



# PLAYING RULES - Softball

## Playing Time

1. The goal of the YMCA is to give EVERY player a chance to play baseball/softball/t-ball in every game. Each player must participate in half of each game in the field. Rotating positions is highly recommended.

## Equipment / Uniform

1. Grades 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>: Players may wear tennis/turf shoes/baseball cleats (no metal spikes allowed).
2. All Grades: Players must wear the official YMCA jersey. A ball cap is provided and required to wear under batting helmet. Players shall not wear anything that is dangerous, i.e., rings, watches; earrings (cannot be taped). No hard casts or splints allowed.
2. Batting Tee: Grades 1<sup>st</sup>. A batting tee will be provided at games.

Bat Specifications - No restriction on bat length or barrel size. Any legally manufactured bat can be used.

## Ball Size

Grades 1 <sup>st</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> :	11" Safety Ball
Grades 4 <sup>th</sup>	11" Yellow Hard Ball
Grades 5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup>	11" Yellow Hard Ball
Grades 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> :	12" Yellow Hard Ball

## Games

1. Grades 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>: Flip of coin by umpire will decide home team designation.
2. Kindergarten – 2<sup>nd</sup> - games are 1-hour time limit (**No** new inning after **55 min.**, but must finish bottom inning). 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades are 1 hour and 20-minute time limit (**No** new inning after **1 hr. /15min.**, but must finish bottom inning).
3. Grades 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup>: 5 infielders and 5 outfielders (no catcher position used)  
Grade 3<sup>rd</sup> – Catcher, Pitcher, 4 infield players, and 4 outfield players (10 Fielders).  
Grades 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> – Catcher, Pitcher, 4 infield player, and 3 outfield players, rover (10 Fielders).
4. Umpire provided for Grades 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> and umpire will start the game by saying "Game time is ... Let's play ball."
5. Home team is responsible for keeping batting order, outs, and informing umpire of inning run rule.

## Field of Play

Grades 1 <sup>st</sup> :	Bases 50'	Pitchers Range 30'
Grades 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Bases 60'	Pitchers Range 33'
Grades 4 <sup>th</sup> , 6 <sup>th</sup>	Bases 60'	Pitchers Range 35'
Grades 7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup>	Bases 60'	Pitchers Range 38'

## Number of Runs or 3 outs per inning.

Grades 1 <sup>st</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup> :	5 Runs	Grades 4 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> :	6 Runs
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\*NOTE: A play will be allowed to finish, but only appropriate runs (listed above) will be recorded.

## Batting Order

1. All players bat whether they are in the field or not. All batters are encouraged to hit the ball, NOT to try and walk as an offensive move.
2. Grades 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>: Coaches must set season batting order. Batting order resumes for next game where last batter batted. i.e., if batter 8 was last batter, then batter 9 is the first batter in the next game.  
Grade 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>: Batting order should change from game to game; it is highly recommended that every player get a chance to be at the beginning of the batting order during the season.

## Batting Team

1. All Grades: Batting team should pick up bat after all plays.
  - Batters, on-deck batters, and base runners must wear helmets. (Grades 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>, umpire will bring bag of extra helmets with masks to field for teams to use for game. Ball cap is required to be worn underneath helmet.)
  - Team at bat may have coaches at 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> base. Coaches may not touch a player-rounding base. (Penalty: Runner is called OUT)
- 2a. Infield Fly Rule: Not in effect between 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Grades.
- 2b. Infield Fly Rule: Is in effect for 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade.  
With less than 2 outs with runners on 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> OR 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> bases; if the hit ball is a fly ball to an infielder; the umpire will call "INFIELD FLY BATTER IS OUT- IF FAIR".
  - \* Runners stay on their base and could proceed at their own risk. This is a "Judgment Call" by umpire.
3. Grade 1<sup>st</sup>: Coach Pitch (4 pitches) then batting tee will be used.
4. Grade 2<sup>nd</sup>: (Girls) Coach Pitches 5 pitches. A batter may not strike out, foul out, or walk. (See: Pitching Regulations)
  - \*NOTE: Coaches should have the next batter ready to go when it is their time to bat in order to speed up play.
  - \* Grades 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>: (Player pitch or Coach Pitch) A batter is not out on 3rd strike foul unless the foul/tip is caught. Batter cannot run on a dropped 3rd strike.
  - \* Grades 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> may run on a dropped 3rd strike. (Note: if 1st base is occupied with less than two outs, then batter is out.)
  - \* If a pitch is thrown and the ball hits the batter in the strike zone, that ball will be called a strike (on no attempt to avoid being hit).
  - \* Foul tips are live balls. This is defined as a pitched ball that tips off the bat and travels directly to the catcher's hands. Unlike a foul ball, a foul tip can be a batter's third strike.

