LOYOLA UNIVERSITY MARYLAND

Intramural Sports Program

2012 - 2013 Softball Manual

I. Basic Rules



A. Slow Pitch Softball Pitching Rules:

- 1. Balls/Strikes: A rubber mat will be placed behind home plate to show an accurate view of the strike zone; any ball that meets the specific height regulations and hits the mat will be called a strike. The ball must have a visible arc with a minimum arc of 6 feet above the ground and a maximum arc of 12 feet above the ground.
- 2. There will be no excessively fast pitches; all must be thrown at a MODERATE SPEED underhand. If after receiving a warning from the umpire for excessive speed the pitcher pitches another fast pitch, he may be removed from his pitching position for the remainder of the game. Any fast pitch must be ruled illegal and is called a ball unless it is hit by the batter; if hit, play the ball. The same ruling applies to any pitch that is not between the 6 and 12-foot arc pitching limits.
- 3. "No Pitch" shall be declared when:
 - a. The pitcher pitches during suspension of play
 - b. A runner is called out for leaving the base too soon
 - c. The pitcher makes a quick return pitch
 - d. Ball slips from the pitcher's hand during his wind-up or back swing
 - e. The pitcher pitches before the base runners retouch base after a foul ball has been declared, and the ball is dead
 - f. A player, manager, or coach calls "time" or employs another play for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit an illegal pitch. No pitch shall be called and a warning issued to the offending team. A repeated offense by the team warned shall result in the offender being removed from the game.
- 4. Once a pitcher begins the pitch, there shall be no stop or reversal of the forward motion.
- 5. The pitcher's pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitching rubber until the pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
- 6. If the pitcher elects to take a step during a pitch, it must be toward home plate and simultaneous with the release of the ball.
- 7. The pitcher shall not use a multicolor, white or gray glove, nor shall he wear on his pitching wrist or forearm a sweatband, bracelet or other similar type item.

B. Batting

1. Each batter will begin with a 1 ball and 1 strike count. 4 balls will dictate a walk and 3 strikes will dictate an out. Any batter who fouls two pitches after obtaining 2 strikes is out. A rubber mat will be placed behind home plate to show an accurate view of the strike zone; any ball that meets the specific height regulations and hits the mat will be called a strike. **No bunting.**

- 2. Batting out of order is an appeal play, which may be made by the defensive team only while the ball is dead
 - a. If the above error is discovered while the incorrect batter is at bat, the correct batter takes his place and assumes any balls and strikes.
 - b. If this error is discovered after the incorrect batter has completed his turn at bat and before there has been a pitch to another batter, the player who should have batted is out. Any advance or score made because of a ball batted by the improper batter or because of the improper batter's advance to first base on a hit, an error or a base on balls shall be nullified. The next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player called out for failing to bat. If the batter declared out under these circumstances is the third out, the correct batter in the next inning shall be the player who would have come to bat had the player been put out by an ordinary play.
 - c. If the error is discovered after the first pitch to the next batter, the turn at bat of the incorrect batter is legal, all runs scored and bases run are legal, and the next batter in order shall be the one whose name follows that of the incorrect batter. No one is called out for failure to bat. Players who have not batted and who have not been called out have lost their turn at bat until reached again in the regular order.
 - d. No base runner shall be removed from the base he is occupying to bat in his proper place. He merely misses his turn at bat with no penalty. The batter following him in the batting order becomes the legal batter.
- 3. The batter shall not hinder the catcher from fielding or throwing the ball by stepping out of the batter's box, or intentionally hinder the catcher while standing within the batter's box. EFFECT the ball is dead and base runners must return to the last base that in the judgment of the umpire was touched at the time of the interference. (Note: with less than two outs and a runner on third base, if the batter interferes with a play being made at home plate, the batter is not out because the runner is out). Any batter that steps on home plate and hits the ball is declared out.
- 4. Members of the team at bat shall not interfere with a player attempting to field a foul fly ball. EFFECT the ball is dead, the batter is out and base runners must return to the base legally held at the time of the pitch.
- 5. A **strike** is called by the umpire:
 - a. For each foul tip. If the batter fouls off the third strike, IM rules state that the batter is allowed one more strike or foul ball before the batter is out. Any foul tip hit above the batters shoulders and is caught, is an out.
 - b. For each foul ball not legally caught on the fly
 - c. For each pitched ball swung at and missed
 - d. When any part of the batter's person is hit with his own-batted ball when he is in the batter's box
- 6. A **ball** is called by the umpire:
 - a. For each pitched ball which does not enter the strike zone, touches the ground before reaching home plate, or touches home plate and is not struck by the batter. EFFECT the ball is dead and base runners cannot advance.
 - b. For each illegally pitched ball. EFFECT the ball is dead. Base runners cannot advance.
 - c. When a delivered ball by the pitcher hits the batter outside of the strike zone or the black outline of home plate, the pitch is a ball.
- 7. A foul tip is a batted ball, which goes directly from the bat, not higher than the batter's shoulders, to the catcher's glove and is legally caught by the catcher. It is not a foul tip unless caught and any foul tip that is caught is a strike. EFFECT a strike is called, the ball is dead.

