Townsville Primary School Sports Association
Softball Sub-Committee

Softball Rules

**Diamond:**
- Baselines: Junior Boys/Girls 15 metres
- Pitching Distances: Junior Boys/Girls 9 metres
- Dead Ball Line: Located 5 metres from diamond in foul territory

**Game Times:**
All games will commence and be finalised on the sound of the hooter
Start: 12:30pm    Finish: 1:50pm
At the end of the game the score will be judged on the following criteria:
a. if the second team at bat has not completed it’s turn and has passed the first at bat score, then the innings will count.
b. If the second team at bat has not completed it’s turn and has failed to overtake the first at bat, then the innings will not count, and the score will revert to the previous completed innings (the first at bat teams runs will not be included from that incomplete inning)

**Ground Rules:**
1. Players must remove all jewellery (earings may be taped).
2. Bats not currently in use must be removed from diamond before ball is pitched.
3. Batters who throw bats will be declared out. Ball will be called dead.
4. Catcher must wear mask, helmet, chin guard, chest plate, shin pads and glove.
5. Batters must wear a helmet while batting and base running.
6. A second backstop from batting team is allowed to stop the ball only [not throw], must stand behind the dead ball line
7. If no score card/results slip is submitted then both teams will receive no points, both teams should submit a score card/results

**Batting**
1. A team consists of nine to fourteen players – all players will bat through in order [same order for whole game], but only nine field at one time. A team must have at least six players. If a team has less than nine players then those players missing will be considered as automatic outs when their turn arises in the batting order.

2. The ball is pitched to the batter, and the following will occur:
a. a ball is called if it does not enter the strike zone and the batter does not strike at the ball
b. a strike is called if the ball enters the strike zone [between armpits and knees of the batter AND over home plate], and is not hit by the batter or the batter swings at any pitch and misses.

c. A foul is called if the batter hits the ball outside of the V of the diamond [marked by baselines].

3. A batter may accrue 3 strikes, if they do not hit the ball on the third strike and the catcher catches it then the batter is out. If the catcher fails to catch the strike then the batter is entitled to attempt to run to first base.

4. The batter may accrue three balls, at which time a tee will be used in place of the next pitch [this is to promote participation!]. When batting with the aid of a tee if a batter:
   a) Misses the ball completely or hits only the tee a strike shall be called.
   b) Makes contact with the ball and it travels less than 4.5m a foul will be called.
   c) Hits the ball more than 4.5m but the tee falls over then the hit is fair and the ball is in play.
   d) Fouls when batting with a tee will count as strikes.

5. When using a tee, and strike three is called, the ball is then considered dead, and no runner may advance. Since there is no catcher the batter is out (considered caught behind). This is also the case with a foul as strike three off a tee.

6. Batting shall continue until nine batters have had a bat. A batter may advance to first base when hit by a pitched ball, providing they made some effort to avoid the ball.

7. When the 9th batter comes to the plate the umpire should call last batter. The ball is then alive and dead as usual until it comes to the final play. The final play is when the 9th player must run. The following may occur:
   1. Strike 3, ball caught by catcher, side away no further score can be made.
   2. Strike 3, wild pitch, ball goes dead, batter and all runners come home, all runs count.
   3. Batter hits ball and is caught, side away no one comes home.
   4. Batter hits ball and all runners are forced to run home. They may be forced out on any base ahead of them or tagged out. A ball on home forces all runners out and is side away.
   5. Batter hits ball and a fielder throws or knocks ball into dead ball territory, batter and all runners come home.

**Pitching**

1. Umpire should indicate ‘Play Ball’ when pitcher, catcher, batter and all fielders are ready.
2. Pitcher must start with both feet firmly on the plate, with the ball in both hands in front of the body. The ball must be delivered underarm.

