

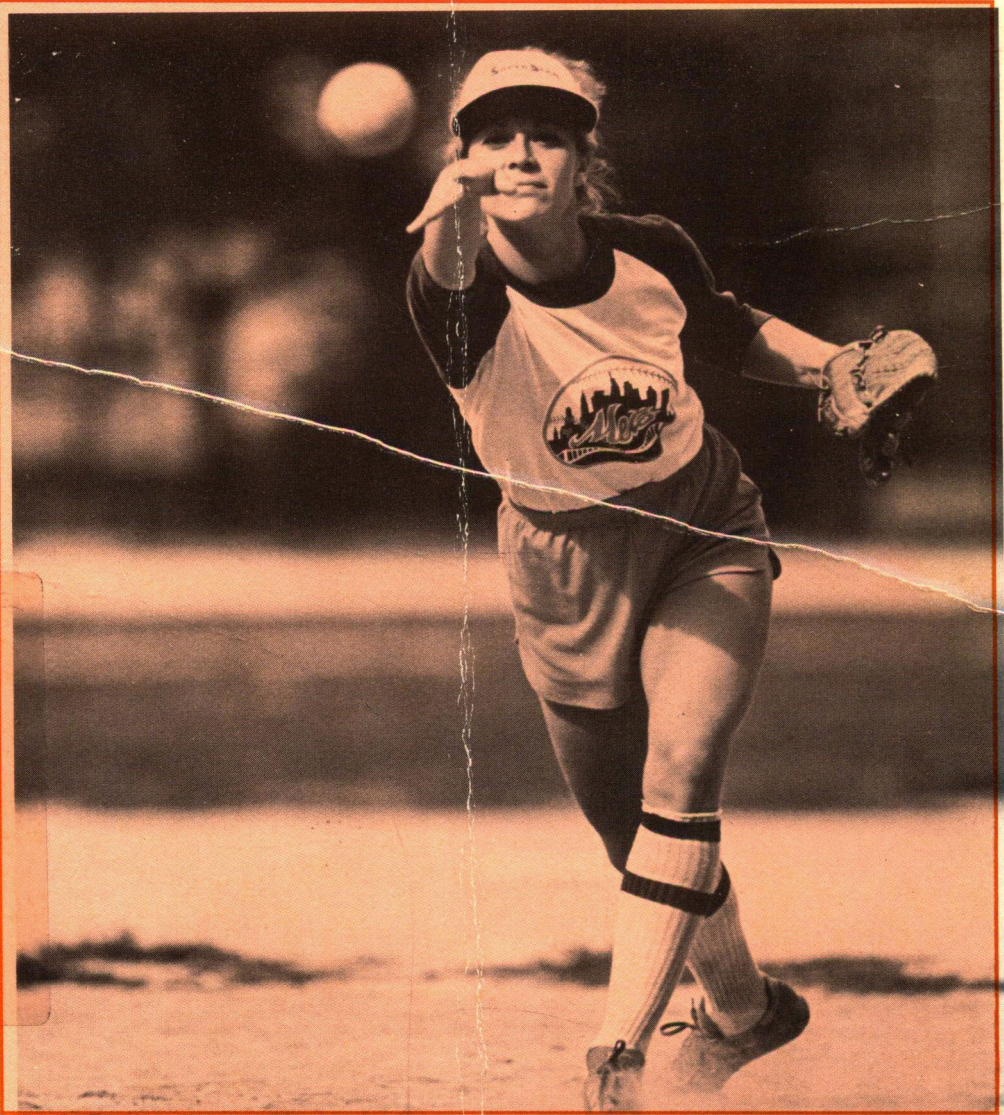
WM. C. BROWN SPORTS AND FITNESS SERIES

# ***SOFTBALL***

## ***SLOW AND FAST PITCH***

***Marian E. Kneer • Charles L. McCord***

***Fourth Edition***



# ***SOFTBALL***

## ***SLOW AND FAST PITCH***

***Marian E. Kneer***

*University of Illinois at Chicago*

***Charles L. McCord***

*Chairman, National Softball Hall of Fame Committee*

***Fourth Edition***

**wcb**

***Wm. C. Brown Publishers***  
***Dubuque, Iowa***

---

# About the Authors

Marian E. Kneer, Professor of Physical Education, University of Illinois at Chicago, received her PhD from the University of Michigan. Dr. Kneer has had a long association with softball as a player in four ASA World Softball Championships, a member of The Joint International Rules Committee on Softball, a writer of numerous softball articles for the former Division of Girls and Women's Sports, and as a consultant for several softball filmstrips. She is a member of the Illinois ASA Softball Hall of Fame and the Illinois State University Athletic Hall of Fame. She has had extensive experiences as a high school physical education teacher and as a softball coach. Presently, Dr. Kneer is a physical education curriculum and instruction specialist and is coauthor of the book *Physical Education Instruction Techniques: An Individualized Humanistic Approach*, published by Prentice-Hall.