- 8. The batter must take his position within 10 seconds after the umpire calls "play ball" or be called out. The batter may not step out of the batter's box without first asking for "time." If he does step out without asking, a ball or strike will be called.
- 9. Fair ball is a ball that:
 - a. Comes to rest in fair territory
 - b. Bounces toward the outfield in or over fair territory, including first and third base
 - c. First touches the ground in fair territory beyond the first or third base line
 - d. Touches a person (umpire or player) or equipment in fair territory
 - e. Flies over the outfield "fence" in fair territory

C. Base running

- 1. When a base runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither he nor any succeeding runners in the same series of plays are compelled to follow a base unreasonably out of position. EFFECT the ball is in play and base runners may advance with liability to be put out.
- 2. Two base runners may not occupy the same base simultaneously. EFFECT the runner who first legally occupied the base shall be entitled to it; being touched with the ball may put out the other base runner.
- 3. Obstruction is when a fielder obstructs the base runner from making a base, unless the fielder is trying to field a batted ball or has the ball ready to touch the base runner. The umpire signals obstruction when the following occurs:
 - a. If a play is being made on the obstructed runner, or if the batter-runner is obstructed before he touches first base, the ball is dead and all runners shall advance, without liability to be put out, to the base they would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, if there had been no obstruction. The obstructed runner shall be awarded at least one base beyond the base he had last legally touched before the obstruction. Any preceding runners, forced to advance by the award of bases as the penalty for obstruction, shall advance without liability to be put out.
 - b. If no play is being made on the obstructed runner, the play shall proceed until no further action is possible. The umpire shall then call "time" and impose such penalties, if any, as in his judgment will nullify the act of obstruction.
- 4. When a fielder contacts or catches a fair batted or thrown ball with his cap, mask, glove or any part of his uniform while it is detached from its proper place on his person, the base runners shall be entitled to 3 bases on a batted ball, or 2 bases on a thrown ball. In either case, the base runners may advance further at their own risk.
- 5. When the ball is in play and is overthrown into foul territory, the ball is dead. An overthrow will result the runner being awarded the base that they are going to plus 1 from when the ball is thrown.
- 6. When a legally caught ball in playable territory is carried by the fielder unintentionally into dead ball territory (out of bounds), the ball is dead, the batter is out, and all runners advance 1 base beyond the base they occupied at the time of the pitch. If, in the judgment of the umpire, the fielder INTENTIONALLY carries a legally caught fly ball into dead ball territory, the ball is dead, the batter is out and all runners are awarded 2 bases beyond the base they occupied at the time of the pitch (Foul balls and home runs on GA 1 are most prevalent in this case).

