

## SOFTBALL RULE INTERPRETATIONS

### SECTION A - GENERAL RULES

- A-1. In cases not covered by these rules, Co-Ed Amateur Softball Association (ASA) Rules will govern. Rulebooks can be obtained at <http://www.softball.org> at a cost of \$10.00.
- A-2. At all times athletes are expected to compete to the best of their ability to ensure a quality competition at all levels. Coaches are expected to provide accurate and honest scores of their athlete's ability.
- A-3. Protests will only be considered for rule infractions (not for umpire judgments).
- A-4. All protests must be filed before the next pitch.
- A-5. The Games Rules Committee will make all final decisions.
- A-6. No advertising or sponsorship is allowed to be worn on competition uniforms or warm ups.
- A-7. The following process will be used for all Special Olympics Colorado round robin tournaments:
  - The team with the best record at the end of competition will receive first place. If the point differential is the same, places of finish will be determined by the total points scored by each team during the tournament (highest scoring team receives first place).
  - If the total points are the same, places of finish will be determined by fewest number of strike outs in the games played during the tournament.
- A-8. In tournament play, the game will be forfeited if a team fails to report on the field, ready to play within ten (10) minutes of the scheduled game time.
- A-9. The forfeit score is 7-0 in favor of the team to which the game is forfeited.
- A-10. Athletes can participate in team competition or individual skills competition.

### SECTION B - FIELD

- B-1. The softball diamond will have 65 feet base lines for all ages and divisions.
- B-2. The pitching distance will be 50 feet and at no time will this distance be altered.

### SECTION C - EQUIPMENT & UNIFORMS

- C-1. All bats must be specifically marked as "Official Softball." No wooden bats allowed.
- C-2. Catchers are required to wear a protective mask and helmet as well as a chest protector.
- C-3. Steel spikes and metal-tipped cleats are not allowed. Street shoes are not allowed. Gym, tennis, running, or rubber spike shoes will be allowed.
- C-4. Gloves are required. The first baseman and catchers may wear the first baseman's trapping

style mitt only.

- C-5. For softball only, twelve-inch (12") optic yellow with a .44 core softballs will be used. The official tournament ball at Regional and State competition will be the restricted flight softball.
- C-6. All players on the team must wear the same color shirt with readable numbers on the back.
- C-7. Only softball/baseball pants, sweat pants or shorts will be allowed for players to wear during competition. No jeans or jean shorts will be allowed for any athletes in softball events. Athletes will not be allowed to wear jewelry or awards during competition.
- C-8. Batting helmets are required at all times when at bat or running bases. Helmets cannot be removed until the player is inside the dugout.

#### SECTION D - UMPIRES AND THEIR DUTIES

- D-1. Umpires will conduct the games in accordance with specified rules.
- D-2. Umpires will have the power to make all decisions regarding play and decisions on any point not specifically covered by the rules.
- D-3. In case of injury, equipment repair, or unsafe playing conditions, the umpire will stop play.
- D-4. The umpire may call a game completed (for darkness or weather) after 4-1/2 innings if the home team is ahead in runs, or after five full innings.

#### SECTION E - PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES

- E-1. Each team will consist of a minimum of 10 and maximum of 15 players. Each team will be allowed up to four coaches. Two base coaches are allowed for the offensive team; one in the first base and one in the third base coach boxes; and they must remain in the boxes while their team is at bat. The third and fourth coach must remain in the dugout.
- E-2. The game may begin with 8 players, but when and if the ninth player arrives, that player must be inserted into the line-up in the ninth batting position.
  - a. Whenever a team is playing with 8 players, an out will be taken when the ninth batting position appears. A team must bat 8 players at all times.
  - b. If the team for any reason falls below 8 players, a forfeit will be declared. A team must have 8 players to end the game.
  - c. A team starting with 9 players may continue a game with 8 players as long as an ejection is not the reason the number of players fell to 8. An out is declared when the ninth position in the batting order comes up. If an ejection occurs to lower the number, a forfeit is declared.
- E-3. Substitutions may be made whenever a "timeout" is called. The coach must notify the umpire, scorekeeper, and opposing coach.
- E-4. Any of the starting players may leave and re-enter the game. This may be done by each starting player only once, with the provision that the players occupy the same position in the batting order as the one they occupied when they left the game. A starting player may only re-enter the game for the person who substituted for him/her. Substitutes may re-enter the game in the same manner.

