

# SLOWPITCH SOFTBALL

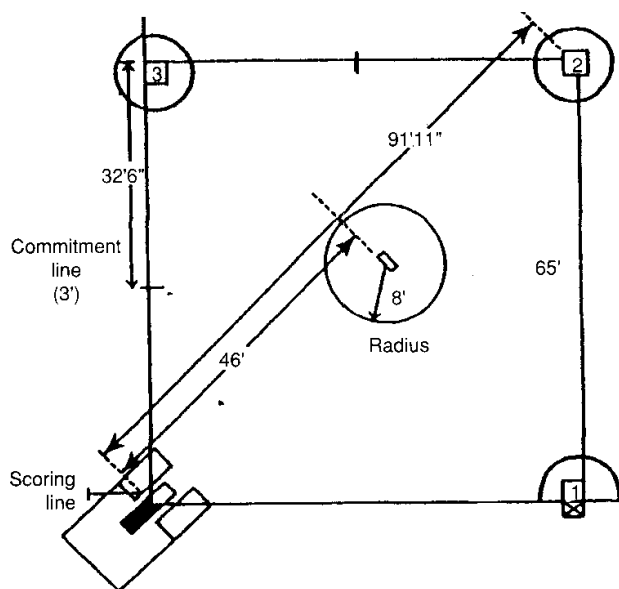
## RULES of the GAME

### 1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 **Base On Balls** – A base on balls permits the batter to gain first base without liability to be put out.
- 1.2 **Batting Order** – The official listing of offensive players in the order in which the players must come to bat. The order must alternate between male and female. After the first innings each next inning begins with the batter who would have batted next in the previous inning.
- 1.3 **Bunting** – Using the bat to just block the ball without following through with the swing is not permitted.  
*Penalty* – Batter is out. Runners may not advance.
- 1.4 **Chopped Ball** – A ball at which the batter strikes downward with a chopping action of the bat so that the ball bounces high into the air. This is not permitted. *Penalty* – Batter is out. Runners may not advance.
- 1.5 **Commitment Lines** – These are marked perpendicular to the baseline, halfway between second and third base, and third base and home plate. Once a runner's foot touches the ground on or past this line, the runner may not re-cross it, but must continue to the next base or home plate. *Penalty* – Runner is out.
- 1.6 **Defensive Team** – The team in the field.
- 1.7 **Double Base** – This is used at first base. If there is a play on the batter going to first base, the batter must touch the orange part of the base, and the fielder must touch the white part of the base.
- 1.8 **Fair Ball** – A batted ball that:
- a) Stops, or is first touched, on or over fair territory between home and first, or home and third.
  - b) Bounds past first or third base on or over fair territory.
  - c) Touches any base.
  - d) First falls on, or is first touched over, fair territory past first or third base.
- 1.9 **Force Play** – All plays at bases in Slowpitch softball are force plays.
- 1.10 **Forced Runner** – A runner who is compelled, by the batter hitting a fair ball, to advance to the next base. A forced runner may only be played out at the base to which he is forced to advance.
- 1.11 **Foul Ball** – A batted ball that:
- a) Stops, or is first touched, on or over foul territory between home and first, or home and third.
  - b) Bounds past first or third base on or over foul territory.
  - c) First falls on, or is first touched over, foul territory past first and third base.
  - d) Touches the batter, or bat in the batter's hands, while the batter is within the batter's box.
- 1.12 **Free Runner** – A free runner is one who is not forced to run by the batter hitting a fair ball. A free runner is played out the same way as a forced runner.
- 1.13 **Illegal Pitch** – A pitch that does not satisfy any one of the conditions in the pitching rule.
- 1.14 **Inning** – An inning is completed when either 3 outs have been achieved, or 10 batters have completed their turn at bat.
- 1.15 **Offensive Team** – The team at bat.
- 1.16 **Overthrow** – If the ball is thrown beyond the dead ball line past either first or third base, the ball is dead and each runner is awarded 2 bases from the last legally held base at the time the ball leaves the fielder's hand.
- 1.17 **Safety Zone** – These are circles (3ft radius) around second and third base and a semi circle marked on the fair territory side of first base. The circles are used to remove sliding and tagging from the game. If a play is made on a runner, the runner must have a foot within the circle before a fielder, in possession of the ball, contacts the base to which the runner is advancing. If no play is made on a runner, the runner must touch the base.
- 1.18 **Scoring Line** – An 8ft scoring line shall extend from 2ft from the corner of home plate closest to third base into foul territory at a 90-degree angle to the third base line. *A scoring home plate shall be placed at the end of the scoring line with the straight edge on the scoring line and the plate facing away from third base. To score a run, a runner must have touched the scoring home plate before a fielder, in possession of the ball, contacts the in diamond home plate.*
- 1.19 **Sliding** – There is no sliding in Slowpitch softball. *Penalty* – Runner is out.

