



## Official Game On Rules: 3-PITCH SOFTBALL

### THE BRIEF OVERVIEW

Softball is a game where two teams attempt to win the game by successfully scoring more runs than their opponent within the allotted time. Games are seven (7) innings long or 1 hour and 15 minutes (whichever comes first). The bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning is played if the home team, which is the team that bats second and fields first, is not in the lead.

Players must hit a softball, using a bat, in order to successfully reach the bases and score runs.

### PLAYER RESPONSIBILITIES

Each player must sign a waiver before the first game. If you add a player to your team throughout the year the player must sign a waiver before they play, even if it is only for one game.

Captains will be responsible for bringing the equipment bag, which will include bats and balls to be used during the game, from inside the gym doors. Captains are also responsible for tracking stats and scores accurately and for ensuring the final score is written on the score sheet. After the game, captains are asked to store the equipment bag and score sheets inside the gym doors. Bases are to be left on the field.

### THE TEAM

Each team will have 8 position players, including catcher, first base, second base, shortstop, third base, right field, centre field, and left field. Opposing teams provide their own pitchers as your own team pitches to your batters.

Each team is required to have a minimum of four (4) female and four (4) male players in the field at all times. Should a team be short one sex then they may still play but must play one player down (i.e. 7 players on the field) unless permission is granted by the opposing player to permit you to field a roster of either five (5) male players and three (3) female players or five (5) female players and three (3) male players.

Each team is allowed to play one (1) player less than the minimum and still not be disqualified. Any players less than that and the team may be in forfeiture. The final decision on whether teams play one another with less than minimum players is the opposing captain's decision.

**Default:** If a team is unable to field the minimum requirements within 10 minutes of the start time, then that team is deemed to have forfeited their game. The opponent will automatically score a 1-0 with the captain receiving the only RBI.

### THE FIELD

The game will be played outdoors. The playing field is a baseball diamond with bases set at 60' apart from one another. Some fields may be enclosed by a fence, while others may not. If a field is enclosed by a fence then home runs, or ground rule doubles, will be clear. In an open field there are no ground rule doubles and home runs are achieved when the batter runs around all of the bases and arrives at home plate prior to being out.

### THE EQUIPMENT

The game will be played with 12" softballs. The league will provide both the balls as well as the bats. All bats are either ASA 2004 or USSSA 1.20 BPF or 1.40 BPF approved. Players are welcome to bring their own bats but no bat may be wooden and all bats must meet at least one of the aforementioned ratings.

Only athletic shoes or rubber baseball cleats, approved for use in softball, or non-metal spiked soccer cleats are permitted to be worn during the game. Open toe shoes, as well as steel or hard plastic cleats, are prohibited.

## **THE GAME**

### **Objective:**

The object of the game is to win your game by outscoring your opponent.

### **Duration of game:**

Each game is limited to whichever comes first, either 1 hour and 15 minutes in duration from the scheduled start time or if 7 innings have been played. If the home team is leading in the bottom of the 7<sup>th</sup> inning then the game is over. Should thunder/lightning/rain, or any other unforeseeable event, cancel your game as you are playing then a game is considered complete after four (4) innings; 3-1/2 innings if the home team is leading. If the minimum innings have not been met then the game will be recorded as a 1-1 tie and stats will not count towards players' totals.

### **Starting the game:**

The "Away" team in the schedule is up to bat first with the "Home" team fielding first.

## **PITCHER**

- The batting team provides its own pitcher.
- Pitchers must pitch from the pitcher's mound marked at approximately 35 feet from home plate.
- All pitches are to be underhand only.
- Fastball or "windmill" pitches are not permitted.
- Each batter is allowed three consecutive pitches, regardless of quality. However, if the 3<sup>rd</sup> pitch is an uncaught foul ball then a 4<sup>th</sup>, and final, pitch will be made. If the 4<sup>th</sup> pitch is fouled, and is not caught, then the batter is out.
- A pitched ball that comes in contact with the ground before reaching the batter is a dead ball and counts as a pitch,
- Pitchers may not interfere in defensive plays. Should they interfere then the play stops and the batter is out.
- Pitchers may get two (2) warm-up pitches between innings or five (5) warm-up pitches if it is a new pitcher. A team may only change its pitcher a maximum of two (2) times per inning.

The pitcher must remain on the field and in play until the play is considered stopped.

Baseballs must be returned to the pitcher to consider play stopped. Pitchers must field balls returned to them by an infielder, otherwise all runners must return back to the previous bag at the time of the infield throw.

Only infielders may return the ball to the pitcher. The pitcher is not obligated to recover a ball returned by an outfielder and the ball is still considered "in play".

