

**Christopher Newport University  
Office of Recreational Services  
Intramural Sports  
Softball  
-Rules of the Game-**

**The rules below are specific for the sport indicated above and do not include intramural program policies which all participants must abide by. For a complete description of intramural policies, participants should view the Intramural Program Manual.**

**Amateur Softball Association slow-pitch rules govern any rule not mentioned in this document.**

**The Game, Field, Players, and Equipment**

**General Provisions**

Art. 1. The Game-The game shall be played between two teams of nine or ten players each, but are permitted to play an eleventh extra player. Eight players are required to start the game. One player is required to claim a default. If a team only has eight players, and a player is ejected or injured, the team must take a default. The extra player (EP) cannot be added, nor removed once the game has begun. If a team has two players, coaches, or spectators ejected, the game will be forfeited.

Art. 2. Eligibility-All players must have checked in with the supervisor and be recorded on the game sheet before they are allowed to play.

**Mercy Rule**

Art. 1. Mercy Rule-If a twelve run difference occurs after four innings, or 3 ½ if the home team is winning, the game will be complete.

**Official Game**

Art. 1. When- A game is considered official after the fourth inning.

Art. 2. Weather- In the event of weather, a game may be cancelled at any time. If a game is cancelled, the game will be official after the fourth inning. Games that are not played or are not official will stand as ties.

Art. 3. Cancellation-If a game has been played past the fourth inning at the time of cancellation, the score will stand as official from the previous inning.

**The Field**

Art. 1. Field Layout-The bases are 60 feet apart; the pitcher's rubber is 46 feet from home plate.

Art. 2. Fair/Foul-The chalk or painted lines are considered to be in fair territory. A ball that lands in foul territory will be considered a strike. A ball that hits the bat then the batter while he/she is still in the batter's box will be foul.

Art. 3.-Dugout-All players not at bat or on base must remain in the dugout, except two base coaches and the on-deck batter.

**Game Equipment**

Art. 1. Regulation Equipment-A regulation softball and bases will be made available for participant use. Participants are responsible for bringing their own gloves, batting helmets and ASA-certified bats.

Art. 2- A regulation softball bat (must say official softball on the bat/ASA certified) with handle tape, rubber or leather, is the only legal bat allowed (no baseball bats). If a metal bat is used, it must have a metal knob.

All bats must pass the ASA 2004 bat standard. All bats having the 2004 certification mark will be allowed. Bats that have the 2000 certification mark will not be allowed unless they are listed on an approved bat list on the ASA website. For convenience, the ASA website has a listing of bats that pass the ASA 2004 bat standard. Please visit the respective manufacturer's website for details on their ASA approved retrofit procedure for these bat models.

For more information please visit [http://www.asasoftball.com/about/certified\\_equipment.asp](http://www.asasoftball.com/about/certified_equipment.asp)

If caught using an illegal bat: Player will be ejected and may be suspended for the remainder of the season.

### **Player Equipment – Required**

Art. 1. Gloves-All players on defense, including the pitcher, must have a softball or baseball glove.

Art. 2. Bats-All players must use regulation softball bat (must say official softball on the bat/ASA certified) with handle tape, rubber or leather, is the only legal bat allowed (no baseball bats).

Art. 3. Shoes-All players must wear shoes made of canvas, leather, or synthetic material, which covers the entire foot.

Art. 4- Teams must abide by the Uniform Policy (see the Captain's guide for details).

### **Player Equipment – Illegal**

Art. 1. Illegal Equipment- A player wearing/using illegal equipment shall not be allowed to play. An out will result when a player is found with illegal equipment in the batter's box. Illegal equipment includes:

- Jewelry of any kind
- Baseball bats
- Shoes with metal, ceramic, screw-in, or detachable cleats unless the screw is part of the cleat
- Leg and knee braces made of hard, unyielding material, unless covered on both sides and all edges. A player may not remove a brace and play.

### **Innings, Time Factors, Substitutions**

#### **Start of Game**

Art. 1. The home team (left side of the schedule/scoresheet) will always bat second.

Art. 2. Playing Time-A regulation game consists of seven innings. No innings will begin after 50 minutes have expired. All started innings must be completed. An inning begins when the third out of the previous inning is made. A game is considered complete after 4 innings. If the game is cancelled for any reason before the 4th inning cutoff it will be recorded with the score as a tie regardless of what the score actually was. If the game is cancelled for any reason after the 4th inning, the score will stand as official from the previous completed inning.

## **Tie Game**

Art. 1. Extra Innings-During the regular season, all scores will stand at the end of seven innings or 50 minutes. During playoffs, extra innings will be played until a winner is decided.

## **Substitutions**

Art. 1. Eligible Substitutions-Free substitution is allowed provided the substituting player occupies the same position in the batting order.

Art. 2. Courtesy Runners-Any base runner may be replaced by a courtesy runner who made the last batted out.

