

N.C.D.S. Three-Pitch Rules

A. ROSTERS & SUBSTITUTIONS

1. Roster for each game is a minimum of 10 players. (no maximum) In the event that a team is unable to have 10 players, vacant spots will be automatically out when these spots are due up in the batting order.
2. The number of players on defense is 9. All players on the roster are in the batting order and the order does not change for the entire game regardless of substitutions in the field.
3. Substitution from the roster may take place at any time while the team is on defense. Players who are replaced may play again. Neither the umpire nor the other team needs to be notified of the change.
4. If a player is unable to continue playing due to injury, and the team has only 10 on the roster, the player may be replaced. Once replaced, he may not re-enter that game. If the team has more than 10 on the roster, that player may be scratched, without the team being charged an out. The player would be ineligible to return to that game. Should the team want to keep the player in the line-up, hoping that the player could come back later in the game, they must take an out for that player when they are due to bat.
5. Coaches may use three pinch-runners during the course of the game. Umpires and scorekeepers must be notified of the change. Pinch runners replace runners at one of the bases when the play is dead. If all three runners have been used and a pinch runner is due up to bat, the runner stays and the team is charged an out. An injured player who is being replaced for the rest of the game may be replaced without the use of a pinch runner being charged to the team.
6. If a player bats out of turn, players return to where they were prior to the at-bat and an out is charged. After the score keepers have checked scores and the half-inning is declared over,

changes will not be made. Umpires will decide where in the order a team should start next time up.

B. EQUIPMENT

1. Players footwear must be running shoes or rubber-cleated shoes. No steel spiked shoes.

2. The catcher must wear a protective face mask.

3. The pitcher must wear a batting helmet while pitching.

4. Wood or aluminum softball bats must be used.

5. Batters and base runners must wear helmets with chin straps that are done up.

6. A new (or nearly new) 12" Red Dot official softball must used. Other similar softballs will be considered.

C. PITCHING

1. Teams pitch to their own players. Any underhand pitch is legal. Each player receives a maximum of three pitches. If the batter doesn't hit any of the three pitches into fair territory, then the batter is out.

2. The pitcher may not field the ball. If a batted ball makes contact with the pitcher, their clothing, or their glove, then the play is ruled to be dead, the runners return to their bases, and the batter is out.

3. Only the 5 infielders may throw the ball back to the pitcher after a play is completed. If one of the outfielders throws to the pitcher, the pitcher may let the ball go, thus allowing runners to advance. **The rover will be considered an infielder if they are in the infield area.**

4. The pitcher may coach runners (get back, run, keep going, etc.) but must do so from the pitching circle and may not interfere in the play in anyway. The pitcher must "duck" on any throws that they might be considered to be in the way of (eg. from 3rd to 1st). **If they are in the way, the umpire may call the runner out.**

5. The pitcher should have one foot in the circle on the pitching delivery.

6. Teams may use any number of pitchers, but may not switch until a new batter is up (unless an injury occurs).

7. When the ball is in the possession of the pitcher inside the pitcher's circle, the play has stopped. The base runners must return to the base he or she last touched or proceed at their own risk to the next base but if the runner has stopped, slowed down or hesitates he or she must return to the base last touched. Violation of this rule may result in the runner being called out for stealing.

D. HITTING

1. The batter may step forward or to the side (except onto the plate) but not backward (for the protection of the catcher) when swinging at a pitch. If a batter steps backward or onto the plate and makes contact with the pitched ball, he or she shall be called "out" and base runners may not advance. Note: A swing and a miss in this situation is not an out unless it is the third pitch.

2. Bunting is not permitted. Anyone who attempts to bunt will be called out.

3. A ball hit by the batter that strikes the plate is called a foul ball. This is true even if the ball goes into "fair" territory.

E. RUNNING

1. On a close play at first, the runner must hit the right half of the safety bag (if there is a safety bag at first) and may then over run the base into foul territory. Failure to hit the safety side of the base results in an out at first. If the runner over runs into fair territory, and makes an attempt to go to second, they can be tagged out. When no throw will be made to first the runner may hit the left side of the base and turn into fair territory towards second base.

2. A base runner may not leave the base until the ball is hit. Lead-offs will result in the base runner being called out by the umpire. This includes leaving the bag when a teammate has swung but missed the ball. They will not be called out if the batter fouls the ball.

3. Advancing to the next base is free and uncontested if there is an overthrow and the ball goes "out of play". If the ball stays "in play" (i.e. not into the "out of play" area), the runner may advance at his or her own risk.. There is no limit on advancing to the next base, if there is an overthrow into the "in play" territory. Outside the foul lines and still inside the fences is considered to be "in play".

4. A base runner can return to first or second base regardless of the distance he or she has gone to the next base as long as he or she is not regarded by the umpire to be stealing. A runner trying to score from third base may return to third base only if he or she has not broken the plane of the half-way line between third and home. If a runner has broken the plane of this

line he or she must continue "home". In the event of a fly ball that is caught, a runner at third who has passed the halfway line may return to third to tag up.

5. Under no circumstances is a player allowed to slide into a base. The player will be called out if this occurs. It is the responsibility of the runner to avoid contact with a batted ball and a player attempting to field a batted ball.

6. To score a run, the base runner must break the plane of the scoring line before the ball is safely in the hands of the catcher who is touching home plate. All plays at the plate are force plays. A runner who touches the plate or crosses the safety line will be called out.

F. FIELDING

1. Infielders may not stand on the base paths if there is a runner in a position to advance past them.

2. Infield Fly Rule: applies only when there are fewer than two outs, and there is a force play at third (runners on first and second base, or bases loaded). In these situations, if a fair fly ball is hit that, in the umpire's judgment, is catchable by an infielder with ordinary effort, the batter is out regardless of whether the ball is actually caught in flight. The rule states that the umpire is supposed to announce, "Infield fly, batter's out!" Umpires also typically raise one arm straight up to signal to everyone that the rule is in effect.

3. Runners must be tagged on non-force plays at the bases.

4. Pop-ups to the catcher are out if the ball went higher than the batters head **and was caught**.

G. SCORING

1. The team to be first to bat will be determined by the umpire's flip of a coin. Each team must designate a captain for this purpose.

2. Each team must have an official scorer. The batting order must be indicated on an official score sheet. The score keepers must check after each half inning that the scorers agree on the score.

3. Teams may score a maximum of seven runs per inning except in the final inning.

4. If a team has won and does not need their last at-bat, they will be awarded the average number of runs per inning that they scored in the other innings of that game. (This is necessary in case of a tie breaker at the end of the round robin.) If a team wins the game during their last at-bat, the game ends immediately, and the score they receive in that inning will be the higher of their average from the other innings of that game, or the number of runs scored in the game winning inning. (See "Clarification of Softball Scoring Rule.")

H. DIAMONDS

1. Approximate field dimensions:

a. Distance from pitching rubber to plate - boys - 11.5 m

- girls - 11 m

b. Distance between bases - boys - 18 meters

- girls - 16 meters

c. Diameter of pitching circle - 3 m

2. All players when on offense, except the batter and the next batter, must stay in the area designated for their team behind the "out of play" line. The team on offense may have a coach at both first and third base. Only the "on deck" hitter may be in the play area.

I. SPORTSMANSHIP

1. The games must be played at a regular playing tempo for the whole duration of the game. At all times teams must run out to and in from their defensive positions, particularly out-fielders.

2. If a coach desires a point clarified by the umpire, he/she must wait until the play is over and then ask for a "time out". Under no circumstances may players verbally object to a decision of the umpire.

3. After each game the coaches and players must shake hands.

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