



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA CAMPUS RECREATION – INTRAMURAL SPORTS

SOFTBALL

Revised 7/6/09

(Rules not covered are governed by ASA rules)

PLAYERS AND ATTIRE

Each team will consist of ten (10) players with a maximum of sixteen (16) players on the roster. If a single-sex team chooses to use an extra hitter (EH), they will have eleven (11) players; a co-rec team using extra hitters (EH) will have twelve (12) players. Each team must have at least eight (8) players on the field in order to start play; teams must field their own pitchers and catchers. Women's league: the pitcher may be counted as part of the starting eight players only if she bats. Teams having less than eight (8) players are subject to forfeiture of the game.

Each team shall designate a captain. The captain will act as the spokesperson for the team and make all decisions. Only the captain may talk to officials. Team representatives, including players, spectators, team managers, coaches, score keepers, and group members are subject to these rules.

The only persons allowed in the dugout at a given time during a game are the players listed on the team roster, one (1) coach, and one (1) scorekeeper. All fans and other persons must be situated outside of the fencing or in the bleacher area, out of play.

All players not playing in the field must stay in the dugout.

Metal spikes, sandals, and bare feet are not permitted.

Jewelry is not allowed. Any batter who enters the batter's box with jewelry will automatically be declared out, no exceptions. Jewelry includes gold, silver, bracelets, necklaces, religious jewelry, Livestrong/rubber bracelets, rubber bands, and braided jewelry. Medical bracelets are allowed for the participants who wear them.

No smoking will be permitted on any part of the fields or in the dugout.

Animals are not allowed on any of our Intramural Fields.

GAME, FIELD, AND EQUIPMENT

Baseball bats are not legal. If a batter hits the ball with an illegal bat, it is a dead ball and the batter is out. ASA certified bats can be found at http://softball.org/about/certified_equipment.asp

LENGTH OF GAME AND TIME CONSTRAINTS

For all games, no new inning will start 50 minutes after the game begins. If the time limit has not passed when the third out of the bottom half of the inning is completed, a new inning will be played.

A complete game consists of:

1. Completion of seven (7) innings or 6 ½ innings with the home team winning.
2. Game called on account of weather and one (1) complete inning has been played during the regular season and after 3 ½ innings if the home team is ahead during the playoffs. If the game is in the middle of an inning when the game is called, the final result will go back to the last fully completed inning.
3. Game completed when fifty-five (55) minute time limit has expired.
4. Game completed in situation of a mercy rule:

- A. A team is ahead by twelve (12) or more runs at the completion of the fifth inning.
- B. A team is ahead by twenty (20) or more runs at the completion of the fourth inning.

Game time is forfeit time. Teams should be ready to play at the scheduled game time. It is beneficial to have your team arrive 15-20 minutes early to ensure that games start on time and that forfeits be avoided.

SUBSTITUTIONS AND TIEBREAKERS

A substitute may take the place of a player whose name is in his/her team's batting order. The following regulations govern the substitution of players:

- A. The manager or team captain of the team making the substitution shall immediately notify the plate umpire.
- B. Violation of the re-entry rule results in the use of an ineligible player and is immediately ejected.
- C. Violation of the re-entry rule is handled as a protest and can be made at any time during the game.
- D. The illegal substitute is considered in the game if a pitch has been made.
- E. Substitute players will be considered in the game when reported to the plate umpire.
- F. Any player may be removed from the game during any dead ball.
- G. The original player and the substitute may not be in the line up at the same time.
- H. Once a team goes through the batting order for one full rotation, no additional players may be added to the lineup.

Offense:

- A. If the illegal player is discovered by the defense after one (1) legal or illegal pitch has been thrown while he/she is at bat, he/she is ejected and a legal substitute assumes the ball and strike count.
- B. If the illegal player is discovered by the defense after he/she has completed his/her turn at bat and prior to the next legal or illegal pitch, or before the defensive team has left the field, the illegal player is called "out" and ejected. Any advance from a walk or hit is nullified.
- C. If the illegal player is discovered by the defense after he/she has completed his/her turn at bat and after the next legal or illegal pitch, or after the defensive team has left the field, the illegal player is ejected and any advance by runners while the illegal batter was at bat is illegal.

