

TEE BALL

GENERAL RULES

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall govern all Special Olympics tee ball competitions. As an international sports program, Special Olympics has developed these rules based upon USA Softball rules for tee ball. USA Softball rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules. In such cases, the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall apply. For more information, visit www.usasoftball.com/

OFFICIAL EVENTS OFFERED

Team Competition (Tee Ball is only offered at the District level, in conjunction with the Region 8 District Tournament)

1. FIELD REQUIREMENTS AND EQUIPMENT

1.1 THE FIELD

- 1.1.1 The field shall conform to ASA rules, except when Special Olympics modifications apply.
- 1.1.2 The diamond may vary with 60-65 foot baselines depending on venue availability and the pitcher's rubber shall be placed 46' from home plate.
- 1.1.3 A "neutral zone" will be marked in an arc of 14m (46') from home plate. Any batted ball that does not cross this line will be designated a foul ball.
- 1.1.4 A coach's circle will be located 3m beyond second base and made with a 1.80m diameter. One coach from the defensive team may be allowed to stand in this circle while his team is on the field.

1.2. EQUIPMENT

- 1.2.1 Only bats marked by the manufacturer as "Official Softball" may be used. All bats must be single wall. Use of an illegal bat in a SOWI tournament may result in forfeiture of the game, and all following subsequent games in the tournament. This includes wooden bats which must be marked "official softball" and must be free of defects that might cause the bat to splinter.
- 1.2.2 A first baseman's trapping-type mitt may be worn by first baseman and catchers only.
- 1.2.3 The catcher must wear a facemask, chest protector and batter or catcher helmet.
- 1.2.4 Fielder masks are mandatory for defensive players at 1st base, 3rd base, and pitchers during the duration of defensive play. Any defensive player can wear a face mask as well, but are not required to.
- 1.2.5 Players with illegal uniforms will not be allowed to play. Legality and final approval of the uniform will be determined by the Event Coordinator or SOWI staff (not the umpire). All players on a team must wear uniforms (shirts and pants) that are identical in color, trim and style. An Arabic number of contrasting color at least six inches high must be worn on the back of all uniform shirts. Taped numbers are not allowed. Team pants must either be all long or all short in style. If this must vary due to health or religious reasons, a Special Needs Form must be completed and **prior approval from SOWI staff must be obtained**. Ball caps, visors and headbands are optional for all players. If worn, caps and visors must be identical, and all must be worn properly. Player socks need not match. No jewelry is allowed. Teams who do not have the minimum required number of players with legal uniforms to field a team must forfeit.

1.2.6 A 30.5 cm (12') restricted flight "official softball" shall be used. The core size may vary from a 40 to 47 core (restricted flight). Colors shall be white or yellow (yellow is preferred for safety and visibility). High school fast pitch balls are not to be used (raised laces are a safety concern).

1.2.7 Steel spikes, and street shoes are not allowed. Gym, tennis, running or rubber spike shoes will be allowed.

1.2.8 Any athlete that acts in the capacity as a base coach must wear a batting helmet while coaching. The athlete will not be allowed to coach if they do not / refuse to wear one.

2. RULES OF COMPETITION

2.1 Teams must play a minimum of two (documented) games against other Special Olympics teams prior to registration for district competition. The team roster must remain the same for the two qualifying games, district competition and State competition. Teams that modify their rosters will forfeit all games. Qualifying games must be played against other teams with an Intent to Play Form on file. **One game must be played against a team from another Local Program.** Forfeited games do not count toward the scrimmage requirement.

2.2 A batting tee will be placed directly on home plate.

2.3 One of the two base coaches from the batting team will adjust the tee to fit the batter.

2.4 To start play, the catcher or umpire will place the ball on the tee and the umpire will say "Play Ball."

2.5 The batter will step in the batter's box and hit the ball. The batter must hit the ball, and not the tee, with the bat. The batter has 15 seconds to hit the ball or it will be called a strike. The umpire will call strike at the conclusion of the 15 seconds. The batter is allowed 3 strikes before he or she is called out. When a batter strikes the tee instead of the ball, that attempt will be called a foul ball. (A "miss" is also a strike.)

2.5.1 Coaches can assist the player into the batters box. Once the player is in the box, the coach cannot physically position that player at bat.

2.6 The batter must hit the ball within the foul lines and beyond the 14m (46') neutral zone to be ruled a fair ball. After a fair hit, the batter must first run to first base, and can then advance as far as possible along the bases. When the play has stopped, the umpire will call "time" and the fielder will roll or throw the ball to the catcher.

2.7 All defensive players must stand behind the neutral zone before the ball is hit. They may come into the neutral zone after the ball is hit to field it. If they touch a ball within the neutral zone, it will be called a fair ball. If a batted ball does not leave the neutral zone, and a defensive player does not touch it, the ball will be called a foul ball.

2.8 The home team shall be decided by a coin toss at the beginning of the game.

2.8.1. The batting team's half of the inning shall end when three outs have been made or 10 batters have batted.

2.8.2 Following the batted ball by the last batter, all players will be allowed to score until a defensive player in possession of the ball touches home plate or makes the third out.

