

**SOFTBALL BERMUDA
LOCAL PLAYING RULES
(Women's Division)**

2024

Softball Bermuda

These rules should be read in conjunction with standard International Softball Federation (“ISF”) rules for slow pitch softball. They are variations on the standard rules made with the objective of promoting the objectives of Softball Bermuda (“SB”).

The Executive Committee is solely responsible for the interpretation of these rules and its decision on such interpretation is final. Guidance notes are given below, where appropriate, in italics. These guidance notes do not form part of the rules but are an indication of the Executive Committee's interpretation. References are made to relevant ISF rules that are modified.

- 1 Michael Preece Softball Stadium playing field is to be regarded as having the minimum acceptable dimensions for playing SB slow pitch softball games. (ISF Rule 2 Sec 1)

- 2 No shoes with spikes (of any material) or metal cleats are permitted. (ISF Rule 3 Sec 5)

- 3 All players on a team must wear the same colour shirts. There is no requirement for uniformity in the colour and style of shorts or pants or caps worn. Numbers on shirts are not required. Ball caps are not required. (ISF Rule 3 Sec 8)

Players not wearing the correct team colour shirt will not be permitted to participate in the game.

- 4 In addition to exposed jewelry not being permitted, players may not wear curlers or beads. (ISF Rule 3 Sec 8g)

Players may be asked to remove jewelry, and if they fail to do so, will be ejected from the game.

- 5 A team shall consist of 10 players, or 11 players if using an Extra Player (“EP”) or Designated Hitter (“DH”) or 12 players if using both an EP and a DH.

The decision to use an EP and/or a DH must be made prior to the start of the game.

Regarding the DH rule, the affected defensive player can only play defense for the duration of the game while the DH can only play offence for the duration of the game. Regular substitution rules apply i.e. players in the original lineup can re-enter only once during the game whereas a player substituted into the game and then replaced can no longer participate in the game.

- 6 A team must have at least 9 players present to start and/or continue a game. The missing player(s) shall be an “automatic out” in the batting order. The missing position(s) may be filled at any time during the game by a player who is on the team roster at the start of the game. (ISF Rule 4 Sec 2a)

Where there are only 9 players available, a team may choose to play with just the 9 players and will not be charged with an “automatic out” however, they must play the game with only 9 fielding and batting positions.

If the game starts and a team has 10 players on their official line-up sheet and subsequently determines that the 10th player is a “no show”, they will not be able to revert to a 9-player batting order without penalty. The decision to play with 9 players must be made before the start of the game.

Notwithstanding the above, every player who is ejected from the game must be replaced in the line-up. Failure to replace an ejected player results in forfeiture of the game.

A team with 11 offensive players may lose two players through injury or other causes (not ejection) and may continue without replacing them. There will be 2 automatic outs in the batting order.

- 7 A ten-minute grace period will be permitted after the scheduled start of the game to allow for the late arrival of players. Further extension beyond that time may be given at the discretion of the umpire. (ISF Rule 5 Sec 3f)

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If the umpire is satisfied that additional players will arrive shortly, he may extend the grace period. The objective is to allow games to be played wherever possible.

- 8 A regulation game shall consist of seven innings but shall not last beyond one and a half hours from the start of the game. The umpire's decision on time keeping is final. (ISF Rule 5 Sec 3). A game is considered official after 5 innings have been completed or 4 ½ innings if the home team is leading.

The umpire may adjust the time available if the start of the game is delayed because of rule 7 above. However, the team not at fault must not be disadvantaged by the umpire's decision.

- 9 If the game is tied after seven innings or one and a half hours, tiebreaker innings shall be played until the game reaches a conclusion, if time permits. (ISF Rule 5 Sec 6)

- 10 All SB games (regular season and playoffs) that are not considered regulation shall be replayed from the beginning. Original line-ups may be changed when the game is replayed. (ISF Rule 5 Sec 3g)

- 11 The game shall be called if the home team is leading by fifteen or more runs any time after 4 1/2 innings have been completed. The game shall be called if the visiting team is leading by fifteen or more runs when 5 complete innings have been played or thereafter at the end of any completed innings by the home team. This rule applies to all SB games (regular season and playoffs). (ISF Rule 5 Sec 5)

- 12 The game will be called if a team is trailing by twenty-five (25) or more runs after three completed innings, with all game statistics remaining intact. This rule applies to all SB games (regular season and playoffs). (ISF Rule 5 Sec 5)

13 **Flip/Flop rule:**

In the 4th inning, any team trailing by 15 or more runs will, after completion of their turn at bat, return offensively to play their half of the 5th inning. If they are unable to reduce their deficit to fewer than 15 runs, the game shall be called. If they are successful in reducing their deficit to fewer than 15 runs, their opponents will also have an opportunity to play two offensive innings back-to-back, with the understanding that during their period on offense, should they increase their lead to 15 or more runs, the game will be called.

- 14 No player or official may smoke while on the playing field.

- 15 No alcohol may be consumed by any player or official while inside the confines of the softball stadium which includes the playing field as well as the dugout. Any player or official contravening this rule is to be immediately ejected from the game and may face further disciplinary action. Where alcohol is found in the dugout during a game and no perpetrator comes forward when an inquiry is made by the umpire, the game will be forfeited in favour of the team not at fault.

- 16 A batter will start her turn at bat with an initial count of 1 ball and 1 strike. (Adopted for 2000-01 season)

- 17 (Adopted for 2002-03 season)

A safety line will be used at home plate such that all plays at the plate require a runner to cross the line instead of touching the plate. **Any runner who crosses between the safety line and home plate, or touches home plate, on a close play at the plate will be called "out". Any runner who touches home plate when there is no apparent play at the plate will not be called "out".**

Exception: If the runner contacts (with force) any defensive player standing on the plate, the runner will be called "out".

In conjunction with the safety line, a commitment line will be marked about one third of the way between third base and home plate. A runner crossing this line has committed to continuing to the safety line at home plate

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(see further explanation below). In effect this rule makes all plays at the plate a 'force' play, where the defensive player must play the plate at all times – tagging the runner is not an option. The intent is to prevent collisions at the plate where a force is not in effect. Any attempts by runners to dislodge the ball from the possession of a player affecting the force play will result in an automatic out to the runner and a dead ball. (ISF Rule 8, sec. 9r)

Once the commitment line has been crossed, the base runner may not return to 3rd base.

Exception: Where a runner does not "tag-up" on a caught fly ball and as a result has advanced beyond the commitment line, the runner may attempt to return to their previously occupied base to avoid a double play.

- 18 If a player is injured during the game, she does not have to position herself in the field as long as there are 9 other fielders on the field at all times. Injured players are subject to regular substitution rules. (see Sec 5 above)
- 19 The pitcher must deliver the ball to the batter with a perceptible arc of at least 5 feet and not more than 10 feet, from the ground.
- 20 Every game will be played with 11 inch balls.