Charles McCord, having achieved success in teaching, coaching, and competitive sports, again joins forces as coauthor with Dr. Kneer in this revision.

After earning his degree from Eastern Illinois University, he both taught and coached for two years at the high school level. For eighteen years he has officiated competitive sports on both the high school and college level. During this time, he has conducted clinics overseas on softball for the men and women of the United States Armed Forces.

Besides his teaching and coaching accomplishments, he managed the nationally famous women's softball team, Lettes, of Caterpillar-Sunnyland and Pekin, Illinois, from 1947-72. During his tenure, the team qualified for the national tournament nineteen times.

Since 1952 he has held the position of State Softball Commissioner for the Illinois Amateur Softball Association and is also the chairperson of the National Hall of Fame Selection Committee. He has held this position since 1958.

Mr. McCord is a member of the Pan-American Committee for Softball and assisted in writing the procedure for selecting the players to represent the United States teams. He was elected president of the Amateur Softball Association in 1984, is a member of the Eastern Illinois University and Peoria Area Athletic Hall of Fame and Illinois ASA Hall of Fame.

## Consulting Editor

Aileene Lockhart  
Texas Woman's University

Cover photograph © Mitchell Reibel/Sports Chrome, Inc.

Copyright © 1966, 1976, 1980, 1987 by Wm. C. Brown Publishers. All rights reserved

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 86-72894

ISBN 0-697-07242-8

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America  
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

---

# Preface

Although softball is a well established game, rules, equipment and strategies do slowly change over time. The fourth edition of *Softball Slow and Fast Pitch* reflects these changes. In addition the text has been refined and illustrations improved.

The purposes of this book are to assist all softball players of any age, beginners to advanced, to acquire knowledge and skills necessary for playing fast- or slow-pitch softball; to provide instructors, coaches and managers with substantive information about softball and suggestions; for structuring meaningful and productive learning experiences; and, to aid students of the game to learn how to umpire and keep score. Emphasis has been placed on skill analysis, error correction, values of softball and its place in our culture. Individual and group practice suggestions are included to foster improvement in performance.

Self-evaluation questions are distributed throughout the text. They afford the reader typical examples of the kinds of understanding and levels of skill that should be acquired as progress is made toward mastery of softball. The player should not only answer the printed questions but should pose additional ones as a self-check on learning. Since the order in which the content of the text is read and the teaching progression of the instructor are matters of individual choice, the evaluative materials are not positioned according to the presentation of given topics. In some instances the reader may find that he or she cannot respond fully and accurately to a question without more extensive reading or more playing experience. From time to time the reader should return to such troublesome questions until he or she is sure of the answers or has developed the skills called for, as the case may be.



---

# Contents

Preface	iv
<b>1</b> What Softball Is Like	1
<b>2</b> Facts for Enthusiasts	5
<b>3</b> Language and Lore of the Game	10
<b>4</b> Offensive Skills	17
<b>5</b> Defensive Skills	35
<b>6</b> Defensive Position Play	54
<b>7</b> Patterns of Play	78
<b>8</b> Teaching, Coaching, and Managing	86
<b>9</b> Rules and Unwritten Laws of the Game	92
<b>10</b> Playing the Game	99
<b>11</b> Umpiring and Scorekeeping	103
Questions and Answers	111
Index	119

---

# 1 What Softball Is Like

You will be able to—

1. distinguish softball from baseball,
2. differentiate between fast-pitch and slow-pitch softball,
3. understand the general conduct of a softball game,
4. identify the playing areas of an official field,
5. identify equipment necessary for playing softball.

Softball is the largest participating sport in the United States. Over thirty million Americans of all ages, size, ability, and sex enjoy playing it informally at picnics, parks, and recreation areas, and formally in a variety of leagues, conferences and tournaments at interscholastic, intercollegiate recreational, industrial and professional levels.