## **Pitching**

### **The Pitch**

Art. 1. Time of the Pitch-The time of the pitch shall be when the pitcher, with the ball, comes to a complete stop for one second while in contact with the pitcher's rubber with one or both feet. The pitcher has twenty seconds from the end of play to pitch the ball. If twenty seconds elapses, the batter will be awarded a ball.

Art. 2. Delivery-When delivering the ball to the batter, one foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's rubber until the ball leaves the hand.

Art. 3. Legal Delivery-A legal pitch is one that is delivered underhand to the batter in one complete motion.

Art. 4. Illegal Delivery-A pitch is illegal if:

- The ball did not reach six feet in height
- The ball exceeded twelve feet in height
- The ball crossed the hip of the pitcher more than once

A ball will be awarded to the batter for an illegal pitch. However, if the batter chooses to strike at the ball, the result will stand.

Art. 5. No Pitch-No pitch shall be declared when:

- The pitcher delivers the ball while not in contact with the rubber
- The ball slips from the pitcher's hand during the backswing

## **Strikes and Strikeouts**

### **Art. 1. Strike-A strike is:**

- A ball which crosses between the highest shoulder and front knee of the batter in his/her normal stance within the width of the plate
- When the batter attempts to hit the ball and misses
- When a ball is dead in foul territory

### **Art. 2. Strikeout-A strikeout occurs when:**

- A batter accumulates three strikes
- A batter fouls a ball with two strikes

## **Batting**

### **At-Bat**

Art. 1. Begins-The at-bat begins when the ball becomes dead from the previous play. The batter has ten seconds to enter the batter's box. If the batter does not enter the box within ten seconds, a strike will be called.

Art. 2. Batting-The batter assumes a count of one ball and one strike at the beginning of the at bat.

Art. 3. Bunting -Bunting and chopping are not allowed. If a batter bunts or chops at the ball and makes contact, whether fair or foul, the ball will be dead and he/she will be called out; runners return to bases at the time of the pitch.

Art. 4. Batter's Box-The batter must occupy the batter's box at the time of the pitch and must make contact with the ball while inside the box. If a foot is outside of the box when contact is made, the batter will be declared out and the ball will be dead.

Art. 5. Base on Balls-When a batter accumulates four balls, first base will be awarded.

### **Extra Hitter**

Art. 1. Provisions for the Extra Player (EP)-An extra hitter (or extra player) may be used. The EP cannot be added once the game begins, nor can the EP position be removed once the game begins. The EP may substitute in the field.

### **Home Run Limit**

Art. 1. Outfield Fence- The sidewalk at James River fields will serve as the outfield fence. All balls clearly hit over this sidewalk will count as a homerun. A hit ball that hits the sidewalk, bounces over, or rolls over the sidewalk will be ruled a ground rule double.

Art 2. Home Run Limit- Each team will be limited to 2 homeruns per game. This does not include "inside the park homeruns". Any ball that is clearly hit over the outfield fence and out of play will be considered a homerun. After the two homerun limit, additional homeruns will be considered outs.

### **Offensive Responsibility**

Art. 1. Foul Balls-The batting team must retrieve any out-of-play foul balls. Failure to do so will result in an out and forfeiture of the game.

Art. 2. Home Run Balls-The batting team must retrieve any out-of-play home run balls. Failure to do so will result in an out and forfeiture of the game.

### **Infield Fly**

Art. 1. Infield Fly Rule-When runners occupy first and second base or first, second, and third bases and there are less than two outs (meaning one or no outs), any fair ball that can be caught with ordinary effort by an infielder will deem the batter out. Runners may advance at their own risk.

Art. 2. Intentional Drop-A ball that is intentionally dropped in an infield fly situation will become dead immediately. The batter will be called out and runners must return to the bases occupied at the time of the pitch.

### **Sportsmanship**

Art. 1. Thrown Bats-A player may be called out or ejected for swinging or throwing the bat in a dangerous manner. If this occurs, the ball will be dead and runners must return to bases occupied at the time of the pitch.

### **Running**

#### **Baserunning**

Art. 1. Runner-A runner is any offensive player occupying a base or between bases while the ball is alive. The batter becomes a runner when contact is made with the ball.

Art. 2. Leading off/Stealing-No leading off or stealing is allowed. Runners may leave the base after the ball is hit. If a runner is off the base prior to contact, the runner will be out and no pitch will be called.

Art. 3. Baseline-The runner may not abandon their baseline by more than three feet. NOTE: The runner's baseline is determined by their direct path to the succeeding base. If a runner abandons the baseline, they will be called out.

Art. 4. Contact and Sliding-The runner must either slide into the base or away from the fielder or simply avoid contact by abandoning the baseline. Be aware that SLIDING CAN CAUSE INJURY. Sliding head first into a base is an automatic out.

Art. 5. Double Play Situation-In a double play situation, the leading runner must avoid contact by abandoning the baseline or sliding into the base or away from the fielder. If the runner does not, "Safety Slide Interference" will be called and outs will be determined at the umpire's discretion.

