players and spectators under control.** Misconduct of players, coaches, managers or spectators can result in penalty, ejection or forfeiture of the game. Spectators must also remain within the area designated by the IM Sports staff.
3. Alcoholic beverages, smoking, and pets are prohibited from all intramural contests.
4. IM Sports Officials/Supervisors will have absolute authority during the contest and can make decisions on any matter or question not specifically covered in the rules.
5. The **NIRSA Slow Pitch Softball Rules** will govern play, with the modifications listed in sections below.

SECTION 1: EQUIPMENT

1. OFFICIAL BAT

- a. No bat shall be used that appears on the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) Banned Bat List.
- b. The bat should be marked "Official Softball" and should bear the ASA certification mark.
- c. The bat must be round and smooth and have no large dents.
 - Penalty: If a player enters the batter's area with an illegal, altered, or banned bat, they shall be declared out and ejected from the game immediately.

2. OFFICIAL BALL

- a. Game balls will be provided by Intramural Sports.
- b. The ball will have a COR of .52 and a maximum compression rate of 300 pounds.

3. GLOVES

- a. All defensive players must wear gloves or mitts

4. SHOES

- a. All players must wear close-toe shoes. If cleats are worn, they must be made of rubber. Metal cleats are not permitted.
 - Penalty: If a player is found to be wearing metal cleats, they will be immediately ejected.

5. UNIFORMS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT

- a. Players may wear hats.
- b. All jewelry must be removed before participating.

SECTION 2: THE GAME

1. TEAMS

- a. In each inning, the visiting team bats first and the home team bats last. The umpires will meet with the captains prior to the game and conduct a coin toss. The winner of the coin toss will choose to be the visiting team or the home team.

2. REGULATION GAME

- a. A regulation game consists of seven innings. If the home team is ahead after six and a half innings, the game will be over.
- b. There will be a 50 minute time limit placed on all games. An inning being played when the time limit expires shall be finished, unless the home team is winning and at bat. No new inning will be started after the time limit expires. A new inning begins when the final out of the previous inning is recorded
- c. A four **Home-Run Limit** will be in effect for all games. When a ball is hit over the fence, the batter will have the option of choosing to count the hit as a Home Run or a single. After the fourth Home Run has been counted, any other balls hit over the fence will automatically result in the batter being awarded a single. If a single is chosen or awarded, then all baserunners will advance one base.
- d. The game will be over if a team is ahead by 15 or more runs after three full innings, or if a team is ahead by 10 or more runs after five full innings.
- e. A game becomes official after four innings. Games called by the umpire will be ruled completed after four innings have been completed or if, after three and a half innings, the home team is ahead.
- f. A regular season game may end in a tie. If the score is tied at the end of regulation or at the expiration of the time limit in the playoffs, then extra innings will be played. The offensive team will begin its at-bat by placing the last person to bat in the previous inning on second base. The game will then continue as normal until a winner can be determined.
- g. The team at bat is responsible for retrieving all foul balls and homeruns.

3. SCORING OF RUNS

- a. A team scores a run each time a runner touches first base, second base, third base, and home plate in succession.
- b. A team does not score a run if the third out of an inning results from:
 1. A force-out.
 2. A runner being put out by a tag or a live ball appeal before the lead runner touches home plate.
 3. A preceding runner being declared out on an appeal play.

SECTION 3: PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES

1. TEAM

- a. Teams will consist of 10 defensive players. A team must have a minimum of 7 players present and officially checked in with the umpire/supervisor to start a game. Teams may continue a game with fewer than 7 players if they have a reasonable chance to win.
- b. A team must have a catcher and a pitcher. All other players may take positions anywhere in fair territory.

2. EXTRA PLAYERS

- a. A team may bat up to 20 players as long as they are compliant with the +1 ratio in CoRec. The extra players may occupy any spot in the batting order.
- b. The extra players may take the place of anyone in the field, but are not considered to be an eligible substitute.

3. PLAYERS OR SUBSTITUTES

- a. Free substitution is allowed for all field players.
- b. A player or substitute is officially in the game when they are entered on to the official score sheet.
- c. A substitute may take the place of any player in the batting order of the team. The captain should notify the home plate umpire of any substitutions. Whether a substitute is announced or not, after the substitute enters the game, any play made by the substitute is legal. An unannounced substitution carries no penalty.
- d. A substitute may take the place of any other player during a dead ball situation.

