

SOFTBALL RULES AND REGULATIONS

All matches shall be conducted under the laws recognised by Softball Australia that are outlined in the "Official Softball Rules", provided they does not clash with any of the following rules. Softball Australia's Rules can be found here: <https://www.softball.org.au/resources/official-playing-rules/>

Minimum players on field:	7	Maximum Players on field:	9
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1. Player's names and initials are to be shown in batting order on the score sheet. Teams must follow the batting order once set. Substitutes must declare the place in the batting order as they enter to the other team's scorer.
2. Players must wear complete uniforms (i.e., School softball uniform); all playing tops are to be of a similar colour.
3. Jewellery must not be worn. If an article of Jewellery is impossible to remove, it must be securely taped.
4. At "Time", the score is taken at the last completed innings or 7 innings maximum (or 90 minutes maximum). *If the team that bats second has an incomplete final innings, the runs scored in that innings will still count towards the score. If delays due to poor weather, two completed innings would constitute a game. If less than two completed innings played, the match shall be called incomplete, and the result is a draw.
5. FINALS – if results are drawn in a finals match, the overall ladder position determines the result. No extra time is played.
6. There shall be a maximum of 12 players per team. Substitutes can only be made at the end of an innings except in the case of injury. The minimum number of players required to commence a game is seven. In the batting order, the blanks can be anywhere in the lineup. These blanks will be "outs" when the blank position has a turn at bat. Players arriving late can take up the positions of the blanks after notification to the umpire and the scorers. Normal batting order will be instituted.
7. Positional changes can be made on the field at any time. Pitchers and catchers must stand in their prescribed positions. Other players may be stationed anywhere on "fair" ground. The fielding positions are Pitcher, Catcher, first baseman, second baseman, third baseman, shortstop, left fielder, centre fielder, right fielder.
8. 7 Run Rule applies to all senior, intermediate, and junior teams. A team continues to bat until 3 outs or they have scored 7 runs (7 runs must be scored in one innings).
9. For safety reasons, first base must be a DOUBLE BASE, where half the base is secured in fair territory, and half the base, (of a different solid contrasting colour), is secured in foul territory.
10. Batters and Runners, and base coaches under 18 years of age must wear helmets.
11. Senior/Intermediate Softball is comprised of Year 9 – Year 12 students, Junior Softball teams are made up of Year 7 – 8 students.
12. Catchers must wear masks with throat protector, helmet, chest protector, and shin guards.
13. Each team is expected to have a competent scorer. Scorers from each school should sit together.
14. Each team is to provide one leather official **12-inch** softball, bats, gloves, and protective gear (all of which must be of official standards) and a scorebook or score sheets. Each School should supply each of their teams with one new ball at the start of each season, then another new ball for Finals (where applicable). Bats are to be of the specification set down in the Softball Australia Rulebook.



15. Umpires

An external badged umpire should be employed to officiate all matches, which the home team is responsible for providing. In the event of such an official not being available, Coaches may umpire. Ideally, all games should have a plate and one line umpire.

- The plate umpire judges batting and appeals.
- The line umpire may take up different positions on the playing field wherever is the best position to render base decisions.

The umpires share equal authority to:

- Judge illegal pitches.
- Judge base stealing.
- Expel players or team officials.
- Suspend play.

The most difficult games to umpire are those where the skills level is poor. Inevitably in these games the umpire will have many judgment calls, interpretation of rules and may make an error in a call. Coaches must accept this.

Intimidating the Umpire is not in the spirit of the game. If you have an experienced umpire, you have the right to question the decision if you think it is a misinterpretation of the rules but not if it is a judgment call. Do not approach with rancour or a poor attitude. Please adhere to the SEISA Code of Conduct in these matters.

16. End of innings – All players should run from and to their positions, not forgetting warm-up balls for throwing. Coaches should organise the team prior to the game beginning, giving thought as to when the substitutions could take place, minimizing the stoppage time for changes.

17. After the game: It is customary as a last rite to line up and shake all the opposing team players and coaches to shake hands, thanking them for the game. Care should be exercised that this is done expeditiously with pep talks by coach left until after the last rites of the game.

