

# **SOFTBALL**

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- I. To learn the history, scoring and rules of softball.
- II. To learn and develop the basic skills of softball.
- III. To learn the strategy of softball.
- IV. To increase coordination and muscle development.
- V. To acquire carry-over skills and attitudes concerning softball.

## **Rules and Scoring**

A team consists of nine players. A Designated Hitter (DH) may be used for any player as long as the player's name is included in the official line-up sheet. If a DH is replaced by a pinch-hitter or pinch-runner, the DH may not return to the game. The defensive player for whom the DH is batting cannot play offense during the game, and a DH may not play defense. All starting players (except the DH) are allowed to re-enter the game one time if they have been substituted for, but the re-entry must be in their original batting order. Play shall consist of 7 innings. If the seventh inning ends in a tie, play will continue for an 8th and 9th inning. Starting in the top of the 10th inning (and for each half inning thereafter), the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player scheduled to bat 9th in that respective inning placed on second base. The distances between base paths is 60 ft. This is a major distinction since the short base paths require infielders to react much more quickly than in baseball where the infielders have 90 ft. to work with. The pitching distance from pitching rubber to home plate is 40 ft. Softball pitchers work from a pitching circle with an 8 ft. radius from the pitching rubber. The ground within the circle is not elevated. Pitches delivered near 70 mph will reach a batter equivalent to a baseball pitcher throwing 100 mph from 60' 6". Pitchers must begin their delivery with both feet in contact with the pitching rubber with the ball held in both hands in front of their body. The pitch begins when one hand is taken off the ball or the pitcher makes any motion that is part of the wind-up. The pivot foot may remain in contact with the rubber or may push off or drag away prior to the front foot touching the ground as long as the pivot foot remains in contact with the ground. Outfield fences are set at a radius of 200 ft. from home plate.

1. Game
2. Players
3. Field and equipment
4. Pitching
5. Batting
6. Infield fly rule
7. Base runner
8. Scoring

### **Safety for Softball**

1. Never swing a bat in a group of people.
2. Make sure no one is standing next to you when swinging a bat.
3. When a player is batting, make sure the batting team is in foul territory, standing where they can see the batter's face.
4. Never throw a ball to someone unless they are looking at you.
5. Always be aware of over throws.
6. Make sure bat handles are taped to avoid slipping out of hands.
7. Do not throw a bat.
8. Do not stand on a base when playing that base.
9. When playing catcher, make sure to stay far enough back away from batter.
10. Batting team is on the first base side, at least 5 yards from the plate.

### **Care of Equipment**

1. Keep bats in a bat bag when not in use.
2. Remove old tape from bat handles and replace with new when worn out.
3. Keep softballs in a ball bag when not in use.
4. Throw away softballs with torn covers.

5. Throw away torn bases.

## Overview

- Softball originated in the late 1890's, was known in the beginning as mush ball, kitten ball, and indoor baseball. In 1926, the game acquired the name it is now know by worldwide, softball.
- Softball flourished in the 1930's and early 40's it be came known as the depression sport. People out of work and with little money to spend on high priced entertainment took in softball, either as spectators of participants.
- After World War II, the sport gradually created more and more interest as a good recreational sport, and before long hundreds of thousands of teams soon sprang up in every open area where there was room to accommodate the size of a softball diamond.
- The real beginning and true development of the game as a competitive sport came when the Amateur Softball Association was organized in 1933 and an official playing rules committee (International Joint Rules Committee) was created. The IJRC worked to bring recognition and identity to the games that would in a short time become the largest participation sport in the United States.
- Fast pitch softball is making great progress as an international game, so much that there is a good possibility that it will be one of the few new sports added to the Olympic Games. Some, forth seven countries presently have organized fast-pitch competition. It is certain that slow pitch will also develop as an international game and with this the opportunity for more and more people to participate.
- Softball has played an important role in fostering greater understanding among people, bringing competitors together from every part of the world in good, spirited sport competition.

## RULES

1. **TEAM:** Must have nine players to start or to continue a game.
2. **GAME:** Regulation game consists of seven innings. Each team has three out per inning.
3. **STRIKE:** May occur in any one of the following:
  - (a) Batter swings at the pitched ball and misses.
  - (b) Pitched ball is "called" a strike when delivered over home plate between the knees and shoulders of the batter.
  - (c) Fly ball which goes foul and is not caught (except on the third strike)
  - (d) Foul tip that remains lower than batter's head and is caught by the catcher.
4. **BALL:**
  - (a) Pitched ball not over the plate between the batter's knees and shoulders and batter does not swing.
  - (b) Four balls entitles batter to become a base runner.
  - (c) Pitcher goes through preliminary motions of pitching but fails to deliver the ball.
5. **FAIR HIT BALL - - LEGALLY BATTED BALL THAT:**
  - (a) Lands and remains in the infield between home and first; home and third...
  - (b) Touches or goes over first or third base.
  - (c) Lands in outfield in fair territory between extended lines from home to first and home to third.
6. **FOULED BALL - - BATTED BALL WHICH:**
  - (a) Lands fair and rolls foul in the infield
  - (b) Hits fouled in the outfield
7. **OUT -- BATTER -- WHEN BATTER:**
  - (a) Swings at and misses the third strike
  - (b) Exception: Third Strike Rule -- When the catcher fails to catch the third strike before the ball touches the ground when there are less than two outs and first base is unoccupied; or anytime there are two outs, batter becomes base runner.
  - (c) Foul tip is caught on third strike
  - (d) Fair or foul fly is caught
  - (e) Interferes with the catcher
  - (f) Is hit by her own batted ball in fair territory before it has been played by a fielder
  - (g) Reaches first base after the ball is caught by the baseman
  - (h) Is tagged with the ball before reaching first base.
8. **OUT -- BASE RUNNER -- WHEN BASE RUNNER:**
  - (a) Leaves her base before ball leaves the pitcher's hand

