



## WM SOFTBALL RULES, GUIDELINES & PENALTIES

The following WM SOFTBALL Field Rules & Guidelines are intended to control all aspects of the game not covered by, or matters that are outside the scope of, the International Softball Federation (ISF) rules.

In some cases, in order to facilitate the playing of the game within the WM SOFTBALL, the WM SOFTBALL has chosen to adopt a rule in contravention to one in the ISF rulebook. Any of the WM SOFTBALL rules that over rule one in the ISF rulebook will be clearly stated.

Softball in the UK is governed by the British Softball Federation (BSF) using the rules of the ISF.

### **A. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION**

1. When at a WM SOFTBALL scheduled game:

- All teams must have available a copy of the current version of the ISF Rulebook (2014-2017)
- All teams must have available a copy of the current WM SOFTBALL Field Rules & Guidelines

**Failure to comply will result in a penalty of one (1) league point for each offence**

2. Teams must have paid all fees owing to the WM SOFTBALL by date of the Pre-Season Captains meeting. See Appendix A for a summary of fees. **Failure to pay outstanding debts owed may result in non-participation of any WM SOFTBALL game and/or event until such debt is paid**
3. WM SOFTBALL utilises the BSF website to roster players and record game data. To enable this to happen effectively, teams must have supplied the WM SOFTBALL with a completed, current season, Affiliation Form by the date of the Pre-Season Captains meeting. All players must be rostered on the Affiliation Form and on the BSF website. Details of how to roster players on the BSF website can be found at [www.britishsoftball.org](http://www.britishsoftball.org). **Failure to supply completed rosters to the WM SOFTBALL and/or on BSF website will result in team exclusion from the WM SOFTBALL until such time rosters are completed**
4. Any person who participates in softball must be made aware of the risks involved and be deemed competent to participate without causing undue risk to themselves or others. Competency to play is the Captain/Coach's decision but can be over ruled by the umpire in charge.

In line with current BSF guidelines:

Any player under the age of 18 is subject to the rules outlined in Appendix B.

A youth player that turns 14 in the calendar year of the season being played may take part with the usual parental consent and competency checks having taken place

**Nobody may play at any WM SOFTBALL fixture or softball event if they know they are pregnant.**

5. To prevent teams having to travel unreasonable distances to play, a team's home ground must be within the designated WM SOFTBALL catchment area. A copy of the WM SOFTBALL catchment area



map is available from the WM SOFTBALL website ([www.wmsftball.com](http://www.wmsftball.com)) or can be requested from the WM SOFTBALL Committee. **Teams outside the WM SOFTBALL catchment area will be excluded from the league**

6. To facilitate the Committee's distribution of information, yearbooks, etc., a representative from each team must attend the WM SOFTBALL AGM and any schedule Captain's meetings. An attendee can only represent one team and must be rostered for that team. **Failure to send a representative will result in the team incurring a penalty of three (3) league points**
7. For rules governing player movement and rostering, see Appendix C. **Breach of player movement rules will make that game a forfeit for offending team**
8. A player may transfer between teams up to three (3) times in a season. Each time, they remain rostered to this team until they transfer to another, including returning to the original team. They can transfer at any time until 15 July 2017. After this date, any player wishing to transfer must gain approval from the WM SOFTBALL Committee via the Results and Fixtures Officer. Be aware that it may take the Committee several days to process any applications.

Details of any transfer must be recorded on the back of the Official WM SOFTBALL Score Sheet for the player's first game in their new team and must also roster with their new team on the BSF website within six (6) days of this game.

Be aware that transferring to another team may cause issues with Softball Nationals qualification.

A player who transfers to another team is no longer eligible to play for their previous team in any rescheduled games where they were part of the original line up, unless allowed by other player movement rules. **Incorrectly rostered player(s) will make any game(s) the incorrect rostered player(s) has/have played in a forfeit for the offending team**

9. The WM SOFTBALL League season officially closes on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2017. All league games must have been played by this date. Play-off games may take place after this date, so it is important league games are played before this date. **Games not fulfilled by 10th August 2017 will be deemed a double forfeit.**
10. On teams with GB players rostered to them, the following dispensation policy has been adopted:

Teams with more than two (2) players selected for a current GB Softball Team are entitled to certain dispensations.

Should a League or League Cup game conflict with a GB Team scheduled event, tournament and/or training session (where the presence of that teams GB players is required), then the affected team must notify their opponent at least two (2) weeks in advance of their scheduled game. They should then reschedule the game within two (2) weeks of the originally scheduled date. All affected teams must consult the WM SOFTBALL schedule as soon as it is circulated and check for conflicts. The Committee requests that any such occasion arises during the season be reported to the Results and Fixtures Officer ASAP.