Defense:

- A. If the illegal player is discovered by the offense after he/she makes a play prior to the next legal or illegal pitch, or before the defensive team has left the field, the offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play, or having the last batter re-bat and assume the ball and strike count at which he was, prior to the play. The illegal player is ejected.
- B. If the illegal player is discovered by the offense after a legal or illegal pitch to the next batter, all plays stand but the illegal player is ejected.

The Pitcher: If the pitcher is taken off the mound but remains in the game, he/she may return to the mound any time later in the game.

- A. If the pitcher is replaced by a substitute, he/she may not pitch again the rest of the game unless due to injury.

DEFINITION OF PLAYING TERMS

The batter is automatically out and the ball is called dead on any attempted bunt.

The batter starts his/her at-bat with a count of one ball and one strike.

Any foul ball after two strikes is considered an out.

A foul tip is a batted ball that goes directly into the catcher's glove, is caught by the catcher, and did not go any higher than the batter's head. A foul tip before two strikes is not an out.

Overthrow Rule: (Anytime a thrown ball goes out of bounds)

The runner shall receive the base he/she was in motion to plus an additional base from the time of the throw if a ball is thrown out of play.

Obstruction: Obstruction is defined as the "act (intentional or unintentional, as well as physical or verbal) by a fielder, any member of the defensive team or its team personnel that hinder a runner or changes the pattern of play." If obstruction occurs, the umpire shall have the authority to determine which base or bases shall be awarded to the runners when the play becomes dead.

If the runner advances further than the official would have awarded and the runner is thrown out, the play will stand.

Offensive Interferences: Interference is defined as the "act of an offensive player or team member which impedes, hinders, or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play." Defensive players must be given the opportunity to field the ball anywhere on the playing field.

- A. Base running interference includes a runner or batter-runner who interferes with a fielder, a runner, or runner-batter who is hit by a fair, untouched batted ball or a thrown ball which strikes any illegal loose equipment, detached part of a uniform, or miscellaneous item left in playable territory by the offensive team.
- B. When a runner interferes with a fielder, it may be in the form of physical contact, verbal contact, visual distraction, or any other type of distraction that would hinder the fielder in the execution of a play. The umpire must determine if the interference occurred before or after the runner who interfered was put out and then apply the proper rule.
- C. It is also considered interference, if, in the judgment of the umpire, there is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play. In such a situation, the runner closest to home plate shall be called "out."

If an offensive player causes excessive contact with a defensive player, the offensive player is called "out." However, **PLAYERS MUST SLIDE INTO HOME PLATE ON CLOSE PLAYS.** (This will be the only exception to the excessive contact rule.)

The base runner cannot run over or through a fielder. The result is an automatic ejection from the game and suspension. If the base runner runs around a fielder and is put out, it is up to the discretion of the umpire to determine if the detour caused the runner to be put out. If the umpire feels that the runner would be safe if he/she did not have to run around the fielder, the base runner will be declared safe.

Out of Play: Any ball that goes into foul territory beyond the out-of-play line or fence is considered "out of play." If an overthrown ball at first or third goes beyond the out-of-play line or fence, the ball is dead and all runners advance according to the overthrow rule (listed above). A ball that goes into the dugout is considered out of play. When a fair-batted ball passes over the out-of-play line, the batter shall be entitled to only two (2) bases.

Safety Base: The orange safety base that is attached to first base in foul territory is suggested for the runner to use to avoid collisions. Once first base is legally occupied, the orange base is nullified and is no longer considered "safe." If a runner returns to the orange base after attempting to advance to second base and is tagged while only touching the orange base, he/she will be out.

Courtesy Runner: A courtesy runner may be used by any player as long as he/she was the batter who made the last out.