- 1.20 **Stealing Bases** – Stealing is not permitted. Runners may only advance to the next base when the ball is hit, or when forced by the batter. A runner may not leave a base before the ball is hit. *Penalty* – Runner is out.
- 1.21 **Strike Zone Mat** – The mat is 17 inches wide and 40 inches long, and includes the home plate marked on the mat. A strike is called when a legally pitched ball hits any part of the mat.
- 1.22 **Tagging** – There is no tagging in Slowpitch softball. *Penalty* – Runner is awarded the base to which he was running.

## 2. THE PLAYING FIELD



- 2.1 The playing field consists of an infield and an outfield. These two areas, including boundaries, are fair territory. Any other area is foul territory.
- 2.2 The infield is 60ft square, with a base at each corner. The distance from the front edge of the pitcher's plate to the rear point of home plate is 40ft. The pitcher's plate is at the centre of an 8ft radius circle.
- 2.3 The outfield is in the shape of a quarter-circle, and is the area between the two foul lines. The distance from the rear point of home plate to the boundary is 225ft.
- 2.4 Foul territory shall extend 25ft from the baselines.
- 2.5 The batter's boxes are 7ft by 3ft. The inside lines are 6 inches from home plate, and the front line is 4ft in front of a line drawn through the centre of home plate.
- 2.6 The catcher's box is 10ft in length from the rear of outside corners of the batter's boxes, and is 8.5ft wide.
- 2.7 The commitment lines are marked perpendicular to second and third baselines and halfway between second and third base and third base and home plate.
- 2.8 Safety zone circles of 3ft radius are placed around second and third base and a semi-circle is marked around on the fair territory side of first base.
- 2.9 The scoring line extends 8ft from 2ft from the corner of home plate closest to third base into foul territory at a 90-degree angle to the third baseline. A scoring home plate shall be placed at the end of the scoring line with the straight edge on the scoring line and the plate facing away from third base.
- 2.10 The outfield arc is an imaginary line that shall arc from the foul line at leftfield to foul line at rightfield at a distance of 30 (thirty) metres from home plate.

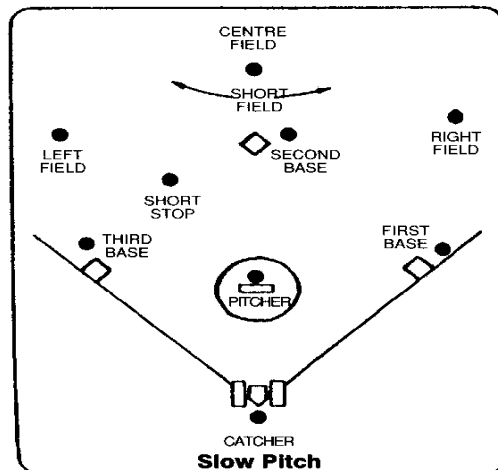
## 3. EQUIPMENT

- 3.1 Only official softball bats may be used. No baseball bats are permitted. *Penalty* – Batter is out.

- 3.2 Enclosed footwear must be worn by all players. Metal cleats and shoes with detachable cleats are not permitted.
- 3.3 Gloves must be used by players.
- 3.4 Helmets may be worn by batters and runners and face masks may be worn by catchers.
- 3.5 All players on a team shall wear tops alike in color and trim.

**4. PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES**

- 4.1 All players must be sixteen (16) years of age or older at the time of participation.
- 4.2 A team shall consist of ten players with a maximum of five males in the team at any one time.
  - a) additional players may be interchanged throughout the game
  - b) other players may be put into the game if they arrive after the game has started.
- 4.3 *A team may start and continue a game with a minimum of eight (8) players provided a maximum of four males are in the team at any one time.*
  - a) pick-up players from other teams or spectators may be used to make up numbers provided they comply with Bylaw 3b.
- 4.3 The players' positions are Pitcher, Catcher, First Base, Second Base, Third Base, Shortstop, Left Outfield, Centre Outfield, Right Outfield, and Short Field.



