



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA
RECREATION & WELLNESS – INTRAMURAL SPORTS

Softball

(Rules not covered are governed by ASA rules)

GENERAL POLICY

- For any questions or concerns regarding any of the following policies and rules please contact our Sports Programs office at (813) 974-4449 or rec-imsports@usf.edu. Or stop by our office, REC 017, Monday – Friday 10am-4pm.
- All participants are required to bring their USF student, USF staff ID card, or a State Issued ID to ALL GAMES. All IDs must have a clear name and picture. USF IDs must have a clear UID. No other forms of identification will allow the participant to play USF intramural sports.
- All enrolled fee-paying students as well as Faculty and Staff members with an active Recreation and Wellness membership at the University of South Florida are eligible to play intramurals. For further eligibility guidelines please reference the IM Handbook, found at the bottom of Recreation and Wellness Intramurals Website, [here](#).
- **Game time is forfeit time.** Teams should be ready to play at the scheduled game time. It is beneficial to have your team arrive 15-20 minutes early to ensure that games start on time and that forfeits be avoided.
 - If a full team is present and the opponent is not, they have the option to wait 10 minutes for their opponent, with the 10 minutes starting at game time. Time waited will be reduced from the game run time.
 - This is at the discretion of the full team and their decision made is final.
- **Close-fitting non-hanging jewelry is permitted, such as stud piercings or rings. Participants who choose to wear jewelry during intramural sports activities do so at their own risk.** Sports Programs staff have the final say in what jewelry is permitted during play.

SPORTSMANSHIP

- Sportsmanship ratings will be given based on the behavior of players, coaches, and spectators. They will also be judged on actions before, during, and after contests. Sportsmanship is rated at the conclusion of every game on a 1-6 scale (details of each can be found in the IM Handbook).
- At the conclusion of the regular season of all sports will be a playoff tournament. For a team to be eligible for playoffs they must have averaged a sportsmanship rating of 4 or better during the regular season, have no regular season forfeits, and have won at least one game during the regular season.
 - If a team's sportsmanship rating drops below a 4 in the playoffs, they will be forfeited out of playoffs and their opponent will move on if their sportsmanship rating is at or above a 4.

- Players are held to a standard of good sportsmanship. If a player does not adhere to that standard, they can be removed from a contest by any Sports Programs employee.

RULES

Players and Attire

- Each team will consist of ten (10) players. If a single-gendered team chooses to have an extra hitter (EH), they will have eleven (11) players; a co-rec team using extra hitters will have twelve (12) players. Each team must have at least eight (8) players on the field to start play.
 - Can complete a game with less than 8 if an injury occurs.
- Each team shall designate a captain. The captain will act as the spokesperson for the team and make all decisions. Only the captain may talk to officials. Team representatives, including players, spectators, team managers, coaches, score keepers, and group members are subject to these rules.
- Metal spikes, sandals, and bare feet are not permitted.
- The only people allowed in the dugout at any given time during a game are the players listed on the team roster, one coach, and one scorekeeper. All other fans and other people must be situated outside of the fencing or in the bleacher area, out of play.
- Teams are allowed two (2) base-coaches, all players not playing in the field must stay in the dugout.

GAME, FIELD, AND EQUIPMENT

- Baseball bats are not legal. If a batter hits the ball with an illegal bat, it is a dead ball and the batter is out. ASA certified bats can be found at <https://www.teamusa.org/usa-softball/certified-equipment>

LENGTH OF GAME AND TIME CONSTRAINTS

- No new inning will start 50 minutes after the game begins.
- A complete game consists of:
 - Completion of seven (7) innings or 6 ½ innings with the home team winning.
 - Game called on account of weather and one (1) complete inning has been played.
 - Game completed when fifty (50) minute time limit has expired.
 - Game completed in situation of a mercy rule:
 - A team is ahead by twelve (12) or more runs at the completion of the fifth inning.
 - A team is ahead by twenty (20) or more runs at the completion of the fourth inning.

SUBSTITUTIONS AND TIEBREAKERS

- A substitute may take the place of a player whose name is in their team's batting order.
- The following regulations govern the substitution of players:
 - The team captain of the team making the substitution shall immediately notify the plate umpire. Substitute players will be considered in the game when reported to the plate umpire.
 - Any player may be removed from the game during any dead ball.
 - The original player and the substitute may not be in the lineup at the same time.

- Once a team goes through the batting order for one full rotation, no additional players may be added to the lineup. (Late Arrivals, etc.)
- Violation of the re-entry rule results in the use of an ineligible player and is immediately ejected. It is handled as a protest and can be made at any time during the game.
 - The illegal substitute is considered in the game if a pitch has been made.
- If the illegal player is on offense:
 - If the illegal player is discovered by the defense after one (1) pitch, legal or illegal, has been thrown while they are at bat, they are ejected and a legal substitute assumes the ball and strike count.
 - If the illegal player is discovered by the defense after they have completed their turn at bat and prior to the next legal or illegal pitch, or before the defensive team has left the field, the illegal player is called “out” and ejected. Any advance from a walk or hit is nullified.
 - If the illegal player is discovered by the defense after they have completed their turn at bat and after the next legal or illegal pitch, or after the defensive team has left the field, the illegal player is ejected and any advance by runners while the illegal batter was at bat is illegal.
- If the illegal player is on defense:
 - If the illegal player is discovered by the offense after they make a play prior to the next legal or illegal pitch, or before the defensive team has left the field, the offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play or having the last batter re-bat and assume the ball and strike count at which they had, prior to the play. The illegal player is ejected.
 - If the illegal player is discovered by the offense after a legal or illegal pitch to the next batter, all plays stand, but the illegal player is ejected.

