UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATIONAL SPORTS PROGRAMS  

SOFTBALL RULES  

Eligibility: Eligibility requirements are outlined in the Intramural Sports Handbook. Each eligible participant may play on one men's, Open and/or one Co-Rec team in the intramural leagues. Open (no gender specific rules or player ratio requirements and is recreational in nature). The penalty for violating this rule is forfeiture of all contests in which the ineligible player participated.  

Code of Conduct: The Department of Recreational Sports Programs will enforce the Code of Conduct, which among other things prohibits the use of alcohol and controlled substances on University property.  

Softball Rules: Amateur Softball Association (ASA) rules will govern the intramural leagues except for the noted modifications below.  

I. Equipment:  
A. Shoes must be worn by all players. The soles may be either smooth or have soft or hard rubber cleats. Shoes with metal cleats or with detachable cleats that screw onto a post on the shoe are not allowed. Plastic cleats that screw into the shoe are allowed. T-Shirts Must be worn at all times.  

B. Bats: an illegal bat is one that does not meet official ASA requirements. Angular metal bats are legal. A safety knob of at least 1/4” must be on the handle of each bat. A "flare" or "cone" grip attached to the bat will be considered an altered bat. Smooth plastic tape on the handle is prohibited. A bat barrel exceeding 2 1/4” is considered an illegal bat. Penalty: An illegal bat in batter's box - batter is out. An altered bat in batter's box - batter is out and ejected from the game.  

C. Softballs are 12" restricted flight balls and will be provided by the Department of Recreational Sports.  

D. Any type of glove or mitt is legal for all players, regardless of position on the field.  

E. Nothing may be attached to a warm-up bat. No Doughnuts.  

II. Players and Substitutes:  
A. A team shall consist of 10 players. Co-Rec teams shall consist of 5 females and 5 males in the field. There are no defensive positioning requirements other than 6 infielders and 4 outfielders. A men’s and Open team must have a minimum of 8 players to start and finish a game. Co-Rec must be 4 women and 4 men. Players arriving after the game has begun must be added in the 9th, 10th, etc. places in the batting order.
B. When a team has the required minimum number of players (8) present to start a game, the game shall begin at that time. Players not available at the start of the game may enter the game under normal substitution rules.

C. Short-handed Rule: A team may continue a game with one less player than it started with whenever a player leaves the game for any reason other than ejection (no less than 8). If the player leaving the game is a runner, he/she shall be declared out. When a player who has left the game is scheduled to bat, an out shall be declared for each turn at bat. The player who has left the game cannot return to the lineup. Exception: A player who has left the game under the Blood Rule may return (See section J below).

D. Re-Entry Rule: Any of the starting players, including the pitcher, may be withdrawn and re-entered, provided that the player withdrawn sits out one complete inning before re-entering the game.

E. Substitutes: Any player may enter or be removed from the game during any dead ball. If an accident (injury) to a runner prevents him/her from proceeding to a base which he/she is awarded, a substitute runner shall be permitted for the injured player (See "Courtesy Runner" below).

F. Co-Rec Batting Order: Batting order shall alternate sexes. There shall be no exceptions to this rule. If a co-rec team plays with nine players, the spot in the batting order that falls between the two players of the same sex will be an automatic out whenever that spot comes up.

G. Extra Players:

1. An extra player (EP) is optional, but if one is used, it must be made known prior to the start of the game and be listed on the score sheet in the regular batting order. If the EP is used, he/she must be used the entire game.

2. An EP must remain in the same position in the batting order for the entire game.

3. If an EP is used, all 11 players must bat and any 10 can play defense. Defensive positions can be changed, but the batting order must remain the same.

4. If the EP is used in Co-rec, an even number of male/female players must be used. It is not permissible to use an uneven number of players because of the alternate batters rules. All 12 players must bat and any 10 can play defense (5 men and 5 women).

5. Teams have the option each game to "Bat the lineup." At the beginning of each game the team managers must state to the opposing team manager and to the umpire their intention to "Bat the lineup." If one or both teams choose to "Bat the lineup" they must do so for the entire game.

