

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ALLIED SOFTBALL RULES 2019–2020

1. Playing Rules

- a. National Federation Slow Pitch Softball rules shall apply, with certain modifications and exceptions.
- b. A regulation game shall consist of six innings. A new inning will not begin after one-hour, thirty-minutes from the start of the game. The start of the game is defined at the pregame conference.
- c. There shall be ten fielders per team. No game shall begin with less than eight players on the field. Batting orders and line-up cards should be exchanged at the pregame conference.
- d. A team unable to field at least eight players shall forfeit the game. Forfeited games cannot be rescheduled. A forfeit is determined at the pregame conference that includes both coaches and the umpire. An exhibition game may be played upon agreement of both teams/coaches/schools.

2. Field of Play

- a. Pitchers must be a minimum of 30 feet and maximum of 40 feet from the apex (back edge) of the plate.
- b. Schools should use “throw down” rubber bases. Bases of different colors should be used to create “double bases”, with one color used to designate the base to be used by the fielder, and the other by the runner.
- c. The runners base at first is positioned in foul territory; the runners base at second and third is positioned behind the fielder’s base on the outfield side of the base; and the runners base at home is positioned in foul territory four feet to the left of home plate (see diagram).
- d. Bases shall be 40 feet apart. Bases shall be 15 inches square, while home plate shall be 17 inches square.
- e. An alternate or “X” base will be used for certain runners designated by the coach prior to the start of the game. Players who require 8-seconds or longer to reach first base from home plate may use the “X” base. [Coaches can make this assessment by having the player swing at a pretend pitch, drop the bat, and then timing how long it takes the player to reach first base].
- f. The alternate base will be an “X” taped to the floor thirty feet after each base (ten feet before the next base).
- g. The field should be set up as shown in the diagram at the end of the *Allied Softball Rules and Standards*.

3. Equipment

- a. Only the Jugs Light Flight 11” softball should be used in practice or competition.
- b. Bats shall be of the soft, safety variety for indoor play.
- c. Batters/base runners shall wear a NOCSAE-approved protective batting helmet.
- d. Catchers shall be outfitted (helmet, mask, throat protector, and chest protector) in approved softball protective gear when playing or practicing, as stated in the NFHS Rulebook. Shin guards are optional.
- e. Gloves should be worn by all fielders (including the pitcher and all assistants), unless a student has a disability that prevents the use of a glove.

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4. Batters and Base Runners

- a. All players may be placed in the team batting order, even if there is not a position in the field for them to play right away (continuous batting order). A team's term at bat ends when five runs have scored or three outs have occurred within their half inning. This "five run rule" shall remain in effect for the duration of each game except for the last inning.

Interpretation:

Coaches have two options when creating line-ups:

1. Create a line-up consistent with the NFHS Softball Rules. Substitutes may be entered into the game per the rules and procedures outlined in the *National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) Softball Rules Book*.
2. Continuous batting order – All players will be placed in the team batting order, even if there is not a position in the field for them to play right away. If utilizing a continuous batting order, all players must occupy the same batting position throughout the course of the game.

A batter shall be called out on appeal when he/she fails to bat in his/her proper turn and another batter completes a time at bat in his/her place. When the proper batter is called out because he/she has failed to bat in turn, the next batter shall be the batter whose name follows that of the proper batter who was called out.

- b. Runners may not steal or lead off bases. The player's foot must remain in contact with the base until after the ball is hit by the batter.
- c. Runners may not slide.
- d. On force plays involving "X" runners, the ball must be thrown by the fielding team to the base. "X" runners may not be tagged out on force plays, however, "X" runners that run when they are not forced to run **MUST** be tagged out. (NOTE: Only motorized wheelchairs that exceed the 8-second rule may be "X" runners. A motorized wheelchair is not automatically an "X" runner.)
- e. After a player using the "X" base is determined to be safe, play is stopped, and the player proceeds to the actual base. As players using the "X" base proceed around the base path, they must touch all bases – not just the "X" bases.
- f. Batters can strike out - When batting without the use of a tee, three strikes (called or swinging) shall be an out.

Interpretation:

Batters have a total of two swings when using the tee. If the batter does not hit the ball in fair play after two swings, it is a strikeout. The "two swing" rule applies whether the player began that at-bat using the tee, or changed to the tee during the course of the at-bat.

- g. Batters may not bunt.
- h. Batters may not be walked.
- i. A foul ball is considered a strike.
- j. A player cannot strike out on a foul ball.

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- k. In the interest of speeding up play, courtesy runners may be used for any base runner, especially for the catcher when there were 2 outs (see NFHS rulebook). Since all players are technically in the game, the courtesy runner shall be the player who made the most recent out.
- l. If a student-athlete requires the support of a wheelchair attendant, the attendant may assist the student-athlete in the field of play. This accommodation should be discussed at the pregame conference.

5. Use of Batting Tees

- a. Batters may elect to use a tee at any time in the course of their at bat. The coach should assist batters in this decision. Players should be encouraged to bat without tees as much as possible.
- b. Batters are required to use the tee after five pitches occur without the player either hitting the ball safely or striking out.
- c. Batters have a total of two swings when using the tee. If the batter does not hit the ball in fair play after two swings, it is a strikeout. The “two swing” rule applies whether the player began that at-bat using the tee, or changed to the tee in the course of the at-bat.
- d. Batters who elect to use a tee are limited to a maximum of a ground-rule double.
- e. Bunting, or intentional soft-tapping of the ball, is not allowed when using a tee.

6. Field Play

- a. A defensive player may not purposely block a base.
- b. Adult coaches or highly skilled players should pitch.
- c. A player must be designated to play and field balls in the pitcher’s area if an adult is pitching.
- d. When an adult is pitching, the student player should be positioned in the vicinity of the pitcher’s mound to field any balls batted into that area.
- e. An adult pitcher or player assistant does not count as one of the team members.
- f. Pitches should be slow, hittable, and have a noticeable arc.
- g. Fast, flat pitches are considered “no pitch.”

7. Additional Rules for Indoor Play

- a. A batted ball hit directly against the wall, ceiling, or bleachers in fair territory is playable and if caught before it falls to the ground shall be called an out (unless the home team has a specific ground rule dealing with balls hit to particular areas of the gymnasium).
- b. If a batted ball hits the ceiling or another structure in fair territory and drifts or rolls into foul territory between home and first or home and third, it is a foul ball. The location of the ball when it lands is the determining factor.
- c. Fair balls that become stuck, trapped, or roll to inaccessible areas (for instance, under bleachers) will be designated as ground rule doubles.
- d. Home teams may determine an area on the back wall that will be considered an automatic home run when a ball is hit there (optional).

ALLIED SOFTBALL – INDOOR FIELD SET-UP AND DIMENSIONS

Home plate is placed 5" in from the baseline in the basketball key. All bases are 40' apart and the pitcher's mound is a minimum of 30' from home plate. The base for the "X runners" is placed in the base path 30' from the previous base.

