This guide will cover rule situations most often occurring in slow-pitch softball as well as special rules designed for Stanford IM Softball. For all game situations not touched on or outlined above, play will be governed by NIRSA Slow Pitch Softball Rules.

**SPECIAL STANFORD IM RULES:**

**SLIDING RULE = RUNNERS MUST SLIDE** *(except at home)*

It is the responsibility of the runner to avoid collisions or interference with fielders in the event of a close play at any base. Runners must slide during a close play at any base *(except home plate)* with the exception of initial force plays at first. If a runner does not slide, and (in the judgment of the umpire) causes contact with a fielder that impedes their ability to make a play, the runner will be called out. In the event of a forceful collision (esp. w/ the catcher at home) immediate ejection will result pending further disciplinary action by the Intramural Supervisors.

**AT HOME PLATE:** There will be no sliding at home plate to avoid injuries/collisions. Instead there will be a cone placed halfway down the baseline from 3rd base to Home Plate. If a runner passes this cone, he/she has committed to going to Home and has to advance. The Umpire will then make the call on a "force-out" basis and no tag is necessary.

**PRE-GAME PROCEDURES:**

1. **OUT OF BOUNDS = DEAD BALL AREAS.**
   These will be established by Supervisors and umpires with both captains prior to the game. All bikes and equipment must be kept out of bounds.

2. Teams are encouraged to arrive at least 15 minutes prior to their game’s scheduled start time. Teams are allowed a five (5) minute grace period. Teams arriving after the grace period will forfeit the contest. IM Supervisors will make the call regarding the grace period.
3. Captains must check to make sure their team is checked in with the Supervisor on duty prior to starting the game.

**EQUIPMENT:**

1. Players must remove watches, rings, chains, and all other jewelry that may cause injury.

2. **SOFTBALL BATS ONLY.** Stanford IMs will supply bats for games but teams must bring their own equipment to warm up with. Teams must be willing to share bats if they wish to use their own. Bats must be ASA approved and not more than 34 inches, nor exceed 38 ounces in weight, not made of Titanium, and conform to all other ASA rules.

3. **NO METAL CLEATS, SPIKES MUST BE RUBBER-MOLDED TYPE.** Participants found to be wearing metal cleats will be ejected from the game.

4. **CATCHER’S MASKS** will be provided for participants to wear at their own discretion.

5. **THE OFFICIAL BALL** will be a **12 inch** regulation softball.

**PLAYERS:**

1. **BATTING ORDER IS FINAL UPON CAPTAIN’S SUBMISSION OF LINE-UP.**

2. **NINE (9) FIELDERS** (everyone may bat), **MINIMUM SEVEN (7) TO START.** Late arrivals can be added and bat last. However, if players arrive late, an out will be recorded for each at bat they will be assuming in the rotation.

3. **FREE FIELDER SUBSTITUTIONS ARE ALLOWED, EXCEPT:** A player must play one complete inning and a sub must sit out one complete inning.

   In Co Rec play, a player can only substitute for a team member of the same sex.

   If a player is ejected and there are no other subs, an out will be awarded each time the player in questions is supposed to bat.

   No pinch runners are allowed unless there is an injury. The last batter out will be the pinch runner. For Co Rec if a woman was the last out then a woman must pinch run.

**CO-REC RULES:**

At least 3 of 7, 4 out of 8, or 4 out of 9 fielders must always be women (not including catcher). If a team has less than 9 players, 3 out of 6, or 2 out of 5 must
always be women. The batting order must rotate between male & female. No two men or two women ever bat consecutively.

TIMING FACTORS:

1. DURATION OF THE GAME: The game is 50 minutes in duration, stopping only at the discretion of the umpire. An inning will be completed, even if the time limit has expired. A new inning will be started unless time has expired prior to the 3rd out for the home team.

2. REGULAR SEASON GAMES CAN END IN A TIE: Following seven innings or the completion of the 50 minute time limit, regular season games can end in a tie. In the playoffs, the game will continue until a team wins.

