Softball Rules

Any rule and situation not specifically covered are subject to the current National Federation of High School Associations' Softball Rules Book and the judgement and discretion of the TN Tech Intramural Sports staff.

All rules are subject to change at the discretion of the Intramural Sports Office, and the Intramural Sports Office has the final decision on all situations covered and not covered by the rules.

- ✓ Bat Rules
  - The bat **MUST** be at least 24oz. Anything less than 24oz is **PROHIBITED**.
  - Wooden and Youth Bats are **PROHIBITED**.
  - Length **MUST** be 34 Inches
  - The bat **CANNOT** say "FP" or "Fastpitch"
  - The bat **MUST** have the "ASA" and/or "USSSA" stickers.
- ✓ Helmets
  - All players must wear a helmet when batting and running the bases. Helmets will be provided, participants may bring their own.
    - Must be a baseball/softball helmet.
    - Football helmets and pitcher/catcher masks are **PROHIBITED**.

NEW – PLEASE READ
Rule 7: Co-Recreational Modifications

Team Composition

- ✓ Team rosters must contain at least **five (5) females**. When fielding, each team must have at least **five (5) females** on the field. **If a team is playing with less than ten (10) players, at least four (4) females must be present and playing in the field. There can never be more males than females in the field at any time.**

Alternating Lineup

- ✓ The batting order must alternate between male and female batters.
  - Exception – When more females than males, the females can bat back to back. Males cannot bat back to bat.

Perfect	Scenario		Less Male	Scenario
Male #1	Female #1		Male #1	Female #1
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Female #2	Male #2		Female #2	Male #2
Male #3	Female #3		Male # 3	Female #3
Female #3	Male #3		Female #3	Male #3
Male #4	Female #4		Male #4	Female #4
Female #4	Male #4		Female #4	Male #4
Male #5	Female #5		Female #5	Female #5
Female #5	Male #5		Female #6	Female #6
Male #6	Female #6		Female #7	Female #7
Female #6	Male #6		Female #8	Female #8

  - You can never have 6 Males bat without 6 Females

- Ex. If you only have 5 females at a game, you can only play with 5 males for that game. All extra males will have to sit out. No subbing will be allowed unless injury.

Offensive Restrictions

- ✓ Pitching
  - Each Team shall provide an offensive pitcher.
  - The offensive pitcher may bat as normal.
  - When the pitcher has to bat, he or she is replaced by a teammate not on base at that time.
  - The offensive pitcher shall not interfere with the defensive pitcher
- ✓ Batting
  - Each batter shall receive a maximum of two (2) pitches, unless one of the pitches is fouled, the batter will receive at maximum one (1) more pitch.
  - Illegal pitches shall count as one (1) of the two (2) pitches (Fast pitch is not allowed).
  - If the batter fails to hit a fair ball after two pitches (three (3) if one (1) of first two (2) are fouled, the batter is declared OUT.
  - If a fair-batted ball contacts the offensive pitcher, there will be a re-pitch (pitch did not count).
    - Exception: Offensive pitcher intentionally touches batted ball, batter will be declared OUT.
- ✓ Automatic Outs
  - Excessive Home Runs
    - When the male batters for a team hit three (3) home runs, each subsequent home run will result in an automatic OUT.
  - Batting Order
    - Less than ten (10) batters will be declared OUT.
      - Ex. 9 players – One (1) Automatic Out. 8 Players – Two (2) Automatic Outs.
  - Injuries
    - No automatic outs will be issued if player gets injured during the game.

Defensive Restrictions

- ✓ Fielding
  - Each team may field all ten (10) positions by rule.
  - Each team shall provide a defensive pitcher and a catcher.
    - Pitcher and Catcher must be opposite genders
      - Ex: Male Pitcher, Female Catcher
  - The defensive catcher should not obstruct the actions of the offensive pitcher.
  - **No more than five (5) males may play in the field at a time.**
  - Infield positions must be filled before outfield
    - Ex: Cannot have less than six (6) players in the infield counting pitcher and catcher.
  - There is no restriction on the number of males or females in the infield or outfield.
- ✓ Restriction Line
  - The grass/clay separation will designate the outfielder restriction line, separating the infield from the outfield.
  - Outfielders must remain in the grass until the ball has been hit.
  - If an outfielder illegally enters the infield before the ball is hit, the batting team has the following two options:
    - Take the result of the play.
    - The current batter is awarded First Base, and, if applicable, all base runners will advance by rule.