## **BATTER**

- Each batter is allowed three consecutive pitches, regardless of quality. However, if the 3<sup>rd</sup> pitch is an uncaught foul ball then a 4<sup>th</sup>, and final, pitch will be made. If the 4<sup>th</sup> pitch is fouled, and is not caught, then the batter is out.
- Any pitched ball that hits the batter is a dead ball and counts as a pitch.
- Partial swings are not allowed. The batter shall be called out. Only full swings are permitted.
- Bunting is not permitted. It is an automatic out if you bunt. Swinging bunts are considered live and playable.
- If a batted ball hits the pitcher then it is a dead ball and it is counted as a strike against the batter.
- The batter must touch the orange side of the first base bag when the defense is trying to make a play at first base or when the first baseman is covering the white side of the base. Defensive players are only permitted to touch the white side of first base. If a violation occurs then the call is made in favour of the non-offending player.

- If a batted ball is caught, either in the playing area, or out of bounds, the batter is out.

### **CATCHER**

- The fielding team provides its own catcher.
- Catchers must stand to either side of the batter, close to the backstop. Catchers may not position themselves directly behind the batter.
- While not mandatory, it is strongly encouraged that catchers wear a catcher's mask.
- Foul tips caught by the catcher will result in batter being called out regardless of pitch or height.
- The home plate belongs only to the catcher.
- Tags at home plate are prohibited. Players who are tagged at home plate will be considered safe.

### **BASE RUNNERS**

- Base runners are not permitted to leave their base until the batter makes contact with the ball.
- Runners who run through 1st base must move into foul territory, (to the right), or they will be considered still in play and may be tagged out as they return to 1st base.
- Runners must always use the safety bag, (orange) at 1st base if there is an obvious play at 1st base, (example: infield ground ball). Players who fail to use the orange bag in this case will be called out. If there is no play at 1st base, either bag, (white or orange) may be used.
- Runners who run beyond three feet on either side of the base line to intentionally dodge a play will be called out. Rounding base is accepted.
- Runners who interfere with a defending player making a defensive play shall be called out. This includes physical and verbal interference including yelling.
- With the exception of a home run, which is an automatic run and where there is no play at home, no player may make contact with the home plate.
- Any runs scored during a third out run down will count.
- There is absolutely **NO SLIDING, LEADING OFF, OR STEALING OF BASES.** Either of these infractions is an automatic out. A player may dive bag to the bag if they have overrun it and a play is being made at that bag.
- Runners may not touch home plate, the exception is off a home run.
- Runners standing on a base when a defensive player throws a ball out of bounds will be awarded **ONE BASE** only.
- Runners may tag up and advance to another base at their own risk.

### **COURTESY RUNNERS**

- An injured player must make it safely to first base before a courtesy runner may replace them.
- The courtesy runner must be of the same sex as the player being replaced.
- Teams are permitted a maximum of three (3) courtesy runners per game.

### **FIELDERS**

- Infielders must remain behind all base lines until the ball is hit.
- All outfielder players must remain on the grass until the ball is hit.
- Defending players who are fielding the ball own the base path and runners must yield to the defending player.
- Interference with a runner by a defending team player will result in an awarded base to the runner UNLESS the defending player is fielding the ball.
- Position changes are prohibited during an inning. Players must maintain their defensive positions throughout an inning unless an injury occurs or for another legitimate reason.
- Fake tags are prohibited and such an extra will result in all runners being awarded an extra base.
- Fielders must tag runners in non-forced out situations.
- The infield fly rule IS IN EFFECT. This rule applies when there are fewer than 2 outs and there is a forced play at 3<sup>rd</sup> base. In other words if there are either runners at 1<sup>st</sup> base and 2<sup>nd</sup> base, or the bases are loaded, and the batter hits the ball up within the infield then the batter is out regardless of whether a catch was made successfully or not. Base runners may tag up and advance to the next base at their own risk.

## **GENDER RULE**

- Each team must field 4 men and 4 women each inning.
- If teams are short a male or female player then they may play with either 3 men or 3 women but are forced to play down a fielding position (i.e. only 7 players on the field). There is no default for such a line-up.
- Any other exceptions must be agreed upon by the opposing captain.
- With respect to the batting order, no more than two (2) players of the same sex may bat consecutively including the wrap-around at the bottom of the order. The penalty is an automatic out each time a player out of sequence comes up to bat.

## **HOME RUNS**

- Each team is permitted a maximum of four home runs per game. Once the home run limit has been reached then any additional home runs will be awarded as singles. Any runners on base may advance only one base.
- In the park home runs are unrestricted and do not count as part of the home run total.

## **GROUND RULE DOUBLE**

- If a ball hits the ground first and then hops over the fence this is considered a Ground Rule Double and the batter may advance to second base.
- If a ball rolls under the fence, or gets stuck in the fence, these will also be deemed Ground Rule Doubles and the same applies as above.

