

NIRSA **SLOW PITCH** **SOFTBALL** **RULES BOOK**

SECOND EDITION



NIRSA

National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association

NIRSA Slow Pitch Softball Rules Book

Second Edition

NATIONAL INTRAMURAL-RECREATIONAL SPORTS ASSOCIATION



Human Kinetics

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Acquisitions Editor: Gayle Kassing, PhD; **Managing Editor:** Jackie Walker; **Permission Manager:** Carly Breeding; **Graphic Designer:** Robert Reuther; **Graphic Artist:** Yvonne Griffith; **Cover Designer:** Keith Blomberg; **Photographer (cover):** Sarah Ritz; **Art Manager:** Kelly Hendren; **Printer:** Versa Press

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Human Kinetics

Web site: www.HumanKinetics.com

United States: Human Kinetics

P.O. Box 5076

Champaign, IL 61825-5076

800-747-4457

e-mail: humank@hkusa.com

Canada: Human Kinetics

475 Devonshire Road Unit 100

Windsor, ON N8Y 2L5

800-465-7301 (in Canada only)

e-mail: info@hkcanada.com

Europe: Human Kinetics

107 Bradford Road

Stanningley

Leeds LS28 6AT, United Kingdom

+44 (0) 113 255 5665

e-mail: hk@hkeurope.com

Australia: Human Kinetics

57A Price Avenue

Lower Mitcham, South Australia 5062

08 8277 1555

e-mail: info@hkaustralia.com

New Zealand: Human Kinetics

Division of Sports Distributors NZ Ltd.

P.O. Box 300 226 Albany

North Shore City

Auckland

0064 9 448 1207

e-mail: info@humankinetics.co.nz

NIRSA

4185 SW Research Way

Corvallis, OR 97333-1067

541-766-8211

www.nirsa.org

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About the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association

The National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) is a non-profit professional association dedicated to the education and development of professional and student members. Its mission is to foster quality recreational programs, facilities, and services for diverse populations. Founded in 1950 at Dillard University in New Orleans by twenty-two African-American men and women intramural directors from eleven historically black colleges, NIRSA began as the National Intramural Association (NIA).

Representing over 650 colleges and universities, NIRSA institutional members represent nearly seven million college students. Of those students, an estimated five and a half million participate in recreational and intramural sports programs.

The NIRSA Sports Officials Development Program began creating training materials for intramural officials in 1980. The *NIRSA Flag & Touch Football Rules Book & Officials' Manual* was first published in 1983. In conjunction with rules books published by NIRSA and other entities, the sport committees develop clinician kits, exams, and videos or DVDs to assist in the training and development of officials.

In January of 2002, the NIRSA Softball Committee conducted a survey of the NIRSA membership to gauge their interest in a new NIRSA softball rules book. Of those surveyed, 95 percent responded that their university played slow pitch softball. And of that group, 71 percent responded yes to "If the NIRSA Softball Committee was to develop a comprehensive NIRSA softball rules book, similar to flag football, would your institution be interested in using it in place of what you currently use?" As a result, the *NIRSA Slow Pitch Softball Rules Book* was born. Published by Human Kinetics, and released in conjunction with an updated softball officials' DVD and clinician's kit, the *NIRSA Slow Pitch Softball Rules Book* will be an essential tool in the softball official's training toolbox.

The NIRSA National Center is located at 4185 SW Research Way in Corvallis, OR 97333, 541-766-8211.

NIRSA Softball Rules Committee

Editor:

Nick Lumpkin, University of Wisconsin, Madison

Contributing members for this edition:

Michelle Bernas, University of Buffalo

Richard Chadwell, University of North Alabama

Mark Crager, University of Southern Mississippi

Zach Gilbert, University of North Carolina, Wilmington

Rachel Moser, East Carolina University

John Rosick, Grand Valley State University

Robert Sinclair, Ferris State University

Summary of Rule Changes/Clarifications

The NIRSA Rules Book takes priority over materials listed below.