4. REENTRY RULE

- a. All players may reenter the game once, but they must occupy the same spot in the batting order.
- b. The opposing team must handle any improper reentry with a protest. An improper reentry becomes a violation once a pitch is made.
- c. If a player has reentered improperly and the defensive team discovers the violation when that player is playing offensively, the following penalties are applied:
 1. If reentry is discovered while the player is batting, the player is ejected and an eligible substitute assumes the accumulated balls and strikes.
 2. If reentry is discovered after the at bat is complete and before a pitch to the next batter, the person guilty of improper entry is called out and ejected. Base runners who have advanced must return to the previous base occupied.
 3. If the improper reentry is not discovered until after a pitch to the next batter, or if the player who enters improperly is a substitute runner, the player is ejected, but all play that has occurred with the improper reentry stands.
 4. If a player has reentered improperly on defense, the following penalties are applied:
 1. The player who reentered is ejected.
 2. If reentry is discovered after the player makes a defensive play on a fair ball or on a foul fly ball, before the next pitch, the offensive team has the option to:
 - a. Take the result of the play.
 - b. Have the batter return to the batter's area and assume the ball and strike count before the discovery of the illegal player. All runners return to the bases they previously occupied.
 5. If there is no eligible substitute, then that spot in the batting order will be recorded as an out for the remainder of the game.

5. SHORTHANDED RULE

- a. Teams that begin a game shorthanded may add players after the game begins. Those players must occupy the last spots in the batting order.
- b. A team that begins a game shorthanded may not use an extra player.

- c. If a player has to leave a game for any reason, then that spot in the batting order becomes an automatic out. The departed or injured player who misses their spot in the batting order may return to play.

6. BLOOD RULE & CONCUSSION RULE

- a. Any player who is bleeding or who has blood on their uniform shall be considered injured and will be removed from the game until the appropriate treatment can be administered.
- b. Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate healthcare professional.

7. COACHES

- a. Coach's boxes, if occupied, may be occupied by a player, the coach, or an eligible substitute.

8. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

- a. Players, coaches, bench personnel, or spectators may receive a warning or be ejected for any of the following:
 - 1. Taunting or using profane language.
 - 2. Being outside the dugout, unless the person is a batter, base runner, on-deck batter, coach, or playing a defensive position.
 - 3. Conducting themselves in an unsportsmanlike manner.
 - 4. Arguing a judgment call.
 - 5. Carelessly throwing a bat.

SECTION 4: PITCHING AND STRIKE ZONE

1. LEGAL DELIVERY

- a. The pitcher must take a position with one foot in contact with the pitcher's plate.
- b. The pitcher must come to a complete stop with the ball in front of the body and must face the batter with the front of their body before delivering a pitch.
- c. The pitcher must not perform any motion to pitch while not touching the pitcher's plate.
- d. The pitcher must use a definite underhand motion when delivering the pitch.
- e. The pitcher must release the ball on the first swing of the arm past the hip.
- f. The delivery must be a continuous motion and the ball must be released at a moderate speed.
- g. The pitcher shall not attempt a quick return of the ball before the batter has taken a balanced hitting position.
- h. Pitches must have a perceptible arc of 6 to 10 feet from the ground.
- i. When the pitcher delivers a pitch, all defensive players must be in fair territory, except for the catcher.
 - 1. Penalty: Violations in any of the above rules shall result in the umpire calling an illegal pitch. The ball remains live. If the batter does not swing, a ball will be called. If the batter swings, then the illegal pitch is ignored and the result of the swing will stand.

2. STRIKE ZONE

- a. Balls pitched with the proper arc that fall within the strike zone will be called a strike. The strike zone is defined as the area above home plate no lower than the batter's front knee and no higher than the batter's back shoulder.

3. NO PITCH

- a. The umpire declares no pitch in the following circumstances:
 1. The pitch was delivered while play was suspended.
 2. A runner is called out for leaving a base before the pitch reaches home plate, touches the ground before reaching home plate, or is hit by the batter.
 3. The ball slips from the pitcher's hand during the backswing.
 4. The pitch is delivered before a runner returns to base after a foul ball.
 5. The pitch is delivered before a runner has retouched the base after legitimately being off the base.

SECTION 5: BATTING

1. BATTING ORDER

- a. Players must bat in the proper order.
- b. The first player who bats in an inning shall be the player whose name follows the final batter of the previous inning. If the third out of an inning occurs before a batter has completed their turn at bat, that player will be the first person to bat in the next inning.
- c. Batting out of order is an appeal play. Only the defensive team may make an appeal.
 1. If the error is discovered while the incorrect player is batting, the correct player takes their place and assumes the ball and strike count.
 2. If the error is discovered after the incorrect player has batted and before the next pitch is delivered, the player who should have batted is out. Any advancement or score that occurred while the incorrect batter was at bat is nullified. Any outs made when the incorrect player was at bat will stand. If the improper player makes an out while batting out of order and is the next scheduled batter in the lineup, the batter's regular turn in the lineup will be skipped. The next batter shall be the individual who follows the improper batter in the lineup.
 3. If the error is discovered after the first pitch to the next batter, the turn at bat of the incorrect batter and all advancements and scores are legal. The next batter is the player whose name follows that of the incorrect batter. Any player who has not batted shall lose their turn.
 4. No base runner is removed from base in order to bat in his/her proper position. That player simply misses their turn at bat.

