

SOFTBALL STUDY GUIDE

NATURE AND PURPOSE

It is estimated that over thirty million adults and youngsters annually play some form of competitive or recreational softball in the United States. The game can be played with a minimal of equipment in a reasonably small area.

AREAS OF SKILL

Pitching – Must be underhand. The strike zone is over the plate, between the armpits and the knees. The player must swing at the ball when it is in the strike zone.

Catching - Use two hands to trap the ball in the glove. The arms should give with the impact of the ball into the glove.

Throwing – Is done overhand, sidearm, or underhand for distance and accuracy.

Fielding - The player must get their body in front of the ball, catch the ball in the glove using two hands, and throw the ball to the correct base to get the base runner out.

Batting – The player assumes a proper stance next to home plate, takes a level swing, and follows through by breaking the wrists. Three strikes and the batter is out. A foul ball is a strike, but the batter is not out if they hit a foul ball on the third strike – unless the ball is caught. After three outs the teams switch places on the field.

BASIC RULES

The game of slow pitch softball lasts for seven innings (6 ½) if the home team has scored more runs than its opponent. The purpose is to get on base and score runs. In slow pitch softball, the ball must be thrown underhand with a specific arch (3 to 12 feet).

- A batter is out after 3 strikes
- A batter goes to first base after 4 balls
- A batter may hit unlimited foul balls while they are batting – the first two foul balls are strikes.
- A base runner may over run first base, if the base runner over runs 2nd or 3rd base they may be tagged out. If the base runner over runs 1st base and turns toward 2nd base they may also be tagged out.
- There is no bunting

- There is no stealing or leading off the base. The base runner may leave the base after the pitched ball crosses home plate.
- There are 10 players on each team.
- There are 65 feet between bases for men and 60 feet between bases for women.
- A base runner may advance one base on an over thrown ball that goes into foul territory or out of play. If the over thrown ball is in fair territory the base runner may advance as many bases as they can.
- **FORCE OUT** – A base runner must run to the next base because there is a base runner on the previous base. If the lead base runner does not get to the next base before the ball, the fielding player steps on the base and that runner is forced out at that base. EX: There is a base runner on 1st base, that base runner must go to 2nd base when a ground ball is hit because the batter is going to occupy 1st base. If the batted ball gets to 2nd base before the base runner gets to 2nd base and the fielding player steps on 2nd base before the runner on 1st base get to 2nd base that runner is forced out at 2nd base.
- **TAG OUT** – A base runner does not have to run to the next base if there is not a runner on the previous base. If that runner chooses to run the fielding team must tag the runner with the ball. If the fielding team steps on the base with the ball that runner is not out – they must tag that runner!
- The batter is out if they throw the bat.

BASERUNNING

Base runners must touch the bases in regular order and if forced to return while the ball is in play, the bases must be touched in reverse order. Two base runners may not occupy the same base at the same time. The runner who legally occupies the base shall be entitled to that base and the other base runner must move to the correct base or they will be put out. A base runner is out when they:

1. Run more than three (3) feet out side of the base path to avoid being tagged out.
2. Passes a base runner on the base path before the preceding base runner is out.
3. Forced out at a base.
4. Tagged out at a base.

BATTING

A batter shall take a position within the lines of the batters box. The batter may be called out for stepping on home plate or if the entire foot touches the ground outside the lines of the batters box when hitting. Players must hit in the regular order or be called out and runs scored on the order mistake are

cancelled. In co-ed softball, the batting order alternates between male/female or female/male.

DEAD BALL

The ball is dead and not in play when:

1. The ball is illegally batted.
2. When the batter steps from one batters box to another as the pitcher is ready to pitch.
3. The ball is illegally pitched.
4. When a pitched ball touches any part of the batter's person or clothing.
5. When a foul ball is not caught.
6. When a base runner is called out for leaving the base too soon.
7. When the umpire calls a blocked ball.
8. After each strike or ball.

