

U.S. House of Representatives

CONGRESSIONAL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION INVITATIONAL SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT RULES

VERSION 05.01

Unless otherwise stated in these rules, the tournament rules shall be the official rules of softball, written by the International Joint Rules Committee on Softball published by the Amateur Softball Association (ASA).

New rules are in bold italic print.

1.0 **FIELD AND EQUIPMENT**

1.1 The distance from base to base and from the pitcher's rubber to home plate shall be established by ASA. *The white part of first base shall be fair territory, the colored part of first base shall be foul territory; but the foul line shall be established by the umpire or Tournament Official prior to the start of the game.*

1.2 Only softballs provided by Tournament Officials shall be used.

1.3 Only approved softball bats may be used in games. Baseball bats or altered bats may not be used. Taping of handles is permitted. A batter using an illegal bat shall be removed from the game. *See list of illegal bats that CAN be recertified on page 7 of the rules' review sheet AND ILLEGAL BATS LISTED ON THE WEB SITE.*

1.4 Metal cleats or spikes of any kind may not be used, including metal-tipped cleats. Players wearing such cleats (whether or not in the game) shall be ejected from that game.

2.0 **SCEDULING AND COMPLETION OF GAMES**

2.1 The Tournament Officials shall schedule, terminate, interrupt, and reschedule all games as required.

2.2 The tournament pairings and initial schedule shall *be made public by the Tournament Committee on the league web site*. The Tournament Committee assumes no responsibility *for dissemination of the rules to individual players*. Schedule changes *will be posted* at least 24 hours prior to a newly-scheduled game.

2.3 Games shall not be postponed unless weather or field conditions are so severe that Tournament Officials determine an inability to play. *All teams shall report to the designated field at their regularly scheduled times unless otherwise directed by Tournament Officials. IN OTHER WORDS, ALL GAMES WILL BE PLAYED...SOMETIMES EVEN IN THE RAIN, UNLESS NOTIFIED OTHERWISE.* Team members should be warned that just because it is raining in one part of town, it's not necessarily raining at the ball fields.

2.4 Seven innings shall constitute a complete game, except as provided for in Rules 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, and 2.8. The Semifinals and Championship games shall be no less than seven innings *except as provided for in Rule 2.8.*

2.5 Once a game has begun, only Tournament Officials may interrupt or terminate the game on account of weather, field conditions, or time limitations as described in Rule 2.6. If at such a time when the Tournament Officials intercede:

a.) the losing team has batted in at least four innings *or has fallen behind in the score by a "sudden death" margin as provided for in Rule 2.9*, the game shall be terminated and constitute an official game, or

b.) the two teams are tied, or have failed to complete the requisite number of innings for an official game, the game shall be postponed and resumed from that point at which action was suspended at the earliest convenient date determined by Tournament Officials.

2.6 All games shall have a one hour time limit. Any inning starting prior to the time limit must be completed (unless the home team is ahead). No new inning may begin with five minutes or less remaining in the time limit (*at the 55 minute point in the game*). The time limit will be counted from the scheduled starting time unless the start is delayed by Tournament Officials. Interruptions caused by weather or uncontrolled circumstances will not count in the time limit. The time limit shall not be imposed—until the losing team has batted in at least four innings or until the score reaches a "sudden death" margin as provided for in Rule 2.9. *except if the score is tied*. This rule shall not apply during the Semi-finals and Championship games.

