Science Divisions
Summer Softball League
Rules and Regulations

Preamble: The Summer Softball League is run with the intent of getting people out of their labs/offices, getting them involved in a vaguely athletic activity, and encouraging social interaction with members of their department and with students from other disciplines. To that end, the league strives to maintain fair play and a casual atmosphere, with a minimum of fuss or strife. The summer softball league is a co-ed league encouraging participating of players of all skill levels.

I) Eligibility
   A) Teams
      1) A team is made eligible for play in the league by submitting a roster of at least fifteen names to the Commissioner. This roster should also include the name, phone number, and e-mail address of the captain and an alternate who can be reached when the captain is out of town.
      2) The Commissioner (as duly appointed by the Physical Science Division Social Committee) shall announce a meeting for prospective team captains in April. Rosters shall be due the Friday following this meeting.
      3) Teams wishing to enter the league after this date must petition the league for entry. The new team will be accepted into the league only by a consensus of votes cast by the captains of the league’s current teams.
      4) A team can be made ineligible at any time during the season if it is in gross violation of any of the league’s rules and regulations. Ineligibility is determined by a simple majority of votes cast by the captains of the league’s current teams.
      5) This is a co-ed league. Gender makeup of some departments can be skewed, but participation is encouraged for all members and genders. An official required minimum was enacted to ensure co-ed participation. Please see section III, C.5.

   B) Team Players
      1) The Science Divisions Summer Softball League is open to all members of the Physical Science Division, the Biological Science Division, the Institute for Molecular Engineering, and the Medical School. These shall be known as the Science Divisions (SD).
      2) Teams may invite other university affiliates not associated with a science division to play in the league provided that the team maintains a majority of Science Division members during the entire season.
      3) Players are eligible to play on only one team during a season. This team is the first team the player plays with. Players may not be on more than one of the initial rosters.
      4) Players not from the science divisions must play in at least one regular season game in order to be eligible for the playoff games.
      5) New players may be added to a team’s roster during the season as long as it is not in violation of the other rules of this section.

   C) Playoffs
      1) All league teams are eligible to participate in the league’s post-season schedule. Each team is guaranteed at least one post-season game.

II) Pre-Game
   A) Playing fields
1) All games, without exception, shall be played at Washington Park. If there are five or more games scheduled at one time, the games will be assigned a field number. Otherwise, the teams may choose a field at Washington Park in whatever manner they like.

B) Playing Field Setup
   1) The home team is responsible for bringing the league provided equipment to the field and setting up for play. The bag contains three bases, a home plate, a mat (home plate extension), several bats and balls marked as belonging to the SD, and five cones.
   2) The bag is to be retrieved by the home team from another team, which does not need it the following week. The bag should be arranged to be picked up well before the game time.
   3) Each equipment bag is stocked only at the beginning of the season. If the contents of a bag are lost during the season, they will not be replaced. At the end of each game, the captain is responsible for making sure that the bag contains all the equipment.
   4) Bases are set approximately 60 feet (20 paces) away from each other.
   5) Two cones are placed down each foul line. They should be placed 20 and 30 paces (approximately 60 and 90 feet) from the base on that foul line. The remaining cone is set halfway between third base and home plate, approximately five feet into foul territory.
   6) The home plate extension is to be fitted against home plate. It is the catcher’s responsibility to keep the mat in its proper place throughout the game.
   7) The pitching rubber is to be placed “15” paces from home plate, roughly equidistant from all 4 bases.

C) Game ball and scorecard
   1) The league will supply a game ball for each game. The visiting team is responsible for bringing this ball to the field. The ball should not be used before the game.
   2) The game balls are issued to all team captains before the season begins. If the balls are lost or used, it is the responsibility of that team to replace them.
   3) The league will provide a scorecard for each game. The visiting team is responsible for bringing the card out to the field. The card is to be used for reporting the final score of the game to the league as indicated by the card’s instructions. In addition, the card may be used to keep track of inning-by-inning scoring, if so desired by the individual teams. Both teams should write their lineups down on the card at the start of the game.
   4) It is the responsibility of the winning team to return the completed card, signed by the captain of each team, to the Commissioner within seven days of the completed game. A game becomes official only when the scorecard has been submitted to the Commissioner. If the scorecard is not returned during the seven-day reporting period, the game will not be included in either teams’ record. Alternatively, an email to the Commissioner from each captain, or one that is copied to the opposing captain who does not object to the final report, will suffice.

