

Softball Study Guide

HISTORY:

Softball evolved around the turn of the 20th century as an adaptation of baseball. In its early days, it was called "Kitten Ball" and "Ladies Ball".

THE GAME:

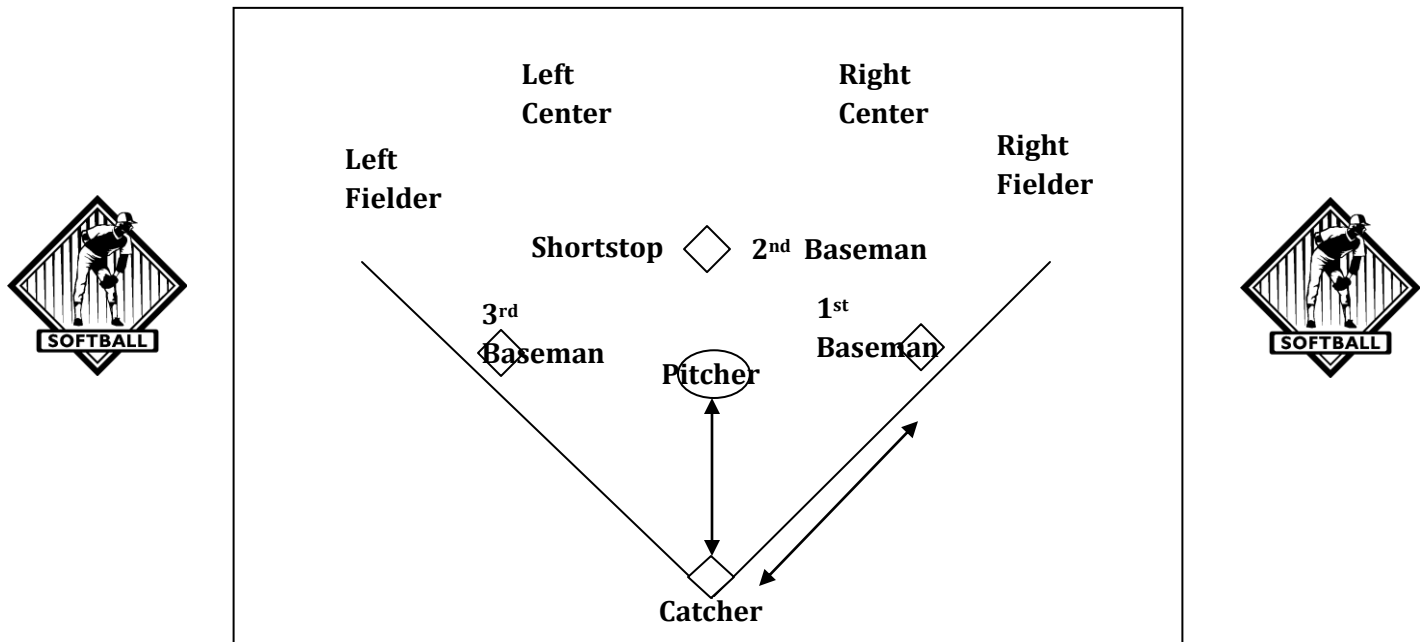
The batting side (offense) attempts to score runs by making a circuit of four bases while the fielding team (defense) attempts to dismiss them. The major differences are that softball is played by men and women, the field of play is smaller, the ball is larger, the game lasts only seven innings, pitching is underhand and players may not steal step off the base while pitcher has the ball in hand. As in baseball, the visiting team bats first, the home team takes the field, there are 3 outs each at bat, and 9 fielding positions. Indiana high school girls play fast pitch (9 players).

A variation of softball is slow-pitch softball. The game is generally a more active one because the ball must be pitched more slowly and with an arch, the ball is hit much more frequently. In slow-pitch softball, teams have 10 players. The extra player is called a short fielder. Bunting and stealing bases are not permitted in slow pitch.

Field and Player Position

Infielders = Pitcher, catcher, 1st baseman, 2nd baseman, 3rd baseman and shortstop.

Outfields = Right fielder, left fielder and center fielder (right and left center in slow pitch)



Scoring

When a player goes completely around the bases, a run is scored. If the defensive team strikes out a batter, catches a fly ball, throws a batted ball to a base before the batter reaches it, or tags a runner before he/she reaches a base, that player is considered out and does not have the opportunity to score a run.

Base Running Rules

1. All bases must be touched in order.
2. If two base runners occupy the same base, the last player on the base can be tagged out.
3. The base runner is out if she/she passes another runner.
4. The base runner is out if he/she is hit by a batted ball. All other base runners have to return to the base occupied prior to the pitch, unless forced to the next base.
5. A runner can only overrun 1st base and home plate.

Terms

Assist – Each player who handles the ball, after it leaves the bat, up to the player who makes the put-out, is credited with an assist.

Ball – A ball pitched outside the strike zone that the batter does not attempt to hit.

Base on Balls (a walk) – Four pitches thrown out of the strike zone.

Batting Order – Order in which players on a team must bat.

Clean-Up Batter – Usually bats 4th in the line-up, the strongest hitter.

Count – The number of balls and strikes on the batter.

Designated Hitter (DH) – A player that is inserted into the batting line-up for someone that cannot bat.

Double – A hit that permits the batter to reach second base.

Double Play – Two offensive players are put out in one play.

Error – A mistake, fumble of ball or wild throw, by the defensive team which allows a base runner to advance.

Fair Ball – A batted ball that hits first or third base line, is touched by a fielder within the baselines, or bounces within the baseline past first or third.

Fielder's Choice – The fielder chooses to retire a base runner, rather than a batter.

Force Out – When a fielder has possession of the ball at a base where the base runner was forced to run does not need to tag the runner.

Foul Ball – A ball that first touches an object or player outside of the foul line. It is considered a strike on the batter, if the batter has less than a two strike count.

Full Count – A count of three balls and two strikes.

Grand Slam – Bases are loaded when batter hits a home run.

Hit – A ball that is hit in such a way that the batter or the preceding base runners are not put-out by a good defensive play.

Home Run – A batter rounds all bases and scores a run off his/her hit.

Inning – The portion of the game within which the teams alternate to the field and a bat. Each team gets three outs only!

Lead-Off Batter – First batter in batting order.

Line Drive – A hard hit ball that travels with little arc, parallel to the ground.

Put-Out – Credited to the fielder who last handles the ball on a play that retires a base runner.

RBI – Run Batted In: the batter is credited with hitting in the base runner.

Sacrifice Fly – When the batter hits a fly to the outfield permitting base runners to advance after tagging up following the catch; sacrifice himself to advance the runners.

Single – A hit that permits the batter to reach first base.

Stealing – Act of base runner attempting to advance to the next base during a pitch – not allowed in slow pitch.

Strike – A swing and a miss, or a ball pitched with the strike zone that the batter does not attempt to hit.

Strike Zone – That space over any part of home plate between the batter's arm pits and the top of the knees.

Tag-Up – With less than 2 outs, runners on base have to go back and tag up at the base before they can run on a caught fly ball.

Triple – A hit that permits the batter to reach third base.