

Softball Rules

Current ASA softball rules will govern all LU IMS Softball with the following modifications listed below. All rules are subject to change at the discretion of the LU IMS Administrative Staff.

Teams are responsible for keeping their spectators under control. Misconduct of spectators, players or coaches can result in ejection or forfeiture of the game. Spectators must remain in the designated seating area. The officiating will be done by umpires who are in absolute control of the game. The umpires shall have the power to make decisions on any matters or questions not specifically covered in the rules. Line-ups must be completed and issued to the scorekeeper at the time of the coin flip. All rules not mentioned in this packet will be governed by the ASA slow pitch softball rules.

I. Team Requirements

- Each team may have up to ten (10) players and as few as eight (8) to start a game.
- A team must have at least eight players on the field to continue playing, if a team only has eight players and a player is ejected or injured and unable to continue, then the team must take a default.
- If a team starts a game with 8 or 9 players, they may add up to 10 players anytime during the game.
- Each additional player must be added to the bottom of the line-up.

II. Equipment

- A regulation softball will be provided by the intramural program. Bats may be checked out with proper identification.
- Athletic shoes must be worn by all participants. Rubber cleats on shoes will be allowed. Screw-in cleats will be allowed as long as the screw is part of the cleat. Metal cleats of any kind, open heel and/or toe shoes are prohibited.
- A regulation softball bat (must say official softball on the bat) with handle tape, rubber or leather, is the only legal bat allowed (no baseball bats) and cannot be dented in any way. The Softball Supervisor has the final call on whether a bat is dented or not. If a metal bat is used, it must have a metal knob. Because of numerous accidents and even deaths involving the newest technology in softball bats, LU IMS has decided to follow the recommendations of the Amateur Softball Association and ban bats with a BPF rating beyond what is listed on the bat.
- *Beginning January 1, 2004, all bats must pass the ASA 2004 bat standard. All bats having the 2004 certification mark will be allowed. Bats that have the 2000 certification mark will not be allowed unless they are listed on an approved bat list on the ASA website. For convenience, the ASA website has a listing of bats that pass and do not pass the ASA 2004 bat standard. Please visit the respective manufacturer's website for details on their ASA approved retrofit procedure for these bat models.*
For more information please visit http://www.asasoftball.com/about/certified_equipment.asp
- If caught using an illegal bat: Player will be ejected - the minimum length of suspension is that game plus one more.
- Knee braces made of hard, unyielding substances covered on both sides with all edges overlapped and any other hard substances covered with at least 1/2 inch of slow recovery rubber or similar material will be allowed. A player may remove a knee brace and continue to play.

III. Substitutions

- Free substitution is allowed provided such player occupies the same position in the batting order.
- Any base runner that is injured may be replaced by a courtesy runner who made the last batted out.
- Any player who is injured while in the field will require normal substitution procedures.
- An automatic out will be awarded if a player who is listed in the batting order is unable to bat (assuming a substitute is not available).

IV. Length of Game

- A regulation game consists of a maximum of seven innings. No innings will be started after 60 minutes of playing time has elapsed. If an inning is started, it must be completed. Innings are considered started once the third out of the previous inning is made. There will be no warm-up time given to either team because of the time limit. Teams should warm up in the designated areas off the field before their game.
- Pitchers will only be allowed one warm-up pitch after the first inning. Infielders are not allowed to take a ball out to warm-up after the first inning as well. This will allow games to run at a quicker pace.
- Mercy rules: 20 run lead after 3 innings, 15-run lead after 4 innings and 10-run lead after 5 innings.
- A game is considered official after four innings. (Example: rain in the middle of the 6th inning, score reverts to end of the 5th inning.)
- No time limit will be in effect during championship games.
- In regular season play, there is no extra innings. Playoff games can go extra innings.

V. General

- At the umpire's discretion, a player may be called out or ejected from the game for swinging or throwing the bat in a dangerous manner. All runners must return to their original bases.
- The offensive team is responsible for retrieving all foul balls and home runs.
- During the game, all equipment must remain in the designated areas.

VI. Running

- No stealing is allowed. Runners may leave the base when the pitch is hit. If the runner is off the base before the pitch reaches the plate, the runner is out and no pitch is declared by the umpire.
- The base distance is 65 feet.
- When the ball is thrown over the fence or out of play, all runners will be awarded one or two bases and the award will be governed by the positions of the runners when the ball left the fielder's hand. If two runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner. The base to which the runner is running has no effect on the award. When the ball is thrown from the outfield goes out of play the runners get two extra bases. When the ball is thrown within the infield and goes out of play the runner gets one extra base.
- Any runner who deliberately runs into a fielder (waiting to make a tag or a force out) will be called out immediately and each runner will return to the last base occupied at the time of the collision. If the runner's act is flagrant, he/she will be ejected. Other runners involved in the play may be called out at the umpire's discretion.

- Any runner who is not in contact with a base and is in fair territory when struck by a batted ball and the ball had not passed a defensive player other than the pitcher, will be called out. An immediate dead ball should be called, the runner is out and the batter is awarded first base.
- Sliding rule-If there is a close play at any base (Including home plate) runner has to slide into that base. If the runner does not slide, he/she maybe called out. A close play is decided by the umpire's discretion.
- In the case of a possible double play, the base runner must slide directly into the base (rather than the fielder) or get out of the way of the thrown ball or both he/she and the batter-base runner may be called out.
- A defensive player cannot stand in the base path or obstruct the path of a base runner unless he/she is making a play on the ball. In the event of an obstruction, the umpire shall award the obstructed runner and each other runner affected by the obstruction the bases they would have reached had there been no obstruction.
- Fake tags by any fielder are illegal. Penalty for a fake tag is ejection from the game.

