



Softball

rules and regulations



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Rules Overview

General Softball guidelines of USA (formerly ASA) slow pitch softball apply where appropriate and as interpreted by Underdog umpires. Umpires have final calls on balls and strikes, fielding calls and any other disputes or appeals.

Umpires will use their discretion and take into account the pace of play to call last inning so that an inning doesn't start after 1 hour and 25 minutes. The start of that 1:25 will start at the scheduled game time unless the game starts late because the previous game ran over.

Captains will decide who will be the "home" and "away" teams prior to the game with a Ro-Sham-Bo (rock-paper-scissors)

7 Inning Games: 7 run maximum per inning (except in the 7th or last inning of the game as declared by the umpire)/ 12 run mercy option after the 4th inning of completed play. "Carry-over" runs past 7 count before inning is called due to 7 run max.

Balls: Underdog will only use official 12 inch softballs. 11 inch soft-balls will not be switched in for batters. Game softballs will be provided by the Underdog umpire before each game.

Uniform: Players are expected to wear a shirt and shorts or pants at all times. Players wearing clothing containing metal, or wearing exposed metal jewelry may be asked to remove such items by an Underdog umpire.

Ties: Extra innings will be allowed with time permitting. A game ending after 7 innings in a tie may be listed as a completed tie game if there is not enough time to begin extra inning play. In this case, both captains must agree to play extras.

In all cases, a game may be called as completed by an Underdog umpire if a full inning has been completed and time does not permit the start of an additional inning. If a game ends mid-inning because of time, rain, lights, etc. the score of the game will revert to the last completed inning.



I Line-Ups

A Legal Playing Combinations

A maximum of 10 players can be on the field for defense. A minimum of 8 players is needed to avoid a forfeit (gender maximums and minimums must be met within those 8).

Teams must field a coed defense: minimum 3 males and 3 females, maximum 6 males or 6 females. There are no maximums or minimums for non-binary players.

Players may not pick up more than 3 non-roster players as subs for any game, otherwise it will count as an automatic forfeit, although a game still will be played. Non-roster players may never be used during the playoffs.

Example: 6 men and 3 women is legal, but 7 men and 3 women is not. 6 men, 3 women and one non-binary player is legal.

B Creating the Line-up

A team may never have more than 2 players of the same gender bat consecutively in the line-up. This even applies to line-up turnover. (example: if a team has two males at the bottom of their line-up, the lead off batter must be female or non-binary to avoid having 3 consecutive male batters.)

If you have more than a 2:1 ratio of males to females+non-binary players or the opposite, your team will have two players share a spot in the line-up. In this case, the two players will alternate at-bats. On defense, either of them can play in any given inning.

Teams may never create separate gender line-ups and rotate the two.

C Batting the Line-Up

Teams will always "bat the line-up" when putting together their line-up.

"Bat the lineup" means the following: Those players designated to hit beyond the starting ten players, are included in the offensive lineup.

Each of these additional players must have a turn at bat before the rotation begins again. Teams are not required to include their entire team in the original submitted lineup, but may list up to a maximum of 15 players in the batting lineup if they choose.

The original submitted lineup may hit in any set order regardless if the player(s) is playing defensively. Defensive substitutions may be freely made among the original submitted lineup. Players may not be substituted defensively during an inning except in cases of injury.

Any entries beyond the original submitted lineup will be added to the lowest spot in the order that does not affect the line-up requirements.

Normal batting line-up restrictions apply to "batting the line-up."
A team must have a minimum of 8 players to start and finish a game.

Example: If a team does not have enough females or non-binary players to ensure that no more than two males bat consecutively, then a team may only bat the line-up with as many players as it can fulfill the restrictions on consecutive men and women in the line-up.

Extra players would share a spot in the order.

D Batting Line ups and Injuries

An injured player can exit the line-up in the case of an injury, unless this exit affects the gender batting line-up. If this breaks the gender batting rule (no more than two in a row) then a person of the same gender who batted last and is not on base must bat in that vacant spot in the line-up.

In the case that the injured player is non-binary, and there is not another non-binary player in the line-up, the last available batter of the gender needed to break up the line-up will bat.

A player simply leaving a game early will be scored as an out unless a sub is available, they can not be "skipped."

Many teams often create their line-ups knowing that players are "on their way." Captains should not place players on their batting line-up until they are present at the game, players will simply be added to a spot at the bottom of the order when they arrive.

