

## Softball <br> Rules <br> In

## Pictures

First edition - 1983
Second edition - 1985
Third edition - 1987
Fourth edition - 1991
Fifth edition - 1992
Sixth edition - 1998
Seventh edition - 2006 (2006 Rule book)

Softball Rules In Pictures is designed for the softball player, coach, umpire, parent and teacher of any age and is a helpful refresher course for the veteran in settling questions on the field, as it is in teaching the rules off the field.

Over 100 illustrations with captions and an index guiding the reader to the Official Rules In Softball, provide a quick introduction to learning the rules of softball.
To the player, a thorough knowledge of the rules is an asset.

To the coach and the umpire, a thorough knowledge is a necessity. New Umpires will find Softball Rules In Pictures to be an easy method of rule study.

Foreword:
This book is enthusiastically endorsed by Softball Australia as an aid to players, coaches and officials' understanding of the game.

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1

3

4

5




## PITCHING DISTANCE <br> Male $\quad 14.0 \mathrm{~m}$ ( 46 feet) <br> Female 13.11m (43 feet)

| RULE NO. | RULE NO. | RULE NO. |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Part 1 | The Pitcher |  |  |
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Both the pitcher and the catcher must be in position before the pitcher is considered ready to pitch. Rule 6 Section 1b.


The catcher must be inside the catcher's box. Rule 6 Section 6a.


The pitcher must have both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate and come to a full and complete stop with the ball held in both hands. This position must be held for at least two seconds before starting the windup. Rule 6 Section 1c \& Rule 6 Section 1e.


The pitcher may not stand in pitching on or near the plate unless he has the ball in his possession. Rule 6 Section 1a.


The ball is delivered with an underhand motion. Rule 6 Section 3 e.


The step must be taken simultaneously with the delivery of the ball. Rule 6 Section 3 h .


The pitcher may use a windup, provided there is not a stop or reversal of the forward motion. Rule 6 Section 3c.


The pitcher may not continue to windup after releasing the ball. Rule 6 Section $3 k$.


The pitcher may not make a motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball. Rule 6 Section 3 a .


The ball may not be held longer than 5 seconds before delivery of the pitch. Rule 6 Section 1e.


A "no pitch" is called if the pitcher pitches during suspension of play. Rule 6 Section 10a.


A "no pitch" is called if the batter has not had time to get ready. Rule 6 Section 10b.


The pitcher may not stand in pitching position unless he has the ball. Rule 6 Section 1a.


The pitcher shall not deliberately roll the ball along the ground to prevent the batter from hitting it. Rule 6 Section 3L.


No foreign substance may be put on the ball. Rule 6 Section 5a.

It is a strike if part of the ball passes through part of the strike zone and the batter does not swing at it.Rule 7 Section 4a.


The runner may try for another base after the pitcher releases the ball, but not before. Rule 8 Section 5 a \& Rule 8 Section 9u.


A "ball" is called for each pitch that does not enter the strike zone and is not swung at. Rule 7 Section 5a.


Four balls entitles the batter to go to first base. This is called a walk. Rule 8 Section 1c.


The batter is permitted to go to first base if a pitched ball that is not a strike hits him and he has not swung at it. Rule 8 Section 1 f .


It is a strike if the ball is swung at and missed. Rule 7 Section 4b.


It is a strike if the ball is swung at and missed and the pitch hits the batter. Rule 7 Section $4 f$.


It is a strike if the ball is hit into foul territory and is not caught on the fly and there are less than two strikes on the batter. Rule 7 Section 4d.


The batter must stand with both feet within the batter's box. Rule 7 Section 3c.


The batter shall not change batter's boxes while the pitcher is ready to pitch. Penalty: The batter is out. Rule 7 Section 9k.


He is out if a foot is completely outside the lines of the batter's box and is touching the ground at the time he hits the ball. Rule 7 Section 9d.


