



# SOFTBALL RULES

## MEN'S AND WOMEN'S LEAGUES GENERAL RULES

*SOFTBALL IS A NON-CONTACT SPORT BUT INJURIES ARE A POSSIBILITY. THE DEPARTMENT OF CAMPUS RECREATION AND THE INTRAMURAL SPORTS PROGRAM ASSUMES NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR INJURIES; HOWEVER, BASIC FIRST AID WILL BE AVAILABLE.*

### **RULE 0. SFASU RULES AND EXCEPTIONS** **SECTION 1. STARTING THE GAME**

#### **Article 1. Eligibility**

Every player must meet the eligibility requirements set forth in the Intramural Sports Policies and Procedures manual. Any individual that participated with varsity baseball/softball is eligible to participate as long as they do not appear on a varsity roster during the current academic year. **Any participants who are or have played for professional or semi-professional teams in softball or baseball are not eligible to participate, no matter how long they have been removed.**

#### **Article 2. Player Equipment**

- **Jerseys** will not be required for softball. However, we do ask that teams wear the same color shirts to make it easy to tell teams apart.
- **Gloves** will not be rented out, teams must bring their own. Gloves may be shared between teammates. However, gloves cannot be shared between teams.
- **Bats** will not be rented out, teams must bring their own. Bats may be shared between teammates. However, bats cannot be shared between teams.

#### **Article 3. Field Rules**

- Teams: Only officials, players, and one coach are permitted on the fields.
- Use of electronic devices for coaching purposes is prohibited.
  - No use of cell phones to discuss game play with spectators across the field.
- **TOBACCO use is prohibited on the IMS Field Complex. Failure to comply with all intramural Rules and Regulations for the IMS Field Complex by any players or spectators will result in immediate expulsion of the individual(s) and possible forfeiture of the contest.**
- **No ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES will be allowed inside the IMS Field Complex. Teams and fans are not allowed to bring glass or metal containers onto the fields. Violators will be removed and SFASU Police will be notified about such violations.**

#### **Article 4. Blood Rule**

If and when an official observes that a player is bleeding, has an open wound, or has excess blood on his/her uniform, the player will be directed to leave the game. The injured player is not to return until the bleeding has stopped, the open wound is covered, and excessively bloody clothing has been removed. The player must be removed from play and a substitute must enter the game. The clock will run as normal once the player is removed.

# **RULE 1. THE GAME, FIELD, PLAYERS AND EQUIPMENT**

## **SECTION 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **Article 1. The Game – Men and Women**

The game shall be played between two (2) teams of ten (10) players each. Eight (8) players are required to start the game and avoid a forfeit. The game cannot continue with less than seven players per team. Teams playing with less than 10 players must still have 10 spots in the batting line-up. The unoccupied spots in the line-up will be placed at the end of the batting order. If a team has 9 players, the 10<sup>th</sup> spot will be an automatic out. **If a team has 8 players, there will be NO automatic outs**, as the team is already at a major disadvantage. CoRec may bat up to 12 players, alternating between male and female players.

- **EXAMPLE:** Team A only has 9 players. Their line-up must indicate 10 players. An out will be charged each time the unoccupied spot is due at bat. Late arriving players may be entered into the unoccupied spot without penalty. If a team has 8 players and a 9<sup>th</sup> player arrives, then they now must take the automatic out at the 10<sup>th</sup> spot.

## **SECTION 3. GAME EQUIPMENT**

### **Article 1. The Ball**

Game balls will be provided by the Intramural Sports Program. Bats and gloves are NOT provided.

### **Article 2. Bats**

Teams may use their own bats. All bats must meet the 2004 ASA Bat Performance Standard. Copies of the ASA Illegal Bat list will be available at all games. Site Managers and officials will check bats prior to use. If an illegal bat is used and found to be illegal prior to the next batter, the batter is out and ejected for using illegal equipment and the bat will be confiscated and returned at the end of the softball game.

### **Article 3. Shoes**

Cleats are limited to studs or projections that do not exceed ½ inch in length and are made with nonabrasive rubber or rubber-type synthetic material, which does not chip or develop a cutting edge. **METAL SPIKES ARE ILLEGAL.** If no cleats are available, the players must wear athletic type shoes.

### **Article 4. Shorts**

Each player must wear pants or shorts. Pants or shorts with pockets are legal.

# **RULE 2. PLAYING TERMS**

## **SECTION 1. STARTING THE GAME**

### **Article 1. Start Time**

Any team failing to report and ready to play at the scheduled starting time shall have a ten (10) minute grace period as long as at least one (1) member of your team is present at the scheduled game time. The official game time will start at the scheduled time. If the grace period is evoked, the team present, ready to play will be the home team. It is recommended that all teams show up at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start time, since a lineup card must be filled out.

