



Stevenson University Department of Campus Recreation  
Intramural Softball Rules

Stevenson University Intramural Softball will follow the current rules of NFHS (National Federation of State High School Associations), ASA (Amateur Softball Association) and NIRSA (National Intramural and Recreational Association) unless modified to accommodate facility or program needs. Those who are subject to the rules are: team representatives (players, substitutes, coaches and spectators) and other persons affiliated with the team are subject to the rules of the game and shall be governed by the decisions of the Intramural Staff assigned to the game.

**Player Eligibility**

1. Participation is limited to all currently enrolled, fee-paying SU students, faculty members, and full-time staff.
2. In order to be eligible to participate, each eligible player MUST present his/her current, valid SU ID. Check-in takes place at designated sign-in locations at the facility, field or court (usually at the Scorekeeper's table). Individuals who are unable to provide a current, valid SU ID will not be permitted to participate. No other forms of identification will be accepted (email, class schedule, Driver's License, etc).
3. For additional information regarding player eligibility, team rosters and participant check-in refer to the SU Intramural Handbook available online at the SU Intramural Sports website and in the Intramural Sports office in Garrison Hall North - Room 106.

**Team Composition and Substitutions**

1. Players can compete on only one team regardless of league classification. In addition, a player may compete for one Co-Rec team during the same season.
2. A minimum of nine (9) players are required to register a team. All players must show their current, valid SU ID at the game site in order to be eligible to participate. (Co-Rec = Minimum of 3 each gender)
3. A team must have eight (8) players to start a game. If a team does not have eight players to start a game, it will constitute a forfeit. (Co-Rec = Minimum of 2 each gender)
4. Players who arrive late must check-in with the scorekeeper/s and must wait for a dead-ball situation in order to enter the game.
5. Players arriving late may have their name added to the bottom of the batting order. Defensive team must always have a player in the catcher's position.

6. Team rosters will be formed based on the players who compete in the team's first regular season game and every subsequent regular season game. No new player's can be added after a team's last regular season game.
7. In order for a player to be eligible for playoffs, he/she must participate in at least one regular season game for that team. \*No player may participate on more than one team\*
8. Any player who is injured or bleeding, has an open wound, or has an excessive amount of blood on the uniform must leave the game.
9. Team captains are responsible for communicating the batting order to the officials. Teams must list all players that will bat and play defense on the score sheet. This number may exceed 10 players. However, only 10 players may play defense at a time. Every player listed on the score sheet is eligible to bat. Players may go in and come out of the game as many times as they choose, but, teams can only make defensive changes between innings. Pinch hitters and runners are not allowed.
  - a. A sub must play the defensive half of the inning immediately following each at bat. Players may only return to the game in the same position in the batting order that he/she occupied prior to being substituted for.

### **Equipment and Playing Field**

1. The Campus Recreation Staff will provide game balls and warm-ups balls. Teams must use the ball provided. Teams are responsible for any damage to game softballs during warm-ups.
2. Catcher's equipment is recommended but must be supplied by the individual if they choose to wear it. The Intramural department is not responsible for any injury that occurs during competition as the result of not wearing a batting helmet or catcher's equipment.
3. Teams are encouraged to wear their own like-colored jerseys. Scrimmage vests (pinnies) are available for checkout at the courts.
4. Individual Player Equipment must meet the following requirements:
  - a. Shirts: Shirts must be worn throughout the game. Shirts must not have arm openings that are larger than four inches. Referees will measure the arm openings with their fist. Shirts that have been altered and are missing more than the length of the sleeve will not be permitted.
  - b. Pants: Players may not wear pants or shorts that have belt loops, metal, cargo pockets or exposed drawstrings. Players may not wear towels that hang from the waist.
  - c. Headgear: Baseball caps or other rigid headwear is not permitted. Players may wear rubber or cloth elastic headbands that are used to control hair. Bandanas with knots are prohibited.
  - d. Pads or Braces: No pads or braces may be worn above the waist. Leg and knee braces made of hard, unyielding material must be covered on both sides and all edges with slow-recovery padding.
  - e. Shoes: All players must wear close toed shoes. Gym shoes, soft-soled shoes, or molded plastic cleats may be worn during competition. Metal spikes are prohibited. Any player caught wearing spikes be asked to remove them immediately. Second offense, the player will be ejected from the game.

5. Jewelry is NOT allowed to be worn by any participant during the game. Jewelry consists of visible rings (wedding bands), watches, necklaces, earrings, studs (including tongue or lip rings), bracelets (metal or cloth) and any other such similar jewelry. Medical alert bracelets must be taped to the body or secured under clothing such as a sock to be worn during play. Taping of any other forms of jewelry, other than a medical bracelet, is prohibited. Players are subject to ejection for failure to remove jewelry.
6. Bases will be approximately 65 feet apart in men's, women's, and co-rec competition.
7. In order for a bat to be deemed legal it must be an official A.S.A. or an official U.S.S.S.A. approved softball bat. It must have a safety grip (no smooth tape) and must be free of rough or sharp edges. Baseball bats and fungo bats are illegal and prohibited. Fast Pitch softball bats are illegal and prohibited.