Ground Rules:

- A. If the ball is knocked out of play by an infielder, the batter is entitled to two (2) bases. If the ball is knocked out of play by an outfielder, the base runner may continue to run and the outfielder may not throw the ball until he/she has come back into play.
- B. If the fielder leaves his feet to catch a ball, the first foot touching the ground must be in the playing area, or the ball is considered out of play. The ball is out of play if one or both of the fielder's feet touch the line or the area beyond the line when the ball is caught.
- C. If a fielder catches a fly ball in a playable area and unintentionally carries it out of play with his/her momentum, the batter is called "out," and the fielder must return into the field of play prior to throwing the ball into play.
- D. A fly ball caught in the air on the rebound from any object is not a legally-caught ball; the batter is not out and the ball remains in play. Should the ball hit a tree outside the fence in fair territory it shall be ruled a "homerun," based on the judgment of the umpires.

Fair/Foul Hit Ball: The definition of a foul hit ball is as follows: a foul hit ball is a legally batted ball that settles on foul territory between home and first base, or home and third base, or that bounds past first or third base, or that while on or over foul ground touches the runner, umpire, or any other player. A fair fly ball must be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, and not as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul ground at the time he touches the ball.

Pitching Regulations: Section 1: The pitcher shall take a position with both feet firmly in the ground and with one or both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate. The pitcher's pivot foot must be in contact with the pitcher's plate throughout delivery.

- A. Preliminary to pitching, the pitcher must come to a full and complete stop, with the ball in front of the body, facing the batter.
- B. The pitcher shall not be considered in pitching position unless the catcher is in position to receive the pitch.

Section 2: The pitch starts when the pitcher makes any motion that is part of his/her windup after the required stop. Prior to the required stop, any windup may be used. The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate until the pitched ball leaves the hand of the pitcher. It is not necessary to step, but if a step is taken, it can be forward, backward, or to the side, provided the pivot foot is in constant contact with the pitcher's plate and the step is simultaneous with the release of the ball.

Section 3: A legal delivery shall be delivered to the batter with an underhand motion.

- A. The pitch shall be released at a moderate speed. The speed is left entirely to the umpire's judgment. The umpire shall warn the pitcher who delivers a pitch with excessive speed. If the pitcher repeats such an act after being warned, he/she shall be removed from the pitcher's position for the remainder of the game.
- B. The hand shall be below the hip.
- C. The ball must be delivered with an arc that reaches a height of at least six (6) feet and a maximum height of twelve (12) feet from the ground.
- D. The pitcher has ten (10) seconds to release the next pitch after receiving the ball, or after the umpire indicates "play ball."

Section 4: The pitcher may use any windup desired, provided:

- A. He/she does not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.
- B. His/her windup is continuous motion.
- C. He/she does not use a windup in which there is a step or reversal of the pitching motion.
- D. He/she delivers the ball toward home plate on the first forward swing of the pitching arm past the hip.
- E. He/she does not continue to windup after he/she releases the ball.
- F. He/she does not pitch the ball behind his/her back or between the legs.

Section 5: There will be no quick pitches; the pitcher will wait until the batter takes position in the batter's box or when the umpire says "play ball."

Section 6: No pitch shall be declared when:

- A. The pitcher pitches during a suspension of play.
- B. The pitcher attempts a quick return of the ball before the batter has taken position or is off balance as a result of the previous pitch.
- C. The runner is called out for leaving the base too soon.
- D. The pitcher pitches before the base runner has retouched his base after a foul ball has been declared and the ball is dead.
- E. The ball slips from the pitcher's hand during his/her windup or during the back swing.

Effect: The ball is dead and all subsequent action on the pitch is cancelled.

Batting:

The batter shall not have his/her foot touching home plate when the ball is hit. The batting box lines are not evident; judgment by the umpire will be used whether or not the batter was inside of the batter's box on the hit. Effect: The batter is out and the ball is dead and all subsequent action on the pitch is cancelled.

The batter shall not step directly across the front of the catcher to the other batter's box while the pitcher is in position ready to pitch.

Batters are not permitted to throw the bats at any time. The umpire will issue a warning upon the first infraction; any subsequent infractions will result in outs.

The batting order delivered to the umpire must be followed throughout the game unless a player is substituted for another. When this occurs, the substitute must take the place of the removed player in the batting order.

The "Hit and Sit" rule applies so that if a player hits a home run, they do not have to run the bases and are still awarded the appropriate runs allotted. The team that hit the home run must get the ball.

