

2023 LGBTQ Sports League Softball Rules

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Current A.S.A. slow pitch rules will be enforced unless exceptions are noted:

EXCEPTIONS FOR SPORTS LEAGUE:

1. Game may start with only 8 players present
2. The game will consist of 5 innings
3. In order to speed the game up, the batter will start with a one strike and one ball count

1. GENERAL

A. Forfeit time has been established as game time. Teams should report to the field a minimum of 15 minutes before the scheduled starting time of the game to fill out the score sheet. If a team fails to appear at the appointed time, the umpire will declare the contest a forfeit.

B. Each team must furnish a scorekeeper. Protests based upon the score will not be allowed. Questions should be directed to the umpire.

2. THE PLAYING FIELD

A. Bases will be 65 feet apart in co-rec 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. Bats, gloves, and balls may be approved equipment.

B. 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.

C. In order for a bat to be deemed legal it must be an official A.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 illegal.

4. PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES

A. A team must have 10 players present to start the game. Teams playing shorthanded will not be assessed outs for those spots in the batting order. Players arriving late may have their name added to the bottom of the order; but you may not add an Extra Hitter after the game has started. All substitutes must report to the plate umpire before batting.

B. "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.

C. The A.S.A. re-entry rule will apply. A starter may be withdrawn from the game and re-entered in the same spot in the batting order once. Players may not re-enter a second time, and the starter and the substitute may not be in the game at the same time. 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 1/2 if the home team is ahead, will constitute a game. A 15-run rule will be in effect after 3 innings and a 10-run rule after 5 innings.

B. No new inning may be started, unless the score is tied, after 55 minutes have elapsed from when the game began. The umpire will keep the official game time.

C. The choice of first or last bat in the inning shall be decided by a coin toss (home/ visitors) prior to the game.

D. 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 runners must return to their bases immediately.

E. Bunting or chopping down on the ball is not allowed, and will result in a dead ball with the batter being called out.

F. Players start with a one strike (0-1) count when at bat.

G. A foul third strike is an out. No courtesy fouls shall be given.

H. Infield practice is not allowed after the first inning.

I. The ball is dead and not in play:

- When no pitch is declared.
- When a foul ball is not caught.
- When a runner is called out for leaving a base too soon.
- When offensive interference occurs.
- When a defensive player carries the ball out of play.

J. The ball is in play:

- When the infield fly rule is enforced.
- When a thrown ball remains in playable territory.
- When a base is dislodged while base runners are progressing around the bases.
- When a thrown ball strikes an offensive player.
- When a thrown ball or fair batted ball strikes an umpire.
- When a thrown ball strikes a coach.

K. The ball remains alive until the umpire declares time. Time will be called when the ball is held by a player on the infield area and, in the opinion of the umpire, all play has ceased.

L. A foul ball must reach a height of six feet or more to be legally caught for an out, except third strike in which case any foul is an out.

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 thrown over the maximum. No infield or outfield ball is allowed after the first inning.
- B. The pitch must have a minimum arc of 6 ft. from the ground. The maximum allowable arc is 12 ft. 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 must pause with at least one foot contacting the rubber prior to pitching the ball. The pitcher's foot must remain in contact with the rubber throughout the delivery.
- D. The pitcher must deliver the ball in a continuous, underhand motion on the first forward swing of the pitching arm past the hip.
- E. If a step is taken it may be forward, backward, or to the side provided the foot stays in contact with the rubber and the step is taken simultaneously with the pitch.

7. BATTING

The batter is out when:

- A batter appears in the batter's box with, or is discovered using an altered or illegal bat. Baseball and fungo bats are illegal
- A batter receives his/her third strike. This can be a called strike or from a swing. A foul ball, whether caught or dropped on strike three is also an out.
- The umpire declares a fair infield fly with base runners on first and second or on first, second, and third with less than two outs. This is called the infield fly rule. The ball remains alive and runners may advance at their own risk.
- A fielder intentionally drops a fair fly ball that can be caught by an infielder, with ordinary effort, with first and second or first, second, and third bases occupied with less than 2 outs. The ball is dead and all runners return to the base they occupied at the time the ball was pitched.
- The batter bunts or chops the ball downward. The ball is dead and all runners return to the base they occupied when the ball was pitched.
- When any foot touches the ground completely outside the batter's box or if any part of the foot touches the plate and the ball is hit fair or foul.

8. RUNNER AND BATTER-RUNNER

- A. When a base runner 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.
- C. When a defensive player is in possession of the ball a runner may not remain upright and crash into the defender. When sliding, runners must always slide for the base. If considered flagrant in either above case, the runner may be ejected.
- D. Base runners are entitled to advance but accept the liability to be put out under the following circumstances:
1. When the ball is overthrown into fair or foul territory and remains in play.

