

East Carolina University
Intramural Sports
Softball Rules

I. Governing Rules

Current ASA (Amateur Softball Association) rules shall apply with modifications or exceptions as indicated below.

II. Equipment

- A. Shoes - Athletic shoes must be worn by all participants. Soccer style shoes are recommended. Shoes with metal cleats or hard nylon cleats will not be permitted.
- B. Bats – Legal softball bats must conform with ASA guidelines. An official can rule on the legality of a bat if there is any question regarding whether it is ASA acceptable. A list of illegal or “banned” bats will be located at the softball fields as well as at the Student Recreation Center, Room 207. Bats need to be checked in by the captain at the captains’ meeting before the game begins. **If a team is found using an illegal bat during a game, they will forfeit the game.** There will be no penalty for an illegal bat that is checked in before the game except for the fact it will not be allowed.
- C. Face Masks - Protective face masks can be requested from the Site Manager and/or officials at each field. Wearing of such masks is highly recommended, but not mandatory.
- D. Ball - The game ball shall be of 12" size and shall be furnished by the Intramural Sports Office.
- E. Gloves - Fielding gloves must be worn. A catcher’s mitt or first baseman’s mitt may be worn.
- F. Gloves, bats, and balls may be checked out at the Customer Services Desk in the Student Recreation Center. Bats are also available to check out at Blount Fields, although are limited in number. Gloves and balls may only be checked out from Customer Service at the SRC. **Gloves will not be available for check out at Blount fields.** Only 3 gloves may be checked out per One Card.

III. Starting the Game

- A. Teams must be prepared to begin play promptly at the scheduled game time by checking in with the score keeper prior to game time.
- B. GAME TIME IS FORFEIT TIME!! At game time, the clock timing the contest will start. At this time the offended team is given the option to take the victory or to wait up to 10 minutes for the other team to arrive. Once the decision is made by the offended captain, it may not be reversed and the outcome of the contest shall stand. Any time consumed by waiting for a late team shall be taken off the time allotted for the game. If neither team has enough players at game time, the 10 minute rule will automatically be enforced allowing BOTH teams time to arrive.
- C. A team shall consist of ten (10) players. However, to avoid forfeiting when a full team is not present at the scheduled time, a team may begin and continue play with a minimum of (8) eight players. The defensive positions of pitcher and catcher must be filled.

IV. Length of Game

- A. An official game will consist of seven (7) full innings or **50 minutes**, whichever occurs first.
- B. After four (4) complete innings of play, a team ahead by 15 or more runs shall be declared the winner provided each team has had an equal number of at-bat opportunities. After five (5) complete innings of play, a team ahead by 10 or more runs shall be declared the winner provided each team has had an equal number of at-bat opportunities.
- C. If an inning has begun and the time limit expires, the inning shall be completed (unless the home team is ahead in which case only 1/2 of the inning need be played).
- D. In the event of a tied score at the end of seven (7) innings or at the end of the last completed inning during a regular season game, one (1) extra inning will be played in an attempt to break the tie **if there is time remaining in the time limit**. If a game ends in a tie, both teams will be given a win. During the playoffs, extra innings will be played until there is a winner.

- E. The Site Manager has sole authority for calling a game at any time due to inclement weather, darkness or other conditions felt justifiable. The score will revert back to the last completed inning, or last 1/2 inning if the home team is ahead.
- F. A game will be considered complete after four (4) innings of play (or 3 1/2 if the home team is ahead) have been played, or if the time limit is exceeded.

V. **Batting**

- A. Choice of first (Visitor) or last (Home) at-bat for the game shall be decided by a coin flip at the start of the game.
- B. A player will begin each turn at-bat with one (1) ball and one (1) strike. Foul balls count as strikes, including the third strike.
- C. No bunting or chopping the ball is allowed. Penalty: Automatic out. Runners may not advance.
- D. ASA extra player rule may be used.
- E. Teams are limited to scoring a maximum of ten (10) runs per inning. No runs may be scored once the 10 runs limit is reached. If a team needs more than 10 runs in the last inning to win or continue the game, the team will still be permitted to bat even though they cannot win.

VI. **Pitching Regulations**

- A. The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate until the pitched ball leaves the hand.
- B. The ball must be delivered with a perceptible arc, and reach a minimum height of at least six (6) feet from the ground, while not exceeding a maximum height of ten (10) feet from the ground.
- C. The ball must be delivered to the batter on the first forward swing past the hip.
- D. In all instances, the umpire shall call illegal pitch loud enough for the batter and catcher to hear. A ball will be automatically awarded **unless the batter swings**. Repeated violations may result in the pitcher being removed from that position by the umpire.
- E. The pitcher may take only one step before releasing the ball, and the pivot foot must be in contact with the designated pitcher's plate area for the duration of the pitch.
- F. Any ball landing on any part of home plate, except the back black edge, will be a ball.

