Intramural Fast-Pitch Softball Rules

Any rule not specifically covered will be governed in accordance with the NFHS Fast-Pitch Softball Rules Book. Modifications have been made to suit Ohio State Recreational Sports programs.

Rule 1: Eligibility
A participant may be an Ohio State student taking a minimum of four credit hours. The Department of Recreational Sports defines a student as any individual who is currently enrolled at The Ohio State University and is registered with the University Registrar. Students taking four or more credit hours automatically pay the Recreational Sports student fee and therefore, do not need to purchase a membership.

The following people are eligible to participate after purchasing the appropriate Recreational Sports membership through the RPAC Welcome Center for the semester in which they intend to participate.

A participant may be:
- an Ohio State student taking less than four credit hours
- the spouse of a student or a faculty or staff member
- a faculty or staff member of The Ohio State University. The Department of Recreational Sports defines faculty and staff as all current faculty and staff, and visiting professors at The Ohio State University who are paid through the university payroll department.
- an affiliate of the department (alumni, member of the President’s Club, other recognized affiliate groups)
- a member-sponsored adult

To participate in any intramural activity, all participants must show a valid Ohio State issued photograph identification card. Acceptable identification cards are limited to BuckIDs, Ohio State Medical Center identification cards, and Recreational Sports membership cards. An Ohio State identification card must include the following information and be clearly visible to be considered valid: the individual’s name, photograph, and identification number. Identification cards that do not have one or more of these requirements will not be accepted and the individual will not be allowed to play.

Misuse of an identification card (borrowing, lending, counterfeiting, altering, etc) is a violation of the Ohio State University Student Code of Conduct. The identification card will be confiscated and the individual attempting to use the card will be ineligible to participate. If the card belongs to another student, that student must meet with a professional staff member in order to regain possession of their identification card.

Professional Athlete Rule
Any individual who has been paid to participate in baseball, under contract with a professional team, included on a professional team roster, practiced with a professional team, and/or compensated for trying out for a team is NOT eligible to participate in intramural baseball.
Intercollegiate Athlete Rule
Intercollegiate baseball athletes are not eligible to participate in an intramural baseball game, activity, or event until a period of one year has passed following completion of all activities with the team. After the period has passed, former intercollegiate baseball athletes must participate in the highest level offered in each league. Intercollegiate baseball athletes are defined as individuals who are practicing with or competing with a team recognized as a varsity sport. Included in this rule are red-shirt athletes and practicing proposition 48 athletes.

Sport Club Rule
No more than two members of the club baseball team may participate on an intramural baseball team. Sport club members must participate in the highest level offered in each league. A sport club member is defined as an individual who has practiced or played in a contest for a registered sport club during the academic year.

Rule 2: Levels of Play
Women’s (WO)
Play once per week. Teams with positive point total and 3.0 sportsmanship rating will make the playoffs. You may only play on ONE Women’s team per sport.

Rule 3: Equipment
- Jewelry is not allowed. Medical or religious medallions must be removed, taped, or sewn under the uniform.
- Rubber, cloth, or elastic bands may be used to control hair. Hard items such as beads, barrettes, and bobby pins are not permitted.
- A guard, cast, or brace made of hard and unyielding leather, plaster, pliable plastic, metal or any other hard substance, even though covered with foam padding, is not permitted on the finger, hand, wrist, forearm, or elbow.
- Knee and ankle braces that are unaltered from the manufacturer’s original design/production shall be permitted and do not require additional padding.
- Knee and ankle braces that are altered from the manufacturer’s original design/production shall be permitted as long as they are soft and yielding or all exposed metal and other hard parts are padded with at least ½-inch foam rubber (or ¼ inch closed cell, slow recovery foam rubber).
- Gloves/mitts must be worn by every player.
- Catchers are required to wear full gear. Catcher’s equipment will be provided by the league. Catchers may wear their own equipment if it meets NOCSAE standards.
- Ball caps, visors, and headbands are optional for players.
- Bats – must be ASA approved and have the ASA emblem embossed on it, the umpire has the right to reject the use of any bat.
- Metal cleats are allowed but may not exceed ¾ of an inch from the sole or heel of the shoe.