Rule 1: Player Eligibility & Registration

Player Eligibility

- ✓ Currently enrolled (at least half-time), fee-paying Tennessee Tech University students as well as faculty and staff of the University with a current, active membership to the fitness center may participate in intramural leagues, tournaments, and contests.
- ✓ Prior to each contest and event, participants must check in with a member of the IM staff.
- ✓ **Players can compete for only one (1) team in each single-gendered league** and, if applicable, **one (1) co-rec league.** Once he or she checks-in for one (1) team, that player **CANNOT** transfer to another team in that league for the duration of the season.
- ✓ **For postseason eligibility, a player must have participated in at least one (1) regular season game.**
- ✓ Current varsity athletes cannot participate in their sport or related sport. Former varsity athletes cannot participate in their sport or related sport for one calendar year (365 days) after their official affiliation with a college or university team has ended.
- ✓ Current professional athletes cannot participate in their sport or related sport. Former professional athletes cannot participate in their sport or related sport for five (5) years after their official affiliation with a professional team has ended.
- ✓ Intramural Sports Professional staff shall make the final decision on eligibility issues.

Registration

- ✓ Teams should register by the deadline by registering on the Fusion Play App.

Rule 2: League Format & Team Composition

League Format

- ✓ A pool play section shall precede the postseason tournament. The overall number of registered teams will determine the number of pools and number of teams in each pool.
- ✓ League standings will determine a team's eligibility for the postseason tournament. The following criteria will determine the League standings: (1) Winning Percentage, (2) Wins, (3) Sportsmanship, (4) Point Differential, (5) Games Played, and (6) Coin Toss.

Leagues (Subject to Change Due to Number of Registered Teams)

- ✓ **Men's**
  - Elite
  - Recreation
- ✓ **Women's**
  - Recreation
- ✓ **Co-Rec**

Team Composition

- ✓ A minimum of seven (7) players are required to start the game.
- ✓ Ten players are required to avoid automatic OUTs, and a maximum of twelve players may be added to the batting order.
- ✓ Each team must field ten (10) players (when at least ten (10) members are present), and when there are ten (10) players in the field, four (4) players must play the outfield. The pitcher, catcher and infield positions must be filled at all times.

Rule 3: Defaults, Forfeits, Grace Periods, & Protests

Defaults

- ✓ A default is a game not played without penalty (e.g. dropped from the league).
- ✓ To receive a default, the team captain or representative must notify the Intramural Sports Office by **2:00 PM on the day of the contest**.
- ✓ Sportsmanship Rating will be as followed:
  - Winning Team = 8

- Defaulting Team = 5

✓ To verify that the request is legitimate, the team captain or representative must notify the Intramural Sports Office via e-mail or in person. **Phone calls are not accepted.**

Forfeits

✓ A forfeit is defined as one (1) of the following:
- Failing to field a team for an intramural contest without contacting the Intramural Sports Office.
  - **The final score shall be 4-0.**
- Receiving three (3) or more conduct warnings before, during, and after an Intramural contest.
  - If the forfeiting team is ahead, the final score shall be 4-0 in favor of the opposing team.
  - If the non-forfeiting team has the higher score, the game shall end with the existing score.
- Defaulting two (2) games during pool play.

✓ If a team forfeits its first (1st) game of the season, that team may be dropped from the league and replaced with a team on the waiting list.

✓ **Forfeits automatically withdraws you from Post-Season play.**

✓ Sportsmanship Rating will be as followed:
- Winning Team = 8
- Forfeiting Team = 2

✓ A second (2nd) forfeiture may result in removal from the league.

Grace Period

✓ If at least **one (1)** team member is **checked-in** at game time, the team will be granted a **five-minute (5:00)** grace period.

✓ Once a team reaches the minimum number of players to start the game, the team **MUST** start when directed by IM staff.

✓ A team may not wait for additional players once the minimum number of players have arrived.

✓ If the team has **NOT** reached the minimum number of players required to play at the end of the grace period, a forfeit **WILL** be declared.

Protests

✓ Intramural Sports Graduate Assistants and Professional Staff will consider protests.

✓ During the contest, teams may protest (a) the misinterpretation or the misapplication of a rule or (b) a scoring error. The protest must be submitted immediately, and, if the protest is denied, a timeout will be charged to the protesting team.

