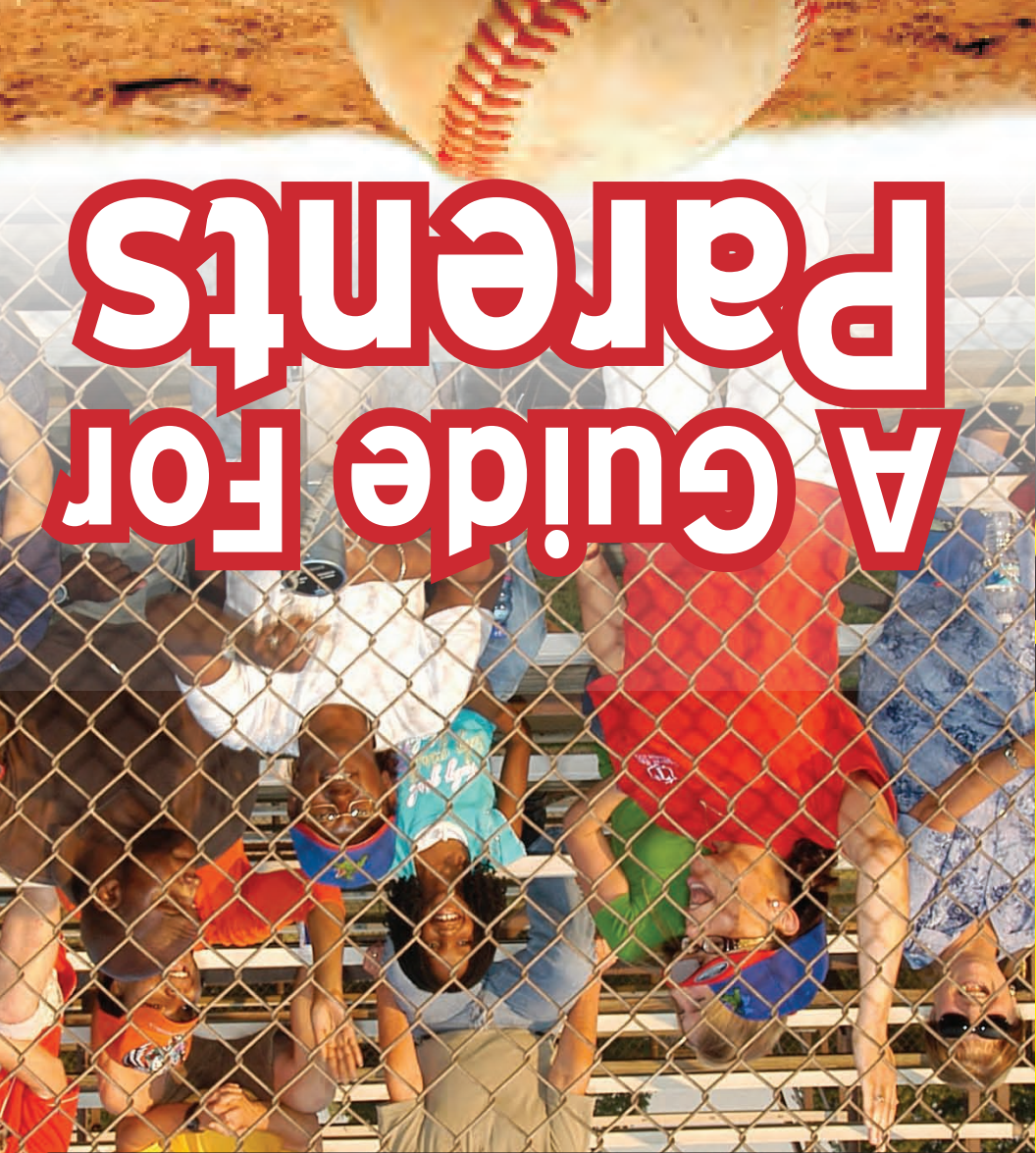


A Guide For Parents



Give Respect to Get Respect

Softball Ontario believes in Fair Play. Fair Play is defined as much more than playing within the rules. It includes respect for others, always playing within the right spirit. Fair play is a way of thinking, not just a way of behaving. Fair play is a positive concept. Fair play must be given the highest priority by all those indirectly or directly participating in the game of softball. Integrity, fairness and respect, these are the principles of fair play.