- 1-3** **Ball.** Clarifies that a ball is a pitch that is considered an illegal pitch.
- 1-4** **Banned Bats.** See rule 3-1F.
- 1-5** **Base.** By institutional adoption, a strike zone mat and safety base at first may be used.
- 1-5A** **Base.** The strike zone mat shall be considered an extension of home plate only for the purpose of a runner touching home plate to score as in Rule 4, Section 4, A.
- 1-5B** **Base.** First base refers to the white portion of the base in fair territory unless otherwise noted. The orange portion of the base shall be considered foul territory.
- 1-12** **Batter's Box.** If the boxes are not marked, the batter's box shall be determined by umpire's discretion.
- 1-20** **Coach.** Clarifies the definition as any player or non-player occupying a coach's box during a team's at bat or any non-player assisting with directing of players on the field.
- 1-21** **Courtesy Runner.** Clarifies the definition as any player who runs for another player without being charged as a substitute.
- 1-27B** **Fair Ball.** First base refers to only the white portion of the safety base if used.
- 1-27F** **Fair Ball.** Clarifies that a ball hit by the batter that, while on or over fair territory, touches the person, attached equipment, or clothing of a player or umpire is a fair ball.
- 1-36** **Illegal Pitch.** Clarifies the definition as a pitch that does not meet the stipulations of a fairly delivered pitch.
- 1-41** **Infield.** Clarifies the definition as the part of the field that is normally fielded by infielders. The infield usually refers to the part of the playing field in fair territory.
- 1-42** **Infield Fly.** Clarifies that the umpire's judgment will determine whether or not a fair fly ball can be caught by an infielder with normal effort.
- 1-42E** **Infield Fly.** If runners do choose to advance legally, this will not be considered a force play.
- 1-43** **Infielder.** Clarifies the definition as a defensive player who occupies a position in the infield.
- 1-44** **Interference.** Contact is not necessary.
- 1-50** **Overslide.** The batter-runner may overslide first base without risk of being tagged out if he or she makes no attempt to advance to second base.
- 3-1F** **Official Bat.** If present, the ASA certification mark should be clearly visible.
- 3-1G** **Official Bat.** The bat barrel shall be free of audible rattles when shaken. The bat barrel shall not have signs of excessive wear.
- 3-4** **Shoes.** All players must wear closed toe shoes.
- 4-2E** **Regulation Game.** Games called by the umpire may be ruled complete if five innings have been completed or if, after four and one half innings have been completed, the home team is ahead.
- 4-7A** **Run Ahead Rule or Mercy Rule.** Adds that the Run Ahead Rule or Mercy Rule is in effect when a team is ahead by 20 or more runs at the completion of the third inning.
- 5-4A** **Team.** The game may be continued with less than nine players as long as the team has a reasonable chance to win.
- 6-7B** **Warm-Up Pitches.** The pitcher may use no more than one minute to throw no more than three warm-up pitches.

- 7-1D2 Batting Order.** Any outs made when the improper player was at bat will stand. If the improper batter makes an out while batting out of order and is the next scheduled batter in the lineup, that player's regular turn in the lineup will be skipped. The next batter will be the individual who follows the improper batter in the lineup.
- 7-1E Batting Order.** Player names have been replaced with genders for clarification purposes.
- 8-2C Batter Awarded First Base.** Added effect: This is a delayed dead ball and the batter will have the option to take the base award or the result of the play.
- 8-4C Base Runners Called Out.** When a fair batted ball hits a base runner before it passes a fielder, excluding the pitcher, the runner will be ruled out.
- 8-4E Base Runners Called Out.** The word "intentionally" has been removed.
- 8-4N Base Runners Called Out.** Clarifies that a base runner shall be called out for intentionally and forcefully making contact with a defensive player with or without the ball.
- 8-11B Courtesy Runners.** If the last out is on base, up to bat, or next to bat, the previous available out should be used.
- 9-2K Dead Ball, Not in Play.** Clarifies that before the ball crosses the plate or the batter hits the ball, it is dead and not in play.
- 9-2S Dead Ball, Not in Play.** The word "intentionally" has been removed.
- 10-3B Protest Procedures.** The term "manager" has been replaced with "captain."
- 10-3B Protest Procedures.** The option to record mentally has been removed.
- 10-3B Protest Procedures.** The word "plan" has been added.
- 10-4A Written Protests (Can Only be Made for Ineligible Players).** Team lineups and time remaining have been added.
- 10-4D Written Protests (Can Only be Made for Ineligible Players).** The signature of both team captains must be obtained for a written protest.
- 11-1B Power and Duties.** Umpires should arrive at the playing field 20 minutes before the game is scheduled to start.
- 13-1E2 Appeals.** Clarifies that appeals must be made at the end of the inning, before the pitcher and *all* infielders have left fair territory.
- 14-7 Base on Balls and Intentional Walks.** When a team is playing with less than 10 players, a male batter is not awarded second base on a base on balls if the following spot in the batting order is a vacancy (automatic out) due to a team playing with less than the regulation number of female players.

