

Softball Rules

National Intramural Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) Slow Pitch Softball Rules will be used with Winthrop University modifications.

Players

1. Men's and Women's Leagues
 - a. The game shall be played between two teams of ten players each, and an optional eleventh batter (extra player).
 - b. The extra player (EP) is an optional player teams may include anywhere in their batting order. The EP never plays in the field unless a field player is obviously injured and there are not other substitutes. If a team starts shorthanded, they are not allowed to use the EP at any time during the game.
 - c. A team may begin a game with a minimum of eight players.
2. Co-Rec
 - a. The game shall be played between two teams of ten players each, 5 men and 5 women.
 - b. A team may begin a game with a minimum of eight players, but there must always be equal numbers of men and women on the field.
 - c. Men and Women alternate positions in the batting order, and the pitcher and catcher must be of opposite sex. Other than pitcher and catcher there are no additional defensive requirements.
 - d. In Co-Rec, the EP consists of an 11th and 12th batter (one male and one female). Teams must have both to use the EP.
 - e. Batting order must alternate male and female or vice versa.
 - f. If a male batter is walked during co-rec play, they are awarded 2 bases. The female next in the batting lineup must bat. If there are 2 outs, the female batter has the option to walk or bat.
 - g. If there is an open spot in the lineup where a male or female should be batting, the team will record an out for the open spot.
3. If a team has begun a game with fewer than ten players and then players show up to play, the new players must be added to the end of the lineup.

The Equipment

- A. The Intramural Sports program has bats that can be provided to teams. If teams do use their own bats, they must bear the approved logos below and must be free of all dents, cracks and any other alterations. If a bat is found to be banned or illegal, players using the bat are subject to removal from the game.



- B. Gloves must be worn by all players. Baseball catcher's mitts are not allowed. The Intramural Sports program does not provide gloves to players.
- C. No Metal cleats are allowed. This includes metal tipped cleats.

Timing and Scoring

- A. Playing Time
 1. The game shall be 7 innings or 50 minutes, whichever comes first
 2. If a game is in the middle of an inning as time expires, the last inning will be played out in its entirety
 3. A new inning will not start if less than 5 minutes are left of the 50 minute time allotment
 4. If a game remains tied following seven innings or the completion of the time limit, the game shall end in a tie in Regular Season. In the playoffs, the game will continue until a team wins.
- B. Mercy Rules
 1. 20 runs after 3 innings
 2. 15 runs after 4 innings

3. 10 runs after 5 innings
- C. Forfeit Policy

Teams have 5 minutes passed the scheduled time to have a team ready to play. For every minute that goes by, the opposing team will be awarded 1 run. During this time, the game clock will be running.

Substitutions

- A. Once a starting player has been substituted for, he/she may re-enter the game only once.
- B. Substitutes may not re-enter the game
- C. If a player is injured/ejected and there are no other substitutes, an out will be awarded each time the player in question is suppose to bat.
- D. Courtesy runners are allowed. The umpire must be notified before a courtesy runner replaces a teammate. This can only occur on a dead ball and before the first pitch of the next batter. Once a player is a courtesy runner, they may only sub for that player if they enter the game in the field unless the substitution is due to injury. If there are no substitutes available for the injured player the team must have the person who made the last out as the courtesy runner.

Batting

- A. All batters will start (prior to each at bat) with a one ball and one strike county, all other rules apply such as four balls for a walk and three strikes for an out.
- B. If the third strike is a foul ball the batter is out.
- C. If the batter bunts or chops at the ball, the ball becomes dead, and the batter shall be called out and all runner(s) shall return to the base he/she occupied prior to the pitch.

Sliding and Stealing

- A. All bases that slide away from the spot are still considered to be on the spot. If a runner was safe and the base slides away, the runner cannot be tagged out. If a runner approaches a base that has been moved due to a previous play, the runner does not need to out of his/her way to find the base. Runners only need to go into the area where the base would have been.
- B. Sliding is allowed with the exception of head first sliding. If a runner is seen sliding head first into a base he/she will be called out and play will continue. If players dive back head first, this is also ruled an out.
- C. Players are not allowed to steal at any time.

Pitching

- A. The pitcher must have one foot on the pitching rubber during the pitch
- B. The pitch must be underhand
- C. The pitcher can release the ball will palm up or down
- D. A legal pitch must have an arc of at least 6 feet and not more than 12 feet. If the pitch does not fall within these limits, this is considered an illegal pitch. The batter still has the option to swing at the pitch regardless.

Strike Zone

- A. The strike zone is that space over any part of home plate between the batter's back shoulder and front knee when he/he assumes a natural batting stance.
- B. There will be no use of a strike mat

Definitions

- A. Chopped Bat (illegal): a chopped hit ball is one at which the batter strikes downward with a chopping motion of the bat so that the ball bounces high into the air.
- B. Infield Fly: an infield fly is a fair fly ball (not including a line drive or an attempted bunt) which can be caught by an infielder with an ordinary effort when first and second bases, or first, second, and third bases are occupied before two outs. The pitcher, catcher, and any outfielders whose positions themselves in the infield at the start of the pitch shall be considered infielders for the purpose of this rule, the infield fly is ruled when the ball catches the highest point based on the position of the closest infielder, regardless who makes the play.

1. NOTE: When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire shall immediately declare, "INFIELD FLY, THE BATTER IS OUT" for the benefit of the runners. If the ball is near a foul line, the umpire shall declare, "INFIELD FLY, THE BATTER IS OUT IF FAIR."
- C. Interference is the act of an offensive or team member which impedes or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play.
- D. Obstruction is the act of:
1. A defensive player or team member that hinders or prevents a batter from striking or hitting a pitched ball.
 2. A fielder (1) not in possession of the ball, (2) not in the act of fielding a batted ball, or (3) not about to receive a thrown ball which impedes the progress of a base-runner or batter-runner who is legally running bases.
 3. Another form of obstruction is a fake tag which is when a fielder who neither has the ball nor is about to receive the ball, and which impedes the progress of a runner either advancing or returning to a base. The runner does not have to stop or slide. Merely slowing down when a fake tag is administered would constitute obstruction.

All rules are subject to change by the Program Director for Intramural and Club Sports.