Rule 4: Team Captain Responsibilities
- Ensure their team members follow all eligibility requirements. Team captains are also advised to seek clarification on special eligibility requirements, if necessary.
- Communicate game time, location, and ID policy to teammates.
- Ensure that all teammates sign a Release of Claims form, located on the back of the scorecard before participating in their first game.
- Ensure teammates have a valid Ohio State University ID at game time to check in.
• Represent the team and communicate with the officials. The captain is the only player permitted to discuss the game with officials.
• Ensure good team sportsmanship among teammates.
• Turn in team conflict sheets reflecting any scheduling problems for the members of your team.
• Cooperate with the intramural supervisors at the game site concerning any protests, incidents, or accidents that may occur, as well as with the intramural sports staff the day following such occurrences.

Rule 5: Players
• A fast pitch team shall consist of ten players with nine batting. The tenth player shall be deemed the designated player. There may be a maximum of 9 players on the field at one time. A team may begin a game with a minimum of 8 players. A team may not continue to play with less than 8 players.
  - All players must check in using a valid Ohio State issued ID – OR – a government issued photo ID
• A game may begin or finish with one less than required to start the game. The vacant position must be listed last in the batting order and an out will be recorded when the vacant position in the order is scheduled to bat.

Player Substitutions
• The teams must choose their substitution preference at the captain's meeting and will NOT be allowed to change their decision after the captain's meeting. There will be two options as follows:
  - Any player, starter or substitute may be withdrawn from the game and re-entered once, provided such player occupies the same batting position whenever in the lineup. A starter and any substitute for a starter may not be in the game at the same time. A violation results in illegal substitution.
  - A team may bat their entire lineup and freely change those individuals who are in the field. For example, if there are 14 players on a roster, then there will be a 14 player batting roster. Any individual may play any position during any inning; the only rule is that the players must remain in the original batting order. If a player is late to the game, they may be added to the end of the batting line up provided the first batter has not batted twice. If the first batter has batted twice, that player must participate as a substitute and must share a spot in the batting order with a teammate.

Rule 6: Forfeits/Defaults
NEW Forfeit Policy:
• All late teams shall start the game with a “B” sportsmanship rating.
• Teams ready for play may choose to decline at any and all points.
• Not ready for play at game time: Team ready for play will be awarded home team.
• Five minutes late: Team not ready for play at scheduled start time will lose its first at bat.
• Ten minutes late: Forfeit, recorded as 1-0, and the forfeiting team will receive an “F” for its sportsmanship rating.
• If neither team is ready to play at game time, but they are ready before 10 minutes have elapsed, the game shall start as normal. However, the game clock will start at the originally scheduled game time.

There are three situations that will result in a forfeit:
• Not enough players – Team does not have the required number of players to participate by 10 minutes after the scheduled game time.
• Eligibility – One or more of the players participating is ineligible and therefore, may not participate. Ineligibility may
be due to the player being a roster violator, being previously ejected, ruled ineligible for sportsmanship-related issues,
etc.
• Sportsmanship – Game is ended by staff for sportsmanship-related issues.

Any team knowing in advance that they will be unable to play a regularly scheduled contest is provided the opportunity to
default the contest. This will result in the team receiving a loss and “A” sportsmanship rating for the contest. To receive a
default, the captain must call the intramural office by 4 p.m. on the day of the contest with their request. For teams playing
on Sunday, the deadline is Friday at 4 p.m. The opposing team will then be contacted by the intramural office to let them
know they do not need to arrive for their scheduled contest.

A team is allowed one default per sport, per season. Any request after the first default will be counted as a forfeit.

If a team has been granted a default and the contest is then cancelled due to weather or scheduling issues, the default will
be removed and the contest will be played normally if it is rescheduled.