Each change or altered segment is identified in the rules by a shaded background.

RULE 1: DEFINITIONS

Section 1: altered bat—A legal softball bat that has had its physical structure altered. Examples of illegal alterations include inserting material inside the bat, applying more than two layers of tape to the grip of the bat, painting the bat (other than at the top or bottom for identification purposes), and attaching a flare or cone grip to the bat handle. Replacing the grip with another legal grip would not cause the bat to be considered altered.

Section 2: appeal play—A play on which an umpire cannot make a ruling until the ruling is requested by a manager, coach, or player. This appeal for a ruling must be made before any of the following has occurred:

- A. The pitcher delivers a legal or illegal pitch.
- B. The pitcher and all infielders have left fair territory.
- C. The umpires have left the field of play.

Section 3: ball—A pitch that is not struck at by the batter and does not enter the strike zone in flight, or a pitch that is considered an illegal pitch.

Section 4: banned bats—Any bat that does not meet the ASA specifications or has been placed on the current ASA banned bat list (see rule 3, section 1, F).

Section 5: base—Any one of the four corners of the infield, marked by a bag or plate, all four of which a runner must touch to score a run. The term is often used to describe the bags marking the designated spots on the field. By institutional adoption, a strike zone mat and double base at first base may be used. If used,

- A. the strike zone mat shall be considered an extension of home plate only for the purpose of a runner touching home plate to score (as in rule 4, section 4, A); and
- B. first base shall be considered the white portion of the base in fair territory, unless otherwise noted. The orange portion of the base is foul territory.

Section 6: base on balls—Rule that allows the batter to reach first base without danger of being put out. The umpire awards the batter a base on balls when the ball count reaches four balls. NOTE: The batter begins the turn at bat with a count of one ball and one strike.

Section 7: base path—The area 3 feet to either side of a direct line between two bases.

Section 8: base runner—A player who has finished his or her turn at bat, has reached first base, and has not yet been put out.

Section 9: batted ball—Any pitch that is hit by the bat or that hits the bat, whether or not the batter intended to hit the ball. A batted ball may land in either fair territory or foul territory.

Section 10: batter—A player from the offensive team who takes a position in the batter's box.

Section 11: batter-runner—A player who has finished his or her turn at bat but has not yet touched first base or been put out.

Section 12: batter's box—The area, designated by lines, to which the batter is restricted while in position to bat. The batter must have both feet entirely within the lines of the box before the pitch. (The lines are considered to be within the box.) If the boxes are not marked, the batter's box is determined by the umpire's discretion.

Section 13: batting order—A list of the order in which team members must come to bat. The batting order is provided on a lineup card, which must include each player's name, defensive position, and number. In addition, the lineup card must include the designation of the extra player (or two extra players in coed play) when an extra player is used.

Section 14: blood rule—When a player, coach, or umpire is bleeding or has blood on his or her uniform and treatment is required (see rule 5, section 5).

Section 15: bunt—A batted ball that the batter did not swing at but instead intentionally tapped slowly without making a full swing.

Section 16: called game—A game that the umpire-in-chief ends for any reason.

Section 17: catch—When a fielder, with one hand, both hands, the glove, or any combination thereof, legally catches a ball that has been batted, pitched, or thrown. To establish a legal catch, the fielder must hold the ball long enough to gain complete control of it and, in subsequently releasing it, must do so voluntarily and intentionally. If the fielder simply holds the ball in the arm or arms, or if part of the fielder's body, clothing, or equipment prevents the ball from dropping to the ground, the catch is not complete. To be a legal catch, the ball must be in the grasp of the fielder's hand, hands, or glove. A fielder has not made a legal catch if

- A. he or she drops the ball while attempting to gain control of it;
- B. he or she drops the ball upon colliding with another player, an umpire, or a fence; or
- C. he or she drops the ball when falling to the ground.