Softball is a variation of baseball that was originated by George Hancock of Chicago, Illinois in 1887 to permit the popular game of baseball to be played indoors. He devised smaller playing dimensions to accommodate the larger and softer ball. The variation became so popular that the indoor game was brought outdoors and became known by a variety of names such as kittenball or mushball. Recreation agencies found the adaptation to be better suited and more appealing to all ages and both sexes than baseball which required a heavier bat, smaller and harder ball, and a larger playing area. Softball, on the other hand, is played on a smaller diamond with a larger ball and a lighter bat. The pitcher pitches underhand instead of overhand. Base runners may not lead off base in some variations of the game and a game consists of seven instead of nine innings. These changes provide a sport which is like baseball but can be played in a smaller area by men, women, and children. It has become basically an amateur sport, whereas baseball includes professional as well as amateur play. Softball has become the largest participating sport in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

Softball is a game for everyone. Power is required to hit the ball, yet accuracy in placing the ball so that a fielder cannot reach it can make up for lack of power. The varied playing situations require quick, intelligent decisions. The game calls for individual and team effort. Basic skills are throwing, catching, running, and hitting. The game demands strenuous effort and yet provides sufficient rest periods. The equipment is relatively inexpensive, and the rules are easily adapted to various playing situations. Softball is one of the safest sports for participants of any age.

1. *Softball a Game for Everyone*, (Oklahoma City: Amateur Softball Association of America, 1977), p. 2.

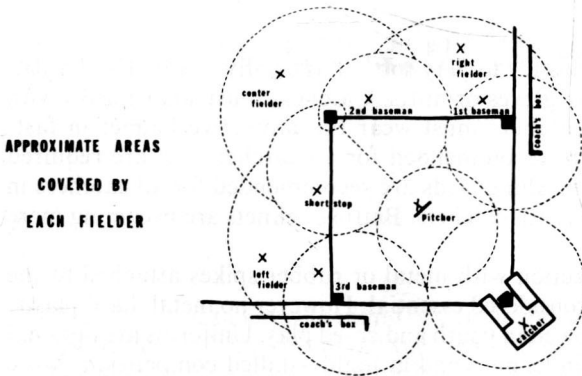
Informal softball is played extensively with rules modified by the participants to suit the situation at picnics, in parks, in backyards, or on the streets. The thrill of catching a ball or striking an object with a bat is sought by many. The game is most often played officially by leagues comprised of several teams. These leagues may be sponsored by schools, playgrounds, recreation departments, churches or industrial organizations. The highly-skilled players perform on teams that are usually sponsored by a business or industrial organization. The teams often travel considerable distances to seek comparable competition. The Amateur Softball Association has drawn up rules governing play for teams that wish to affiliate and to compete in metropolitan, state, regional, national, and international competition.

There are several variations of the game: fast-pitch softball, which is considered the standard game; twelve-inch slow-pitch and sixteen-inch slow-pitch softball.

## **FAST PITCH**

The game of fast-pitch softball requires nine players on a team and ten if a designated hitter is to be used. Each team assigns players to certain defensive positions. These are pitcher, catcher, first baseman, second baseman, third baseman, shortstop, left fielder, center fielder, right fielder. The designated hitter does not play a defensive position but rather is assigned to bat for one of the defensive players who does not then bat. The players are stationed on a playing field that has a clear and unobstructed area within a radius of 225 feet for adult males, 200 feet for adult females, and a minimum of 175 feet for girls and boys under fifteen years old from home plate between the foul lines. The batter stands at home plate and tries to hit a ball that is delivered by the pitcher. If the batter succeeds, he or she tries to reach first base and eventually advance around the diamond until he or she returns to home plate. The players in the field try to prevent runners from scoring. Each time a runner crosses home plate, a run is scored. The team with the most runs after seven innings of play is the winner. Pitching dominates fast-pitch softball when it is played by highly-skilled players.

The pitcher must deliver the ball underhand. The batter must decide whether or not to swing at the pitch. If the batter does not swing at it, the umpire judges whether the ball was delivered over the plate and between the batter's armpits and the top of his or her knees when the batter assumes a natural batting stance. This area is called the strike zone. If the pitch is in the strike zone, a strike is called. If it is not, a ball is called. If three strikes are called, the batter is declared out. If four balls are called, the batter is allowed to take first base. The batter attempts to hit the ball so that it will settle on fair ground in the infield or strike fair ground in the outfield. If the batted ball is hit outside of this area it is in foul territory and is called a foul ball. The first two are counted as strikes. When the ball is hit into fair territory, the batter and all other base runners try to reach as many bases as possible.