"Bat the lineup" is defined as follows: Those players designated to hit beyond the starting ten players, are included in the offensive lineup. Each of these additional players must have a turn at bat before the rotation begins again. Teams are not required to include their entire team in the original submitted lineup, but may list up to a maximum Revised on 3/6/2007 4:25 PM
of 20 players in the batting lineup if they choose. The original submitted lineup may hit in any set order regardless if the player(s) is playing defensively. Defensive substitutions may be freely made among the original submitted lineup. Any entries beyond the original submitted lineup must enter the game by the regulation substitution method. If all players are listed in the batting order and an injury occurs or a player(s) is ejected, all batters move up one spot to fill the injured/ejected player's spot. The injured player(s) may not return for the duration of the game.

NOTE: As with the EP rule for co-rec games, there must be an even number of males and females in the lineup at all times.

H. Courtesy Runner: One courtesy runner shall be allowed per inning for any reason. The new runner is allowed to enter the game when play has stopped and the batter has reached and stopped at a base. The courtesy runner must be the last recorded out (or the player scheduled to bat last, if in the first inning with no outs) and must be entered prior to the first pitch to the next batter. In co-rec, the courtesy runner must be the same sex as the player being replaced.

I. American Disability Act Rule

1. This rule may be used for a person(s) who is physically challenged as determined by the ADA. As a result of the player’s disability, he/she can play either offense or defense.

2. Teams using a physically challenged player on either offense or defense only must have 11 players. If the physically challenged player can play both, only 10 players are needed.

3. Contact the intramural sports staff for additional details regarding this rule.

J. Blood Rule: A player who is bleeding or who has blood on his/her uniform shall be prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment can be administered. The umpire shall:

1. Stop the game and allow treatment if the injured player would affect the continuation of the game.

2. If medical care or treatment is administered in a reasonable length of time, the individual will not have to leave the game. The length of time that is considered reasonable is left to the umpire's judgment.

3. Apply the rules of the game regarding substitution, short-handed player, and re-entry if necessary.

III. The Game:

A. Each team is responsible for keeping their team's score on the score sheet provided by the Intramural Department. The final score on the score sheet shall be considered the official score.
B. The choice of the first or last bat in the inning shall be decided by a coin toss (or picking odd/even).

C. A regulation game shall consist of seven innings. Exceptions:

1. A contest halted by weather, darkness, or other causes shall be considered completed, regardless of the number of innings played. The score at the completion of the last full inning of play shall be the final score unless the home team is ahead at the end of the 1/2 inning.

2. No new inning will begin one hour and five minutes after the scheduled game time. Example: a 3:30 game is complete at 4:35 unless the teams are in the process of finishing an inning. A new inning begins immediately after the final out of the previous inning.

3. **A game shall be considered complete if by the end of the 5th inning one team is ahead by 12 or more runs.** Complete innings must be played unless the home team scores the total to go ahead by 12 runs while at bat. Whenever the visiting team reaches the limit in the fifth or sixth inning, the home team must have their opportunity to bat in the bottom half of the inning.

4. A game that is tied at the end of seven innings shall be continued only if time remains (during the regular season). If no time remains, the game will be recorded as a tie.

D. **Tie-breaker Rule:** If, after the completion of seven innings of play (and time remains during the regular season), the score is tied, the following tie-breaker will be played to determine a winning team.

1. Starting with the top of the eighth inning, and each half inning thereafter, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player who is scheduled to bat last in that respective half inning being placed on second base (e.g., if the number five batter is the lead off batter, the number four batter in the batting order will be placed on second base. A substitute may be inserted for the runner).

IV. **Pitching Regulations:**

A. The ball must be delivered with a perceptible arc, and reach a height of at least 6 feet from the ground while not exceeding a maximum height of 12 feet from the ground.

B. The ball must be delivered underhand at a moderate speed.

C. The maximum time to hold the ball prior to the pitch is 10 seconds.

D. A pitcher may not deliver more than 3 pitches to the catcher prior to the beginning of each half inning (i.e. warm up pitches).