In addition, for a catch to be legal, the fielder's feet must be within the field of play, touching the out-of-play line, or in the air after leaving live ball territory. A player who is returning from the out-of-play area must have both feet touching the playable area or one foot touching and the other in the air before the catch is legal. Also note that if a ball in flight strikes anything other than a defensive player, it is ruled the same as if it had struck the ground.

Section 18: catch and carry—A legal catch that a fielder makes and carries into dead ball territory. See the rule about carrying a live ball into dead ball territory (rule 13, section 10).

Section 19: chopped ball—A batted ball that results from the batter's deliberate strike downward so that the ball hits the ground in the infield.

Section 20: coach—Any player or non-player occupying a coach's box during a team's at bat or any non-player assisting with the directing of players on the field.

Section 21: courtesy runner—Any player who runs for another player without being charged as a substitute.

Section 22a: dead ball—A ball that touches any player or object located out of play, that becomes lodged in an umpire's gear or in an offensive player's clothing, or that the umpire rules dead. A line that marks a dead ball area is considered in play.

Section 22b: delayed dead ball—An infraction signaled by the umpire in which the ball remains live until all play has ended and the umpire calls time.

Section 23: disqualified player—A player removed from the game for a rule violation. If any disqualified player is discovered participating in the game, his or her team forfeits the game.

Section 24: double play—A play that occurs when, as the result of continuous action, the defense legally puts out two offensive players.

Section 25: ejected player—A player or coach who is removed from the game by the umpire for an unsportsmanlike act or unsportsmanlike conduct. An ejected player or coach must leave the grounds for the remainder of the game. A team may not play shorthanded. If no substitutes are available, the team must forfeit the game. If an ejected player or coach participates in the game, a forfeit results.

Section 26: extra player—An optional player or players that may be used in the game.

Section 27: fair ball—A ball hit by the batter that

- A. comes to rest in fair territory between home plate and first base or between home plate and third base;

- B. when bouncing toward the outfield is in or over fair territory, including any part of first or third base, or touches first, second, or third base (first base refers to only the white portion of the double base, if used);
- C. first touches the ground in fair territory beyond first or third base;
- D. touches an umpire or player who is in fair territory;
- E. flies over the outfield fence in fair territory; or
- F. while on or over fair territory, touches the person, attached equipment, or clothing of a player or umpire.

In judging whether a fly ball is fair or foul, the umpire shall consider only the relative position of the ball and the foul line, not the position of the fielder when he or she touches the ball. Home plate is in fair territory.

Section 28: fair territory—The part of the playing field between and including the first-base and third-base lines from home plate to the base of the outfield fence and the fence itself.

Section 29: fake tag—Motion of making a tag without the ball. A player who does this is guilty of obstruction and may be ejected.

Section 30: fly ball—Any batted ball hit into the air.

Section 31: force-out—When a runner loses the right to the base that he or she is occupying because the batter has become a batter-runner and the batter-runner or a succeeding runner has not been put out. If after touching the next base, the forced runner retreats for any reason toward the base that he or she last occupied, the force play can occur again, and the defense may put the runner out by tagging the runner or the base to which the runner is forced.

Section 32: foul ball—A ball hit by the batter that

- A. comes to rest or is touched in or over foul territory between home plate and first base or between home plate and third base;
- B. bounces or rolls past first base or third base in or over foul territory;
- C. while over foul territory, touches a player or umpire, including clothing or attached or detached equipment, or any object not part of the natural ground;
- D. while over foul territory, is played on by a defensive player whose attempt is interfered with by a runner;
- E. first hits the ground in foul territory or a fielder first touches the ball over foul territory beyond first or third base (but a caught fly ball is not a foul ball);
- F. touches the batter or the bat in the batter's hands a second time while the batter is within the batter's box; or
- G. goes directly from the bat and not higher than the batter's head to any part of the catcher's body or equipment and is caught by another fielder.

Section 33: foul tip—A batted ball that travels directly from the bat to the catcher's hands, glove, or mitt and not higher than the batter's head, and is legally caught by the catcher. A foul tip is a strike. The batter is out if the foul tip occurs when the batter has two strikes. A foul tip is a dead ball.