**Failure to report games that require rescheduling to the Fixtures and Results Officer may result in the team incurring a penalty of three (3) league points**



## B. THE PLAYING FIELD

1. **Clarification of ISF Rule 5.2:** In order to play softball safely, the playing area must be in suitable condition. It is the umpire's decision as to whether the field is suitable and this may be reviewed at any point during the game. If, for any reason, playing the game on the field in question would put the players and/or public at greater risk than normal, then the game should be stopped.

In case of lightning in the immediate or surrounding area, the WM SOFTBALL has adopted the BSF guidelines. It states: "At the first sign of lightning, in league or tournament play, the umpire shall stop the game and all players must take shelter inside a building, if available. If after fifteen (15) minutes, there is no further lightning, then the game can resume. If after thirty (30) minutes, there is still lightning, the game should be abandoned."

If a game is stopped and cannot be continued to completion, then the game must be rescheduled (see ISF rule 5.3 regarding regulation games).

Both teams must agree a new date and inform the Fixtures and Results Officer and the Umpire in Chief within fourteen (14) days of the original game date.

The attending umpire should be given first refusal to officiate the rescheduled game. If unavailable, then inform the Umpire in Chief for a replacement.

In the case that teams cannot, within 14 days of the original game date, agree a rescheduled date, then the Committee will set a date for the fixture. Any team not attending this date will forfeit the game. If both teams fail to attend, then it will be considered a double forfeit.

Failure to report games that require rescheduling to the Fixtures and Results Officer may result in the team incurring a penalty of three (3) league points.

2. For safety reasons, bases must be secured, this means pegged down if using vinyl bases. If this is impossible and the umpire considers it safe to play, then all players must be informed before play commences. If the umpire rules play unsafe to start or continue, then Section B.1 applies.

In the event of wet conditions, the umpire will decide if the game shall continue with wet bases.

3. **Contrary to ISF Rule 2.4:** For the purpose of player safety and ease of umpiring, the field should ideally be marked out in full accordance with the ISF rules. This may be impractical so WM SOFTBALL has adopted that as a minimum the batter's boxes and foul lines (at least 25m long) must be marked and a dead ball area indicated either with a line or cones

On the Committee's first notification of an offence, a warning will be given

On the Committee's second notification of an offence, two (2) league points will be deducted from the offending team

4. **Clarification of ISF Rule 2.2:** The correct size of a co-ed softball diamond is 275 feet from home plate to the outfield boundary. Due to only a few teams having access to purpose-built softball diamonds, the game sometimes has to be played on areas that are smaller than those laid out in the ISF rules. Because of this "Ground Rules" need to be agreed regarding any areas where the ball



cannot be safely fielded. The umpire should take advice from the team captains about ground rules but it is ultimately the umpire's decision and not the captains. Captains must inform all their players of any "Ground Rules" before the game commences. **Team Captains have no recourse upon any play involving an area under "ground rules" if failing to inform their team of the "ground rules" before the start of the game**

### C. PLAYING EQUIPMENT

1. Bats - **Contrary to ISF Rule 3.1.m:** WM SOFTBALL has adopted the BSF policy and will use the ASA Banned Bat List. Appendix D shows all the non-approved bats as of 11 Apr 2014. The current list of non-approved bats can be found at: [www.asasoftball.com/about/certified\\_equipment.asp](http://www.asasoftball.com/about/certified_equipment.asp). **If the batter enter the batter's box with, or is discovered using, an illegal bat then the batter is out and the bat is removed from the game**
2. Balls - **Contract to ISF Rule 3.3:** WM SOFTBALL has specified those which are most suited for our playing purposes. It has been found that the yellow balls are more visible than other colours. Balls that can be used are: Any 11" Yellow, 0.47 (or lower) COR., 375lbs (or lower) Comp. and ASA Compliant or 12" Yellow, 0.52 (or lower) COR., 300lbs (or lower) Comp. and ASA Compliant

Note: Balls marked as "Fast Pitch" may be used providing they fulfil all other criteria.

The Home Team must supply two (2) good, quality softballs of both 11" and 12" for each fixture.

