

GSA Summer Softball Rules

April 27, 2015

1 General Game Day Logistics

The first team to arrive for the first games should retrieve the bases (1B safety base, 1B, 2B, 3B, pitching rubber, home plate, and strike mat) from the equipment desk in the UC and set up the field. The team captains of the last game, by mutual agreement, can decide who puts the bases away. **MAKE SURE THE BASES GET PUT AWAY.** Please also do not fold the strike mat when storing it. Place the strike mat on top of the bases so that the strike mat does not get destroyed. We don't have a lot of money so we need to hold onto and take care of the equipment that we have. Also, please shake off the bases so the equipment desk isn't covered by the little black rubber stuff.

The home team is in the field first. The home team is also responsible for bringing the game ball (provided by the league at the beginning of the season). You must provide your own bats and gloves. Please share if necessary.

The captain of the winning team should email the league commissioner the scores. **Please be prompt about this.** We will have a website with updated standings and it will be nice to have team captains help us keep this as up-to-date as possible.

2 Logistical Rules

1. GAME TIMES - GAMES MUST START ON TIME. Games will be scheduled from Monday through Thursday. The game timeslots are as follows:

- (a) 5:30 - 7:00
- (b) 7:00 - 8:30

2. ARRIVAL

- (a) Have your team at the game at least 15 minutes early.
- (b) Don't start taking batting practice right before gametime.
- (c) If there is a scheduling conflict between a league game and another athletic group, please yield the field to the other group. There are a number of soccer camps which use the field during the summer. Every effort will be made to schedule games around the camps, but sometimes there are miscommunications and a conflict will exist. Give the other group the field and contact the commissioner.

3. TIME LIMITS

- (a) No inning may start past **10 minutes before the next game.** This does NOT apply to the late game (because there is no next game). This is important; we must keep the games on schedule because there are no field lights.

- (b) For the early game, if the game runs past **5 minutes** after the next scheduled start the game is over right then. The teams from the next game should enforce these time restrictions. There is no way any game should take more than an hour and a half anyways. Teams that continually take too long will be harassed by the league commissioner.
- (c) The pitcher gets 4 warm up pitches between innings.
- (d) Please remind your players to take the field quickly between innings. One of the biggest reasons for games not finishing is teams that take forever to get out into the field or don't know their batting order. Please determine your batting order and your positions prior to the game, not as the game starts. This will go a long way to making everyone happier.
- (e) There will be NO extra innings during the regular season. If the score is tied after 7 full innings, each team will receive a TIE in the standings.
- (f) A game is complete if 5 innings or more are played. If you do not finish because of slow play, the score stands as is. If you do not finish because of rain we will try to reschedule a complete game **from the point the game was stopped**. This means you need to document the inning, score, runners on base, etc. This also applies to the event that it gets too dark to play the last game.

4. RAIN

Unless you specifically hear from the commissioner assume **all games are on**.

- (a) Please do not email the commissioner asking if you're still playing.
- (b) Please play through light to medium rain.
- (c) Please note that weather also changes quickly, so do not cancel a game at first sign of rain. Rain will often clear up quickly. Note that even if the first game is cancelled, we can still get the second or third game in if the weather clears up.
- (d) If it is raining hard enough, **BOTH** captain's must decide to call the game. Please be in contact with each other and call/text each other rather than relying on only email.
- (e) Please use common sense and err on the side of caution! **STOP at the first sign of lightning!** We will have some make-up times for rain outs.

5. SCORING

- (a) All teams MUST keep a scorecard of their own batters. It only has to keep track of batting order, who made outs and who scored runs, this will avoid conflicts about the number of outs and the score. Teams should check the score with the other team every 1/2 inning.

3 Gameplay Rules

In general, the standard rules of softball (very similar to baseball) govern play. Games are 7 innings in length.

