

The logo for Baseball Softball UK is displayed in white text on a green grass background. The word "Baseball" is on the top line, followed by a small dot and a stylized graphic of a baseball bat and ball. The word "Softball" is on the bottom line, with "UK" in a larger, bold font. In the foreground, a yellow softball with red stitching sits on the grass.

Baseball • 
Softball UK

School Softball 2022

**GIRLS FASTPITCH
SOFTBALL CUP**

**COACHING
RESOURCES**

Welcome & About This Guide

Thank you for joining us for the inaugural Girls Fastpitch Softball Cup this year.

We hope this guide provides you with useful resources to provide your students with enjoyable, engaging and challenging sessions.

For further questions about the program structure, dates, or courses, please contact [Jayde Ellis](#).

For questions about the program content, activities, or coaching, please contact [Alyson Spinis-Valainis](#).



USING THIS GUIDE

Using this Guide

Please navigate to your chosen section by clicking above. To return to this slide, click the BSUK logo on any page.

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ABOUT THE GAME

Softball and baseball are similar sports in many ways. The two sports, and the various formats within each, share the same structure and overall goal:

- The field of play is a diamond.
- A pitcher pitches the ball to a batter, who hits it and scores runs for their team.
- The overall aim is to score more “runs” than the opposition by having batter cross home plate
- A typical game consists of 9 players per team

This section provides further information on softball vs baseball, the overall game structure, and equipment needed.

Game Structure

Basic Game Rules and Format

The batting team is trying to hit the ball and advance around the bases, while the fielding team tries to prevent this. Teams switch roles throughout the game, with one full rotation being an “innings”. Games constitute multiple innings, depending on the age and level of competition.

Batting (Offensive) team

Goal: Score points (“Runs”)

How: Batters hit the ball, advance around all 4 bases, **passing home plate equals one run**

- A “homerun” is when the ball is hit far enough they can pass all 4 bases and home plate without being out
- More commonly, teams work together to gradually progress their batters around the bases

Fielding (Defensive) Team

Goal: Limit scoring of runs

How: By getting batters “out”, including:

- Strike out (3 strikes on the batter)
- Being caught off your hit
- Ball beating batter to a base

If they are get 3 batters out, they switch to offense and have their turn to try to score.

Baseball

Olympic format for men.

Pitching

- Overarm, looks like a throw
- Longest pitching distance
- Off a mound

Field & Baserunning

- Largest distance between bases
- In higher levels, baserunners can get a head start to the net base before the pitcher releases

Equipment

- Ball is smaller, and typically white
- Bats are typically wider, and metal type may differ

Fastpitch Softball

Olympic format for women.

Pitching

- Underhand “windmill”
- Longest pitching distance
- Off flat ground

Field & Baserunning

- Shorter distance between bases
- Baserunners must stay touching the base before the pitcher releases the ball

Equipment

- Ball is larger, and typically yellow
- Bats are typically more narrow, and metal type may differ

Baseball5

“Street Style” baseball/softball, increasingly in popularity due to its simplicity & accessibility.

Pitching

- No pitching
- The batter “serves” to themselves to commence play

Field & Baserunning

- Same shape and progression around bases to home plate
- Fewer fielders (5 a side)

Equipment

- A ball
- Something to mark “bases”



Equipment

Bat

In both baseball and softball, a bat is used to hit the ball into the field. The tape is where the bat is held and the barrel (where the design is) is where contact with the ball is made.



Helmet

In both baseball and softball, helmets are used for the offensive team while hitting and baserunning. Some have a protective “grill” at the front, not not all (this is typically in more competitive junior levels).



Glove

In both baseball and softball, gloves are used. It goes on the non-dominant hand (so that players can throw the ball with their dominant). The netting (pocket) goes between the thumb and pointer finger.



Balls

Balls used are dependant on the format (e.g. baseball, softball or Baseball5), as well as the age of players



Equipment Modifications

If you do not currently have the equipment listed, there are modifications that can be made to all sessions and games to suit your needs.

Examples include:

- Tennis balls and no gloves
- Cones or chalked marking instead of bases
- Practising hitting with tennis rackets

FASTPITCH SOFTBALL SKILLS

There are a variety of skills required in Fastpitch Softball, many of which mirror other sports, or resemble a similar action, for example:

- Throwing, as in cricket and rounders
- Catching, as in netball and basketball (with different balls)
- Striking, as in cricket, tennis and hockey (with different ball and implement)

Fastpitch also has specialist positions, which require a unique application of other common skills, including:

- Pitcher, whose main job is to throw the ball underarm to the batter for them to hit
- Catcher, whose main job is to catch the pitched ball behind the batter, while in a squatting position

Defence - Pitching & Fielding

Goal

Prevent runs being scored by the offensive team, by restricting their ability to get a runner over home-plate.

