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## **SECTION A - GENERAL RULES**

- A-1.** In cases not covered by these rules, Special Olympics Illinois will follow the World Softball Confederation (WBSC) Rules for slow pitch softball found at <https://www.wbsc.org/en/disciplines/softball> or National Governing Body (NGB) rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Illinois Rules for Softball.
- A-2.** At all times athletes are expected to compete to the best of their ability to ensure a quality competition at all levels. Coaches are expected to provide accurate/honest scores of their athlete's ability.
- A-3.** Protests will only be considered for rule infractions (not for umpire judgments).
- A-4.** All protests must be filed before the next pitch.
- A-5.** The Games Rules Committee will make all final decisions.
- A-6.** The following process will be used for all Special Olympics Illinois round robin tournaments:
- The team with the best record at the end of competition will receive first place.
  - If all teams have the same record (one win-one loss), places of finish will be determined by the point differential in the games played.
  - If the point differential is the same, places of finish will be determined by the total points scored by each team during the tournament (highest scoring team receives first place).
  - If the total points are the same, places of finish will be determined by fewest number of strike outs in the games played during the tournament.
- A-7.** In tournament play, the game will be forfeited if a team fails to report on the field, ready to play within ten (10) minutes of the scheduled game time.
- A-8.** The forfeit score is 7-0 in favor of the team to which the game is forfeited.
- A-9.** Athletes in team competition must receive a gold medal from a Region Qualifier to attend the State Softball Tournament. Teams must submit an Intent to Play, Team Rating Form and play 3 games prior to the Region Qualifier. Athletes in Individual Skills competition must receive a gold medal from a Region Qualifier to attend the State Softball Tournament. See Criteria for Advancement for specific requirements.
- A-10.** Athletes can participate in team competition or individual skills competition. NOT BOTH.
- A-11.** For safety reasons, bat girls or bat boys are not allowed in Special Olympics Illinois Traditional or Coach Pitch games.

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**A-12.** An out will be assessed if non-registered personnel (coaches, athletes, Unified partners, bus drivers, spectators, etc.) are found to be on the team bench or in the team bench area. A second violation will result in the head coach being ejected from the game.

## **SECTION B - FIELD**

**B 1.** The softball diamond will have 65ft base lines whenever possible for all ages and divisions. Distance can be adjusted to 60ft or 70ft feet if facility is not set up for 65ft bases.

**B-2.** Pitchers must take position with both feet firmly on the ground at the selected pitching position, which may be any distance between 40' and 50' within a 24 inch width of the pitcher's plate. Pitchers may adjust their pitching distance, without penalty, if in the judgement of the umpire(s) there is no attempt to gain an advantage.

## **SECTION C EQUIPMENT & UNIFORMS**

**C-1.** All bats must be specifically marked as "Official Softball" and designated with an ASA of ISF certification logo. The bat shall not be longer than 34 inches nor exceed 38 ounces in weight. The bat shall not be more than 2.2250 inches in diameter at its largest part.

**C-2.** Catchers are required to wear a protective mask and helmet as well as a chest protector.

**C-3.** Steel spikes are not allowed. Street shoes are not allowed. Gym, tennis, running, or rubber spike shoes will be allowed.

**C-4.** Gloves are required. The first baseman's trapping style mitt may be worn by the first baseman and catchers only.

**C-5.** The red-stitch 30.5cm (12 inch) ball with a compression of 300 and a COR of .52 and under shall be used in all divisions, and must have league approved logo (e.g. ASA league approved).

**C-6.** All players on the team must wear the same color shirt with readable numbers on the back.

**C-7.** No advertising or sponsorship is allowed to be worn on competition uniforms or warm-ups. Athletes will not be allowed to wear jewelry or awards during competition. No jeans, jean shorts or street shoes will be allowed to be worn during the competition. Athletes will be expected to dress appropriately for the weather and competition. Athletes not in the proper attire will be disqualified. Only softball/baseball pants, sweat pants or shorts will be allowed for players to wear during competition.

**C-8.** Batting helmets are required at all times when at bat or running bases. Helmets cannot be removed until the player is inside the dugout.

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**C-9.** Chinstraps are recommended with batting helmets but not required.

## **SECTION D - UMPIRES AND THEIR DUTIES**

**D-1.** Umpires will conduct the games in accordance with specified rules.

**D-2.** Umpires will have the power to make all decisions regarding play and decisions on any point not specifically covered by the rules.

**D-3.** In case of injury, equipment repair, or unsafe playing conditions, the umpire will stop play.

**D-4.** The umpire may call a game completed (for darkness or weather) after 4 1/2 innings if the home team is ahead in runs, or after five full innings.

## **SECTION E - DIVISIONS**

**E-1.** Teams are assigned to competition divisions according to results of the Softball Team Rating Form (TRF) and 3 game scores.

**E-2.** All teams must play at least 3 games before entering tournament competition. Two of the three games must be played against other Special Olympics agencies besides your own. The teams played and scores must be submitted with Region entry forms.

## **SECTION F - PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES**

**F-1.** Each team will consist of a minimum of 10 and maximum of 18 players. Each team will be allowed up to three coaches. Two base coaches are allowed for the offensive team; one in the first base and one in the third base coaches boxes; and they must remain in the boxes while their team is at bat. The third coach must be in the dugout.

**F-2.** At a tournament entry deadline, a team must at least 10 eligible players for entry into the tournament. During tournament games, a game may begin with 9 players, but when and if the tenth player arrives, that player must be inserted into the line-up in the tenth batting position.

a. Whenever a team is playing with 9 players an out will be taken when the tenth batting position appears. A team must bat 9 players at all times.

b. If the team for any reason falls below 9 players, a forfeit will be declared. A team must have 9 players to end the game.

c. A team starting with 10 players may continue with 9 players as long as an ejection is not the reason the number fell to 9. An out is declared when the tenth position in the batting order comes up. If an ejection occurs to lower the number, a forfeit is declared.

