

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
INTRAMURAL SPORTS

MEN'S, WOMEN'S & CO-REC SOFTBALL RULES

The current available *Official Rules of Softball of the Amateur Softball Association- Slow Pitch* will govern play. The game of softball as played in the Intramural Program is a slow-pitch game with modified pitching and Intramural modifications.

Each player must present his/her [valid UMass UCard](#) to participate in each and every intramural contest.

For the full list of intramural policies and procedures, please read the [Intramural Captains Guide](#).

Team captains are responsible for the conduct and eligibility of their teams and adherence to the rules governing play.

I. TEAM

A. A team shall consist of 10 players as follows:

1. The nine regular positions and an extra fielder.
2. All players of the team in the field may be stationed anywhere in fair territory. The pitcher in delivering the ball to the batter must be in the legal pitching position and the catcher must be in his/her catcher's box.
3. Substitutions/Player Re-Entry -- Any of the starting players and substitutes may be substituted and re-entered as many times as the team wishes, provided players occupy the same batting positions whenever in the lineup. The starting player and substitute(s) may not be in the lineup at the same time.
4. A maximum of 10 players **must** appear on the scoresheet in the batting order.
5. Team captains determine the batting order.

B. A game cannot begin without at least six (6) players per team. The fielding team must provide a catcher. *For co-rec, a team that lists an even number of players in the lineup must have an equal number of men and women. A team that lists an unequal number of players in the lineup can be one up male or female. Men and women must be listed alternately in the batting order.*

1. If, at any time during the game, a team does not maintain the minimum number of _____ players, that team shall forfeit the game regardless of the score.
2. Additional players may enter the game upon arrival whenever play is dead. Additional _____ players to the lineup after the game has begun should be placed at the end of the batting _____ order, alternating men and women.

II. EQUIPMENT

- A. Metal-spiked or metal-cleated shoes are **ILLEGAL**.
- B. The official ball is the one supplied by the intramural program.
- C. The intramural program will supply a bat for game use. Teams may use their own bats provided each bat is an *official softball bat* or approved for use by the Amateur Softball Association (ASA). Any bat on ASA's non-approved bat list is illegal and cannot be used. Baseball bats are illegal.

III. PLAY

A. Strike Zone - The strike zone is that space over any part of homeplate between the batter's armpits and the top of his/her knees when the batter assumes his/her natural stance.

B. Ball and Strikes

1. Two (2) strikes and the batter is **OUT**.
2. Three (3) balls and the batter is awarded first base (walk).

Note: The batter is NOT out when he/she hits a foul ball with two strikes

3. On a walk to a male batter (intentional or not) the male batter will advance to second base and the following female will bat for herself. All base runners will advance to the next base forced to, on a walk to a male batter. If a male batter is walked and there are two outs, the female may be

given the option of hitting or receiving an automatic walk.

C. Bunting is permitted

1. The batter is **OUT** on a bunt attempt on a second strike that goes foul.

D. Base Stealing/Advancement

1. Under no condition is a baserunner permitted to steal a base or advance on a wild pitch or passed ball. She/he may leave her/his base when a pitched ball has reached or passes homeplate.
2. When a baserunner fails to maintain contact with the base to which she/he is entitled until a legally pitched ball has reached homeplate, the ball is dead, a no pitch is declared, and the baserunner is **OUT**.
3. The batter **may not** become a runner if the catcher fails to catch a third strike.

E. Ground Rules

1. *Light poles* – If contacted by a fly ball, the ball remains live and all players are liable to be put out. The batter-runner is limited to two (2) bases.
2. *Field #2* - If the ball becomes submerged or lodged in the water at the base of the hill in leftfield, the ball is dead and all runners are awarded 2 bases from the time of the pitch (ground rule double). Balls that are hit onto the top of the hill that do not return are still considered homeruns.
3. *Overthrows* - On thrown balls that go out of play (dead ball territory), all runners will be awarded two bases based on their position when the ball left the fielder's hand. Runners may return to touch a missed base.

IV. THE GAME

A. The 'home' and 'visiting' team will be determined by a coin toss prior to the beginning of the game.

B. A game will consist of five (5) complete innings. During league play, a time allotment of forty-five (45) minutes is set to complete these five (5) innings.

1. No inning can begin after the forty-five minute time limit. However, regardless of the time limit, a game cannot be suspended until an inning is completed, unless the 'home' team is ahead.

