

FULLY LOADED SOFTBALL

Junior Slowpitch Playing Rules for Schools

SUMMARY

- Modified simple rules designed for schools & inter-school competitions, focused on participation, reduced time waiting to bat
- Three innings per game / 45 minutes
- Innings concludes when all players have batted, regardless of the number of 'outs'
- Each batter bats once per innings
- Every player gets three turns to bat & one turn to run the bases every game
- Pitch: ball to be pitched in an underarm motion. No windmill pitching allowed
- No catcher. Fielder stands 2m behind the batter. Not required to catch the ball, simply returns ball to pitcher
- Similar equipment Helmet for all batters & base runners & home plate fielder, softball bats, gloves
- Ball: Softcore ball 11 inches
- Additional equipment. Batting tee required (in place of walk) & 'Strike Zone Mat' > 90cm x 120cm rubber mat
- No tagging. No tag up on a fly ball. No infield fly ball rule. No dropped 3rd strike. No walks. No sliding

TEAMS

- Teams may have up to 12 players & make unlimited substitutions
- Maximum of 9 players on the field at any one time, or as agreed prior to the match

EQUIPMENT

- Footwear: Metal cleats & shoes with screw in studs are not permitted
- Gloves: Must be used by all fielders
- Helmets: Must be worn by all batters & base runners
- Bats: Use the usual softball bats with grips
- Tee required in place of 'walks'
- Softcore 11" balls
- Strike Zone Mat (.90cm x 100cm) replaces home plate

THE GAME

- Choice to Bat or Field is determined by coin toss or similar
- Game is comprised of 3 innings & expected to take 45 minutes to complete
- One innings is completed when each team has batted & fielded
- A team's turn at batting concluded when all players have batted, regardless of the number of out
- Last batter: If the last batter hits the ball, play will stop when a fielder has the ball & is on the 'Strike Zone Mat' If a runner is between bases at that time, they are deemed to be at the last base they reached
- Batters bat in a set order. The batting order is set before each game
When a substitution is made, the substitute takes the batting position of the player they have replaced
- Pitcher can only pitch in one innings of the game, therefore 3 pitchers are required 1:innings
- Fielding team must have a pitcher & home plate fielder. All other fielders may be positioned as they choose
- Scoring: A run is scored when a batter makes their way around (touches) all bases & crosses the 'Strike Zone Mat'
- Winner: The team that scores the most runs at the end of 3 (even) innings will be declared the winner
- Tied Game: Play 1x extra innings with 3 batters only. Teams choose their 3 batters
Team that fielded last will remain in the field & bat second. Any player can pitch in the tiebreaker

STARTING / SET UP

- Discuss & agree on the number of players 'in the field of play & batting'
- Record batting order on the score sheet
- First Innings: The batting team sends a batter to 'Strike Zone Mat' & 3 runners to the bases – 'Loaded Bases'
#1 batter to 'Strike Zone Mat' plus #7 batter to 3rd base #8 batter to 2nd base #9 batter to 1st base
Each subsequent innings the order is rotated
- Second Innings, 'Loaded Bases'
#4 batter to 'Strike Zone Mat' plus #1 batter to 3rd base #2 batter to 2nd base #3 batter to 1st base
- Third Innings, 'Loaded Bases'
#7 batter to 'Strike Zone Mat' plus #6 batter to 3rd base #5 batter to 2nd base #4 batter to 1st base
- The lowest order batter starts on 1st base each innings (maintaining the batting order)
- If playing with additional players, the rotation will need to be adjusted & agreed by both teams.

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PITCHING

- The pitcher must have at least one foot on the pitching plate when releasing the ball
- The ball must be delivered in an underarm motion. Windmill action is not permitted.
The ball must reach above the height of the batters' shoulders at some stage during the pitch
- No 'catcher', home plate fielder (back stop) fields in a position at least 2m behind the batter, to return the ball
- Start of play: Catcher / Back Stop must start far enough back to avoid being hit by a swinging or thrown bat

STRIKE

A strike is...

- Correctly pitched ball that hits any part of the junior 'Strike Zone Mat' on the full (1m x .90m)
- Batter swings & misses (correct or incorrect) pitched ball
- Pitched ball is not swung at, hits the batter, whilst the batter has his/her foot on the 'Strike Zone Mat'
- Foul ball is hit, when a batter has none or one strike on them

Batter cannot be struck out on a foul ball

BALL

A 'Ball' is called for each pitched ball that...

- Not swung at, that does not hit the 'Strike Zone Mat' on the full
- Not swung at, that is not delivered correctly
- Hits the batter when not swinging at the pitch, provided batter doesn't have a foot on the 'Strike Zone Mat'

After the 3rd ball to the batter, rather than walk, the batter hits the ball off a tee.

