

The University of Texas at Arlington  
The Department of Campus Recreation

**SLOW PITCH SOFTBALL RULES**  
Men's and Women's

Current U.S.S.S.A. slow pitch softball rules will be enforced with the following exceptions:

1. GENERAL

- A. Game time is forfeit time. Teams should report to the Intramural Sports Supervisor a minimum of 15 before the scheduled starting time of their game to fill out the score sheet and to conduct the coin toss. *If a team is late, the opposing team has the option to take a forfeit win or wait up to 10 minutes. If they decide to wait until the other team has the minimum players required, they will be up 5-0, are the home team, and the game will start with 40 minutes remaining. The team who is late will LOSE AN AT BAT! The game will begin in the BOTTOM of the 1<sup>st</sup> inning.*
- B. Questions about scores should be directed to the umpire(s) or Intramural Sports Supervisor on duty.
- C. The Intramural Department will judge the conditions of the fields and such decisions will be made at 3:00 p.m. on the day of the scheduled game (by 12:00 noon on Sundays). Call 817-272-3277 or 817-272-0681 (Rain Out Hotline) for information regarding cancellations due to poor weather or playing field conditions. When games are cancelled, please do not use the fields. Damaged fields may cause additional cancellations.

2. THE PLAYING FIELD

- A. Bases will be 65 feet apart in men's and women's competition.
- B. Umpires will establish ground rules prior to the game regarding out of play areas, permanent obstacles in the field of play, etc.

3. EQUIPMENT

- A. Closed-toe shoes are required. Gym or running shoes are recommended. Rubber training shoes and single molded plastic/rubber soccer-type cleats are permitted. Metal cleats or spikes of any type are not allowed.
- B. In order for a bat to be deemed legal it must be an official A.S.A. or an official U.S.S.S.A. approved softball bat. It must have a safety grip (no smooth tape) and must be free of rough or sharp edges. Baseball bats and fungo bats are not legal. Fast Pitch softball bats are legal.
- C. Game softballs will be provided by Campus Recreation. Teams must use the ball provided.

#### 4. PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES

- A. A team must have 8 players present to start the game. Teams starting with 8 or 9 players will **not** be assessed out for those slots in the batting order. Players arriving late may have their name added to the bottom of the order; but may not add an Extra Hitter after the game has started. All substitutes must report to the plate umpire before batting.
- B. Injured Player. A player who is bleeding, has an open wound, or has blood on their uniform shall be considered an injured player. Such player may not return to the game until the bleeding has stopped and the wound properly covered, and soiled clothing has been treated with a bleach disinfectant.
- C. “Shorthanded Rule”. If a player must leave the game and there is no substitute available, when it is that player’s turn to bat an out is declared. If a runner must leave the game and there is no substitute available, the runner will be declared out.
- D. The U.S.S.S.A. re-entry rule will apply to both starters and substitutes. (Both starters and substitutes may be withdrawn from the game and re-enter the same spot in the batting order once.) To bat an Extra Hitter (EH), a team must have 11 players present at the start of the game.

#### 5. THE GAME

- A. The game will consist of 7 innings. In the event of rain or darkness, 5 innings or 4 ½ if the home team is ahead, will constitute a game. A 15-run rule will be in effect after 3 innings (2 ½ if the home team is ahead) and a 10-run rule after 5 innings (4 ½ if the home team is ahead).
- B. No new inning may be started, unless the score is tied, after 50 minutes have elapsed from when the game began. The umpire and/or Supervisor will keep the official game time.
- C. The choice of first or last bat (home/visitor) in the inning shall be decided by a coin toss prior to the game.
- D. Each new at-bat will begin with a 1-1 count (1 ball and 1 strike). Batters will be allowed a courtesy foul once they have reached 2 strikes. (For example: If the batter hits a foul ball on the first pitch, a strike will be assessed and the count will become 1-2. If the batter swings and misses on the second pitch, he or she will be out. If the batter hits a foul ball on the second pitch, a courtesy foul will be assessed and the at-bat will continue.)
- E. Base stealing is not allowed. Runners can leave their bases when a pitched ball has reached home plate or is hit. If the batter does not hit the pitch, base-runner(s) must return to their bases immediately.

