



## Part 1 The Basic Game

TWO TYPES OF OUTDOOR SOFTBALL are played in the UK: Fastpitch and Slowpitch.

However, over the last few years a new hybrid game has been created, commonly referred to as Indoor Softball or Indoors. Indoor Softball largely evolved as a way for the dedicated or mad to play their sport year-round. There is no standard Rulebook for Indoors and because of this the game usually evolves to fit the site or the requirements of the particular players. In short, you can take the framework for Indoors and adapt it to suit your needs. This Guide deals with Indoor Softball and assumes a knowledge of Slowpitch softball – from whence it came.

**Inclusive Rules** - Indoor Softball is played by two teams with a minimum of eight players each. Only eight players will take the field at one time, but you can have an unlimited number of batters. Indoors is seen as a mixed-gender game and the team ratio should be no more than 4 players of the same gender fielding, and alternating genders in the batting line-up.

The basics of Indoors are simply a variation on Slowpitch. The PITCHER pitches the ball to a BATTER who hits it and runs around as many bases as possible before the ball is brought under the control of the defensive team. The aim of the game is to score more RUNS than the opposition.

Meanwhile, the defensive team is trying to get batters and baserunners OUT in all the same ways they do in Slowpitch:

- Strike outs – One pitch only – either a ball, a strike/out or a hit.
- Fly outs (balls that are hit in the air and caught).
- Force outs
- Tag plays

There is more information on all of these at the end of this Guide. If you would like to familiarise yourself with the complete rules, please refer to the World Baseball Softball Confederation Slow Pitch Softball Playing Rules 2018-2021. Information on Batting and Baserunning (including Interference and Obstruction) are detailed in section 5, for instance.

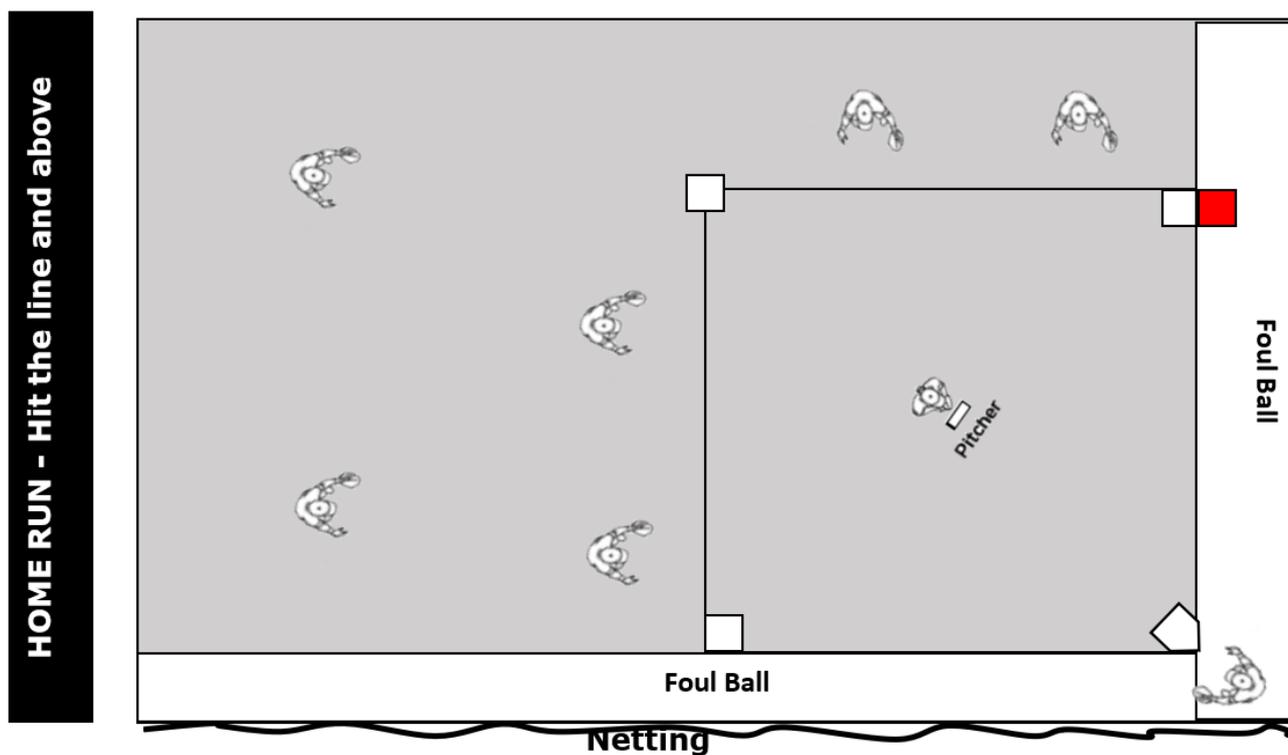
Indoors is ONE innings long and innings are not defined by the number of outs, but rather by time. Each half inning is usually five to six minutes long – the duration is flexible as long as it is applied evenly to each half inning. Players still bat in a pre-arranged order and in mixed-gender games, the batting order should alternate between genders as evenly as possible. Batters continue to bat in that order for the inning timing, regardless of any outs being made. During the game, there may be consecutive players of the same gender when the next batter is still on base and has not yet returned home. The overall batting order should be maintained in this circumstance.