**If the Home Team fails to provide two (2) good, quality softballs of both sizes then:**

**On the Committees first notification of an offence, a warning will be given**

**On the Committees second notification of an offence, two (2) league points will be deducted from the offending team**

**The game should be played using any available balls deemed suitable by the umpire in charge.**

**Under no circumstances can a game proceed if only 11" balls are available**

3. Shoes - Clarification of ISF Rule 3.5: For safety reasons, no shoes with any form of metal cleats or studs are allowed to be worn by anyone whilst on the field of play or in the dugout area. **Any player or coach found wearing metal cleats or studs shall be removed from the game and asked to change to suitable footwear. Play should not be suspended whilst player changes. If the offending team is reduced to less than eight (8) players and they do not have an eligible substitute, then the offending team forfeits the game**
4. Helmets - Clarification of ISF Rule 3.6f: Batting helmets are not mandatory, for adults, but WM SOFTBALL encourages all players to wear batting helmets. The WM SOFTBALL will adopt ISF Rule 3.6f regarding helmets for fast pitch play to cover instances where helmets are voluntarily worn in slow pitch play. **Batting helmets must be deemed, by the umpire, to be of suitable design and in a fit and safe condition. If any player continues to wear an unsuitable helmet during play, then they are to be removed from the game. If by removing the player and the offending team is reduced to less than eight (8) players, and no eligible substitute, then that team forfeits the game**



5. Uniforms - Contrary of ISF Rules 3.8.a, b, c and d: The league recommends that all teams wear matching style and colour shirts
6. Jewellery - Contrary of ISF Rules 3.8.g: The only jewellery allowed are Medic Alert Bracelets and/or Necklaces, which must be taped down. The WM SOFTBALL will allow players, entirely at their own risk, to wear wedding rings, if they are the "band" type and are to be taped over.

This is at the Umpires discretion and may invalidate any injury insurance claim.

#### D. RULES OF PLAY

1. **Contrary to ISF Rules 4.3.a, b.5 and 5.3.f.7:** If a team has only eight (8) or nine (9) players, then they can still play. Where the player(s) are missing from the normal ten (10) player line-up, they are replaced by an "automatic out" when the player(s) would be at bat.
2. **Contrary to ISF Rules 4.3.a, 4.6.d and 7.2.b:** In order to allow the playing of softball when players may be unavailable, any number of male players may be replaced by female players in the line-up as long as all other player rules are followed. Any female batter taking the place of a male player in the batting line-up must inform the umpire and pitcher before receiving the first pitch of her turn at bat. **A female player, who is taking the place of a male player, who then receives a pitch at her designated bat without telling the umpire and opposing pitcher, will be issued a warning by the umpire in the first instance. On the second and subsequent occasions, the player will be call out by the umpire and any play resulting will be void, resulting in a dead ball situation. As soon as the next batter has received a legal pitch, the umpire may still issue a warning, if the infringement is noticed, but may not call the offending batter out even it is the second or more instance of the offence**
3. **Contrary to ISF Rule 8.1.4:** A female batter playing in a male position in the batting line-up will be awarded two (2) bases for a walk, as if she was a male batter. If there are two (2) outs then the next batter, who must be female, may elect to bat or take a walk to 1<sup>st</sup> base.
4. WM SOFTBALL has decided to introduce 11" balls for female batters. All female batters, unless taking the place of a male batter in the line-up, will be pitched the 11" balls and males will be pitched the 12" balls.

**If a batter is pitched the incorrect size of ball according to their gender then:**

**During the "at bat" and no play has occurred, then the ball will be replaced with the correct size and the "at bat" will continue with the same count as before.**

**When the ball is "in play", then the play should be allowed to continue. Once time has been called the batting team captain has the option of letting the play stand or resetting and playing the play again with the count on the batter continuing from where it was prior to the batter putting the ball into play.**

**After a play and before the next legal pitch to the next batter, then the batting team captain has the option of letting the play stand or resetting and playing the play again with the count on the batter continuing from where it was prior to the batter putting the ball into play.**



After a pitch to the next batter, then the infringement is ignored with no penalty.

5. To facilitate the changing of balls between batters the first base coach is responsible for swapping balls unless directed by the umpire that he/she will facilitate the swapping of the balls. The first base coach can wear a glove to aid in this task. Whilst wearing a glove the coach must not make any gestures which may be distracting to the defensive team. The ball that is not in play should be out of sight to the fielding team.

Any distraction or disruptions to the game caused by the first base coach, either by wearing a glove or not swapping the balls in a suitable manner will be treated as “interference”

If a first base coach is not provided to facilitate the swapping of the balls, the umpire should do the following:

Issue a warning once play is ready to commence.

If after the batter has had their “at bat” and there is still no first base coach, the umpire may start awarding strikes against the next batter.