DEFINITION OF PLAYING TERMS

- **No bunting.** The batter is automatically out, and the ball is called dead on any attempted bunt.
- The batter starts their at-bat with a count of one ball and one strike.
- Any foul ball on third strike is considered an out.
- A foul tip is a batted ball that goes directly into the catcher’s glove, is caught by the catcher, and did not go any higher than the batter’s head. A foul tip before two strikes is not an out.
- If a pitch hits the batter, the pitch is considered a ball.
- Overthrow Rule: (Anytime a thrown ball goes out of play)
 - The runner shall receive the base they were in motion to, plus an additional base from the time of the throw if a ball is thrown out of play.
- Obstruction
 - Obstruction is defined as the “act (intentional or unintentional, as well as physical or verbal) by a fielder, any member of the defensive team or its team personnel that hinder a runner or changes the pattern of play.” If obstruction occurs, the umpire shall have the authority to determine which base or bases shall be awarded to the runners when the play becomes dead.

- If the runner advances further then the official would have awarded and the runner is thrown out, the play will stand.
- Offensive Interferences
 - The “act of an offensive player or team member which impedes, hinders, or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play.” Defensive players must be given the opportunity to field the ball anywhere on the playing field. If the base runner runs over or through a fielder, it will result in an automatic ejection.
 - The umpire must determine if the interference occurred before or after the runner who interfered was put out and then apply the proper rule.
 - It is also considered interference, if, in the judgment of the umpire, there is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play. In such a situation, the runner closest to home plate shall be called “out.”
 - If an offensive player causes excessive contact with a defensive player, the offensive player is called “out.”
 - **Exception: PLAYERS MUST SLIDE INTO HOME PLATE ON CLOSE PLAYS**
- Out of Play
 - Any ball that goes into foul territory beyond the out-of-play line or fence is considered “out of play.” If an overthrown ball at first or third goes beyond the out-of-play line or fence, the ball is dead, and all runners advance according to the overthrow rule (listed above). A ball that goes into the dugout is considered out of play. When a fair-batted ball passes over the out-of-play line, the batter shall be entitled to only two (2) bases.
- Safety Base
 - The orange safety base is attached to first base in foul territory and is suggested for the runner to use to avoid collisions. Once first base is legally occupied, the orange base is nullified and is no longer considered “safe.” If a runner returns to the orange base after attempting to advance to second base and is tagged while only touching the orange base, they will be out.
- Courtesy Runner
 - A courtesy runner may be used by any player as long as they were the batter who was last out.
- Infield Fly Rule
 - If a fly ball remains in the infield, the batter is called out IF
 - There are runners on 1st and 2nd with less than two outs
 - There are runners on 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, with less than two outs
 - Runners may advance at their own risk

Appeals

- An appeal needs to be made by the defensive team before the next pitch, and before the infield leaves the field
- There are three types of appeals:
 - Runner misses a base

- Runner leaves base early
- Batting out of order

Ground Rules:

- If the ball is knocked out of play by an infielder, the batter is entitled to two (2) bases.
- If the fielder leaves their feet to catch a ball, the first foot touching the ground must be in the playing area (including foul territory), or the ball is considered out of play (outside of the fence line).
- If a fielder catches a fly ball in a playable area and unintentionally carries it out of play with their momentum, the batter is called “out.” The fielder must also return into the field of play prior to throwing the ball into play.
- A fly ball caught in the air on the rebound from any object is not a legally caught ball; the batter is not out, and the ball remains in play. If the ball hit a tree outside the fence in fair territory it shall be ruled a “homerun,” based on the judgment of the umpires.
- Fair/Foul Hit Ball
 - A foul hit ball is a legally batted ball that settles on foul territory between home and first/third base or the line that goes past first or third base, or hits any person in this area. A fair fly ball is determined according to the position of the ball and the foul line, and not if the fielder is on fair or foul territory at the time, he touches the ball.