2. BATTING POSITION

- a. The batter must take a position in the batting area within 5 seconds of being directed to do so by the umpire. If the batter fails to comply, a strike shall be called.
- b. The batter may not step in front of the catcher to the opposite side of the plate when the pitcher is in position to pitch or any time before the delivery of the pitch. If the batter does this, the ball is dead and the batter is declared out.

3. BALL AND STRIKE COUNT

- a. All batters come to bat with a 1-ball, 1-strike count.

4. **STRIKE**

- a. The umpire calls a strike:
 - 1. For a legally pitched ball that enters the strike zone.
 - 2. For a pitch at which the batter swings and misses.
 - 3. For a foul ball which is not caught by a fielder. **Batters will receive one courtesy foul when they have two (2) strikes. For batters with two strikes, their first foul ball will not be an out. If a second foul ball is hit while the batter has two strikes, they will be declared out.**
 - 4. For a batted ball that hits any part of the batter when they are still in the batter's area.

5. **BALL**

- a. The umpire calls a ball:
 - 1. For a pitched ball that does not enter the strike zone and is not swung at by the batter.
 - 2. For a pitched ball that hits the ground on or in front of home plate. If the batter swings at a pitch after it touches the ground on or in front of home plate.
 - 3. For an illegally pitched ball that is not swung at by the batter.
 - 4. When the pitcher does not pitch the ball within 10 seconds after the batter has taken a position in the batter's area.

6. **OUTS**

- a. The batter is out:
 - 1. When they accumulate 3 strikes.
 - 2. When they enter the batter's area with an illegal bat.
 - 3. When they bunt or chop at the ball and make contact.
 - 4. When they steps on or across home plate while making contact with the ball.
 - 5. When a member of the team at bat interferes with a defensive player who is attempting to field a batted ball.
 - 6. When the batter hits a fair ball with the bat a second time while the ball is in fair territory.
 - 7. When the batter's own hit ball contacts them outside the batter's area.
 - 8. When a fielder intentionally drops a fair fly ball or line drive that they could have caught with ordinary effort, at least one base is occupied, and there are less than two outs.
 - 9. When they swing or throws the bat in a dangerous manner. The ball will be dead and all runners must return to their original bases.

7. **FAIR/FOUL BALL**

- a. A batted ball is judged to be foul if it stops or is contacted in foul territory before crossing a base, or if it first lands in foul territory after crossing a base in the air.
- b. A batted ball is judged to be fair if it stops on top of home plate, if it stops or is touched in fair territory, if it crosses over or inside a base after first touching the ground before the base, or if it first touches fair territory after crossing a base in the air.

SECTION 6: BASERUNNING

1. **BATTER AWARDED FIRST BASE**

- a. The batter is awarded first base:
 - 1. When they accumulate four balls.

2. When the pitcher requests to intentionally walk the batter.
3. When the catcher interferes with the batter's attempt to hit a pitched ball.

2. RUNNER CALLED OUT

- a. The batter-runner/base runner is called out:
 1. When a fielder catches a fly ball.
 2. When the runner is forced out at a base.
 3. When a fielder tags the runner with the ball or with their glove while the ball is inside.
 4. When a base runner leaves the base before the pitched ball contacts the bat or crosses home plate.
 1. Effect: The ball is dead and a no pitch is called.
 5. When the base runner interferes with a thrown ball or a fielder who is attempting to field, catch, or throw a ball.
 6. When a fair batted ball hits a base runner before it passes a fielder or a base runner intentionally interferes with a ball.
 7. When a coach interferes with a live ball.
 8. When a base runner passes or makes contact with the runner ahead of them.
 9. If a base runner leaves the base before a fielder touches a caught fly ball and is tagged or forced out before returning to the base.
 10. If a base runner intentionally and forcefully makes contact with a defensive player either with or without the ball. Sliding is allowed, but it is not required. The runner must attempt to get around a tag.
 1. Penalty: A dead ball will be called, the runner will be declared out and ejected, and all other runners must return to the base they occupied at the time the dead ball was called.
 11. If a base runner moves farther than 3 feet from the base path while attempting to avoid a tag.
 12. A batter-runner is allowed to overrun first base. However, if they make or feign an attempt to advance, they are liable to be put out. A runner may not overrun second or third base without being liable to be put out.

3. BASE STEALING

- a. No base runner may steal a base.

4. COURTESY RUNNER

- a. A courtesy runner may run for a player who is injured and unable to run the bases safely. In order for a player to be awarded a courtesy runner, they must reach first base by their own ability. The courtesy runner must be the player who made the last batted out.

