



# SOFTBALL RULES (revised 9/1/05)

All participants are required to complete a waiver of liability form each year. All participants in intramural sports activities assume the risk of injury. Rice University, its employees and agents shall not be liable for injury to person, loss or damage to personal property arising from or in any way resulting from participation in the intramural sports activities.

\* Official ASA rules will be used with the following additions, exceptions, and clarifications. *If you have further rules questions, please contact Evan Stein.*

\* Captains are required to read the general IM Rules and Eligibility, and inform their team of any changes to policies and/or procedures!

**Rule changes and interpretations for the 2005-2006 school year are indicated in BOLD.**

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**TEAM:** ten players constitute a team. **If a team starts with less than ten players, they have the option of either locking their roster (at eight or nine players) or keeping the roster open to add a ninth and/or tenth player. If a team locks their roster, they cannot add a ninth and/or tenth player (they can only substitute for existing players). If a team keeps their roster open, they will be forced to take an out in the batting order where the ninth and/or tenth players would bat.** Once a team falls below eight players (during the game) then the opposing team will be asked if they want to continue the game. If they continue the result of the game stands. If they do not agree to continue, then they win by forfeit.

**GAME TIME:** Games will consist of seven innings or a 45-minute time limit, whichever comes first. When the game time has expired the umpire will make an announcement that no new innings may begin. **An inning is considered complete once the third out is made against the home team. The next inning then begins.**

**TIES:** *Regular season:* If the game is tied at the end of seven innings or the 45-minute time limit, one extra inning will be used. If teams are still tied after the extra inning, then the game will end in a tie. *Playoffs:* For tie games, play will continue until one team is ahead after a complete inning.

**MERCY RULE:** If one team is ahead by 10 runs or more after 5 innings of play (or 4 1/2 innings if the home team is ahead), the game shall end.

**WEATHER:** In the case of inclement weather or other harmful conditions, four full innings (or 3 1/2 innings if the home team is ahead) will constitute a full game.

**SHOES:** Shoes (sandals not included) must be worn at all times. No metal or steel cleats allowed.

**DISTANCES FOR PITCHING MOUND AND BASES:** The pitching mound will be 46' away from home plate. The bases will be 65' away from home plate for all games.

**GAME EQUIPMENT:** Only official designated Rice Intramural Sports balls will be used. Only officially marked softball bats will be allowed in play.

**UMPIRE'S JUDGEMENT:** An umpire's judgment should not be contested. Failure to adhere to an umpire's judgment may warrant ejection. No appeals. The umpire's decisions are final. Only rule interpretations may be protested immediately following the issue in question.

**BALLS AND STRIKES:** Each batter will start his/her at bat with a count of one ball and one strike. In other words, two pitched strikes equals an out and three pitched balls equals a walk. A batter who hits a foul ball, including foul tips, on a count of two strikes will be out. If a batter steps out of the batters box (on either side of the plate, not touching any part of the line) on a pitch that is hit the batter will be called out. If a batter steps on home plate as they hit the ball, they will be called out.

**NOTE:** A pitcher will be allowed to announce, at any time, his/her intention to walk a batter upon which the batter will be automatically awarded a walk.

**BUNTS OR INTENTIONAL CHOPS:** The batter will be called out if they bunt or intentionally chop at the ball.

**THROWN BATS:** If the batter throws his/her bat, they may be warned, called out, or ejected depending on the severity of the incident, intent, and additional factors.

**BASE RUNNING:** Under no circumstance will stand-up collisions, at any base, be tolerated. Sliding is strongly encouraged, but not required. HOWEVER, the responsibility of avoiding contact lies with the runner. If, in the umpires' judgment, the runner fails to take the necessary steps to avoid contact, and causes contact, they shall call the runner out. On double play situations, runners tagged out at second must refrain from interfering with the throw to first base. Any interference by the baserunner will cause the runner going to first base to automatically be called out for runner interference. Any excessive force used to tag a base runner out, or to force a fielder to drop a ball, may warrant an ejection.

**STEALS:** No steals are allowed in slow pitch softball. A base runner may not leave the base until either a pitched ball is hit or it crosses home plate. If the base runner leaves early, the umpire will declare "no pitch" and the base runner will be called out.