Pitching Regulations:

- Section 1: Prior to the Pitch
 - Both of the pitcher’s feet must be on the ground with one or both feet touching the pitcher’s rubber. The pitcher’s pivot foot must be in contact with the pitcher’s rubber throughout delivery.
 - Prior to pitching, the pitcher must come to a full stop, with the ball in front of the body, facing the batter.
 - The pitcher is not considered to be in pitching position unless the catcher is in position to receive the pitch.
- Section 2: Starting the Pitch
 - The pitch starts when the pitcher makes any motion that is part of their windup after the required stop. Prior to the required stop, any windup may be used. It is not necessary to step, but if a step is taken, it can be forward, backward, or to the side, provided the pivot foot is in constant contact with the pitcher’s rubber and the step is simultaneous with the release of the ball.
- Section 3: Delivery of the Pitch
 - A legal delivery shall be delivered to the batter with an underhand motion. The pitch must be released at a moderate speed, which is under the judgment of the umpire. The umpire shall warn the pitcher who delivers a pitch with excessive speed. If the pitcher continues to pitch with excessive speed, they shall be removed from the pitcher’s position for the remainder of the game.
 - The hand shall be below the hip upon release.

- The ball must be delivered with an arc that reaches a height of at least six (6) feet and a maximum height of twelve (12) feet from the ground.
- The pitcher has ten (10) seconds to release the next pitch after receiving the ball, or after the umpire indicates “play ball”.
- Section 4: Pitching Windup
 - The pitcher may use any windup desired, provided:
 - They do not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.
 - Their windup is continuous motion.
 - They do not use a windup in which there is a step or reversal of the pitching motion.
 - They deliver the ball toward home plate on the first forward swing of the pitching arm past the hip.
 - They do not continue to windup after they release the ball.
 - They do not pitch the ball behind their back or between the legs.
- Section 5: “Quick Pitches” and “No Pitches”
 - There will be no “quick pitches”; the pitcher will wait until the batter takes position in the batter’s box or when the umpire says, “play ball.”
 - A “No Pitch” shall be declared when:
 - The pitcher pitches during a suspension of play.
 - The pitcher attempts a quick return of the ball before the batter has taken position or is off balance as a result of the previous pitch.
 - The runner is called out for leaving the base too soon.
 - The pitcher pitches before the base runner has retouched his base after a foul ball has been declared and the ball is dead.
 - The ball slips from the pitcher’s hand during their windup or during the back swing.
Effect: The ball is dead and all subsequent action on the pitch is cancelled.

Batting

- The batter cannot have their foot touching home plate when the ball is hit. The batting box lines are not evident; judgment by the umpire will be used whether or not the batter was inside of the batter’s box on the hit.
 - Effect: The batter is out, and the ball is dead and all subsequent action on the pitch is cancelled.
- The batter shall not step directly across the front of the catcher to the other batter’s box while the pitcher is in position ready to pitch.
- Batters **are not permitted to throw the bats at any time**. The umpire will issue a warning upon the first infraction; any subsequent infractions will result in outs.

- The batting order delivered to the umpire must be followed throughout the game unless a player is substituted for another. When this occurs, the substitute must take the place of the removed player in the batting order.

Co-Rec Rules

- The batting order must alternate genders. If a team is short either a male or female the following rules apply:
 - If two (2) people of the same gender hit in a row, the team must take an automatic out between them. If two people of the same gender are batting in a row, and the first person is the last out of an inning, the team will start with an automatic out the next inning before the next batter of the same gender comes to the plate.
- If a pitcher walks a male batter (intentionally or not) and the next batter is a female, she has the option to hit or take a walk. The male batter automatically gets two (2) bases regardless if the female hits or not. After the first pitch, legal or illegal, she has to hit. If there is a male batter following a male that was walked, the batter only receives one base.

Re-entry Rule

- Starting players may leave the game and re-enter once in the same batting position that they left the starting game and must replace only the person that substituted for them.
- Substitutes may enter the game only once and have to bat in the same position as the player they replaced. **Once the substitute leaves the game, they are done playing that game.**
- Violation of the re-entry rule results in the use of an ineligible player. Violation of the re-entry rule results in the ejection of the illegal player if the violation is brought to the attention of the umpire by the offended team.
- Violation of the re-entry rule is handled as a protest and can be made at any time during the game. However, all play that occurred while the illegal re-entry was in the game will stand.

Base Stealing

- Under no condition is a runner permitted to steal a base. They may leave their base when a pitch has reached or passed home plate but must return to that base immediately after each pitch not hit by the batter, as the catcher is returning the ball to the pitcher.
- If a runner attempts to steal, they are automatically out.

Base Running

- The base runner is out when:
 - They are tagged with a ball when not touching a base.
 - In running to any base, they run more than three (3) feet from the baseline in order to avoid a tag or touched by a fielder.
 - They interfere with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball. If the interference is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the succeeding runner shall be called out.
 - They are struck with a fair-batted ball while off the base and before it passes an infielder, excluding the pitcher.

- The base runner is not out when:
 - They run behind the fielder and outside the baseline in order to avoid interfering with a fielder attempting to field the ball in the base path.
 - More than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball and the base runner comes in contact with the one who, in the umpire's judgment, was not entitled to field the ball.
 - When a base runner is hit with a fair-batted ball that has hit a fielder first, before striking the runner.

PITCHING

- Each team will pitch to the opposing team.
- Each batter will start with a 1-1 count, which means 1 ball and 1 strike.
- Players will not be walked if hit by a pitch, this will be considered a ball.