

SOFTBALL

1. Overview

In 1887, George Hancock developed the game of indoor softball. In 1895 Lewis Robert adapted the game for outdoor play. In 1927, the National Recreation Association set up a committee to establish rules for the game. In 1933 a National softball tournament was held under the direction of Leo J. Fisher and M.J. Pauley.

A regulation softball game is seven innings. If the score is even at the end of seven innings, the game continues until one team scores more runs than the other team at the end of a complete inning. For the game to be considered legal, 5 innings must be completed. Base runners must remain in contact with the base until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.

II. Playing Area

The playing area is called a diamond, it is a 60 foot square with the bases within the corners of the square. There are batters boxes located on each side of home plate.

III. Rules

The game of softball is actually a modification of the game of baseball and therefore the rules are generally the same for both. Three outs per inning for each team, fouls are unlimited.

1. **Base Runner** - The base runner is entitled to advance only after the ball has left the pitcher's hand in his/her delivery of the pitch. If he/she steps off the base any time prior to the release, he is declared out.
2. **Pitch** – Underarm motion
3. **Strikes** – Occur when:
 - a) batter swings and misses a pitched ball;
 - b) pitched ball is delivered over home plate between the top of the knees and the armpits of the batter;
 - c) fly foul ball is not caught, with less than two strikes on the batter
 - d) the batter, with less than two strikes, is hit by his own batted ball
 - e) foul tip remaining lower than the head of the batter, is caught by the catcher.

Third Strike Rule – the batter may run to first base if the catcher drops the third strike and first base is not occupied with less than two outs.

4. **Balls** – Occur when balls:
 - a) are pitched so as not to go over the plate in the strike zone and the batter does not swing.
 - b) touched the ground before reaching home plate
 - c) are pitched illegally

5. **Fair Balls:**
 - a) touching or settling in fair ground in the infield
 - b) touching first, second or third base
 - c) landing in fair territory in the outfield between the lines from home to first base and home to third
 - d) traveling on or over fair ground and settling behind a fence or in the stand at a distance of more than 200 ft.

6. **Foul Balls:**
 - a) settling in foul territory before reaching either first or third base
 - b) first touching foul beyond first or third base
 - c) bouncing past first or third base on or over foul ground

7. **Batter is out when:**
 - a) a fly ball is caught
 - b) a third strike is caught by the catcher
 - c) he/she swings and misses the third strike and the ball touches him/her
 - d) he/she bunts foul after the second strike
 - e) an infield fly is hit with runners on first and second base or first, second and third base with less than two outs.

8. **Runner is out when:**
 - a) he/she is touched by a fielder before he/she reaches base
 - b) first base is tagged by a fielder with the ball before the runner reaches first base, or when he/she is not in contact with the base
 - c) he/she causes interference with a player fielding the ball
 - d) he/she runs more than three feet out of the baseline
 - e) he/she is forced out at a base
 - f) he/she passes another runner
 - g) he/she leaves the base before the ball leaves the pitcher's hand
 - h) he/she fails to return to the base before the ball, following a fair fly ball that is caught
 - i) he/she is hit by a directly batted fair ball while off base

IV. TERMS

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| Strike Zone | Between batter's arm pits and top of his knees and the area that covers the width of home plate; 3 strikes constitute one out, and 4 balls allow the batter to walk to first base, the first two foul tips turn into strikes. |
| Pinch Hitter (or substitute) | Must hit in the same place in the batting order as the person replaced. |
| Assist | Credit awarded to each player handling the ball in any play that results in a runner being put out. |
| Batting Average | Divide the total number of base hits (not the total number of bases on hits) by the total times at bat. |
| Cut Off | To intercept an outfielders throw to a base in order to pick off another runner. |
| Double | Two base hit |
| Double Play | Two outs resulting from one continuous action. |
| Earned run | The point scored by a runner who arrived safely at first base other than on an error. |
| Error | An avoidable misplay of the ball resulting in base advancement or a lengthened batting life. |
| Full count | 3 balls and 2 strikes on a batter |
| Infield Fly | A high ball hit into the infield |
| Inning | One of the seven divisions of the game, in which both teams have offensive turns. |
| Line Drive | An aerial ball hit directly to one of the defensive ball players. |
| No Hitter | A game with no safe hits by one or both teams |
| Sacrifice | Bunt, hit or fly intended to advance the base runner, with the hitter subjecting himself to being put out |
| Single | One base hit |

Squeeze Play The third base runner coming home on a bunt.

Stolen Base Advance of a base runner unaided by a hit, error or put out

Triple Three base hit

Rules Different from softball

No bunting

Base runners may not advance or leave the base until the ball has been hit

Six innings

10 run rule after 4 innings

No infield fly rule

Positions

First baseman

Second baseman

Third baseman

Short stop

Left fielder

Center fielder

Right fielder

Catcher

Pitcher