Softball Ontario undertook the Respect My Game campaign to raise the awareness of fair play and to reduce abusive situations in the game of softball.

Softball Ontario is deeply committed to improving the sportsmanship and the behaviour of all participants. It is extremely important that all stakeholders be part of this commitment, and do their part to provide a positive experience in softball.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of Respect My Game is to educate stakeholders in softball, thereby creating awareness of abuses in the game and building mutual respect amongst participants. It also introduces no tolerance policies to reduce abusive behaviours at all levels in all components of the game, thus reversing the decline in leadership roles within the sport.

VALUES PHILOSOPHY

We stand alongside all stakeholders of softball as partners on the same side, working in concert with them to provide a positive softball experience. The Respect My Game philosophy encompasses a belief that by working together with Athletes, Coaches, Officials and Spectators, we can impact our sport's experience in a positive way.

PROGRAM BELIEFS

- ✓ Competition should demonstrate high standards of ethics and sportsmanship, and promote the development of good character and other important life skills
- ✓ The highest potential of softball is achieved when all the participants are committed to the following core principles
 - Trustworthiness involves integrity and honesty
 - Respect is what we show each other through sportsmanship
 - Responsibility is being accountable and prepared
 - Fairness is making sure everyone competes honourably
 - Caring is showing compassion for each person's role
 - Civility is considering others while playing
- ✓ By setting high standards of excellence for our own performance on the athletic stage, our sport can model the same pillars of character that we ask others to model



STAKEHOLDER'S CODE OF CONDUCT

I will:

- ✓ act as a responsible person
- ✓ acknowledge and appreciate efforts made by all participants
- ✓ be respectful of athletes, coaches, officials and spectators
- ✓ respect the rules
- ✓ encourage others to enjoy our sport
- ✓ respect the sport of softball and the facility where it is played



I will not:

- ✓ make any verbal comments or physical gestures about or toward anyone that could be considered offensive, derogatory, or abusive
- ✓ engage in any action that might be considered verbally or physically abusive

Consequences

- ✓ offenders to the code will be reported to their respective executive or association for disciplinary action
- ✓ repeat offenders will be banned from participating for the remainder of the season

Enforcement

Local Softball Associations are responsible for enforcing the code of conduct. Softball Ontario reserves the right to support the well-being of the game of softball and the rights of all participants to be treated with respect.

SPECTATOR'S CODE OF CONDUCT

I will:

- ✓ be on my best behaviour and use appropriate language when communicating with players, coaches and/or game officials
- ✓ respect the officials' decisions and teach young people to do the same
- ✓ encourage players to always play according to the rules
- ✓ support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from softball
- ✓ condemn the use of violence in any form, whether it is by spectators, coaches, officials or players
- ✓ respect the rights of every participant in softball regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background or religion
- ✓ be aware of and follow the Spectator's Code of Conduct



I will not:

- ✓ publicly question the officials' judgment and/or honesty
- ✓ use violence, harassment or abuse

TOP 10 MISUNDERSTOOD RULES

1

LEFT HAND TURN FROM FIRST BASE

A runner forfeits his/her exemption from liability to be put out if, after overrunning first base, he/she makes an attempt to run to second base.

The key to this run is to continue to second base. There must be at least an attempt towards second base. It does not matter which direction the batter-runner turns after reaching first base if they are coming back to first base without attempting to advance to second base.

2

CHECK SWING

If it is the plate umpire's judgement that the batter made an attempt to swing at the ball (but not a full swing), the plate umpire shall call the pitched ball a strike. This call is NOT to be appealed to the base umpire - use the guiding principle that the plate umpire does not call it a strike unless he/she saw the attempted swing - therefore no need for an appeal of what the plate umpire saw.