3. THE TEN (10) RUN MERCY RULE IS IN EFFECT AFTER FOUR (4) COMPLETE INNINGS.

THE FIELD:

Distance between bases will be 65 feet and the pitcher’s mound will be 50 feet from home plate.

The batter’s box will not be drawn on the field. It is considered a judgment call by the umpire.

PITCHING RULES:

1. LEGAL PITCH.
Starting position is facing home plate w/ at least one foot on the rubber pitcher’s plate. When the batter is ready a legal pitch must be delivered in one continuous UNDERHAND motion at moderate speed with a perceptible arch of at least one foot. Illegal pitches will result in a warning and be automatically called BALLS (if the batter does not swing).

2. DEAD PITCHES.
Any pitch that lands in front of the plate is dead (and a ball) and may not be hit. A ball that slips out of the pitcher’s hand during the windup is "no pitch". Runners may not advance.

3. STRIKE ZONE – no umpires will be calling balls/strikes
If any portion of the ball lands on Home Plate/extension of home plate, the call is a strike. All other pitches will be called balls.

BATTING RULES:

1. FAIR TERRITORY.
Home plate is in fair territory. Balls hitting bases are fair. Foul lines are fair territory.

Ground balls that bounce anywhere before first & third and then cross over (or between) first & third are FAIR--no matter where they land in the outfield.

Fly balls or line drives past first & third must land in fair territory in the outfield.

Ground or fly balls that do not reach first & third are fair if they come to rest in fair territory or are first touched by a fielder while the ball is in fair territory.

2. BATTER IS OUT WHEN:
   A) a batted fair ball hits him/her when he is out of the batter's box.
   B) he/she steps on or across home plate to strike the ball.
   C) a foul tip is caught when the batter has two strikes.
   D) WHEN HE/SHE BUNTS OR CHIPS THE BALL DOWNWARD!
Runners return to bases. The infield fly rule is called (and the ball is caught or lands in fair territory).

3. INFIELD FLY (designed to protect runner from a double play):
   Special rule in effect with runners on first & second or bases loaded and less than two out. When an infielder assumes proper position (i.e. facing home plate, in fair territory, and moving only slightly towards the ball) to catch a full-swing pop-up (not line-drive) the umpire shall immediately yell, "infield fly, batter out if fair." If the pop-up is dropped in fair territory, the batter is still out, but the runners are not forced to move and may advance at their own risk. If the fly drops foul, the call is reversed and the batter returns to home.

4. If the CATCHER INTERFERES with batter's swing he/she automatically gets first base.

5. All players are ELIGIBLE to hit. Players do not have to play in the field to hit. Once a player leaves the batting order, he/she cannot re-enter the game.

6. BATTING OUT OF ORDER:
   1. Is an appeal play which may be made by the defensive team.
   2. The defensive team forfeits its right to appeal batting out of order when one legal or illegal pitch has been made to the following batter, or when the pitcher and the infielders have left fair territory on their way to the dugout area.
   3. If an error is discovered by either the offensive or defensive team while the incorrect batter is at bat, the correct batter shall take his place and legally assume any balls or strikes.
   4. If the error is discovered after the incorrect batter has completed his turn at bat and before a legal or illegal pitch has been made to the next batter, or before the infielders have left fair territory on their way to the dugout, shall result in:
a. The batter who should have batted called out.
b. Any scores made during the "at bat" nullified.
c. All runners returning to the base they occupied prior to the last pitch.
d. The next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player who failed to bat, regardless of whether he/she was the batter who hit out of order.
e. If the batter called out is the third out, the correct batter in the next inning shall be the player who would have come to bat had the player been put out by a normal play.

5. If the error is discovered after the first legal or illegal pitch to the next batter, or after the infielders have left fair territory to the dugout, shall result in:
   a. The turn of the bat of the incorrect batter ruled legal.
   b. Any runs scored ruled legal.
   c. Any base runner(s) who advanced ruled legal.
   d. The next batter is the one who follows the incorrect batter.
   e. Any player(s) who failed to bat have lost their turn at bat until reached again in the regular order.

