

Big D Sports – Official Coed Softball Rules

Clothing/Attire

Shoes/Footwear: Shoes must be worn at all times. Sneakers and rubber-cleated shoes will be allowed. Metal screw-in cleats, open-toed, open-heeled or hard-soled shoes will not be allowed.

Pads: Pads (leg, knee, ankle, arm and/or elbow) that are worn must be soft and pliable.

Reflective Items: Players may not wear clothing with reflective items/fabric/designs that could be distracting to opposing batters and/or pitchers.

Any clothing/attire in question should be brought to the attention of the umpire. Big D Sports staff and the umpire will make all final decisions with regard to discrepancies in clothing/attire.

Team/Player Requirements

Rosters/Player Eligibility: It is the responsibility of both team captains to maintain their respective rosters and line-ups. Big D Sports staff and the umpire will assist in any discrepancies with regards to the coed ratios and player eligibility. All roster check requests must be made to Big D Sports staff prior to the first play of the game.

Minimum Number of Players at Game Time: Each team must have eight (8) players, with a minimum of three (3) females, at game time.

Failure to Have the Minimum Number of Players at Game Time:

- If a team does not have the minimum number of players to begin, then the team at full strength will be awarded with three (3) runs. The team that is short-handed will have ten (10) minutes to field the minimum number of players. If the short-handed team does not have the required minimum number of players at the end of the ten-minute period, then they will have to forfeit the game.
- If neither team has the minimum number of players to begin, then the 3-run penalty will not be enforced. Both teams must field the minimum number of players within ten (10) minutes after game time. If neither team has the minimum number of players at the end of the ten-minute period, then both teams will forfeit the game. **BE ON TIME!**

The two team captains can agree to proceed with an official game if Big D Sports staff allows it. However, the team on the verge of forfeiting cannot force an official game to take place, nor is the opposing team required to allow an official game to take place. The Big D Sports staff will ultimately make this decision after talking with both captains.

Two-Up Rule (Playing Only 3 Females): If a team has at least 6 males, but only 3 females during the game, then they have two options:

- They can play 6 males and 3 females on defense. However, they must take an out every time the missing (fourth) female's turn comes up in the batting order.
- They can play 5 males and 3 females on defense. However, they will not take an out every time the missing (fourth) female's turn comes up in the batting order.
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If both teams have at least 6 males, but only 3 females during the game, then this rule will not be enforced.

General Rules

Field of Play: Field of play will be a softball/baseball type field with 65 feet base paths.

Fair/Foul Territories: Fair territory consists of the area between (and including) the 1st and 3rd base lines. Foul territory consists of any area outside the 1st and 3rd base lines.

Game Ball: Softballs (12-inch regulation size for males and 11-inch regulation size for females) will be provided by Big D Sports and must be used during league play.

Bats: Big D Sports will follow the Amateur Softball Association (ASA) approved list for bats. A player's bat must:

- Have the 2000, 2004 or 2013 ASA seal for approval
- Not appear on the non-approved list of bats with the 2000 or 2004 seal.

The first violation for using a non-approved ASA bat will be a verbal warning. The second violation will result in an out on the play. The third violation will result in the team's forfeit of the game. The fourth violation will be a disqualification from the league.

Baseball/Softball Glove: A baseball or softball glove is required for all fielders on defense. Players must provide their own glove.

Game Officials: At least one (1) umpire will be provided by Big D Sports to officiate and enforce the rules of the game. The umpire's responsibilities include:

- Starting the game on time
- Announcing the top and bottom of each inning
- Calling and tracking balls, strikes and outs.
- Calling base-runners either 'safe' or 'out' on the field of play.
- Settling disputes and disputed calls

All umpire's judgment decisions are final. Any excessive player disagreements with the umpire will result in an ejection from the game (and/or league), if deemed necessary.

Scorekeeping: It is the responsibility of both team captains to help keep track of their scores. Big D Sports staff and the umpire will assist in the tracking of scores and any discrepancies with the scores. The game's final score must be verified by both team captains with Big D Sports staff at the end of the game.

Game Duration: A regulation game will be seven (7) innings, or end after 50 minutes. The 50-minute game clock shall begin after the coin toss. No new inning will start after the 50-minute game clock has expired. However, the game will conclude after the final out of the current inning.

