Intramural Softball Rules

ALL Participants must have a valid VCU Photo ID card when checking in!!! No VCU ID... No Play... NO EXCEPTIONS!!!

The Intramural Program staff will work hard to ensure that all participants have the safest experience, but guaranteeing absolute safety is not possible. Be aware that participation in intramural sports activities, including use of intramural facilities and equipment, is completely voluntary. There are risks and hazards, minor and serious, associated with participation in intramural sports activities. Participants voluntarily assume all responsibility and risk of loss, damage, illness, and/or injury to person or property associated with participation in intramural sport activities.

Virginia Commonwealth University and the Commonwealth of Virginia are not liable for any injuries, damages or other losses which individuals may incur while using recreational sports facilities or participating in the Intramural Program provided by the Office of Recreational Sports. Virginia Commonwealth University does not provide medical, health, or other insurance for participants. Medical expenses incurred such as ambulance, doctor bills and x-rays will be the responsibility of the participant. Purchasing adequate health/medical insurance prior to participation is strongly recommended.

Virginia Commonwealth University is committed to holding intramural sports and events in a safe environment free from bullying. Offensive language including profanity, derogatory remarks around a person’s race, ethnicity, culture, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, national origin, veteran status, social economic class, religion, professional status, or other intimidating actions directed at officials, event staff, student-athletes, coaches or team representatives will not be tolerated and are grounds for removal from the competition site and from the league altogether.

The Virginia Commonwealth University Intramural Softball program follows the current NIRSA rules. The rules listed below do not represent the entire rulebook; rather they have been compiled as a guide. Some rules have been modified for the Intramural program.

I. Player Eligibility

a. All undergraduate & graduate students who have paid the recreation fee and are currently enrolled in any department or college of the University and current faculty and staff members shall be eligible to enjoy all intramural privileges and shall retain that status until they withdraw, graduate, take a leave of absence, or fail to comply with the eligibility rules or other guidelines.

b. Non-student friends, guests, relatives, or spouses are not eligible to play

c. Only players who present their current VCU photo ID card to the Intramural Site Supervisor will be eligible to participate in intramural activities. There will be no exceptions to this rule.

d. Participants who have not activated their IM Leagues account and do not have proper identification (VCU ID) will not be allowed to participate.

e. Professional athletes, varsity sport athletes, and Olympic athletes in the sport of softball may not participate.

f. For a full list of all eligibility requirements please refer to the Intramural Sports Handbook.
II. Team Composition

a. Number of Players
   a. Men’s and women’s teams require 10 players for a full team. A minimum of 7 players is needed to start. A team may continue with fewer than 7 players if a player is injured and removed from the game.
      i. Exception, if a team falls below the minimum requirement of 7 due to an ejection, the game will be terminated and the team with the ejected player will forfeit, regardless of score or game time remaining.
   b. Players may be added to a team’s roster at any time during the duration of the season.
   c. Teams playing shorthanded must provide a pitcher and catcher.

b. Substitutions
   a. Team captains must notify umpire and supervisor immediately of substitutions.
   b. All players may withdraw and re-enter a game once, but they must occupy the same batting position in the lineup.
   c. The opposing team handles improper reentry with a protest. An improper reentry becomes a violation after a pitch is made.

c. All team members are required to present their VCU photo ID card and sign in with the Intramural Supervisor at the beginning of each game. If a team member does not have his/her ID card and does not sign in with the Intramural Site Supervisor they will not be eligible to play.

III. Equipment

A. A player shall not wear anything that may be dangerous to him/herself or another player; this includes jewelry, watches, and ANY cleats.
   a. PENALTY: The offending player shall be instructed to leave the field and shall not be allowed back on the field until the hazard is removed. A legal substitute may replace the offending player at this time.
B. Shoes must be worn. No sandals, boots, or bare feet permitted.
C. Gloves or mitts must be worn by all defensive players.
D. Players are encouraged to bring their own gloves and practice balls as RecSports has a limited supply. Softball bats and game balls will be provided and no outside bats/balls will be permitted. Catchers must wear a facemask while there is a batter at the plate.
   a. Gloves will be handed out at a first come, first serve basis
E. .44 Core ASA approved 12” softballs will be the official game ball.