### **Article 2. Forfeit**

If one team fails to show up, or does not have enough players after the 10 minute grace period, it will result in a forfeit and a final score of 5-0. The team who forfeits will be fined a \$10 fee that must be paid before participating in another game.

### **Article 3. Game Time**

For the regular season, a maximum of six (6) innings will be played. Game time is 50 minutes or 7 innings, whichever comes first. **NO NEW INNING WILL START AFTER 50 MINUTE MARK HAS EXPIRED.**

### **Article 3. Drop Dead Time**

All games will start with a fifty (50) minute game clock. At 50 minutes, the game is over if by rule (home team winning and they are at bat, mercy rule, etc.) However, if the losing team is still batting, the game will continue for another five (5) minutes to complete the inning. When the additional five minutes expire, the game is over. A game can end in a tie during regular season.

#### **Article 4. Mercy Rule**

The game shall end when either team is behind by 20 or more runs after three innings, behind by 15 or more runs after four innings, or 10 after the fifth inning. If at any point between the third and seventh inning, any of the above occurs, the game shall end.

#### **Article 5. Extra Innings**

Extra innings will only be played to break ties in the playoffs.

#### **Article 6. Scoring**

An IMS score keeper will keep official scoring at each field.

#### **Article 7. Warm Up Prior To Each Inning**

Defensive teams are allowed to take infield warm up **prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> inning of the game**. Pitchers can have five (5) warm-up throws prior to the start of the first inning and 3 warm up pitches in the other innings.

#### **Article 8. Extra Hitters**

Teams are permitted (but not required) to have 1 extra hitter in the line-up (meaning the team would bat 11 players). This is simply considered an additional batting spot, but the player doesn't play in the field. However, the extra hitter may switch positions with a field player. The only stipulation is that ***the batting order may not change***. A substitute may enter the game into the extra hitter's position. That player is now considered the extra hitter. The extra hitter may bat anywhere in the line-up. CoRec teams may bat 10-12 players, the line-up must alternate between male and female.

### **SECTION 2. PLAYING THE GAME**

#### **Article 1. Batting Order**

Batting orders will be submitted to the IMS Game Supervisor scoring the game. Teams playing with less than 10 players must still have 10 spots in the batting line-up. **See Teams Rule for empty spots in the line-up.**

- **Batting out of order:** If a team is found to be batting out of order:
  - While the incorrect batter is at bat:
    - Correct batter must take the batter's position and assume the current count. Any runner advanced and runs scored while the incorrect batter was at bat shall be legal.
    - After the incorrect batter has completed a turn at bat BEFORE a legal or illegal pitch to the following batter or before the pitcher and all infielders have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left live ball territory
    - The player who should have batted is out
    - Any advanced runner and any run scored shall be nullified. All outs made stand.
    - The next batter is the player whose name follows the player called out for failing to bat. (includes if the player who failed to bat properly was the 3<sup>rd</sup> out and the new inning begins.)
  - After a legal or illegal pitch to the NEXT BATTER
    - The run of the incorrect batter is legal.
    - All runs scored and runners advanced and outs made are legal
    - The next batter shall be the player whose name follows that of the incorrect batter
    - No out is called for failure to bat
    - Any other missed batters who have not been called out have lost their turn at bat until the next time through the order.

#### **Article 2. Tie Games**

All games ending in a tie score will be recorded as a tie in the win/loss record for the regular season. In the playoffs, tie games will be played until a team wins.

#### **Article 3. Substitutes**

Substitutions are unlimited. Players may re-enter the game anytime in any position, however, they may only enter into the batting order spot he/she previously occupied. A non-starter must re-enter the lineup in the batting order spot from which he/she was removed. **THE BATTING ORDER MUST REMAIN THE SAME THROUGHOUT THE GAME.**

#### **Article 4. Strike Zone**

When a batter assumes a natural batting stance, the strike zone is any part between the batter's back shoulder and the batter's front knee. *A ball hitting the plate is a ball.* **Slow pitch softball is an offensive game, so we want to encourage batters to swing the bat.**

#### **Article 5. Batting And Running**

Stealing, bunting and chop swings are prohibited. Base runners are not allowed to leave the base until contact with the ball is made by the batter. Leaving a base early will result in that runner being called out and all other runners being sent back to their original bases. Sliding is permitted, but not required. A base runner is NEVER required to slide. However, a player who initiates malicious contact will be ejected from the game. Batter/runners may not advance to first base on a dropped third strike.

#### **Article 6. Starting Count**

Every batter starts the at-bat with a count of one (1) ball and one (1) strike.

