

SOFTBALL RULES:

All games will be governed by the Official USSSA Slow Pitch Rule Book with the following modifications:

Players & Equipment

- Each participant must present a current McKendree ID Card in order to be eligible to participate.
- Each participant must sign a liability waiver online at www.mckendree.edu/intramurals
- *Eligible Participants:* Students, Faculty and Staff
- Each Men's, Women's, and Co-Rec team shall play 10 players in the field (5 men and 5 women for Co-Rec play). Any player that takes a position in the field must be listed in the batting order and participate as a batter. If you have more than 10 listed in the batting order, you are allowed to free sub in the field. There is no limit on the number of batters in the batting order. Each team must have a minimum of 8 players (4 men and 4 women for Co-Rec play) in order to begin a game. Any team that begins a game with 8 or 9 players may add players to the bottom of its line-up. Only those players that are present and checked-in with the staff may be listed in a team's line-up.
- If at any time a team fields 9 or more players, the team must finish the game with at least the same number of players with which it began the game. In the event that a player is dropped from the line-up and cannot be replaced, an out shall be called when the missing player(s) should bat. **For safety reasons, a game shall not be continued with fewer than 8 players.**
- Each team must have one of its players occupy the catcher's position at all times.
- **Substitutions:** All substitutes must notify the Home Plate Umpire and the Scorekeeper upon entering the game. Any starting player may re-enter the game once (the player must bat in the same position in the line-up at which they started the game). Any substitute (a player who did not start) who is then substituted for is out of the game and cannot re-enter under any circumstances. The starting player and his substitute may not be in the line-up at the same time.
 - Teams may bat any number of players on their roster (**up to the roster cap of 15**).
 - If all present players are listed in the batting lineup, players may freely switch in and out of positions in the field
 - No player may play defense only, every player must be participating offensively in order to play defense
 - At any point in the game, a team may add batters to the bottom of the order to allow for the team to field a full team of 10 players defensively
 - If more than 10 players are in the lineup, players may be added to the bottom of the order until the point in the game that the 1st batter in the lineup has begun his/her second appearance at the plate (the plate appearance begins once he/she has entered the batter's box).
 - If the 1st batter has begun his/her second appearance at the plate, any participants checking into the contest will serve as "true substitutes" and must follow the procedure listed above.
- Men's, Women's, and Co-Rec play shall use a regulation USSSA approved 12-inch softball
- All bats must be official softball bats. Titanium bats and any bats not approved for play by USSSA and/or ASA will not be permitted. Campus Recreation will provide all softballs and bats. **No outside bats will be permitted.**
- Regulation rubber-soled cleats, plastic cleats, detachable rubber cleats that screw into the shoe, and tennis shoes are the only permissible footwear. Sandals, street shoes, hiking boots, combat boots, or metal spikes are not allowed. No player will be allowed to participate in bare feet. Cleats with any metal showing will not be allowed. **No steel cleats or shoes with detachable steel cleats that screw onto the shoe may be worn.**
- No jewelry or any other item deemed dangerous by the Campus Recreation Staff may be worn. Any player wearing exposed permanent jewelry (i.e. body piercings) will not be permitted to play.

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- Players may wear soft, pliable pads or braces on the leg, knee, or ankle. Braces made of any hard material must be covered with at least one-half inch padding for safety reasons. Under no circumstances will a player wearing a hard cast or splint be permitted to play.

Playing Surface

- All games will be played on the Horner Park fields, unless otherwise noted.
- The bases measure 70ft; with a 50ft pitching rubber.
- Only players participating and a coach are permitted in the team dugout.

Game Format

- A game will consist of seven innings or 40 minutes, whichever comes first. No new inning will begin once the 40-minute time limit has expired; however, any inning which has been started prior to the time limit expiring will be completed.
- A coin toss will be held during the captain's meeting to determine which team will be the home team and which will be the visiting team.
- **Extra Innings:** In the event that the score remains tied after 7 complete innings or 50 minutes, a series of extra innings will be played until the tie is broken. The offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player who completed the last at-bat in the previous inning placed as a runner on second base.
- **Run Rule:** If a team is ahead by 15 runs after 3 complete innings (2 1/2 if the home team is ahead), 12 runs after 4 complete innings (3 1/2 if the home team is ahead), or 10 runs after 5 innings (4 1/2 if the home team is ahead), then the game will be considered complete. The run rule will apply to all championship games.
- **Called Games:** In the event of inclement weather or power failure of more than 15 minutes, the following will constitute a complete game:
 - The time limit has elapsed or 4 innings have been completed (3 1/2 if the home team is leading).
 - The time limit has elapsed and the game is called during an incomplete inning in which the home team has not tied the score or taken the lead, at which time the score will revert to what it was at the end of the last complete inning.

If the game is called due to weather before the time limit or inning limit has elapsed (4 innings), then the game will be replayed from the beginning. If it becomes necessary to stop play due to inclement weather, the final decision will be made by the Campus Recreation Supervisor on duty.

Rules of Play

- The pitcher shall keep one foot in contact with the pitcher's plate or in their pitching area until the ball is released. No walking wind up prior to the pitch is permitted. One or more steps may be taken in any direction with the free non-pivot foot, provided it is taken prior to or simultaneously with the delivery of the ball. After assuming the pitching position, the pitcher must present the ball in front of his/her body for at least one second before starting the delivery motion. All USSSA rules in regard to pitching apply.
- Teams will be given no more than two warm up pitches between innings and no infield practice is to be taken. These pitches may be reduced in number or denied at the discretion of the Umpire (in the event the game is running late or pending inclement weather).
- The pitch must be thrown at a moderate speed and must arc at least 6 feet after leaving the pitcher's hand and no more than 12 feet above the ground. This is an Umpire's judgment call. A pitch that does not meet these specifications will be considered an illegal pitch. Any pitch that hits any part (including the black) of home plate is an automatic ball.