BASE-RUNNING RULES:

1. REVERSE ORDER.
If a runner must RETURN to bases while the ball is live, he/she must touch them in REVERSE. (i.e. a runner on first runs on a ball hit in the air to the outfield. He/she touches and rounds second heading for third, but the ball is caught. To “tag up” at first base he/she must return in the baseline, touching second base on his/her way back to first)

2. BASES DISLODGE.
If a runner dislodges a base neither he/she nor any succeeding runners are compelled to touch the out-of-position base. Subsequent force or tag outs should be made at the original spot.

3. TWO RUNNERS ON SAME BASE.
The runner who first legally touches the bases is entitled to it—the other may be tagged out.

4. TWO RUNNERS PASS IN THE NIGHT...
If a runner physically passes a preceding runner (not yet out) then he/she is immediately out.

5. NO LEADING OR STEALING.
A runner is automatically out if he/she leaves a base before the pitch crosses home plate.

6. OUTSIDE THE BASELINES.
A runner is out if he/she runs more than three feet outside the baseline to avoid a tag. However, he/she must leave the baseline (if possible) to avoid a fielder’s catch or throw.

7. TURNS AT FIRST BASE.
A runner may over-run first base, turn in either direction, and return to base w/o liability to be put out. However, an obviously aggressive move toward second forfeits the privilege.

8. MISSING A BASE.
While a play is still live, runners who miss bases can be put out by fielders touching the missed base while holding the ball. After the play is over, the defense must make an appeal before the next pitch. Runners caught missing bases do not affect the fate of runners behind them, unless they make the third out.

9. TAGGING UP.
A player tagging up on a fly ball may leave the base as soon as the ball is touched by a fielder--it does not have to be caught.Runners can tag up on caught foul fly balls.

10. GENERAL INTERFERENCE.
Offensive interference occurs when a runner or batter (intentionally or not) obstructs, impedes, hinders, or confuses a fielder attempting to play a batted or thrown ball. If interference is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the umpire may call both runners out. If an umpire declares a batter or runner out for interference, all other runners shall return to the last base that was legally touched at the time the interference occurred.

FIELDING RULES:

1. IMPROPER USE OF FIELDING APPAREL.
All runners may safely advance three bases if a fielder throws his/her glove, cap, or other apparel and makes contact with a batted ball in fair territory.

All runners may safely advance two bases if a fielder throws his/her glove, cap, or other apparel and makes contact with a thrown ball.

2. INTERFERENCE WITH THE BALL.
If a batted ball strikes an umpire in fair territory before reaching a fielder, it’s a dead ball single and other runners advance only if forced. If a batted ball strikes a runner in fair territory before reaching a fielder, it’s a dead ball, the runner is out, and the batter is awarded a single.

If a batted ball strikes an umpire or runner after having passed a fielder, play continues.
If a thrown ball strikes an umpire or runner (within the base paths), play continues.

3. OVERTHROWS.

On an overthrow that goes out of play, the runner receives the base they were running to, plus one (in other words, two bases are awarded from the last base touched when the ball left the fielder’s hand).

However, if the runner was stationary on base, not in motion or making an attempt at the next base, at the time of the throw, they are only awarded one base, unless forced to advance by the runner behind them.

4. GENERAL OBSTRUCTION.
Defensive obstruction is an act by a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball and not in the act of fielding, impedes the progress of any runner. The umpire shall call obstruction, but let the play proceed. At the conclusion of the play, the umpire shall explain the nature of the action and impose any penalties that nullify the act of obstruction.

INCLEMENT WEATHER:

The Stanford IM office reserves the right to postpone or reschedule a contest if circumstances warrant such action. Contests postponed due to inclement weather or other reasons may or may not be rescheduled, at the discretion of the IM Office, due to field conditions or limited field space. In the case of inclement weather, the IM Office will make a decision regarding the playing of games no less than 1 hour prior to the scheduled game time. Players should reference the IM website at http://intramuralsports.stanford.edu/ for cancellation information. If inclement weather occurs after the closing of the IM Office, decisions regarding the continuing of the games will be made on the field by the IM Supervisors.