

BERA Softball League 2026 Rules

Current slow pitch rules will be enforced unless exceptions are noted:

I. GENERAL

- A.** Forfeit time has been established as 15 minutes after game time which is 5:30pm.
- B.** Campus Recreation will furnish one umpire per game as available. He/she will call balls/strikes, safe/out, and arc/height of pitches.
- C.** Each team must keep their own book with line up and scores.
- D.** The fitness of the ground will be decided by the BERA Softball Board by 3:00 p.m. on the day of the scheduled game followed by an email to the league.

II. THE PLAYING FIELD

- A.** Bases will be set 65 feet apart and the pitcher's mound 50ft from the back of home plate to the mound.
- B.** When a batter runs to 1st base, he/she must run through the orange safety bag to ensure no contact with 1st baseman.
- C.** If a runner overruns 3rd base and passes the 1st commitment line whether intentionally or unintentionally, the runner must run home. The runner cannot return to 3rd plate. To avoid collision with catcher, the runner must run parallel to home outside the 3rd baseline through the 2nd commitment line avoiding homeplate.
- D.** If the catcher steps on homeplate with the ball in glove before the runner crosses over the 2nd commitment line, the runner is out.
- E.** Umpires will establish ground rules prior to the game regarding out-of-play areas, permanent obstacles in the field of play, etc.

III. EQUIPMENT

- A.** Game softballs will be provided for use to each team by the BERA/QOL Office.
- B.** Closed toe shoes are required. Gym or running shoes are recommended. Rubber training shoes and single molded plastic/rubber soccer-type cleats are permitted. Metal cleats or spikes of any type are not allowed.
- C.** For a bat to be deemed legal it must be an official approved softball bat. It must have a safety grip (no smooth tape) and must be free of dents, rough and sharp edges. Reference [Approved Bat List](#). Umpires will check bats prior to start of each game.

IV. PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES

- A. **A team must have 8 players present to start the game** and may list up to 15 batters in the batting order (only 10 will field). Batters may be added at any time at the end of the batting order up to 15 players. Batters removed from the game (injury, ejection, etc.) must be substituted for by the same gender where possible (female for female/male for male), or that spot in the order will be an out.
- B. Males and females are not required to alternate defensively on the bases or in the outfield, however, if a team has 3 or more female players, at least 2 females are expected to play a position somewhere on the field [IN/OUT] per inning. If a team only has 1 female, that female must play a position on the field [IN/OUT]. Exceptions to these rules include concern for safety or injury.
- C. **In the event a team is short of a player, borrowing a player from the opposing team is allowed.** Typically, the borrowed player plays in the catcher position, but it is up to the discretion of the two team Captains at the beginning of each game.
- D. **Blood Rule.** A player who is bleeding, has an open wound, shall be considered an injured player. Such players may not return to the game until the bleeding has stopped, and the wound properly covered.
- E. **The re-entry rule will apply.** A starter may be withdrawn from the game and re-entered in the same spot in the batting order once. Players may not re-enter a second time, and the starter and the substitute may not be in the game at the same time.

V. THE GAME

- A. The game will consist of 7 innings. In the event of rain or darkness, 5 innings or 4-1/2 if the home team is ahead, will constitute a game.
- B. A 15-run rule will be in effect after 4innings.
- C. Base stealing is unallowable. Runners cannot leave their base until a ball is hit.
- D. Bunting or chopping down on the ball is unallowable and will result in a dead ball with the batter being called out. Umpires will make this determination.
- E. Players start with a (1-1) count when at bat.
- F. The batter is out if he/she hits a foul ball after their first 2 strikes. No courtesy fouls shall be given.
- G. The ball is dead and not in play:
 - 1. When no pitch is declared.
 - 2. When an illegal pitcher's action is declared.
 - 3. When the base runner is called out for leaving a base too soon on a pitched ball.
 - 4. After each pitched ball and strike not batted.
 - 5. When a pitched ball touches any part of a batter's person.
 - 6. When a batter bats illegally or hits the ball with an illegal or altered bat.
 - 7. When a batter deliberately BUNTS or CHOPS THE BALL DOWNWARD.
 - 8. When the batter is hit by his own-batted ball, in the batter's box or foul territory.

9. When there is an intentionally dropped fair fly ball or line drive, by an infielder.
10. When an offensive team member or their equipment causes a blocked ball.
11. When an offensive team member causes interference.
12. When the base runner deliberately crashes into a defensive player who is waiting to make a tag.
13. When a base runner is off a base and is hit with a fair-batted ball before the ball is touched by or passes through the infielders.
14. When a blocked ball occurs.
15. When the ball gets outside the established limits of the playing field.
16. When a coach intentionally interferes with a batter or live thrown ball.
17. When a spectator or other person not in the game causes interference.
18. When a batted ball hits an umpire before the ball is touched by, or passes through the infielder, the batter is awarded first base. No base runners may advance except to make room for the batter-runner.
19. When "TIME" is called for any reason by the umpire.
20. When there is obstruction on the batter.

H. The ball is in play:

1. When the pitcher has the ball in his possession at the pitcher's plate.
2. When the pitcher delivers the pitch toward home plate.
3. When the batter hits the pitched ball illegally.
4. If there is a play resulting from a legally batted ball.
5. When a fly ball is legally caught.
6. At all times during the enforcement of the infield fly rule.
7. When any thrown ball goes into foul territory and is not blocked.
8. When a fair-batted or thrown-live ball accidentally strikes the coach.
9. When a fair ball strikes the umpire or offensive player on foul ground.
10. When base runners have reached the base to which they are entitled because the fielder illegally touched or fielded a batted or thrown ball.
11. When obstruction is called but the runner obstructed cannot be put out until he reaches the base to which he is entitled to because of the obstruction.
12. When a base runner must return to a base in reverse order while the ball is live and in play.
13. When a base runner is called out for passing a preceding runner.
14. When a base runner acquires the right to a base by legally touching it before being put out.
15. When a base is dislodged while base runners are progressing around the bases.