Art. 6. Being struck with the Ball-Any runner struck with a batted ball while not in contact with a base will be called out if the ball had not passed a defensive player other than the pitcher. If this occurs, the ball is dead, an out is called on the runner and the batter is awarded first base.

Art. 7. Assisted-Any runner who is assisted by a coach or anyone except another runner will be declared out. The ball will be dead and runners must return to the last reached base.

Art. 8. Two Runners Occupying a Base-In the event that two runners occupy the same base, the trailing runner will be called out and the play remains alive.

### **Interference**

Art. 1. While running-Any runner who deliberately runs into a fielder making a play on the ball will be called out for interference. The ball will become dead and runners must return to the last attained base at the time of interference. If the act is flagrant, the player may be ejected.

Art. 2. While on Base-Any runner occupying a base whom deliberately touches the ball will be called out for interference. The ball will become dead and the runners must return to the last occupied base at the time of the pitch.

Art. 3. While Retired-Any retired runner who, in the judgment of the umpire, hinders a fielder's ability to play the ball will be charged with interference. In this instance, the ball will be dead and the runner nearest home plate will be called out.

Art. 4. As a Base Coach-A base coach who does not vacate the coach's box and interferes with a defensive player's attempt to field the ball will be charged with interference. In this instance, the ball will be dead and the runner nearest home plate will be called out.

### **Fielding**

#### **Number and Position**

Art. 1. Number-No more than ten players shall take the field for defense.

Art. 2. Position-No more than six fielders (including the pitcher) shall be in the infield.

#### **Making a Play**

Art. 1. Playing the ball-A fielder may not stand between the runner and the base when not making a play on the ball. This includes the catcher, who must either stand completely in fair or foul territory to avoid contact.

#### **Obstruction**

Art. 1. Obstruction-Obstruction is an act by any defensive player that hinders the runner's attempt to reach a base or bases. In the event of obstruction, the ball will remain alive until the end of play. At the umpire's discretion, bases may be awarded.

Art. 2. Fake Tags-A fake tag by any fielder will result in a base award and ejection of the defensive player.

### **Scoring**

#### **Runs**

Art. 1. When- A run is scored when a runner legally touches home base after touching first, second, and third in order.

Art. 2. Situation with Two Outs-When with two outs, a run does not score if the third out is made at first. If a runner crosses home plate before the third out, the run counts if the third out was not a force.

#### **Mercy Rule**

Art. 1. Mercy Rule-If a twelve run difference occurs after four innings, or 3 ½ if the home team is winning, the game will be complete.

#### **Official Game**

Art. 1. When- A game is considered official after the fourth inning.

Art. 2. Weather- In the event of weather, a game may be cancelled at any time. If a game is cancelled, the game will be official after the fourth inning. Games that are not played or are not official will stand as ties.

Art. 3. Cancellation-If a game has been played past the fourth inning at the time of cancellation, the score will stand as official from the previous inning.

### **Appeals and Awards**

#### **Appeals**

Art. 1. What it is-An appeal is a play in which an umpire cannot make a decision until requested by a player. The appeal must be made before the next legal or illegal pitch or before the defensive team has crossed the foul line.

**Art. 2. Types The following must be appealed:**

- Runner missing a base
- Runner leaving a base before a catch
- Batting out of order

Art. 3. Who Can-After the ball has become dead, any infielder (with or without possession of the ball) may make a verbal appeal to the plate umpire. The plate umpire will then appeal to the administering umpire for the decision.

**Awards**

Art. 1. Awarded Bases-Bases may be awarded by the plate umpire for the following:

- Overthrow out of play: 2 bases from the time of the throw
- Ball bounds over a fence/cones after landing in fair territory: 2 bases from the time of the pitch. Batter receives a double.
- Overthrow into a dugout: 2 bases from the time of the throw
- Ball caught in outfield cones: 2 bases from the time of the pitch
- Batted ball touches detached player equipment: 3 bases from the time of the pitch
- Thrown ball touches detached player equipment: 2 bases from the time of the throw
- Ball crosses cones in flight while in fair territory: 4 bases from the time of the pitch
- Obstruction: 1, 2, 3, or 4 bases from the time of the infraction

**Coed Rules Adjustments**

The Game-Teams will be composed of the following combinations, 4 men/4 women, 5 men/4 women, 4 men/5 women, 5 men/5 women.

Batting-Men and women may bat in any order in the lineup.

Extra Hitter-An Extra Hitter (Extra Player) is allowed and may be of either gender, provided the team has five men and five women. Rules regarding the EP stand as in Men's/Women's rules.

Base on Balls-If a male batter takes a base on balls and is followed by a female, he will automatically be awarded second base. The female may then choose to hit or be awarded first base.

Batted Ball-Males must hit the men's softball. Females may hit the women's softball. If a male hits a women's softball, the play will stand. If a female hits a men's softball, the female batter has the option of taking the play or being awarded a new at bat. In that case, the runners must return to the bases occupied at the time of the pitch.

Fielding-Men and women may take the field at any position.