

# SOFTBALL

07/00

## HISTORY

Softball is an adaptation of baseball. The YMCA transferred the game of baseball from the outdoors to the indoors. This took place about 1900. Because of limited indoor space and the hardness of the ball the YMCA directors made the ball softer, the bat smaller, and the baselines and pitching distances shorter. The pitcher throws the ball with an underhand motion.

There exists only one set of official rules, but modifications have produced many types of games and leagues such as fast-pitch and slow pitch.

## THE GAME

A regulation game consists of seven innings. In case of a tie extra innings are played.

## PLAYERS

A team consists of 9 players: pitcher, catcher, first baseman, second baseman, shortstop, third baseman, left fielder, centre fielder and right fielder. In "Slow-Pitch" softball a tenth player is added called a short fielder.

## SCORING

The winning team is the one that scores the most runs. A run is scored when a player completes a circuit of the bases, touching each in order.

## BATTING

The batter shall take a position within the lines of the batters box. All batters must bat in their order, or an out is called on the person at bat.

A **strike** is called:

- 1) for each pitch in the strike zone that the batter does not hit.
- 2) for each pitched ball that the batter swings at and misses
- 3) for each foul tip - the batter is out if the tip is on the third strike.

A **ball** is called:

- 1) for a pitched ball that does not enter the strike zone and is not swung at by the batter.

A **fair ball** is one that:

- 1) lands in fair territory - between first and third bases.
- 2) lands on any one of the bases with the exception of home plate.
- 3) falls on fair ground beyond first or third base.

The batter is out immediately when an **infield fly** is hit with base runners on first and second or first, second and third with less than two outs. This is called the infield fly rule.

A **foul ball** is a legally batted ball that:

- 1) lands on foul ground outside the first or third base lines or behind home plate.
  - 2) passes first or third base on foul ground or outside the bases.
- If a foul ball is caught before it touches the ground the batter is out.

The **batter is out** under the following circumstances:

- 1) on three strikes
- 2) when a fly ball is legally caught.
- 3) on an infield fly rule.
- 4) when the batter interferes with the catcher. Intentional interference puts a runner out plus the batter who hit the ball.
- 5) when a hit ball is thrown to first base, caught and the bag touched before the batter reaches the base.

## BASERUNNING

- 1) All bases must be touched in order.
- 2) If two baserunners are on the same base the last runner can be tagged out.
- 3) The batter becomes a baserunner when four balls are called.
- 4) When a fair ball rolls out of bounds the ball is dead and all baserunners are awarded two bases from the time of the pitch.
- 5) There is no base stealing. Only after the ball has passed home plate can the baserunner leave a base.
- 7) The baserunner is out if he/she is tagged with the ball while running to a bag or the fielder with the ball touches the bag before the runner gets there if it is a force play.
- 8) The baserunner is out if running outside the basepath unless it is necessary to avoid colliding with the fielder catching the ball.
- 8) The baserunner is out if he/she passes another baserunner.
- 9) The baserunner is out if he/she is off the base and is struck by a fair ball.

## TERMS

**Base on Balls:** batter reaching first base after four balls are called.

**Base Path:** An imaginary line 3 feet to either side of a direct line between the bases.

**Batting Order:** the official listing of the sequence of the players to bat.

**Bunt:** a ball softly touched by the bat and landing within the infield.

**Double Play:** a play in which two players are legally put out.

**Error:** A play that fails to cause an out of a runner.

**Fair Territory:** the part of the playing field within the first and third base foul lines from home plate to the end of the outfield.

**Force Out:** occurs when the runner loses the right to his base because the batter has become a runner and the fielder on the next base is holding the ball.

**Foul Tip:** a ball that goes directly from the bat to the catcher's glove.

**Infield:** that portion of the field within the baselines

**Infield Fly Rule:** the batter shall be declared out when hitting an infield fly with runners in first and second or first, second and third with fewer than two outs.

**Inning:** that portion of a game in which a team plays both offence and defence, starting with the first team at bat.

**Stolen Base:** a player on a base advances to the next base without the ball being hit.

**Strike Zone:** the area between the batter's knees and armpits.

**Tagging Up:** once a fielder has caught a fly ball the baserunner may run to the next base provided he/she has "tagged up". This means that the runner has his/her foot on the bag and does not leave until the ball has been caught. If the runner leaves early he/she will be called out.

## THE PLAYING FIELD

