

Special Olympics Iowa Team Softball Competition Information

Rules

- SOIA will follow the Amateur Softball Associations Slow Pitch rules. ASA rules for softball are found on the SOIA website.

Equipment and Field

- Only bats marked by the manufacturer as "Official Softball" may be used.
- A first basemen's trapping-type mitt may be worn by the first baseman and catcher only.
- The catcher must wear a one piece helmet and mask.
- All batters and base runners must wear a batter's helmet.
- A 30 centimeter (12") optic yellow softball must be used.
- The softball field used for play shall conform to ASA standards.
- Baseline distance is 60'
- Pitcher's mound distance is at least 43'

Competition

- Team softball competition does not follow the age and / or gender categories for divisioning. It is an open age and gender competition which means team consist of all ages and gender.
- Rosters are – 15 players
- The game consists of seven innings with a 1.5 hour playing time limit. No new inning will start after 75 minutes of play.
- Developmental games will have no new inning start after 60 minutes of play.
- Extra innings are played if needed.
- The game is considered complete if after three full innings of play one team leads the other by 15 runs or more, after four full innings of play one team leads the other by 12 runs or more, or after five full innings of play one team leads the other by 10 runs or more.
- When batting, players will take their stance within the lines of the batter's box.
- All divisions will have a 3 "over the fence" homerun per game per team limit
 - All additional over the fence homeruns will be counted as outs
- If a batter is using the tee, the pitcher will stand on the rubber and the outfielders need to be on the grass
- Division 3, 4 and Developmental may use a tee and bat. When the batter steps up to the plate, he / she must choose the pitcher or tee. No changes at bat will be allowed.
- In Division 4 after an athlete pitcher pitches three balls a coach will come in and pitch three pitches. There will be no walks. Batter will not be allowed to switch to tee after receiving pitch.
- The ball must be pitched in an underhand motion and should travel in an arc that is no less than 1.83 meters (6') and no greater than 3.66 meters (10'). The pitcher must have one foot on the rubber to start the pitch.
- A carpet extension is used to determine a strike or ball. The carpet extension is attached to the back of home plate and provides an exact strike target. If the ball lands on the plate or the carpet in the correct arch, it is a strike. If the ball lands on the black area of the plate, it is a ball.
- Divisions 1, 2, 3 and 4 at bats start with a one and one count. Four balls constitute a walk, and three strikes constitute an out. If the batter has two strikes and fouls off the third pitch, he / she shall be declared out.

- In the Developmental division coaches will pitch to their own batters who do not start with a one and one count. There will be only four pitches from the coach or four swings from the batting tee unless the ball is put into play. When the batter steps up to the plate, the coach and batter need to decide if the batter elects to use live pitches or the tee.
- In Division 3 and 4 when using a tee the batter starts with a one and one count and can strike out.
- As a safety issue athletes in Division 1 and Division 2 are not allowed to use the tee.
- In Division 4 and Developmental three outs or 10 batters will indicate the end of an inning, whichever comes first.
- An appeal play is defined as a play in which an umpire is unable to make a decision unless he / she is requested to do so by coach or player. The appeal can be made if a coach or player asks the umpire to make a ruling.
- The umpires are empowered to make all decisions on the playing field. If a protest is made, it shall be brought to the Softball Rules Committee who will then make a final decision. A protest may only be made if it questions the applicability of the rules. No protests will be considered which pertain to any judgement call made by an umpire.
- If a coach touches a runner while the play is still in play, that runner will be declared out. Coaches are required to stay within the boundaries of the coaches' box.
- In the Developmental division, the defensive coach can be on the field behind second base.
- In Division 4 and Developmental after the tenth batter bats and the pitcher has the ball in the vicinity of the mound; the ball will be considered dead. Runners may advance to the base they are headed for.
- In the Unified Division, the roster shall contain a proportionate number of athletes and partners. During the competition the line-up shall never exceed five athletes and five partners (six athletes and six partners if the EP is used) at any time. Failure to adhere to the required ratio will result in a forfeit. The batting order shall be an alternation of athletes and partners. During the competition the position requirements are: two athletes and two partners in both the infield and the outfield, and one athlete and one partner as pitcher and catcher.
- Unified Partners are **not** permitted to use a tee at any time during game play.
- A player can only occupy one spot in the batting order. If a player is replaced in the batting order, he / she can only come back into that same slot in the order, and only one re-entry is allowed. Moving defensive position is not a substitution. Players can switch defensive positions at will.
- An extra player, referred to as an "EP" is optional. However if one is used, it must be made known prior to the start of the game and be listed on the scoring sheet and roster card in the regular batting order. If the EP is used, then he / she must be used the entire game. Failure to complete the game with the EP results in the forfeiture of the game.
- The EP must remain in the same position in the batting order for the entire game.
- If an EP is used, all 11 players must bat and any 10 may play defense. Defensive positions may be changed, but the batting order must remain the same.
- The EP may be substituted at any time. The substitute must be a player who has not yet been in the game. The starting EP may re-enter the game.