### **Match Time and Length**

1. The game will consist of 7 innings or 50 minutes. No inning may start after 45 minutes have elapsed. A coin toss will determine the home team.
2. After 4 innings or 3 ½ if the home team is ahead, games that are stopped due to weather, field conditions or other forces of nature will be considered official at the point they are called. Games that have not reached 4 innings will be attempted to be rescheduled and resumed where it left off, but is not guaranteed.
3. A maximum of ten (10) runs per inning allowed per team.
4. (Mercy Rule) A 15-run rule will be in effect after 5 innings (4 ½ if the home team is ahead)
5. Regular season games can end in a tie. Extra innings can be played, but only if they start before the 50 minute mark.

### **Pitching**

1. Players will pitch to the opposing team.
2. In the act of pitching, the pitcher:
  - a. May hold the ball in any manner before delivery.
  - b. May only deliver the pitch with a definite underhand motion.
  - c. Must face home plate before and during delivery of the pitch.
  - d. The ball must be pitched at a slow speed.
  - e. Must have at least one foot contacting the pitching rubber prior to pitching the ball. The pitcher's foot must remain in contact with the pitching rubber throughout the delivery.
  - f. Must deliver the ball in a continuous, underhand motion on the first forward swing of the pitching arm past the hip.
3. The pitch must have a minimum arc of 6 feet from the ground. The maximum allowable arc is 12 feet from the ground. If the pitch does not meet these requirements, an illegal pitch shall be called. The batter has the option of taking the pitch for an automatic ball or swinging at the pitch. If the pitch is swung at, the illegal pitch is ignored.

4. The pitch must be a slow pitched ball, excessive speed is determined by the umpire.

### **Batting**

1. Batters will start with a 1-and-1 count.
2. The strike zone is any space immediately over home plate between the height of the batter's highest shoulder and lowest knee when the batter assumes his/her natural batting stance.
3. Strike is called if the pitch has a legal arc, crosses the batter's body at the appropriate height.
4. The batter will be declared out if a ball is batted foul for the third strike. The play will be called dead and runners cannot advance.
5. Bunting and/or chopping the ball downward is prohibited. If this occurs, the batter is declared out, the ball is dead, and runners may not advance.
6. Throwing of the bat in any manner is prohibited. On the first occurrence, a warning will be issued by the umpire. On the second occurrence, the batter will be declared out. On the third occurrence, the player will be ejected from the game.

### **Running**

1. There is no stealing. Runners are not allowed to leave the base until the pitch is hit. If a runner is found off base before the pitch is thrown, the runner will be out and "no pitch" will be called.
2. The base path for a runner is a direct line between the player and the base to which he/she is running at the time a play is being made on that specific base runner and the three feet to either side of that direct path.
  - a. The exemption is if a base runner is advancing for multiple bases. Base runners may take a more rounded path to maintain their speed, providing they maintain their established path
  - b. For plays between home plate and 1<sup>st</sup> base, base runners are encouraged to run on the foul side towards 1<sup>st</sup> base.
3. A base runner who runs outside (more than 3-feet) his/her established base path in order to avoid a tag shall be declared out.
4. Base runners must avoid all collisions with fielders anytime a fielder is making a play on the ball. Any base runner who does not avoid the collision will be ruled out; he/she will be ejected immediately. The batter will be awarded 1<sup>st</sup> base and runners will return to their original base unless forced to the next base. (If a runner occupies 1<sup>st</sup> he/she will be awarded 2<sup>nd</sup> so the batter can be awarded 1<sup>st</sup>)
5. Defensive players may not intentionally stand or obstruct the base path of a base runner unless he/she is fielding the ball. If a defensive player intentionally obstructs a base runner, the umpire shall award that base runner and all others the bases they would have reached had there been no obstruction.
  - a. Obstruction is also called when a fielder without the ball fakes a tag in which the umpire will award bases as a normal obstruction and eject the fielder from the game.

