Intramural Softball Rules

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Participation Warning
There are inherent risks of mental and physical injury while participating in the Intramural Sports Program. Our goal is to reduce or eliminate as many risks as reasonably possible to provide a safe and fun program. This does not mean that injuries will not happen. We ask for your full cooperation in following instructions regarding proper conduct, proper use of equipment and facilities, and adherence to the rules of each sport as established by the Intramural Sports Program. Participants are responsible for the cost of any injury; therefore, you are encouraged and recommended to have adequate health insurance.

Rules of Play

Team and Equipment Regulations
1. Safety comes first: You are expected to use your best judgement and consider safety first for all other player (i.e. non-excessive fouls). Competitive Sports Program staff have the right to enforce consequences as they deem appropriate.
2. The Intramural Sports Program will furnish the game ball. Participations are required to bring their own glove(s), practice balls, and bats.
3. Cleats and shoes that are judged unsafe (liable to cause injury to self or to another player), by Competitive Sports Supervisor will not be allowed. No flip-flops, sandals, bare feet, or metal cleats are allowed! All players must wear shoes with closed toes and heels. All cleats must be made of rubber. Use of illegal cleats may result in ejection from the game.
4. Players are recommended to wear a mouthpiece.
5. Bats: Bats must not be cracked or have dents and must have a certification mark resembling one of the following:
Game Rules

1. **A team shall consist of ten or more players**; however, a team may begin a game and continue to play with seven players.
   
   a. **Automatic out(s)** may be placed anywhere in the batting order. They occur when a team has an odd number of players and cannot bat guy, girl, guy, girl etc.

2. Games will consist of **seven innings or 50 minutes** whichever comes first. Game clock will begin at the scheduled time. No new inning will start after the 45-minute mark of the game. Final decisions on starting an inning rest with the umpires and Competitive Sports Supervisors. If a game is tied after seven innings or the 50 minutes has expired it will be recorded as a tie in the regular season. In the postseason, one additional inning will be played for the tiebreaker. At the beginning of the top and bottom of the additional inning, the person who was out last in the previous inning will start on 2nd base. **If the game is tied after the additional inning, it the game will continue on like this until there is a winner.**

3. **Scoring:** the maximum number of runs a team can score in their half inning is 10. The only exceptions are for a home run and in the last inning of play where there won’t be a limit to the number of runs scored.

4. **Batting:** the count starts at one ball and one strike for each batter. If the batter has two strikes then they get two foul balls; on the second foul ball the batter is called out. It doesn’t matter how the batter gets the second strike, they still get two foul balls.

5. **Bunting:** Bunting will not be permitted, and neither are slaps. Slaps are defined as either of the following options: half-swings that result in a short dribble of the ball; and swings which involve a running start. If a batter successfully attempts one of these batting options they will immediately be called out.

6. All **Lineups** must be completed and delivered to the scorekeeper by the manager or team representative at least **five minutes prior** to the scheduled game time. Additions/changes to the lineup beyond 10 players or in place of an automatic out after game time has begun must be substitutions. The first team to get their lineup to the Competitive Sports Supervisor will be the home team. (Exception of Playoffs)

7. **Run Rule:** A team leading by 20 or more runs after three or more innings, or 15 or more runs after four or more innings, or a team leading by 10 or more runs after five or more innings of play is declared the winner of the game.

8. **Home Runs:** No limit on home runs.

9. **Strike Zone:** Consists of home plate, as well as the turf that extends out to the batter’s box and back to the end of the batter’s box or plate extension. This is indicated on the field.
10. **Pitching:** The pitch shall be released at a moderate speed, the pitcher’s hands must be below the hip and the ball delivered with a perceptible arc that reaches a height of at least 6’ from the ground, while not exceeding a maximum height of 15’ from the ground. Pitchers must pitch the ball with an underhand approach, with the hand being consistently behind or in front of the ball. No quick pitches are allowed. A quick pitch is one made by the pitcher with the obvious attempt to catch the batter or base runner off balance.
   a. The pitcher needs to be behind or on the mound to begin their pitch. Their back foot must touch the mound throughout the entire pitch. The umpire has the right to call an illegal pitch in the event of a pitcher being too close to the batter or too far off the mound.

11. **Infield Fly:** The umpire shall immediately call the batter out when the batter hits a fly ball within the infield. After the catch, the ball remains alive and in play, with runners in jeopardy until time is called or the ball is in the pitcher’s hands. An infield fly occurs when runners are forced to advance; on 1st and 2nd, or on 1st, 2nd, and 3rd bases with less than two outs. If a declared infield fly falls to the ground in fair territory and is untouched and bounces in foul territory before passing first or third bases, it is a foul ball.

12. **Over-Throw:** When the throw goes out of the field of play, the base-runners advance one base. In the event of the opposing team’s dugout touching or interfering with the defensive play, the overthrow rule will be in effect and the play will be dead.