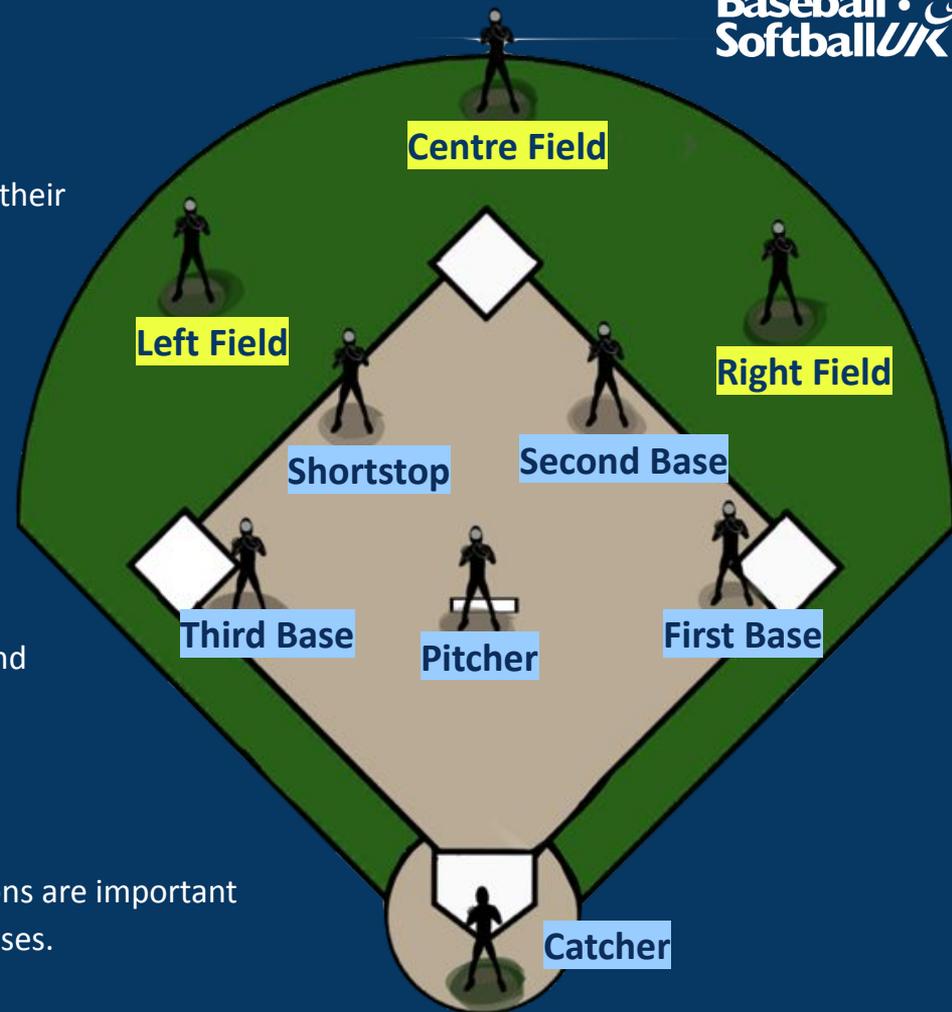
Infield

The first line of defence; if the ball can be stopped by the infield, the chances of getting the hitter out is much higher.

Player coverage to bases are determined by their position; e.g. 1st base is covered by *First Base*. The exception is *Second Base* and *Shortstop*, who can cover either 1st or 2nd base, or 2nd or 3rd base, respectively.

Outfield

The backup positions and furthest from the hitter, these positions are important for catching long hit balls and backing up infielders and their bases.



When

The defensive team will need to coordinate to get the offensive team 'out'; this includes fielding the ball when it is hit, throwing it to each other, and securing the ball to bases.

Coaching Points

The goal is to get players comfortable throwing and seeing a ball, any way to achieve this is encouraged!