IV. Game Times

a. It is recommended that teams arrive 15-20 minutes prior to the start of the game to allow time to sign in and to confer with the officials if need be. If a team is not able to field a team at the time the game is scheduled to begin the game will be recorded as a forfeit. Game Time is Forfeit Time.

b. No new innings of play will begin after the 45-minute mark. A game is considered complete after the completion of the inning after the 45-minute mark or seven innings, whichever occurs first, regardless of score. Extra innings will be played to declare a winner if the game is tied at this point in PLAYOFFS ONLY.
   a. Games are also considered complete if they are called because of weather after 3 full innings have been completed
b. **Mercy Rule:** a game is complete if a team is up by 15 at the end of 4 innings or 12 at the end of the 5th, 6th or 7th innings

c. Season will consist of a double-elimination tournament. Once your team loses two games, they will no longer be scheduled

V. Game Rules

A. Batting Order
   i. 7 players must occupy the first 7 spots in the batting order. Anyone arriving late will fill the 8th, 9th and 10th spots. Empty spots in the batting order will result in outs.
   
i. A courtesy runner may take the place of any base runner injured during play with the understanding that both players are eligible for further participation in the game. Any eligible sub shall be used as a courtesy runner. If no eligible subs are available, the player who made the last out shall be the courtesy runner. If the last out is on base, up to bat, or next to bat, the previous available out should be used.
   
i. The team can bat 10 or 11 with an extra player.
      i. CLARIFICATION: If the team begins the game using an extra player(s), this must be maintained throughout the game.
   
ii. Players arriving late may not be added into the batting line-up unless they will be taking the 8th, 9th or 10th spot in the order.

B. Fielding Positions
   i. There can never be more than ten players fielding at any one time.
   
ii. There must always be at least one player in the outfield, a pitcher, and a catcher

C. Dead Ball Areas
   i. All players must stand/sit behind the spectator bleachers or behind their team’s bench unless they are playing a defensive position, batting or running the bases.
   
ii. All substitutes and spectators must stand/sit on the spectator bleachers
   
iii. Any teams warming up for games must warm up in the outfield, as close to the tennis courts as possible
      i. No practice at bats may be taken while another game is being played, including between innings
   
iv. The ball is considered dead if:
      i. It goes on the blacktop down each foul line
      ii. It goes into the field equipment, goals, or bleachers
   
v. Dead balls are recognized once the defensive player throws both hands in the air, signaling they cannot reach the ball

D. Pitching Regulations
   i. At the highest point of the pitch, the arc of the pitch shall be between 6 and 12 feet.
   
ii. If a "quick" pitch is thrown, the umpire shall call "illegal pitch."
   
iii. The pitcher has 20 seconds to release the next pitch.
   
iv. If an illegal pitch is thrown, the umpire shall call "illegal pitch”. The batter has the option to take the pitch (automatic ball) or swing, in which case it becomes a legal pitch and the ball is live, if hit.
   
v. The pitcher must keep the pivot foot in contact with the pitcher’s plate until the pitched ball leaves the hand.
   
vi. The pitch must be made in one continuous motion and can only move forward and backwards once. The pitcher must be facing forward at time of pitch.

E. Batting
i. A called strike is a legal pitch when it strikes home plate, which includes the black perimeter and/or the mat placed immediately behind the plate. Any pitch not striking the plate or mat and not swung at will be ruled a ball.

ii. If a batter steps with one (1) or both (2) feet entirely out of the turf batter’s box, they shall be called out. If the batter steps on or over the plate or mat, they will be called out.

iii. Players will start with a one strike, one ball count. Four total balls will constitute a base on balls. A strike-out will consist of any combination of three strikes. A foul ball is considered a strike (with two strikes, the batter is allowed one free foul ball; the second foul will be considered a strike and the batter will be out).

iv. Bunting and/or chopping down on the ball are not permitted. The batter will be called out and the play dead if the umpire rules a bunt/chop swing was attempted.

v. A foul tip is a batted ball that goes directly into the catcher’s hand or glove, is caught by the catcher, and did not go higher than 6 feet. The batter is out on a third strike foul tip.