Coin Toss: The team that wins the coin toss will decide to start the game fielding (as the "home" team) or batting (as the "visiting" team).

Run Limit (Per Inning): Each team has a six (6) run limit per inning (for Innings 1 through 4). When a team scores 6 runs in those designated innings, then the teams switch (regardless of the number of outs). However, unlimited runs may be scored (in Innings 1 through 4) if one of those innings is declared the final inning of the game (based on time). There are unlimited runs for Innings 5 through 7, until a team gets their third out.

End of Game: The team with the higher score at the end of regulation wins the game. The game officially ends.

Ties: If the score is tied at the end of regulation during the regular season, then the game will officially end in a tie. Extra innings will not be played.

Mercy Rule: The game officially ends, and a team wins if they are ahead by:

- 12 runs after 4 complete innings, or
- 10 runs after 5 complete innings

Forfeits: If a team forfeits a game due to no-showing or not having the minimum number of players, then the opposing team will be awarded a 10-0 victory.

Fielding Rules

Players on the Field: The fielding team must have ten (10) players, with a minimum of four (4) females, on the field of play. The fielding team may not play more than six (6) males on the field at any time. Fielding positions are not gender-specific. For the batting team, a 1st base and 3rd base coach is allowed. The next batter up can be position in the on-deck circle. All other players from both teams need to be in their respective dugouts. If the umpire believes a ball was interfered with due to players outside of their respective dugouts, a “dead ball” will be called. *Defensive Dugout Interference* results in runners advancing one (1) base from where dead ball was called. *Offensive Dugout Interference* results in runners returning to the last successful base reached prior to the dead ball being called.

Catcher: The fielding team must play a catcher at home plate. The catcher must stand behind the batter and not interfere with the batter’s ability to hit the ball or advance to 1st base. *Catcher Interference* shall result in the batter being awarded 1st base and all other base runners advancing one (1) base.

Infield/Outfield Line: The “infield/outfield line” will be designated as where the infield-dirt and outfield-grass meet. If there is no clear “infield/outfield line”, then the umpire will designate a line (approximately 10 paces) beyond the bases to act as the “infield/outfield line”. There can be no more than six (6) fielders on the infield at any point before the ball is hit. Any fielder that starts in the outfield cannot enter the infield until the ball is hit.

Pitching Rules

Pitcher’s Plate: The pitcher’s plate is approximately 92 feet from home plate. Before a pitcher begins their pitch, he/she must have both feet on or behind the pitcher’s plate. The pitcher must have one foot on the pitcher’s plate when the ball leaves his/her hand.

Pitch Height: The legal pitch height must go above the batter’s shoulder and not exceed 15 feet above ground. Any pitch that is not deemed legal will be called a ‘ball’ (unless the batter swings at the ball).

Pitcher’s Safety Zone: The pitcher will be protected in an area between two lines marked on either side of the pitcher’s plate (“safety zone”). If any line drive or sharply hit groundball travels through the safety zone, then the batter will automatically be ruled ‘out’ (regardless of the batter’s gender). Multiple violations of the safety zone by the same batter can and will result in an ejection from the game (and possible suspension from the league).

Batting Rules

Batting Order/Lineup: The batting order must follow these guidelines:

- The team must alternate between males and females throughout the batting order.
- The males must follow the same order among the other male teammates (Male Lineup)
- The females must follow the same order among the other female teammates (Female Lineup)

In the 1st inning, the batting team may lead off with either a male or female batter. After that, batting order guidelines must be followed. A team is allowed to have females bat back-to-back (if they choose to) without penalty. Males are never allowed to bat back-to-back, unless the missing fourth girl (an automatic 'out') is between the two males.

Male Lineup	Female Lineup
1. John	1. Jill
2. Michael	2. Amy
3. Andrew	3. Susan
4. Jake	4. Candice
5. Peter	5.
6. Ed	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.

If John is starting the game as the leadoff batter, then the batting order would be as follows: *John, Jill, Michael, Amy, Andrew, Susan, Jake, Candice, Peter, Jill, Ed, Amy, John, Susan, Michael, Candice, Andrew, Jill, Jake, Amy, Peter, Susan, Ed, Candice,...*

“Batting the Bench”: Teams may “bat the bench” (where every player in attendance may bat in the lineup). A batter is not required to play defense. However, all fielders on defense are required to bat.