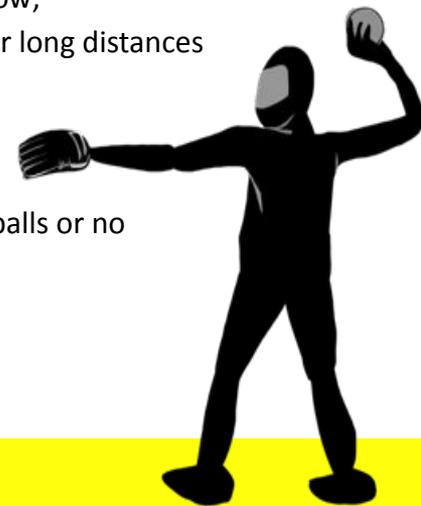
- Side-on to target, glove-hand pointed to target;
- Throwing arm back and in "muscle flex" position;
- Eyes on target.
- Take step with front foot towards target;
- Keep throwing arm up and high;
- Eyes remain on target.
- Release the ball in front to throw to the target.

Important to Remember

- Letting the ball go too early → high throw;
- Letting the ball go too late → low throw;
- Encourage players to let the ball go for long distances to test their throws!

Notes

If using modified equipment (such as tennis balls or no gloves), the mechanics are the same.



[Link to Skill](#)

[Throw & Catch](#)

[Links to Skill Activities](#)

[Shape Toss](#)

[Gate Guard](#)

[Tennis](#)

When

The defensive team will need to coordinate to get the offensive team 'out'; this includes catching the ball when it is hit, catching the throws between positions, and catching at bases.

Coaching Points

- Glove in front of chest;
- Eyes on the thrower;
- Second hand near to capture the ball in glove upon receiving;
- Knees bent and ready to move if the ball is not on target;
- Capture the ball in glove and secure with other hand.

Keys to Remember

- If throw is above waist line → **Fingers pointed to the sky**
- If throw is below waist line → **Fingers pointed to the ground**
- A throw right to the glove will help players adjust to using both the glove and hand-eye coordination.
- Challenge them to try to use the glove for different results depending on where the ball is coming from.



Link to Skill

[Throw & Catch](#)

Links to Skill Activities

[Clap-Up](#)

[Egg-Toss](#)

[Cross Toss](#)

[Relay Throws](#)

When

Any time the ball is hit into the field of play, a player will be responsible for trying to stop it - whether this is stopping it on the ground, or when hit in the air.

Coaching Points

No matter what position fielders are in on the field, there are some common coaching points when fielding:

- We want players in an athletic, ready position;
- Their gloves are pointed down, with palm facing target;
- Second hand near, to snap the ball up in the glove ('crocodile hands');
- Backside lowered and chest up;
- Feet ready to move



Link to Skill

[Grounders / Flies](#)

Links to Skill Activities

[Shape Toss](#)

[Gate Guard](#)

[Tennis](#)

Defence Skills - Pitching

I Drill



Set Up

- Front foot - Pointed towards target
- Throwing hand- At waist
- Palm & eyes - Facing target

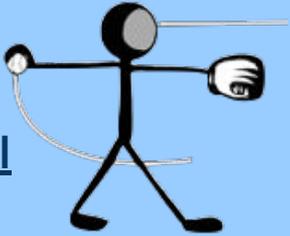
Action

- Release the ball in a wrist flick at hip to partner
- *If ball is going high → release earlier*
- *If ball is too low → release later*

Pitching Notes

Fastpitch Pitching is one of the most unique movements in any sport.

T Drill



Set Up

- Starting in a "T" position
- Glove pointed to partner
- Throwing hand back, even with glove
- Both arms straight
- Feet and eyes still pointed to target

Action

- Arm swings down to release ball at waist
- Like I-Drill above, flick ball on release

You will find that there are some students that will be immediately drawn to it.

The pitching video guides will be particularly helpful for you when teaching your students.

K Drill



Set Up

- Set up in a "K" position
- Throwing hand is straight up at the ear
- Glove still pointed to partner
- Balancing on back foot, front foot raised of ground pointing to partner

Action

- Front foot (raised foot) reaches forward in a step
- Throwing arm swings down to the waist and release the ball, as above

As a Reminder

Our modified rules for The Cup will allow pitchers to use their K Drill or Full pitch.

Offense - Batting & Baserunning

Goal

Hit the ball through the defense and get onto the bases; from there, making your way all the way around the bases for one run.

The Hitting Lineup

Each player is given their place in the 'lineup', and bat one by one in their order. If they do not get all the way through the lineup in one inning, they pick up where they left off next time they are on offense. For example, batting team gets to batter number 5 when the inning ends, so the 6th batter would be the first batter next innings.

Keys to Remember

Hitting is both one of the most fun and scariest aspects of the sport; players are on their own and expected to hit the ball. This can be a lot of pressure for some players, so a lot of practice and support is useful!



