

Ottawa Tech Mixed Softball Guidelines

This is a minimal list of duties/guidelines for umpires and general conduct within the Ottawa Tech Mixed Softball League. These points are meant to compliment our rules not contradict them. **ALL PLAYERS** in the league are to be encouraged to take a moment to review these guidelines.

General Information

There should be two designated umpires at all times. It is very difficult for one umpire to call all of the bases. The team at bat is responsible for providing the umpires while their team is at bat.

Players serving as umpires should be knowledgeable of softball rules and Ottawa Tech Softball League rules.

The home plate umpire is responsible for the calling of balls and strikes, all plays at home and third base, and fair and foul balls. The umpire should call all foul balls loudly. Nothing should be called when the ball is fair -- just signal by pointing with an extended arm into fair territory. This eliminates any confusion. Similarly, strikes are called loudly, and signalled with the right arm pointing to the side. Balls are either not called at all, or are called just loud enough for the catcher to hear. From time to time (every 2 or 3 pitches), the umpire should announce the ball and strike count loudly enough for the pitcher to hear.

The base umpire is responsible for all calls at first and second bases as well as assisting the home plate umpire in the calling of third (when necessary). Base calls should be called loudly and promptly, and must be accompanied by the appropriate signal. The base umpire may stand in foul territory near first base if there is no one on first or second, but should stand between first and second beyond the baseline (on the grass near the boundary between the infield and the outfield) when there is a runner on first and/or second base. The umpire should be ready to move out of the way of a play if necessary.

Although the umpires may confer on calls, the umpire responsible for the base where the call occurred has the last word on all decisions.

Do not allow players to influence calls. Do not tolerate abusive behaviour from players. Both teams shall accept the umpires' decisions without question. If a player persists in disputing an umpire's decision, they should be provided with one warning. If the player persists after that, the umpire shall eject the player from the game. The umpire must report the player to the league executive for possible further discipline. Umpires are under no obligation to tolerate abusive behaviour of any kind.

Players acting as umpires should project an air of neutrality and refrain from coaching or rooting for their team during their turn as umpire.

Remember that this is a fun league. The prime duty of the umpire is to provide a safe recreational atmosphere to play in.

During the game:

Keep the game moving. We have an hour and a half to play seven innings. Allow the pitcher a maximum of five warm up pitches per inning. If the pitcher takes a long time to get out on the field or to throw the warm-up pitches, then reduce the number of pitches accordingly. If teams are slow in

getting warm-up balls off the field once the pitcher is warmed up, you may choose not to allow players to bring balls onto the field for warm up.

Remember the strike zone is from the highest armpit to the top of the knees when the batter is in their normal batting stance. If any part of the ball is over any part of the plate in the strike zone, then it is a strike. It does not have to be the whole ball over the plate; any part of the ball over any part of the plate in between the batter's knees and armpits is a strike. Please try to maintain appropriate size of the strike zone. A large strike zone speeds up the game.

If a runner touches home plate he/she is out. The League experience is that because of the wide variety and calibre of players that play in this league, this rule causes some confusion. Temper your calling of this rule accordingly. If someone touches home plate and there was no risk of a collision (i.e. the catcher was someplace else), then warn the player that he should not touch home plate, but do not call him out. On the other hand, if the catcher is standing on home plate when the runner attempts to touch it, there is a risk of collision, so call the batter out.

End of game

Both teams should keep an eye on the clock, especially as 6pm approaches. Clocks on cell phones should be used and in case of any dispute, the average time of 3 phones shall be used as the correct time. Teams should be aware of when 6:05pm occurs.

All games MUST end at 6:15pm. The game must stop, it shall not continue to the end of the next half or full inning. If an inning hasn't been completed by 6:15pm then the score for the game will be the score at the end of the last complete inning. Ties are permitted.

No new inning may begin after 6:05pm. If an inning is in progress at 6:10pm, then the batting team is responsible for monitoring the time and announcing when 6:15 arrives. Again, at 6:15 games must end. Once 6:05pm has past, since no new inning can be started, consider how the mercy rule may apply if either team is up by more than 10 runs (5 runs if limited male or female players are present).