Example: If a non-binary player is injured and cannot bat, creating 3 males hitting in a row, then the female who hit most recently and is not on base will hit in their place.

If the injury causes 3 females in a row, then the male who hit most recently and is not on base will hit in their place.

E Forfeits

A forfeited game shall be declared by the umpire in favor of the team not at fault in the following cases:

- ▶ If a team fails to appear on the field, is not able to field a legal team, or being on the field, refuses to begin a game for which it is scheduled at the time scheduled or within **10 minutes** of the scheduled starting time.
- ▶ If after the game has begun, one side refuses to continue to play, unless the game has been suspended or terminated by the umpire.
- ▶ If after play has been suspended by the umpire, one side fails to resume playing within two minutes after the umpire has called "play ball".
- ▶ If a team employs tactics noticeably designed to delay or to hasten the game to benefit from a time-cap on the game.
- ▶ If, after warning by the umpire, any one of the rules of the game is willfully violated.
- ▶ If, because of the removal of the players from the game by the umpire or for any cause there are less than 8 players on either team.

NOTE: Teams that forfeit multiple games, or fail to field full teams for multiple games may be dropped from the league.

II The Game

A Bats

Underdog umpires have the final say in which bats can be used for league games.

Bats must have and USA or ASA certification stamp on them and not be on their banned bat list.

Bats with a USSSA or ISA certification must still have an ASA or USA stamp as well.

Bats that are not allowed include:

- ▶ Baseball Bats
- ▶ Wooden Bats
- ▶ Bats that are dented or flattened or altered.
- ▶ Bats that have been banned by USA (formerly ASA) Softball
- ▶ Any bat that an Underdog umpire deems gives an unfair advantage or creates an unsafe playing environment

A list of bats banned by USA (formerly ASA) Softball can found on their website.

B Shoes

Shoes must be worn by all players. **Metal cleats or simulated metal cleats are never allowed.** The soles may be either smooth or have soft or hard rubber cleats. Shoes with metal cleats or with detachable cleats that screw onto a post on the shoe are not allowed. **Sandals are never allowed.**

C Defensive Positioning

Fielding: Teams must have a minimum of 3 ladies in the field (while playing with 8 or 9 players). If playing with 10 players, they must either have a minimum of 4 ladies or 3 ladies and at least one non-binary player. Teams must position a minimum of 1 male and 1 of their 3-4 females in the infield (1B, 2B, 3B, SS) and 1 male and 1 of their 3-4 females in the outfield while playing defense. There are no minimums or maximums for the positioning of non-binary players.

Note: Teams must still have at least 4 females in the field (or 3 and one non-binary) when playing with 10, or at least 3 females in the field when playing with 8 or 9.

Teams must always field a catcher, even with 8 players.

D Pitching

Pitches are to be thrown underhand in an arc with the pitchers foot resting on the pitching rubber. Balls and strikes are to be determined by an Underdog umpire. A catcher should not attempt to catch the ball in the air, but rather should wait for the ball to bounce before fielding and throwing back to the pitcher for safety reasons. Arguing balls and strikes is grounds for warnings and possible removal by an Underdog umpire.

Pitching Rules:

- ▶ The ball must be delivered with a perceptible arc, and reach a height of at least 6 feet from the ground while not exceeding a maximum height of 12 feet from the ground.

- ▶ The ball must be delivered underhand at a moderate speed.
- ▶ A pitcher may not deliver more than 5 warm-up pitches prior to the beginning of each half inning. However, the umpire may give less, or even no warm-up pitches in the interests of time.

Strike Zone: The strike zone is defined as being from a player's shoulders to knees when he or she is in the middle of the batters box. Moving forward or backward in the batters box does not change the strike zone, the zone is based on what it would be were they in the middle of the box.

E Batting

A team may not score more than 7 runs in one inning of play. After the 7th run has been scored the inning will automatically be called by an Underdog umpire after the play ends, except in the 7th or last inning declared by the umpire. Carryover runs past the 7th will count.

Walks: After a walk by a pitcher on 4 straight pitches with no strikes thrown, the batter will have the option of taking the walk, or to resume hitting by resetting the count. If the pitcher intentionally and repeatedly throws non-hittable pitches to try to force the batter into a walk, the pitcher may be removed from the mound.

Throwing the Bat: A player may be called out for throwing the bat if this is deemed a danger to other players or the umpire. Players will usually, but not always be given a warning by an Underdog umpire before being called out.