When

When it is a player's turn to bat, they are the **batter**. The only way to score points ('runs') is to hit the ball and make it around the bases and across Home Plate, without getting 'out.' This requires the batter to hit effectively through the defensive team.

Coaching Points

- Hands together on the bat, with knuckles lined up;
- Bat on dominant shoulder, dominant hand on top;
- Side on to the pitcher;
- Knees bent and athletic;
- Eyes on the ball;
- Big step towards the pitcher and swinging from shoulder.



[Link to Skill](#)

[Hitting](#)

[Links to Skill Activities](#)

[Two-Up](#)

When

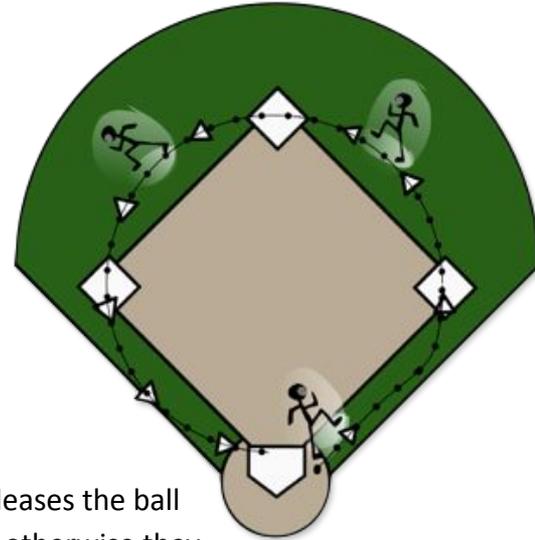
Once a batter has hit the ball and stops on a base, they become a **baserunner**. Teams then work together to advance their baserunners around the bases, to score runs by crossing Home Plate.

Important Points

- Upon hitting, batters do not have to run all the way around in one-go; they can stay on a Base if it is not safe to advance (e.g. if a fielder has the ball near them)
- Each player must touch the base with their foot as they run, as missed bases do not count
- If a batter stops on a base, they are only allowed to leave the base again when the pitcher releases the ball
- If there is another runner on the base immediately before, the runner at the front must run, otherwise they can choose to wait until it is safe

Coaching Points

- For new players, focus on players running in order, touching the bases with their feet and knowing where they need to go.



COACHING PROGRAMME

This *Coaching Programme* is designed to provide teachers and coaches with easily accessible tools to introduce Fastpitch Softball.

Resources are based on videos, with direct linked provided. Sessions are recommendations only, and we encourage you to create sessions based on your specific students, space, and resources.

Every session is broken down into:

- **Core skill** - in developmental progression
- **Suggested activities** - these can be split across multiple session
- **Full Activity** - advice on putting the activities together
- **Session Goal** - overall aim for the session

Coaching Programme

For the full program playlist, [Follow this Link.](#)

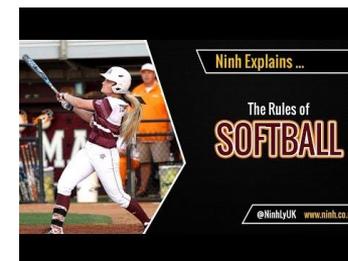


Timeline	Skill	Skill Activity	Full Activity	Goal
Week 1	Throwing & Catching	Clap-Up Eggs Toss Cross-Toss Relay Throws	Races, distance, and timing can be a fun and creative way to play on the field. Give a go at combining some of our favourite Skill Activities to create your own game!	Our goal is to establish a familiarity with the ball, gloves, and format, as well as ensure players are safely and confidently able to play catch and throw by the end of the session.
Week 2	Defense	Grounders-Flies Gate Guard Shape Toss Tennis	In the game of softball, the ball doesn't often come right to us off of the bat; play with ways to help students feel confident chasing down and moving to get the ball.	Our goal is to continue to establish a familiarity with the ball, gloves, and format, as well as ensure players are safely and confidently able to react to the ball.
Week 3	Hitting & Baserunning	Homerun Contest Two-Up Relay Race	As hitting is often a player-favourite, combining games from the first 2 weeks lets players field while hitters hit. This is especially important when you have a large class size.	Our goal is to encourage players to hit the ball with bats both powerfully and safely. By the end of Week 3, we want players to have a good understanding of how to properly hit the ball.
Week 4	Pitching	Is, Ts, Ks Rockstars Full - Targets	If the class is confident enough, encourage them to create a game in which pitchers can throw against hitters.	Establish the uniqueness of fastpitch pitching in easy to digest means.
Week 5 Week 6	Game-Days	Baseball 5s Quick Pitch Two-Up King of the Cones Mod-Ins	Depending on the level of your group will determine the modifications of the game; rewarding the previous weeks by putting it all together.	Putting together all the skills learned is a reward for the hard work they put in. As will all the lessons previously, teachers can make modifications as you see fit.