Any ball at which he swings and misses is a STRIKE, regardless of position of pitch. Rule 7 Section 4b.


It is a STRIKE if part of the ball enters part of the STRIKE ZONE over home plate and the batter does not swing at it. Rule 7 Section 4a.


Any pitch, OUTSIDE THE STRIKE zone, not swung at by the batter, is a BALL. Rule 7 Section 5a.


A fair ball must:-

1. Settle in fair territory between first and third bases or
2. Bounce past third or first base in fair territory - or
3. Bounce over first or third base - or
4. Fall fair beyond first or third base on a fly ball - or
5. Be first touched on or over fair ground.

FAIR territory is territory within foul lines. FOUL territory is area outside the foul lines. Rule 1 Section 29 \& Rule 7 Section 6.




## THE BATTER IS AWARDED FIRST BASE



It is a fair ball if it strikes the umpire on fair territory before touching a fielder other than the pitcher. Pitcher is a fielder if he/she touches or is touched by the batted ball. Rule 7 Section 6d.


It is a fair ball if it strikes a runner on fair territory. Batter goes to first if the ball hits the runner before it touches or passes a fielder, other than the pitcher, but the ball is dead and the runner is out. If the runner is hit by a ball that has been touched or passed a fielder, other than the pitcher, the ball is alive and all runners may advance. Rule 8 Section 1e, Rule 8 Section 9k \& Rule 8 Section 10f.


A ball directly off the bat to the catcher is a FOUL TIP and is in play. If caught on rebound, NOT A CATCH unless ball touches catcher's glove or hand first. Strike and number called, runners may advance on pitch. Rule 7 Section 8.


A batter should run when he hits a fair ball. Rule 8 Section 1a.


A batter may run when he has three strikes - if the catcher fails to catch the ball. Rule 8 Section 1b.

SOME OF THE WAYS A BATTER CAN BE PUT OUT -


The batter is OUT if he hits a fair fly ball which is caught by a fielder before it touches the ground. Rule 8 Section 2b.


The batter is out if he hits a foul fly ball which is caught by a fielder before it touches the ground. Rule 8 Section 2b.


The batter is out if his third strike is caught by the catcher. Rule 7 Section 9m.


The batter is also out after third strike not caught if less than two are out and a runner is on first. Rule 7 Section $9 n$.


If the third strike is dropped, with less than two out and first base is not occupied, the batter-runner is safe if he can beat the throw to first, or he is not tagged off base. Rule 8 Section 1b.

## INFIELD FLY

An infield fly is a fair fly ball (not including a line drive or an attempted bunt) that can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when first and second, or first, second and third bases are occupied, before two are out. The umpire should call "Infield fly, if fair the batter is out". Rule 1 Section 56.


The batter is OUT on an infield fly; but a runner on his base struck by an infield fly is NOT OUT. Rule 8 Section 2e \& Rule 8 Section 10m.

"Rule of thumb" to determine if infield fly: Could fielder be facing toward batter when making catch? Here NOT an infield fly.


The batter is out if he bunts the third strike foul. Rule 7 Section 9 f.


The batter is out if the third strike is swung at and hits him. Rule 7 Section 9a.


The batter is out if his fair-batted ball bounces up and hits him while he is out of the batter's box. Rule 8 Section 2 g (5).


The batter-runner is out if a fair-batted ball is held by a fielder on first base before the batter-runner reaches the base. Rule 8 Section 2c.


The batter-runner is out if the ball is held by a fielder on first base before the batter-runner reaches the base on a dropped third strike. Rule 8 Section 2a.


The batter-runner is out if he is touched (tagged) before he reaches first base on a fair-batted ball, or on a third strike that is not caught. Rule 8 Section 2a \& Rule 8 Section 2c.

## THE BALL REMAINS IN PLAY -



The batter is NOT out if he drops the bat and the ball rolls and contacts the stationary bat. Rule 7 Section $9 i$ Exception 2.