**FIGURE 1.1** Diamond and defensive stations (fast pitch).

The defensive team members play positions within the boundary lines of the field and attempt to put batters and base runners out before they are able to complete the circuit of the bases.

Figure 1.1 illustrates the diamond and the defensive areas covered by each player. Outs occur when the batter strikes out, when a fly ball is caught, when the base is touched with the ball before the runner reaches it when forced to run because of a succeeding runner, and when a runner is touched with the ball before reaching a base. Three outs retire the batting team. The fielding team is then given a chance to bat and to score runs. When each team has had a turn at bat, an inning has been completed.

## SLOW PITCH

Slow-pitch softball has in recent years shown tremendous growth. The major difference from fast-pitch softball is evident in the name itself. The pitcher is restricted to delivering the ball at a moderate speed with a perceptible arc from the time it leaves his or her hand until it reaches approximately three feet in front of home plate. Base runners may not steal bases, and a team consists of ten or eleven players. The extra players are called short fielder and extra hitter. The short fielder may play anywhere on the field. Extra hitters may not play on defense and may not be used in co-ed slow pitch game. Bunting is illegal. Another popular variation of the game is the use of the sixteen-inch ball with slow pitch rules.

Slow-pitch softball provides more action since a slower-pitched ball makes hitting the ball easier. The short fielder is usually placed in the outfield to make place hitting more difficult.

The unobstructed playing area is extended twenty-five feet for women and fifty feet for men. Batters dominate the game and even former professional baseball players enjoy playing slow-pitch softball.



## EQUIPMENT

The minimum equipment necessary to play softball officially is a ball and a bat. However, players usually wear gloves or mitts. Catchers must wear masks with throat protectors and youth catchers must wear the protective helmet in fast-pitch play. Body protectors are recommended for all catchers but are required for youth catchers in fast pitch. Shinguards are recommended for all catchers in fast-pitch but are required for youth catchers. Batting helmets are becoming more frequently used.

Shoes which provide traction with metal or rubber spikes attached to the sole and heel of the shoes are considered essential. However no metal, hard plastic or polyurethane spikes are allowed in youth and co-ed play. Uniforms are optional but are often worn by teams in leagues and in highly-skilled competition. More information about equipment is provided in Chapter Two.

The game of fast-pitch or slow-pitch softball provides enjoyment and challenge for persons of both sexes, all ages, and varied skill levels. A great deal of force and control is necessary to hit or throw the ball within the limits of the playing space. Players must learn to absorb that force in order to catch or stop the ball. Timing and flow are integral aspects of the game. Timing is needed for executing plays or swinging at the pitched ball. Flow of movement is essential for combining a series of skills for a single execution, such as pitching or executing a double play.

*How do slow and fast pitch softball compare in the following: number of players; amount of action in the game; delivery of pitches; base running; and bunting regulations?*

## REFERENCES

- Coaching Youth Sports*. Consultants: Paul Brown, Bob Gould and Leo Miller. Athletic Institute, 1978.
- Meyer, Robert G. *The Complete Book of Softball*. New York, New York: Leisure Press, 1984, Chapter 1.
- National Association for Girls and Women's Sports. *Softball Guide*. Reston, Va: American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. (Published Bi-annually)
- Official Guide and Rule Book*. Oklahoma City, OK: Amateur Softball Association. (Published Yearly)
- Official's Manual: Softball*. Rittler, Kathy. West Point, New York: Leisure Press, 1982, Chapter 3.
- Softball, A Game for Everyone*, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Amateur Softball Association, 1977.

---

## 2 *Facts for Enthusiasts*

Enthusiasts need to know the kind of equipment to purchase and how to care for it. In addition, information about the possibilities of participation in tournaments will enhance a player's appreciation of the game.

You will be able to—

1. select and care for equipment, and
2. appreciate the wide acceptance of softball.

### SELECTION AND CARE OF EQUIPMENT

The minimum equipment necessary to play softball officially is a ball and a bat. Bases may be makeshift, and official dimensions modified.

#### *Bats*

The rules permit a variety of materials to be used in manufacturing official bats: wood, wood laminated, plastic, bamboo, and metal. In addition, there are several unofficial plastic bats that are hollow, lightweight and do not present a hazard to students or to gym floors. A wide selection of bats with differing size grips and barrels should be available. The bat is made of one piece of hardwood or formed from woods bonded together with plastic, bamboo, or metal. The surface must be smooth and free of burrs, rivets, or other hazards. It is not more than 34 inches long or more than 2½ inches in diameter at its largest part and has a safety grip of cork, tape, or composition material. A safety knob of a minimum of ¼" protruding at a 90° angle from the handle must be included on all bats.