2.7 *Any game that is played beyond the time limit due to a tied score or because the losing team has not batted the minimum number of innings (within the guidelines of Rule 2.6), shall have innings which begin after the time limit has expired. All batters in these innings shall begin batting with a one ball and one strike count on them.*

2.8 All games will begin as scheduled unless delayed by a prior game running over the time limit. The time limit shall begin on delayed games immediately after the line-ups have been recorded in the official scorebook. *Team members should be ready to play five (5) minutes prior to the scheduled starting time. Teams unable to field a minimum number of players five (5) minutes past the designated starting time shall forfeit by a 7-0 score.*

2.9 If after the losing team has batted in four (4) innings, one team's score is **ten (10)** or more runs greater than the other team's score (e.g. 12-2, 22-4, 11-0), the game shall be terminated and constitute an official game, except that in the Semi-finals or Championship games such inning shall be five (5) and such margin shall be fifteen (15) runs or more greater, (e.g., visitors go over ten runs in top of fifth, game is over, no home team at bat.) *If at any point in the game one team's score reaches twenty (20) runs and the difference in the score is ten (10) runs or more, a "sudden death" margin shall be declared and the game shall end at that point.*

3.0 TEAM COMPOSITION AND LINE-UP

3.1 Each team shall be composed of at least eight (8) players, *with three (3) or more females playing defense in the field. At all times* three positions in each batting order shall be designated as "female positions" and only females may be inserted in those positions. Teams shall have no more than three (3) players from another Senate, or *Congressional* League team, only two of which may be the same sex. Teams must field a catcher, and the battery (pitcher/catcher) shall be at all times 1 male and 1 female. *Physically Challenged players shall be treated as set forth in the ASA Rule Book, and shall not count toward team composition rules.*

3.2 No player may play on more than one team at any time during the tournament. Once a player has been certified on an official team roster *and plays for a team, the player is considered part of that team and may not play, or wear a uniform in another team's dugout. A player who plays for more than one team shall cause all teams on which that player has participated to be expelled from the tournament.*

3.3 Prior to the start of each game, team captains shall submit a line-up and list of substitutes to the Tournament Officials. Line-up cards will be provided *on the League web site*. Persons not listed in the line-up or list of substitutes may not participate in that game. All names on the line-up or list of substitutes must appear on the official roster. *Since identification is required to enter the military bases, all players should have photo ID's. Players must also be able to prove their identity to the satisfaction of Tournament Officials. Failure to immediately verify a player's identity will result in the expulsion of that player's team from the tournament. At the pregame conference with officials, captains must declare how they will play their defensive outfield, i.e., four across or three outfielders and a shortfielder, and must keep that defense throughout the game.*

3.4 Substitutions must be reported to the plate umpire *and/or* official scorekeeper. Failure to report may result in a team being declared batting out of order and resulting in outs being called. A fielder failing to report prior to entry shall result in every batter (appearing at the plate in the inning the infraction was detected and while that fielder is in a defensive position) being awarded a base on balls when reported by the opposing team or noticed by a Tournament Official.

3.5 Once a player has left the game, that player may re-enter only once and only if that player was a starter, *and may re-enter in the next half inning since removed from the game as prescribed in official ASA rules*. Any player re-entering the game must bat in that player's original batting order position, and the substitute in that position must be removed for the duration of that game.

- a.) If an injury prevents a team from fielding three female players, the game shall be forfeited at that point.
- b.) If an injury prevents a team from fielding ten (or eleven if an EH is being used) players, but that team meets the minimum requirements for fielding a team (eight total and at least three being female), the game shall continue. However, when any injured player's vacated position in the batting order is up, it shall be declared an out the first time and then passed over without prejudice and a substitute who might arrive at the game after the injury may NOT enter in that batting order position for the remainder of that game.

3.6 A female may substitute for any other player (within the guidelines of Rule 3.4), and a male may substitute for a male at any time (within the guidelines of Rule 3.4) or for a female who is not occupying one of the three "female positions" in the batting order.

3.7 Extra Hitter. Teams may choose to utilize an extra hitter by adding an eleventh (11th) position to the line-up. The EH is a "starting position" which may be inserted anywhere in the batting order.

Limitations to the Extra Hitter Rule

- A.) An extra hitter cannot hit in place of any other starting batter since the EH is also a starting batter's position.
(All players in fielding positions must bat.)
- B.) If the initial line-up does not contain an EH, one may NOT be added once the game begins.
- C.) If the EH is included in the initial line-up, the position may NOT be dropped from the line-up once the game begins.