- 4.4 At the start of each pitch, the defensive players may be positioned anywhere on fair territory, with the following exceptions;
  - a) the catcher must be in the catcher's box.
  - b) the pitcher must be in a legal pitching position.
  - c) that short field must be behind the baselines between first and second base, or second and third base.
  - d) that the left fielder, centre fielder and right fielder must, at the time of the pitch, be outside an imaginary line that shall arc from the foul line at leftfield to foul line at rightfield a distance of 30 (thirty) metres from home plate.
- 4.5 There is no limit to the number of substitutions that can be made during a game, however, a player must occupy the same position in the batting order whenever he is in the team.
- 4.6 When a substitute enters the game, they must play at least one complete innings. For example, one turn at batting and one turn at fielding.
- 4.7 A player who has been injured during the course of a game may, when at bat, request a runner. The runner shall position them self an equal distance from first base as the batter, but at a safe distance behind the catcher. The batter shall be declared out if the runner leaves this position prior to the ball being hit (as per rules definition 'stealing bases').

The runner shall be of the same gender as the batter, and shall be the last runner to have batted or the last runner to have scored a run.

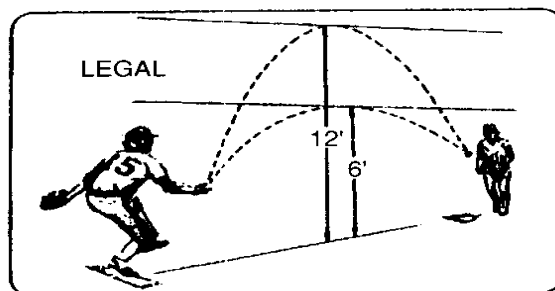
- 4.8 A 10th batter rule applies. When the 10th batter in an innings comes to bat, the umpire shall notify the defensive team. Once the 10th batter has completed their turn at bat, the offensive team is deemed to have been retired, and all runners remaining on base score. The exception to this is if the 10th batter is retired, or the third out occurs elsewhere. It is the responsibility of the offensive team to notify the umpire of the 10th batter. *Penalty* – No runners left on base score.
- 4.9 The 10th batter receives a base on balls with 10 balls, not the usual 4.

## 5. THE GAME

- 5.1 The choice of first or last bat in a game shall be decided by a toss of a coin at the beginning of the game.
- 5.2 One team bats (offense) for an innings against the other team who fields (defense). An inning ends when 3 offensive players are declared out or 10 batters have completed their turn at bat, whichever occurs first.
- 5.3 A regulation game is 7 innings or 75 minutes, whichever occurs first. No new innings shall commence within 5 minutes of the scheduled finishing time, but an innings in progress at the scheduled finishing time shall continue until completed.
- If a game is abandoned for any reason it shall be considered a regulation game if three innings have been completed, or if the game has been in progress for at least 30 minutes at the time of abandonment. The score will be as of the last complete innings.
- 5.4 A run is scored each time a runner legally rounds all three bases and crosses the scoring home plate.
- 5.5 A run shall not be scored if the third out of an inning is the result of;
- The batter being put out before legally touching first base.
  - A runner being forced out due to the batter becoming a runner.
- 5.6 No run may score after the third out of an inning.
- 5.7 The winner of the game shall be the team that scores the most runs in a regulation game.

## 6. PITCHING

- 6.1 When pitching, the pitcher must have at least one foot in contact with the pitcher's plate.
- 6.2 The pitcher is not required to take a step when delivering the pitch. If a step is taken, it can be forwards, backwards, or sideways.
- 6.3 The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
- 6.4 The ball must be delivered in an underarm motion and released at a moderate speed.
- 6.5 The ball must be pitched in an arc, and during the arc, the ball must reach at least 6ft above the ground, but not higher than 12ft.



- 6.6 The pitcher must release the ball on the first forward swing of the arm past the hip.
- 6.7 The penalty for an illegal pitch is a ball on the batter. If a batter swings at an illegal pitch, it is a strike, and there is no penalty for the illegal pitch.

6.8 The ball is dead after each pitch, unless the pitch is hit.

## 7. BATTING

7.1 The batter must take his position in the batter's box within 10 seconds after the umpire has declared play ball. *Penalty* – The umpire will call a strike on the batter. It is not necessary for a pitch to be thrown.

7.2 A strike is called:

- a) For each legally pitched ball that hits any part of the strike zone mat.
- b) For each pitched ball that is swung at and missed.
- c) For each foul ball.