✓ Protests regarding the judgement of the game officials will **NOT** be recognized.

✓ When protesting player eligibility:
- *Regular season*: The eligibility of any player **MAY** be protested at any point during the regular season (e.g. before, during, and after the contest; anytime during office hours)
- *Postseason Tournament:* Player eligibility **MUST** be protested before the start of the contest. **Protests made after the start or end of the game will NOT be recognized**

Rule 4: Playing Area & Equipment

Playing Area

✓ All games will be played on the Campus Recreation Intramural Softball Fields.

Team Dugouts

✓ Teams will select a dugout prior to each game. Players not currently fielding, batting, or coaching are asked to remain in or near their team's dugout.

Game Equipment

- ✓ **The Intramural Sports Office reserves the right to declare any piece of equipment illegal.**
- ✓ The Intramural Sports Office will provide bats and balls for each contest.
- ✓ Players may present personal bats for inspection. In order to use legal personal bats, the player must allow both teams the opportunity to use the bat. If the owner of the bat declines, then the bat cannot be used by either team.
- ✓ Players in the field must wear gloves, and pitchers and catchers must wear a helmet & facemask.

Clothing & Equipment

- ✓ All attire and equipment are subject to the approval of Intramural Sports staff. Any clothing or equipment that is deemed unsafe or illegal must be removed prior to competition.
- ✓ IM staff reserves the right to ask participants to remove or conceal clothing that, in the opinion of IM staff, displays offensive or demeaning language or imagery.
- ✓ Proper athletic attire is required. Non-athletic clothing including but not limited to jeans, dress pants, dresses, khakis, and blouses is not allowed.
- ✓ Footwear
  - Players are required to wear athletic shoes (e.g. basketball shoes, running shoes, tennis shoes) or molded cleats.
  - Cleats with metal spikes are strictly prohibited.
  - Footwear including but not limited to boots and open-toed shoes is also prohibited.
- ✓ Jewelry
  - Religious or medical jewelry is permitted and must be taped down against the body.
  - All other jewelry is prohibited and must be removed prior to the contest.
  - **All Air Pods/Ear Buds/Headphones are PROHIBITED during IM Contests.**
- ✓ Headwear
  - Players may wear baseball caps, knit or stocking caps, headbands, and hair control devices made with soft and non-abrasive material.
- ✓ Helmets
  - All players must wear a helmet when batting and running the bases. Helmets will be provided, participants may bring their own.
    - Must be a baseball/softball helmet.
    - Football helmets and pitcher/catcher masks (for the batter) are **PROHIBITED**.
- ✓ Pads/Braces
  - Casts may not be worn anywhere on the body.
  - Any equipment made of hard, unyielding materials may not be worn above the waist.
  - Leg & knee braces covered with soft, pliable material and free of any sharp edges are allowed.
  - Compression apparel and wrist sweatbands are permitted.
- ✓ Blood
  - Participants that are bleeding, have an open wound, and/or have an excessive amount of blood on the uniform will be asked to leave the game. The bleeding must be stopped, the open wound must be covered, and/or the bloody uniform must be changed before the player can return to the game.

Rule 5: Timing & Scoring

Game Length

- ✓ Each seven-inning game is scheduled to be played over a period of fifty (50) minutes.
- ✓ At the expiration of the fifty-minute time limit, an inning in progress shall be completed if the home team does not have the lead.
- ✓ Regular season games that are tied at the end of the seventh inning or fifty minutes will end with a tie.

- ✓ During the playoffs, extra innings will be played until the score is no longer tied after the conclusion of an inning.

Inclement Weather or Other Interruptions

- ✓ When a game is interrupted due to weather conditions, it is a regulation game in the following situations:
  - **The fourth inning has been completed**
  - When the third or fourth inning is interrupted at any point, the home team has reached one of the specified point differentials listed on the mercy rule table.
- ✓ When faced with unforeseen circumstances, the Intramural Sport Office reserves the right to suspend or terminate games with the existing score.

Home Run Rule

- ✓ Participants in the Men's elite and women's leagues will be allowed five (5) home runs per game. Participants in the Men's recreational league will be allowed three (3) home runs per game. Any home runs in excess of the limit shall result in an automatic OUT.

Mercy Rule

- ✓ In any inning, a team bats completely through their line up twice, that half inning will end after the result of the final player's at bat.
- ✓ Please refer to the table. When the specified point differential is reached after the number of innings have been completed, the game will end.

