



SOFTBALL

MODIFIED EVENTS

Individual Skills Competition
Designated Pitcher Team

TRADITIONAL EVENTS

Traditional Team

UNIFIED EVENTS

Unified Team

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Softball shall govern all Special Olympics competitions. Special Olympics has created these rules based World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) rules, which shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Softball.

RULES OF COMPETITION

UNIFORM SPECIFICATIONS

1. All participants must wear athletic shorts, softball/baseball pants or sweatpants.
2. No blue jeans or dress slacks allowed.
3. All jerseys must be of the same color with number on the back.
4. Soft cleated shoes and tennis shoes are permissible.
5. No hiking boots, dress shoes or metal/screw-in cleats are allowed.

TEAM COMPOSITION & LEVELS

1. A team roster may contain a maximum of 17 players.
2. Players may only be on one (1) team roster.
3. Team Level: Each team shall be placed in one of three levels for play, based on attributes of the top half of their team. The Level placement is subject to change by the Softball Sport Management Team prior to the tournament. A team's level will serve as the basis for division placement.
 - a. Level 1 - High: plays by regulation rules; high to excellent skills and athleticism; implements strategies; several players hit with power; reacts to the way the other team plays; competent fielders; aggressive base running.
 - b. Level 2 - Average: plays by regulation rules; average skills and athleticism; some strategy; a few players hit with power; defense depends on a few key players; most base runners require coach to say when to run.
 - c. Level 3 - Low: following rules is a challenge; low skills and athleticism; little strategy; a few players hit can hit ball out of infield or reliably catch a fly ball; defense depends on one or two key players; base runners advance one base at a time.
4. Teams must play at least two (2) games against different opponents within their classification.

GENERAL RULES

1. Game
 - a. A regulation game shall consist of seven (7) innings or 65 minutes; whichever comes first.
 - b. The game will be considered complete if one (1) team leads the other by 15 runs after four (4) full innings of play, or by 12 runs after five (5) full innings of play.
2. Field
 - a. The distance from home to the pitcher's plate shall be 50 feet.
 - b. The distance between bases may be 60, 65 or 70 feet.
 - c. A Double Base for First Base is approved.
3. Balls and Strikes
 - a. Four (4) balls constitute a walk and three (3) strikes constitute an out.
 - b. If the batter has two (2) strikes and then fouls a pitch, they shall be declared out.
 - c. Batters will start with a 0-0 pitch count.
4. Players
 - a. A team must have at least 10 players to start a game.
 - b. A team may finish with one (1) less player.
 - c. An automatic out will result when an absent player's position comes to bat in the batting order.
5. Extra Players
 - a. An extra player (EP) is optional, but if one is used they must be made known prior to the start of the game and be listed on the score sheet in the regular batting order.
 - i. If an EP is used, they must be used the entire game. Failure to complete the game with an EP results in the forfeiture of the game.
 - ii. The EP must remain in the same position in the batting order for the duration of the game.
 - iii. If an EP is used, all 11 must bat and any 10 may play defense.
 - iv. The EP may be substituted for at any time. The substituted EP must be a player who has not yet been in the game. The starting EP may re-enter.

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6. Line-Up Card
 - a. Coaches must submit their team's line-up card to the umpire and the opposing team prior to the start of the game.
 - b. The line-up card shall include the batting order and fielding positions.
7. Re-entry
 - a. Any of the starting players may be withdrawn and re-entered once, provided players occupy the same batting order.
 - b. A player may only re-enter the game by replacing the person who originally substituted for them.
8. Pitching
 - a. The ball must be pitched in an underhand motion, and travel in an arc that is no less than six (6) feet and no more than 12 feet.
 - b. The pitcher must maintain contact with the pitcher's plate from the start of the delivery until the ball is released.
9. Batting
 - a. When batting, players will take their stance within the batter's box.
10. Umpires
 - a. The umpire(s) are empowered to make all decisions on the playing field.
 - b. Umpires shall warn any player whose play is deemed dangerous. Subsequent dangerous play by that player will result in disqualification from the game.
11. Base Runners
 - a. If a coach touches a runner while the ball is in play, that runner will be declared out.
 - b. A base runner may not leave their base until the pitched ball is hit.
12. Home Runs (over the fence)
 - a. Limit of two (2) home runs per team per game.
 - b. Any additional home runs above the limit will be scored as an out.
13. Run Limit
 - a. Once a team has scored 20 runs in an inning, that half inning is over.
14. Designated Runner
 - a. A team may apply to the Softball Sport Management Team to use a designated runner (DR) for an individual with a severe physical limitation that impairs their ability to run.
 - b. The DR may be any player who is on the roster and not currently in the lineup.
 - c. Teams with only 10 players will not be allowed a DR.
 - d. The DR will start from the third base line extended eight (8) feet from home plate, and shall not run until the ball is hit.
 - e. Violation is an automatic out.

