

Cathletics Slow-Pitch Softball Rules

(Updated 5/18/2026)

Yellow: new last year (2025)

Blue: new this year (2026)

Pink: changed at coaches meeting 2026

Bold: Important info

Current I.S.A. slow pitch rules will be enforced unless exceptions are noted:

1. GENERAL

- A. A continuous batting order of all available players must be used. Injured players will be skipped with no penalty.
- B. A team is permitted 10 defensive players: 4 outfield, 4 infield, one pitcher and one catcher.
 - a. All outfield players must play on the grass, two on each side of 2nd base.
 - b. 2 infield players must play on each side of 2nd base (no shifts).
 - c. The catcher must play in dead ball territory within 15 feet of home plate.
- C. **Each team must have two rostered female players for each game.**
 - a. **If a team does not have two rostered females for a game, they may still play but will be charged an "out" at the end of their lineup each time through.**
 - b. **two female players are required to play the field each inning.**
 - i. **Only eight men are permitted in the field each inning unless a female is injured during the contest.**
- D. **Each rostered player must play two defensive innings per game.**
- E. Each game will start and end with prayer. Teams will line up on their respective foul line with hats removed for prayer. Teams will shake hands after the game's closing prayer.

2. THE PLAYING FIELD

- A. Bases will be 65 feet apart.
 - a. Bases will feature a safety base **at first base** to mitigate collisions. Fielders must use the inside base. Runners must use the outside base.
- B. Pitching distance is 50 feet.
- C. Teams will establish ground rules prior to the game regarding out of play areas, permanent obstacles in the field of play, etc.

3. EQUIPMENT

- A. Closed-toe shoes are required. Gym or running shoes are recommended. Rubber training shoes and single molded plastic/rubber soccer-type cleats are permitted. Metal cleats or spikes of any type are not allowed.
- B. **League softballs will be .52/300 rated.**
- C. For a bat to be deemed legal it must have an approval stamp from a major softball certifier (ASA, USA, USSSA, NSA, ISA, etc.). It must be free of rough or sharp edges. Baseball bats and fungo bats are illegal.
 - a. **Bats stamped for "USA Senior League" play are illegal.**

4. PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES

- A. All players must be properly registered with the team they are playing for. Substitutes or “guest players” must receive written authorization to play from the league commissioner at least 48 hours prior to the game to play. Player eligibility will be determined solely by the league commissioner.
 - a. Guest players are only permitted when a team fields 12 or less rostered players for a game.
 - i. Exception: a female guest player is permitted, no matter the number of available players, to satisfy the female player requirement in rule 1-D.
 - 1. Additionally, a female substitute may serve as a “third woman” for a team.
 - b. Guest players are limited to 2 league appearances per season.
 - c. Guest players are not permitted in postseason play.
 - d. Guest players may only appear with one team during the season.
 - e. Guest players may not be rostered on another team in the league.
 - f. Guest players must bat last in the batting order.
 - g. Penalty: game will be forfeited if an illegal player is found.
- B. A team must have 8 players present to start the game. Teams playing shorthanded will not be assessed outs for those spots in the batting order. Players arriving late may have their name added to the bottom of the order.
- C. Blood Rule. A player who is bleeding, has an open wound, or has blood on the uniform shall be considered an injured player. Such players may not return to the game until the bleeding has stopped and the wound properly covered.
- D. "Shorthanded Rule". If a player must leave the game and leaves an open spot in the order, that spot will be skipped with no penalty.

5. THE GAME

- A. The game will consist of 6 innings. In the event of rain or darkness, 4 innings or 3 1/2 if the home team is ahead, will constitute a game. **A 15-run rule will be in effect after 3 innings and a 12-run rule after 4 innings.**
- B. Teams can score a maximum of 8 runs per inning in innings 1-3. Unlimited runs in innings 4-6.
 - 1. This rule will be waived in the 3rd inning for teams in jeopardy of being run-ruled.
- C. No new inning may be started after 65 minutes have elapsed from when the game began.
- D. **Field warm-ups between innings will only occur during the first inning.**