Point Differential	Innings Completed
20 Runs	3 Innings
15 Runs	4 Innings
10 Runs	5 Innings

Rule 6: Playing Rules

Determining Home & Visiting Teams

- ✓ Rock, paper, scissors or other means shall determine the Home team and the Visiting team.

Batting Order

- ✓ Both teams shall submit a line-up card to the scorekeeper before the start of the game.
- ✓ At the start of the game, a team may add up to twelve players to the batting order. All players that are present must bat. Unlimited substitutions are allowed in the field.
- ✓ After the batting order is set, if there are less than ten players on the batting order, a team may add players until the 10^{th} spot is filled.

Batting

- ✓ Bunting
  - A bunt is a pitched ball that is intentionally tapped slowly with the bat.
  - No form of bunting is allowed. The batter must take a full swing at the ball.
  - Any attempt at bunting, whether the ball is fair or foul, will result in the batter being called OUT.
- ✓ Throwing the Bat
  - If a player throws the bat unintentionally that player will be given a warning. Each subsequent violation will result in the batter being declared OUT, and all runners will return to base If player continues to throw the bat they will be ejected.
  - If a batter intentionally throws the bat, the player will be declared OUT and ejected.
- ✓ Batter's Box
  - The player must stay within the confines of their chosen batter's box.

- If the batter steps completely out of the box before making contact with the ball, the batter will be declared OUT.
- It is legal for the batter to step outside the box after contacting the ball.

✓ Bat Rules
- The bat **MUST** be at least 24oz. Anything less than 24oz is **PROHIBITED**.
- Wooden and Youth Bats are **PROHIBITED**.
- Length **MUST** be 34 Inches
- The bat **CANNOT** say "FP" or "Fastpitch"
- The bat **MUST** have the "ASA" and/or "USSSA" stickers.

Pitching

✓ The pitcher must have one foot in contact with the pitching rubber until the ball leaves his/her hand.

✓ A legal delivery shall be a ball delivered in an underhand motion at a slow to moderate speed.

Offensive Restrictions

✓ Pitching
- **Each Team shall provide an offensive pitcher.**
- The offensive pitcher may bat as normal.
- When the pitcher has to bat, he or she is replaced by a teammate not on base at that time.
- The offensive pitcher shall not interfere with the defensive pitcher

✓ Batting
- Each batter shall receive a maximum of **TWO (2)** pitches.
  - Exception: one (1) of the two (2) pitches is a foul. The batter will receive only **one (1)** more pitch.
- Bad pitches shall count as one of the two pitches (Fast pitch is not allowed).
- Illegal pitches shall count as one (1) of the two (2) pitches (Fast pitch is not allowed).
- If the batter fails to hit the ball after two (2) pitches, the batter is declared **OUT.**
- If the batter fails to hit a fair ball after three (3) pitches, the batter is declared **OUT**.

Defensive Restrictions

✓ Pitcher
- Each team must have one fielder to serve as a defensive player in the pitching area.
- Prior to the pitch being released, the fielder must have at least one foot in/on the designated area of the field.
- Failure to be in the ready position will result in a warning for the first offense. Other offenses will result in the current batter being awarded a walk and advancing to second base.

Base Running

✓ No stealing is allowed. Runner(s) must stay on base during the pitch. If a runner is off base before the pitch reaches the plate, a dead ball is called, and the runner(s) is/are declared OUT.

✓ Base Path
- The base path for a runner advancing to second base, third base, and home is the direct line between the player and that base or home plate. The base runner may legally move three feet to either side of that direct path to avoid a fielder.
- Exception: When rounding first base, the runner will take an indirect route to second base (i.e. a buttonhook path).
- A baserunner who exceeds three feet to either side to avoid a tag will be declared OUT.

✓ When a defensive player has the ball and is waiting for the runner, and the runner deliberately crashes into the defensive player, the runner is declared OUT. The ball will be declared dead, and all runners must return to the last base they legally occupied. If the act is judged flagrant by the umpire, the offending player will be ejected from the game.

✓ If the ball goes out of play, the base runner gets one base past the base he/she is heading.