6. The home team is responsible for checking that their ground is available and in a fit state to play. If any problems are encountered, then the WM SOFTBALL Fixtures and Results Officer, the appointed umpire and the opposing team captain must be notified as soon as possible.

In the event of the ground being unavailable, then the game should be played at the oppositions ground or, if that is unavailable, at a neutral venue.

Only the Umpire in attendance and/or the Grounds keeper in charge of the ground may call off a game. If the weather is bad, unless the Grounds keeper has contacted the team and said the game cannot commence, all players and the umpire should turn up as normal.

There is no rescheduling of games, except in one of the following circumstances:

When Rule A.12 applies regarding GB player dispensation

When called off by an Umpire and/or Grounds keeper

In circumstances deemed exceptional by the Committee

If a game is called off by an umpire or grounds keeper, then both teams must agree a new date and inform the Fixtures and Results Officer and the Umpire in Chief within fourteen (14) days of the original game date.

The attending umpire should be given first refusal to officiate the rescheduled game. If unavailable, then inform the Umpire in Chief for a replacement.

In the case that teams cannot, within 14 days of the original game date, agree a rescheduled date, then the Committee will set a date for the fixture. Any team not attending this date will forfeit the game. If both teams fail to attend, then it will be considered a double forfeit.



Failure to report games that require rescheduling to the Fixtures and Results Officer may result in the team incurring a penalty of three (3) league points.

7. WM SOFTBALL will (as far as possible) appoint a British Association of Softball Umpires (BASU) qualified Umpire to officiate all league games. They must be paid in accordance with the fees outlined in Appendix A. It is responsibility of each team to pay their fee. Teams who provide representatives on umpiring courses will be given preference when umpires are allocated to league games. **If a team fails to pay the required fee to an umpire, they will be suspended from the league until such time as the Committee deems that the debt is paid**
8. If an Umpire is unavailable to attend a fixture, it is their responsibility to find a suitable replacement. The home team captain should contact the allocated umpire a couple days before the fixture and check they are still available, provide directions to the ground, etc. **Any umpire failing to attend three (3) league fixtures, and failing to find a suitable replacement, will be removed from the League Umpire List.**
9. If an Umpire fails to attend their allocated game, then the teams should appoint a qualified person (preferably from a neutral team) to umpire the game. If once is not available, then the batting team should provide an umpire whilst their team is at bat. Umpiring calls must be treated as if they were made by a WM SOFTBALL appointed umpire. Any disputes should be resolved by the captains only. **Any player, appointed by the Team Captain to umpire a fixture in the absence of an appointed umpire, is deemed to be an umpire as defined in the ISF rules and must be treated accordingly.**
10. All teams should ready to play by 7pm and the game must have commenced by 7:15pm. The only exception to this is if both team and the umpire have agreed alternative arrangements prior to the scheduled start time. **At the umpires discretion, team not ready to play at 7:15pm will forfeit the game. If neither team is ready, then the game will be a double forfeit.**
11. **Extension to ISF Rule 4.11:** The “Replacement Player Rule” is only for players with “bleeding” wounds. In order to prevent unnecessary game stoppages, the umpire may allow a player with an injury that is not bleeding the same privilege. This is purely at the discretion of the Umpire  
  
As per BSF guidelines, it is strongly recommended that ALL players who sustain a head injury, no matter how trivial, are taken to A&E for examination.
12. Final scoring methods: A game officially stops the moment that one team has won (i.e., as soon as the winning run crosses home plate). The only exceptions to this are if both teams are tied after seven (7) innings or more than five (5) innings have been completed and the Umpire calls the game off.
13. **Clarification of ISF Rule 5.5.a:** The “Run Ahead Rule” - The game officially stops when one team is twenty (20) runs or more ahead after four (4) innings, fifteen (15) runs or more ahead after five (5) innings.
14. To assist teams in recording the results of their games, and passing the results back to the WM SOFTBALL Results and Fixtures Officer, pre-paid envelopes will be issued to teams at the start of the season, along with the official WM SOFTBALL score sheets.



Both teams must complete the official score sheet with player's Christian and Surnames, no nicknames!!

Immediately after the game finishes, the scores should be filled in and checked by both teams. Any players who do not appear on the BSF website, as rostered players for that team, must be included on the back of the score sheet.

**Failure by any team to fill in the Official League Score Sheet correctly will result in:**

**On the Committees first notification of an offence, a warning will be given**

**On the Committees second notification of an offence, two (2) league points will be deducted from the offending team**

**Team must report scores to the WM Softball Results and Fixtures officer within 7 days of the game. Failure to do so will result in a one (1) point penalty. This penalty will not be applied if the post mark on the envelop is dated within 2 days of the league game and the delay appears to be caused by the Postal Service.**

15. Team positions within a league division will be worked out on a points system. Points will be awarded as follows: three (3) points for a win, one (1) point for a lost, two (2) points for a draw and zero (0) points for a forfeit.