2. When the ball is batted into fair territory.
3. When a legally caught fly ball is first touched.

E. Base runners are entitled to advance without liability to be put out under the following circumstances:

1. When a fielder obstructs the base runner from making a base, unless the fielder is trying to field the batted ball or has the ball ready to touch the base runner.
2. When 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 which 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 base runner who is legally running the bases.

G. Interference is the act of an offensive player or team member, umpire, or spectator that impedes, hinders, or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play. Contact is not necessary for interference to be called.

H. Base Stealing: Base stealing is not allowed. Each base runner 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 base runner is out when:

1. In running to any base he/she runs more than three feet from a direct line between a base and the next base when a defensive player is attempting to tag the runner.
2. The base runner passes a preceding base runner before that runner has been put out.
3. The base runner legally overruns first base and makes an attempt to advance to second base and is legally touched while off base.
4. The base runner 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. The base runner is struck with a fair batted ball while off base and before it passes an infielder who could have otherwise made a play.
6. With a base runner on third, the batter or any offensive player interferes with a play being made at home base.
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. 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. Base runners are not out under the following circumstances:

1. When a base runner 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. When a base runner is hit with a fair batted ball that has passed through 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. When a base runner is hit by a fair batted ball after it is touched or touches any fielder.

4. When a base runner is hit by a fair batted ball while in contact with a base.

K. Injured Runner: If an accident to a batter-runner or base runner prevents him/her from proceeding in the game, a substitute runner will be permitted. If no substitutes are available, the runner will be declared out.

9. INJURY AND HEALTH DISCLAIMER

A. Participants should be aware that there is a risk of injury in participation in due to the inherent nature of the activity. Individuals are encouraged to have a physical examination and to obtain adequate health and accident insurance prior to participation. Individuals participate in intramural activities at their own risk!

A.S.A. Rulebook

1. Blocked ball

*batted or thrown ball that is touched, stopped or handled by someone not engaged in the game

*ball is dead

*runners return to last base legally touched

*if offensive equipment, runner being played upon is out

2. Catch/illegally caught ball

*not legal until the ball is in the grasp of the fielder's hand or glove

*not a catch if fielder drops the ball as the result of a collision

*the release must be voluntary and intentional

3. Ejection

*An ejected player must leave the Vine Fields for the remainder of the game

4. Fly ball/line drive

*a fly ball is any ball batted into the air

*a line drive is any ball batted sharply and directly into the field of play

5. In flight

*a batted or thrown ball which has not yet touched the ground

6. In jeopardy

*a term indicating that the ball is in play and any offensive player may be put out

7. Legal touch

*occurs when a runner who is not touching a base is touched by the ball securely held by a fielder

RULE 2 - THE PLAYING FIELD

1. Base distance - 65'

2. Pitching distance - 50'

3. Fair territory

*includes the lines, the bases, and the plate

4. Foul territory

*extends from the foul line to the dead ball line and fence

5. Dead ball territory

*indicates out of play area

*both feet must be in playable territory for a catch to be legal

RULE 3 - EQUIPMENT

1. Legal bat

*may be metal, plastic, graphite, wood, or ceramic

*bat must be stamped "OFFICIAL SOFTBALL"

*may be angular, round, or three-sided

*not longer than 34", not heavier than 38 oz.

*not more than 2.25" in maximum diameter

2. Illegal bat

*exposed rivets, pins, rough or sharp edges, dents

*baseball bats

*more than two layers of tape on the grip

*electrician's tape or other slippery tape on the grip

3. Illegally batted ball

*ball hit with an illegal bat

*batter's entire foot is completely outside the lines of the batter's box

*any part of the batter's foot touches the plate

*the ball is dead and the batter is out

4. Altered bat

*legal bat whose physical structure has in some way been changed

*includes inserting any kind of material inside the bat; painting; sand papering

*if the batter enters the box with an altered bat, the batter is out and ejected

5. Balls

*ball must have "UNL CRec" written on the outside cover *11" for women; 12" for men; 12" for co-rec

6. Other equipment

*only the catcher and first baseman may use a mitt

*if a player makes a play using an illegal glove, the offensive manager has the option of having the batter assume the previous count and bat over or take the result of the play

*no steel cleats

*handkerchiefs may not be worn

*no plastic visors

*no jewelry

7. Equipment on the playing field

*must be kept in dead ball territory-(i.e. the bench area)