FAIR BALL

A fair ball is a batted ball that...

- Settles, or touched on, or between the foul lines, between the 'Strike Zone Mat' & 1st base, or between the 'Strike Zone Mat' & 3rd base. The outside of the 'Strike Zone Mat' is considered at part of the foul lines
- Bounds past 1st or 3rd base, on or over the fair territory, regardless of where the ball hits after going over the base.
- Touches 1st, 2nd or 3rd base
- Whilst on or over fair territory, touches the person or clothing of a fielder
- First falls on or between the foul lines beyond 1st and 3rd base
 - (a) If a home run boundary is used, if the ball land over the boundary line over or between the foul lines, the batter is automatically awarded a home run. Batter must still run & touch all bases
 - (b) If a line or cones are used to mark the home run boundary, and a ball that is deemed fair, bounds over the boundary, the batter is automatically awarded three bases. Batter must still run & touch all bases

FOUL BALL

A foul ball is a batted ball that...

- Settles on foul territory between the 'Strike Zone Mat' & 1st base, or between the 'Strike Zone Mat' & 3rd base
 - Bounds past 1st or 3rd base, on or over the foul territory
 - First touches on foul territory beyond 1st or 3rd base
 - Touches the batter or the bat in the batter's hand/s a second time while the batter is within the batter's box
- Base runners cannot advance on a foul ball. If a foul ball is hit, all base runners return to the base they started on

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OUT

The batter is out when...

- The third strike is swung at & missed
- The ball is hit & caught in fair or foul territory
- They do not reach the safety base before a fielder, who is in contact with 1st base, has possession/control of the ball (A batter is permitted to run through the safety base. However, if they turn & attempt to run to 2nd base & then retreat to 1st base, they will be out if a fielder has possession/control of the ball at 1st base before the batter returns)

A base runner is out when...

- They do not reach the base or safety zone they are attempting to reach before a fielder, who is in contact with the base that the runner is attempting to reach, has possession/control of the ball
 - They do not reach home plate (Strike Zone Mat) before a fielder, who is in contact with the 'Strike Zone Mat', has possession/control of the ball
 - They overrun 2nd or 3rd base & a fielder has possession/control of the ball at the base before the runner returns to the base or safety zone (#)
 - They attempt to slide or dive into a base
 - They leave the base before the ball is hit
 - They interfere with or prevent a fielder from making a play. All other runners return to their previous base
- (#) Safety Zone is a drawn circle around the bases

ADVANCING BASES & SCORING RUNS

- A base runner can run only after the ball has been hit in play by the batter, not before
- All base runners, when forced to do so, must run on a fair batted ball
- A base runner can advance on a batted ball that is caught, including a foul ball. There is no requirement for a base runner to tag up & wait for the ball to be caught
- Once a base runner has reached halfway to the next base they are running toward, they cannot turn back. If they do turn back, they are liable to be put out at the base they were attempting to reach.
- Each time a runner makes their way around (touching) all 4 bases & safely crosses 'Strike Zone Mat', equals one run.
- If a dead ball line is used & the ball crossed the line on an overthrow, base runners are awarded two bases from the time of the throw
- A fielder cannot tag a runner to make an out
- Base runner is awarded the base to which they are running when a fielder, not in possession of the ball & not fielding a batted ball, obstructs a base runner
- If a batting line is used & the batter steps over the line & hits the ball, the fielding team has the option of taking the results of the play or cancelling the play & have the batter bat again, with the same balls / strikes as they had before

FORCE PLAYS

- A force play occurs when there is a runner on a preceding base that is forced to run when the ball is hit by a batter. During loaded bases, a force out can be made to any one of the bases
- If there is a runner on first base & the ball is hit on the ground, the runner is forced to run as the incoming batter will soon occupy 1st base. You cannot have two runners on the same base at the same time
- Force plays happen to 3rd base when there are runners on 1st & 2nd base, a force out can be made at 1st, 2nd or 3rd
- Force plays happen to 2nd when there is a runner on 1st, a force out can be made at 2nd or 1st
- Runners are also forced to move up if it is a force situation & the batter is walked. All base runner, forced by other base runners, advance one base.



Primary School - Junior Diamond Sizing

For competitions:

- Fully Loaded T Ball
- Fully Loaded Junior Slowpitch

Pitching distance: 32 feet or 10m

Base paths: 55 feet or 17m

Note: Avoid being hit by an accidentally thrown bat, the catcher (back stop) should be a minimum of 4 meters behind the batter and should also be wearing a face mask