- E-5. Only those on the roster can be in the dugouts during the games.
- E-6. Athletes may serve as a Bat Person for their team while also abiding by the following standards:
- Must be cleared of the Class A process.
  - Helmet must be worn at all times.
  - One Bat Person per team.
  - Coaches are responsible for ensuring the bat person is safe as well as not interfering with play.
  - Must be added to roster in Bat Person spot.
- E-6. Each player substituted into the game must bat at least once or play in the field for at least one full inning (three defensive outs), except in case of injury or completion of game.
- E-7. The EP (Extra Player) can be used in Special Olympics Colorado competition.
- E-8. The Courtesy Runner rule will not be used in Special Olympics Colorado competition.
- E-9. No players may be added to or replaced on the roster after the Team Rating Form (TRF) has been submitted.

#### SECTION F - THE GAME

- F-1. The choice of home team advantage will be determined by a coin toss prior to the start of the game.
- F-2. A regulation game will consist of 7 innings or the competition's pre-established time limit. An equal number of innings will be allowed for the losing team. Time requirements may need to be changed at the discretion of the Tournament Director.
- F-3. No new inning may begin in the last 15 minutes of the time allotted for game play. At the end of 1 hour and 15 minutes, the inning in progress will be completed.
- F-4. No stealing will be allowed. Base runners may not lead off but may leave the base when the pitched ball reaches the plate.
- F-5. A game will be declared completed if one team has a 12 run lead at the end of the fifth inning or prior to the start of the last possible inning to be played because of the 1-1/2 hour time limit. A game will be declared completed if one team has a 20 run lead at the end of four innings.
- F-6. A game tied at the end of regulation play will be continued through an unspecified number of innings until a team is ahead at the end of a full inning.
- F-7. Each team will be allowed ten minutes after the scheduled reporting time to take the field. If a team is not ready to take the field at the end of ten minutes, the game will be forfeited.
- F-8. All line up cards must be presented to both the umpire and opposing coach before the start of any game.

#### SECTION G - PITCHING REGULATIONS AND STRIKE ZONE MAT

- G-1. A legal delivery will be one delivered to the batter in underhand motion.
- G-2. The pitcher will take a position with one foot in contact with the pitching rubber.
- G-3. Pivot foot must remain in contact with rubber until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.

- G-4. The ball must be delivered with a perceptible arc of at least 6 feet and no more than 12 feet.
- G-5. The speed of the pitch will be left entirely to the judgment of the umpire.
- G-6. No designated pitcher may be used in tournament play. Each team will be responsible for providing a player capable of pitching according to the rules specified.
- G-7. *We will be using a strike mat at Regional and State Competition – these mats will be provided to you by Special Olympics Colorado. Please reach out to your Regional Manager for more information on receiving these.*
- G-8. *The rectangular mat will be nineteen (19) inches wide and thirty-four-and-a-half (34-1/2) inches in length. The mat shall be made of rubber or other suitable material. The mat will be placed over Home Plate and be aligned with the front edge of Home Plate.*
- G-9. *THE ARC The height of a legal pitch must be from six (6) to twelve (12) feet above the playing surface.*
- G-10. *Any pitch that hits the strike mat in the above arc range will be considered a strike.*
- G-11. A defensive player making a play at Home Plate will be allowed to complete the play by touching any portion of the strike mat. If, during the play, the mat is dislodged, the defensive player shall touch Home Plate, rather than the strike zone mat.

