

Softball Rules (updated 3/15/10)

➤ **Ground Rules:**

- Base lines – 60 feet, Home to Second = 84' 10.25"
 - Each baseline is an imaginary straight line between the bases. 3 feet on either side of the line.
- Pitching Distance – High School/ASA = 43'
- Outfield fence – 190' – 225'
- Home Plate – fair or foul

➤ **Strikes/Ball**

- 3 strikes = Strike out
 - Caught foul tip = is a live ball
 - Foul ball = strike, except 3rd strike
- 4 balls = Walk
- Bunting – new rule 2009 – You must pull the bat back now or it is a strike.

➤ **Dropped third strike rule** – With less than two outs and first base not occupied, on a dropped third strike the batter must be forced out at first or tagged out. If the base is occupied the batter is automatically out. With two outs you must get the batter out, either by a force at first or tagging them.

➤ **Force Outs** – Lead Runners – ex bases loaded, ball hit to third. Third basemen steps on third and then throw home. Catcher catches the ball on home plate – Is the runner out?

➤ **Base Running:**

- Leaving early – Can not leave the bag until the pitcher releases the ball. If do can be called out.
- Running Lane at first – Must be in the running lane, if get hit with the ball outside of the lane will be out.
- Double Bag at first – We play with a double bag on first base. One white and one orange. As a runner if a play is being made on first you must use the orange bag. As a defensive player you must use the white bag.
- Missed bags – as a base runner if we miss a bag and it is blatantly obvious then we go back and touch that base. If not we continue on. Do not hesitate, if you hesitate go back and touch the bag.

Softball Rules (cont.)

- **Infield Fly rule** – With less than 2 outs and runner on first and second or first, second and third. If a fair ball is hit in the air into the infield and in the umpires judgment would have been reasonably caught, the batter is automatically out (whether or not the ball is caught). The runners do not have to advance, they run at their own risk.

- **Tagging up** – If a ball is hit into the air and a field catches the ball, the runner must tag up before they can advance. This means if the ball is hit in the air, either a fly ball or a line drive. You must wait until the ball is caught before you leave the base. If you leave early and they appeal you could be called out.
 - Bobbled ball – You can leave as soon as the ball touches the player.
 - Foul ball Pop up – Can you tag up on a foul ball?

- **Pitching Circle:** Once the ball is caught in the pitching circle or a pitcher with the ball enters the circle. The Runner(s) must make a decision to either go back to the base or continue on. If they hesitate or stop and go they will be called out.

- **Ground Rule double** – If a batted ball bounces over the fence or goes under the fence or is trapped by some part of the fence or field. The outfield puts up their arms and a ground rule double is called. If the outfield tries to get the ball trapped under the fence then it is a live ball. When the outfield puts up their arms, as a base runner you continue to run the bases all the way home. At the end of the play the umpire will inspect the ball and if it is indeed a Ground rule double they will place you back on second base.

- **Interference:**
 - Defensive Interference – the defensive person can not be in the baseline with out the ball. This includes making a play on any runner at any of the bases.
 - Offensive inference – anytime an offensive player interferes with a defensive player making a play it is interference. If a batter does not slide at second and interferes with the double play it can be called interference. If a player says something to interfere with a defensive player it can be called interference.
 - Catcher interference – this occurs when the batter in the process of swinging hits the catcher. The batter is awarded first base.

Softball Rules (cont.)

- **Appeals** – We have two kind of appeals
 - **Live ball** – this means that during a play you witness someone missing a bag. You can then throw the ball to that base and step on it.
 - **Dead ball** – Here you have to wait until the umpire calls play ball and then physically throw the ball to the base that the runner missed.