3.8 Deliberate attempts to violate line-up and substitution rules shall result in the elimination of the offending team from the tournament.

3.9 The home team for each game shall be determined by a coin flip, *except in the case when two teams play consecutive games in the championship round. The home team in the first game shall be the visiting team in the second game..*

4.0 **BALLS AND STRIKES**

4.1 All games shall be slow-pitch softball, and the pitcher MAY release the ball as prescribed in official ASA rules, which permits a backhanded delivery. A delivery which crosses over the ball from side to side is also permitted. (Tournament Officials will demonstrate acceptable releases prior to games.) Maximum heights for pitches are confined to twelve (12) feet and minimum heights must clear the top of the pitcher's head. Each pitch must arc and be called by the umpire according to Rules 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4.

4.2 A "ball" shall be called by the umpire when the pitcher throws a pitch which:

- a.) touches the ground before reaching the plate, or
- b.) hits the plate including the black edge of the plate, or
- c.) crosses below both of the batter's knees, or
- d.) has a downward flight above both of the batter's shoulders, or
- e.) has an arc higher than twelve (12) feet, or
- f.) has no arc, or
- g.) is in the umpire's judgment not hittable (i.e. more than four (4) inches from the outside of home plate and two (2) inches from the inside of home plate), or
- h.) violates **Rule 6.1**.

4.3 A "strike" shall be called if a batter:

- a.) swings and misses a ball, or
- b.) swings and hits the ball foul.

4.4 A "strike" shall be called by the umpire if in his judgment the pitch is hittable and is not a ball as defined by Rule 4.2. Hittable pitches are those which cross that space over any part of the plate or that area from four (4) inches outside the plate to two (2) inches inside the plate between the batter's highest shoulder and lowest knee when the batter assumes a natural batting stance.

4.5 The pitcher may intentionally walk a batter by so indicating the choice to the home plate umpire after that batter has stepped into the batter's box, or may intentionally throw a pitch which is called a ball by the umpire. When the fourth of any of the pitches is called a ball, the batter shall be awarded *the appropriate base or bases*.

4.6 *If a male batter, preceding one of the three designated female batting positions, is walked, the male batter will go directly to second base. The female must bat if less than two outs. If two outs, the female batter has the option to also walk if she indicates her choice prior to entering the batter's box.*

4.7 A "strike out" shall be called when:
 a.) a batter with two strikes, swings and misses, or
 b.) a batter with two strikes, hits a foul ball, or
 c.) a batter with two strikes is called out by the umpire *for failing to swing at a "hittable" pitch.*

4.8 A foul ball caught behind home plate must have been at least ten (10) feet high before the batter can be called out, except for a foul on the third strike.

5.0 HITTING AND BASERUNNING

5.1 Bunting is not permitted. Anyone who, in the judgment of the umpire, attempts a bunt will be called out.

5.2 *The homerun limitation shall be Class "B"—seven (7) homeruns.* After the homerun limit is reached by both teams, a plus one (1) rule will take effect. That is, either team may hit one (1) homerun on its opponent once both teams have reached the prescribed homerun limit. *All batted balls over the fence without assistance, which do not meet the aforementioned criteria will result in the batter being awarded first base.*

5.3 *A batter/runner shall always use the colored portion of first base while running from home to first base, unless a clear hit allows the runner to round the base, in which case the runner may use any portion of first base. The use of the white portion without a clear hit shall result in the runner being called out.* A runner shall not leave the base until the ball crosses the plate. Any runner who leaves the base before the ball crosses the plate shall be called out and the play declared dead. Leaving the base is defined as movement away from the base area toward another base. Stealing bases is not permitted.