F. Base Running

i. Any fair ball which goes into another field following an error by a fielder shall be in play.

ii. However, if someone playing on the other field touches the ball, the batter shall be awarded the bases, in the umpire’s judgment, he/she would have normally reached.

iii. Any base runner that intentionally runs into a fielder or catcher having possession of the ball will be declared out and will also be disqualified for the remainder of the game.

iv. On an overthrow, out of bounds is delineated by an out of play line extending from the backstop.

   i. This includes the cement walkway surrounding the field or any goals on the perimeter of the field.

v. Overthrow penalty: Two bases from the last base legally touched shall be awarded for an overthrow that goes out of play. This shall be determined from when the player (thrower) releases the ball.

   i. For example, if a runner is between first and second when the overthrow has begun, they will be awarded second base (base the runner is heading to) and 3rd base (1 additional base).

vi. If overthrown into an "in-play" area, runners advance at their own risk. If two runners are between the same bases, the base awards are determined by the lead runner.

vii. There will be a line drawn 2/3 of the way between 3rd base and home plate. If the runner crosses this line they must go home, and it will be considered a force out. When possible, the catcher has the plate and the runner should use the mat to avoid collisions (see double first base rule for clarifications).

   i. All plays at home are force outs (a tag does not need to be applied to the runner).

viii. Lead-offs and stealing are not permitted. Runners may only leave the base once the pitch crosses the plate.

ix. Sliding is NOT PERMITTED.

x. The double first base (safety base) will be used. Generally, the fielder will have the base in fair territory and the runner will have the base in foul territory. We will use the ASA double first base rule with the exception of an appeal for an out if the runner touches the base in fair territory.

xi. The pitching mat behind the plate is considered an extension of the plate.

xii. Offensive Interference: is defined as the “act of an offensive player or team member that impedes, hinders, or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play.”
Defensive players must be given the opportunity to field the ball anywhere on the playing field.

i. Base running interference includes a runner or batter-runner who interferes with a fielder, a runner or batter-runner who is hit by a fair, untouched batted ball and a thrown ball which strikes any loose equipment, detached part of a uniform or miscellaneous item left in playable territory by the offensive team.

ii. When a runner interferes with a fielder, it may be in the form of physical contact, verbal contact, visual distraction, or any other type of distraction that would hinder the fielder in the execution of a play. The umpire must determine if the interference occurred before or after the runner who interfered was put out.

iii. It is also interference, in the judgment of the umpire, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the runner closest to home plate shall also be called out.

G. Ground Rules
   i. Teams are permitted to warm-up in the first inning only
   ii. If there is a pitching change, the incoming pitcher has 3 pitches before resuming the inning
   iii. If a team hits a ball over the fence, they must send the player who recorded the last out to get the ball. Games will continue regardless of time or distance needed to recover a ball
   iv. Due to the time-limit, stalling is not permitted. If a team is stalling they will be given one warning.
      i. If stalling persists, the offending team will forfeit the game

H. Open Specific Rules
   i. Teams must adhere to batting every other gender for as deep into the batting order as possible.
      i. Example: If a team has 10 players (4 males and 6 females) The team must bat every other for as much of the lineup as they can. The lineup would look like this: FMFMFMFMFF
   ii. Defensive positioning:
      i. Teams must have at least 1 male and 1 female in the outfield and infield.

VI. Sportsmanship

a. After every game, participating teams will be given a sportsmanship rating of 0-5.00, in accordance with the Intramural Sports Handbook.

b. Teams must have a 3.00 average (on a 5.00 scale) to be eligible to participate in the playoff tournament.

c. Any team which receives a 2.00 or less sportsmanship rating may be dismissed from play and may face further disciplinary action.

d. The Office of Recreational Sports will review any team which averages less than a 2.0 during the playoffs for future eligibility in intramural play.

e. Appeals: Teams may inquiere with the Head Official at the game site to view their sportsmanship ratings following a game. A team captain may appeal his or her team’s sportsmanship rating by submitting an appeal to the Intramural Sports Coordinator by 12:00 pm of the next business day following the game or match. ANY APPEALS SUBMITTED AFTER THIS TIME WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

f. For a complete understanding of all Intramural sportsmanship policies, please refer to the Intramural Sports Handbook.
VII. Forfeits & Defaults

a. A forfeit is recorded when a team failed to show up for their scheduled contest or displayed unsportsmanlike behavior which resulted in the early dismissal of a game.

b. If a forfeit is issued to a team who did not show up for a scheduled contest the team will be subject to a $25 fine, a second forfeit will result in another $25 fine AND removal from the league.

c. A default is an un-played game that is recorded as a loss rather than a forfeit. This results when the defaulting team captain notifies the Office of Recreational Sports that they will not show up to play a contest by 3pm on the BUSINESS DAY (Monday through Friday) preceding the scheduled game. Teams are allowed two defaults in the season before a team will no longer be scheduled to play.