Designated Hitters: Designated hitters are not allowed. All fielders on defense are required to bat. Any attempt at using a designated hitter must be brought to the attention of the umpire prior to game time and can only be deemed allowable by the opposing team captain.

Count at Home Plate: All batters will start with a count of one (1) ball and one (1) strike and one (1) courtesy foul. Four (4) balls will result in the batter “walking”. Three (3) strikes will result in the batter being called “out”.

Courtesy Foul Ball:

- If the batter fouls (with one strike), it's a 2nd strike and is allowed one courtesy foul ball. If the batter fouls (with two strikes), the courtesy foul is gone.
- If batter swings and misses, or the ball hits the home plate/strike mat on a legal pitch (with one strike), it's a 2nd strike and is allowed one courtesy foul ball. If the batter fouls (with two strikes), the courtesy foul is gone.
- If the batter fouls (with two strikes and no courtesy fouls), then the batter is out.

Bunting: A batter must make a full swing if they attempt to hit a ball. Bunting (or slap bunting) is not allowed.

Walks: If a male batter is walked, then he is automatically awarded 2nd base. If a female batter is walked, then she is automatically awarded 1st base. **If there are two outs and the next batter is female, then she can choose to bat or take the walk to 1st base.**

General Gameplay

Scoring: A base-runner scores a run by touching home plate or the strike mat. A run is not scored if the third out results in the batter or base-runner being forced out.

Homeruns (One-Up Rule): Teams may hit an over-the-fence home run; however, no team may ever go more than one homerun up on the other team. Any additional homeruns above the “one-up” will result in the batter being awarded a single (and any base runners will only advance one base).

Home Plate/Strike Mat: All balls & strikes will be determined by using “mat” rules. Balls hitting home plate or its plate extension (strike mat) at the appropriate pitching height will be called a ‘strike’.

1st Base/Safety Bag: There will be two bags at the 1st base position: a white bag (1st base) in fair territory and an orange bag (safety bag) in foul territory. On force-out plays at 1st base, the batter has the right to the orange bag and the fielder has the right to the white bag:

- The fielder must use the white bag to make the out.
- If the fielder uses the orange bag, then the batter will be called ‘safe’.
- If the batter uses the white bag, then the batter will be called ‘out’.
- If the fielder crosses into the base path for any reason (including an attempt to catch a wayward throw) and inhibits the batter from taking a clear path to the orange bag, then the batter will be called ‘safe’ for defensive interference.

If there is not a force-out play at 1st base, then the batter may use the white bag.

Fair Balls: A fair ball is defined as:

- A batted ball that touches and stays in fair territory
- A batted ball that touches fair territory, and goes into foul territory after passing 1st base or 3rd base
- A batted ball that touches foul territory, but goes into fair territory before passing 1st base or 3rd base.
- A batted ball (in fair territory) that touches a player before going into foul territory

Foul Balls: A foul ball is defined as:

- A batted ball that touches foul territory without going into fair territory
- A batted ball that touches fair territory, but goes into foul territory before passing 1st base or 3rd base.
- A batted ball that hits a backstop, a tree (or anything extraneous to the playing area) before going into fair territory

Outs: An out will be called in the following situations:

- The batter is called for a 3rd strike
- The batter hits a second foul ball after getting two strikes
- A foul ball goes above the batter’s head and is caught in the air (in the field of play) before touching any part of the fence or ground
- A batted ball is caught in the air before it touches the ground
- A force-out is called at a base before the base-runner reaches that base

- During a force-out play, if the fielder is making contact with the base, he/she must demonstrate complete possession of the ball
- During a force-out play at home, if the fielder is making contact with home plate or the strike mat and is demonstrating complete possession of the ball
- A base-runner is tagged by a fielder with the ball (that was put into fair play) and the base-runner is off the base.
- A batted ball hits a base-runner in fair play (while he/she is off base or is forced to run off base). The base-runner will be called “out”, the batter is awarded 1st base and all other base runners must return to their original base.
- If a batter overruns 1st base and makes an aggressive turn toward 2nd base and the batter is tagged with the ball before getting back to 1st base.