- ✓ When rounding the bases, a runner may not advance past a runner in front of him/her. The advancing runner(s)s will be declared OUT.
- ✓ When attempting to score, a runner may not intentionally charge into or displace a defensive player with the ball or waiting on a throw.
- ✓ Courtesy Runners
    - The last runner declared OUT may replace the injured runner on the awarded base.
    - The umpire must be notified of the request during a dead ball.

Obstruction

- ✓ A defensive player may not obstruct a runner's path unless he/she is making a play on the ball. In the event a defensive player obstructs a runner, the umpire may award all affected runners any number of bases up to and including home plate.
- ✓ Fake Tag
    - It is also obstruction when a fielder fakes a tag without the ball.

Interference

- ✓ During a double play, the runner must slide into the base or get out of the way of a thrown ball. Base runners who fail to move or slide will be called for interference, and both base runners will be OUT.

Infield Fly Rule

- ✓ An infield fly occurs when **all** of the following conditions are satisfied:
    - A fair fly ball (not including a line drive) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort.
    - There are less than two outs in the inning.
    - There are runners on first and second base or there are runners on first, second, and third base (bases loaded).
- ✓ When all three conditions are met, the umpire will declare an infield fly and rule the batter out immediately. The successful or unsuccessful catch attempt by an infield does not factor into the umpire's decision.
- ✓ If the fly ball is caught by the infielder, the base runners must tag up.

Appeals

- ✓ Once the ball has been returned to the infield and TIME has been called, any infielder (including pitcher or catcher), with or without possession of the ball, may appeal that a runner missed a specific base. The appealing team must designate the base, and the administering umpire will decide.
- ✓ Base runners cannot leave their base once TIME is declared.
- ✓ Appeals must be made prior to the next pitch or before the defensive team has left the field.

Substitutions

- ✓ **No additions will be made to the batting order once it has been locked.**
- ✓ **The batting order is locked once all present players have batted through once.**
- ✓ **Any players that arrive after the batting order is locked are ineligible to participate in the game.**
- ✓ **If you have less than ten (10) players, players that show up late may add to the bottom of the lineup until 10 players is reached.**
- ✓ You will bat everyone that is present and, on the roster, NO SUBSTITUIONS in the batting order.
- ✓ Unlimited subs may happen within the field.

Automatic Outs

- ✓ Batting Order
    - When a team lists less than ten players on its batting order, that team will receive an automatic OUT for each missing batter. For example, a team with seven players shall receive three automatic OUTs (for the eighth, ninth, and tenth batting positions).
- ✓ Ejections

- When a player is ejected, he or she may be replaced by an eligible substitute. If there are no eligible substitutes available, an automatic OUT will occur each time the vacant position is required to bat.

✓ Excessive Home Runs
- When a team has reached the home run limit, each subsequent home run will result in an automatic OUT.

Rule 7: Co-Recreational Modifications

Team Composition

✓ Team rosters must contain at least **five (5) females**. When fielding, each team must have at least **five (5) females** on the field. **If a team is playing with less than ten (10) players, at least four (4) females must be present and playing in the field. There can never be more males than females in the field at any time.**

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- Each Team shall provide an offensive pitcher.
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  - When the male batters for a team hit three (3) home runs, each subsequent home run will result in an automatic OUT.
- Batting Order
  - Less than ten (10) batters will be declared OUT.
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  - No automatic outs will be issued if player gets injured during the game.

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- Each team may field all ten (10) positions by rule.
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  - Pitcher and Catcher must be opposite genders
    - Ex: Male Pitcher, Female Catcher
- The defensive catcher should not obstruct the actions of the offensive pitcher.
- **No more than five (5) males may play in the field at a time.**
- Infield positions must be filled before outfield
  - Ex: Cannot have less than six (6) players in the infield counting pitcher and catcher.
- There is no restriction on the number of males or females in the infield or outfield.

✓ Restriction Line
- The grass/clay separation will designate the outfielder restriction line, separating the infield from the outfield.
- Outfielders must remain in the grass until the ball has been hit.
- If an outfielder illegally enters the infield before the ball is hit, the batting team has the following two options:
  - Take the result of the play.
  - The current batter is awarded First Base, and, if applicable, all base runners will advance by rule.

Ejections

✓ When two (2) members of a team is ejected, that team shall forfeit the contest.

✓ Ejected players must leave the Fitness Center and/or Intramural Fields immediately and cannot return to play **ANY** sport until he/she has been cleared for participation by a professional staff member of the Intramural Sports Office.