III) Game Rules
   A) Starting
      1) All games should begin promptly at the scheduled starting time. Teams should see to it that warm-up or practice periods end well before the scheduled starting time. Note: All games are currently scheduled to begin at 5:15 P.M. Some games at the beginning of the season will need to be changed to 5:30 to avoid seminar conflicts. The captain of a team with a time conflict should make sure that the opposing captain agrees to the later starting time or a rescheduling by 12:00pm the Thursday before the game. An effort will be made to schedule teams with seminar conflicts against each other in the early part of the season.
2) Teams can decide to reschedule a game before its starting time. The rescheduled game must be played before the second Friday in July, if originally scheduled on or before June 23; and by at least two days before the scheduled end of the season, if originally scheduled on June 24 or later. (If honest attempts to reschedule an early season game by mid-July fall through, the commissioner may waive this rule at his discretion). Contact the Commissioner with the rescheduled date as soon as it is determined to avoid the scorecard penalty of Chapter II, Section C, Paragraph 4.

3) In case of inclement weather, the Commissioner will decide whether or not games will be played that day. The decision will be made by 2:00 P.M. on the day of the games. If a game cannot be completed due to inclement weather, it should be rescheduled subject to conditions in Paragraph 2 above. This is the responsibility of the captains.

4) Each year the schedule will contain an open week between the last week of the season and the beginning of the playoffs. This week can be used to make-up weather cancelled games.

B) Forfeiture
1) Failure of a team to field eight players by 15 minutes after the scheduled start of the game will result in forfeiture of the game by the team lacking a sufficient number of players. There are absolutely no exceptions to this rule. The score of a forfeited game is 15 to 0.

2) If both teams have an insufficient number of players 15 minutes after the scheduled start of the game, the teams can either (1) reschedule the game or (2) accept a tie by double forfeit. In this instance both teams have a forfeit for the purposes of the tiebreakers in Chapter V, Section B, Paragraph 1.a.

C) Fielding Positions
1) Up to ten players can be on the playing field for the defensive team, the additional position being occupied by an extra outfielder.
   (a) Note that Paragraph 4 does not bind the additional fielder
   (b) Note that Paragraph 5 puts some restraint on number of fielders based on gender makeup

2) Teams with only nine players in the field must play a pitcher and catcher, unless the batting team opts to provide a “courtesy catcher.” These catchers only call fair and foul and return the ball to the pitcher; they should move to the side once the ball is put in play. Other positions may be filled, so long as Paragraph 4 is not violated.

3) Teams with only eight players must provide a pitcher, but the batting team is required to provide a courtesy catcher, as described above. Other positions may be filled, so long as Paragraph 4 is not violated.

4) Before each pitch, no more than 7 players, including the catcher, may be positioned inside the arc formed by the two first foul line cones with home plate as the center of the arc. The “outfielders” may move across this line once contact has been made. Note: This rule is intended to provide less-experienced hitters a chance to get a hit without being faced with a wall of fielders surrounding the infield. Because of the difficulty in determining the exact location of the arc, some leeway should be given to the outfielders regarding their position before each pitch.

5) In order to be able to field the full 10 players allowed, at least three non-male players must be in the field at all times. This is intended to be an absolute minimum and not a guideline by which to play. This was enacted to encourage a welcoming and fun social co-ed league.
   (a) If a team cannot reach this minimum, they will be assessed one out for each non-male player that they are missing, and they may have no more than 7 men in the field at any one time. Therefore, if they only have one non-male player, that team shall play with 8 players in the field and be assessed 2 outs at the end of their batting order.
(b) If a team is under this minimum (e.g. one or two non-males), then they cannot have a non-male catcher.
(c) Please be reasonable and considerate in allowing situations for teams to occasionally rest players if due to abnormal circumstances a low number of non-male players are playing that day.

D) Length of Games
1) All games are scheduled for seven innings. The game ends when the team having scored fewer runs finishes their seventh at-bat.
2) Tie games can proceed past the seventh inning until either (1) the tie is broken or (2) a full eleven innings have been played. In event (2), the game is declared a tie unless both captains agree to continue until a winner can be determined. In the playoffs, games must be played until a winner can be determined.
3) If the weather becomes inclement or darkness becomes an issue, a game is official if the team having scored fewer runs finishes their fourth at-bat.
4) A game is official if a 15-run advantage exists after the team having scored fewer runs finishes their fifth or sixth at-bat. a. Any game being stopped do to a 15-run differential will show a 15-run differential for seeding purposes regardless of the final score.

