

Softball Rules

16" (inch) softball originated in and is considered a Chicago Game.
This form of softball is played without using a glove.

Field:

- The field or "diamond" consist of home plate and 3 bases.

Each positional player is assigned an area to field, but is not limited to this area.

- 16" softball is played with 10 players. (This is different from 12" fast-pitch and baseball)

Position and universal number assigned to that position (for score keeping purposes):

- 1 Pitcher
- 2 Catcher
- 3 1st baseman
- 4 2nd baseman
- 5 3rd baseman
- 6 Short stop
- 7 Left fielder
- 8 Center fielder
- 9 Right fielder
- 10 Short center field

- Positional players may not stand on or interfere with a runners path of travel to each base if not play is being made on that runner.
- Runners may not make contact with a positional player who is fielding a ball.

Bases:

Each base path is 60ft long. The pitcher's mound is 40 ft from home plate (45' in some leagues)

Batting:

A batting order is established prior to the start of a game. This order may not be altered in any way. Batting "out of order" results in an out for the team that is up to bat.

Each batter comes to home plate with a 1 and 1 count (one ball and one strike).

- # of balls is always said prior to # of strikes
- 4 balls thrown prior to striking out results in a "walk" (batter is awarded 1st base Ball: (a ball not thrown within the proper height or a ball not crossing the strike zone (usually a mat or carpet is placed behind home plate to signify the strike zone)
Height: Leagues can determine their own "arch" (height at which the ball must be pitched), however, most leagues use a 6' to 12' arch.
- "Strike Out": 3 strikes results in an out and the batter loses their turn.
 - Strike: a ball that crosses over home plate between the batter's chest and knees. If thrown properly, the ball will land on the mat. Also, a ball that has been contacted, with the bat, but touches in foul territory before 1st or 3rd base. Finally, a ball that has been swung at, but no contact is made.
- If an "illegal pitch" is called by the umpire, the ball did not meet the height requirements. The batter has the choice of hitting the ball or not. If it is not hit, a "ball" is called regardless of the ball landing in the strike zone or not.

- Runners cannot come in contact with a ball that has been hit until after it has passed the fielder making the play.
- Any ball that hits home plate is considered a “ball.” The ball never crossed through the strike zone.
- Any runner that crosses home plate prior to the 3rd out, scores a single run.
- Bunting is not allowed in slow-pitch softball.

Pitching:

- The pitcher must start with 2 feet on the mound. The pitcher may take one step to the left, right, or back from the mound. The pitcher must then come to a complete stop prior to motioning to home plate.
- A pitcher is allowed 2 hesitations (a ball that is either thrown towards a base runner or a ball that is “faked” home or towards a base runner)
 - The 3rd attempt must be released towards home plate.

Fielding:

The act of stopping or catch a ball and throwing it to the appropriate base before a runner can reach that base.

- Ground ball: a ball that hits the ground before being caught. The ball must be thrown to the appropriate base to get an out (or a runner can be tagged if not in contact w/a base)
- Fly ball: a ball that goes up in the air and can be caught (w/o it touching the ground)...the result is the batter being out. The ball does not need to be thrown to a base.
- Double Play: a play that results in 2 outs using the same batted ball.
- Infield Fly Rule: There must be runners on 1st and 2nd or 1st, 2nd, and 3rd w/less than 2 outs. The ball that is hit in the air and is a routine fly ball for the infield. The ball does not have to be caught. All runners must tag their base (if the ball is caught), before attempting to advance to the next base. The runners do not have to advance because the batter is automatically out in this situation.
- Force Out: A play in which the fielding team only needs to tag the base (while having full possession of the ball).
- Tag Play: A play in which the fielding team must tag the base runner in order to get the out. Ex. A situation where the runner does not need to advance. A runner on 2nd and no runner is on 1st. There is no force out. Any runner that is not in contact w/a base can be tagged out.
- Pick Off Play: The attempt to throw out a base runner who is taking a lead off at any base. Runners cannot steal no matter what. The runner must be tagged while they are not in contact with the base. Again, there is no stealing.
- Runners may only attempt to advance a base when the ball has been batted, not during a pick off play.
- Dead ball due to and over throw: a ball that is thrown (and not caught) to 1st or 3rd base and goes out of play. A runner is awarded the base they were going to and one extra base.