- F. Bunting or chopping down on the ball is not allowed and will result in a dead ball with the batter being called out.
- G. Infield practice is not allowed after the first inning.
- H. The ball is dead and not in play when:
  - 1. “No pitch” is declared.
  - 2. A foul ball is not caught.
  - 3. A runner is called out for leaving a base too soon.
  - 4. Offensive interference occurs.
  - 5. A defensive player carries the ball out of play (intentionally or unintentionally).
- I. The ball is in play when:
  - 1. The infield fly rule is enforced.
  - 2. A thrown ball remains in playable territory.
  - 3. A base is dislodged while baserunners are progressing around the bases.
  - 4. A thrown ball strikes an offensive player.
  - 5. A thrown ball or fair-batted ball strikes an umpire.
  - 6. A thrown ball strikes a coach.
- J. The ball remains alive until the umpire declares time, which will be done when the ball is held by a player in the infield area and, in the opinion of the umpire, all play has ceased.
- K. A foul ball must reach a height of six feet or more to be legally caught for an out, except on the third strike in which case any foul is an out.
- L. *Home Run Limit: Each TEAM is limited to 3 unassisted over the fence home runs per game. Any unassisted over the fence home run after the limit has been reached will result in a dead ball, automatic out for the batter.***

## 6. PITCHING

- A. At the beginning of each half-inning or when a pitcher relieves another, not more than one minute may be used to deliver not more than one warm-up pitch to the catcher or other teammate. One ball will be called on the batter for each pitch throw over the maximum. No infield or outfield practice is allowed after the first inning.
- B. The pitch must have a minimum arc of 3 feet from the ground. The maximum allowable arc is 10 feet from the ground. If the pitch does not meet these requirements, an illegal pitch shall be called. The batter has the option of taking the pitch for an automatic ball or swinging at the pitch. If the pitch is swung at, the illegal pitch is ignored.

- C. The pitcher may take a walking start but must have least one foot contacting the pitching rubber prior to pitching the ball. The pitcher's foot must remain in contact with the pitching rubber throughout the delivery.
- D. If the pitcher does not take a walking start, a step may be taken and can be forward, backward, or to the side provided the other foot stays in contact with the pitching rubber and the step is taken simultaneously with the pitch.
- E. The pitcher must deliver the ball in a continuous, underhand motion on the first forward swing of the pitching arm past the hip.
- F. The pitch must be a slow pitched ball, excessive speed is determined by the umpire.

## 7. RUNNER AND BATTER-RUNNER

- A. When a baserunner must return while the ball is in play, he/she must touch the bases in reverse order.
- B. No runner may return to touch a missed base or one he/she had left illegally after a following runner has scored. The defense must appeal for the out to be granted. The appeal may be verbal or physical.
- C. Baserunners must slide or run around a fielder making a defensive play on the ball when trying to reach a base. The runner is responsible for avoiding contact in these situations. When sliding, runners must always slide for the base and will be ejected for purposely sliding into a fielder, or physically running into a fielder.
- D. Baserunners are entitled to advance but accept the liability to be put out under the following circumstance when:
  1. The ball is overthrown into fair or foul territory and remains in play.
  2. The ball is batted into fair territory.
  3. A legally caught fly ball is first touched.
- E. Baserunners are entitled to advance without liability to be put out when:
  1. A fielder obstructs the baserunner from making a base unless the fielder is trying to field the batted or has the ball ready to touch the baserunner.
  2. The ball is in play and is overthrown and goes out of play, all runners advance two bases from where they were when the ball left the thrower's hand.
- F. Obstruction is the act of:
  1. A defensive player or team member who hinders or prevents a batter from striking or hitting a pitched ball.