5.4 A runner may not advance on a "wild pitch" or "passed ball."

5.5 The ball is dead after the pitch crosses the plate until the pitcher is ready to deliver the next pitch. Baserunners may not advance if the catcher makes an errant return throw to the pitcher. On legal appeal plays, the ball is dead and runners may not advance.

5.6 Sliding is permitted, and encouraged to avoid collisions.

5.7 **Infield Fly.** Whenever runners are on first and second bases or first, second, and third bases, with less than two outs, and a batter hits a pop-up in fair territory and within the ordinary range of an infielder, the batter shall be declared out, and the runners may advance at their own peril.

5.8 On an overthrow:
 a.) that goes "out of play," all runners will be awarded the base they were advancing toward when the throw was released by the fielder, plus one base. (*If more than one runner is involved, runners may advance only as far as one base behind the preceding runner.*);
 b.) that remains in play, the runners may advance, at their own peril, as many bases as possible.

5.9 A runner shall be called "out" for interference and the play declared dead, if:
 a.) the runner interferes with a fielder who is attempting to field a batted ball or a thrown ball, or
 b.) the runner intentionally interferes with a thrown ball, or a fielder throwing a ball. If the interference is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, *the lead runner on base* shall also be called "out" and the ball is dead.

The runner shall at all times attempt to avoid the fielder who is attempting to field a batted or thrown ball except for those instances listed in Rule 5.10.

5.10

A runner shall be called "out," ejected from the game, and suspended from at least one successive tournament game by the Tournament Officials if that runner maliciously or recklessly runs into a fielder .

A runner shall be deemed to have acted maliciously or recklessly unless:

- the collision is accidental, or

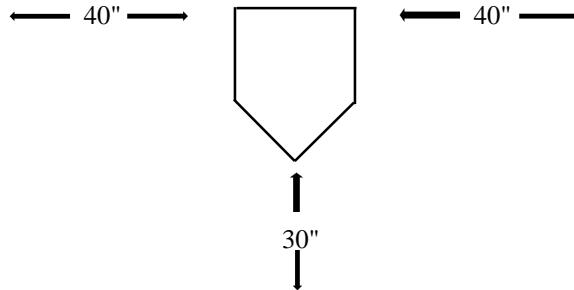
- the fielder is blocking the base path and is not involved in the play, or
- the fielder moves after the runner has attempted to avoid a collision, or
- the fielder is blocking the base to which the runner is trying to advance.

In such situations, runners may not use their heads, shoulders, or forearms to initiate the collision. Open palms or the runner's body are acceptable.

5.11

Batter's Box. Batters shall stand within forty (40) inches of either side of home plate and within thirty (30) inches of the point of the plate. A batter lining up outside this box shall be warned by the umpire. Any further pitches will be declared an automatic "strike" and play declared dead (the batter may not swing and hit the ball).

A batter shall be called "out" only when ***hitting a fair ball and*** stepping on the plate or across the line of the inside front corner of home plate.



6.0

FIELDING

6.1

As prescribed in official ASA rules, the pitcher's motion must begin from a stopped, standing position on the pitcher's rubber and shall begin within twenty (20) seconds of receiving the ball. ***One foot must be in contact with the rubber until the release of the ball.***

6.2

Any fielder not involved in a play and who is blocking the path of a baserunner, ***including the fielder who uses the colored part of first base,*** shall be called for obstructing the runner. The runner shall be awarded any additional bases at the end of play if, in the umpire's judgment, the runner would have attempted and safely advanced toward those bases.

6.3

Any fielder decoying a runner into an unnecessary slide shall be ejected from that game without warning.

6.4

When a female is at bat, the defense must remain in the declared positioning described in Rule 3.3 and outfielders must be no closer to the infield than 120 feet from home plate (twice the distance of the basepath) until the ball is hit.