13. **Appealing:** Appeals can be made in a dead ball situation. The pitcher must have the ball and be in the pitcher’s circle. They can then appeal the previous call. Defensive teams will only have one appeal per game.

14. **Sliding:** When a defensive player clearly has the ball and is waiting for the runner and the runner deliberately crashes into the defensive player, the runner is declared out. If a play on the base is likely to occur at any base besides first, the runner is highly encouraged to slide. The umpire reserves the right to calling the runner out in the event of reckless endangerment. In the event of reckless endangerment, the offender shall be ejected, the ball is dead and all other runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the collision. **This does not mean that players can block the bases or home plate without the ball nor does it mean a runner can deliberately crash into the defensive player. Sliding into first base is not allowed under any circumstance. Runners are not allowed to slide head first in any situation, unless they are retreating back to a base. THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO SLIDING AT HOME.**

**Team Regulations**

1. **Substitutions:** There will be free substitutions. The only restriction is you must bat in the batting order given to the scorekeeper at the beginning of the game. Substitutions in the batting order are final. Once a batter is subbed out, they cannot return to the line-up. They can however continue to play in the field. You can alternate a batter’s spot in the batting line-up. Example: B1 bats in the first at bat, B2 in the second, then back to B1 in the third. A substitution is required in order to change batters.

2. **Courtesy Runners** may be used if a player is injured during the game. The last player of the same gender to make the last out must be the courtesy runner. The batter must get to at most first base, but once they have reached first base and time is called, a courtesy runner may step in for them. Courtesy runners are also used for the bleeding policy.

3. **Batting:** You may bat as many players as you like up to the roster limit as long as the lineup alternates gender.
If two batters of the same gender bat back to back, an automatic out will be placed in place of the missing batter of the other gender. You cannot make changes in the lineup once the game has started outside of legal substitutions. If a player leaves in the batting order, then an automatic out will be put in that spot if the team cannot provide a sub for that player. Bats must be ASA approved, or be on the NSA approved bat list. A questionable bat can be banned by the Intramural Sports Staff.

4. **Batting out of order**: If a batter bats out of order, as soon as violation is caught, the batter will be out. If violation is caught while batter is batting, the real batter must bat and will still be held at what had been called for illegal batter. Example, if batter in position number four (B4) bats illegally for batter in position number two (B2), and has one strike when violation is caught, B2 must bat with one additional strike already against them.

5. **Forfeits**: Teams are expected to be ready to play at the scheduled time. However, teams with less than seven players will be given a five-minute leeway. *Every two minutes the team does not have enough players, the other team will be awarded a run.* After this time a forfeit will be assessed to teams with less than seven players. Teams must have at least three females to play.

6. **Teams** consist of five women and five men. A maximum of 10 or minimum of seven players will play in the field each inning. If a team only has seven, eight or nine players, there can be any number of men to women ratio as long as there are no more than 5 men or women in the field. However, the automatic out rule will apply. Teams who have more than 10 players can have the additional players bat as long as if follows the every-other batter gender rules. If two players of the same gender bat back to back there will be an automatic out placed in place of the missing batter.

7. **Automatic Out Rule**: Lineups must consist of male and female alternating with automatic outs in the proper order. If there are more males than females or females than males, anytime two batters of any sex bat in order, there will be an automatic out replacing where a female or male should have been batting. Even numbers of males and females are required in the active line-up to avoid automatic outs. *Example: If the lineup consists of five men and three women, the automatic out must be in a female’s spot in the batting order.*

8. **Intentionally Walking Males**: Team batting orders must alternate male and female at all times. When a man is intentionally walked, he will be awarded second base with the next female batter having the option to walk or to bat.
   a. **Intentional Walk**: If the first three pitches to a man are all balls it is considered an intentional walk. It may not actually be the intention of the pitcher to walk the batter. If there a strike thrown at any point in the at bat it can never be an intentional walk, even if the first pitch is a strike and the next three are thrown over the fence.

9. **Extra Players**: You can have as many people as you want in the batting order. Just know that the man, woman ration must be maintained and there can be no more than 10 players in the field.

10. **Base Running**: No stealing will be allowed. A runner must have one foot on the base until the ball crosses home plate. Runners MUST touch strike mat at home IF it is going to be a close play. Umpires have authority to make that judgement call.
Injured Player(s) Policy
If someone on your team becomes injured, please contact the Intramural Program staff at intramurals@usu.edu or 435-797-8388 24 hours before your next scheduled game to inquire about replacing the injured player on your team. Doctor or Athletic Trainers note may be required. Intramural Sports Program staff has the authority to determine if an injured player will be allowed a substitute. There are limitations when it comes to who can substitute during tournament play. If someone becomes injured during the tournament, an eligible participant may play in their place. Once the injured individual becomes approved to play again, that substitute is then removed from the team roster.

Eligibility Requirements
Eligibility to participate in the Intramural Sports Program at Utah State University is restricted to certain members of the campus community. Review the following requirements carefully to ensure you and your teammates are, and remain, eligible. For questions concerning eligibility, please call our office at 435-797-8388 or email intramurals.usu.edu.