E) Pitching
1) The offense will provide a pitcher for their own team. The defense will still have a defender at the standard pitcher position, but the offensive pitcher will deliver the pitch
   (a) If a batted ball hits the offensive pitcher, it is a dead ball and the batter is out.
   (b) Each batter gets a maximum of 10 pitches. If they have not hit the ball in play in 10 pitches, they are out.
2) Walks and strikeouts are not charged.
3) All balls must be slow-pitched and should have an arc with its apex between the height of the backstop and the shoulders of the hitter.
4) Pitchers should not intentionally put spin on the ball and should release the ball with their palm facing upwards.
5) Pitchers should stand on the rubber positioned equidistant from the 3 bases and home plate. (Too far away leads to pitches thrown too hard and with inappropriate arc as well as an unfair fielding advantage; too close risks injury to the pitcher). This positioning rule applies both to the offensive pitcher and the defensive pitcher.
6) Pitchers may not change pitching hands during a single at-bat.

F) Hitting
1) Hitters will get a maximum of 10 pitches from their own team’s pitcher, if they have not hit a ball in play over the course of 10 pitches then they are out.
2) Due to the varying experience of the participants in the league, hitters should make a strong effort to put decently pitched balls in play as soon as possible. Failure to do this may cause games to stretch to unreasonable lengths. There is no incentive for a hitter to let a wellpitched ball pass.
3) A hitter is not permitted to change between right-handed and lefthanded stances during the course of a single at-bat.
4) Any player from either team may warn batters who dangerously throw bats during or after their swing. After a warning, batters may be called out for throwing the bat. Catchers, on-deck batters, and others on the benches should help collect bats after the ball is hit to encourage safety.
5) No batter may intentionally bunt or chop a ball in to the ground; this will result in an automatic out.

6) A foul tip must go over the head of the batter to be caught by the catcher, or any other defensive player able to reach it, for an out.

7) Any players showing up after the lineup has been made, must be added to the bottom of the lineup.

8) In order to limit games from occasionally getting out of hand and embarrassing, an in-game run cap is used. If at any point during the game, you begin an offensive half-inning leading by more than 15 runs you may only score 5 runs in that half-inning. If you begin an offensive half-inning by less than 15 runs, you may only score enough runs to go ahead by no more than 20 total runs.

9) Any bat used in the science division summer softball league must have a legible logo of approval from either the USSA or the ASA.

G) Base Running

1) Base runners may not take leads off any base. Running is only permitted after the bat makes contact with the ball.

2) A double bag is used at first base to prevent collisions. On plays at first, the fielder should use the inside (fair) bag, and the runner should run to the outside (foul) side of the bag.

3) Due to the mobile nature of our equipment, the bags occasionally are kicked out of the way by accident. Be reasonable when assessing safe and out calls on dislocated bases.

4) If a runner at third base passes the cone positioned halfway between third base and home plate, the runner is committed to running to home plate, and it becomes a force play (see next section)

5) All plays at home plate are force plays. The catcher merely must have one foot on the plate and have control of the ball in order to force out any runner coming in from third base.

(a) Catchers may not block out runners on purpose at the plate.

(b) For scoring purposes, the mat positioned behind the plate will be considered part of the plate.

(c) On a play at the plate, the catcher must play to the front of home plate and may not block the runner’s access to the mat. The runner may only touch the mat and is not permitted to run into the catcher’s area on the plate. This should be done whether or not a play at the plate is being attempted. The goal of this rule is to prevent injuries. All catchers and runners must be aware of this rule.

(d) Intentional collisions caused by the catcher will result in an automatic safe call

(e) Intentional collisions caused by the runner will result in an automatic out call.

6) Because of the lack of boundary walls, runners are permitted to advance a maximum of one base, at their own jeopardy, beyond the base they were advancing to, on “overthrows.” For example, a runner traveling towards third base may score on an overthrow, but one standing on second may only advance to third. Note also that “permitted” is not equivalent to “entitled” – runners attempting to advance may be put out normally. The only exception is a thrown ball that is “out of play” (See Section H, Paragraph 6), in which case the one base is given.

7) If a player slides into any bases, for any reason, that player is ruled out. If a player aggressively jumps into the base, then they are ruled out.

8) If a catcher is intentionally blocking the mat behind Home Plate without possession of the ball and this causes the runner to not reach Home safely, the run scores.
9) If a player is injured, they will be allowed a pinch runner once they safely make it on base. The pinch runner will be the last player to be put out. See sect. III part J.