Home Runs: Some fields have no home-run fences. A ball is live and can roll as far as the field permits until it is returned to the pitcher. Underdog may use cones on these fields to help keep spectators off of the field, but these cones have no relation to home runs or scoring.

For any games played at fields with fences a 3 home run limit will apply to any game for all players. There are no restrictions to how many "inside-the park-homers" that a team can hit. On any home run after the 3rd, the ball will be considered dead, the batter will be called out, and each runner must return to their original base.

Foul Tips: A foul tip is a batted ball which goes directly from the bat, not higher than the batter's head, and is legally caught. Any foul tip that is caught is a strike and the ball is dead. Caught foul tips can not be scored as outs. Caught foul pop ups may be scored as outs.

F Running

Base Running: No leads are allowed on the base paths. Advancing on wild pitches by the pitcher is also not allowed. Base stealing is not allowed. Base runners may leave their base when a pitched ball is hit, but must return to that base immediately if the ball is not hit in fair territory.

Balls and Strikes:

Underdog uses a full count (4 balls for a walk, 3 strikes for an out).

Players get one courtesy foul after two strikes. A foul ball after that will be out.

Sliding will be allowed. Defensive players are not allowed to stand on the base and block the path of runners.

Head first sliding: Head first sliding is not allowed. Any runner sliding head first will be called out. Dive backs are allowed. A dive back to the base is not considered a head first slide. A **diveback** = 2 steps and a dive.

When a defensive player has the ball or is about to receive the ball, the runner shall be declared out if they remain on their feet and attempt to crash into the defensive player. A base runner shall be out if he/she does not attempt to avoid a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make a tag or force out. In order to prevent a crash ruling, the runner may slide, go around the defender (if outside the 3 foot lane, the runner will be called out), or return to the previous base touched. Runners are not required to slide. This includes plays at the plate.

Interference: When an offensive player impedes or confuses a defensive player while attempting to execute a play. This includes yelling at a member of defense in an attempt to distract them from receiving the ball. Penalty: Runner is out.

Obstruction is the act of:

- ▶ A defensive player who hinders or prevents a batter from batting a pitched ball
- ▶ A fielder, while not in the possession of the ball, in the act of fielding the ball, or about to receive a thrown ball, who impedes the progress of a legal base runner.

Penalty: Base runner(s) is awarded base(s) he/she would have reached if there had been no obstruction.

Overthrows: An overthrow occurs when a thrown ball from any fielder goes beyond the boundary lines of the playing field (dead ball territory) or becomes a blocked ball. Base runners are entitled to advance 2 bases from the last base obtained when the ball was thrown on all overthrows, as clarified by umpire.

Ground Rule Double: when a fair ball bounces and rolls out of play, or when it deflects off of a defensive player and goes out of play in foul territory, the ball is dead and all runners (including the batter) are awarded two bases from the time of the pitch.

Fan Interference: differs from Ground Rule Double in that the umpire can award two bases from the time at which the ball was interfered with.

An Underdog umpire may rule interference and award the hitter 2 bases from the time of interference if the umpire feels the ball has been interfered with by either:

- ▶ Unfit or unusual field conditions (object on the field)
- ▶ A passerby interfering with the ball or game.

Catch and Carry: When a live ball is unintentionally carried by a player into the out-of-play area, the ball becomes dead and all base runners are awarded 1 base from the last base touched at the time the fielder enters dead ball territory.

Foul lines, dead ball lines (out-of-play) - all lines are considered in play.

Infield Fly Rule: An infield fly is a fair ball (not including a line drive) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort there is a force at 3rd and less than 2 outs. When an apparent infield fly is hit, the umpire shall immediately declare "Infield Fly – Batter is out". Runners may advance at the risk of being caught.

Appeal Play: A play in which an umpire cannot make a decision until requested by a coach or player. The appeal must be made before the next pitch or before the defensive team has left the field (i.e. crossed the foul lines). Any infielder, with or without the ball, can make a verbal appeal on a runner missing a base or leaving a base too soon on a fly ball.

There are 4 major appeal plays:

- ▶ Missing a base
- ▶ Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched
- ▶ Batting out of order, and
- ▶ Attempting to advance to second after making a legitimate turn at first base.

Time: The ball remains live until the umpire calls "TIME", which should be done when the ball is held by a player in the infield area and when, in the judgment of the umpire, all play has ceased. Time may be requested by players, but is not automatically granted by the umpire.

