

# Softball

## Basic Information

Softball is a popular game played by more than 30 million people worldwide. Softball resembles baseball, but the rules of the sports differ in several ways. Softball pitching must be underhand, and base runners must remain on base until the ball has left the pitcher's hand. Softball requires less space and equipment and regulation games last seven innings instead of nine.

## Field and Equipment

- Infield in softball is smaller than that in baseball.
- Bases are 60 feet apart.
- The pitcher stands 40 feet from home plate.

## Basic Rules

- A game consists of seven innings.
- Slow pitch softball- each team is made up of 10 fielders: Pitcher, catcher, first baseman, second baseman, third baseman, shortstop, left fielder, right fielder, center fielder, and short fielder (rover).
- Three strikes allowed- if you foul the ball off on the third strike you are out.
- Pitches must be at least 6 feet high, but no more than 12 feet at its highest point.
- Four pitches out of a strike zone and you "walk" or get a base on balls.
- Slow pitch rules prohibit bunting and base stealing.

## History

- First developed as an indoor game in 1887 by George W. Hancock. A 16-inch ball was used.
- In 1895, the game was adapted for outdoor play by Lewis Rober of Minneapolis. A 12-inch ball was used.
- Today's game came from Rober's version of the game.
- The Amateur Softball Association (ASA) was founded in 1933.
- The International Softball Federation was founded in 1952.
- Softball was introduced as an Olympic sport in 1996 and the U.S. Women brought home the gold.

## Definitions

**Base on balls**—Reaching first base after four balls 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.

**Double Play**—A play in which two players are legally put out on the same hit ball.

**Error**—A play that fails to cause the out of a runner or that allows advancement of a runner.

**Infield Fly Rules**—The batter shall be declared out when hitting an infield fly with runners on first and second or first, second, and third base with fewer than two outs.

**Strike Zone**—The area over home plate, between the knees and armpits of the batter.