- (b) Is tagged off the base
  - (c) Fails to return to the base before ball reaches baseman following a fair hit fly legally caught
  - (d) Interferes with a fielder to field the ball
  - (e) Is forced out at base
  - (f) Passes a base runner
  - (g) Is hit by a fair batter ball
  - (h) Runs outside the legal three feet from direct base line
  - (i) Intentionally kicks a ball missed by fielder
9. The pitcher's plate, made of wood or rubber, is only six inches wide and is inserted flush with the ground 40 feet from home plate.

### **Terminology**

Appeal play - a play in which an umpire cannot render a decision unless requested by a member of the fielding team.

Balk - a term used frequently to describe an illegal pitch.

Base hit - a hit made by a batter which permits her to safely reach one of the bases without causing a teammate to be forced out.

Base on Balls - a turn at bat in which the batter is automatically awarded first base when the pitcher delivers four pitches which are outside the strike zone.

Battery - the pitcher and catcher.

Blocked ball - a thrown or batted ball which is touched by a non-player or which touches any object which is not part of the playing area or equipment.

Box score - in the scoring record the listing of each player's name and position(s), her batting and fielding record, and the score for each team by innings.

Double - a two-base hit.

Double play - a play by the defensive team in which two base runners are put out on the same play.

Error - an act committed by a fielder which permits a runner to reach base or advance an extra base.

Fair ball - a batted ball which settles or is touched by a fielder between home and first, or between home and third base, or one in which the ball lands within the base lines beyond first or third base.

Force-out - a play in which the runner loses her right to a base because the batter becomes a base runner.

Foul ball - a ball which settles or is touched by a fielder outside the base line between home and third, or between home and first base, or one which lands outside of the base lines beyond first or third base.

Foul tip - a batted ball which goes directly from the bat not above the head of the batter to the catcher's hands.

Ground rules - rules established by mutual consent of opposing teams to designate the playing area when objects of any nature are within the prescribed official boundaries of the playing field.

Half inning - a portion of an inning in which one team is at bat and the other team in the field, and one team makes three outs.

Home run (homer) - a hit which enables the batter to run all four bases and score a run; a ball which is batted over a fence 200 feet from home plate.

Hot corner - third base

Infield - that portion of the field which is included within the diamond made by the base lines.

Infield fly - a fairly hit ball other than a line drive or bunt which is caught or in the opinion of the umpire could have been caught up by an infielder, when there are less than two outs and there are runners on first and second bases or runners on first, second, and third bases.

Keystone - second base.

Line drive - an aerial ball which is hit sharply and directly "on a line" into the field of play.

Mound - the area surrounding the pitcher's plate.

Obstructed ball - a batted or thrown ball which strikes an object or person within 25 feet of the base lines.

On-deck circles - the areas marked on the first and third base side of home plate.

Outfield - that portion of the field beyond the diamond formed by the base lines and within the foul lines beyond first and third base and within the boundaries the playing field.

Overthrow - a throw made by a fielder which goes into foul territory over first, third, or home plate.

Passed ball - a legally pitched ball which should have been caught or handled with ordinary effort by the catcher.

Play ball - the call made by the umpire to indicate that play may start or be resumed.

Pop-up - a short fly ball hit anywhere in the infield or surrounding foul territory.

Rubber - the pitcher's plate.

Sacrifice - with less than two outs the batter advances one or more base runners by bunting a ball and is put out (or should have been out if an error had not been committed), or with less than two outs the batter advances a runner by hitting a fair fly ball which is caught.

Single - a one-base hit.

Straight-away hitter - a batter who hits toward center field.

Strike - a pitched ball at which a batter swings or a pitch which enters the strike zone at which the batter does not swing; a strike is also called when a batter hits a foul ball with less than two strikes already called on her.

Strike out - a play in which the umpire calls the third strike on the batter.

Texas leaguer - a ball which is batted over the head of the infielders but not far enough to be caught by an outfielder; a ball that is just out of reach of both the infielders and outfielders.

Time - the call made by the umpire to indicate a temporary halt or suspension of play.

Triple - a three-base hit.

Turn at bat - the time when a player is at bat; it starts when she enters the batter's box and continues until she becomes a base runner or is put out.

Wild pitch - a fairly delivered ball which is pitched so high, low, or wide that the catcher cannot catch or control it with ordinary effort.