Re-entry Rule: Starting players may leave the game and re-enter once in the same batting position that they left the starting game, and must replace only the person that substituted for them.

- A. Substitutes may enter the game only once and have to bat in the same position as the player they replaced. Once the substitute leaves the game, he/she is done playing that game.
- B. Violation of the re-entry rule results in the use of an ineligible player. Violation of the re-entry rule results in the ejection of the illegal player when the violation is brought to the attention of the umpire by the offended team.
- C. Violation of the re-entry rule is handled as a protest, and can be made at any time during the game. However, all play that occurred while the illegal re-entry was in the game will stand.

Base Stealing: Under no condition is a runner permitted to steal a base. He/she may leave his/her base when a pitch has reached or passed home plate, but must return to that base immediately after each pitch not hit by the batter, as the catcher is returning the ball to the pitcher.

The base runner is out when:

- A. In running to any base, he/she runs more than three (3) feet from a direct line between a base and the next one in regular or reverse order to avoid being tagged or touched by the ball in the hand of a fielder.
- B. He/she interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball. If the interference is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the succeeding runner shall be called out.
- C. He/she is struck with a fair-batted ball while off the base and before it passes an infielder, excluding the pitcher.

The base runner is not out when:

- A. He/she runs behind the fielder and outside the baseline in order to avoid interfering with a fielder attempting to field the ball in the base path.
- B. More than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball and the base runner comes in contact with the one who, in the umpire's judgment, was not entitled to field the ball.
- C. When a base runner is hit with a fair-batted ball that has hit a fielder first, before striking the runner.

PLAYER CONDUCT

Abusive or insulting language, acts of unfair play, or managers, coaches, or substitutes on the field of play without permission will result in suspension or forfeit.

WOMEN'S STIPULATIONS

Each team shall supply a pitcher to pitch to their own team. The designated pitcher may be male or female. The designated pitcher may be a player playing in the game or a coach of the team.

The defensive pitcher must stay within an eight-foot radius of the pitcher's plate until the ball is batted.

Balls and strikes will not be called, therefore, there will be no walks.

Each batter will receive a maximum of three (3) pitches to hit. If by the third (3rd) pitch the batter has not hit the ball into fair territory, the batter is declared out.

The "offensive" pitcher shall not interfere in any way with the play once the ball is hit. If in the umpire's judgment interference has occurred, the following will occur:

- A. If interference occurs during the first play on the ball, the ball is dead and the batter is out. All runners will return to the base they occupied at the time of the pitch.
- B. If interference occurs after the first play on the ball, the ball is dead and the runner being played upon is out. All other runners must return to the last base touched.
- C. If interference occurs after the first play on the ball and the play is being made on no particular runner, the ball is dead and the runner closest to home plate is out. All other runners will return to the last base touched.

The team in the field (defensive team) shall provide a defensive pitcher who may stand anywhere around the pitcher's plate except in the offensive pitcher's sight.

CO-REC STIPULATIONS

Teams are composed of any of the following combinations: 5M and 5W, 5M and 4W, 4M and 5W, 4M and 4W, 6M and 5W, 5M and 6W or 6M and 6W.

As stated above, a co-rec team using extra hitters (EH) could have up to twelve (12) players.

Defensive positioning shall include two (2) males and two (2) females in the outfield, two (2) males and two (2) females in the infield; one male and one female must assume the pitcher and catcher positions. **Exception:** If playing with less than ten (10) players, the team must field two (2) females in the infield, at least one (1) female in the outfield, and one (1) female at the pitcher or catcher position.

The batting order **must** alternate sexes. If a team is short either a male or female the following rules apply:

- A. When two (2) males hit in a row, the team must take an automatic out between them.
- B. When two (2) females hit in a row, there will be no penalty.

If a pitcher walks a male batter (intentionally or not) and the next batter is a female, she has the option to hit or take a walk and the male batter automatically gets two (2) bases regardless if the female hits

or not. After the first pitch, legal or illegal, she has to hit. If there is a male batter following a male that was walked, the batter only receives one base.

If a courtesy runner is used, he/she must be of the same gender.