The runner is out if he dodges more than . 91 metres ( 3 feet) to avoid a TAG. Rule 8 Section 9a.


The batter-runner is out if he interferes with a fielder. Rule 8 Section 2g (2) \& (3).


Tagging a base ahead of a runner only when he is forced to advance, because the batter became a batterrunner, makes a force out. Rule 1 Section 35 \& Rule 8 Section 9c.


The situation is not a force play. First base is open for the batter. Rule 1 Section 35.


The batter is out when a fielder intentionally drops a line drive with less than two out in order to make a force play possible. Rule 8 Section 2L.


The batter is out when a fielder intentionally drops a fly ball with less than two out in order to make a force play possible. Rule 8 Section 2L.

THE BALL IS DEAD -


The runner is out when a runner interferes with a defensive player catching a thrown ball, or throwing to complete a play. Rule 8 Section 9 m .

The batter who should have batted is out if someone else bats in his turn. To obtain the out the defensive team must appeal to the umpire before the next ball is pitched. If no appeal is made, all plays stand.


If an appeal is made while the incorrect batter Number Three is at bat, the proper batter Number Two comes to bat and assumes the ball and strike count of the improper batter Number Three. Nobody is out. Rule 7 Section 2d Effect 1.


If an appeal is made after batter Number Three has completed his time at bat but before the next pitch, batter Number Two is out. Bases run and scores made do not count if the advance is due to the actions of the improper batter Number Thee, but any outs obtained on the play remain out. Rule 7 Section 2d Effect 2.

## HOW A BATTER IS AWARDED FIRST BASE WITHOUT JEOPARDY -

"Jeopardy" means in danger of being put out, as the ball is in play. To be "awarded" a base means to be permitted to advance there without jeopardy that is, without danger of being put out. Rule 1 Section 53.


The batter is awarded first base by having four balls called by the umpire. Rule 8 Section 1c.


THE BALL IS DEAD

The batter is awarded first base if the catcher OBSTRUCTS and prevents him hitting the ball safely. If he hits the ball safely and advances both himself and all other runners - ignore the obstruction. Rule 8 Section 1d.


The batter is awarded first base when a fair hit ball strikes the umpire before touching or passing a fielder, other than the pitcher. Rule 8 Section 1e Effect 3.


The ball is dead on a foul fly not caught. Runners return. Rule 9 Section 1 e.


The batter is awarded first base if struck by a pitched ball he is not attempting to hit and which he tries to avoid. Rule 8 Section 1f.

## DEAD BALL

When the ball is dead the play stops. No runs count and no one can advance - except as the result of acts while the ball was alive. The most common exceptions are:

## EXCEPTION 1



Overthrow into crowd. Runners advance. Rule 8 Section 7 g .


The runner must touch first, second, third and home bases in order to score a run. Rule 8 Section 4.


If forced to return, a runner must touch bases in reverse order - unless the ball is dead. Rule 8 Section 4a.


Two runners may not occupy the same base. The first runner retains right to base, except on force play. Rule 8 Section 4d.


If not a force play, and the second runner is tagged while on base he is out. Rule 8 Section 4d Effect.


Runners advance one base without jeopardy when batter is awarded first base and runners must advance to vacate first base for him. Rule 8 Section 7a.


Catcher obstructs batter as he attempts to strike the ball. Batter is awarded first base. All other runners hold their bases, unless forced to advance. Dead ball. Rule 8 Section 1d \& Effect.


A runner advances without jeopardy to a base if a defensive player, without the ball and not in the act of fielding it, obstructs his progress. He is awarded the base he WOULD have made. Rule 8 Section 7b \& Effect.


All runners and batter are entitled to advance home without jeopardy when a fair ball is hit over the fence. Rule 8 Section 1 g \& Rule 8 Section 7h.