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- The strike zone is defined as a legally pitched ball that crosses the plate between the front shoulder and back knee of the batter (if the batter is standing parallel with home plate). A batter moving up or back in the batter's box will not alter the location of the strike zone as it remains directly over home plate.
- A "strike mat" will be used to determine balls and strikes. If the softball touches any part of the mat on a legal pitch (6'-12' arc), it will be considered a strike. ****IMPORANT DISTINCTION**** The strike mat is only used for calling balls and strikes. The strike mat is not home plate. Therefore, when a runner is trying to score, he or she must touch home plate in order to score. If he/she touches the strike mat and not home plate, and then is tagged, the runner will be tagged out.
- Each batter will assume a 1 ball/1strike count at the start of every at bat. The batter will walk when the count has a total of four balls. The batter will strike out after three strikes. If a batter's third strike is a foul ball, then they will be allowed to have one more strike (courtesy foul). A strike or another foul ball will result in the batter being declared out.
- Bunting, chopping the ball downward, stealing, and leading off base are not permitted. Players may step off of first or third base into foul territory for safety, but must retouch the base before advancing.
- Sliding (feet first) IS legal but never required. However, a runner who initiates malicious contact shall be ejected. A runner sliding head first while advancing to a base will be declared OUT, by rule, automatically (a runner retreating to a base that has already been legally obtained by diving back head first will not be declared OUT automatically).
- A baserunner will be declared OUT if he/she deliberately and forcefully runs into the defensive player who clearly has the ball and is waiting for the baserunner. The offender shall be ejected, the ball becomes dead and all players must return to the last base touched at the time of the collision.
- The infield fly rule will be in effect. An infield fly is a fair fly ball (not a line drive) which can be caught by any infielder with ordinary effort when first and second bases or first, second, and third bases are occupied and there are less than 2 outs.
- A dead ball appeal may be made on a non-judgment call. No appeals will be considered on an Umpire's judgment. An appeal must be made before the next legal pitch, intentional walk, illegal pitcher action, or before all fielders have left fair territory. To appeal a play, a team's pitcher must have the ball during a dead ball period and must stand within an 8-foot radius of the pitcher's plate. He/she must then tell the Home Plate Umpire what they are appealing. The Umpire(s) will then render a decision.
- **Dead Ball Territory:** If the ball is in play and is overthrown into dead ball territory, then all runners will be awarded two (2) bases based on the positions of the runners at the time the ball left the fielder's hand. Runners may return to touch a missed base or a base left too soon. If two runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner.
 - When the first throw is made by an infielder trying for a first play, the award is made from the batter's/baserunner's position(s) at the time of the pitch.
 - When an infielder makes a second attempted play or throw, or on any throw from the outfield, the award is made from the last base touched by a runner.

If a fielder loses possession of the ball, such as on an attempted tag, and the ball enters dead ball territory, then each runner is awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the ball entered dead ball territory. The one-base award also applies when a fielder unintentionally carries a live ball from playable territory into dead ball territory.
- The batting team is responsible for retrieving all balls hit out of the playing area (over the fence, foul territory, etc.)

Batting Infractions

- Bat does not have USSSA or ASA Stamp, or is not a bat provided by Campus Recreation – if the bat is identified after an at bat, the batter is declared out. The ball is dead and all baserunners return. Remove bat from play and continue the game with sportsmanship unaffected. The team is flagged – if the team uses any illegal bat in subsequent games, a forfeit will be recorded for that game in which it was used.

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- A bat that becomes damaged during or immediately after an at bat – the bat is removed from play and the game continues unaffected. – team still needs to be flagged – if that bat is used again is considered an altered bat which is illegal. Subsequent use after warning results in a forfeiture of the game.
- Altered Bat – bats that are perceived as shaved, altered, or broken – physical structure changed ... both teams continue the game using Campus Recreation provided bats.
- If a bat is found to be altered - the batter is out, the player is ejected. The ball is dead runners return.
- Campus Recreation Coordinator reserve the right to inspect and/or remove bats for safety precautions

Co-Rec Rules

- Teams must alternate males and females in the batting order.
- If a team bats an odd number of players, **NO OUT** will be recorded in the line-up where two males or females are batting consecutively from the last batter in the lineup to the top of the lineup. Note that the difference between the number of males and females may not exceed one.
- Any player that takes a position in the field must be listed in the batting order and participate as a batter.
- Position requirements are as follows:
 - The pitcher and catcher must be of opposite sexes.
 - The gender difference in the infield and outfield cannot be more than one.
- If a team walks a male batter, that male batter is automatically awarded second (2nd) base. The next batter, a female, has the option to automatically walk or to hit. The female must make this decision before the next legal pitch is thrown.
 - If a team has a full roster of 10 players, there must be 4 outfielders
- If a pitch runner is needed, the runner must be of the same gender

Team Conduct & Sportsmanship

- The official(s)/supervisor(s) shall have the authority to warn, penalize, or disqualify any player(s), substitute, or coach for violations of sportsmanship including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Disrespectfully addressing an official or staff member.
 - Questioning the official's/supervisor's judgment or decisions.
 - Use of disconcerting acts or words when an opponent is about to play the ball.
 - Showing disgust with official's decisions.
 - Using profane or insulting language or gestures toward an official/supervisor or other player.
 - Baiting players of the opposing team
 - Disrupting the game so that it may not be continued in an orderly fashion.