**F-3.** Substitutions may be made anytime the ball is dead. The umpire, scorekeeper, and opposing coach must be notified by the coach.

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- F-4.** A starting player may only re-enter once and must maintain their original position in the batting order.
- F-5.** Substitutes may not re-enter except as a courtesy runner.
- F-6.** Each player substituted into the game must bat at least once or play in the field for at least one full inning (three defensive outs), except in case of injury or completion of game.
- F-7.** The EP (Extra Player) can be used in Special Olympics Illinois competition.
- F-8.** A Courtesy Runner may be used for the catcher to allow them to put catcher equipment on for next inning. The Courtesy Runner must be the last out recorded. If an out has not been recorded in the game, the last batter in the order will be used.
- F-9.** No players may be added to or replaced on the roster after the Team Rating Form (TRF) has been submitted.
- F-10.** Extra Player
- If used, it must be made known prior to the start of the game and be listed in the line-up card in the regular batting order.
  - If the EP is used, the EP must be used the entire game.
  - The EP must remain in the same position in the batting order for the entire game.
  - When an EP is used, all 11 on the starting line-up must bat and any 10 of those 11 may play defense.
  - The EP may be substituted for at any time. The substitute must be a player who has not yet been in the game. The starting EP may re-enter once.

## **SECTION G - THE GAME**

- G-1.** The choice of home team advantage will be determined by a coin toss prior to the start of the game.
- G-2.** A regulation game will consist of 7 innings or 1 1/2 hours play. An equal number of innings will be allowed for the losing team. Time requirements may need to be changed at the discretion of the Tournament Director.
- G-3.** No new inning may begin in the last 15 minutes of the time allotted for game play. At the end of 1 hour and 15 minutes, the inning in progress will be completed.
- G-4.** No stealing will be allowed. Base runners may not lead off but may leave the base when the pitched ball reaches the plate.
- G-5.** A game will be declared completed if:
- One team has a 15 run lead at the end of four innings
  - One team has a 12 run lead at the end of the fifth inning

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- c. New inning would start more than 1 hour 15 minutes from the time game began

**G-6.** A game tied at the end of regulation play will be continued through an unspecified number of innings until a team is ahead at the end of a full inning.

**G-7.** Each team will be allowed ten minutes after the scheduled reporting time to take the field. If a team is not ready to take the field at the end of ten minutes, the game will be forfeited.

**G-8.** All line up cards must be presented to both the umpire and opposing coach before the start of any game.

## **SECTION H. – MODIFIED SOFTBALL TEAM PLAY “COACH PITCH”**

**H-1.** Except for rules outlined below, traditional Special Olympics rules will apply.

**H-2.** Each player will be allowed 5 pitches only.

**H-3.** No walks will be granted, hit or out will be the only two options.

**H-4.** Three swings constitute an out.

**H-5.** Third strike foul tip is an out.

**H-6.** The coach pitching the ball will not be allowed to make intentional interference on the play of the ball. If the coach makes an intentional interference on the play of the ball, it will result in an out for the batter. The only exception is personal protection from the ball.

**H-7.** Coach Pitchers must pitch from the pitching rubber and the coach pitcher is not allowed to coach the batter or any base runners in any way.

**H-8.** Only two Coach Pitchers will be allowed for each team. The two names must be submitted on the original games paperwork and will be the only two pitchers allowed during the tournament. Coach pitchers do not count towards the 4:1 athlete to coach ratio.

**H-9.** Special Olympics Illinois reserves the right to move a Modified Team into a Traditional Team bracket if the rules committee deems the team is inappropriate for Modified Team Play.

## **SECTION I - PITCHING REGULATIONS**

**I-1.** A legal delivery will be one delivered to the batter in underhand motion.

**I-2.** The pitcher will take a position with one foot in contact with the pitching rubber.

**I-3.** Pivot foot must remain in contact with rubber until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.

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- I-4.** The ball must be delivered with a perceptible arc of at least 6 feet and no more than 12 feet.
  - I-5.** The speed of the pitch will be left entirely to the judgment of the umpire.
  - I-6.** No designated pitcher may be used in tournament play. Each team will be responsible for providing a player capable of pitching according to the rules specified.

## **SECTION J - BATTING REGULATIONS**

- J-1.** Each player will bat in the order in which his name appears on the score sheet. A player batting out of order will be called out if an appeal is made to umpire by other team.
- J-2.** Balls and strikes will be called. Strikes will be called for legal pitches, balls swung at but missed, and all foul balls.
- J-3.** A batter will be out on the third strike.
- J-4.** After 2 strikes, a foul ball will be considered a strike and the batter will be called out.
- J-5.** All players must remain on the bench until their turn at bat or in the field. There is no on deck area.

## **SECTION K - TOURNAMENT PLAY**

- K-1.** All teams in tournament play will play at least 2 games. A team will play no more than 2 games on one day and the round robin rules will be used to determine division ties.
- K-2.** All teams in tournament play are divisioned according to the Division Section above.

## **SECTION L – SOI SAFETY REQUIREMENTS**

- L-1.** The adaptation regarding the safety home plate may be found on page 13 of Special Olympics Summer Sports Rules – Softball. This rule will be enforced during Special Olympics Illinois competitions.
- L-2.** A detailed diagram on layout for safety home plate, first base and pitching distances can be found in Softball Section of Policies & Procedures.