

# Rules

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Softball Canada rules are the official guide, except for the following local rules:

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## EVERYBODY PLAYS & EVERYBODY SITS OUT

1. All players must play at least 3 innings defensively. Any player who is too injured to play at least 3 defensive innings cannot play at all.
2. Members of a team who are present must be listed in the team's batting order and take their proper turn at bat without regard to their participation in the team's field play.

## GAME TIMES (REGULAR SEASON)

1. All game will be no longer than 2 hours in duration.
2. No inning can begin more than 1 hour and 45 minutes after the first pitch; no game will surpass 2 hours.
3. Standard scheduled start times will be 5:00 pm, 7:00pm, and 9:00pm, unless otherwise listed on the schedule. A later game will start late if the earlier game requires extra time.
4. If both teams have 8 or more players, the game is to start at the scheduled time. Late arriving players can join the game as they arrive. If a team does not have the minimum 8 players, the umpires will allow a 10-minute grace period. The game will begin upon the arrival of the 8th player.
5. A game is considered complete after 4 innings (3.5 innings if the home team is leading).

6. Extra innings shall be played if time permits according to Game Time rules 1 and 2. The teams will start the extra inning with the last completed batter from the previous inning on second base. Extra innings will start with zero outs. If time does not permit extra innings, the score will be recorded as a tie and each team will receive 1 point in the standings.

### **GAME TIMES (PLAYOFFS)**

1. The regular season game time rules apply with the following exceptions.
2. Every play counts. This means that if a game is suspended before it is a complete game, the game must be resumed at a later time at the exact place where it was suspended down to the score, inning, base runners, and count on the batter.
3. If a game begins with 1 hour and 45 minutes or more available to play it, then it is considered complete after 4 innings (3.5 innings if the home team is leading) if it must be stopped for weather, darkness, etc. (the same as the regular season rule with an exception explained below).
4. If a game begins with less than 1 hour and 45 minutes available to play it (e.g., because the earlier game caused a delay or the teams completed a suspended game first), the game will be suspended if not all 7 innings are completed.
5. If a resumed game has 1 hour and 45 minutes available to compete it, then it will be considered complete after 4 innings (3.5 innings if the home team is leading) if it must be stopped for weather, darkness, etc. (with an exception explained below).
6. If a tied playoff game where we must have a winner cannot be continued, it will be suspended and resumed at another time. If the visiting team was trailing at the end of the previous inning and catches up in their half of the current inning when the game cannot continue, the game will be suspended and resumed at another time (note that this differs from the regular season rule).
7. If a playoff game does not require a winner (e.g., the first game of a two-game total score series), then if the 7<sup>th</sup> inning ends in a tie, the score is left tied.

### **MINIMUM NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

1. A team must begin play with a minimum of 8 players, of which 7 must be registered with the team. A team may recruit a maximum of 2 players not registered to the team. A recruited player is not permitted to pitch. The lineup when recruiting a player cannot exceed 9 players at the start of the game, but if a registered player arrives after the start of the game the recruited player will be allowed to complete the game.
2. To be eligible for the playoffs, players must have played one-third of the regular season games. Players who miss regular season games due to injuries must have played in one-third of the games where they were not injured. No recruits are permitted during the playoffs.
3. The only time there is an auto out is when a team drops from 9 to 8 players due to an ejection. In this case, when the ejected player's turn comes up in the batting order, the batter is out.

### **MERCY RULE**

1. During the regular season, if a team is trailing by 12 (15 in the playoffs) or more runs after 5 or 6 innings, the game is over and the team leading the game wins.
2. During the regular season, if the home team is ahead by 12 (15 in the playoffs) or more runs at any point during the bottom of the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> innings, the game is over.

## **PITCHING RULES**

1. During the first 5 innings, no pitcher may pitch in more than 3 innings, with the following exception: after 2 runs have been scored in an inning, any pitcher may pitch without it counting as an inning pitched. After the 5th inning teams can substitute pitchers without restrictions.
2. A windmill motion is prohibited; "Fastball" pitchers must complete their wind up vertically to their body. No part of the ball may proceed beyond the pitcher's head during the wind up. Both feet must have contact with the rubber prior to wind up. The arm must swing back to a maximum of 12 o'clock; the throwing foot (front) must maintain contact with the rubber prior to stepping forward. Pitchers choosing to set at 12 o'clock must come to a complete stop before starting the release motion. The release motion allows the pitcher to stride toward the batter. Any infraction of this motion will constitute an illegal pitch.
3. The "Hop" (also referred to as "jumping or leaping") is strictly prohibited and constitutes an illegal pitch. The throwing foot must maintain contact with the ground while in the stride (better known as "dragging").