Choose a bat that feels balanced and seems to be the proper weight for you to swing with power and whip. A heavy, tapered bat is often used by power hitters. The "bottleneck" bat is used for sharp hits out of the infield or for bunting. Bats made from ash woods tend to be lighter than hickory bats.

The aluminum bat has gained in popularity and is becoming the kind most often used by players because off-center contacts seem to maintain more power. On the other hand, many players still prefer the wooden bat because they believe they can "whip" it better and it sounds more solid upon contact with the ball.

## *Balls*

The twelve-inch ball must be a minimum of 11 $\frac{7}{8}$ " and a maximum of 12 $\frac{1}{8}$ " in circumference and be a minimum of 6 $\frac{1}{4}$  ounces and a maximum of 7 ounces in weight. The sixteen-inch ball circumference may range from 15 $\frac{3}{4}$  to 16 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches and be 9 to 10 ounces in weight. The core of the ball is composed of kapok or a mixture of cork and rubber. This core is dipped in rubber cement and covered with horsehide or synthetic material.

Softballs are closely controlled by the rules as to weight, diameter, contents, cover, and stitching. Be certain when buying softballs that they are marked "Official Softball." The brand name of the balls you purchase depends upon personal choice. Most players like to play with a ball that "feels" light; however, these balls often are not durable.

Fleece balls and plastic balls are recommended for primary-age children, but in junior high school, regular fast-pitch softballs should be used. If the ball seems too hard, a rubber-covered, soft softball may be more desirable. Teams should use regulation softballs. Tests are made each year by the Amateur Softball Association Equipment Standards Committee to determine conformity to the rules.

## *Gloves and Mitts*

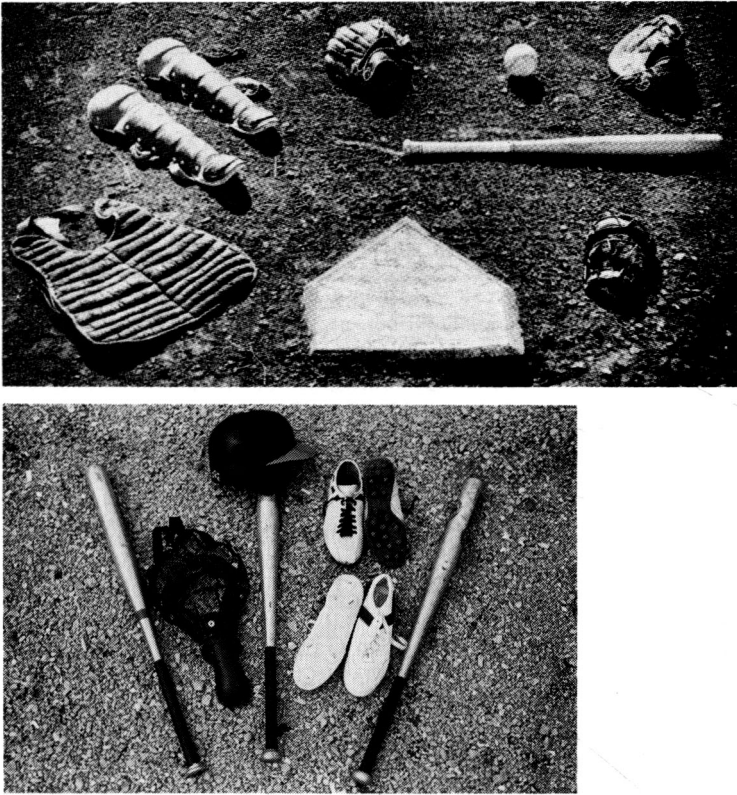
There are many styles of gloves and mitts. Mitts do not have fingers. Individual differences in hand size and comfort of the glove will determine the style you purchase. Only the catcher and the first baseman may wear mitts, and the rules spell out the specific regulations concerning their pattern. The webbing of the glove may not be more than five inches. The pitcher's glove must be of one color and not white or gray. Multicolor gloves are unacceptable.

Most players prefer a baseball glove with a large pocket to gloves specially constructed for softball use. Baseball catchers' mitts do not work well for catcher's mitts. Usually, first basemen's mitts are used by catchers. Padding is not too important in softball gloves or mitts, but the softness of the leather is important. Horse-, cow-, or elkhide are excellent leather coverings. The palms should be oiled or greased. At the end of the season, mitts and gloves should be oiled and stored with a ball or a wad of paper wrapped in the pocket.