2.9 A regulation game shall consist of six innings. A time limit of one hour shall be enforced for all games.

NOTE: No new inning may begin after 55 minutes of play. A game will be declared completed if one team has a 15-run lead after two innings, a 12-run lead after three innings, or a 10-run lead after four innings or prior to the start of the last possible inning to be played because of the one-hour time limit.

2.10 A game tied at the end of regulation play will be continued through an unspecified number of innings until a team is ahead at the end of a full inning.

- 2.11 Players are required to stand within the lines of the batter's box while at bat.
- 2.12 Coaches are required to submit a lineup card stipulating their team's batting order to the official scorer prior to the start of the game. Players are required to bat in this batting order.
- 2.13 An appeal play is defined as a play in which an umpire is unable to make a decision unless he/she is requested to do so by a coach or player. The appeal can be made if a coach or an athlete asks the umpire to make a ruling.
- 2.14 After a ball is hit into fair territory and the batter has left the batter's box, the umpire shall remove the tee from home plate and set it in foul territory behind the plate.
- 2.15 If the batter has two strikes and fouls off the third attempt, he/she shall be declared out.
- 2.16 Each team will be allowed 10 minutes after the scheduled game time to take the field. If a team is not ready to take the field at the end of 10 minutes, the game will be forfeited.
 - 2.16.1 Each half-inning will consist of a team's regulation line up batting order not to exceed 10 batters or three outs, whichever occurs first. NOTE: If you are using an extra player and thus have 11 batters in your line up, only ten batters will be allowed to bat in a half inning if three outs are not reached first.
 - 2.16.2 Following the batted ball by the last batter, all players will be allowed to score until a defensive player in possession of the ball touches home plate or makes the third out.

3. UMPIRES AND THEIR DUTIES

- 3.1 Officials shall have full authority to interpret rules. For further questions, the tournament rules committee shall be consulted.
- 3.2 Officials shall have the power to make all decisions on any points not specifically covered in the rules.
- 3.3 Umpires will conduct the games in accordance to specified rules.
- 3.4 Local, Regional, district and State competition should utilize ASA certified umpires.
- 3.5 Umpires shall have the power to make all decisions of play and decisions on any point not specifically covered by the rules.
- 3.6 In case of injury, equipment repair, or unsafe playing conditions, the umpire shall stop play.
- 3.7 The umpire may call a game completed (for darkness or weather) after 4 1/2 innings if the home team is ahead in runs, or after five full innings.
- 3.8 The umpires are empowered to make all decisions on the playing field. If a protest is made, it shall be brought to the softball rules committee who will then make a final decision. A protest may only be made if it questions the applicability of the rules. No protest will be considered which pertains to any judgment call made by an umpire.

4. TEAM AND PLAYERS

- 4.1 Each must have ten players in the following positions to start a game:
 - 4.1.1 Pitcher Defensive position is on the rubber
 - 4.1.2 Catcher Defensive position is behind the plate
 - 4.1.3 First Baseman Normal defensive position
 - 4.1.4 Second Baseman Normal defensive position
 - 4.1.5 Third Baseman Normal defensive position
 - 4.1.6 Shortstop Normal defensive position
 - 4.1.7 Four Outfielders Must play a minimum of 3m (9' 10 1/4") behind infielders
- 4.2 Shorthanded Rule – A team must have ten players to start a game. A team with less than ten players at game time must forfeit the game. The vacant position must be listed last in the batting order and an out will be taken each time the vacant position in the batting order appears. Teams must play with a full roster for at least one game at district to be eligible to advance.
- 4.3 During play, due to injury or player disqualification, a team may play with as few as nine players. However, if a team is unable to field at least nine players, the game shall be forfeit. At no time can play continue with less than the minimum number of players.

5. SUBSTITUTIONS

- 5.1 Substitutions may be made anytime that time is called.
- 5.2 Any of the starting players may leave and re-enter the game. This may be done by each starting player only once, with the provision that the players occupy the same position in the batting order as the one they occupied when they left the game. A starting player may only re-enter the game for the person who substituted for the player. Substitutes may re-enter the game in the same manner.

6. COACHES' PRIVILEGES

- 6.1 Two base coaches are allowed for the offensive team, one in the first base coach's box and one in the third base coaches' box. The coaches must remain in those boxes while their team is at bat. A maximum of four coaches will be allowed on the bench during games.
- 6.2 One of the two base coaches must adjust the tee to the proper height for each batter and return to the coach's box.
- 6.3 One coach from the defensive team may be allowed on the field, and must remain in the coach's circle behind second base. Also, the coach must make a reasonable attempt to avoid any ball that is batted or thrown in his/her direction.

7. DIVISIONING

- 7.1 All teams will play as coed open entries.
- 7.2 The head coach must identify their 12 best players in terms of their on-field playing ability by placing a star next to their names on the roster.