

SCHS SOFTBALL STUDY GUIDE

HISTORY

Softball evolved from baseball in the United States. The first version of the game developed by George W. Hancock, was played indoors in Chicago in 1887. Different variations were played under the names of “Diamond Ball”, “Kitten Ball”, “Mush Ball”, “Pumpkin Ball”, and “Recreation Ball”. The first softball league was organized in Minnesota in 1900. In 1926 the game was officially called “Softball”.

Softball was introduced as an Olympic sport in 1996 and the U.S. Women’s team brought home the GOLD.

THE GAME

- A game is allotted time or 7 inning for both teams.
- A point is scored for a team when one runner goes all the way around the four bases, starting and finishing at the home base and touching all bases.
- A team consists of 9 players – in some cases of “SLOW” pitch softball an additional player is allowed and they are referred to as a “rover” or “short fielder”.
- An inning ends when the team batting accrues three outs.
- The order of the batting remains the same for each inning. The batting order continues where it left off at the end of the last inning.

BATTING

- The batter stands just away from the “homeplate” so that when he/she extends the arms and bat, the bat will go over the homeplate.
- The batter is to take a full swing, starting with the bat at (or near) the shoulder and swing it through to the other shoulder.
- Bunting is NOT allowed in slowpitch softball.
- The batter, upon hitting the ball, must run to “first base”.
- A batter is “out” if he/she accrues three strikes or is fielded out.

STRIKE

- If the batter swing at the ball and misses.
- If the ball is “pitched” so that it travels over homeplate and is at a height between the batters knees and shoulders, even if now swing is attempted.
- Three strikes = out
- In slowpitch, if you foul the ball off on the third strike you are out.

BALL

- A ball “pitched” which is not over the homeplate and/or is outside the knee-shoulder range of the batter is a “ball”.
- Four “balls” = one free base

PITCHING

- The pitcher is to pitch underhand, pulling the arm straight back, bringing it forward then releasing. NO windups! NO windmill pitches! NO overhead!
- The ball must make an arc between 6 feet and 12 feet and must land just behind homeplate, touching the carpet in order to be called a strike.
- The pitcher stands 40 feet from home plate.

FIELDING

- If the ball is hit in the air and a fielder catches the ball before it touches the ground the batter is “out”. All other runners must return to the base they started from. If the ball is hit into the “in field” and is caught before it touches the ground, the batter is out and all runner must return to the bases from which they started without the threat of getting “out” If the ball is hit into the “outfield” and is caught before it touches the ground, the batter is “out”.
- A runner may over-run first and home bases only. If the runner does not stop on second or third base, he/she may be caught off based and tagged “out”.
- If the batter swings the bat and it “ticks” the ball and the ball continues to travel backwards to the catcher it is a “foul” ball.
- If the batter hits the ball into the air and it is caught by catcher the batter is “out”, but the ball MUST rise above the height of the batter’s head before it is caught.
- The batter can NOT run with the bat. The bat must first be dropped before the batter may run.
- To get a person “out”-
 - The ball must be caught before it touches the ground
 - The runner must be tagged with the ball while it is in the hand of the fielder.
 - The ball must be securely in the hands of a fielder standing on a base, where the ball has arrived just before the runner. This only applied if the runner is “forced” to run. In extremely close plays and at the discretion of the umpire, the decision will be in favor of the runner.

DEFINITIONS

BASE ON BALL: reaching first base after four ball are called.

BATTING ORDER: the official listing of the sequence of the players to bat

BUNT: a ball softly touched by the bat that lands within the infield – illegal in slowpitch

DOUBLE PLAY: a play in which two players are legally out on the same hit pitch

ERROR: a play that fails to cause the out of a runner or that allows advancement of a runner.

INFIELD FLY RULE: the batter shall be declared out when hitting an infield fly with runner on first and second or first, second, and third with fewer than two outs.

STRIKE ZONE: the area over home plate, between the knees and armpits of the batter

KAPOK: a soft mixture of cork and rubber that fills the inside of a softball.