In the spirit of cooperating with other users of the field, teams should be careful about trying to play right up to our ending time in our use of the fields. If the home team is up by a large margin when 6:05pm arises, consider carefully whether you can complete a full inning in 10 minutes. Teams are allowed to play for enjoyment past 6:05 but should not be doing this all the way to 6:15pm if other teams are waiting.

If other teams are trying to get their game going following ours, consider moving any team and personal equipment to the bleacher area of the diamond and then putting it away, thus allowing the following teams to setup in the bench area.

Players should always do a spot check before leaving the diamonds to make sure nothing has been left behind (e.g. bats, bases, balls, coats, shoes, keys – especially hooked on the fence).

Interference Guidelines

There are two types of incidents which are commonly called "interference" : offensive interference, and defensive obstruction.

Interference

Interference is the act of an offensive player or team member that impedes, hinders, or confuses a defensive player while he is attempting to execute a play.

Some examples of interference:

- When a batter intentionally strikes a hit ball a second time, strikes it with a thrown, bat, or deflects its course in any way while running to first base.
- When a fair hit ball strikes a runner who is not on base, before it has a chance to be fielded by the defense.
- When the batter interferes with the catcher.

In all cases of interference the ball is dead (i.e. the play is over), the runner who caused the interference is out, and all other runners must return to the last base touched before the interference, unless forced to advance by the batter.

Cases

The batter hits a ground ball, which stops in front of home plate. As the batter is running to first, he discards his bat in fair territory causing it to roll against the ball in fair territory.

Ruling: The ball is dead. The batter is out for batting the ball twice in fair territory.

There is a runner on second. The batter hits the ball toward the short stop, and the ball hits the runner who is half way to third before the short stop has had a chance to play the ball.

Ruling: The ball is dead. The runner is out, all other runners will return to the last base touched before the interference occurred unless forced by the batter becoming a base runner.

There is a runner on second. The batter hits the ball toward second, and the ball hits the runner who is standing on second.

Ruling: The ball is alive and the play will continue. No interference has occurred.

There is a runner on second. The batter hits the ball toward the short stop, and it rolls through the short stop's legs and then the ball hits the runner who is half way to third.

Ruling: The ball is alive and the play will continue. No interference has occurred.

There is a runner at second with none out. The batter hits a ground ball toward the second baseman. The second baseman scoops up the batted ball and throws it to the third baseman who is covering third base. The throw is in time and the third baseman is holding the ball and waiting to apply the tag on the runner. The runner stays on his feet and deliberately crashes into the third baseman hoping to dislodge the ball.

Ruling: The ball is dead, and the runner is out for interference. The batter/baserunner remains on first base.

There is a runner at first. Once the ball crosses home plate the runner attempts to steal second. The batter steps across home plate in an attempt to interfere with the catcher's throw.

Ruling: The ball is dead. The batter is out. The runner returns to first.

Obstruction

Obstruction is the act of:

a defensive player or team member which hinders or prevents a batter from striking or hitting a pitched ball, or

a fielder who is:

- not in possession of the ball,
- not in the act of fielding a batted ball, or
- not about to receive a thrown ball

who impedes the progress of a runner who is running the bases.

Some examples of obstruction:

- the batter is obstructed or prevented from striking at a pitched ball.
- when any defensive player prevents the runner from making a base.

Cases

The batter attempts to swing at a pitched ball. The bat contacts the catcher's glove and misses the ball.

Ruling: The ball is dead. The batter is awarded first base. Other runners will only be advanced if forced by the batter going to first.

The batter hits a ball into left field. As the batter is rounding first, she is forced to change path to avoid the first baseman. The runner is put out attempting to go to second.

Ruling: Regardless of whether the umpire feels the runner would have made it to second, the runner is awarded second base.

The batter hits a ball into left field. As the batter is rounding first, she is forced to change path to avoid the first baseman. The runner makes it safely into second.

Ruling: Play continues like the obstruction never occurred.

The batter hits a ball into left field. As the batter is rounding 1st, she is forced to change path to avoid the first baseman. The runner makes it safely to second, but is put out attempting to go to 3rd.

Ruling: Since the obstruction occurred between first and second, the runner is out, and the play will continue as if the obstruction never occurred.