- 7. Base runner(s) must return to his/her base under the following circumstances:
 - a. When a batter or base runner is called out for interference. Other base runners shall return to the last base, which was in the judgment of the umpire legally touched by him at the time of the interference.
 - b. Base stealing. Under no conditions is a runner permitted to steal a base when a pitched ball is not batted. The runner must return to his base. EFFECT base runners may leave their base when a pitched ball is batted or reaches home plate, but must return to that base immediately after each pitch not hit by the batter.
- 8. Batter-base runners are out under the following circumstances:
 - a. When he runs outside the 3-foot line and in the opinion of the umpire, interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base or does so in an effort to avoid being touched by a fielder with the ball. However, he may run outside the 3-foot line to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball.
 - b. When he interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball. If this interference, in the opinion of the umpire, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the immediate succeeding runner shall also be called out.
 - c. When he interferes with a play at any base or home plate in an attempt to prevent an obvious out at that base. The runner is also out.
 - d. When the batter-runner legally overruns first base, and in the umpire's opinion, attempts to run to second base and is legally touched while off the base.
 - e. When a base runner is struck with a fair-batted ball while off base and before it passes an infielder excluding the pitcher.
 - f. When the base runner fails to keep contact with base to which he is entitled, until a legally pitched ball has reached home plate.
- 9. Base runners are NOT out under the following circumstances:
 - a. When a base runner runs behind the fielder and outside the baseline in order to avoid interfering with a fielder attempting to field the ball in the base path.
 - b. When a base runner does not run in a direct line to the base providing the fielder in the direct line does not have the ball in his possession.
 - c. When a base runner is hit with a fair-batted ball that has passed through an infielder, excluding the pitcher, and in the umpire's judgment, no other infielder had a chance to play the ball. Also, when a fair-batted ball hits the base runner, after any fielder touches it, including the pitcher.
 - d. When the base runner is not given sufficient time to return to a base, he shall not be called out for being off the base before the pitcher releases the ball. He may advance as though he had left the base legally.
 - e. When hit by a batted ball when touching their base, unless they intentionally interfere with the ball or a fielder making a play.
 - f. When a base runner slides into a base and dislodges it from its proper position, the base is considered to have followed the runner. EFFECT a base runner having made such a base safely shall not be out for being off that base. He may return to that base without liability to be put out when the base has been replaced. A runner forfeits this exemption if he attempts to advance beyond the dislodged base before it is again in proper position.

II. CO-REC RULES

- A. ASA Co-Rec Rules will be used.
- B. A team consists of 5 men and 5 women. Exception: if a team has only 9 players, the batting order must begin with a woman and end with a woman.

- C. Batting order must alternate man/woman at all times. If a man walks, the following woman has the option of automatically walking, or batting. Once in the batter's box, each player must bat.
- D. Positioning in the field is as follows:
 - 1. 2 women and 2 men in the infield
 - 2. 2 women and 2 men in the outfield
 - 3. Pitcher and catcher must be mixed

III. ADDITIONAL RULES AND CLARIFICATION

- A. Re-entry Rule: A player may withdraw and reenter a game once, but he/she must occupy the same batting position in the lineup.
- B. A player overrunning first base may return the left or right when returning to first base. If he/she attempts to advance to second base, he/she can be tagged out.
- C. The distance from base to base should be 65 feet (both men's and coed). The distance from the back of the pitcher's mound to the back of home plate should be 50 feet.
- D. On GA 1, the following rules apply when batted balls enter the outfield blacktop:
 - 1. A fly ball that lands in the blacktop will be ruled a home run
 - 2. A fly ball cannot be caught in the blacktop still a home run
 - 3. A batted ball that rolls or bounces into the blacktop will be ruled a triple
 - 4. If the grandstand is located on the blacktop, balls that land in it will be ruled home runs, while balls that roll in/under it will be ruled a triple.
- E. On GA 2, the following rules apply:
 - 1. A fly ball that lands over the fence or in the bleachers/concrete area down the left-field line will be ruled a home run
 - 2. A batted ball that bounces over the fence will be ruled a ground rule double
 - 3. All "hurdle-like apparatus" must be placed on the bleacher side of the fence and returned to their original location after games are completed for the day

IV. DEFINITIONS

<u>Appeal Play:</u> An appeal play is a play upon which an umpire cannot make a decision until requested by a player. The appeal must be made before the next pitch, legal or illegal. To make an appeal following a dead ball, the pitcher must stand within the eight-foot radius with the ball. The umpire shall recognize the pitcher when he has the ball and the pitcher will announce the appeal. The ball does not have to leave the eight-foot radius and runners cannot leave their bases. The ball remains dead.

Base Path: A base path is an imaginary line 3 feet to either side of a direct line between the bases.

<u>Blocked Ball:</u> A blocked ball is a batted or thrown ball that is touched, stopped or handled by a person not engaged in the game, or a ball that touches any object which is not part of the official equipment or official playing area.