#### SECTION H - BATTING REGULATIONS

- H-1. Each player will bat in the order in which his name appears on the score sheet. A player batting out of order will be called out.
- H-2. For Unified competition, Athletes and Partners will alternate in the batting order. For example, Batter one is an athlete, Batter two will be a partner, Batter three will be an athlete, and so on.
- H-3. Balls and strikes will be called. Strikes will be called for legal pitches, balls swung at but missed, and all foul balls.
- H-4. A batter will be out on the third strike.
- H-5. After 2 strikes, a foul ball will be considered a strike and the batter will be called out.
- H-6. All players must remain on the bench until their turn at bat or in the field. There will be no on-deck area.

#### SECTION I – MODIFIED COMPETITION

- I-1. All rules above will be followed.
- I-2. Twelve inch (12") training softballs will be used. The official ball used for State and Regionals is an Easton or MacGregor Brand Soft Training Softball (not an Incrediball) with a synthetic cover in OpticYellow.
- I-3. Unified Teams may compete in Modified Competition.
- I-4. Players have the choice of either having a team pitcher (from the assigned pitcher's mound) or

using a tee. This determination needs to be made prior to each at bat. This can change throughout the game for each player, but not in the middle of the at bat.

- I-5. The identified pitcher will be allowed to pitch to his/her team. The pitcher must be identified at the start of the game. The pitcher DOES NOT field the ball. An athlete from the fielding team is positioned near pitching mound.
- I-6. If the rules are not followed according to these during tournament play, teams will be at risk of having to forfeit.

#### SECTION J - TOURNAMENT PLAY

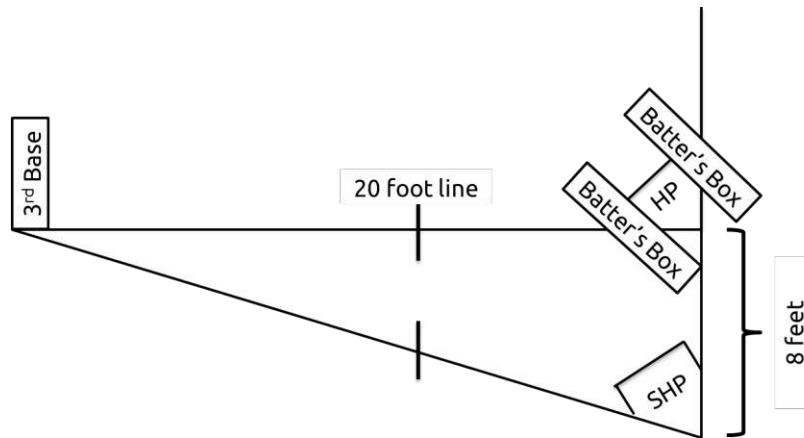
- J-1. All teams in tournament play will play at least 2 games. A team will play no more than 2 games on one day and the round robin rules will be used to determine division ties.

#### SECTION K – SOI SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

- J-1. Information regarding the double first base may be found on page 12 of Special Olympics Summer Sports Rules – Softball.

#### J-2. Safety home plate

- a. The safety home plate is approved for use. The dimensions for the safety home plate are the same as the regulation home plate. The specific diagram for the safety home plate is below.



- b. The safety home plate should be located 8' back from the regulation home plate. The Commit Line should be located 20' up the third base line from the back point of the regulation home plate.
- c. Defensive players can only touch the original home plate and runners can only touch the second home plate.
- d. Runners must touch the second home plate located adjacent to the right-handed batter's box in order to be safe at home.
- e. Runners tagged by a defensive player will not be out.
- f. Should a defensive player touch the second home plate and still touch the original home plate before the runner reaches the second home plate, the runner would be out..

- g. If the runner touches the original home plate, the runner will be out and the ball will remain live
- h. Once a runner passes the commitment line (20 foot marking), from a second home plate, the runner cannot return to third base. Effect: The runner will be called out if the runner returns, and the ball remains live.

If the runner has passed the commitment line, 20 foot marking, and continues to run on the original foul line, and interferes with the fielder taking a throw at, or in contact with the original home plate:  
Effect: A dead ball should be declared and the runner is out