## Part 2 The Playing Area

The Indoor Softball area is usually defined by its venue. Indoors can be played in gyms, sports halls or similar. The key point is that the playing area should be contained by four sides and a ceiling as the ball continues to be 'live' (in play) off these surfaces, including the side walls. Note that in the Rochdale venue the ball is live off the ceiling net.

A Softball diamond should be laid out within the parameters of the venue with Home Plate, First Base, Second Base and Third Base as usual. There are no hard and fast rules about distances except that bases should be a 'reasonable' distance apart – 12 metres is fairly standard – although there doesn't have to be much space left for the OUTFIELD.

At the Rochdale the field is set up as a regular Outdoor softball field in regards of foul balls, an imaginary foul-ball line is made by the Homeplate and bases. All judgement calls are for the umpire to make and be respected by all players. Given the limitations of the venue items such as bags, bats, water, etc. from players may be in the way, and so this general chaos can lead to DEAD BALL situations.



## Part 3 **The Defensive Team**

Unlike Slowpitch, in Indoors there is little distance from Infielders and Outfielders.

There are essentially eight fielding positions (see Playing Area for placement):

- PITCHER • FIRST BASE • SHORTSTOP • LEFT FIELD
- CATCHER • SECOND BASE • THIRD BASE • CENTRE FIELD

Like everything else in Indoors, nothing is hard and fast, and you can place your fielders where you want. However, following the diagram is a good way of ensuring that you cover the court and once you are familiar with the game you can tailor fielding positions accordingly, whilst making sure safety is maximised.

## Part 4 **Playing the Game**

- Each batter receives only one pitch from the Pitcher. The pitch is a Slowpitch pitch with an arc between 6' and 12' from the ground. If the batter does not swing and the pitch is a STRIKE, the batter is out. If the batter does not swing and the pitch is a BALL, the batter advances to First Base. If the batter swings and hits the ball into Foul Ball territory, the batter or if it rolls back into Foul Ball territory without any defensive player touching the ball, the batter is out. The batter is also out if they step on Home Plate in the process of hitting the ball or if the batted ball hits the batter runner off the bat or the bat hits the ball.
- During the game, there may be consecutive players of the same gender if the (potential) batter is still on base and has not yet returned home. The overall batting order should be maintained in this circumstance.
- Any baserunners are out if a batted ball hits them when they are not in contact with a base and the ball has not been in contact with a fielder.
- The batting team continues to bat in order for a set time and then the fielding team comes into bat for the same time (one inning). OUTS are made in all the ways listed above.
- A HOMERUN is scored if the batter hits the back wall ABOVE a specified height which depends on the venue and may be a feature on the back wall or marked by tape. Umpires will advise of the mark on the wall. A homerun can NOT be caught off the back wall. A homerun has the effect of scoring all runners on base, they simply return to the end of the batting line-up (they do not have to touch all the bases). A homerun still counts if it touches a fielder prior to hitting the back wall.
- Scoring runs is the same as Outdoor softball.
- It is also worth noting that Indoors by its very nature is a fast, energetic game. The emphasis is on hitting and running which means that the umpire is much less likely to call a pitch a ball! Also, it is a game that lends itself to aggressive baserunning and the umpire will not call TIME until it is clear that no baserunners have a chance for further advance. If the ball is hit into Fair Territory, it remains live at all times even if overthrown into Foul Ball Territory (unless it becomes tangled in the general team debris or obstructed by the offensive team waiting to bat – then the play will be called DEAD BALL and all baserunners will be awarded the base they were running to at the time of the overthrow, as per outdoor rules). Umpires decision is final.
- BUNTING is NOT allowed.

- Plays at HOME PLATE is played as per Outdoor rules, however we encourage runners and catchers to be aware of the small and fast environment and avoid collisions.

## Part 5 **Scoring the Game**

Umpires keep score of the runs scored, as per the outdoor game, one run every time runner crosses Home Plate. Please help umpired by saying run scored in a polite way once a run is scored.

## Part 6 **Equipment**

The standard equipment for Slowpitch softball is used, i.e., a set of throw-down bases (including the safety First Base). Often, bases may be substituted with masking tape for safety reasons depending on the playing surface.

At Rochdale the surface is Astro Turf.

Bats and fielders' gloves are the same. It is, however, worth remembering that gyms are usually a hard surface such as concrete with a thin covering of green 'carpet' and you probably don't want to be chucking your expensive bats down in this environment! The only equipment that is different from the outdoor game is the ball. Indoor balls are 12', the same size as a standard softball, but are softer and more 'squidgy' for safety reasons – most equipment suppliers refer to them as practice balls. Bats should have an ASA or ISF marking.

## Part 7 **Eligibility**

Player eligibility is largely self-determined as rosters are not required to be submitted for verification beforehand. Nevertheless, we encourage a sensible approach to the league, as it is a mixed ability league. Concerns during play should be raised with relevant umpires and captains. Concerns post-play should be referred to BaseballSoftballUK at [LA@bsuk.com](mailto:LA@bsuk.com).