Courtesy Runners: Teams are allowed to have one courtesy runner per inning. Generally this runner would be used in place of a player who is injured and cannot run. The batter must be able to make their way to 1st base by themselves. The courtesy runner would then be the last player of the same gender in the line-up who does not currently occupy the base paths.

In the case that the runner on base is non-binary, and there is not another non-binary player in the line-up, the last available batter will run.

An Underdog umpire may decline the use of a courtesy runner if they feel that the rule is being abused.

Example: Using a courtesy runner just to put your fastest runner on the base paths is not allowed.

G Protests

Protests will not be received or considered if they are based solely on a decision involving the accuracy of judgment on the part of an umpire.

Examples of protests which will not be considered are:

- ▶ Whether a batted ball was fair or foul.
- ▶ Whether a runner was out or safe.
- ▶ Whether a pitched ball was a ball or strike.
- ▶ Whether a runner did or did not touch a base, or did or did not leave too soon on a caught fly ball.

There are three types of protest:

- ▶ Misinterpretation of a playing rule - must be made before the next pitch or, if on the last play of the game, before the umpires leave the playing field.
- ▶ Illegal substitute or re-entry - must be made while they are in the game and before the umpires leave the field.
- ▶ Ineligible player - can be made any time during the game.

Protests may involve both a matter of judgment and the interpretation of a rule.

The captain or acting captain, of the protesting team shall immediately notify the plate umpire that the game is being played under protest. To aid in the determination of the issue, all interested parties shall take notice of the information, game details, and conditions surrounding the decision to protest.

H Mercy Rule

The losing team has the option of using the mercy rule and end the game if they are behind by 12 or more runs after 4 complete innings of play.

I Playoffs

Playoff Format:

In certain situations teams at or near the bottom of the standings may not advance to the playoffs. Playoff brackets are not determined until the end of the season as we may break teams up into separate divisions.

Seeding:

Teams are seeded according to wins and ties. Teams may be split into divisions. These divisions may not be solely based on team record. Teams may be placed in a division based on their performance, team history and strength of schedule during the regular season.

Rosters:

Non-Roster subs are not allowed in the playoffs unless they have been pre-approved by the office and added to your roster. Sub requests are not automatically approved and must be submitted for review during normal business hours for review.

Players are welcome to play on multiple teams in the league during the regular season. During the playoffs, players can only play on one team per division. They must pick the team before the playoffs and are not able to switch teams if one of their teams loses.

Team rosters do need to be independent of each other to the point that they will be able to play at the same time, or play each other.

J Misc

American Disability Act Rule: This rule may be used for a person(s) who is physically challenged as determined by the ADA. As a result of the player's disability, he/she can play either offense or defense.

Teams using a physically challenged player on either offense or defense only must have 11 players. If the physically challenged player can play both, only 10 players are needed.

Contact Underdog staff for additional details regarding this rule.

Blood Rule: A player who is bleeding or who has blood on his/her uniform shall be prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment can be administered. The umpire shall:

Stop the game and allow treatment if the injured player would affect the continuation of the game.

If medical care or treatment is administered in a reasonable length of time, the individual will not have to leave the game. The length of time that is considered reasonable is left to an Underdog umpire.

Player Conduct: Players are expected to exhibit respect and sportsmanship towards the opposing team. Any player found fighting, threatening, or being abusive to an opposing player can be warned or ejected from a game by an Underdog umpire.

Excessively arguing calls and ball/strikes can also be grounds for removal from a game.

NO DRINKING OF ALCOHOL IS PERMITTED DURING UNDERDOG SOFTBALL GAMES.

Players found to abuse this rule, players deemed as a threat to other players or their own safety, and players clearly intoxicated may be asked to leave the game and the field by an Underdog umpire.

All players not in the game are encouraged to stand or sit behind the fenced back-stop.

Rainouts: Games that have progressed more than 4 innings can be called by rain and listed as a completed game.

If there is ever a question as to whether games will be played please check the website, **in the weather section**, for rain-out information. If no information is available, call the Underdog office and listen to the voice mail instructing you on whether games are to be played. In all cases, a team should assume that games are to be played unless told otherwise by Underdog staff or umpires.

Games will not automatically be canceled due to inclement weather. There is no guarantee that all postponed games will be played. However, the Underdog staff will reschedule as many games as possible.

Thanks for playing – see you on the field!

**REMEMBER EVERYONE: THIS IS FOR FUN.
PLAY SAFE!!!**

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