Section 34: home team—The team on whose grounds the game is being played. If the teams are playing on a neutral site, they come to an agreement about which team will be the home team, or they decide by a toss of a coin. The home team bats in the last half of the innings.

Section 35: illegal bat—A bat that does not meet the requirements of rule 3, section 1.

Section 36: illegal pitch—A pitch that does not meet the stipulations of a fairly delivered pitch.

Section 37: illegally batted ball—A ball that the batter hits fair or foul and for which any of the following conditions are present:

- A. The batter's entire foot touches the ground and is outside the lines of the batter's box when the bat hits the ball.

- B. Any part of the batter's foot is touching home plate when the bat hits the ball.
- C. The batter uses an illegal bat.
- D. The batter had moved his or her entire foot out of the batter's box and moved it back inside the box to hit the ball.

Section 38: illegally caught ball—A batted or thrown ball that a fielder catches with a cap, illegal glove, or any part of the uniform removed from its proper place.

Section 39: illegal player—A player who participates in the game on either defense or offense and plays under an assumed name or is not on the team's roster. If the opposing team makes the proper appeal, use of an illegal player results in a forfeit.

Section 40: ineligible player—A player who does not meet the requirements of the rules. If the proper protest is made, the use of an ineligible player results in a forfeit. The umpire is not responsible for determining eligibility.

Section 41: infield—The part of the field that is normally fielded by infielders. The infield usually refers to the part of the playing field in fair territory.

Section 42: infield fly—A fair fly ball that, in the umpire's judgment, an infielder can catch with normal effort when none or one is out and when runners occupy first and second bases or first, second, and third bases. The following conditions apply:

- A. A line drive cannot be an infield fly.
- B. Any defensive player, including the pitcher and catcher, who takes a position in the infield at the start of the pitch is an infielder for the purposes of this rule.
- C. The umpire makes the infield-fly ruling based on the position of the closest infielder when the ball reaches its highest point, regardless of who makes the play.
- D. When the umpire judges that a batted ball will be an infield fly, he or she shall declare, "Infield fly." The ball is live, and runners may advance at the risk that a fielder will catch the ball.
- E. As on any fly ball, runners may tag up and advance after a fielder touches the ball. If runners do choose to advance legally, this shall not be considered a force play.
- F. A declared infield fly that becomes a foul ball is treated as any other foul ball.

Section 43: infielder—A defensive player who occupies a position in the infield.

Section 44: interference—An act by players or others that interferes with a fielder's opportunity to make a play on a batted or thrown ball. Contact is not necessary.

Section 45: legal tag—Can occur in two ways:

- A. A fielder makes a legal tag by tagging with the ball a runner or batter-runner who is not touching a base. The fielder must be holding the ball securely in the hand, hands, or glove. The ball is not considered securely held if the fielder juggles or drops the ball after tagging the runner, unless the runner deliberately knocks the ball from the fielder's hands or glove.
- B. A fielder makes a legal tag of a base by having control of the ball in the hand, hands, or glove and by touching the base with any part of the body. This tag applies in a force-out or appeal situation.

Section 46: live ball—Occurs when the umpire signals, "Play ball." The ball remains live until it becomes dead for any reason described in these rules.

Section 47: obstruction—Occurs in either of the following situations:

- A. A defensive player or team member hinders or prevents a batter from striking at or hitting a pitched ball.
- B. A fielder who is not in possession of the ball, in the act of fielding a batted ball, or about to receive a thrown ball impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running the bases.

The fielder may be guilty of impeding the runner without making contact with the runner.

Section 48: outfield—The part of the playing field beyond the lines of the infield and extending to the extreme edge of the playing field. The outfield usually refers to the part of the playing field in fair territory.

Section 49: outfielder—A defensive player who occupies a position in the outfield.

Section 50: overslide—Occurs when a runner or batter-runner slides beyond a base that he or she is trying to reach. The momentum of the runner usually causes him or her to lose contact with the base and thus be at risk of being tagged out. The batter-runner may overslide first base without risk of being tagged out if he or she makes no attempt to advance to second base.

Section 51: overthrow—Occurs when a fielder throws the ball into foul territory beyond the boundaries of the playing field in an attempt to retire a runner who has not yet reached base or who is off base.

Section 52: pitch—Any delivery of the ball by the pitcher to the batter.