C. Three (3) complete innings constitute a legal game and the umpire shall declare the leading team the winner, in the following situation:

1. The forty-five minute (45) time limit has expired and the inning has been completed.

D. Games halted with less than three (3) innings having been played will be considered tie games.

E. Tie Games – League Play

1. If the score is tied after five (5) complete innings and the time allotment has expired, the game will remain tied and will be considered a 'win' for both teams in playoff considerations.

F. Tie Games - Playoffs

1. All playoff games shall be five (5) full innings, unless the 'home' team is ahead.
2. Tie games will continue into extra innings until the tie is broken.
3. **Run Ahead Rule** – 15 after three innings or 2½ innings if the home team is ahead. Complete innings must be played unless the home team scores the run ahead limit while at bat. When the visiting team reaches the limit in the top half of the inning, the home team must have their opportunity to bat in the bottom half of the inning.

V. PITCHING

A. Pitcher's position - before delivering the ball to the batter, the pitcher shall take his/her position with both feet on the pitcher's plate.

1. While on the pitching plate, prior to the start of the delivery, the ball must remain in either the glove or pitching hand.
2. At the start of movement, the pitcher shall hold the ball in both hands for not less than one second and not more than 10 seconds before releasing it.
3. He/she must step directly forward with the free foot and deliver the ball the first time the pitching arm passes the hip toward the batter.
4. On the backswing, the pitching hand may not go above the shoulder on the pitching side.
5. The pivot foot must stay in contact with the pitcher's plate until the ball has left his/her hand.

6. His/her shoulders must stay in line with first and third bases at all times during the pitching motion.
7. Male pitchers shall pitch from 46 feet and female pitchers may pitch from 40 feet.

- B. Pitch delivery - the ball must be delivered with **moderate** speed and underhand with the palm of the pitching hand facing directly toward homeplate at all times.
1. Twisting of the wrist, two hesitations, windmill motions, twirling, or hiding the ball from the batter's view are **ALL ILLEGAL** and will be called by the umpire.
- C. Illegal Pitch - any pitch declared illegal by the umpire will be considered a 'ball' (a warning may be given). **EXCEPTION:** If a player swings at a declared 'illegal pitch,' the illegality of the pitch is forfeited and any/all action resulting from the swing shall stand.
- D. No Pitch shall be declared when:
1. The pitcher delivers the ball during a suspension of play.
 2. The ball slips from the pitcher's hand during his/her backswing.
 3. The runner is called out for leaving the base too soon.
- EFFECT:** The ball is dead and all subsequent action on that pitch is cancelled.
- E. A pitched ball that hits a batter shall be called a ball or strike. No base is awarded and the ball is dead.
- F. Intentional Walk - if a batter is to be intentionally walked, notify the umpire who will award first base. No pitches are necessary.

VI. BASERUNNING

- A. When a defensive player has the ball and is waiting for the runner and the runner remains on his/her feet and deliberately crashes into the defensive player, the runner is to be declared **OUT**.
NOTE: If the act is deemed flagrant, the offender shall be ejected.
- B. Dislodged Base - if a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither he/she nor the succeeding runners in the same series of plays are required to follow a base unreasonably out of position.
- C. Overslide/Overrun - a batter-runner may overrun or overslide first base and return directly to the base without liability to be tagged out. The runner may be tagged out when there is an attempt or movement to advance to second base. Simply turning either to the left or to the right is not an attempt to go to second. Whether a runner simply turns or attempts to advance to second is an umpire's judgment.

VII. NO MOUTH RULE

- A. Players are required to act in a civil manner toward other players and officials. Any player 'mouthing off' shall be ejected from the game. Captains may ask for a rule interpretation, if it is done in a courteous manner. Further, two players ejected for the same reason will cause their team to forfeit the game.
1. It is up to the discretion of the umpire(s) if a substitute shall be permitted to replace the ejected player.
 2. An ejected player, and her/his team, shall be suspended from further play until she/he meets with the Campus Recreation Staff.
- Rationale: This rule prevents players from 'baiting' and "taunting" each other, and/or berating the game officials and staff. This is an attempt to prevent players from committing unsportsmanlike acts toward each other and/or the officials.

GOOD LUCK AND ENJOY THE SOFTBALL SEASON!

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