V. **Batting/Base Running Regulations:**

- **Bunting:** Bunting is not allowed if batter bunts he/she are out

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• Batter Stepping on Plate- Result batter is out

A. DOUBLE BASE USEAGE:
The double base has been approved for use at first base. Whenever a play is being made on the batter-runner, the defense must use the inside portion of the base and the batter-runner must use the outside portion of the base. On extra base hits or balls hit to the outfield when there is no play being made at the double base, the batter-runner may touch the inside or outside portion of the base. Should the batter-runner return to the base, the runner must use the inside portion of the base. NOTE: THE BATTER-RUNNER IS OUT WHEN THERE IS A PLAY BEING MADE AT FIRST BASE AND THE BATTER-RUNNER TOUCHES ONLY THE INSIDE PORTION OF THE BASE, PROVIDING THE DEFENSE APPEALS PRIOR TO THE BATTER-RUNNER RETURNING TO FIRST (THIS IS CONSIDERED A LIVE BALL APPEAL).

B. Co-rec: on any base on balls to a male batter (intentional or not) the next female batter must take her turn at bat.

C. Base stealing is not allowed. Base runners may leave their base when a pitched ball is hit or crosses home plate, but must return to that base immediately if the ball is not hit in fair territory.

D. Sliding will be allowed. Defensive players are not allowed to stand on the base and block the path of runners. Head first sliding is not allowed. A dive back to the base is not considered a head first slide. **Sliding into home plate is not allowed and will result in an automatic out.**

E. When a defensive player has the ball or is about to receive the ball, the runner shall be declared out if he/she remains on his/her feet and crashes into the defensive player. A base runner shall be out if he/she does not attempt to avoid a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make a tag or force out. In order to prevent a crash ruling, the runner may slide, jump over the top of the defender holding the ball, go around the defender (if outside the 3 foot lane, the runner will be called out), or return to the previous base touched. NOTE: If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender will be ejected. Runners are not required to slide.

F. Infield Fly Rule: An infield fly is a fair ball (not including a line drive) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when 1st and 2nd, or 1st, 2nd and 3rd bases are occupied, with less than two outs. When an apparent infield fly is hit, the umpire shall immediately declare "Infield Fly - Runner is out." Runners may advance at the risk of being caught or "tag-up" and advance as on any fly ball.

VII. General Rules and Definitions:

A. Interference is when an offensive player impedes or confuses a defensive player while attempting to execute a play. Penalty: Runner is out.

B. Obstruction is the act of:
1. A defensive player who hinders or prevents a batter from batting a pitched ball; or

2. A fielder, while not in the possession of the ball, in the act of fielding the ball, or about to receive a thrown ball, who impedes the progress of a legal base runner.

Penalty: Base runner(s) is awarded base(s) he/she would have reached if there had been no obstruction.

C. An overthrow occurs when a thrown ball from any fielder goes beyond the boundary lines of the playing field (dead ball territory) or becomes a blocked ball. Base runners are entitled to advance without liability to be put out when the ball is in play and overthrown (as above) or is blocked.

Effect:

1. All runners will be awarded two bases from the last base touched at the time the ball left the thrower's hand. Direction of runners has no bearing on the award.

2. When a fielder loses possession of the ball, such as on an attempted tag, and the ball enters the out-out-play area, all runners are awarded 1 base from the last base touched at the time the ball entered the dead ball area.

D. Ground Rule Double: when a fair ball bounces or rolls out of play, or when it deflects off of a defensive player and goes out of play in foul territory, the ball is dead and all runners (including the batter) are awarded two bases from the time of the pitch.

E. When a live ball is unintentionally carried by a player into the out-of-play area, the ball becomes dead and all base runners are awarded 1 base from the last base touched at the time the fielder enters dead ball territory.

F. Foul lines, dead ball lines (out-of-play) - all lines are considered in play.

G. Foul Tip is a batted ball which goes directly from the bat, not higher than the catcher's head, to the catcher's hands and is legally caught. Any foul tip that is caught is a strike and the ball is dead. 3rd Strike Foul ball batter is an out.

H. A forfeited game shall be declared by the umpire in favor of the team not at fault in the following cases:

1. If a team fails to appear on the field, or being on the field, refuses to begin a game for which it is scheduled at the time scheduled or within 10 minutes of the scheduled starting time.