Section 53: pivot foot—The foot that the pitcher places on the pitcher's plate. The pitcher must keep that foot in contact with the pitcher's plate until he or she releases the ball.

Section 54: "Play ball"—Call that the plate umpire uses to start play. The umpire makes the call when all defensive players except the catcher are in fair territory, the catcher is in the catcher's box, and all runners are properly on base.

Section 55: protests—May result from three situations:

- A. Misinterpretation of a playing rule
- B. Use of an illegal player
- C. Use of an ineligible player

Section 56: quick pitch—A pitch that the pitcher throws with the obvious intent of catching the batter off balance. A quick pitch may occur before the batter takes his or her preferred position in the batter's box or while the batter is still off balance after the previous pitch.

Section 57: sacrifice fly—Occurs when, with none out or one out, a runner scores after tagging up on a fly ball or line drive that a fielder catches. If the fielder drops a fly ball or line drive in the same situation, the scorekeeper may score the play as a sacrifice fly if in his or her judgment, the runner could have scored had the fielder caught the ball.

Section 58: strike zone—The space above home plate that is not lower than the bottom of the batter's front knee and not higher than the batter's back shoulder, when the batter is in a natural batting stance. A pitch is a strike if any part of the ball passes through this space.

Section 59: substitute—Either a player on the team's roster who is not listed as a starting player or a starting player who reenters the game. An illegal substitute will be subject to penalty.

Section 60: "Time"—Call by the umpire that indicates a legal interruption of play. The ball becomes dead and remains dead until it is legally put back in play.

Section 61: trapped ball—A batted fly ball or line drive that touches the ground or fence before a fielder catches it, or a ball that is thrown to a base to make a force-out and that a defensive player catches with the glove over the ball on the ground rather than under the ball.

Section 62: triple play—Occurs when the defensive team legally puts out three offensive players in a continuous action.

Section 63: turn at bat—Begins when a batter enters the batter's box and continues until the defensive team puts out the batter, the batter becomes a batter-runner, or a substitute takes the batter's place.