MODIFIED RULES FOR THE GIRLS FASTPITCH SOFTBALL CUP

The aim of the *Girls Fastpitch Softball Cup* is to introduce girls to the sport in an accessible and welcoming manner. As such, the modified rules aim to provide opportunities for success and improvement, and reduce the fear that can typically be held around a sport you can “get out” in.

Below are some helpful videos* that show the “flow” of a Fastpitch Softball game and introduce some of the traditional rules, however please see the **modified rules** we will play by on the following pages.



* These videos are not property of BSUK but are shared for reference & learning. BSUK takes no responsibility for their content.

Modified Rules - Pitching & Hitting

Pitching Action

The pitcher's plate (from which the pitcher starts) is 33ft or 10m from the batter (closer than in traditional youth games).

Pitchers can pitch from either:

- Step and underarm throw
- K Shape, with back foot starting on the plate
- Full Windmill, with both feet starting on the plate

Strike Zone

Hittable & wild pitch instead of traditional balls & strikes

We want to encourage players to have a go at hitting, so the larger “strike zone” will instead include:

Hittable Pitch: Any ball within hitting range.

- *3 swing-and-misses → batter can use the tee to hit off of for one more chance.*

Wild Pitches: A pitch deemed not reasonably hittable - e.g. on the ground, wider than reaching distance, above head

- *4 Wild Pitches → batter gets to automatically go to 1st Base, plus any other baserunners on the immediately following bases, 1 base (which can include Home if the runner is on 3rd Base).*

Hit Batter

If a batter is hit by the pitch, they can choose to either:

- Stay in and try again → Classed as 1 Wild Pitch
- Go to first base → All runners also advance one base as with 4 Wild Pitches.

Modified Rules - Scoring Runs

Getting Out

To encourage maximal opportunity, some traditional means of getting out have been removed. The only ways to get out in this modified format are:

As a batter:

- **Caught off a hit ball** - caught by a fielder before the ball touches the ground
- After **3 swing & misses at the tee**

As a baserunner:

- **Forced out** - if a fielder catches the ball & touches the base before the baserunner gets there
- **Off base path** - running >1m off line between bases

Running bases as a batter

Batters & baserunners can advance maximum 2 bases per play. For a batter, this means a big hit to the outfield can result in reaching second base (“a double”), but no further.

Running bases as a baserunner

Baserunners can advance maximum 2 bases per play

A runner is only ‘forced’ to run to the next base if there is another runner on the base immediately behind them. No runners can overtake each other.

‘Tagging up’ applies - i.e. a baserunner must stay on or return to the base they were on at the time of a hit, if the ball is hit in the air, until it is caught. Once it is caught, they can leave again if it is safe to do so. If they left the base ‘early’ and the ball beats them back to the base, the **forced out** rule applies. If the ball is dropped, the **forced out** rule does not apply.

Modified Rules - Fielding Positions, Time & Innings

Catcher	To focus on the more common positions, and reduce the need for specialist equipment and skill, there will be no catcher in the modified rules. Instead, the “catcher” will stand behind the backstop, and will return the ball to the pitcher on any missed pitches. They will also be responsible for setting up the tee after <i>4 Wild Pitches</i> .
Alternating Fielding Positions	Every innings, the fielding team must change every position on the field, with the exception of the pitcher. <i>We strongly encourage your pitcher to change as well, however we recognise this skill can be intimidating and therefore there may be fewer players willing to try the role.</i>
Fielding Team Time Penalty	A fielding penalty allows the batting side to place one runner on base (the batter 6th from the current batter). A fielding penalty is given in any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fielding team taking longer than 2 mins to be ready throw the first pitch (including all fielders in position)• Taking longer than 1 min to be ready to pitch between plays (e.g. after a player is out, or safely on a base)
Batting Team Time Penalty	A batting penalty gives the fielding team one ‘out’. A batting penalty is given in any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• First/next batter taking longer than 2 mins to be ready to face the first pitch of each inning• Next batter taking longer than 1 min to be ready to face the next pitch
End of Innings	3 out or one full rotation through the batting order*, whichever is sooner. <i>* Once the last batter has their turn to bat, the innings ends here, so any runners left on base do not count as runs.</i>
Games end	3 complete innings or 50 minutes, whichever is sooner.