SLOW PITCH SOFTBALL STUDY GUIDE

HISTORY

The game of softball was invented by George W. Hancock, of Chicago, in 1887. He used a 16” ball and it was played indoors. Our present set of rules are formed by the Amateur Softball Association of America (A.S.A.), which was founded in 1933.

PLAYERS AND POSITION

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TERMINOLOGY:

Ball – a pitch which is not within the strike zone of the batter.
Base on ball – walk to first after four pitches are judged to be balls.
Base – the 4 stations on the ball field which runners on the offensive team must touch in succession before scoring.
**Baseline** – a more or less imaginary space 6ft. wide in which a runner must stay while running the bases.

**Batter's Box** – area in which the batter must stand when batting.

**Batting Order** – order in which the players take their turn batting.

**Count** – the number of balls and strikes on a batter.

**Dead ball** – the ball is not in play until the pitcher has pitched the ball

**Defensive Team** – the team positioned in the field.

**Double Play** – a defensive play which results in 2 outs.

**Fair Ball** – any legally batted ball which is touched or which stops in fair territory.

**Fly Ball** – any ball batted high into the air.

**Fly Out** – any ball hit into the air and caught before it touches the ground.

**Force Out** – when the runner has to run on a ground ball because there are no open bases.

**Foul Ball** – any ball settling outside the fair area, or touching in the fair area and then rolling out, without being touched by a fielder before going past 1st or 3rd.

**Full Count** – the batter has 3 balls and 2 strikes.

**Inning** – the portion of a game in which the teams both are on defense and offense once.

**Line Drive** – a low sharp fly ball hit into the playing field

**Offensive Team** – the team at bat.

**Strike** – a pitched ball which is within the strike zone of the batter, or when the batter swings at and misses the ball, or fouls off.

**Strike Zone** – the space over any part of home plate which is between the batter’s armpits and knees. The ball must also be thrown in an arc 6-12ft. high.

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**GAME**

The game was patterned after baseball. There are 10 players on the field in a slow pitch softball game.

In a regulation softball game there are 7 innings. An inning is a complete turn at bat for both teams.

There are 3 outs for each team per inning.

Bunting or stealing bases is not allowed.

A run will not score if the third out is a force out.

A base runner cannot score ahead of the base runner preceding her/him.

** Strikes and balls:**

1. The pitcher must pitch the ball underhand.
2. The strike zone is between the batter’s armpits and knees and over the plate.
3. If the pitched ball does not cross the strike zone it is called a ball.
4. 4 balls is a walk (you get to go to 1st base).
5. 3 strikes is an out.
6. A foul ball is considered a strike except on the third strike.
7. A batter must be in the batter’s box when they hit the ball. If you step on the plate, you are out.
8. When a batter swings and totally misses the ball, it is called a strike.
Fair and foul balls:

1. A ball is foul if it is hit in the infield and is not touched until the ball is in foul territory.
2. A ball is foul if it lands in the outfield in foul territory. It also counts as a strike.
3. A ball is fair if it hits 1st or 3rd base.
4. A ball is fair if it lands in fair territory in the outfield then rolls foul.
5. A ball is fair if it is touched in fair territory.
6. A fly ball in foul territory, that is caught, is an out.

Base Runners:

1. A base runner is not allowed to interfere with a player fielding a ball. The base runner will be called out.
2. The base runner is safe if a player on the other team interferes with him/her.
3. Base runner is out if they leave the base before the batter hits the ball.
4. Base runner is out if they do not “tag-up” when a fly ball is caught (foul or fair) and the team throws the ball back to the base before the runner gets back.
5. If a batted ball hits a base runner they are out.
6. When an overthrow at 1st or 3rd base occurs, and the ball goes out of play, the runner is awarded one base.
7. The base runner may overrun 1st base, without jeopardy of being put out, if no attempt is made to advance to 2nd.
8. An overthrow at 2nd base occurs, and the ball goes to the outfield, the runner may advance as many bases as he/she can.
9. During a force out, the fielder can tag the base or the runner.
10. If the base runner chooses to advance, he/she must be tagged with the ball to be put out.
11. A base runner may advance after a fly ball is caught.

SKILLS

Keys to initiating a good throw are:

1. Grip the ball comfortably, not too tight.
2. The ball should come from the waist and then from right behind the ear.
3. Step in the direction of the recipient.
4. Follow through with hand toward the target.
5. Step with the opposite foot than the arm you are throwing with.

Keys to a successful catch are:

1. Throwing hand should be behind but not necessarily touching the glove.
2. The catcher should watch the ball all the way into the glove.
3. ALWAYS keep the ball in the center of the body.
4. To catch a ball high above the shoulder, the fingers of the glove should be pointing up.
A good hitter:

1. Watches the ball from the time the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand.
2. Does not rest the bat on his or her shoulder.
3. Keeps his or her elbow up, not tucked in by his/her side.
4. Steps (toward the pitcher) and swings all in the same motion so as to get the most power on contact.
5. Swings at CHEST LEVEL to drive the ball hard and straight rather than high in the air.
6. Follows through with both hands on the bat in addition to “Rolling” his or her wrists upon contact. (Also aids in power on contact).
7. Grips the bat with dominate hand on top, there should be no spacing between hands.

BASIC SAFETY

1. Players should stand behind the backstop or in the dugout to prevent injury during a softball game.
2. After hitting, NEVER throw the bat.
3. If catching, stand away from home plate or you MUST be wearing the proper equipment.
4. If you choose to pitch, NEVER stand too close to the batter.
5. Before playing, ALWAYS stretch, especially the shoulder girdle.

SPORTMANSHIP

1. Ways to improve self-discipline are accepting officials’ decisions, obeying the coach, and cooperating with teammates.