RULE 2: THE PLAYING FIELD

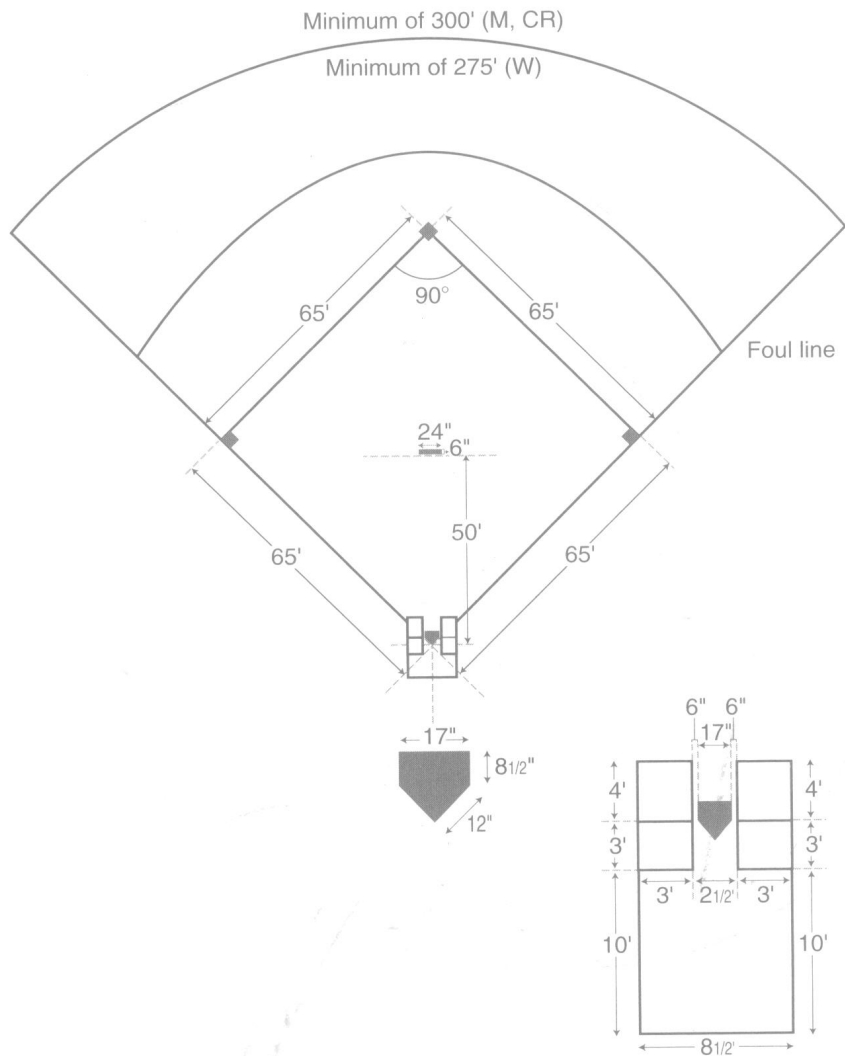
SECTION 1: THE FIELD

The playing field is the area in which teams can legally play and field the ball. An area between the foul lines and within the radius of the prescribed fence distance from home plate shall be clear and unobstructed. If during the game, the base distances or the pitching distance is found to be incorrect, the error should be corrected and the game should continue, with no penalty being assessed.

SECTION 2: PLAYING FIELD EXCEPTIONS

The tournament or league host may use special ground rules that establish the limits of the playing field. The double base is approved for use at first base. The base is 15 inches by 30 inches and not more than 5 inches thick. The half of the base over fair territory is white, and the half over foul territory is orange or green. The base should be made of canvas or other suitable material.

SECTION 3: FIELD LAYOUT



RULE 3: EQUIPMENT

SECTION 1: OFFICIAL BAT

- A. The bat must be round and smooth and must have no large dents. It also shall not have exposed rivets, pins, or rough or sharp edges that would present a hazard.
- B. The bat must be no longer than 34 inches and must weigh no more than 38 ounces. If the bat is round, its diameter must not exceed 2 1/4 inches.
- C. The bat shall be of one-piece construction and shall be made of metal, aluminum, fiberglass, or graphite. The handle must be solid and made of the same material as the remainder of the bat. An insert firmly secured in the large end of the bat is permitted.
- D. The bat must have a safety grip of tape, cork, or composite material.
- E. Pine tar, resin, or other tacky substances may be placed only on the safety grip to improve the grip on the bat.
- F. Certified and approved bats must meet the current ASA bat performance standard. If present, the ASA certification mark should be clearly visible.
- G. The bat barrel shall be free of audible rattles when shaken. The bat barrel shall not have signs of excessive wear.

SECTION 2: OFFICIAL BALL

- A. The ball must have smooth seams and a flat surface.
- B. The ball must have a stamped core of 0.44 or less and a compression rating with a maximum 375 pounds.
- C. The ball should be solid white or optic yellow.
- D. The ball must be 12 inches in diameter for all divisions.

SECTION 3: GLOVES

- A. Gloves may be a single color or multicolored.
- B. All defensive players must wear gloves.
- C. A first baseman mitt may be worn by all defensive players.

SECTION 4: SHOES

- A. All players must wear closed-toe shoes.
- B. Shoes must be made of leather, canvas, or similar material.
- C. Shoes may have cleats made of soft or hard rubber, but metal cleats are not permitted.

SECTION 5: MASKS AND HELMETS

- A. A player or coach may wear a batting helmet at any time. A player may also wear a plastic or metal face mask.
- B. A catcher has the option of wearing a catcher's mask.

SECTION 6: UNIFORMS

- A. All players on a team must wear uniforms of the same color and style.
- B. Numbers must be on the back of all uniforms. Numbers must contrast in color with the uniform. Numbers must be whole numbers in the range of 0 to 99. Each player must wear a uniform with a different number.
- C. Players or coaches may wear caps or visors of similar style and color.

SECTION 7: PROTECTIVE OR EXTRANEOUS EQUIPMENT

- A. Players must remove exposed jewelry that the umpire considers dangerous, including watches or piercings.
- B. Players must wear protective equipment properly. Padding must cover splints, braces, or casts. The umpire may prohibit the use of any type of protective equipment that presents considerable risk to the safety of other players.
- C. The umpire may prohibit the use of any equipment that may perceptibly affect the game, compromise the safety of participants or fans, or enhance a player's performance.