VII. Batting

- The batter starts with a count of one ball and one strike.
- Chopping and bunting are not allowed. The batter must take a full swing. Penalty: batter is called out and base runners must return to their original bases.
- The batter has 10 seconds to enter the batter's box. If the batter does not enter the box, the umpire shall call a strike on the batter.
- Once the batter has two (2) strikes, he/she is declared out if he/she hits a foul ball. Runners may still tag if a ball is caught in foul territory.
- An extra hitter (EH) may be used. He/she is an eleventh hitter in the lineup. This person cannot be added once the game has started. If an EH is used, the position cannot be terminated during the game. An EH may substitute in the field, however, they must maintain the same position in the batting order.

VIII. Pitching (Distance=50 Feet)

- Before pitching, the pitcher shall come to a full and complete stop with both feet firmly on the ground, and with one or both feet in contact with the pitching rubber. The ball must be held in the pitching hand or both hands in front of the body. This position must be maintained at least one second but not more than 10 seconds before starting the delivery. The pitcher has 20 seconds to pitch the ball and this time starts when the previous pitch ends.
- In the act of delivering the ball to the batter, the pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's rubber until the ball leaves the hand. There are no fake pitches. A ball will be called.
- A legal delivery shall be a ball that is delivered to the batter underhand. The pitch shall be what is commonly known as a slow pitch.
- The ball must be pitched, with a minimum arc of at least 6 feet from the ground. The ball also must not reach a height of more than 12 feet at its highest point from the ground.
- Illegal pitch-The batter has the option to swing at an illegal pitch. Umpire will declare illegal pitch at time of the incident.

IX. Infield Fly Rule

- An infield fly is a fair fly (not including a line drive) which can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort provided there are runners on first and second, or first, second and third with

less than 2 outs. The umpire will declare the infield fly rule and the batter is immediately out. Base runners cannot be forced out. They can advance at their own risk.

X. Appeal Play

- An appeal play is a play in which an umpire cannot make a decision until requested by a coach or player. The appeal must be made before the next legal or illegal pitch. The appeal must also be before the defensive team has left the field. The defensive team has left the field when the pitcher and all the infielders have left fair territory.
- There are 3 types of appeal plays:
 - missing a base
 - leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched
 - batting out of order
- Once a dead ball has been called, any infielder (including the pitcher and catcher), with or without possession of the ball, may make a verbal appeal on a runner missing a base or leaving a base too soon. The plate umpire should acknowledge the appeal, and the administering umpire should make a decision on the play. Base runners cannot leave their bases during the appeal.

XI. Rule Clarification

- A ball slips from the pitcher's hand during the back swing, is dead and no pitch is declared. All subsequent action on that pitch is canceled.
- Any runner who is physically assisted by a coach or anyone except another base runner is to be declared out. The ball is dead and runners must return to the last base they touched.
- A missed base must be appealed. An umpire cannot call a player out unless the offended team appeals.

XII. Game Cancellations Due to Weather

- If a game is stopped and has been played through 3 ½ innings (with the home team winning), or the 4th inning (the visiting team winning), it is considered an official game.
- If a game is stopped and has been played past the 4th inning, the score will stand as it was in the last complete inning. (Example: rain in the middle of the 6th inning, score reverts to the end of the 5th inning.)
- Any game stopped prior to these scenarios will be restarted.

XIII. Sportsmanship

- The mission of LU IMS is to provide a recreational environment for the LU community that is safe and enjoyable. While the game atmosphere is often competitive, ensuring participant safety, providing a fun, social atmosphere, and promoting sportsmanlike behavior among participants, spectators, and team followers are our primary concerns. The game atmosphere should remain good-natured at all times. Participants shall maintain good sportsmanship throughout their participation in all facets of LU IMS.
- The LU IMS Sportsmanship Rating System is intended to be an objective scale by which teams' attitude and behavior can be assessed throughout the LU IMS league and playoff seasons. Behavior before, during, and after an LU IMS contest is included in the rating. The team captain is responsible for educating and informing all players and spectators affiliated with his/her team about the system.
- A team is responsible for the actions of the individual team members and spectators related to it. Additionally, LU IMS does not recognize the use of coaches. Only the team captain shall

- speaking to the officials regarding administrative matters (protests, ejections, disqualifications, etc.). Furthermore, the team captain's effort in assisting officials/staff to calm difficult situations and to restrain troubled teammates is vital in controlling team conduct.
- Sportsmanship is vital to the conduct of every LU IMS contest. In order to encourage proper conduct during games, officials, administrative personnel, and supervisors shall make decisions on whether to warn, penalize, or eject players or teams for poor sportsmanship. These decisions are final! The LU IMS administrative staff will rule on further penalties due to unsportsmanlike conduct.
 - Each participant should choose his/her team members carefully, as all team members will suffer the consequences of any disciplinary action taken by the LU IMS staff against that team for violation of the LU IMS rules and sportsmanship guidelines. Protest or appeals of sportsmanship ratings will not be recognized. The LU IMS administrative staff reserves the right to review any rating given to a team.
 - Additional information regarding team and participant sportsmanship including the rating method, factors, and scale is available in the Sportsmanship section of the LU IMS Handbook, available online at www.liberty.edu/ims.