## **REFEREEING**

- Captains are responsible for working together in enforcing the game's rules.
- The batting team is responsible for having 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> base coaches.

## **SCORING**

- To score, any part of the player's foot must touch the ground past the home plate safe line before the catcher has solid possession of the ball and touches home plate.
- The safe line is a line drawn from the home plate to the backstop, which is parallel to and extending from the first base line.
- All plays at home plate are considered forced plays. In order for the runner to be out they must have crossed the "commitment line", which is a line between 3<sup>rd</sup> base and home plate, and a defensive player must touch any part of home plate while in possession and control of the ball before the runner crosses the "commitment line".
- Once a base runner touches or passes the "commitment line" they must proceed home and cannot legally return to 3<sup>rd</sup> base.
- **No team may score more than 7 runs per inning.**

Game Win	2 points
Game Tied	1 point
Game Loss	0 points

### **Playoffs:**

All registered participants are permitted to play in the playoffs, regardless of how many games they have played during the regular season. Any substitute players that have been brought in to fill in the space of registered participants are only permitted to play in the playoffs if they have played at least three (3) regular season nights. This is to avoid teams bringing in "ringers" for the playoffs.

### **Other items:**

- Please take care with the equipment. Please use the equipment only for its intended use.
- If a pregnant player wishes to participate as a member player, they are required to provide a doctor's note that specifically states what she can and cannot do and until what time in her pregnancy.

## **RULE ENFORCEMENT**

During league games, rules will be enforced primarily by the "honour system". It is the players' responsibility to enforce and uphold the rules of 3-Pitch Softball when playing. Captains may intervene, if there is a questionable call, to resolve an issue.

### **FUN FACTOR POINTS SYSTEM**

We want to stress, at the outset, that this league is meant purely for fun, exercise, and entertainment. At the end of the day we want to foster a positive environment for all to play in and we want to encourage building friendships, both within your team and throughout the league. We also want to stress that we encourage teams and players to play hard but to be respectful of their opponents and to realize that the utmost importance of this league is to have fun. As such, our own spirit point system, called the "Fun Factor", which will allow teams to give their opponents with a -1, 0, or +1 rating at the end of each game.

<b>Fun Factor rating</b>	<b>Comments</b>
+1	Had an extremely enjoyable time with our opponent. The players were fun to play against, they played hard, but played fair and respectfully. We had no issues with their play.
0	We felt neutral towards our opponent's play, they were OK to play against, and while there were times of unsportsmanlike play it was still somewhat fun.
-1	Our opponent was extremely unsportsmanlike in their behaviour, language, and actions, and were not fun to play against.

These points will be added, or subtracted, to a team's overall points, which means that even if you had a perfect record, you might end up in 3rd or 4th spot if you were not fun to play against. Please remember that this type of "spirit" point is not meant to be abused and not meant to simply penalize good teams to bring them down in the standings. Rather this is meant to make players accountable for their actions on the field. Comments, with specific details, must accompany any rating that is a "0" or "-1".

For all games we will automatically give each team a +1 rating unless we hear from the captain prior to noon the following day of your game with a different rating and comments.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

1. Understand, appreciate and abide by the rules of the game.
2. Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials.
3. Respect your opponent and congratulate them in a courteous manner following each match whether in victory or defeat.
4. Be responsible for your actions and maintain self-control.
5. Do not taunt or bait opponents and refrain from using foul or abusive language.
6. Fighting will not be tolerated by Game On. A player, and possibly the team, will be expelled from the league, without refund, for fighting or for gestures made towards an opponent to fight. This includes verbal threats. It is a player's, and their team's, responsibility to maintain composure during the game and to ensure its safety and fun. If a player is having a concern over the play of another, please have it addressed through your captain with the convener, or game official, present. Alternatively, email us the details at [info@gameonguelph.ca](mailto:info@gameonguelph.ca) and we will investigate the situation.
7. Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated. This includes:
  - a. foul language, racial slurs and verbal abuse
  - b. unnecessary roughness and physical abuse
  - c. slamming down or kicking balls in anger
  - d. arguing with officials, staff, participants, or fans
  - e. abuse of the honour system
8. Physical, sexual or mental abuse is not acceptable. If you encounter such a situation, and would like to report it, please do so via the game official, via telephone or via e-mail. Any reports will be kept confidential. Should any of this be reported to Game On Sports & Entertainment Inc., we will issue a verbal warning to the team. Should a second such report occur, that player and/or team will be asked to leave the league without a refund. Game On Sports & Entertainment Inc. reserves the right to involve law enforcement officials at its discretion and reserves the right to eject any player and/or team, without warning or refund, for such behaviour.
9. Alcohol and/or smoking are prohibited at any game and any such offenders will be asked to leave the league immediately, without a refund.