VII. **Base Running**

- A. There is no stealing of bases under any condition.
- B. A runner may leave a base only after the ball has reached or passed home plate.
- C. If an overthrow goes out of play or is interfered with by a spectator, coach, opposing team player or equipment, the base runners are awarded two bases from the release of the throw or the interference contact based on the runners' location.
- D. Malicious contact by a base runner with a fielder will result in an out and an automatic ejection.
- E. Interference may be called on a runner who approaches a base with hands raised in an attempt to disrupt the flight of the ball. The batter may be ruled out at the umpire's discretion.

VIII. **Players/Substitutions**

Substitutions may be done in one of two methods but not a combination of both.

- A. The first method is the traditional method outlined in the ASA rulebook and is as follows:
 - 1. Substitutions may be made at any time with prior notification to the umpire.
 - 2. If a "starter" leaves the game in favor of a substitute, that player may re-enter the game once, but only in the same batting position
 - 3. If a "substitute" leaves the game, that player may not re-enter the game.
 - 4. A starter and their designated substitute shall never be in the game at the same time.
 - 5. When a team starts with fewer than 10 players, any late players may be added to the end of the batting order at the time of their arrival (NO PENALTY ASSESSED).
- B. The second method allows teams to bat an unlimited number of players:
 - 1. The batting order will contain as many players as desired.
 - 2. Any ten players within the order may play the field in a given inning similar to the extra player rule.
 - 3. Late players may be added to the end of the batting order.

C. **Courtesy runner exception**

1. In the event of a player becoming injured while running the bases, a courtesy runner will be allowed to enter for the injured player without using one of the two above substitution methods. (Note: It will be the umpire's judgment to determine if the injury is legitimate and occurred during the specific time frame mentioned.)
2. The courtesy runner allowed to run for the injured player will be the player who last made an out during the inning (same gender in Co-Rec). If there are no outs, the courtesy runner will be the player who made the last out during the previous inning.

IX. **Definitions**

- A. **Infield Fly Rule:** Any fair fly ball, not including a line drive, which can easily be fielded or caught by an infielder when 1st and 2nd, or 1st, 2nd and 3rd bases are occupied, with less than two outs. The batter is out and runners may advance with liability of being put out.
- B. **Foul Tip:** Batted ball which goes sharply and directly from the bat to the catcher's hands/glove/mitt. The result is a called strike and a dead ball. Whether or not it is a foul out does not depend on the height of the ball, but on whether or not the ball had a perceptible arc.
- C. **Obstruction:** When a fielder obstructs the base runner from making a base, unless the fielder is trying to field a ball (batted) or has the ball ready to touch the base runner. The ball is delayed dead and all runners shall be awarded the bases they would have reached if the obstruction had not occurred.

X. **Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

- A. Any individual who by **his/her misconduct** (profanity, gestures, physical or verbal abuse toward officials, etc.) **causes himself/herself to be ejected from a game is automatically ineligible to participate in Intramural Sports, and must meet with the Sports Manager before participating again.**
- B. Any arguing regarding judgment calls made (ie: strikes, outs, fouls, etc.) will result in an official team warning. Repeat offenses following this warning shall result in the ejection of that particular team member.
- C. Any team who is given the official warning, will be assigned an unsatisfactory sportsmanship rating for that game.

CO-REC Rule Modifications

1. Teams shall consist of **five (5) men and five (5) women**. A team shall be considered legal as long as the number of either sex on the field five (5).
2. **Co-Rec teams must alternate women and men in the batting order.** An automatic out is recorded before each time players of the same sex bat consecutively in the batting order. For example, if 2 males are batting consecutively, then male #1 will bat, then an out is recorded, and male #2 may bat next.
3. In order for a co-rec team to be legal they must have a minimum of eight (8) players and must have at least three (3) players of each sex present. If a team chooses to use an unequal number of men and women in the batting order, regardless of the number of players batting, co-rec modifications #1 and #4 will apply at all times. Either substitution method may be used but not a combination of both.
4. **No more than 5 males or 5 females may play in the field at any one time.** No specific ratio will be required for placement of males and females in the field.
5. In any situation when a male batter is walked, the male will ALWAYS be awarded two bases. With two outs, the next batter (only if it is female next) has the option to take a base on balls, or to hit. This decision must be made prior to the first pitch. With either zero or one out, the female following a walked male must bat.
6. A line perpendicular to the third base line 20' from home plate is considered the "commitment line". If any part of a runner's foot touches this line, the runner MUST proceed home:
 - a. If a runner takes a step toward third base after crossing the commitment line, the ball is immediately dead and the runner is out.
 - b. If the runner crosses the commitment line, the play at home plate is a force play and the defensive team must only possess the ball on the plate before the runner touches the plate. The defensive team may also tag a runner that has crossed the commitment line.

7. All infield and outfield players must remain in their respective areas until the batter has made contact with the ball.