- 16. When a base runner is called out for being out of the baselines.
- 17. When a base runner is forced or tagged out.
- 18. When an appeal play is involved or enforced.
- I. The ball remains live until the umpire declares the time.
- J. Scoring
 - a. A run shall not be scored if the third out is a result of a batter or runner being forced out.
 - b. A run shall not be scored if a preceding runner is called out on an appeal play.
 - c. A run shall be scored if it crosses the plate prior to the third out of the inning provided that it is not a force out; failing to tag up is not a force out.

VI. PITCHING

- A. The pitch must have a minimum arc of 6 ft. from the ground. The maximum allowable arc is 12 ft. from the ground. If the pitch does not meet these requirements, an illegal pitch shall be called. The batter has the option of taking the pitch for an automatic ball or swinging at the pitch. If the pitch is swung at, the illegal pitch is ignored.
- B. The pitcher must pause with at least one foot contacting the rubber prior to pitching the ball. The pitcher's foot must remain in contact with the rubber throughout the delivery.
- C. If a step is taken it may be forward, backward, or to the side provided the foot stays in contact with the rubber and the step is taken simultaneously with the pitch.

VII. BATTING

The batter is out when:

- A. A batter appears in the batter's box with or using an altered or illegal bat.
- B. A batter receives his/her third strike. This can be called strike or from a swing. A foul ball, whether caught or dropped on strike there is also an out.
- C. The umpire declares a fair infield fly with base runners on first and second or on first, second, and third with less than two outs. This is called the infield fly rule. The ball remains live, and runners may advance at their own risk.
- D. A fielder intentionally drops a fair fly ball that can be caught by an infielder, with ordinary effort, with first and second or first, second, and third bases occupied with less than 2 outs. The ball is dead, and all runners return to the base they occupied at the time the ball was pitched.
- E. The batter bunts or chops the ball downward. The ball is dead, and all runners return to the base they occupied when the ball was pitched.
- F. When any foot touches the ground completely outside the batter's box or if any part of the foot touches the plate and the ball is hit fair or foul.
- G. Alternating male and female players in the lineup is not required but recommended.
- H. The walk rule is no longer effect.

VIII. RUNNER

- A. When a base runner must return while the ball is in play, he/she must touch the bases in reverse order.
- B. A courtesy runner is allowed however a female must run for a female and male must run for a male.
- C. No runner may return to touch a missed base or one he/she had left illegally after a following runner has scored. The defense must appeal for the out to be granted.
- D. When a defensive player is in possession of the ball a runner may not remain upright and crash into the defender. When sliding, runners must always slide for the base. If considered flagrant in either of the above cases, the runner may be ejected.
- E. Base runners are entitled to advance but accept the liability to be put out under the following circumstances:
 - 1. When the ball is overthrown into fair or foul territory and remains in play.
 - 2. When the ball is batted into fair territory.
 - 3. When a legally caught fly ball is first touched.
- F. Base runners are entitled to advance without liability to be put out under the following circumstances:
 - 1. When a fielder obstructs the base runner from making a base unless the fielder is trying to field the batted ball or has the ball ready to touch the baserunner.
 - 2. When the ball is in play and is overthrown and goes out of play, all runners advance two bases from where they were when the ball left the thrower's hand.
- G. Obstruction is the act of:
 - 1. A defensive player or team member who hinders or prevents a batter from striking or hitting a pitched ball.
 - 2. A fielder, while not in possession of the ball, in the act of fielding a batted ball, or about to receive a thrown ball, which impedes the progress of a base runner who is legally running the bases.
- H. Interference is the act of an offensive player or team member, umpire, or spectator that impedes, hinders, or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play. Contact is not necessary for interference to be called.
- I. Base Stealing: Base stealing is unallowable.
- J. The base runner is out when:
 - 1. In running to any base, he/she runs more than three feet from a direct line between a base and the next base when a defensive player is attempting to tag the runner.
 - 2. The base runner passes a preceding base runner before that runner has been put out.
 - 3. The base runner legally overruns first base and makes an attempt to advance to second base.
 - 4. The base runner interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball. If this interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play (including shouting or waving the arms to distract the

defense), the immediate succeeding runner shall also be called out.

5. The base runner is struck with a fair batted ball while off base and before it passes an infielder who could have otherwise made a play.
 6. With a base runner on third, the batter or any offensive player interferes with a play being made at home base.
 7. In the umpire's judgment, the base coach at first or third base touches or holds the runner physically to assist a runner in returning to or advancing from the base when a play is being made on him/her.
 8. A runner, after being declared out or after scoring, interferes with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play on another runner, the runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out.
- K. Base runners are not out under the following circumstances:
1. When a base runner runs around the fielder and outside the baseline in order to avoid interfering with a fielder attempting to field the ball in the basepath.
 2. When a base runner is hit by a fair batted ball after it is touched or touches any fielder.
 3. When a base runner is hit by a fair batted ball while in contact with a base.
- L. Injured Runner: If an accident with a batter-runner or base runner prevents him/her from proceeding in the game, a substitute runner will be permitted. If no substitutes are available, the runner will be declared out.

IX. PROTESTS

Allowable protests should be first lodged by the team captain to the game umpire prior to the next pitch, legal or illegal.