Infield Fly Rule: An infield fly consists of the following:

- Any fly ball within the infield with significant arc and deemed an “easy catch”
- There are less than two (2) outs
- There are base-runners on:
 - o 1st base and 2nd base, or
 - o 1st base, 2nd base and 3rd base

The batter is automatically called ‘out’ on an infield fly and base-runners can advance (at their own risk) once the ball is caught.

Live Ball/Dead Ball: The ball is live at all times until ‘time’ or ‘dead ball’ is called by the umpire. ‘Time’ will be called by the umpire when a fielder has controlled the ball in the infield and all base-runners have reached (or retreated back) to their respective base. Any contact with a live ball during the course of play (by the base-runner) is an out.

Out-of-Play Balls: All thrown balls are deemed “out-of-play” when:

- The ball is thrown over the fence
- The ball is thrown beyond the fence (or “no complete” fence at the park)
- The ball is thrown or carried beyond the imaginary line (if there is no fence) extending from the end of the backstop. This imaginary line also applies to overthrows and caught foul balls

On balls that are ruled “out-of-play”, the base-runners are granted the base he/she were going to (at the point of the throw), plus one (1) additional base. In cases where a base-runner runs past 1st base, he/she must have clearly made an aggressive turn towards 2nd base, in order to be granted 2nd base and 3rd base during an out-of-play scenario. If the ball is overthrown and hits the fence behind the 1st or 3rd base lines, this is not considered “out-of-play” and the runners may advance (at their own risk).

Leadoffs/Stealing: Leading off a base or stealing a base is not allowed. Base-runners can leave the base once the ball is hit. If it is determined that a base-runner leaves their base early before the ball is hit into play, then a ‘dead ball’ will be called and the base-runner is called ‘out’. If this is the batting team’s 3rd out of that inning, then their batter at the plate will be the first batter in the next inning.

Tagging Up: The base-runner must retouch or remain on his/her original base, until after the ball either lands in fair territory or is first touched by a fielder. The base-runner must tag up when a fly ball is caught in flight by a fielder for an out. If the base-runner successfully tags up, then the base-runner may advance (at their own risk) when a fly ball out is caught. If the base-runner fails to tag up on a fly ball out and the fielder completes a force-out at the base-runner’s original base, the base-runner is called ‘out’.

Fielder's Obstruction: A fielder may not block the base path (or block/stand on a base) for an incoming base-runner, unless he/she is there to make the force-out or tag-out play. The base-runner will be ruled "safe" if he/she would have reasonably reached the intended base safely.

Base-Runner's Interference: A base-runner may not disrupt or interfere with a fielder making a play on the ball. A dead ball is called and the base-runner will be ruled 'out'. All other base-runners must return to the last base that he/she touched, prior to the interference.

Base Coaches: The batting team is allowed to use 1st and 3rd base coaches. These coaches are to stand in foul territory in the designated coach's box. Base coaches must attempt to move out of the way of a play in their area. If, in the eyes of the umpire, a base coach is found to have interfered with a play, an "out" will be awarded to the defense. This includes, but is not limited to, inhibiting a defender from pursuing a foul ball or touching a base runner during a live play.

Courtesy Base-Runner: A courtesy base-runner can only be used if a base-runner is injured during the play. The courtesy base-runner will be designated as the previous batter (of the same gender) that is not on base. The injured base-runner may return to the game if he/she is cleared to play by the umpire. A courtesy base-runner cannot be used to replace a base-runner based on speed (or athletic/base-running ability). A violation of this rule will result in an "out".

Excessive Contact: Big D staff/officials will closely watch base-runners and fielders that engage in excessive contact. Any excessive, unnecessary contact or collisions will result in an out and/or ejection. This includes contact with the catcher (or fielder) at home plate. Sliding is allowed by the base-runner. All plays at home plate require the base-runner to either slide or bail out to avoid contact. Any sliding into a base to break up a double/triple play, or any intentional interference (in the eyes of the umpire) with the fielder, then all base-runners may be called 'out'.