3. Pitcher’s back foot must remain grounded until ball is released.

Running to Base
1. A batter running to first base may touch the yellow half of the safety base and overrun it, providing he/she returns immediately and does not attempt to run to second base. If an attempt to run to second base is made, the fielder is entitled to tag the runner out prior to them regaining the base. Second and third bases cannot be overrun, the runner must stop on the base or slide into the base. Runners tagged after overrunning a base are out. Sliding is allowed however players are advised to wear some form of long pants if they intend to slide. If a base runner takes out a member of the fielding team when sliding into a base then the base runner is out. Teachers should assess the ability of individual players before teaching and/or allowing players to slide into bases. Sliding is only permitted at second and third base and at home plate.

2. To be declared out:
   a. On first base, a fielder must catch the ball and touch the white half of the safety base or tag the runner before the runner touches the base.
   b. On second and third base, the runner must be tagged by the fielder while the runner is not in contact with base. [Exception: when the runner is forced to run to the next base, the fielder may tag the runner OR touch the base]
   c. At home plate, the runner must be tagged by the fielder before they touch the plate unless bases are loaded in which case it is a forced out and the fielder need only make contact with home plate whilst in possession of the ball.

3. A runner may return to any base providing they have not been tagged out, no matter how far they have run – there is no halfway rule, however base runners must stay within 1 m of a direct route between bases when running.

4. If a base runner collides with a fielder when running it is the umpire’s decision as to whether the runner is out for obstructing the fielder or whether the fielder is guilty of obstructing the base runner. Advantage should go to the base runner.

5. Runner must not leave the base prior to the ball leaving the pitcher’s hand otherwise the runner is called out and the pitch must be replayed

6. When the umpire declares a foul ball, no runner shall be entitled to advance to a new base

7. If a ball has been pitched and it ends up in foul territory, eg the catcher fumbles; players are entitled to steal a base.

8. On the 3rd strike with loaded bases if there is a wild pitch and the ball goes dead all base runners and the batter are allowed to advance to the next base. (Unless it is the last batter when all base runners come home).

Getting Out
1. Batter is out:
   a. if he/she bats out of order
   b. when he/she hits a fair ball caught on the full, even in foul territory
      [Exception: when ball is caught by the catcher but is not above head height]
c. if he/she interferes with a fielder fielding a batted ball  
d. if they do not hit the ball on the third strike and are caught by the catcher.

2. Runner is out:  
a. if they leave the base before the ball leaves the pitcher's hand  
b. if they are hit by a batted ball  
c. if they are tagged before reaching the next base  
d. if they attempt to avoid a fielder attempting to tag him/her by moving further than a metre from the baseline

3. Forced Outs – if a runner is forced to run to the next base then fielders do not have to tag, they may touch the base the runner is forced towards while in possession of the ball to put a runner out. e.g. batter hits ball – runner on first is automatically forced to run to second base, fielder only has to touch second base while in possession of the ball before runner does to effect the out

4. When a fly ball is caught, any base runners must touch the base they were on prior to the pitch before advancing to the next base. If the runner is tagged, or the fielder touches the base while in possession of the ball prior to the base runner touching the bag then they are additionally out.

**Dead Ball**

1. A ball is dead when it goes over the dead ball line, usually as the result of a wild throw, the umpire shall direct all base runners to move safely to the base they were running to plus an additional base.

2. When playing without a net and a ball is pitched dead. The runners may advance to the next base but not home unless all bases are loaded. If this occurs on strike three the batter gets to advance to third base if it is vacant. If bases are loaded all batsman advance one base and the player on third comes home. Unless it is last batter when all batters come home.

**Scoring Runs**

1. One run shall be scored every time a base runner completes a circuit of all four bases, having touched every base on the way around.

2. When the ninth batter bats the ball shall be deemed dead when a fielder has it on home plate as all runners are forced to run home.

*These rules do not represent the full international softball rules, however they have been designed to ensure that primary-school aged children can participate in a game appropriate to their physical development. If you believe that there is any rule not adequately explained or covered in these rules please advise the TPSSA Softball Subcommittee by email.*

*Teachers, please understand that all students will have varying degrees of knowledge of the game and the rules, as will your colleagues. Remind students at the beginning of the game of the importance of fair play and respecting the decision of the umpire [which may differ slightly from their own teacher’s interpretation of the rules].*