*Why do some softball players prefer a wood bat over an aluminum one?*

## *Masks and Protectors*

The rules for fast and slow pitch vary concerning the use of masks and protectors. In fast-ball play masks with a throat protector must be worn by all catchers, and youth catchers must also wear a protective helmet, body protector and shin-guards. These protective devices are recommended for slow pitch but not required. Softball masks are made much lighter than baseball masks. They can be purchased with sponge rubber padding or with hair padding covered with leather. Both are excellent, and the selection is a matter of individual preference. Body protectors should be made especially for softball and be only waist long. Light-colored duck filled with kapok is the material commonly used for protectors.



**FIGURE 2.1** Softball equipment.

### *Shoes*

Shoes must be worn by all players. A shoe shall be considered official if it is made with either canvas, leather or other similar material. The soles may be smooth or have soft or hard rubber cleats. Adult players in non co-ed play prefer to wear spiked shoes for better traction on the playing ground. Metal sole and heel cleats must be less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches. Rounded metal spikes are illegal. No metal, hard plastic or polyurethane spikes are permitted for youth or co-ed play.

### *Bases, Home Plate, Pitcher's Plate*

The regulation home plate is five sided and made of rubber. The pitcher's plate is constructed of wood or rubber; it is twenty-four inches long and six inches wide. The distance of the pitching plate from home plate varies depending upon sex, age and type of play. Forty-six feet is required for fast and slow-pitch adult men's play; all slow-pitch adult, twelve and above, and girls' fifteen and above play forty feet is required for fast-pitch adult women and girls and on both fast and slow



pitch for twelve and under boys. Girls who are age twelve and under pitch from 35 feet away in slow pitch. Bases covered with canvas or other suitable material are fifteen inches square. They are placed sixty feet apart and are fastened in place.

In official games, home and pitcher's plates are rubber, and the bases are made with a canvas cover. Official play requires that all bases and plates be secured to the ground.

## THE GAME TODAY

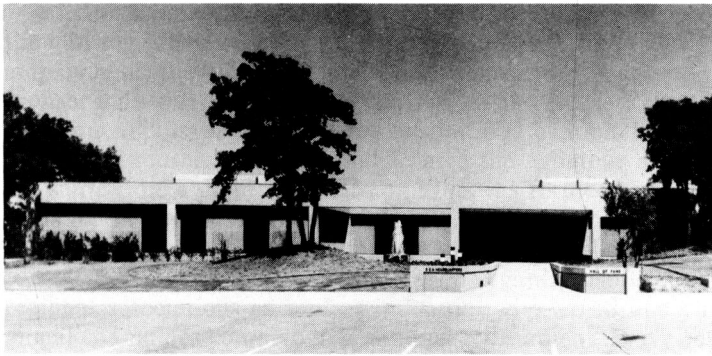
For almost one hundred years softball has been a prime recreational and competitive sport in the United States. Today, it has a home in over fifty countries in the world. Over thirty-million adults and youngsters in the United States and over twelve million in other parts of the world play softball. Each summer thousands of tournaments are held sponsored by schools, churches, armed forces, fraternal clubs, recreation agencies, industries, the Amateur Softball Association (ASA), the United States Slow-Pitch Softball Association (USSPSA), and Interscholastic and Intercollegiate Associations. Competition on the international level is growing. Women led the way with the first tournament in Australia in 1965 and men soon followed in 1967 in Mexico. These games are played every four years. It is expected that softball will soon be included as an Olympic sport. Softball is an official sport of the Pan American Games. Don Porter, executive director of the Amateur Softball Association, states: "There is hardly a man or woman in the United States who didn't at one time play softball."<sup>1</sup> Playing field facilities are insufficient to fill the demand for playing softball, especially slow-pitch softball. Rules are printed in fifteen different languages.

The Amateur Softball Association (ASA) is organized to promote softball and to provide clinics and information designed to improve play as well as to organize tournaments on a local, district, state, regional, national, and world basis. More than 145,000 teams are involved in ASA adult programs for both fast-pitch and slow-pitch softball. Each year more than a thousand invitational and championship tournaments are conducted at all levels of skill and for both sexes. The ASA Youth Program involves over five hundred thousand children.