7.0

MISCELLANEOUS

7.1

Any player, coach, or fan who is ejected from a game must immediately leave the athletic facilities (fields, stands, parking lots and surrounding grounds within one-half mile of the field) before the game can continue. Failure to vacate the facilities within five (5) minutes will result in the expulsion of that team from the tournament. Any person who is ejected from a game is automatically suspended from at least one successive tournament game (***which may carry over to another tournament.***)

7.2

Beer will be provided free of charge to teams participating in the two Semi-finals games as well as the Championship game(s). ***Teams reaching the final sixteen round must pay an additional \$25 fee before continuing play in the tournament.*** Trophies will be awarded to the final four surviving teams. Entry fees are not refundable in as much as expenditures for the operation of the tournament have been committed.

7.3

All disputes shall be settled by Tournament Officials and/or umpires at the facility. Tournament Officials' decisions are final. An umpire's judgment cannot be appealed. ***The homeplate umpire is responsible for the enforcement of rules but must notify both coaches of a sanction before teams must comply with said sanction.***

7.4

Fighting will result in automatic expulsion from ALL tournament games.

7.5 Each team will designate two individuals to represent the team in any dispute or rules clarification. Prolonged or abusive argumentation will result in ejection. Judgment calls such as balls and strikes or out and safe may be questioned only for clarification purposes by any player. Interpretation of rules may be questioned only by a team's designated representative. Profanity or physical abuse directed at an umpire will result in ejection and will lead to suspension from at least one successive game at the discretion of Tournament Officials.

7.6 Coaches must remain in the coach's boxes at all times. A runner shall be called out if a coach touches that runner while the ball is in play. A coach must avoid opposing players who are attempting to field a ball. If contact or interference occurs, outs shall be called accordingly.

7.7 Only the on-deck batter is permitted in the area designated "in play." All other players must remain in the dugout or outside the playing area immediately surrounding the dugout. **Only players who are listed on the official roster may enter the field of play or stay in the dugout.** No player or spectator will be permitted to stand behind the backstop.

7.8 In the event that a team is eliminated from the tournament for rules violations, all previously played tournament games' results shall not be altered and the eliminated team's next round opponent shall be awarded a bye, except if the next round is the Championship game. If the next round is the Championship game, the eliminated team's last opponent (during the Semi-finals) shall play in the Championship game. If the violation occurs in the Championship game, the violating team's opponent shall be awarded the Championship and the violating team's Semi-finals opponent shall be awarded second place.

7.9 All teams shall conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner. A player who acts in such a manner as to confuse the opposing team or gain an advantage through unsportsmanlike tactics shall be called out or ejected from the game. Teams will be responsible for the conduct of their fans as well as for their own conduct. All teams should be prepared to provide a competent scorer should the need arise.

7.10 The Tournament Committee shall consist of the following Tournament Officials:

George Burke, Chairman
 Greg Budnik, Rules & Umpires
 Patrick Jones, Fields & Security

Gary J. Caruso, Director
 Nancy Alcalde, Trophies & Awards
 Stephanie Hague, Scheduling

TEAM SELECTIONS AND PAIRINGS

The seeding process used by the Tournament Committee is based on the league rankings calculated on the League web site—the total weighted winning percentage ranks teams by taking into account forfeits and the strength of each team's opponents' records.

In the past, the pairings were divided into four divisions (two "Off the Hill" and two "On the Hill"). This year, like last year, teams will NOT be segregated by "Hill" designations, but the same seeding process described below will apply.

The system ranks teams from 1 to 64 and seeds them so that first round play allows for balanced games even though some teams may have extremely diverse schedules. Theoretically, assuming the higher seed always wins, a team should play an opponent 16 rankings apart in the first round, 32 rankings the second round, 8 rankings the third round, 4 rankings the fourth round, and the top four should enter the final four double elimination round. Each team was also seeded according to its Saturday participation availability. *Dates, times, and field locations are located between each bracket.*

The final four will play a double elimination series which is also included with the four brackets. All other games played prior to the final four selection will play in a single elimination system.