*equipment on the field causing a blocked ball: if by the offensive team, if a runner is being played on, that runner is out; if by the defense, the ball becomes dead and runners advance one base

RULE 4 - PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES

1. Teams

*men's or women's may play with 10 or 11 (only 10 will field)

*must have 8 to start

*players arriving late may have their name added to the bottom of the order; but you may not add an EP or EH

2. Extra player (EP)

*must have 11 players to start the game *11 bat and any 10 will play defense

3. Batter, batter-runner, and runner

*the batter is the player who has not yet finished his/her turn at bat

*the batter-runner is the player who has finished his/her turn at bat but has not yet been put out or touched first base

*the runner is the player who has finished his/her turn at bat, has reached first base, but has not yet been put out

4. Batting order

*order in which team must bat

5. "Shorthanded" rule

*if a player must leave the game and there is not a substitute available, when it's that player's turn to bat an out is declared

6. Substitutes

*must report to the plate umpire

7. Illegal substitute

*player who has entered the game without reporting

8. Re-entry

*any starter may be withdrawn and re-enter once, provided he/she occupies the same batting position

9. Blood Rule

*A player, coach or umpire who is bleeding or who has blood on his uniform can not participate until properly treated

*if care is provided in a reasonable amount of time the individual will not have to leave the game

*enforce the rules regarding substitutes, re-entry and shorthanded play if necessary

RULE 5 - THE GAME

1. Coin toss

*determines home and visitors

2. Regulation game

*consists of seven innings

*no new inning shall start after 55 minutes has elapsed

*run rule; 15 after 3, and 10 after 5

*tie games shall be completed, daylight permitting

3. Scoring

*a run shall not be scored if the third out is a result of a batter or runner being forced out

*a run shall not be scored if a preceding runner is called out on an appeal play

*a run shall be scored if it crosses the plate prior to the third out of the inning provided that it is not a force out; failing to tag up is not a force out

RULE 6 - PITCHING REGULATIONS

1. Pitching preliminaries

*one or both feet on the pitching rubber

*must come to a full and complete stop on the pitching rubber

*pitcher has 10 seconds to deliver the ball

2. Legal delivery

*pivot foot must remain in contact with the plate

*a step is not necessary, but if taken, it may be forward, backward, or to the side

*arc limit -- 6' and 12'

*illegal wind-ups include: a stop of the continuous motion; a reversal of the forward motion; more than one pass past the hip (windmill); continuing the wind-up after the release; pitches behind the back or between the legs

3. No pitch

*if pitch is delivered before the umpire is ready

*if catcher is not in catching position

*if the runner leaves the base too soon on a pitch

*if the ball slips from the pitcher's hand during the wind-up

4. Illegal pitch

*one that does not meet arc limits

*one delivered illegally

*a quick pitch

*if the batter swings at the pitch, the illegal pitch is ignored; otherwise a ball is awarded to the batter

5. Defensive charged conference

*one per pitcher per inning

*must remove pitcher from pitching position if more than one is taken

RULE 7 - BATTING

1. Batter's box

*the lines are considered part of the box

*prior to the pitch, the batter may touch the lines, but may not touch outside the lines

*the batter must take a position in the box within 10 seconds after the umpire has declared "Playball;" failure to do so will result in a strike on the batter, no pitch has to be thrown; a new 10 seconds begins; repeat the process if necessary

*a batted ball that touches a batter in the batter's box is a foul ball

2. Batting out of order appeal

*if discovered while the incorrect batter is at the plate, the proper batter assumes the count; otherwise:

*appeal must be made before the next pitch (legal or illegal)

*the batter who should have batted is out; the next batter in order comes to the plate

3. Strike zone

*batter's front knee and back shoulder (Have a generous strike zone)

*to be judged as if the batter is standing even with the plate

4. Base on balls/intentional walk

*the pitcher may intentionally walk a batter without pitching by informing the umpire of his/he desire

5. Batted ball

*any ball that hits or is hit by the bat; no intention to hit the ball is necessary

6. Fair ball

*ball that settles or is touched on or over fair territory

*bounds over first or third

*touches first or third

*hits a foul pole

*leaves the playing field while over fair territory

7. Foul ball/foul tip

*ball that settles or is touched on or over foul territory

*a foul tip is a batted ball that goes directly from the bat, not higher than the batter's head and is caught by the catcher; considered a strike not an out

8. Third strike foul

*the batter is out if s/he hits a foul after s/he has two strikes

9. Bunt/chop

*a bunt is a ball that is intentionally tapped with the bat

*a chop is a ball that is struck with a downward, chopping motion

*bunts and chops are not legal and the batter is out

10. Infield Fly

*a fair fly ball which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when first and second, or first, second, and third bases are occupied and there are less than two out