SECTION 7: IMPORTANT ITEMS

1. INFIELD FLY RULE

- a. If a batter hits a fair fly ball that, in the umpire's judgment, an infielder can catch with normal effort when there are runners on first and second, or first, second, and third, and less than two outs, an infield fly shall be called. The batter shall be called out, and all runners do not have to advance. The following conditions apply:
 1. A line drive cannot be an infield fly.
 2. Any defensive player, who takes a position in the infield at the start of the pitch, is an infielder for the purpose of this rule.

3. The umpire makes the infield fly ruling based on the position of the closest infielder when the ball reaches its highest point.
4. When the umpire judges that a batted ball will be an infield fly, they shall declare "Infield Fly."
5. As on any fly balls, runners may tag up and advance after a fielder touches the ball.
6. A declared infield fly that becomes a foul ball is treated as any other foul ball.

2. OUT OF PLAY AREA/OVERTHROWS

- a. The playing area is defined as the area between the fence lines along the first and third base dugouts, and in front of any outfield fencing.
- b. A batted fair ball that rolls under, bounces over, goes through or gets stuck in a fence is a ground rule double.
- c. If a fielder catches the ball within the playing area and then carries the ball out of play, one base shall be awarded to all base runners.
- d. If a player attempting to make a tag drops the ball and it rolls out of play, one base shall be awarded to all base runners.
- e. On overthrows that go out of play or that become blocked because of hitting a defensive team member who should not be on the field or because of hitting equipment that belongs to the defensive team or does not belong on the field, runners are awarded two bases. The two bases are awarded from the last base touched when the overthrow left the hand of the thrower. If two runners are between the same bases, the position of the lead runner determines the award of the bases.

3. INTERFERENCE

- a. Interference is the act of an offensive player or team member that impedes, hinders, or confuses a defensive player who is attempting to make a play. Interference includes physical contact, verbal distraction, visual distraction, or any kind of distraction that might hinder a fielder who is attempting to make a play. Defensive players must have an unhindered opportunity to field, throw, or catch a ball.
 1. Penalty: If a batter, batter-runner, runner, on-deck batter, or coach commits interference, the ball becomes dead, the player who interfered is called out, and any runners must return to the base last touched at the time of interference.

4. OBSTRUCTION

- a. Obstruction occurs when a fielder who is not in possession of the ball, not in the act of fielding a batted ball, or not about to receive a thrown ball impedes the progress of a runner.
 1. When obstruction occurs, the umpire declares and signals a delayed dead ball. The ball remains live. If an obstructed runner is put out before reaching the base that, in the umpire's judgment, they would have reached had the obstruction not occurred, the umpire calls a dead ball and awards the obstructed runner the base.
 2. If an obstructed runner passes the base that the umpire would have awarded them, then the runner is liable to be put out.
 3. Catcher's obstruction is a delayed dead ball. Catcher's obstruction is cancelled when the batter reaches first base safely and all other runners have advanced at least one base. If the batter does not reach first base, or if base runners do not advance one bases, the captain of the team at bat has the option to take the obstruction award or take the result of the play.

5. APPEALS

- a. Appeals may be made in the following circumstances:
 - 1. When a runner misses a base
 - 2. When a runner leaves a base before a caught fly ball is touched.
 - 3. When a batter bats out of order.
- b. Appeals must be made before the next pitch, or if at the end of an inning, before the pitcher and all infielders have left fair territory. If the appeal is on the last play of the game, it must occur before the umpires leave the field.
- c. For live ball appeals, a fielder in possession of the ball may appeal by touching the base that the runner missed or the base from which the runner left too early, or by tagging the runner if they are still on the field. The fielder must notify the umpire that they are appealing, and must tell the umpire specifically what they are appealing. All other runners may advance during live ball appeals.
- d. For dead ball appeals, an infielder, the pitcher, or the catcher may make an oral appeal. The fielder must notify the umpire that they are appealing, and must tell the umpire specifically what they are appealing.

6. PROTESTS

- a. If a team wishes to protest a rule misapplication, then it must do so before the next pitch, whether it is illegal or legal, before all fielders leave fair territory, or on the last play of the game, before the umpires leave the playing field.

SECTION 8: CO-REC RULES

- 1. No more than 5 players on the field may self-identify as the same gender (Men, Women, or Another Non-Binary) at the same time. If a team is playing with less than 10 players, we will follow a +/-1 rule.
- 2. If a Co-Rec team wishes to use extra players, they may use up to 10 extra players, in a +/-1 compliant manner.
- 3. Players may take any position in the infield or the outfield, regardless of self-identified gender.
- 4. Players may bat in any order, regardless of self-identified gender.
- 5. Substitutes must replace players self-identifying as the same gender.
- 6. Courtesy runners may be used, but they must self-identify as the same gender.