All runners and batters are entitled to advance home without jeopardy when ball is prevented from going over the fence by a fielder striking it with a thrown glove, apparel or equipment. Ball stays alive. Rule 8 Section $7 f$ Effect 1 Exception.


All runners and batter advance three bases without jeopardy if a fielder touches any fair ball with a thrown mask, glove or detached part of uniform. Batter may try for home at his own risk. Rule 8 Section 7f Effect 1.


If a ball is thrown by a fielder and another fielder throws his equipment at, and contacts, the ball, runners and the batter advance two bases without jeopardy, but may advance further at own risk. Rule 8 Section $7 f$ Effect 2.


The runner is awarded two bases without jeopardy from the base occupied at the time the ball was thrown, if the ball goes out of play. Rule 8 Section 7 g .


The runner is awarded two bases without jeopardy from the base occupied at the time the ball was thrown, if the ball goes out of play. Rule 8 Section 7 g .


A wild pitch to batter which goes into the stands, bench, etc., entitles runners to advance one base without jeopardy. Rule 8 Section 7c.


When the runner on third attempts to score on steal or squeeze bunt and catcher interferes with batter, award runner home, batter first. Rule 6 Section 4c \& Penalty.


The runner is out when he fails to yield right of way to a fielder fielding a fair batted ball. Rule 8 Section 9 m .


The runner is out when he intentionally interferes with a thrown ball. Rule 8 Section 9 m .


The runner is out when he is tagged by a fielder while off base. Rule 8 Section 9b.


The runner is out if he passes the preceding runner unless that runner has been put out as occurs occasionally on "run-down" plays. Rule 8 Section $9 f$.


The runner is out when the base to which he is advancing on a force play is tagged. Rule 8 Section 9c 1.


A runner is out when he is tagged with the ball while off base on a force play. Rule 8 Section 9c3.

## APPEAL PLAYS

An Appeal must be made to the umpire by defensive player before next pitch to batter. An appeal is defined by the rules as the act of a fielder in claiming a violation of the rules by the offensive team. Rule 1 Section 2.

THIS IS AN APPEAL PLAY


If a runner leaves base before a fly ball, fair or foul, is first touched and caught, he is out if the base is tagged before he returns to the base. Rule 8 Section 9g.


If a runner leaves base before a fly ball, fair or foul, is first touched and caught, he is out if he is tagged before he returns to the base. Rule 8 Section 9 g .


If a runner misses a base, he may be put out by a fielder touching the base with the ball before the runner retags the base, or he may be tagged out before he returns to the missed base. Rule 8 Section 9h.


The runner is out if he is tagged while returning to first base after over running and attempting to run to second base. Rule 8 Section 9i.


The runner is out if he overslides home plate - misses it - and the plate is tagged by a fielder before the runner returns. Rule 8 Section $9 j$.


A baserunner must return to base on a foul ball not caught. Rule 8 Section 8a.


The runner need not retouch after a foul tip as this is considered a regular strike and ball remains alive. Rule 7 Section 8 \& Effect.

## INTERFERENCE PLAYS

On all interference plays somebody must be out and the ball is dead. Runners return to base. Rule 9 Section 1f.

INTERFERENCE


THE BALL IS DEAD, RUNNERS RETURN TO BASE

When the batter interferes with a play at the plate, he is out. Runners return to last base held at time of interference. Rule 7 Section 9L 4 \& Effect.

INTERFERENCE


THE BALL IS DEAD, RUNNERS RETURN TO BASE

The runner closest to home is out if the coach leaves the coach's box and makes the fielder think he is a runner by running toward home, and draws a throw from the fielder to the catcher. Rule 8 Section $9 p$ \& Note.


The runner is out if teammates gather around a base to which runner is advancing to confuse or hinder the defensive team. Rule 8 Section 90.


If a preceding runner "misses" a base, it does not affect the baserunners behind him, whether put out or not, unless it's the third out. Rule 5 Section 8a \& Rule 5 Section 8b.