2. If after the game has begun, one side refuses to continue to play, unless the game has been suspended or terminated by the umpire.

3. If after play has been suspended by the umpire, one side fails to resume playing within two minutes after the umpire has called "play ball."

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4. If a team employs tactics noticeably designed to delay or to hasten the game.

5. If, after warning by the umpire, any one of the rules of the game is willfully violated.

6. If the order for the removal of a player is not obeyed within one minute.

7. If, because of the removal of the players from the game by the umpire or for any cause, there are less than 8 players on either team.

The score of a forfeited game shall be 7-0 in favor of the team not at fault.

NOTE: Teams that forfeit two games will be dropped from further competition.

I. Appeal Play: A play in which an umpire cannot make a decision until requested by a coach or player. The appeal must be made before the next pitch or before the defensive team has left the field (i.e. crossed the foul lines). Any infielder, with or without the ball, can make a verbal appeal on a runner missing a base or leaving a base too soon on a fly ball.

There are four major appeal plays: (1) missing a base, (2) leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched, (3) batting out of order, and (4) attempting to advance to second base after making the turn at first base.

J. "TIME": The ball remains live until the umpire calls "TIME", which should be done when the ball is held by a player in the infield area and when, in the judgment of the umpire, all play has ceased.

K. Sportsmanship Encroachment Rule (Co-rec): When in the umpire's judgment, a male defensive player encroaches on a female teammate's attempt to make a play on the ball, the sportsmanship rule shall be called. If the male player succeeds in making the play, the batter/base runner(s) will be awarded the base(s) that would have been received had there been no encroachment (Example: A batter hits a fly ball to right field that would be a normal play for the right fielder, a female. The male center fielder steps in front of the female fielder to make the catch. Ruling: Batter is awarded 1st base, all runners advance one base). Exception: The rule does not apply to plays at home plate where another fielder, other than the catcher, may attempt to make the play.

VIII. Points of Emphasis:

A. Face masks will be provided for catchers to wear if they choose to do so.

B. All players not in the game are encouraged to stand or sit behind the fenced back-stop.

C. Protests
   1. Protests will not be received or considered if they are based solely on a decision involving the accuracy of judgment on the part of an umpire. Examples of protests which will not be considered are:
      a. Whether a batted ball was fair or foul.
b. Whether a runner was out or safe.
c. Whether a pitched ball was a ball or strike.
d. Whether a runner did or did not touch a base, or did or did not leave too soon on a caught fly ball.

2. There are three types of protest:
   a. Misinterpretation of a playing rule--must be made before the next pitch or, if on the last play of the game, before the umpires leave the playing field.
   b. Illegal substitute or re-entry--must be made while they are in the game and before the umpires leave the field.
   c. Ineligible player--can be made any time.

3. Protests may involve both a matter of judgment and the interpretation of a rule.

4. The captain, or acting captain, of the protesting team shall immediately notify the plate umpire that the game is being played under protest. To aid in the determination of the issue, all interested parties shall take notice of the information, game details, and conditions surrounding the decision to protest.

5. An official protest form must be filed in the Intramural Sports Office before 2:00pm the following school day.

D. Games will not automatically be canceled due to inclement weather. In the event that it is necessary to postpone games, the following procedures will be in effect:

1. Team captains may call the Intramural Sports Hotline at 616-3306 if there is uncertainty as to whether games will be played or not. Decisions regarding weather related postponements will be made at 2:30pm (11:00am on Sunday) on days when game status is questionable.

2. When games are postponed due to field conditions, the fields shall be considered closed until scheduled games begin.

3. There is no guarantee that all postponed games will be played. However, the Intramural Sports Staff will reschedule as many games as possible.

E. Team captains are encouraged to check the schedules posted in the IMA for score updates, field changes, etc. Schedules should be checked at least on a weekly basis. Captains should also review their responsibilities listed on page 14 of the Intramural Sports Handbook.

F. Infield practice is not guaranteed prior to the start of the game.

G. Barbeques are not allowed on fields.