EQUIPMENT

1. Only bats marked by the manufacturer in a prominent manner so as to be easily visible "Official Softball or Approved for Softball" may be used. If marking is worn off, the bat may still be permitted in play if it is in compliance with WBSC Rules.
2. A first baseman's trapping-type mitt may be worn by first basemen and catchers only.
3. The catcher must wear a facemask.
4. A 30.5cm (12-inch) white or yellow ball restricted core softball must be used.
5. All players on a team shall wear matching shirts with numbers on the back.
6. All batters, base runners, and on-deck hitters must wear batting helmets.

GENERAL RULES FOR DESIGNATED PITCHER TEAM COMPETITION

1. The designated pitcher division is for Level 3 teams only. Coaches should train a member of the team to pitch if at all possible.
2. Each team in the "Designated Pitcher" division will be responsible for supplying a non-fielding designated pitcher that will pitch to their team.
3. The designated pitcher shall pitch from a distance of 45 feet and shall pitch underhand.
4. There shall be no walks, and no "called" strikes; each batter shall bat a maximum of seven (7) pitches. A batter that does not reach three (3) strikes (swing and miss or fouled ball) or put the ball in play would be considered out after seven (7) pitches.
5. A coaches' circle that will be located 3m (9'10-1/4") beyond second base and made with a 1.8m diameter. One (1) coach from the defensive team is allowed to stand in this circle and coach while their team is on the field.



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- When a ball is hit into the outfield, a direct throw can be made to attempt a play at a base. The ball becomes dead when in the opinion of the umpire, the ball is being returned to the pitcher and has crossed the imaginary baseline, regardless whether the ball is in the possession of a player.
- On an infield play, the ball becomes dead when, in the opinion of the umpire, the infielder attempts to throw the ball to the designated pitcher.
- A runner who has advanced more than halfway to the next base before the ball crosses the baseline, shall advance to the next base. A runner who has not advanced beyond the halfway point is to return their previous base, unless forced to advance by the previous runner. The lead runner controls all base advancements.
- The batting team's half of the inning shall end when three outs have been made or the batting order is complete.
- A batted ball that strikes the designated pitcher before it has contacted a defensive player is dead and not counted as a pitch.

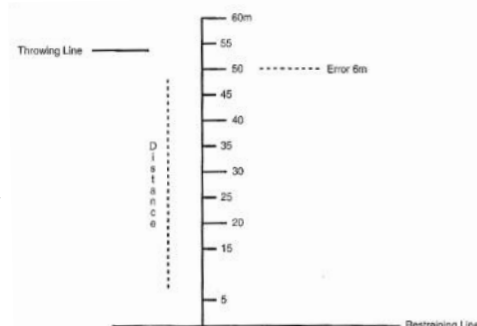
GENERAL RULES FOR UNIFIED SPORTS® TEAM PLAY

- Roster
 - The roster shall contain proportionate number of athletes and Unified partners.
- Line-up
 - The line-up shall contain five (5) athletes and five (5) Unified partners at all times.
 - Exception: if the EP is used, 12 players must be in the line-up (6 athletes and 6 Unified partners).
- Position Requirements
 - Two (2) athletes and two (2) Unified partners in both the infield and outfield.
 - One (1) athlete and one (1) Unified partner as pitcher and catcher.
 - Failure to adhere to the required composition during competition results in a forfeit.
- Batting Order
 - The batting order shall alternate athletes and Unified partners.
- Coach
 - Each team shall have an adult, non-playing coach in the dug-out.