6. PITCHING

- A. At the beginning of each half-inning the pitcher will be permitted three warmup pitches.
- B. The pitch must have a minimum arc of 6 feet. The maximum allowable arc is 12 ft. from the ground. **If the pitch does not meet these requirements, an illegal pitch shall be called immediately and a ball will be called on the batter at the conclusion of the pitching action.**
 - a. **A batter is still permitted to swing at an illegal pitch and put the ball in play. The batter forfeits the illegal pitch award if a swing is attempted.**
- C. A pitcher is required to allow the batter to become reasonably set in the box.
 - a. If, in the judgement of the umpire, the pitcher is attempting a quick pitch, a “no pitch” shall be called.

- D. The pitcher must deliver the ball in a continuous, underhand motion on the first forward swing of the pitching arm past the hip.
- E. A “strike” will be called when **any part** of the ball makes contact with home plate or its extension, or if, in the judgement of the umpire, the batter made an attempt to strike the pitch. Otherwise, the pitch will be deemed a ball.
 - a. **The strike mat will be 20 inches by 36 inches, aligned with the front edge of home plate.**
 - b. **The strike mat will serve as home plate for the duration of a play.**
 - i. **If the strike mat is dislodged during play and no longer covers more than half of home plate, home plate alone will serve as the 4th base during a live play.**

7. BATTING

- A. Bunting is not allowed and will result in a dead ball with the batter being called out.
 - a. **A bunt is a judgement call made by the umpire.**
- B. Each batter will start with a 1-1 count. Two foul balls after a batter has received two strikes will result in an out.**
- C. No outfielder may make an out of a female batter-runner on the initial play at first base.**
- D. The batter is out when:
 1. A batter appears in the batter's box with or is discovered using an altered or illegal bat. Baseball and fungo bats are illegal.
 2. A fielder intentionally drops a fair fly ball that can be caught by an infielder, with ordinary effort, with first and second or first, second, and third bases occupied with less than 2 outs. The ball is dead and all runners return to the base they occupied at the time the ball was pitched.
 3. The batter bunts. The ball is dead and all runners return to the base they occupied when the ball was pitched.
 4. When any foot touches the ground completely outside the batter's box or if any part of the foot touches the plate and the ball is hit fair or foul.

8. RUNNER AND BATTER-RUNNER

- A. Base stealing is not allowed. Runners can leave their bases when a pitched ball is hit.
- B. When a base runner must return while the ball is in play, he/she must touch the bases in reverse order.
- C. No runner may return to touch a missed base or one he/she had left illegally after a following runner has scored. The defense must appeal for the out to be granted.
- D. When a defensive player is in possession of the ball a runner may not crash into the defender.
 - a. A runner should never initiate malicious contact, regardless of the position of the fielder.
 - b. Sliding feet first is legal.**
 - c. Sliding headfirst is only legal when a player is returning to a base.**
- E. Baserunners may not begin a new baserunning advance when:
 - a. The pitcher is in possession of the ball within the vicinity of the mound and
 - b. The pitcher verbally requests time

- G. Injured Runner: If an accident to a batter-runner or base runner prevents him/her from proceeding in the game, a substitute runner (the last batted out of the same gender) is permitted.
 - a. Any person who receives a pinch runner due to an injury is ineligible to play in the rest of the contest.

9. Conflicts and League Management

- A. If a rule/bookkeeping issue is raised, a written complaint (via e-mail) must be submitted to the commissioner within 24 hours for investigation. As much detail as possible should be included in the report.
- B. Tie-breaking procedures:
 - a. If two teams are tied:
 - i. Head-to-head record
 - ii. Run differential
 - iii. Runs allowed
 - iv. Coin flip
 - b. If three or more teams are tied:
 - i. Run differential
 - ii. Runs allowed
 - iii. Coin flip
- C. **This is a recreational, Christian league. Vulgar language, arguing with umpires/league staff, taunting, and other unsportsmanlike acts committed by players or fans are strictly prohibited. Any such behavior should be immediately reported to the league commissioner. Penalties, including forfeiture, suspension, and removal from the league may be assessed for any violation of this rule.**