## **BASE RUNNING RULES**

1. At 1st base all games will be played with a safety base. The batter must use the red portion of the base any time there is a play at 1st base from fair territory; the defensive player must only use the white portion of the base. After the base runner passes the base, only the white portion of the base is to be used.
2. Home plate commitment line: the commitment line is 20 feet from home plate. A base runner who advances past (or touches) the commitment line cannot return to 3rd base, but must continue home. If a defensive player touches home plate while in possession of the ball any time after a base runner crosses the commitment line, but before the base runner plants his foot on the ground beyond the line extending from home plate to the backstop, the base runner is out.
3. Scoring: to score the base runner must plant his foot on the ground on or beyond a line extending from the front of home plate to the back stop, before the defensive player touches home plate in possession of the ball. The defensive team cannot tag the base runner after they have crossed the commitment line. The base runner will be declared out if he steps on home plate. Base runners must avoid contact at home plate with the catcher.
4. Teams will be allowed 3 courtesy runners during a game. During the regular season, teams may agree to allow more than 3 courtesy runners, but only 3 per game will be allowed in the playoffs. If a team is out of courtesy runners and a player is still on base when it is his turn at bat, the batter is out (and the player remains on base (unless the inning is over)).

5. There is no leading off, a player can only advance after the ball has crossed the plate, and if the player leaves early he will be called out.

## **PLAYOFF TIE-BREAKERS**

1. The seeding of the playoffs is determined by the team ranking from the regular season.
2. The first tie-breaker is total points (2 for a win and 1 for a tie).
3. The next tie-breaker is number of wins.
4. The next tie-breaker when exactly 2 teams are tied is their head-to-head record. If that is tied, then use their head-to-head run differential (with a maximum differential of 12 in each game). If we still have a tie, use the total season run differential (with a maximum differential of 12 in each game). If we still have a tie, go to the last game between the teams that was not a tie. If this is still tied, toss a coin.
5. If 3 or more teams are tied, use this rule to choose the top team, and then start back at the top of the tie-breaker rules to break the other ties. Use the total season run differential (with a maximum differential of 12 in each game) to decide which team (among the tied teams) gets the highest ranking. If 2 teams are tied for best differential, use rule 4 to break this tie. If 3 or more teams are tied with best differential (and at least one team had a worse differential), then start back at the beginning of rule 5 to break the tie). If all teams have the same run differential, then rank the teams by fewest runs against (without limiting the differential to 12 runs). If 2 teams are tied with fewest runs against, break the tie with rule 4. If 3 or more teams are tied with fewest runs against (and at least one team had a worse runs against total), then start back at the beginning of rule 5 to break the tie). If we still cannot eliminate any tied teams, then choose the top team using a fair coin-tossing or dice-rolling method. After choosing a top team among the 3 or more teams that were tied initially, return to the top of the tie-breaker rules to break any further ties.

## **EQUIPMENT**

1. All batters and base runners must wear a protective helmet approved by the umpires Association.
2. Catchers must wear a protective helmet and mask in addition to other protective gear. Players warming up pitchers on the field of play must wear a mask and helmet.
3. Metal cleats are not permitted.
4. All batters must remove rings and jewelry before entering the batter's box (medical bracelets must be safely secured but never covered).
5. If a player is caught using an illegal bat; his team must forfeit the game. Win is awarded to opposing team. The BMSA adheres to the ASA Standard as [http://www.softball.org/about/certified\\_equipment.asp](http://www.softball.org/about/certified_equipment.asp). A list of non-approved bats can be found at [http://www.asasoftball.com/about/build\\_batlist\\_one\\_page.asp](http://www.asasoftball.com/about/build_batlist_one_page.asp)

## **SPORTSMANLIKE BEHAVIOUR**

1. No player will be allowed to play, if in the opinion of the umpire the player is inebriated.
2. No player is allowed to taunt or badger another player during the course of the game.

3. If a player is ejected from a game for any reason, the player is suspended for the team's next scheduled game (or subsequent game in the case of a rainout).
4. Any player involved in reckless and or dangerous play will receive an automatic suspension, pending a review, which could result in a suspension from the league.
5. Any player ejected for abuse of an umpire or another player will receive an automatic suspension, pending a review, which could result in a suspension from the league.
6. If it is reported to the league executive that a team is discriminating against any players on a team, the captain will be held responsible. These incidents will be reviewed by the league executive to decide on the action to be taken. Multiple occurrences could result in a suspension from the league.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Home team must ensure the bases are pegged down at least 10 minutes prior to the start of the game.
2. Home team puts the bases away after the last game of the evening.
3. Home team provides a new game ball and a good second ball to the umpires; the visiting team provides another second ball.

**Note:** Winning team will e-mail the score to the league statistician and president; in the case of a tie the home team is responsible for e-mailing the score.