#### **Article 7. Pitching**

The pitcher must have at least one foot in contact with the pitching rubber from the start of the initial pitching motion. The pitcher must deliver the ball underhand with a perceptible arc of *six feet to twelve feet* from the ground. The pitch must be delivered in one fluid motion. PENALTY: The umpire will call "illegal pitch" verbally to the batter and catcher. It is an automatic ball unless the player swings at the pitch. If the batter swings, play continues as if it was a normal pitch.

- **Quick Pitches** – the pitcher will wait until the batter is in position and ready to receive the pitch. The official will warn the pitcher the first time and the award automatic balls after the warning if the pitcher continues to quick pitch.
- **Release Of The Ball** – a pitcher must release the ball from the throwing arm side, not behind the back, between the legs, or any other alteration. The ball must be released on the first forward swing of the arm. The pitcher has 10 seconds to release ball after receiving it for the next pitch (officials will deal with situation if intentionally consuming time).

#### **Article 8. Courtesy Fouls**

When a batter has two strikes no matter how he/she may attained them is allowed to foul off one pitch before the next foul ball will be an out.

#### **Article 9. Contact**

If a runner leaves the base before there is contact made by the bat the runner will be called out. Leading off and stealing bases are prohibited.

#### **Article 10. Double First Base**

All IMS fields will have double first bases. If a normal play is going to occur at 1<sup>st</sup> base, the runner must use the orange bag to run through the play. **The fielder is restricted to the white bag.** There are exceptions to this rule and the officials will make the call when appropriate.

**Tie Goes To The Runner** – *does not exist. There is no such thing in any rulebook.*

#### **Article 11. Runner Hit With A Live Ball**

If a runner is hit by a batted ball that has not passed a fielder other than the pitcher, the runner will be called out and all other runners must return to their original bases. (Interference on the runner).

#### **Article 12. Detached Player Equipment**

If a defensive player throws his/her glove and hits the ball, or uses his/her hat or any other equipment not designed to catch the ball, all runners will be awarded either three (3) bases (batted ball), two (2) bases (thrown ball), or one (1) base (pitch) depending on the status of the ball at the time of the infraction.

#### **Article 13. Intentional Walk**

- If the fielding team wishes to intentionally walk a player, the catcher must let the plate umpire know and the batter will be granted a walk without having to be thrown to. This is a speed up rule.
- If a player is walked unintentionally, then the rule will be as followed:
  - Men's & women's teams will receive one (1) "free" walk per inning. After the one "free" walk, it will be considered an out.
  - CoRec teams will receive one (1) "Free" walk per game. After the one "free" walk, it will be considered an out.

#### **Article 14. Obstruction**

Obstruction is the act of:

- A defensive player or team member who hinders or prevents a batter from striking at or hitting a pitched ball.
- A fielder, who is not in possession of the ball, in the act of fielding a batted ball, or about to receive a thrown ball, which impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running bases.
- A defensive player may not block a base unless that player is in possession of the ball or the ball is between the runner and the base.
- IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOU ADVISE YOUR DEFENSIVE PLAYERS TO AVOID STANDING IN THE BASELINE DURING A LIVE BALL PERIOD.

#### **Article 15. Interference**

Interference is the act of an offensive player or team member which impedes or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play.

- All other runners will be returned to the last base touched at the time of the interference

#### **Article 16. Dead Ball Territory**

Any fair-batted ball that rolls into dead ball territory will be ruled a “dead ball”. This will be considered a ground rule double and all runners will advance 2 bases from their position from when the ball was pitched.

- **Catch And Carry** – Any ball caught by a defensive player legally in live ball area and then carried into dead ball area will result in a dead ball and an out for the caught fly ball and the runners on base will be rewarded one (1) base from the time of the pitch.
- All fielders must have both feet in live ball territory in order to catch a ball. The ball does not become dead until it touches the ground in dead ball territory.
- Any ball caught in dead ball territory by a player, will be called a foul ball.

#### **Article 17. Overthrow**

Any ball thrown into dead ball territory will result in an awarding of two bases to all runners. The two-base award shall be governed by the position of the runners at the time the ball is released from the defensive player. Ex: If there is a runner on first and a fly ball is hit into the outfield and the runner forgets to tag and tries to hurry back to the bag and the fielder tries to throw the runner out and throws the ball out of play. The runner is now awarded second and third.

#### **Article 18. Appeal Plays**

All appeals must be made before the next pitch (legal or illegal), before all infielders have left the infield (at the end of an inning), or before the umpires have crossed the dead ball lines (at the end of a game). Appeals may be either live ball or dead ball by any player on the field or in the dugout area. Any player can appeal a play at any time as long as they are a member of the team.