Runs score if appeal play for third out is behind the runner and is not a force out. Rule 5 Section 8a.


If the batter is put out before reaching first. Rule 5 Section 8b 1.


If any other runner is put out by a force out for third out. Rule 5 Section 8b 2.


If a preceding runner is the third out on an appeal play. Rule 8 Section 4e Exception.

Umpire lines up with the top of the strike zone head must be to the inside of the centre of THE PLATE, and must not move as ball crosses plate - eyes level with the flight of the ball.


NATIONAL LEAGUE'S STYLE - UMPIRE JUDGES BALLS AND STRIKES OVER CATCHER'S SHOULDER NEAREST BATTER.


Be in a position to call all plays. If working alone, start game behind the plate.


See that the field is marked plainly.


See that pitcher's rubber is in good condition, and bases are firmly pegged.


Most Amateur games use two umpires. One is always behind the plate. With nobody on base, the other umpire stands as shown.

"Balls" are not indicated, merely called vocally.


The umpire's signal for an OUT.

KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE BALL
HUSTLE


The signal for safe.


Indicate "balls" on left hand, "strikes" on right every few pitches. It avoids unnecessary questions.


Between innings take position approx. 8 feet from Home Plate down the foul line on the side of the team in the field.


When anyone argues, listen briefly, say "This is how I saw the play so that's why I called the play the way I did, so now let's Play Ball." Then walk a few steps away.


When cleaning home plate, step inside the diamond, face crowd, turn back to pitcher, lean over and brush plate. Keep plate clean.

## Coaching Points:

Coaches may find the suggested schedule for a team training session of assistance. It is most important to vary the activities in each session to avoid lack of interest and to stimulate the players to a maximum effort.

## Suggested Outline For Team Training:

1. Warm Up: All players, 8 minutes.
2. Fielding Practice: All players except the pitcher and catcher who practice together.
3. Skill Practice: Batting, baserunning, sliding.
4. Split Team Practice: Outfielders skills, infielders skills.
5. Team Practice: Team combinations and tactics.

Note: At the conclusion of the practice prior to the game, there should be an opportunity for a team talk.

## Coaching Points:

1. Establish a worthwhile routine -
(a) As players arrive a short jog is suggested (about 500 metres); increase this distance as the season progresses.
(b) Pair off for warm up throws: infielders together, outfielders together.
(c) Insist on quick changes from one section of practice to the next.
2. Aim at ultimate perfection of skills in all players.
3. Don't overlook correction of faulty techniques.
4. Develop good team understanding.
5. Team Talks -
(a) Encourage all players to take part, but players must adhere to team policy.
(b) Make full use of blackboard or magnetic board. These boards should have a permanent diamond marked on them.
(c) Discuss any team faults from the previous game.
(d) Decide on plan for the coming game opponents weaknesses, tactics they employ, and strengths will all have a bearing. Signals to be used and batting order are also decided.


Diagram illustrates the standard fielding positions. These may vary according to the fielder's ability i.e., a shortstop with a strong throw may field in a deeper position, and/or, the batter's ability.

## HOW TO MAKE A LEAGUE SCHEDULE

Key-schedules for a round robin are shown below. In order to make use of them, teams draw or are assigned numbers. Then pick the proper schedule - $5,6,7,8,10$ or 12 teams. Leagues of 9 or 11 teams use the next higher schedule with a "bye" for the teams scheduled to play a number for which there is no corresponding club.