18. Ladder Points: 2 points will be awarded for a win, 1 point for a draw and 0 points for a loss. In the event of schools being equal on points the final position is determined by percentage.

19. Coaches

- a. Coaches are to stay in the coaching box for the batting side and behind the foul/dead ball line when fielding.
- b. Any under 18-year-old coaches at 1st or 3rd base must wear a batting helmet whilst in the coaching box or on the field of play.
- c. Coaches are expected to ensure that all safety equipment is always in good order and in use at all times as their duty of care.
- d. A list is given for guidance:
 - i. Safety base at first bag
 - ii. Batting helmets on all batters, on deck batter, runners, and underage coaches.
 - iii. Catchers are wearing full protective gear (FULL regulation catching equipment) at all times when on the diamond and players taking warm-up pitches are suitably equipped.
 - iv. Umpires are appropriately protected.
 - v. Equipment is tidy and behind the dead/fair ball line.
 - vi. Benches are well behind the dead/fair ball line.
 - vii. One batter swinging for warm up at a time.

20. Blood Rule: In the event of a “blood injury” the game should stop and the injured removed and replaced before the game continues. The injured player may return at any time once bleeding has ceased.

21. Infield Fly Rule does **not** apply to any SEISA competitions.

22. Weather/Field Conditions: SEISA supports the premise that Softball is an all-weather game.

Doubtful weather – the decision to play or stop play is the decision of the two coaches. If the coaches fail to agree, the umpire will decide. Players who do not have suitable footwear are at a disadvantage, but this is not a reason for the game to be abandoned.

The umpire shall be the sole judge regarding whether the field is safe to play on. Each team needs to have completed at least one full innings for a match result to be determined.

23. Key areas in game play that always require urgent attention and teaching to players by coaches are:
- Batters should be instructed to take their position in the batting box by passing behind the umpire when taking up the batting box farthest from their bench.
 - To protect the catcher and umpire from injury, the bat should not be thrown at any time. Umpires will be instructed to take action for dangerous play. After a warning, a repeat throw could result in the umpire putting the batter out.
 - Throwing equipment in general and into the bench area in particular is not to be condoned and the coach or umpire shall take action. Temper tantrums normally associated with the throwing act shall be severely actioned by the coach. Helmets damaged are to be thrown away permanently.
 - The ball should be returned to the pitcher in the 8ft circle. The pitcher stands behind the pitching plate, and then steps forward onto the plate with hands separated. At this point the catcher's signals are received, and then the hands are put together for the pitch. This full stop position must be maintained for a minimum of one second and a maximum of ten seconds before the pitch.
 - The difference between a tag and a force play, when each is applicable.
 - Third Strike Rule: Batters and catchers must be taught when the third strike is dropped by the catcher that the out is given when either a throw is made to first or a tag on the batter/runner. However, in a situation with one or no outs and first base is already occupied by a base runner, the batter is automatically called out and may not advance to first. The base runners may steal on a dropped third strike at their own risk, as the ball is still 'live'.
A run shall not be scored if the third out of the inning is a result of a runner being forced out due to the batter becoming a baserunner.
 - Eight Foot Circle Rule: Base runners must understand how this rule operates when the pitcher is in the 8ft circle. It is a cause of dissatisfaction with the umpiring; therefore, it is better to teach the correct method then the umpiring dissatisfaction ceases.
 - Leaving the Base Early: Teach the runners not to leave early as they will be called out if caught by the umpire.

24. Diamond size and pitching distance for each grade:

	Year Level	Pitching	Distance	Base	Distance
Senior/Intermediate	9, 10, 11 & 12	40ft.	12.20m	60ft.	18.30m
Junior	7 & 8	35ft.	10.67m	55ft.	16.76m

25. Pitchers must have at least one foot on the plate to begin the pitch. They must come to a complete stop. Once the hands come together, the pitcher must pause then deliver the pitch. The pause must be between 2 and 5 seconds in duration.