In 1957 the Amateur Softball Association developed a Softball Hall of Fame. Selections are made on the basis of documented evidence of outstanding performance and contributions to the game on a national level. The headquarters for the Amateur Softball Association and the Softball Hall of Fame are located in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. In addition to the above services the ASA provides the following:

- Aids and clinics for umpires, coaches, and players
- Assistance in local league organization and play
- Publications (rules, guides, monthly newspaper, and national magazine)
- Free literature and instructional films

1. Don E. Porter, "Softball—Past, Present and Future," *Journal of Health, Physical Education Recreation* 42 (May 1971):36-37.



**FIGURE 2.2** Softball Hall of Fame.

The National Association for Girls and Women's Sports (NAGWS) and the National Association for Sport and Physical Education of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance promote softball in educational institutions. The NAGWS sponsors a Softball Committee that biannually publishes a Softball Guide with instructional articles, officiating information, rules, and media resources. Softball is usually included in the physical education curriculum from elementary school through college.

### *Where is the Softball Hall of Fame located?*

Several attempts have been made to professionalize the game. An attempt was made for women in the late forties and fifties and again for both men and women in the late seventies. None of these attempts have been successful over an extended period of time.

## REFERENCES

- ASA Softball*. Oklahoma City, Okla.: Amateur Softball Association (nationally circulated magazine).
- Balls and Strikes*. Oklahoma City, Okla.: Amateur Softball Association (monthly newspaper).
- Jones, Billie J. and Murray, Mary Jo. *Softball Concepts for Coaches and Teachers*. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1978, Chapters 1 and 2.
- Meyer, Robert G. *The Complete Book of Softball*. New York, New York: Leisure Press, 1984, Chapter 1.

---

### 3 *Language and Lore of the Game*

Softball is a “peoples” game that has endured for almost a hundred years. As such it has developed a history, a lore and a language. You will be able to:

1. appreciate and understand the history of softball, and
2. understand and apply common softball terms.

The concept of striking an object and reaching a destination before being “put out” can be traced to England. Early games based on this concept were called “Rounders” or “Town Ball.” The early colonists adapted “Rounders” into a game called “One Old Cat.” Folklore credits Abner Doubleday in 1839 as having scratched the first baseball diamond in the dust at Cooperstown, New York, and outlined general playing rules. It was then, according to legend, that baseball and its many variations started to grow.

Softball is the most famous offspring of baseball, our national pastime. On a Thanksgiving afternoon in 1887 the Chicago Farragut Boat Club devised and played an indoor game similar to baseball. A boxing glove and broom were used as a ball and bat. The afternoon’s fun offered promise, a promise fulfilled by George W. Hancock, a member of the club, who developed rules and equipment. He produced a larger, softer ball and a bat with a smaller batting surface.

Early organization of game play began in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Lewis Rober, a member of the municipal fire department, made the first “kittenball,” or softball, by hand. The firemen amused themselves by playing with it in their free time. The first softball league was organized in Minneapolis in 1900, and the first published rules covering the sport appeared in Minneapolis in 1906. During the next twenty years the game was played both indoors and outdoors. It was called mushball, kittenball, and pumpkinball. Because the game was less dangerous than baseball, women readily took to it. The game immediately appealed to women. The game was called “softball” by Walter A. Hakanson, a YMCA Director from Denver, Colorado, in 1926. That name was officially adopted in 1933.

Since indoor space was not always available, the game began to be played outdoors more and more. Around 1930 Leo H. Fischer and M. J. Pauley of Chicago adapted the game so that it could be played outdoors. They conducted tournaments which were so successful that they were able to convince the 1933 Chicago World’s Fair to sponsor a national tournament for men and for women.

Thousands of unemployed adults of the 1932-33 depression years found the game a satisfying way to use excess leisure time. When they finally found employment, they took the game with them and encouraged their employers to sponsor industrial leagues and teams of highly skilled players. The first national tournament pointed up a need for greater organization. In 1934 all organizations sponsoring tournaments met and formed the Amateur Softball Association. At the same time a Joint Rules Committee was formed to standardize rules. Previous to the formation of this committee, the National Recreation Association and the American Physical Education Association published their own set of rules.

The Amateur Softball Association organized softball into city, state, and regional associations as well as industrial, city, co-ed and church leagues. Regional championships compete in a national tournament. Early championship teams came from the Midwest. Since that time champions have come from all different parts of the United States. The national fast-pitch men's and women's championship teams compete in a World Championship tournament. Many teams were and still are sponsored by business and industrial concerns. Some of the sponsors of national championship teams are Aetna Insurance Company, AMF, Avco-Lycoming, Briggs Company, IBM, Jax Brewery, Kodak, Raybestos-Manhattan, Sealmaster Company, Sears, Westinghouse, Wilson, Aurora Home Savings, Xerox, Zollner Piston Company, Dow Chemical Company, and Archer Daniels Midland.

