



SOFTBALL

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall govern all Special Olympics Softball competitions. As an international sports program, Special Olympics has created these Rules based upon Federation Internationale de Softball (FIS) and the National Governing Body (NGB) Rules which are ASA rules for slow pitch softball. FIS or NGB Rules shall be employed except when either is in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules. In such cases, the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall apply.

A. Events Offered by Special Olympics Missouri

1. Individual Skills Softball
2. Tee Ball Softball
3. Coach Pitch Softball
4. Regulation Team Softball
5. Unified Sports® Slow Pitch Softball

B. Special Olympics Missouri Rules

The following pertain to all softball events:

1. An inning shall consist of ten batters or three outs whichever comes first.
2. The tenth batter shall run the bases, if he/she hits the ball in fair territory, until he/she is declared out. If a fielder while in possession of the ball touches ANY base in front of the tenth batter regardless if there is a force out or not, after the ball has been hit into fair territory, the runner shall be declared out and the inning is over. If the base touched is any base other than first base, all runners that cross home plate shall count if in the opinion of the umpire they would have

scored before the out occurred. If the fielders fail to touch any base in front of the tenth batter then runner may only be declared out if tagged with the ball.

3. A team may start a game with 8 or 9 players and may add up to 10 players but only at the end of a complete inning. If a team starts the game with 11 players **(use an extra player, "EP" see ASA rule)** they must finish with 11 players. If you start with 10 players, however you may end with 8 players.
4. If a team only has 8 or 9 players they may only bat 8 or 9 players in an inning.
5. SOMO will use the Softball Skills Assessment Form (modified by SMAC) to assess and division teams prior to Regional.
6. SOMO will use colored softballs (either orange/yellow) at ALL levels for competition and encourages coaches to use them at practices, as well.

C. The following pertain to Tee Ball Rules:

1. The batting line-up may consist of all the players on the roster or only 10 batters at the discretion of the coach; however only 10 batters may bat in an inning.
2. Each team may substitute freely when they are on defense (in the field).
3. The ball may not be fielded by anyone unless it travels a minimum of 45 ft. Any attempt by the pitcher to get out of his circle and field the ball shall make the ball live. The batter may run to first and all runners may advance at their own risk. The batter may be put out at first base or tagged out before reaching first base.
4. SOMO will use a Restricted Injury Factor (RIF) 12 –inch ball for T-Ball.
5. The base distance for Tee-Ball Softball shall be 60 feet.

D. The following pertain to Coach Pitch Rules:

1. Each team will begin the game with Special Olympics athletes in designated defensive positions **(you may still play with an EP see ASA rule)**.
2. The Special Olympics athlete who is the designated pitcher will be positioned on the field **in the pitchers area (located behind the regulation pitching rubber)**. The designated pitcher cannot leave the

pitcher's area until after the ball has been hit. Pitcher may then field or make an attempt to field any live ball.

3. Each batter will be afforded the same opportunity to hit a pitched ball. Each batter will have **up to five (5) pitches to get a hit or strike out on three swings**. If a batter who has a count with two strikes and less than 5 pitches fouls the pitch off, it will be considered an out and the batter will not receive the additional pitches. **No batter will be allowed to walk.**
4. The **coach** of the offensive (batting) team **will pitch** to their own team. If the coach is unable to pitch then the Games Rules Committee will choose a neutral pitcher. The neutral pitcher may pitch to one or both teams.
5. The **coach or neutral pitcher cannot field** or make an attempt to field any live ball. Any attempt to field a live ball will be ruled interference and the batter will be given another attempt to hit the ball. If a ball hits the coach-pitcher, the ball will be declared a dead ball, runners may advance one base, and the batter will be allowed to go to first base.
6. The **coach or neutral pitcher will not be allowed to move closer than eighteen 18 feet** to pitch to the batter. Whenever possible the pitcher should be at regulation pitching rubber in order to teach the skills of the game.
7. The **coach of the defensive team** will be allowed to stand **ten 10 feet behind second base** to coach their team while they are in the field. Defensive coaches may also stand outside the foul lines (first base and third base).
8. The batting line-up may consist of all the players on the roster or only 10 batters at the discretion of the coach; however only 10 batters may bat in an inning.
9. Each team may substitute freely when they are on defense (in the field).
10. The base distance for Coach-Pitch Softball shall be 60 feet.
11. SOMO will use a Restricted Injury Factor (RIF) 12 –inch ball for Coach-Pitch.

E. The following pertain to Unified Sports® Slow Pitch Softball:

1. The roster **must** consist of at least 50% athletes always.
2. All games will be played using Co-ed Rules.
 - a. The batting line-ups will consist of alternating an athlete and a partner throughout the batting order. Unified Partners may NOT bat in back-to-back positions.
 - b. Either the pitcher or the catcher **MUST** be an athlete, and the other position **MAY** be a Partner OR an Athlete. Partners may NOT play both pitcher and catcher at the same time. If playing with fewer Partners than Athletes, Athletes **MAY** play both pitcher and catcher at the same time.
 - c. The infield **MUST** consist of alternating athletes and partners.
 - d. The outfield **MUST** consist of alternating athletes and partners.
3. Rosters **MAY** consist of equal numbers of athletes and partners. Or rosters **MAY** consist of more athletes than partners. However, partners **MAY NEVER** outnumber athletes.
4. A Unified Partner may NOT be walked to pitch to an Athlete. If the Partner is walked, the following athlete has the option of batting or walking.

F. Competition Uniforms

1. All softball teams shall wear the ASA approved uniforms.
2. ALL individual skills competitors shall wear any short that conforms to the Competition Uniforms Rules or sweat pants, a T-shirt, tank-top, or sweatshirt, and any footwear that conform to the Competition Uniforms Rules.