

FALL 2026 SLOW-PITCH SOFTBALL RULES

(Updated 7/14/2026)

Recent changes will appear highlighted and italicized.

Rule 1: Facility

1. All games will be played at the Hawkeye Softball Complex. Alcohol and tobacco are not permitted inside the complex or in the parking lot.
2. Teams shall remain clear of the fields while games are in progress. Warming up can occur only in the designated areas. No infield practice before games or between innings is allowed.

Rule 2: Player Eligibility

1. All Intramural Sports eligibility rules apply. Please check the [Intramural Sports Rules and Regulations](#) carefully.
2. To check-in, each participant must have a photo available through IMLeagues, or must provide a University of Iowa or government-issued photo ID.

Rule 3: Team Composition

1. Eight players must be present to start a game. Players may be inserted into the lineup upon arrival after they have checked in with a Sport Programs Supervisor.
2. Teams may field up to 10 players.
 - a. The catcher position is not optional, it must be filled.
3. Teams can choose to bat up to a maximum of 12 players or bat the 10 players in the field and use any remaining players as substitutes. No outs will be taken for vacant lineup spots if batting less than 12.
 - a. Co-Rec modification: Teams may not have a gender disparity of greater than three players for both playing the field and batting in the lineup.
4. A player may leave the game and return after their substitute has batted and has played at least three defensive outs in the field provided the player occupies the same batting position in the batting order.
 - a. A team may only use one Courtesy Runner per inning. *The Courtesy Runner can be anyone on that team's roster, provided that person being replaced has not used a Courtesy Runner prior in the game. (Updated Summer 2026)* If an injury occurs during the at-bat or while running the bases, a Courtesy Runner may be used to replace the injured runner. If a Courtesy Runner's spot in the batting order comes up while that runner is on base, an out will be recorded, the base vacated, and that person shall bat.
 - i. For Co-Rec games the courtesy runner or substitute must match the gender of the player needing a courtesy runner.
 - ii. *Each individual player may use a Courtesy Runner only once per game. If a player requires a Courtesy Runner a second time during the same game, they will be ineligible to participate for the remainder of the game. (Updated Summer 2026)*
5. A team must finish a game with at least eight players, except in the event of an injury.
6. If a position in the batting order is vacated and no substitutes are available to take that position the following will be enforced:
 - a. A vacated position in the batting order due to ejection will result in an out in that spot for the remainder of the game.
 - b. All other situations in which a position in the batting order is vacated (such as injury, needing to leave the game early) will not result in an out.

Rule 4: Equipment

1. All players must wear close-toed shoes. Tennis shoes, soft-soled shoes, and one-piece softball shoes are legal. Metal spikes or cleats with metal exposed are not allowed.
 - a. Any player found wearing metal spikes in the field of play during their team's defensive half of the inning will be removed from the game and that team will play short-handed for the remainder of that half inning.
 - b. Any player found wearing metal spikes in the field of play during their team's offensive half of the inning will be declared out.
 - i. Any runners that have advanced as a result of a hit by the player wearing illegal equipment will return to the bases they previously occupied.
 - c. If the player does not have other shoes/cleats they will not be allowed to participate in that game.
 - d. A player with metal spikes cannot be called out once the play is completed and the player in question has entered their team's dugout.
2. Each team shall provide their own softballs that must be 12" softballs (USA Softball approved .52 COR or under and 300.0 lbs). At the start of each game teams will exchange two of their own softballs with their opponent who will verify these specifications. The batting team will hit their own softballs that will be pitched to them by the pitching team. Throughout the game the pitching team will be responsible for verifying that the correct softballs are being used as they are introduced into the game.
3. Participants are encouraged to wear personal safety equipment.
4. Players must supply their own gloves and bats. A small amount of bats and gloves may be available to check out from the Sport Programs Staff prior to each game.
5. Only ASA, NSA, or USA Softball stamped and approved softball bats may be used.
6. *The Sport Programs staff retains the right to require any jewelry or items deemed dangerous to be removed prior to participation, or continued participation (Updated Summer 2026).*

Rule 5: Ground Rules

1. A coin toss will determine the home and away teams.
 - a. During the playoffs, the higher seed will have the option of choosing to be either the home team or away team.
2. Each batter will start with a 1-and-1 count. A foul ball on a two-strike count will be recorded as a strikeout.
3. A runner may not lead-off or steal. They must remain on the base until the ball crosses home plate or is contacted by the batter. If a lead-off occurs, the player leading off or stealing will be called out.
4. There will be a three over-the-fence home run limit for each team in each game. Any home run over the limit will result in an out. If both teams reach the home run limit, teams can then hit additional home runs until one team has one more home run than the other. At this point, only the team with fewer home runs may hit one.
5. The Infield Fly Rule will be applied.
6. A legal pitch will have a minimum arc of six feet and a maximum arc of twelve feet.
7. The batting team is responsible for keeping its own score and reporting it to the umpire after each half inning. The umpire is the final judge in case of a score discrepancy.
 - a. The home plate umpire will give the batting team their scoresheet before each turn at bat.
8. Base path lengths will be 70 feet for all leagues.
9. Pitchers must toss from the pitching rubber furthest from home plate.
10. When a ball is overthrown and ends up out of playable territory, such as over the fence or in the dugout, the base runner(s) will be allowed the base to which they were going to plus one additional base.

11. If a team wants to intentionally walk a batter, they may do so by getting the attention of the umpire and verbally saying that they want to intentionally walk a batter.

Rule 6: Game Time and Length

1. Games will last seven innings (six and a half if the home team is ahead) or 60 minutes, whichever occurs first. No new inning may begin after the 60-minute mark has been reached.
2. A game that is tied at the end of seven innings or 60 minutes will continue into the next inning, and each half inning thereafter, with the offensive team placing the player that was last scheduled to bat in the previous inning on second base (e.g., if the number five batter is the leadoff batter, the number four batter in the batting order will be placed on second base). The inning will begin with zero outs. Each half inning will continue as such until a winner is declared.
3. In the case of rain, or other occurrences, a game will become official after the completion of five innings (four and a half if the home team is ahead). If less than a legal game has been completed, the game shall be suspended at this point.
4. There will be a 10-run rule in effect after the fifth inning and a 15-run rule in effect after the fourth inning.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

If there is inclement weather and Intramural Sports are scheduled, check the [Intramural Sports website](#) for cancellation information. The Sport Programs Staff will also attempt to notify participants scheduled to play that night. You can also sign-up for Intramural Sports notifications through the [Recreational Services app](#).

LIGHTNING POLICY

In the case of lightning within 8 miles of the game site during outdoor sports, play will be suspended. Play may not resume until there have been zero lightning strikes within 8 miles for 30 minutes. Determinations on lightning strikes will be made by Sport Programs Staff on-site using lightning detection software. Lightning detected by the system does not need to be visible to participants or staff.