*ball is alive and runner may advance at their own risk

11. Offensive charged conference *one per inning

RULE 8 - BASERUNNING

1. Base path

*the imaginary line three feet on either side of a line between the bases

2. Force out

*occurs only when a runner loses the right to a base because the batter becomes a batter/runner

3. Dislodged base/over slide

*runners are not compelled to follow a base unreasonably out of position

*if the runner over slides any base other than first, s/he is in jeopardy to be tagged out

4. Tag-ups

*runners may advance on a fly ball once the ball is touched by the fielder

*a tag up is not a force because the batter is put out

5. Appeal plays

*live ball appeals: umpire gives an immediate decision; the ball remains alive and runners may advance

*dead ball appeals: the decision is rendered upon request; any infielder may make the request; the ball remains dead and runners may not advance

*may appeal failure to touch a base, leaving a base too soon on the catch of a fly ball, and overrunning first base

6. Interference/deliberate crash

*act by an offensive player which impedes or confuses a defensive player while attempting to execute a play

*three things ALWAYS occur when interference is called:

1) the ball is dead;

2) someone is called out;

3) other runners must return to the base they occupied prior to the interference

*if a runner, in the umpire's judgment, intentionally attempts to prevent a double play, that runner and the immediate succeeding runner are both called out

*if a runner interferes after s/he has been put out, the runner closest to home is also out

- *when a runner is struck while off base by a fair batted ball that could have been played by an infielder, s/he is called out
- *when anyone other than another baserunner physically assists a runner, that runner is called out
- *when a defensive player has the ball and is waiting for the runner, if the runner remains on his/her feet and deliberately crashes into the defensive player, the runner is out and may be ejected

7. Obstruction

- *an act by a fielder, while not in possession of the ball, which impedes the progress of a runner
- *any act by a catcher which hinders or prevents a batter from hitting the ball
- *when obstruction occurs, the umpire shall give the delayed dead ball signal
- *if a play is being made on an obstructed runner, or if the batter is obstructed before s/he reaches first, the ball is dead and the runner is awarded the base s/he would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there been no obstruction
- *if no play is made on an obstructed runner, play continues
- *if, in the umpire's judgment, the obstructed runner would not have reached the next base, regardless of the obstruction, and s/he is put out prior to reaching the next base, s/he shall be returned to the last base touched prior to the obstruction
- *if the runner advances beyond the base s/he would have reached had there been no obstruction, s/he runs at his/her own risk and may be put out
- *a runner cannot be called out at either of the bases between which s/he is obstructed
- *a runner obstructed in a run down shall be protected to the base s/he would have achieved had there been no obstruction
- *for catcher's obstruction, the batter is awarded first base; runners advance if forced
- *for catcher's obstruction, the offensive manager has the option of taking the result of the play or taking the award for the obstruction
- *if the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely, the catcher's obstruction is canceled; all action stands, no option given

8. Fake tag

- *a form of obstruction
- *when it occurs, warn both teams
- *subsequent offenses result in an ejection

9. Overthrow/base awards

- *award two bases
- *awarded bases determined by the position of the runner at the time of the throw

10. Stealing

- *stealing is not allowed in slow pitch

RULE 9 DEAD BALL - BALL IN PLAY

1. Calling time

- *time is called when the ball is in the infield and it is apparent there will be no subsequent play

2. Dead ball territory

- *call "Dead ball" as soon as the ball or a player with the ball enters dead ball territory
- *if a ball is carried unintentionally into dead ball territory, award runners one base from the last base legally touched

3. Foul balls

- *ball remains alive if a foul fly ball is caught
- *ball becomes dead if a foul fly ball is not caught

4. Falling over the fence *ball becomes dead

- *the batter is out
- *runners awarded one base

5. Other dead ball situations

- *when the ball is batted illegally
- *when interference occurs
- *when the batter bunts or chops the ball
- *when a base coach runs toward home in an attempt to draw a throw to the plate
- *when the ball is blocked
- *when a fly ball is intentionally dropped

6. Delayed dead ball situations

- *illegal pitches
- *obstruction
- *catcher's obstruction
- *runner at third is assisted by a coach on a tag up
- *detached equipment hits a thrown or batted ball

7. Ball remains alive

- *when a fair ball strikes an umpire after passing an infielder
- *when a runner is called out for passing a preceding runner
- *when a thrown ball strikes an offensive player, a coach, or an umpire