If teams are level on points, then run difference will used as the next deciding factor, if they are still drawn, Runs conceded followed by Runs scored will be used. If the teams are still equal after all these factors apply, then the Committee will decide how to separate the teams, including the possibility of a play-off game.

16. At the end of the season the teams in first place, in each division, will be promoted to the division above (except for division 1). Relegation for the bottom team in each division will depend on the number of teams in that division. The WM SOFTBALL Committee reserves the right to veto promotion or relegation if it deems it in the best interest of WM SOFTBALL.

17. WM SOFTBALL may, at any time, send a representative to perform a check on a WM SOFTBALL fixture. This representative shall be extended all courtesies by both teams and the umpire. The representative will check that all WM SOFTBALL rules are being fully adhered to and any infringements found, will be reporting to the attending Umpire and the Committee. **Any League representative must be treated as a game official and as such ISF rule 10.9 regarding player/coach conduct applies**

18. If a team is unable to field a full team for a fixture, then the Committee should be informed as soon as this is known. The Committee is keen to provide as much help and assistance as possible to enable teams to play. The Committee has many ways of assisting teams with players. If the Committee is not able to help and team is still short, then that team must forfeit.

In all cases, the captain(s) of the forfeiting team(s) should make a statement to the Committee within three (3) days, via the Fixtures and Results Officer (or other Committee member in unavailable), as to the circumstances of why the fixture could not have been played. The matter will



be raised at the next Committee meeting (normally within 28 days) and the Committee will decide whether to reschedule the fixture or award a forfeit.

19. It has been decided to help with light restriction causing games to be called early, that for the month of May, all games in Division 1 and 2 will be played with 1 and 1 counts for the batter ie the batter steps up to the plate with one strike and one ball against them. In the case of double headers being played this 1 and 1 count will also be used to ensure as many innings can be played as possible
20. The league has decided that 14 players can be used in a batting line up. This means 7 boys and 7 girls can be used. The extra 2 players must act as designated hitters only and must be placed at the bottom of the line-up. They may take the field as substitutes only.

### **E. Reporting and Enforcement Procedures**

1. Any infringements of the rules must be reported to the Committee within 36 hours via the WM SOFTBALL Fixtures and Results Officer, Umpire in Chief or if they are unavailable, any other Committee member.
2. If there is a problem whilst playing a fixture then, if necessary, the game should be played "Under Protest" as set out in the WM SOFTBALL Constitution, Section 5.6 and the ISF Rule, Section 11. Failure to adhere to the procedure as written may invalidate the protest.
3. It is the responsibility of the WM SOFTBALL Fixtures and Results Officer and/or Umpire in Chief to report rule infringements to the Committee but anyone attending a WM SOFTBALL Fixture and/or Event may report infringements to them.
4. Once an infringement is reported to the Committee, the Umpire in Chief will be informed. Within three (3) days the Umpire in Chief, or if unavailable, a designated Committee member, will contact both team Captains and the officiating umpire to provide a statement of the circumstances regarding the alleged incident and any mitigating circumstances. These statements must be provided to the Committee within three (3) days.
5. The Committee will review the alleged incident at the next Committee meeting (within 28 days) and make a decision on whether or not to penalise the offender(s) as per the WM SOFTBALL Rules.
6. In the Umpire is Chief's absence, one of the Executive Committee will act on their behalf. If the relevant team or umpire fails to make a statement to the Committee, then the decision will be made on the information that is available. Any Warning or Penalty issued by the WM SOFTBALL may be appealed using the procedures as laid out in the WM SOFTBALL Constitution.
7. WM Softball provides an online method for providing feedback on games, teams and umpires. This is anonymous and can be reported via the WM Softball site, [www.wmssoftball.com](http://www.wmssoftball.com).

### **F. Nationals Competition Qualification Criteria**



1. Places allocated for WM SOFTBALL League Teams to participate in Nationals will be allocated to the teams of the relevant grade in order of placing in the previous year's league competition. Winners of Division 1 will be offered a place in the Gold Nationals. Winners of Division 2 will be offered a place in the Bronze/Silver Nationals. Entry into these competitions is dependent on those team complying with BSF requirements. WM Softball is not involved in setting these requirements and teams should direct all queries to the BSF.