



# SOFTBALL STUDY GUIDE



## History

The game of softball was credited to *George Hancock*, who developed the first set of rules in Chicago in 1887. Softball was first called “**INSIDE BASEBALL**” because it was played indoors. It was originally played with boxing gloves and a broom. The official game used a softer ball; a smaller bat, shorter base distances, and the pitcher threw the ball underhand.

When the game was moved outdoors, it was referred to by many names such as Kitten ball, Mush ball, Big ball, Recreational ball, and Diamond ball. *The Amateur Softball Association (ASA)* was formed in 1933 and gave the game the official name “SOFTBALL”. Softball became very popular after World War II and by the 1950’s; leagues had been established all over the country. This game does not demand a fast-pitch strikeout pitcher, instead it requires the pitcher to pitch the ball with an arc of anywhere from 3 to 12 feet.

## Equipment

**Softball** – should be a flat-surfaced ball not less than 11 7/8 inches and not more than 12 1/8 inches in circumference.

**Bat** – weight of the bat should be minimum of 28 ounces to a maximum of 38 ounces. The length of the bat should be from 28 inches to 35 inches.

**Fielding Glove**

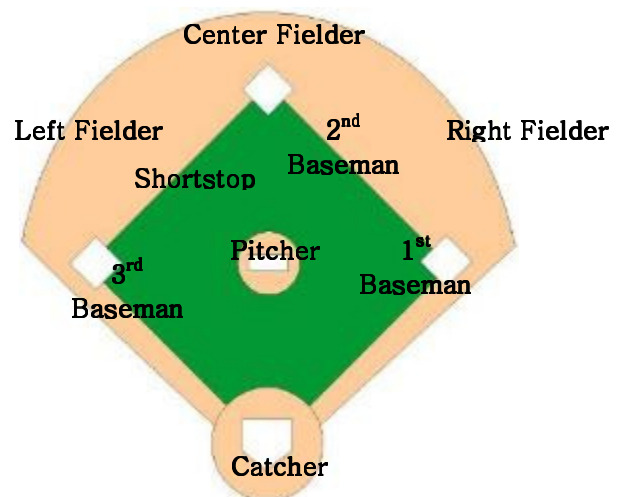
**Set of 4 Bases**

## Rules

Members of one team take turns batting while the other team tries to get each batter out by catching the batted fly ball, tagging the batter after a hit ball before the runner gets to first base, striking the batter out, or having possession of the ball and touching a base ahead of the runner who must advance to that base. Each team consists of three outs per inning and a game consists of seven innings. A player scores a run by advancing around all four bases. The four bases are 60 feet apart. Pitching mound to home plate is 46 feet.

The team is made up of 9 players:

- 1<sup>st</sup> baseman
- 2<sup>nd</sup> baseman
- Shortstop
- 3<sup>rd</sup> baseman
- Left fielder
- Center fielder
- Right fielder
- Pitcher
- Catcher



## **Fielding Ground Balls**

*Ready Position* – feet in a forward back stride position with the leg on the throwing side back, keep the glove and bare hand in the open position with the bare hand ready to trap the ball into the glove, knees should be bend so the glove and bare hand can touch the ground.



*Handling the Ball* – align your body with the ball (shuffle the feet to get in front of the ball), staggered stance, give with the ball as you receive it, fielding the ball and bringing it up to the hip of the throwing side in on motion in preparation for the throw.

## **Fielding Fly Balls**

*Ready Position* – feet in a forward back stride position, face the ball and focus your eyes on the hit ball, move in toward the ball if necessary, keep the glove pocket open and in front of the throwing shoulder, hold the throwing hand up by the glove.

*Catching* – catch the ball above eye level on the throwing side of the body holding the glove with fingers pointing up, place the throwing hand over the ball as it goes into the glove to keep the ball in the glove and not bouncing out. Move quickly to the ball and try to get the body positioned in front of it.

## **Pitching – Slow Pitch**

*Stance* – use a forward stride position, bend the trunk slightly forward at wrist level, keep both feet on the ground and in contact with the pitching rubber (rear foot can be off the rubber), square your shoulders to the target and keep your center of gravity within the base of support, hold the ball and pitching hand at waist level.

*Pitching Motion* – a three-quarters circular motion backward to full extension and then forward, should have a 10-foot to 15-foot arc as it approaches the plate, cock the wrist at the top of the backswing, shoulders square with the target (home plate), step with the leg opposite the throwing arm when beginning the downward motion of the pitch, snap the wrist as you release the ball between the waist and knee level, extend the arm up in the follow-through motion and step forward on the trailing leg to take a fielding position. The strike zone for a batter is the bottom of the armpits to the top of the knees.

## **Batting**

Have a firm grip on the bat by placing the dominant hand on the bat and the non-dominant hand below that hand. Both hands should be touching with the knuckles aligned, body facing home plate with the feet parallel and shoulder-width apart. Bend the knees slightly, keeping the weight on the back foot, lift the rear arm elbow away from the body and hold the bat off the shoulder, step forward with the front foot about 12 inches. As you start the swing with the hands and arms, keep the rear foot planted as the weight shifts forward, make contact with the ball in front of the plate, not over it. Swing the bat as fast, but steady, swing the bat all the way around to the front shoulder during the follow-through.



**Strike** – is called (1) for each legally pitched ball, (2) for each pitched ball missed by the batter, (3) for each foul tip, the batter is not out if the tip is on the third strike.

**Ball** – called for a pitched ball that does not enter the strike zone.

**Fair Ball** – (1) lands in fair territory between first and third base line, (2) lands on any one of the bases with the exception of home base, (3) falls on fair ground beyond first and third base.

**Foul ball** – (1) settles on foul ground outside the first and third baseline or behind home plate, (2) bounds past first and third base on foul ground or outside the bases.

**Batter Out** – (1) on three strikes, (2) when the ball is bunted or chopped downward, (3) when a fly ball is legally caught, (4) on an infield fly rule, (5) when the batter interferes with the catcher, (6) intentional interference puts a runner out plus the batter who hit the ball.

### **Base Running**

1. all bases must be touched in order
2. move as quickly as possible to the base
3. focus your eyes on the base and don't watch the ball as you run
4. turn right when overrunning first base
5. don't overrun second or third base – you must stop on the base
6. there is no stealing or leading off the base – you are not permitted to leave the base until the batter swings at the ball
7. after a fly ball is caught, the base runner must tag up on the last base they were at.



## Definitions

**Battery** – the pitcher and the catcher combination

**Batting Average** – number of hits made by the batter divided by the times at bat

**Bating order** – sequence of the players to bat

**Designated Hitter** – a player who does not take the field defensively but bats in the batting order in the place of the pitcher or another player

**Double play** – a play in which two players are legally put out

**Error** – a play that fails to account for the out of a runner or allows the advancement of a runner

**Infield** – that portion of the field within the baselines

**Inning** – that portion of the game in which a team plays both offense and defense starting with the first team at bat

**Play** – “Play Ball” means to resume the play or to begin the game

**Switch Hitter** – a batter capable of batting either right-handed or left-handed

**Wild Pitch** – a ball thrown in such a way that the catcher cannot catch it.