## Foul Ball

- o Settles on foul territory between home and first base or between home and third base
- o Bounces and then goes past first or third base on or over foul territory
- o Has its first bounce occur in foul territory beyond first or third base
- o While in foul territory, touches an umpire or batter, or any object foreign to the natural ground. By interpretation, a batted ball that touches a batter while in his batter's box is foul regardless of whether it is over foul territory.
  - \* A pitch that bounces and goes through the strike zone is a "ball," and a bounced pitch cannot be caught for strike three unless first base is occupied and there are less than two outs.
  - \* A walk will be given to pitched balls that bounce off the ground and hit the player, as long as the batter made a realistic attempt to avoid being hit.

## Stealing / Lead Off

Grades 1 <sup>st</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup> :	No lead off. Runners must stay on the base until ball is hit. No bunting or stealing.
Grades 5/6 <sup>th</sup> :	Runners can steal base once pitched ball crosses home plate. Bunting, stealing, and sliding are allowed. Stealing of home base is not allowed.
Grades 7/8 <sup>th</sup> :	Runners can steal base once pitched ball crosses plate. Bunting, stealing, and sliding are allowed. Stealing of home base is allowed.

\***Note:** Grades 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>: Home plate is closed on ball thrown from catcher back to pitcher even if wild throw. The player that is walked to 1<sup>st</sup> base cannot attempt a steal onto 2<sup>nd</sup> Base on the walk.

## Base Running

- All Grades: (All base runners must wear helmet)
  - If a base runner passes a base runner in front of him/her, the base runner will be called out.
  - If 2 players end up on the same base, the umpire will call the 2<sup>nd</sup> occupant out.
  - No run shall score when the 3<sup>rd</sup> out is a forced play.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Fielder's Choice/Tag Out: Base runner must slide if a realistic attempted tag play is to be made at any base. No attempt to slide may result in base runner being called out. If there is no realistic attempt possible, the base runner may enter base standing up. Fielders cannot be in the base paths if there is not a possible play at the base.
- 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade:
  - INFIELD HIT: Any infield-hit base runner/batter may advance only one base. Play should be attempted.
  - OUTFIELD HIT: Runners may advance until ball is controlled by an infielder. Base runner must then stay on closest bat. Umpire will call "Time" to stop play.
- 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade:
  - INFIELD HIT: Base runner may proceed at own risk.
  - OUTFIELD HIT: Same as Grades 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## Safety Procedures (First aid is available at the office building at Wright Park.)

- Any batter throwing the bat will be called out immediately, umpire's discretion. **NO WARNINGS**. No base runner may advance. Coaches should teach players to lay the bat down near home plate.
- ONLY the on-deck batter may practice swinging the bat.
- Grades 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> are given one fielder's facemask that can be worn by either pitcher or infielder (optional).
- Catchers must wear protective equipment.

## Overthrow Rule

- 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade:  
If an overthrow occurs at any base, the player must stop on the base they are closest to whether the ball is in play or not. **NO** advancement.
- 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade:  
If the ball is still in the area of play, the runner advances at his/her own risk. If the ball goes beyond the imaginary line of the extended edges of the backstop or into dugout, the ball will be ruled dead. Runner will receive the base he/she is going to plus one.