Rule 7: Protests

Rules Protest
Questions pertaining to interpretation of rules on the part of game officials must be addressed by the intramural supervisor at
the time the interpretation occurs and prior to the next live ball. The procedure shall be:
1. If a team feels the official has made a misinterpretation of a rule, the captain shall calmly and immediately request
   a “time out” and inform the official that he or she wishes to have a ruling on the interpretation by the intramural
   supervisor in charge.
2. No protest, which involves the judgment of the official(s), shall be upheld. The judgment of the official(s) is final.
   This also includes intramural staff when necessary.
3. If corrections are necessary, the intramural supervisor shall rule immediately and the team shall not be charged with
   a time out; however, if the official’s interpretation was correct, the team will be charged with a time out.
4. If the participant still does not agree with the decision at the game site, a protest form should be obtained from the
   intramural supervisor on site and completed. The contest will continue from this point “under protest.”

Eligibility Protest
Protests involving player eligibility must be called to the immediate attention of the intramural supervisor prior to the
completion of the contest while the protested individual is present. Eligibility protests may not be made by participants after
the completion of the contest. A Protest Form should be obtained from the intramural supervisor and completed. The contest
will continue from this point “under protest.”

Rule 8: Play

Start of Game
A pre-game coin toss will determine home and away status.

Timing
• A regulation game shall consist of seven innings. The game can be made official after 4.5 innings provided the home
team is winning.
• Game must begin as quickly as possible; teams are not permitted pre-game warm-ups on the field. Please get to the
field early enough to warm-up.

- In order to prevent stalling tactics, an inning has officially started with the third out of the previous inning.
- There shall be infield ball only when the pitcher is warming up between innings. At the beginning of each half inning, or when a pitcher relieves another, not more than 1 minute may be used to deliver not more than three warm-up pitchers.
- The supervisor will announce “no new innings” at 70 minutes past the scheduled start time. There is a 90-minute limit for each game.
- If the inning had begun, it shall be continued until it is completed if the visitors are ahead or until the home team is ahead in the bottom half of the inning. If time is to be added to the game, the supervisor will announce this separately.
- During the regular season, games may end in a tie. During playoffs, extra innings will be played to determine a winner.

Scoring
When a runner crosses home plate safely, a run is scored.

Mercy Rule
- If either team is winning by 15 or more runs after four complete innings (3.5 innings if home team is winning) of play, that team is the winner of the game.
- If either team is winning by 10 or more runs after five complete innings (4.5 innings if home team is winning) of play that team is the winner of the game.

Pitching
- The pitcher may not take the pitching position on the pitcher’s plate without possession of the ball and shall not be considered in the pitching position unless the catcher is in position to receive the pitch.
- The delivery must be an underhand motion with the hand below the hip and the wrist not farther from the body than the elbow. The release of the ball and follow-through of the hand and wrist must be in a forward motion.
- In the act of delivering the ball, the pitcher must take one step with the non-pivot foot simultaneous with the release of the ball. The step must be forward and towards the batter within the 24-inch length of the pitcher’s plate.
- Pushing off and dragging the pivot foot in contact with the ground is required.
- The pitcher shall not make “quick return” pitches nor shall they unduly delay the pitch after the batter is ready. Penalty: illegal pitch.
- If the ball drops from the pitcher’s hand during the delivery, a ball is declared on the batter, the ball will remain live and the runner(s) may advance at their own risk.
- If the umpire rules that the pitcher hit a batter intentionally with a pitch, that pitcher may be ejected.
- If at any point during a game the same pitcher hits 3 batters, they will be ineligible to pitch again in that contest (if intentional, 3 HBP is not necessary).

Batting
- The batter must wear an approved helmet.
- The batter shall not:
  - Have one or both feet entirely outside the limits of the batter’s box touching the ground or any part of home plate when the ball is hit.
Penalty: the batter is out and all runners must return to their original bases.

• Step into the batter’s box with an illegal bat.
  • Penalty: the batter is out and all runners must return to their original bases.

• Enter the batter’s box with an altered bat.
  • Penalty: the ball is dead; the batter is out and is ejected from the game.

• The batter must take their position within 10 seconds after being directed to do so by the umpire.
  • Penalty: The umpire will call a strike. No pitch has to be thrown and the ball is dead.

• The batter may not step out of the batter’s box without first asking the umpire for “time”. If the batter does step out without “time” being granted, the umpire may warn or call a strike. No pitch has to be thrown and the ball is dead.

**Base Running**

• Base runners may not lead off.