However, if the batter attempted to swing at the ball but the plate umpire did not see the attempt (perhaps blocked out by the catcher) then a ball shall be called. With this call, the plate umpire does have the opportunity to check with his/her base umpire(s) with or without request from the defensive team. The key to the base umpire is that they shall only answer a check swing request made by the plate umpire - they do not respond to a request made directly to them by a defensive player.

Should the base umpire see the attempt that the plate umpire did not see, they shall respond by calling "Yes" and the call shall be changed from ball to strike.

3

AWARD OF BASES ON AN OVERTHROW

When a thrown ball goes out of play (beyond the established boundary lines of the playing field):

- ✓ all runners, including the batter-runner shall be awarded two bases from the last base legally touched based on their position at the time that the thrown ball left the fielder's hand
- ✓ If there are two runners between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner

Keys to remember with this rule:

- ✓ the award is based on their position at the time the throw was made, not at the time that the ball went out of play - watch for that very long overthrow from the outfield
- ✓ the award is two bases from the last base legally touched - if a runner is returning to first base to tag up on a fly ball, they will still be awarded two bases which is second base and third base as the last base that they had legally touched was first base

4

BATTED BALL HITTING HOME PLATE OR A BASE

Home Plate

- ✓ a batted ball remains alive and in play when it strike home plate
- ✓ in the event that a batted ball comes to rest on home plate, it shall be ruled a fair ball and the plate umpire shall signal accordingly
- ✓ Remember, the fair/foul lines come to the back point of home plate so the plate is completely in fair territory

First or Third Base

- ✓ When properly installed, first and third base are positioned on the diamond completely in fair territory* see #10
- ✓ Once a batted ball strikes first or third base without having been first touched by a player, the batted ball shall be ruled a fair ball regardless of where the ball ends up
- ✓ Once the ball touches first or third base it does not have to pass the base, touching the base is all that is required to make it a fair ball
- ✓ The plate umpire should signal fair ball immediately once the batted ball strikes the base

5

BATTER STEPPING ON HOME PLATE OR MAT DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF HOME PLATE

Stepping on Home Plate or Mat:

- ✓ the batter is out if any part of their foot is touching home plate or touching the mat when the bat contacts the ball
- ✓ the ball is dead and runners may not advance on the play

Stepping directly in front of Home Plate or Mat:

- ✓ the batter is out if their foot is completely outside the lines of the batter's box and touching the ground when the bat contacts the ball - therefore if the batter's foot is completely in front of home plate their foot is obviously completely outside the lines of the batter's box
- ✓ The batter is out if their foot is completely in front or behind the Mat
- ✓ the ball is dead and runners may not advance on the play

Points of Emphasis:

- ✓ there is no penalty unless the batter makes contact with the ball
- ✓ the position of the foot must be judged at the time the bat makes contact with the ball - if the foot is in the air and then comes down on the ground after the ball is hit, there is no penalty
- ✓ with the exception of the foot touching home plate or touching the mat, the foot must be completely outside the lines of the batter's box - touching any part of the lines is acceptable as the lines are part of the box
- ✓ the same penalty applies whether the batted ball is fair or foul - "Dead Ball" is called as soon as the batter makes contact with the ball

6

FAIR BALL BOUNCING OUT OF PLAY OR OFF A DEFENSIVE PLAYER

When a fair ball bounces out of play, including if it deflects off a defensive player, the umpire shall declare "Dead Ball" as soon as the ball goes out of play.

- ✓ All runners shall be awarded two bases
- ✓ the award is based on their position at the time of the pitch - not at the time the ball went out of play
- ✓ the award is the same regardless of where the ball actually goes out of play
- ✓ be prepared that this rule could actually end up bringing runners backwards
- ✓ a long rolling ground ball goes out of play and the batter is already past second base - the batter goes back to second base
- ✓ same play, runner starting at first base is already past third base and on their way to score when the batted ball goes out of play, the runner is returned to third base

7

INFIELD FLY

Requirements for an Infield Fly:

- ✓ runners on first and second base OR first, second and third base
- ✓ less than 2 out
- ✓ not a bunt
- ✓ not a line drive
- ✓ can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort - this includes the pitcher, catcher or any outfielder positioned in the infield

Once an Infield Fly is declared:

- ✓ if the hit becomes a foul ball, no penalty - treat like any other foul ball
- ✓ if the hit remains a fair ball:
 - the batter is out regardless of whether the ball is caught or not
 - the ball remains alive
 - the runners may advance at their own risk
 - if the fly ball is caught, the runners must tag up
 - if the fly ball is not caught, the runner can choose to advance but as the batter has already been declared out there is no force play.