## Pitching Regulations

### Coach Pitch/Batting Tee: 1<sup>st</sup> Grade:

- Coaches, assistant coaches or an adult will pitch to their own batters/team.
- Coach/pitcher will stand 30'-33' from the plate. Coach must step back after each pitch. The coach should attempt to get out of the way of any ball in play. If coach is hit by the ball, the ball is still in play.
- Coaches may verbally help batters before and after pitches but not during.
- Coach/pitcher will not be permitted to talk to the fielding team/players, unless congratulating good play.
- Player playing pitching position will stand either side of coach pitching and may field the hit ball.
- Coaches will throw 4 pitches to his/her player. If the player does not hit the ball after 4 pitches, a tee will be used. A batter may not strike out, foul out, or walk.
- A double is the most that can be scored from the tee.

### Coach Pitch: 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade:

- Coaches, assistant coaches or an adult will pitch to their own batters/team.
- Coach/pitcher will stand 30' from the plate. Coach must step back after each pitch. The coach should attempt to get out of the way of any ball in play. If coach is hit by the ball, the ball is still in play.
- Coaches may verbally help batters before and after pitches but not during.
- Coach/pitcher will not be permitted to talk to the fielding team/players, unless congratulating good play.
- Player playing pitching position will field the ball.
- Coaches will throw 5 pitches to the player. If the player does not hit the ball after 5 pitches, then the batter will be recorded as an out. A batter may not strike out, foul out, or walk.

### Player/Coach Pitch: 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade:

- Warm Up Between Innings: 3 for new pitchers; 2 between innings for returning pitchers.
- Player will pitch a maximum of 5 pitches in all grades (moderate to fast with speed determined by ability of pitcher).
- No walks will be given, but a player may strike out. Umpire will call strikes, swinging or not.
- If a hit or put out is not recorded within 5 pitches, then batting team's coach will throw 3 maximum to own player, no walks will be given. Batting count is not in effect on coaches 3 pitches. If still no result, then an "out" will be called.
- One or both feet must be in contact with pitching rubber. Foot in contact with the rubber must remain on rubber until ball has left pitcher's hand.
- Pitcher may only pitch 2 innings per game maximum.
- Player being hit by a pitch will not be awarded 1st base. Pitch will be part of pitch count.
- Pitcher may deliver ball at any speed and wind milling is allowed for softball. Umpires will NOT call balls.

### Player Pitch: Grades 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>:

- Warm Up Between Innings: 4 initial warm ups; 2 between innings for returning pitchers
- A pitcher may not pitch more than 3 innings.
- Balls will be called, but if abuse of rule persists then base may be awarded (umpire discretion). One or both feet must be in contact with pitching rubber. Foot in contact with rubber must remain on rubber until ball has left pitcher's hand.
- Speed of Pitch - Moderate to Fast (speed determined by ability of pitcher)
  - **Step Back Rule is allowed:** Pitcher must start with front foot on pitching rubber and is allowed to "step back" with back foot to begin pitching Motion (back foot does not have to be in contact with pitching rubber to start). It can happen before, simultaneous with or after the hands are brought together. Then would push off pitching rubber and drag lag foot upon release.
  - Ball may be delivered at any speed and wind-milling is allowed.
- Balls and strikes are called according to the strike zone, which is **batter's armpits to right below kneecaps**. Any batter being struck with a pitched ball is entitled to one free base unless batter took a swing at the ball or did not attempt to avoid being hit. Dead ball will be called on any play of the batter being hit (**this includes hands**), whether the base is awarded or not.
- In order to provide success for all players, the following two rules apply:
  - Pitcher will deliver no intentional walks; all batters should be encouraged to hit the ball.
  - If a pitcher walks 3 consecutive batters, the pitcher should be replaced.