During World War II, softball experienced a brief departure from amateur to professional play for some girls and women. It was born out of concern for the restricted baseball activity because of the war. In Chicago a Women's Professional League was formed, and shortly afterward, P. K. Wrigley gave support to a Midwest version of women's professional play in a game that was essentially a blend of softball and baseball. Both of these attempts died shortly after the end of the war.

Fast-pitch softball dominated the game from 1940 to 1960. The tendency for excellent pitching to result in low-scoring games gave rise to increasing interest in two variations of the game: slow-pitch softball with a regular-size ball and slow-pitch softball with a larger-size ball. These variations prohibited base stealing, required the ball to be pitched slowly, and permitted two extra players. Slow-pitch softball attracts about 70 percent of softball participants because it lessens the impact of the pitcher on the game outcome and lessens the need for speed on the bases. Consequently the games become more offensive and provides more opportunity for player involvement.

Softball provides physical activity which permits maximum social interaction. It is fun, relaxing, challenging, active, and rarely dangerous. It is no wonder that softball has such wide appeal.

As both baseball and softball were played experts developed the game by devising certain playing techniques, and some of their inventions resulted in the formation of new rules. Bill Cummings of Massachusetts developed spins on pitches by the skips and turns he observed when flinging clam shells into the ocean. Paul "Windmill" Watson of Arizona developed the circular windup and the fast pitch. John "Cannonball" Baker of Wisconsin invented the figure eight windup. These developments resulted in increasing the pitching distances and prohibiting some of the windups.



The National Softball Hall of Fame was established by the ASA in 1957 and is located in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Both men and women players are eligible to be selected. Over sixty members have been inducted which also includes founders, executives and umpires. Visitors may view the historical development of the game, see the pictures of great players, and obtain information about their achievements. Some of the famous men in the Softball Hall of Fame are Harold Gears, Sam Elliott, Al Linde, Bernie Kampschmidt, Dizzy Kirkendall, Jim Ramage, Clarence Miller, John Baker, Warren Gerber, Hugh Johnson, Bill West, John Hunter, Tom Castle, Ben Crane, Ray Stephenson, Don Ropp, Jim Chambers, John Spring, Jerry Curtis, Charles Justice and Harvey Sterkel. Women members of the Hall of Fame include Amy Peralta, Marie Wadlow, Betty Grayson, Ruth Sears, Nina Korgan, Marjorie Law, Kay Rich, Margaret Dobson, Bertha Tickey, Gloria May, Donna Lopiano and Joan Joyce. Slow-pitch "greats" are Myron Reinhardt, Frank DeLuca, Don Rardin, Alberta Sims and Ida Hopkins.

## COMMON SOFTBALL TERMS

Most of the terms used in softball are taken from baseball. In most cases these terms simply explain the situation or name the person or item. Some of the terms seem to have little relationship to the situation defined, but there is usually some interesting lore about them.

**Altered bat** A bat which has been physically changed so that it no longer meets legal standards.

**Appeal play** A violation of the rules that must be called to the umpire's attention for a ruling. Appeal situations result from leaving a base before a fly ball is caught, not touching a base, or batting out of order.

**Assist** A fielding credit to a player who helps a teammate make a putout.

**Away** The number of outs. "Two away" means the same as "two outs."

**Backstop** Another name for the catcher and also the term given to a fence behind home plate.

**Back-up** A position taken by a fielder behind the player attempting to field the ball to possibly play the ball if it gets past the first fielder.

**Bag** The base.

**Balk** A term applied to making a motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter. If a balk is committed, a ball is called on the batter, and the base runners are given one additional base.

**Base on balls** When four balls are called on the batter.

**Basepath** An imaginary path three feet wide on each side of a direct line between the bases.

**Bases loaded, or Bases full** Base runners on every base.

**Batter's box** An area on each side of home plate that is seven feet long and three feet wide. The batter must stand within that area when batting.

**Batting order** Official sequence in which the batters will appear at the plate to bat.

**Battery** The pitcher and the catcher. They are given that name because they really are the "power source" for action.

**Bean ball** A ball pitched too close to the batter's head.