

# 8<sup>th</sup> GRADE SOFTBALL HANDOUT

## THE GAME

- There are 9 players on a fastpitch softball team.  
There are 10 players on a slowpitch softball team
- The positions and responsibilities are as follows:
  - Pitcher** – pitches and fields ball in the area of pitchers mound.
  - Catcher** – catches for the pitcher and takes plays at home plate.
  - First baseman** – takes plays at first base and fields balls in the area.
  - Second baseman** – fields all balls hit to right side of field and covers 2<sup>nd</sup> base on balls hit to left side of the field.
  - Shortstop** – fields all balls hit to left side of field and covers 2<sup>nd</sup> base on balls hit to right side of the field.
  - Third baseman** – takes all plays at third base and field ball in the area.
  - Left fielder, Center Fielder, and Right Fielder** (Left & Right center in slowpitch)– are the last line of defense and cover balls hit in there area.
- The playing field is divided into the infield and outfield.
- The lines between the bases are 60’ apart and when joined they form a “diamond”, inside the baseline in known as the infield.
- Outside the baseline but inside the playing field is called the outfield.
- Any ball going outside the 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> baseline is a Foul Ball (runners can not advance and the batter gets another try unless the ball was caught in the air, which translate to an out).
- An official game is 7 innings (an inning is when both teams have had their turn to bat:  
3 outs = one half      6 outs = 1 complete      7 innings =  
inning                      inning                      ball game

## PITCHING

- The pitcher must have both feet on the pitcher’s rubber and can only take one step forward while pitching.
- The ball must be thrown underhand in slow pitch.  
The ball is usually thrown in a windmill style in fast pitch.
- Both hands must be on the ball at the start of the pitch.
- The strike zone is any pitch thrown between the shoulder and knees that is over the plate:  
A strike is called if:
  - a. ball is over plate between shoulder and knees – slow pitch  
ball is over plate between chest and knees – fast pitch
  - b. ball is swung on and missed
  - c. ball touches batters bat and goes into foul territory  
(except on third strike)
- A ball is called if any pitch is thrown outside of the strike zone  
3 strikes = 1 out      4 balls = walk  
The first number called represents balls and the second number represents strikes.  
(example) If the umpire says it a 2 & 1 count that would mean 2 balls and 1 strike.

## BATTING

- Batters must follow the same order throughout the whole game
- The batter is out if and when:
  - a. three strikes have been called
  - b. a fly ball is caught
  - c. the batter does not stand in the batter's box
  - d. steps on plate when hitting

## BASE RUNNING

- Runners must touch each base in order
- Runners may overrun 1<sup>st</sup> base only (you must turn right into foul territory), all other bases the runner may be tagged out if they are off the base.
- Runners can not lead off a base, they must be on base until the ball has left the pitcher's hand (fastpitch) or makes contact with the bat (slowpitch).
- After a fly ball has been caught the base runner must tag the occupied base before advancing to the next base.
- One base runner cannot pass another base runner that is ahead of them.
- Stealing a base is allowed in fastpitch after the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. Stealing in slowpitch is not allowed. You may only leave the base when the ball hits the bat.
- A runner is out if:
  - a. they are tagged with the ball before reaching a base
  - b. the ball gets to 1<sup>st</sup> base before the runner
  - c. they run more than 3 feet out of the base line to avoid being tagged

## TERMS

- **Ball** – a legally pitched ball that does not enter the strike zone
- **Grounder** – a ball that is hit on the ground
- Force out – when the runner has to advance to the next base to make room for the following base runner.
- **On deck** – the next batter
- **Pop up** – ball hit up in the air to the infield
- **Fly ball** – ball hit up in the air to the outfield
- **Strike** – term used when a ball is swung at and missed or is called when the ball enters the strike zone and is not swung at.
- **Strike Zone** – the ball passes over the plate between batter's shoulders and knees
- **Tagging up** – when a runner returns to the base they just left and retouches it. Runners must tag up on a pop up or a fly ball
- **Bunt** – pushing or tapping the ball forward without swinging the bat.
- **Full Count** – when the ball and strike count forces you to take action on the next pitch.  
3 & 2 - 3 balls and two strikes is a full count
- **Sacrifice** – Offering to get an out so that your runner can advance forward.