RULE 4: THE GAME

SECTION 1: TEAMS

In each inning, the visiting team bats first and the home team bats last. The umpires meet with the captains of each team before the game to determine which team will be the visiting team and which team will be the home team. An umpire flips a coin, and one captain calls, "Heads" or "Tails." The winner of the coin flip may choose to be the home team or the visiting team.

SECTION 2: REGULATION GAME

- A. A regulation game consists of seven innings or a time limit determined by the tournament or league director. Teams need not play seven full innings if
 1. the home team scores more runs in six and one-half innings;
 2. the home team scores more runs before the third out in the last half of the seventh inning; or
 3. the run-ahead rule is in force.
- B. If the game is tied at the end of seven innings or after time expires, the teams continue to play until one team has scored more runs than the other at the end of a complete inning or until the home team has scored more runs.
- C. The umpire may call the game at any time because of darkness, rain, fire, panic, or any other cause that puts players or spectators in danger.
- D. Games that the umpire has stopped may or may not be rescheduled.
- E. Games called by the umpire may be ruled complete if five innings have been completed or if, after four and a half innings have been completed, the home team is ahead.

SECTION 3: FORFEITED GAMES

The umpire may declare a forfeited game in favor of the team not at fault in the following cases:

- A. A team member or spectator physically or verbally attacks an umpire.
- B. A team does not appear on the field, or a team on the field refuses to begin a game at the scheduled time. Forfeit time shall be determined by the tournament or league director before the start of the tournament.
- C. A team refuses to continue to play after the game has started, unless the umpire has suspended or ended the game.
- D. Following a suspension of play, a team does not resume play after the umpire declares, "Play ball."
- E. A team uses tactics noticeably intended to delay or speed up the game.
- F. A player, coach, or manager does not obey an order of ejection.
- G. A team does not have the required number of players to continue the game after an ejection.
- H. An ejected player is discovered participating.

SECTION 4: SCORING OF RUNS

- A. A team scores one run each time a runner touches first base, second base, third base, and home plate in succession.
- B. A team does not score a run if the third out of an inning results from any of the following situations:
 1. A force-out.
 2. A runner is put out by a tag or a live ball appeal before the lead runner touches home plate.
 3. A preceding runner is declared out on an appeal play. NOTE: An appeal can be made after the third out and, if successful, can nullify a run.

SECTION 5: WINNER OF A GAME

- A. The team that scores more runs in a regulation game is the winner.
- B. The score of a called regulation game is the score at the end of the last complete inning or at the expiration of the time limit—whichever is used.

- C. The score of a forfeited game is 7 to 0 in favor of the team not at fault. If a tiebreaker is required in pool play, a team that loses by a forfeit drops to the bottom of the standings.

SECTION 6: HOME RUN RULE

- A. At his or her discretion, a tournament or league director can establish a limit for over-the-fence home runs.
- B. On any home run hit that exceeds the limit, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and runners cannot advance.
- C. Any fair ball hit over the fence is charged as a home run whether or not runs score.
- D. Any fair ball that goes over the fence after a defensive player touches it is declared a four-bases award and does not count toward the total of over-the-fence home runs.
- E. Home runs hit by both males and females count toward the coed limit.

SECTION 7: RUN-AHEAD RULE OR MERCY RULE

The game ends and a winner is declared in the following circumstances:

- A. Adds that the Run Ahead Rule or Mercy Rule is in effect when a team is ahead by 20 or more runs at the completion of the third inning.
- B. A team is ahead by 15 or more runs at the completion of the fourth inning.
- C. A team is ahead by 10 or more runs at the completion of the fifth or sixth inning.

NOTE: If the visiting team reaches the run-ahead limit in the top half of an inning, the home team has the opportunity to reduce the deficit below the limit in the bottom half of the inning. If the home team reaches the run-ahead limit while at bat, the game ends and the home team is the winner.

SECTION 8: TIME LIMIT RULE

- A. Games are subject to a predetermined time limit, although the tournament or league director may modify the time limit to fit the circumstances.
- B. No inning can begin after the time limit expires. A new inning begins when the third out of the previous inning occurs.
- C. If a playoff game is tied after the time limit expires, the teams play an extra inning or innings to determine a winner.

SECTION 9: DUGOUT CONDUCT

Coaches, players, substitutes, fans, or other bench personnel cannot be outside the designated bench dugout except when the rules allow it or when the umpire permits it.