Constant appealing of plays will be ruled a travesty of the game and will not be tolerated.

### **SECTION 3. SPORTSMANSHIP**

#### **Article 1. Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

Players shall not commit acts of unsportsmanlike conduct. This includes, but is not limited to: arguments with officials (the captain is the only player permitted to talk with the officials) by any coach, manager or spectator, flagrant fouling, fighting, etc. will result in expulsion of that individual and/or team from further participation in that scheduled game. A PLAYER SUSPENDED FROM THE GAME FOR UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT MUST LEAVE THE IMS FIELD COMPLEX IMMEDIATELY, AND WILL BE DECLARED INELIGIBLE FOR HIS/HER TEAM'S NEXT PLAYED GAME. FAILURE TO LEAVE COULD RESULT IN IMMEDIATE FORFEITURE.

#### **Article 2. Alcohol**

SFASU PROHIBITS possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages on University property. This includes the IMS Field Complex, HPE Complex, or any other venue utilized for Intramural Sports. If a team, either its participants or spectators, is found to possess or consume alcoholic beverages at a sponsored event, that team may be forfeited from the event and suspended from all Intramural activities. If the team, either participants or spectators, fail to comply with the request of the Intramural Sports Site Managers, SFASU Police will be called to handle the situation. For further information on the SFASU alcohol policy, please refer to the Student Handbook for the complete policy.

## SECTION 4. GENERAL INFORMATION

### **Article 1. Complete Game**

In case of weather related suspensions of play or cancellation of games, **three complete innings or twenty minutes constitutes a complete game.**

### **Article 2. Protests**

Any disputed discussions based on rules (not judgment) will be solved on the field at the time the dispute occurs even if it involves checking the official rule book and/or getting an official interpretation from the Coordinator – Intramural Sports.

### **Article 3. Ground Rules**

Special ground rules may be implemented by the intramural supervisor if special conditions exist that would warrant an alteration of ground rules already in place.

## RULE 3. CO-REC MODIFICATIONS

The above rules apply with the following additions, or exceptions:

### Article 1. Teams

Five men and five women constitute a team. A team may start a game with eight players, the game cannot continue with less than seven players per team.. If they have 9 players, [4 men and 5 women or vice versa], then there will be an automatic out for the 10<sup>th</sup> spot. There must 10 batting spots in the line-up. Only players in the line-up may play the field (you can't have 4 girls and 6 guys play the field. Max of 5 and 5).

### Article 2. Batting Order

Team members must bat in alternating order (i.e., woman, man, woman, or man, woman, man, etc.) Teams playing with less than 10 players must still have 10 spots in the batting line-up. **See Team Rule to read on automatic outs. The only exception is that the hole in the lineup will be in the 9<sup>th</sup> or tenth spot, wherever the hole is for the missing player.** EXAMPLE: Team A has 4 men and 5 women, if they choose to bat a male first; the final four slots in their lineup will appear: 7. Male, 8. Female, 9. Male (empty), 10. Female. That empty male slot would be counted as an automatic out.

### Article 3. Ball

Males and females shall use a 12" softball.

### Article 4. Extra Hitters

Teams are permitted (but not required) to have 2 extra hitters in the line-up (meaning the team could bat 12 players). If the extra hitter option is used, both a male and a female extra hitter are required (e.g. a team may have either 10 or 12 lineup spots but not 11). They are simply considered additional positions, but the players don't play in the field. However, the extra hitters may switch positions with a field player. The only stipulation is that the batting order may not change, and there must be 5 males and 5 females playing defense. A substitute may enter the game into the extra hitter's position. That player is now considered the extra hitter. The extra hitter may bat anywhere in the line-up.

### Article 5. Field Players

Players may play any position on the field. There are no stipulations as to where males and females may play.

### Article 6. Restraining Line

A restraining line will be drawn in the outfield at 200' from home plate. **Three outfielders will be restricted by the restraining line in the outfield.** If the umpire does not see three outfielders behind the line to start the play, they shall not allow the pitcher to put the ball in play until the required number of players are behind the line. If the ball is put in play without the appropriate number behind the line, the offensive team may choose the result of the play or elect to have a re-pitch.

### Article 7. Walks

If a male is walked anytime during the game, he will be awarded 2<sup>nd</sup> base automatically (he must still run the bases in order). With none (0) or one (1) out, the female batter next in order **must** bat. However, if there are two (2) outs, if a male is awarded a base on balls, the female following him in the order has the option of batting or automatically walking to first without having to bat. This decision must be made prior to the first pitch to the female batter and must be made by the player in question (not the team captain or coach). **This rule is in place so a team does not walk male batters to pitch to female hitters only.**