7.3 A ball is called:

- a) For each pitched ball not swung at that does not land on the strike zone mat.
- b) For each pitched ball not swung at that is not the correct height.
- c) For each pitched ball that hits the batter when not striking at the pitch.
- d) When the pitcher fails to pitch the ball within 10 seconds.

7.4 If the pitcher pitches 4 balls to a batter, the batter is awarded first base. All runners forced by the batter also advance one base.

7.5 *Intentional walks, where the pitcher purposefully pitches 4 balls to a batter, are not permitted. The umpire shall award the batter third base in lieu of first base.*

7.6 The batter is out:

- a) when the ball is bunted or chopped downward.
- b) when the third strike hits the strike zone mat.
- c) when the third strike is struck at and missed.
- d) when the ball is batted foul on the third strike.
- e) when the ball is hit in the air and caught, in fair or foul territory.
- f) when the ball is hit and the defensive team gets the ball to a fielder standing on first base, before the batter touches first base.
- g) if he stands on home plate at the time he hits the ball.
- h) if his full foot steps over the front line of the batter's box at the time he hits the ball.

7.7 A batter who does not complete his turn at bat before three outs starts the next inning.

## 8. BASERUNNING

8.1 *Runners must remain in contact with the base until the ball is hit or crosses the home plate. Penalty – Runner is out*

8.2 Runners may not advance on a foul ball.

8.3 There are circles (3ft radius) around second and third base and a semi circle marked on the fair territory side of first base. The circles are used to remove sliding and tagging from the game. If a play is made on a runner, the runner must have a foot on or within the circle before a fielder, in possession of the ball, contacts the base to which the runner is advancing. Otherwise, the runner is out. If no play is made on a runner, the runner must touch the base. The semi-circle around first base is only used when a runner is returning to first base.

8.4 The runner is not to touch any of the bases while running the diamond (except 1<sup>st</sup> base). A runner who does not comply will be given 'out'. The runner must step on or inside the safety circle line at each base but must not touch the base itself when running to or thru that base. However, when the play is over the runner must return to have his foot in contact with that base.

8.5 On balls hit into the air and caught, runners must remain on the base until the fly ball has been touched. The runners may then advance to the next base at their own risk. If a runner leaves a base before a fly ball has been touched, he must return to the safety zone before the defensive team gets the ball back to that base. *Penalty* – Runner is out.

- 8.6 The batter is permitted to overrun first base provided they make no attempt to continue to second base.
- 8.7 When a runner overruns a base, he may be put out by a fielder, in possession of the ball, touching the base before the runner returns to the safety zone.
- 8.8 When a fielder is blocked from fielding the ball by an object that is not part of the game, the batter and all runners are awarded 2 bases from the base held at the time of the pitch.
- 8.9 A runner is not permitted to interfere with, or prevent, a fielder fielding the ball. *Penalty* – Runner is out. All other runners shall return to the last legally held base at the time of the interference.
- 8.10 A runner may advance and not be put out when a fielder not in possession of the ball, and not fielding a batted ball, obstructs that runner from reaching a base. The runner is awarded the base, or bases, he would have reached had the obstruction not occurred.
- 8.11 There are commitment lines marked halfway between second and third base and third base and home plate. If a runner places a foot on or over this line, he is committed to the next base. He may not re-cross the line. *Penalty* – Runner is out.
- 8.12 Should a runner leave a base and cross a commitment line on a fly ball before it is touched, and the ball is subsequently caught, the runner is automatically out.
- 8.13 A run is scored each time a runner legally touches all three bases and the scoring plate, before a fielder, in possession of the ball, touching the strike zone mat.
- 8.14 The runner must not touch or step over any part of the strike zone mat. *Penalty* – Runner is out.
- 8.15 A runner is not permitted to overtake a preceding runner. *Penalty* – Overtaking runner is out.

## **9. DEAD BALL**

- 9.1 The ball is dead after each pitch that is not hit.
- 9.2 The ball is dead on a foul ball.
- 9.3 The ball is dead when it leaves the limits of the playing field.
- 9.4 The ball is dead when it is blocked within the limits of the playing field.
- 9.5 From the time a ball is dead no play shall continue. Runners are not liable to be put out when the ball is dead.

## **10. PROTESTS**

- 10.1 There shall be no protests in Slowpitch softball.
- 10.2 The umpire's decision, at all times, will be final. No question will be considered on an umpire's decision that is judgment (fair/foul, ball/strike), but one team member may question a decision related to a rule, or the interpretation of a rule.