H) Officiating
1) Teams must fairly officiate their own games.
2) The first base coach is responsible for all calls at first base. The first base coach is also responsible for invoking the infield fly rule.
   (a) The infield fly rule should be invoked in the situation where there are runners on first and second or on first, second, and third and fewer than two outs. If the batted ball is in fair territory and a high fly ball which can easily be handled by an infielder with average effort, than the batter is declared out and the runners may advance at their own risk upon tagging up, or a dropped ball.
   (b) The infield fly rule is in effect whether or not it is called by the first base coach. All base runners must be aware of this rule when they are on the bases.
3) The third base coach is responsible for making all calls at third base.
4) The first base coach is responsible for making calls at home but may defer to the third base coach.
5) The third base coach is responsible for making calls at second base but may defer to the first base coach.
6) The call of the base coach must be made quickly and loudly. If the coach waivers in making the call, the call must go against the hitting team.
7) The catcher determines whether a ball is fair or foul. The catcher should use the cones as a guide. The call must be made quickly and loudly for the benefit of players on both teams. If the catcher is unable to make the call, the base coach on the foul line in question will make the call.
   (a) A ball is foul if it is touched by a fielder in foul territory closer to the plate than either first or third base or if it lands in foul territory past the bases. Balls falling in fair territory and rolling into foul territory past either 1st or 3rd base are fair balls.
   (b) Balls hitting the base or cones are in fair territory.
   (c) All catchers must be aware of these rules. d. Standard umpiring etiquette suggests that foul calls are made by loudly calling “foul” and pointing towards foul territory, while fair calls are made by pointing towards fair territory and saying “fair” in a softer voice. In any event, if outfielders and runners are unsure, they should persist in making the play, and the catchers should repeat their call if it is in fact a foul ball.
8) A ball is out of play if it enters the rectangle extending one foot on each side of the bench (parallel to the sides of the bench) and continuing indefinitely away from the field. The intent of the rule is to prevent injury from players chasing foul balls into the bench or equipment scattered in the bench area. To make this effective, players are asked to keep their equipment in this out of play area.
9) The catcher, first base coach, and/or third base coach must decide if a ball is out of play.

I) Cleats/Spikes
1) The use of metal cleats/spikes during a game is strictly prohibited. The use of metal cleats/spikes destroys the league’s equipment and can cause harm to other players.
2) The use of plastic or rubber cleats is permitted.
3) Any player that is found to be wearing metal cleats/spikes will be asked to remove them.
   (a) Failure to remove said metal cleats/spikes will result in the disqualification of that player. That player must leave the field of play.
   (b) Players found repeatedly to be disobeying this rule will be banned from the league.
(c) Failure to leave the field of play will result in forfeiture of the game.
(d) Following any such forfeiture, the league equipment used during that game will be inspected and any damage will be charged to the offending team. Failure to pay these charges will result in the forfeiture of all games until the charges are paid.

J) Injured Players
1) In the event that a player becomes injured during the game leaving a team with fewer players than necessary as indicated in Section B the team may continue to play and is not required to forfeit.
2) A player who is not injured seriously enough to need to leave the game may be run for once they reach base and the play has ceased if necessary. The pinch runner shall be the last player on the batting team to be put out.
3) If a player is too injured to run to first after batting, the player may continue to play in the field but will have their turn in the batting order skipped.

IV) Post-Game
A) Cleaning up
   1) The home team must collect all of the league’s equipment after each game.
   2) Team captains must sign the scorecard before it is forwarded to the Commissioner, unless e-mail reporting is planned, though it remains advisable to sign anyway.
   3) Each equipment bag goes out complete. When cleaning up the field, the captain must make sure that all of the equipment is returned to the bag. See Chapter II, Section C, Paragraph 4.

V) Post-Season
A) Games
   1) All playoff games follow normal league rules (though see Chapter II, Section D, Paragraph 2). All playoff games are scheduled on specific dates and may not be rescheduled except by decision of the Commissioner.
B) Seeding
   1) Teams are seeded in the playoffs according to their record during the regular season. Division winners (if applicable) will receive the top seeds. The following scheme will be used to resolve the seeding of teams that finish with identical records.
      (a) The team with the least number of forfeits is seeded higher.
      (b) If the teams remain tied, the team which won more games in head to head play is seeded higher.
      (c) If the teams remain tied, the team with the greater run differential will be seeded higher.
      (d) If the teams remain tied, the seeding will be determined by a coin toss (or other acceptably random method in the result of a three or more team tie).