6. A runner who is in fair territory and not in contact with a base that is struck by a batted ball will be declared out except if:
  - a. The ball has passed an infielder and no other fielder had a chance to make a play
  - b. A runner is hit with a fair hit ball in foul territory and no other fielder could make a play
  - c. A runner is touched by the ball after it is touched by any fielderIf an exception occurs, all runners must return to the base they originally occupied and the batter is awarded first base unless forced to the next base.
7. If the defense is attempting a double play, base runners must get out of the way of the thrown ball. Base runners who fail to make an attempt to avoid obstruction will be charged with interference and both the base runners and batter will be called out.
8. Sliding into any base in softball is prohibited. Base runners that slide will be called out.
9. Base runners may not attempt to jump over, hurdle or intentionally collide with a defensive player in possession of the ball attempting to make a tag on the base runner. Players who violate this rule will be ruled out, ejected and base runners will return to the original base they occupied.
10. Courtesy or pinch runners are not allowed in softball.

### **Fielding**

1. The defensive players are restricted to the following position rules:
  - a. No more than 6 players may be positioned in the infield before a pitched ball is hit including the pitcher and catcher.
  - b. Each team must field a catcher. The catcher is required to remain behind the batter and may not cross home plate until the ball is hit.
2. Batters and base runners are out in all normal situations: force out, fly out, tag out.
3. When a ball is in play and overthrown, the play will be called dead and bases will be awarded based on the position of the runner at the time the throw occurred. Base runners will be awarded two bases from the last base attained at the time the ball was released.
  - a. All bases awarded are based on the lead runner.
4. The infield fly rule will be in affect when there is less than two outs, runners occupy first and second base or the bases are loaded, and a fair batted ball is popped up and can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort.
5. The ball will remain alive until all base runners have stopped advancing, the pitcher holds the ball in the infield and the umpire has declared time.

### **Appeal Plays**

1. Appeal plays are plays that an umpire cannot make a ruling until a request by a member of the defensive team has been made. All appeals must be made before the next pitch or before the defensive team leaves the field.

2. Appeals can be made once the ball has been returned to the infield and time has been called. Any infielder with or without the ball may make a verbal appeal on: a runner missing a base, a runner leaving a base too soon or a batter batting out of order. The plate umpire will acknowledge the appeal and the appropriate umpire will rule on the play.

### **Co-Rec Modifications**

1. A team is composed of ten (10) players, five (5) men and five (5) women. Play may start with no less than eight (6) players, four (4) men and four (4) women. A team may also play with 9 players. At no time may there be more than five (5) players of a gender on the field for a team. Therefore, the only legal combinations are 5 males + 5 females, 5 males + 4 females, 4 males + 5 females, and 4 males + 4 females. Substitutions may only take place as a male for male or female for female.
2. The defensive team is restricted to a maximum of 3 males and 3 females in the infield (This restriction includes the pitcher and catcher) and 2 males and 2 females in the outfield. The pitcher and catcher must be of opposite gender. No exceptions will be made.

### **Sportsmanship**

1. The Sportsmanship Rating System is intended to be an objective scale by which teams' attitude and behavior can be assessed throughout the intramural sports league and playoff seasons. Behavior before, during, and after an intramural sports contest is included in the rating. The team captain is responsible for educating and informing all players and spectators affiliated with his/her team about the system.
2. A team is responsible for the actions of the individual team members and spectators related to it. Additionally, WCU Intramural Sports does not recognize the use of coaches. Only the team captain shall speak to the officials regarding administrative matters (ejections, disqualifications, etc). Furthermore, the team captain's efforts in assisting Intramural Staff to calm difficult situations and to restrain troubled teammates are key to controlling team conduct.
3. Sportsmanship is vital to the conduct of every Intramural contest. In order to encourage proper conduct during games, officials, administrative personnel, and supervisors shall make decisions on whether to warn, penalize or eject players or teams for poor sportsmanship. These decisions are final. The Intramural Sports administrative staff will rule on further penalties as a result of unsportsmanlike conduct.
4. Each participant should choose his or her team members carefully, as all team members will suffer the consequences of any disciplinary action taken by the Intramural Sports staff against that team for violation of the intramural rules and sportsmanship guidelines. Protests or appeals of sportsmanship ratings will not be recognized. The Intramural Sports administrative staff reserves the right to review any rating given to a team.
5. Additional information regarding team and participant sportsmanship including the rating method, factors, and scale is available in the Intramural Sports Handbook, available online at the WCU Campus Recreation web site.

## Inclement Weather

1. The SU Intramural Sports Staff reserves the right to cancel or reschedule a game if circumstances warrant such an action. Regular season games that are cancelled due to rain or snow do not have to be rescheduled. Games postponed due to other reasons may or may not be rescheduled at the discretion of the Intramural Staff.
2. Weather conditions at the playing field will be monitored by the Campus Recreation staff with postponements and cancellations that follows departmental weather policy.
3. In case of inclement weather, the Intramural Sports staff will not make a decision regarding the playing of games until after 4:00pm.
  - a. If inclement weather occurs after the closing of the Intramural Office, decisions regarding game status will be made on the field by the Intramural Site Supervisor.
  - b. When games are cancelled due to weather, the fields will not be open for practice.