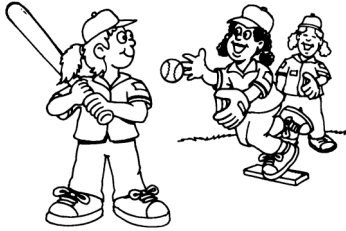


Softball



The Basics



- Softball players advance around bases by batting and running in an effort to score.
- Points, called runs, are scored when a player on the batting team touches all the bases (including home plate) without being tagged out by a player in the field.
- The team scoring the greater number of runs in the allotted number of innings wins the game.

What's Needed?



- A softball glove
- a softball (made of rubber and cork)
- softball bat (made of wood or aluminum)
- cleats or sneakers
- matching uniform
- baseball cap
- batting helmet
- For the catcher: a face mask and chest protector.

How Long Does A Game Last?

- A fast pitch softball game is generally seven innings long. (Some youth leagues may play shorter games.)
- Each inning is divided into two halves: a top and a bottom.
- Usually, to start a game teams flip a coin to decide which side will bat first.
- Both teams are allowed three outs per half inning.
- Usually, if a game ends in a tie, extra innings are played until one team outscores the other.
- The team batting in the bottom half of the inning, if trailing, always gets a final at bat.

Swing Batter!



- Batting takes place at home plate in a batter's box.
- The batter stands at the plate and swings his or her bat in an attempt to hit the pitched ball into fair play.
- Batters must swing at the ball when it is pitched in the strike zone or else it may be called a strike.
- When a batter hits a fair ball he or she becomes a base runner and sprints to first base.

Base Hit



- Occurs when a batting player hits the ball in fair play and is able to safely reach a base.
- It is called
 - a single if the batter reaches first base
 - a double if the batter makes it to second
 - a triple if he or she gets to third
 - and a home run if the batter crosses home plate.

Home Run (Homer or 4 Bagger)



- When a batter hits a fair ball far enough for him or her to reach all four bases without being tagged out.
- In some softball parks a fence encloses the outfield. It is an automatic home run when the ball is hit over this fence on the fly.
- A home run scores one run for the batter and a run for each player on base at the time of the hit.

Fair or Foul?



- **Fair Ball** - A batted ball that is hit within the foul lines.
- **Foul Ball** - A batted ball that lands outside fair territory or touches fair ground, but rolls out-of-bounds before reaching first or third base. A foul ball counts as a strike, unless there are already two strikes; in this case, the player continues to bat.

Strikes and Balls

- **Strike** - Called when a player swings and misses a pitch; swings and fouls off a pitch; or does not swing when a pitch is in the strike zone. A batter strikes out when he or she gets three strikes in one turn at bat (so long as the third strike is caught by the catcher); foul tips a third strike that is caught by the catcher; or bunts the ball foul when there are two strikes.
- **Ball** - Called by the umpire when the batter does not swing at a pitch that is outside the strike zone.

You're Out!

- The objective for teams playing in the field is to get three players on the batting team out in each inning. A batter is out when he or she
 - 1) hits a softball fair or foul, that is caught by a fielder before it touches the ground
 - 2) is tagged or first base is touched by a fielder with the ball before the batter gets there, or
 - 3) strikes out.
- A base runner is out when he or she
 - 1) is between bases and is tagged by a fielder holding the ball, or
 - 2) is forced out.

This Is Not Baseball!

- Although the two games are very similar, several nuances exist between baseball and softball that set them apart.
- In softball the ball is larger and softer; pitching is done underhand; the dimensions of the playing field are smaller; the bases are closer together; and the pitcher throws at a distance closer to home plate. There is no base leading or stealing allowed (runners may not move off a base until the pitched ball either crosses home plate or is hit by the batter); and if a pitcher balks, illegally moving his or her feet off the pitching plate while a runner is on base, a runner is not awarded a free base - the pitch is deemed a ball instead.

Did You Know That?

- Dispute exists over the origin of softball. Some argue that the game was invented as an indoor version of baseball in Chicago in the 1880's. Others claim that a lieutenant fireman in Chicago created the game in a vacant lot adjoining his fire station in the 1890's. A multitude of names labeled the game in its earliest form, such as kitten ball, mush ball, and big ball. Today, softball is one of the most popular participation sports in the United States.