GENERAL RULES FOR INDIVIDUAL SKILLS COMPETITION

- The Individual Skills Competition is to allow athletes to train and compete in basic softball skills. The development of these key skills is necessary prior to advancing on to team softball. Individual Skills Competition is designed for lower ability athletes. It is not for athletes who can already play the game.
- Four (4) events comprise the Individual Skills: Base Running, Throwing, Fielding, and Hitting. The athlete's final score is determined by adding together the scores achieved in each of these four (4) events.
- Base Running
 - Purpose
 - To measure the athlete's base running ability.
 - Equipment
 - Three (3) bases, home plate, and stopwatch
 - Description
 - Bases are set up like a softball diamond and positioned 19.81m (65 feet) apart.
 - The athlete is instructed to start on home plate, and run around the bases as fast as possible, touching each base en route.
 - Scoring
 - The time stops when the athlete touches home plate after circling the bases. The time elapsed in seconds is subtracted from 60 to determine the points scored.
 - A penalty of five (5) seconds for each base missed or touched in an improper order shall be assessed.
 - The best score of two (2) trials is recorded.
- Throwing
 - Purpose
 - To measure the athlete's ability in throwing for distance and accuracy.
 - Equipment
 - Regulation field, two (2) measuring tapes, softballs, and two (2) small cones or marking stakes.
 - Description
 - The player being tested stands behind the restraining line, back far enough to take one (1) or more steps in preparation for throwing.
 - The player has two (2) tries to throw the softball as far and as straight as possible down the throwing line, without stepping over the restraining line.

Diagram for Throwing



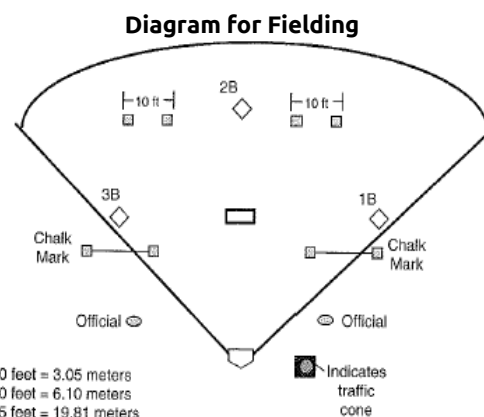
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- iii. Coaches, assistants or other waiting players should be positioned in the field to indicate, using a cone or marking stake, the spot where each ball first touches the ground.
 - iv. The better of the two (2) throws is measured and recorded as the player's score.
 - v. If a player steps on or over the line before releasing the ball, the trial must be repeated. There will be a maximum of two (2) repeats.
- d. Scoring
- i. The net throwing score equals the throwing distance, measured at a point on the throwing line straight across from (perpendicular to) the spot where the ball landed, minus the error distance (the number of meters the ball landed off target, away from the throwing line).
 - ii. The player's score is the better of the two (2) throws.
 - iii. Both error scores and distance are measured to the nearest meter.
 - iv. Example: if a ball lands even with (perpendicular to) the 50m point on the measuring tape, but is 6m off to one (1) side, the player's score is 44 points. Distance thrown (50) minus number of meters off target (6) results in a net score of 44m.
 - v. Athletes score one (1) point per meter (Ex. 44m = 44 points).
 - vi. If score falls between meters, score should be rounded down (44.73 = 44).

5. Fielding

- a. Purpose
 - i. To measure athlete's fielding ability.
- b. Equipment
 - i. 30.5cm (12-inch) softballs, measuring tape, chalk line, and cones.
- c. Description
 - i. The athlete will stand between, and behind the two (2) cones.
 - ii. The official must throw the ball on the ground to the athlete, between the cones.
 - iii. The throw to the athlete must hit the ground before the 6.10m (20 foot) chalk mark.
 - iv. The athlete may move aggressively toward the ball.
 - v. If the thrown ball is outside of the cones, the throw must be repeated.
 - vi. Each athlete gets five (5) fielding attempts per trial.
 - vii. Each athlete receives two (2) trials.



- d. Scoring
- i. The athlete receives five (5) points for a clearly fielded ball (either caught in glove or trapped against the body, but off the ground);
 - ii. Two (2) points for a ball that is blocked; and
 - iii. Zero (0) points for a missed attempt,
 - iv. For a maximum score of 50 (2 trials - 5 attempts each).

6. Hitting

- a. Purpose
 - i. To measure the athlete's ability to hit for distance when hitting off a batting tee.
 - b. Equipment
 - i. Batting tee, 30.5cm (12-inch) red stitched restricted-flight balls (white or yellow balls are acceptable), bat, measuring tape, and chalk
 - c. Description
 - i. Standing in a regulation size batter's box [2.31m (7'7") by 99cm (3'3")], the athlete is instructed to hit the ball off the tee.
 - ii. The athlete receives three (3) attempts.
- d. Scoring
- i. The distance of the longest hit shall determine the athlete's final score. The distance of a hit is measured from the batting tee to the point where the ball first touches the ground.
 - ii. The distance is measured to the nearest meter.
 - iii. Athlete's score one (1) point per meter (Ex. 46m = 46 points).

7. Scoring

- a. A player's final score is determined by adding together the scores achieved in each of the four (4) events which comprise the Individual Skills Competition.