8

LEAD-OFF (PITCHER'S CIRCLE) - FP ONLY

The Pitcher's Circle is the area within a 8' radius of the pitcher's plate - the lines are considered within the circle.

Even though the ball may be in the pitcher's possession in the pitcher's circle, the batter-runner may:

- ✓ continue past first base
- ✓ is entitled to run towards second base, as long as he/she does not stop at first base
- ✓ once the runner makes a stop, he/she must immediately proceed to the next base or return to his/her base UNLESS the pitcher makes a play (including a fake throw) on the runner or another runner.

If the runner stops and simply stands there off the base while the pitcher has possession of the ball in the pitcher's circle and no play is made - "DEAD BALL - RUNNER IS OUT - LEAD-OFF"

If the runner stops and then makes a move in more than one direction immediately after the stop while the pitcher has possession of the ball in the pitcher's circle and no play is made "DEAD BALL - RUNNER IS OUT - LEAD OFF"

Points of Emphasis

- ✓ the pitcher cannot force the first stop by a runner merely by having possession of the ball in the pitcher's circle. Put another way - the runner is allowed one stop - as soon as he/she stops he/she must make a decision immediately to either advance or return
- ✓ A play on the runner (including a fake throw) nullifies any penalty - put another way, every fake throw allows the runner one more stop

9

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INTERFERENCE AND OBSTRUCTION

Interference

- ✓ typically an act by an offensive player
- ✓ possible to have umpire interference and spectator interference
- ✓ results in "Dead Ball" being called (exception - umpire interference)
- ✓ results in an out if by an offensive player

Obstruction

- ✓ is an act by a defensive player
- ✓ results in a delayed dead ball
- ✓ award is determined at the end of the play (exception - if the obstructed player is called out)
- ✓ an obstruction call does not entitle the obstructed runner to keep attempting to advance until played upon

Contact does not always mean interference or obstruction occurred. There is such a thing as incidental contact - 2 players both unsure of where to go and contact is made. Rule 8.10(c) states that the runner is not out when more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball and the runner comes in contact with the one who, in the umpire's judgement, was not entitled to field the ball.

10

DOUBLE BASE

The Double Base is used at first base with the orange portion in foul territory and the white portion in fair territory. A batted ball striking the white/fair portion is declared a fair ball, a batted ball striking the orange/foul portion is declared a foul ball - a batted ball striking the centre of the double base is declared a fair ball as it therefore hits a portion of the white/fair part of the base.

The defensive player (typically the first baseman) must use only the white/fair portion of the base at all times.

The offensive player must use only the orange/foul portion of the base on his/her first attempt at first base when a play is being made on him/her. This includes when the batter-runner runs on a dropped third strike.

On a ball hit to the outfield with no play being made at first base, the offensive player may touch either portion of the base on his/her first attempt at first base.

Once an offensive player has touched the orange/foul portion of the base on his/her first attempt at first base, he/she must then use the white/fair portion of the base:

- ✓ when returning to the base after overrunning first base
- ✓ when taking his/her position prior to the next pitch
- ✓ when tagging up on a fly ball

Points of Emphasis:

- ✓ the defensive player - provided any portion of his/her foot is touching any portion of the white/fair portion of the base, he/she is considered to be in contact with the base
- ✓ the offensive player - when he/she is required to use the orange/foul portion, provided any portion of his/her foot is touching any portion of the orange/foul portion of the base, he/she is considered to be in contact with the base
- ✓ once the offensive player has made his/her first attempt at first base, for simplicity sake the orange/foul portion of the base no longer exists for him/her