EQUIPMENT

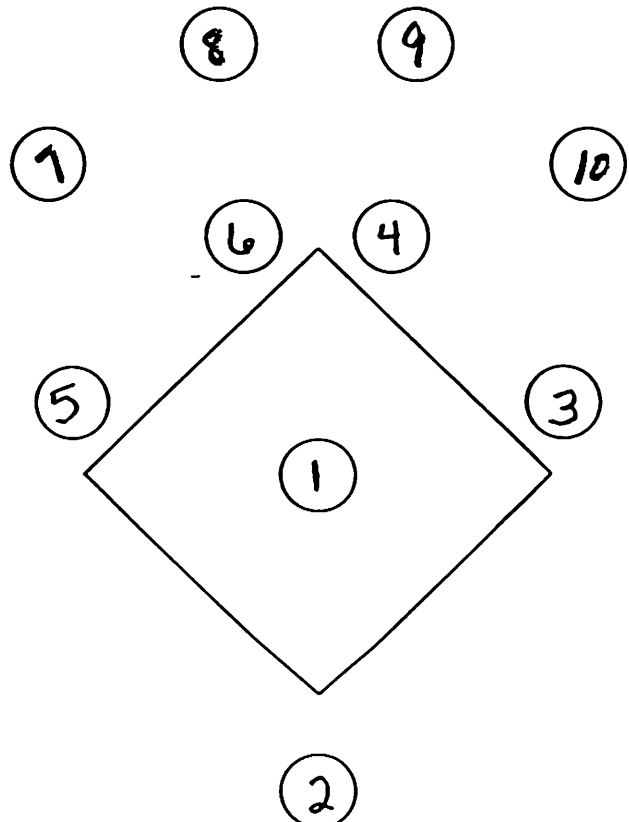
The softball bat must be rounded and made of one piece of hardwood, plastic or metal. The bat must be no more than 34 inches long and 2 ¼ inches in diameter at its largest part. It must have a safety grip.

The softball must be a regular, smooth seamed concealed-stitch or flat surface ball not less than 11 7/8 inches or more than 12 inches in circumference. The ball may not weight less than 6 ¼ ounces or more than 7 ounces. All players may wear gloves, but the catcher and the first baseman are the only players that may wear mitts.

The ball field to the right is called a diamond. The names of the 9 fielding positions are listed below.

1. Pitcher
2. Catcher
3. 1st baseman
4. 2nd baseman
5. 3rd baseman
6. Shortstop
7. Left fielder
8. Left Center fielder
9. Right Center fielder
10. Right Fielder

The battery is known as the pitcher and the catcher.



In our classes we will lay "slow pitch" softball. Each official game is seven innings in length. The pitcher in slow pitch softball, must deliver the ball with an underhand motion at an arc no higher than ten feet. This rule is specific to ASA (American Softball Association) rules. Base runners cannot "lead off", steal bases or advance on passed balls, as they can in fast pitch softball. No bunting is allowed; all swings at the ball must be full swings and a foul ball after two strikes is an out.

There are ten players on a slow pitch softball team. The positions are: 1 – pitcher, 2 – catcher, 3 – first base, 4 – second base, 5 – third base, 6 – shortstop, 7 – leftfield, 8 – left center field, 9 – right center field, and 10 – right field. Some slow pitch leagues allow eleven players (rover) or designated runners as rule modifications.

Terminology:

- **DOUBLE** – a hit that allows the batter to reach second base safely
- **DOUBLE PLAY** – two outs made in succession during the time the pitcher throws the ball and receives it back again for the next pitch
- **ERROR** – a misplay by the fielding team that allows the batter or base runner to advance a base or bases
- **FIELDER'S CHOICE** – the batter is safe because the fielder chose to put out a base runner rather than the batter
- **FLY BALL** – a ball that is hit high into the air
- **FORCE OUT** – a base runner is put out by the fielding team because the runner was forced to advance a base
- **FOUL BALL** – a batted ball that is hit or lands outside the foul lines
- **GRAND SLAM** – a home run is hit with the bases loaded (a runner on each base)
- **GROUND BALL** – a batted ball that is hit on the ground
- **HIT** – a batted ball that is hit in fair territory and allows the batter to advance one or more bases
- **HOME RUN** – a batted ball that is hit in fair territory and allows the batter to circle the bases without the aid of an error
- **HOT CORNER** – the third base area
- **INNING** – each team has batted and made three outs
- **KEYSTONE** – the second base area
- **LINE DRIVE** – a ball that is hit with considerable force in a line which is parallel to the ground
- **ON DECK** – the next player in line to bat
- **PUT OUT** – a fielder retires a runner or a batter
- **SINGLE** – a fair hit ball that allows the batter to reach first base safely without the aid of an error
- **SOUTHPAW** – a left handed thrower
- **STRIKE OUT** – a batter is declared out for receiving three strikes in one time at bat
- **TRIPLE** – a fair hit ball that allows the batter to reach third base safely without the aid of an error
- **WALK** – the batter advances to first base due to the pitcher throwing four pitches that are not in the strike zone; also called a base on balls