- Students: If you are enrolled at Utah State University with at least one (1) credit, paying the Campus Recreation fee, or are doing research and possess a current student activity card or proof of enrollment.
- Faculty and Staff: If you are currently employed by any department of Utah State University you can pay the Campus Recreation fee for $35.61 at the Registrar’s Office.
- Spouses of Students/Faculty/Staff: You can purchase a spouse pass at the Registrar’s Office that will give you access to participate for $40.
- Intercollegiate/Club Sport Athletes: You can only have two or three Intercollegiate or Club Sport athletes (depending on the sport) on an Intramural team that at one point were on the team roster during that current school year. See tables below for Intercollegiate and Club Sport Athletes on eligibility for Intramural Sports.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USU Sport</th>
<th>Club Sport</th>
<th>Intramural Sport</th>
<th># of Participants you can have on IM Team</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adding Players
Team captains are responsible for monitoring participants who join their team. If players are not on the team roster before 4pm of your scheduled game day, those players will need to get permission from the Competitive Sports Supervisor on duty. The cut off for adding players to rosters is one day after the season ends.

Sportsmanship Rating System
The sportsmanship rating system is intended to be an objective scale by which teams’ attitudes and behaviors can be assessed. Behavior before, during, and after a contest is included in each rating. Each team captain is responsible for educating ALL players and spectators affiliated with his/her team about the system. Teams must maintain a 3.0 (“B”) average in order to qualify for tournament play. Teams must also maintain a 3.0 (“B”) average during tournament play. The Intramural Staff will determine the score for the teams after each
intramural contest. The Intramural Staff reserves the right to review and/or change any sportsmanship rating given. Captains inquiring about their team’s sportsmanship rating can do so in a few ways:

- Contacting the Assistant Director of Competitive Sports or Graduate Assistant of Competitive Sports by emailing intramurals@usu.edu the next day
- Asking the Supervisor at halftime of the game that is currently being played
- Checking online in the “Rankings” area of FusionIM

The sportsmanship rating system is based on the following criteria, but not limited to:

4.0 = Excellent Conduct and Sportsmanship (A)
- Team members cooperate with and demonstrate good sportsmanship toward members of opposing teams, spectators, and ALL campus recreation staff.
- Team manager exhibits control over his/her team and spectators, converses reasonably and rationally with officials about rule interpretations, and cooperates by providing any information requested by any intramural staff member.

3.0 = Good Conduct and Sportsmanship (B)
- Team members verbally complain about some of the decisions made by the officials and/or show minor dissensions, which may or may not merit an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
- Teams receiving one unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will receive no higher than a “B” rating.
- A team defaults the contest, meaning they contact the Intramural Sports office before noon on the day they are scheduled to play to let them know they will not attend.

2.0 = Average Conduct and Sportsmanship (C)
- Team shows verbal dissent toward officials and/or the opposing team throughout the game, which may or may not result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
  - There may be one player who consistently question calls in a rude behavior or speak negatively towards the opposing team throughout the game. A penalty may not be enforced as no one instance may warrant that, but the overall behavior may award the team a “C” in sportsmanship.
- Team captain exhibits minor control over team/spectators, but is in control of himself/herself.
- Teams receiving more than one unsportsmanlike conduct penalties will receive no higher than a “2.0” rating.
- Team is unable to produce a team at game time resulting in a forfeit.

1.0 = Below Average Conduct and Sportsmanship (D)
- Team continually dissents the officials and/or opposing team from the court/sidelines.
  - There may not be an unsportsmanlike penalty enforced as no one scenario may mandate that, but if multiple players exhibit rude or negative behavior toward the staff or the opposing team they will be awarded a “D”.
- Team manager exhibits little or no control over team/spectators or himself/herself.
- Teams that have a player ejected will receive no higher than a "D” rating.

0.0 = Poor Conduct and Sportsmanship (F)
- Team is completely uncooperative; manager has no control over team/spectators/self.
• Teams play with ineligible participants or withhold any information requested.
• Damage or destruction of any Campus Recreation facility/equipment.
• At least one player ejection or causing a contest to be forfeited by any reason than not having enough players will receive an “F” rating.
• Any threatening behavior (verbal/nonverbal) towards any player, spectator, or campus recreation employee.

Teams receiving a "0.0" rating will not be allowed to advance.

Teams receiving a "1.0" rating must have their team captain meet with the Assistant Director of Competitive Sports before their next scheduled contest.

Teams that receive a sportsmanship rating lower than a 3.0 during any Tournament contest will automatically be disqualified from the tournament.

For full details and our entire Intramural Sports Program Manual, please visit https://www.usu.edu/campusrec/intramural_sports/homepage_intramural

Everything is at the discretion of the Assistant Director of Competitive Sports and the Graduate Assistants of Competitive Sports. If you have any questions, contact them at intramurals@usu.edu or 435-797-8388.