<u>Catch</u>: A catch is a legally caught ball, which occurs when the fielder catches a batted or thrown ball with his hands or glove. If the ball is merely held in the fielder's arms or prevented from dropping to the ground by some part of the fielder's body or clothing, the catch is not completed until the ball is in the grasp of the fielder's hands or glove. It is not a catch if a fielder, immediately after he contacts the ball, collides with another player or wall, or falls to the ground and drops the ball as a result of the collision or falling to the ground. In establishing a valid catch, the fielder shall hold the

ball long enough to prove he has complete control of the ball and that his release of the ball is voluntary and intentional. If a player drops the ball while in the act of throwing it, it is a valid catch.

<u>Chopped Ball:</u> A chopped ball is one at which the batter strikes downward with a chopping motion of the bat. Batters may chop at the ball as long as it is a full swing motion. Any swings not considered a full swing, such as a bunt, will result in the batter being called out, if the ball is put into play. If foul, a strike is called and a warning is given to the batter. Bunting is not allowed. All batters must take full swings at the ball.

<u>Dead Ball:</u> The ball is not in play and is not considered in play again until the pitcher has the ball in his possession and is prepared to deliver the ball to the batter.

Extra Player: Men's teams will be allowed one additional player to be in the batting order, however only ten (10) players will be allowed in the field. Remember if a team starts with 11 players, they must finish with 11. The extra player rule does NOT apply to Co-ed games.

<u>Fair Ball</u>: Any ball that settles in fair territory between 1st and 3rd base. If a fielder touches a ball before it reaches 1st or 3rd base and knocks it foul, it is still a fair ball. If a ball hits the ground and bounces over a base and lands in foul territory, it is still fair. A fly ball shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul territory at the time he touches the ball.

<u>Force-Out:</u> A force-out is an out, which can be made only when base runner losses the right to the base which he is occupying because the batter becomes a base runner, and before the batter or succeeding base runner has been put out.

<u>Foul Ball:</u> A foul ball is a batted ball that settles on foul territory outside 1st and 3rd base. A ball that bounds past 1st or 3rd base on or over foul territory or that first falls on foul territory beyond 1st or 3rd base.

Foul Strikeout: The second foul after two strikes results in an out.

<u>Illegally Batted Ball:</u> An illegally batted ball occurs when a batter hits a ball while his entire foot is completely out of the box, when any part of the batter's foot is touching home plate when he hits the ball, or when the batter hits the ball with an illegal bat. EFFECT - the batter is out, runners cannot advance and the ball remains dead.

<u>Illegally Caught Ball:</u> An illegally caught ball occurs when a fielder catches a batted or thrown ball with his cap, mask, glove or any part of his uniform while it is detached from its proper place.

<u>Illegal Pitch:</u> Any pitch, which does not have an arc between 6 and 12 feet. The umpire must IMMEDIATELY yell flat or illegal. The pitch is an automatic ball, but the batter may swing if he chooses and if the ball is put into play it is legal.

<u>Infield Fly:</u> Occurs when there are LESS than two outs, and AT LEAST 1st and 2nd base occupied. A batter hits a FAIR pop fly that is easily fielded by an infielder. The batter is out and the runners may advance at their own risk. Runners must tag up if the ball is caught. If the ball is dropped there is no force play on the advancing runners.

<u>Interference</u>: Interference is the act of a defensive player, which hinders a batter from striking or hitting a pitched ball, or the act of an offensive player, which impedes or hinders a defensive player while attempting to execute a play.

<u>Obstruction</u>: Obstruction is the act of a fielder, while not in possession of the ball or in the act of fielding a batted ball, which impedes the progress of the base runner that is legally running bases.

Overthrow: When a thrown ball goes out of bounds as marked on each playing field, every base runner is awarded 2 bases. When a first throw is made by an infielder, the umpire is awarding bases governed by the position of each runner at the time the ball was delivered by the pitcher. When the throw is made by an outfielder or is the result of any succeeding play or attempted play, the bases awarded shall be governed by the position of each runner and the last

base he/she has touched at the time of the throw.

<u>Safety Rule:</u> Any act that is determined to be flagrant will result in ejection of the player involved. The official and the supervisor on duty must fill out a disciplinary action form. The guilty player must then meet with the Assistant Director, Club Sports and Intramurals.

Slaughter Rule: If a team is winning by 15 or more runs after four innings, or 10 or more runs after 5 complete innings, (4 1/2 innings if the home team is winning), the game is over.

<u>Sliding Rule:</u> Sliding is allowed in all leagues, but, base runners will not be allowed to break up a force play by interfering in any way. However, sliding to avoid contact is allowed.