2. A fielder, while not in possession of the ball, in the act of fielding a batted ball, or about to receive a thrown ball, which impedes the progress of a baserunner who is legally running the bases.
- G. Interference is the act of an offensive player or team member who impedes or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play.
- H. Base Stealing – Base stealing is not allowed. Each baserunner may leave his/her base when a pitched ball is batted or reaches home plate, but must return to that base immediately after each pitch not hit by the batter.
- I. The Baserunner is out when:
1. In running to any base he/she runs more than three (3) feet from a direct line between a base and the next base when a defensive player is attempting to tag the runner.
  2. The baserunner passes a preceding baserunner before that runner has been put out.
  3. The baserunner overruns any base and makes an attempt to advance to the next base and is legally touched while off base. (A player may overrun first base as long as no attempt is made toward second base.)
  4. The baserunner interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball. If this interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play (including shouting or waving the arms to distract the defense), the immediate succeeding runner shall also be called out.
  5. A baserunner is struck with a fair-batted ball while off the base and before it passes an infielder that has otherwise made a play.
  6. With a baserunner on third, the batter or any offensive player interferes with a play being made at home plate.
  7. In the umpire's judgment, the base coach at first or third base touches or holds the runner physically to assist a runner in returning to or advancing from the base when a play is being made on him/her.
  8. When a runner, after being declared out or after scoring, interferes with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play on another runner, the runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out.
- J. Baserunners are not out when:
1. A baserunner runs around the fielder and outside the baseline in order to avoid interfering with a fielder attempting to field the ball in the base path.
  2. A baserunner is hit with a fair-batted ball that passed an infielder, excluding the pitcher, and in the umpire's judgment no other infielder had a chance to play the ball. The ball remains "alive" under this condition.

3. A fair-batted ball hits a baserunner after it is touched or touches any fielder.
4. A baserunner is hit by a fair-batted ball while in contact with a base.

K. Homerun:

1. In order to conserve game time, a batter who hits a homerun will not be allowed around the bases. The batter will touch first and return to the dugout. All other runners must cross the plate. (The team that hit a homerun, is responsible for getting the ball.

8. UP IN THE MIDDLE/HALO RULE

- A. This rule has been put in place to protect the pitcher. A line drive ball hit back the pitcher, within the parameters of toe to head, and arms outstretched, will be deemed a dead ball, and an out. All runners will return to their previous base. This rule is not up for interpretation; it is solely the judgment of the umpire. Ground balls hit back at the pitcher are ok. If the pitcher moves away from the mound after the pitch is delivered and a line drive still goes up in the middle, it is still an out.

9. PROTESTS

- A. Allowable protests should be first lodged by the team captain to the game umpire prior to the next pitch, legal or illegal. If unsatisfied with the ruling, the captain must then lodge his/her protest to the Intramural Sports Supervisor on duty. The must be done during the same stoppage of the game that the initial complaint was made. The Supervisor will then rule on the protest. A protest of the Supervisor's ruling must be made verbally before the next pitch, legal or illegal. All protests of the Supervisor's ruling must then be done in writing.

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**SLOW PITCH SOFTBALL RULES  
CO-REC**

Current Men's and Women's Intramural Slow Pitch Softball Rules will be in effect for all games with the following modifications:

1. A female may only substitute for a female, a male for a male.
2. Teams must alternate positions in the batting order by sex.
3. A team consists of 10 defensive players. In addition, a team may legally play with 8 players, provided they have 4 male and 4 female players. A team may play with as many as 12 players (6 of each gender; 10 on defense and 2 extra hitters). Teams may also play with 9 or 11 players. If a team plays with 8, 10, or 12 players, they will not be assessed any automatic outs. Teams playing with 9 or 11 players will be assessed an automatic out because 2 batters of the same gender may not bat consecutively without penalty. Players arriving late may have their name added to the bottom of the order; but an EH may not be added after the game has started.
4. If a team is playing with more than 50 percent of one gender, a player of the majority gender must bat first.
5. On a walk to a male batter, he will advance to second base and the female has the option to walk with 2 outs. If less than 2 outs, the male will end up at second base and the female will bat.
6. Teams are not regulated as to the number of infielders or outfielders or to their gender makeup.