• Base runners are entitled to advance when:
  - the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand on delivery.
  - a thrown ball or a batted fair ball is not blocked.
  - a thrown ball hits an umpire.
  - a legally caught fly ball is first touched by any defensive player.
  - a fair ball strikes an umpire or a runner after having passed a fielder other than the pitcher, and no other fielder had a chance to make an out or when a fair batted ball has been touched by a fielder, including the pitcher.
  - the ball gets lodged in a defensive player’s uniform or equipment.

• When the base slides away from its proper position (when a runner goes into it sliding feet first) the runner is assumed to be on the base and not in jeopardy to be put out unless they try to advance. If the player slides head first, they must hold on to the bag to avoid being called out.

• Fake tag: A fake tag or simulating the motion of catching a throw is a form of obstruction. The fake tag is a potential safety hazard and is also considered unsportsmanlike conduct.
  o Penalty: The offender shall be ejected from the game and runners shall be awarded bases they would have reached if the obstruction had not occurred.

• Intentional walk: If a pitcher desires to walk a batter intentionally, they should indicate this to the umpire who will award the batter the appropriate base. The ball is dead during the award.

• Out of base path: If a base runner goes out of the base path to avoid being tagged, they are out. A player is not required to slide into a base; however, a player may not deliberately or otherwise crash into, or “takeout”, a fielder who is attempting to make or complete a play.
  o Penalty: the runner is out and the ball is dead. No runner shall advance because of the interference. If the umpire determines the act is flagrant, the runner shall be ejected from the game.

**Overthrows**

• All runner(s) will be awarded two bases from the last base legally touched. The award will be governed by the position of the runner(s) when the ball is released from the fielder’s hand. **Exception: when a fielder loses possession of the ball, and the ball leaves live ball territory or becomes blocked.**

• Catch and carry: If a player catches a fly ball in playable territory then goes out of play with the ball in their possession, the runner(s) advance one base (if intentional, runner(s) advance two bases).
Rule 9: Sportsmanship
The team captain is responsible for the actions of his or her team and their spectators. Additionally, the captain will ensure that his or her team is familiar with the rules of play and intramural policies and procedures contained in this handbook. Sportsmanship is a vital component for success in every intramural contest. Participants and spectators are expected to display good sportsmanship toward opponents and the intramural staff at all times.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct
Participants and spectators shall not commit acts of unsportsmanlike conduct. This includes, but is not limited to, arguments with staff, flagrant fouling, fighting, etc. before, during or after a contest. No player or team shall:
- use foul or derogatory language, threaten, or verbally abuse any other participant or intramural employee before, during, or after the game
- participate in a game for which he or she is ineligible
- argue or talk back to the intramural staff. Only the captain should address an official and only if done so in a courteous manner.
- intentionally strike, push, trip, or flagrantly foul another participant, spectator, or Recreational Sports employee
- mistreat the facility, equipment, or supplies of The Ohio State University and/or the Department of Recreational Sports

Unsportsmanlike Conduct Penalties
Any participant displaying unsportsmanlike conduct will be issued either a conduct warning or ejection by the game officials or intramural supervisors.
- Verbal warning resulting in incident report — conduct warning
- Ejection of participant with/out warning — ejection
- Two ejections or three verbal warnings — forfeit

Disciplinary Action
Any player receiving two conduct warnings in one game or ejected from a game is required to meet with professional staff. The player will be suspended from ALL recreational sports facilities and programs until the meeting occurs and for a minimum of seven days from the time of the meeting.

Rule 10: Co-Rec Modifications
- There are no Co-Rec Modifications.

Rule 11: Playoffs
In addition to a positive playoff point total, teams must also maintain a “3.0” or “B” sportsmanship average during the regular season to be eligible for the playoffs. Team’s averages will be formulated in the same way a student’s GPA is calculated. Each sportsmanship letter grade is assigned a numerical value:
- “A” – Four (4) points
- “B” – Three (3) points
- “C” – Two (2) points
- “D” – One (1) point
- “F” – Zero (0) point

The grades for each regular season contest will be added together and divided by the total number of contests held. This will
equal the team's sportsmanship average.

For any questions or clarifications, please contact the Competitive Sports office at the RPAC (614) 292-2732.