

Softball Study Guide

(Freshman/Sophomore P.E.)

Softball is an adaptation of baseball. Because of the limited indoor space and the hardness of the ball, the YMCA directors made the ball softer, the bat smaller, and the baselines and pitching distances shorter. The pitcher throws the ball with an underhand motion. Base stealing is not permitted until the ball has left the pitchers hand.

Prior to World War II, public interest in softball grew so much that teams are organized into leagues all over the country. Because of its great appeal to Americans of all ages, and because little equipment is needed and any ordinary playground is adequate, this game has become the first choice of all recreation playgrounds.

There exists only one set of official rules, but modifications have produced many types of games and leagues, such as fast pitch and slow pitch; leagues for men's teams, women's teams, and combined teams; games using the regulation-sized softball and games using a much larger ball; rules forbidding the use of gloves; and many other interesting variations.

Equipment

The bat should be round and made of hard wood or aluminum, no more than 34 inches long and not more than $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter at its largest part.

The ball should be smooth-seamed, leather-cover sphere containing yard and kapok, measuring no less than $11\frac{7}{8}$ inches and more than $12\frac{1}{8}$ inches in circumference and weighing from $6\frac{1}{4}$ to 7 ounces.

The home plate should be made of solid rubber or other suitable material. The distance to the pitchers box is 40 feet for women and 46 feet for men for fast pitch.

Gloves may be worn by any player, but mitts are limited to first basemen and catchers.

Masks must be worn by catchers. Spikes or any other type of sharp projections on the shoes are prohibited.

Rules

Team consists of 10 players; pitcher, catcher, first baseman, second baseman, third baseman, shortstop, left fielder, center fielder, right fielder, and short fielder. A player removed from the game can reenter the game only as a coach.

A regulation game consists of 7 innings. In case of a tie game more innings are played. A forfeited game is awarded to the team that is ready to play.

The pitching arm must come to rest holding the ball in front of the body, with a pivot foot in contact with the pitchers plate. This position cannot be held longer than 20 seconds. The ball is to be thrown on the first forward swing past the hip. The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitchers plate until the ball leaves the hand. The hand must be below the hip. The ball must be delivered with a perceptible arc of at least 3 feet from the time it leaves the pitchers hand until it reaches home plate. The pitched ball may not be higher than 12 feet from the ground during its flight to home plate.

The batter must take position within the lines of the batters box. The batter has one minute to take the place after the empire calls “play,” or the batter is out. All batters must bat in their batting order or an out is called on the person at bat. However, if this error is discovered in time, an adjustment can be made.

A strike is called (1) for each legally pitched ball, (2) for each pitched ball missed by the batter, (3) for each foul tip---the batter is out if the tip is on the third strike (4) for each pitched ball struck at and missed that touches any part of the batter, and (5) for hitting a batter positioned in the strike zone.

A ball is called for a pitched ball that does not enter the strike zone.

A fair ball is one that (1) lands in the fair territory-between first and third bases, (2) lands on any one of the bases with the exception of home base, or (3) falls on fair ground beyond first or third base.

The batter is out immediately when an infield fly is hit with base runners on first and second, or first, second, and third with less than two outs. This is called the infield-fly rule.

A foul ball is a legally batted ball that (1) settles on foul ground outside the first or third baseline or behind home plate or (2) bounds past first or third base on foul ground or outside of bases. If a foul fly is caught, the batter is out. The batter is out if there are two strikes and the next batted ball is a foul tip. A foul tip is a batted ball that goes from the bat, not higher than the batter head, to the catchers hand and is legally caught.

The batter is out under the following circumstances: (1) On three strikes, (2) When the ball is bunted or chopped downward. (3) When a fly ball is legally caught. (4) On an infield fly rule. (5) When the batter interferes with the catcher. (6) Intentional interference puts a runner out plus the batter who hit the ball.

Vocabulary

- Assist
 - Throwing or deflecting, by a player, of a thrown or batted ball by which a possible out could be made.
- Base on balls
 - Reaching first base after four balls are caught.
- Battery
 - The pitcher and catcher
- Batting Average
 - Number of hits made by a batter divided by the times at bat.
- Batting Order
 - The official listing of the sequence of the players to bat.
- Beanball
 - A ball thrown at the batters head.
- Bunt
 - A ball softly touched by a bat and landing within the infield.
- Double Play
 - A play in which two players are legally put out.

- Error
 - A play that fails to account for the out of a runner or allows the advancement of a woman.
- Inning
 - Portion of the game in which a team plays both offense and defense, starting with the first team at bat.
- Pivot Foot
 - The foot that the pitcher must keep in constant contact with the pitchers plate until the delivery of the ball.
- Sacrifice Bunt
 - Bunt for the purpose of advancing a runner.
- Strike Zone
 - Area between the batter knees and armpits.
- Switch Hitter
 - A batter capable of batting either right-handed or left-handed.