| 5 Teams | 7 Teams | 3.................. 2 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 1.................. 2 | $5 \ldots . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .4$ |
|  | 5.................. 6 | 8 ................... 1 |
| 2 ................... 3 |  |  |
|  | 1.................. 3 | 3.................. 5 |
|  | 2................... 4 | 2 ................... 6 |
| 3 ................... 5 | 5.................. 7 | $4 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . ~ 8 ~$ |
| 2 ................... 4 |  | 7.................. 1 |
|  | 1................... 4 |  |
| 4-.................. 5 | 6................... 2 | 4................... 6 |
| 3 ................... 1 | 7.................. 3 | 7.................. 3 |
|  |  | 8 ................... 2 |
| $5 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .2$ | 5.................. 1 | 1................... 5 |
| 1 ................... 4 | 2................... 3 |  |
|  | 6................... 7 | 5.................. 7 |
| 5 Teams |  | 8 ................... 3 |
| 1 ................... 2 | 6................... 1 | 6 ................... 6 |
| 3 ................... 4 | 2.................. 5 | $2 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .4$ |
| $5 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .6$ | 4................... 7 |  |
|  |  | 5.................. 8 |
| 2 ................... 3 | 7.................. 1 | $6 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .3$ |
| $4 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . ~ 5 ~$ | 3................... 5 | $2 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . ~ 7 ~$ |
| 6 ................... 1 | 4................... 6 | $4 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .1$ |
| 3 ................... 6 | 7.................. 2 | 1.................. 3 |
|  | 3.................. 6 | $2 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .5$ |
|  |  | $6 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . ~ 8 ~$ |
| 6 ................... 2 | 8 Teams |  |
| $5 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .3$ | 1.................. 2 | 10 Teams |
| 4 ................... 1 | 3.................. 4 | 1................... 2 |
|  | 5................... 6 | $3 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .4$ |
| 5 ................... 2 | 7................... 8 | $5 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .6$ |
| 3 ................... 1 |  | 7................... 8 |
| 4 ................... 6 |  | $9 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .10$ |


| 1................... 3 | 10................ 1 | 1................... 7 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| $2 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .4$ | $2 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .5$ | 2................... 8 |
| 5................... 9 | $3 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .8$ | 3................... 9 |
| $6 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . ~ 8 ~$ | $4 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .9$ | 10................. 4 |
| 7................. 10 | 6 .................. 7 | 5................. 11 |


| 1.................. 4 | 12 Teams |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 2................... 6 | 1 ................... 2 | 8.................. 1 |
| 9.................. 3 | $3 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .4$ | 9. |
| 5.................. 7 | $5 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .6$ | 10. |
| 8................. 10 | 7 ................... 8 | 12................. |
|  | $9 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . ~ 10$ | 6................... 7 |
| 1.................. 5 | 11 ............... 12 | 4................ 11 |

4................... 8 1................... 3 9..................... 1
$6 \ldots \ldots . . . . . . . . . . . .10$ 2 ..................... 5 10................... 2
$7 \ldots \ldots . . . . . . . . . . . . . .9$ 4.................... 6 11................... 3
7 ...................... 9 12.................... 4
1.................... 6 8................... 11 5..................... 7

| $2 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . ~ 7 ~$ | 10 ................ 12 | .............. 8 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |

10 ................... 3

| 4................... 5 | 1................... 4 | 10................. 1 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 8................... 9 | $2 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .6$ | 11................. 2 |
|  | 3 ................... 5 |  |

7 ..................... 1 ................... 10 4..................... 7
8.................... 2 8.................. 12 5.................... 8
3.................... 5 ................... 11 6..................... 9
10 ................... 4

8.................... 1 3..................... 6 3..................... 7
9.................... 2 7.................. 11 4..................... 8
3.................... 6 8.................. 10 5..................... 9

| 4................... 7 | $9 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . ~ 10 ~$ | 10 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |

5 .................... 10

|  | $1 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .6$ | 12................. 1 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 9.................. 1 | 2 ................... 3 | 2.................. 7 |
| 10................. 2 | 4 ................... 5 | 3.................. 8 |
| $3 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . ~ 7 ~$ | 7 ................. 12 | 4................... 9 |
| $4 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .6$ | 8 ................... 9 | 5................. 10 |
| 5................... 8 | $10 . . . . . . . . . . . . . .11$ | 11................. 6 |


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