Playoff Procedures

Player Eligibility: To be eligible for playoffs, players must:

- Be listed on one (1) official team roster. A player cannot be listed on more than one (1) official roster.
- Played with their official team for at least one (1) regular season game.
- Signed the team's official roster sheet.
- In good standing (no league suspensions or expulsions)

Players in the league can be on one team's official roster and may sub on other teams in the same division during the regular season. However, if a player's official team does not make the playoffs, then that player is not eligible to play with the playoff team(s) that he/she subbed with. Big D staff and opposing team captains have the right to verify player eligibility by requesting a roster and ID check.

Game Duration: Playoff games will follow the seven (7) inning or 50-minute time format, like in the regular season. The championship game will follow a seven (7) inning or 70-minute time format.

Coin Toss: During playoffs, there is no coin toss. The higher-seeded team has the choice to start the game fielding (as the "home" team) or batting (as the "visiting" team).

Extra Innings in Playoffs: Ties at the end of regulation during the playoffs will result in an extra inning.

- **Coin Toss in Extra Innings:** There is no coin toss. The team that batted first to start the game will bat first in the extra inning.
- **Base-Runner on 2nd Base:** Each team will start off with a base-runner on 2nd base when it's their time to bat during an extra inning. The batter (or base-runner) that was called for the 3rd out from the previous inning will be designated as the starting base-runner.
- **Number of Pitches:** Each batter gets one (1) pitch and no courtesy foul. If the batter gets called for a "strike" or hits the ball "foul", the batter is called 'out'. If the pitcher throws a "ball", the male batter walks to 2nd base or the female batter walks to 1st base.
- **End of an Extra Inning:** The team with the higher score at the end of the extra inning wins the game. If the score is still tied, then an additional extra inning is played.

USA Softball Bat Testing & Certification Program

***** Information on non-linear bats with unique barrel compression thresholds can be seen on the [Non-Linear Bat Compression Thresholds](#) page.*****

CERTIFIED/APPROVED: The official bat for USA Softball Championship Play must meet all the USA Softball specifications and the requirements of Rule 3, Section 1, and:

1. The official bat, made up of the knob, handle, grip, taper, barrel and end cap shall be free of burs, dents cracks, sharp edges, rattles and show no signs of excessive wear. The official bat may be marked OFFICIAL SOFTBALL by the manufacturer, and shall be no more than 34 inches long nor exceed 38 ounces in weight. The official bat shall not be more than 2.250 inches in diameter at its largest part, including any tolerance for expansion. The official bat must bear either the 2000 Certification Mark, 2004 Certification Mark, or 2013 Certification Mark (Slow Pitch, Men's Adult Fast Pitch, Junior Olympic Boy's Fast Pitch and Men's Modified only), as shown below and must not be listed on the USA Softball Non-Approved Bat List with 2000 or 2004 Certification Mark.



NOTE: USA Softball has begun transitioning to the new USA Softball Certification Marks for the 2020 calendar year. On behalf of equipment manufacturers, the USA Softball Equipment Testing and Certification Committee requested that the new certification marks be approved for the 2019 calendar year and the USA Softball Board of Directors approved the new marks (seen here) for 2019 USA Softball Championship Play. The Official Rules of Softball, Rule 3, Sections 1 and 3 will be updated for 2020 to identify the new Certification Marks for Championship Play.



All Games



Adult Fast Pitch/All Slow Pitch

AND

2. must be included on a list of approved bat models published by USA Softball

OR

3. must, in the sole opinion and discretion of the umpire, have been manufactured prior to 2000 and if tested, would comply with USA Softball Bat Performance Standard. This includes wooden bats.

Exception: Senior Softball bats may be used in Senior Championship Play only.

*All bats in USA Softball Championship Play, except Seniors, must pass USA Softball's Bat Performance Standard. All bats having the 2000, 2004 or 2013 (**Slow Pitch, Men's Adult Fast Pitch, Junior Olympic Boy's Fast Pitch and Men's Modified Pitch ONLY**) Certification Mark and not listed on the list of Non-Approved bats with Certification marks will be allowed in USA Softball Championship Play. Bats with the 2013 Certification Mark will be allowed in Slow Pitch National Championship Play Only. For your convenience, USA Softball's website has a listing of all approved bats and bats that have USA Softball Certification Marks and are no longer approved.*