**INTERFERENCE:** A fielder (catcher also) has the right to go into the base path when A) he/she has the ball B) he/she is in the act of fielding the batted ball C) he/she is in the act of fielding the thrown ball. If accidental contact is made under these circumstances the umpires will decide if the runner will be awarded the next base. If the contact was blatantly made by the runner, then the runner will be called out.

**OBSTRUCTION:** If a defensive player illegally hinders a batter or base runner then the base runner will be awarded an extra base. A fake tag to induce the runner to slide is considered obstruction and the runner will be awarded an extra base.

**THROWN HATS/GLOVES:** If a fielder throws his/her hat or glove at a batted or thrown ball and contacts the ball, the base runners will be awarded three bases from the time of the pitch or two bases from the time of the throw. If contact occurs on an obvious home run all base runners will be awarded four bases.

**OVERTHROWS & OUT OF PLAY:** When a ball is overthrown into foul territory, the advancement of the base runners is unlimited. The ball is considered in play and runners can be tagged out while advancing. Overthrown balls going beyond the out-of-play line will award base runners two bases from the last base they had touched when the ball was thrown. If a ball is carried out of play, the base runners are awarded one base at the time of the carry over. Any balls initially caught beyond the out-of-play line will count as foul balls.

If a batted ball enters dead ball territory without being touched by a fielder, the ball shall become dead, and the batter-runner and all other baserunners shall be awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the ball went out of bounds. The one exception occurs when a batter-runner has not yet touched first base at the time the ball goes out of bounds. In that instance, the batter-runner shall be credited with a ground-rule double and will be awarded second base. If a batted ball enters dead ball territory after being deflected by a fielder, each

baserunner is entitled to two bases from the last base touched at the time of the deflection. Deflected balls shall be treated in the same manner as overthrown balls in this regard.

**INFIELD FLY RULE:** A batter is called out on an easily caught pop fly to any defensive player near or in the infield when there are runners on first and second or the bases are loaded and there are less than two outs. The batter is called out and all base runners advance at their own risk once the fly ball has been touched. When such a hit is made the umpire should immediately call "infield fly the batter is out". When in doubt the umpire should call "infield fly, the batter is out if fair", or "infield fly, if fair".

**PITCHING:** Each pitch must meet an arc requirements of 6-12 feet from the ground. If a pitch does not meet these requirements then the umpire will call "flat" or "top" as soon as it comes apparent that the pitch will not meet the requirements. A pitcher must keep one foot in contact with the pitching rubber during the entire pitching motion. Otherwise it will be ruled an illegal pitch and considered a ball. On an illegal pitch, if a batter swings and misses then it will be considered a strike. Once the batter is set in the batters box, the pitcher may pitch the ball. If the batter is not set in the box and the pitch occurs it will be called "no pitch".

**SUBSTITUTIONS:** A substitute will enter the batting order for the person they are replacing. Only starters are allowed to re-enter a game and must come back in the batting order at the place they originally held. A substitute may not re-enter the game once they have left.

**OPTIONAL EXTRA HITTER:** In men's or women's play a team may use an extra player as an extra hitter. The hitter will not play the field unless switched for a fielder. The hitter is counted as a starter for the purposes of substitutions. Teams must decide before the start of the game whether or not to use the extra hitter. If an extra hitter leaves the game for any reason and cannot be immediately replaced his team shall take an automatic out every time his/her name is reached in the batting order. Extra hitter rules for coed play are described below.

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## COED SOFTBALL RULES:

**TEAMS:** An official team is composed of five males and five females. Below are the rules governing less than the official number of participants:

- Nine – 5 of one sex and 4 of the other
- Eight – 4 of one sex and 4 of the other
- Seven – forfeit

**OPTIONAL EXTRA HITTER:** A team may have either 1) a female OR 2) both a female and male as extra hitters in the lineup. The extra hitter(s) can play the field only if switched with a fielder and counted as starters.

**BATTING ORDER/FIELDING RULES:** There will be no specific batting order nor will there be any specific fielding rules. However, if a male batter walks and is followed by a female batter she has the option of walking or taking her turn at bat. In either scenario, the male batter automatically goes to second base.

**All final decisions to eligibility rules will be at the discretion of the Intramural Director.**

**FURTHER QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS MAY BE DIRECTED TO:**

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