<u>Strike Zone</u>: The strike zone is that space over any part of home plate, which is between the batter's highest shoulder and his knees when the batter assumes his natural batting stance. The pitch must have an arc between 6 and 12 feet, in order to be legal.

V. GAME MANAGEMENT

A. Pre-Game Duties

- 1. Report to the field you are assigned to work at least 15 minutes before the scheduled game time.
- 2. If you are assigned to work the first game on a given day, then you will have to go to the main entrance on Geppi-Aikens to pick up the necessary equipment (clipboard with score sheets and duffel bag containing 3 bases, 1 home plate, strike zone mat, 1 pitchers rubber, foul-line cones, indicators, bats and game balls) for the games. Should the games assigned to an umpire not be the first ones on that field for that day, then he/she need not bother with the equipment, as it will be waiting for him/her when he/she arrives.
- 3. Before the start of an umpire's assigned game(s) he should make sure that he checks-in with the field supervisor. By doing this, the umpire will receive any special instructions for that day and will guarantee that he has been properly "clocked in".
- 4. In case of a forfeit:
 - a. A team shall forfeit a game if it does not have at least eight players ready to play at the scheduled starting time. GAME TIME IS FORFEIT TIME.
 - b. If a forfeit occurs, make sure that the team who is present (the winning team) records their names on the score sheet and the win is designated.
 - c. Once the forfeit takes place, secure all equipment and return it to the supervisor unless there is a later game scheduled for that field. DO NOT leave equipment on the field without an umpire in charge.
- 5. Before each game the umpire/scorekeeper should make sure of the following:
 - a. Managers or team captains are given the clipboard with the proper score sheet to sign-in his team.
 - b. All participants are eligible to participate as valid members of the Loyola Community. All participants must bring their Loyola ID to all games or they will not be eligible to participate in that game. IM Scorekeepers and Supervisors will verify eligibility before each game.
 - c. Gather the team captains (2 minutes before game time) for a brief pre-game talk. This meeting should include going over the ground rules for the field, any special rules, scoring procedures, substitutions and rule classifications. At this time make sure a team captain is designated by

- each team who will represent his team and shall direct any questions to the umpire and control his team's play and behavior.
- d. At the end of the pre-game talk, the umpire should have a coin to flip, ID toss or call "even or odd" to determine who is the home team and who is visiting team.

B. During the Game

- 1. During the game the umpire should make sure that:
 - a. Each team is allowed only 30 seconds to take infield during the first inning and from then on is only allowed a "warm up" pitch with no practice ball being allowed to go out into the field. By doing this, the umpire speeds up the game and increases the likelihood of 7 full innings being played.
 - b. The umpire checks and approves the score sheet on the clipboard after each half inning before it goes to the team scheduled to bat next. If any team attempts or successfully alters the score sheet to their advantage, the game will automatically be declared a forfeit.
- 2. Keep track of ALL equipment. Equipment is the responsibility of the umpire from the minute he picks it up from the supervisor or when he begins his shift until the minute he returns it to the supervisor or is replaced by another umpire.

3. Extra Innings

- a. Regular Season: Each game will last 50 minutes or 7 full innings, whichever comes first. Once an inning has begun before the 50-minute time limit, it must be completed. Should a game, which is in progress, be called due to rain, it will be declared official if 5 complete innings have been played. The final score of such a game will be the end of the last complete inning. Extra innings will be played if time permits until the game is completed. Some games will end in a tie due to scheduling constraints and darkness. Every attempt to finish games at later dates will be made.
- b. Playoffs or Spring Tournament: If after 7 innings, a game is tied, teams should continue to play until a winner is determined. If darkness becomes a factor, the umpires and the supervisor on duty can suspend the game until the next day, in which case the game will continue at the exact place it was suspended. The game must be completed before the next round of scheduled playoff games. Games will be bumped back to later starting times at the discretion of the Assistant Director.

C. After the Game

- 1. Secure the game ball.
- 2. Check the score to make sure there are no irregularities in the scoring. Once the score sheet is checked and approved, the score is official.
- 3. Make sure you sign the score sheet, circle the name of the winning team on the score sheet and give each team a sportsmanship rating.
- 4. If any disciplinary actions forms need to be filled out make sure you obtain one from the supervisor and do so at this time. These forms must be completed if a sportsmanship rating of D or F is given to a team or if players were ejected for any reason.

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