1. The league is for FUN, all the following rules will be based on this rule.

2. TEAM LOGISTICS

- (a) You may field 10 players in the field.
- (b) You must have a minimum of 7 players to play a game (otherwise your team will forfeit).
- (c) If you have 7 or 8 players the other team MUST supply a catcher (though this catcher cannot make any plays, basically a retriever).
- (d) If you have 9 or more players, you must supply your own catcher.

(e) Substitutions

- i. There are free substitutions in the field (unlimited), but every player must remain in the same spot in the batting order. An unlimited number of players can bat. **Every player must bat.**
- ii. In the event that a player must leave a game early, the player is simply skipped at his next scheduled at bat. This rule also applies in the event a player is injured and is no longer able to continue batting. In the event a player arrives late to the game, he is added to the bottom of the batting lineup.
- iii. Given this is meant to be a fun league, you may pick up players from another team to ensure you have enough to play a game. There are, however, some limits on this rule. First, you must have at least 6 of your OWN players. During the regular season, you may pick up a total of no more than 3 players from other teams. **During playoffs, you may not pick up players from other teams.**
- iv. Unlike years past, there are no pinch runners for any batter. We don't have the backstops anymore so it is too dangerous for the pinch runner (and not enough room). However, after a player reaches base, they may have a pinch runner. This pinch runner is the last batter to have made an out. Please note that this is only allowed if the player is hurt and cannot run well. Please do not abuse this rule (i.e. you may only use a pinch runner for injured players, not slow baserunners).

3. EQUIPMENT

(a) BATS

- i. Bats must be slow-pitch softball bats (e.g., no fastpitch or baseball bats).
- ii. Bats must be ASA or USSSA certified.
 - A. Only ASA bats will be permitted. If you buy a new bat it must be ASA approved. We are doing this to slowly phase out all non-ASA bats to ensure that the league rules are more consistent and simple going forward. This will help to ensure that people do not argue about what is legal or not.
- iii. Bat Sharing Etiquette
 - A. Teams should provide their own bats (entry level bats are very cheap).
 - B. In the event that one team does not have their own bat (this should not happen anyways), teams should be willing to lend at least one bat to the other team.
 - C. Do not use a bat owned by the other team without asking first.
 - D. Teams are NOT required to share all of their bats with the other team. Because some bats have limited life, this is to be fair to those teams that have paid for high end bats. In the past, people have also damaged other teams bats by accidentally throwing them.

(b) Plastic cleats are permitted. Metal spikes are not.

(c) We highly recommend that pitchers wear face masks for protection. Please make sure pitchers are aware that a ball can come back at them very fast and instruct them to be ready to field the ball.

4. UMPIRES

(a) The batting team supplies an umpire for 1st and 3rd base.

- i. The first base umpire is responsible for first and home.
- ii. The third base umpire is responsible for second and third.

- iii. The umpires must always pay attention for their own safety! There is not a lot of foul territory on the fields. This is especially true for overthrows. Be sure to stand in a safe location where a stray throw will not hit you.
- (b) Umpires are responsible for any calls of foul balls.
- (c) **Team captains must make sure competent people are placed as umpires.** Be sure that all calls are prompt and clear.

5. BALLS AND STRIKES

- (a) Batters start with a normal 0-0 count. Four balls is a walk and three strikes is a strikeout.
- (b) Strikes for all leagues include swinging strikes, and called strikes. A called strike is one that lands on EITHER the league supplied strike mat OR home plate. If it hits any part of the mat or plate it is a strike. The catcher should yell “strike” loudly for called strikes.
- (c) After the batter has two strikes, if the batter hits two foul balls, the batter will be called out. The first two strikes may occur in any fashion (called, swing-and-miss, or foul ball).
- (d) The pitch’s arc must be between 6 and 12 feet, anything higher or lower is a ball, and must be called in the air by the first base umpire. (the batter may still swing, and the ball will legally be put in play.)
- (e) Pitching style. The pitcher must release the ball barehanded with the palm up. (no spins).
- (f) Pitching location. The pitcher must pitch from the pitching plate. If there is no pitching plate, they must stand in the center of the infield (between first and third base, and between home and second base). The pitcher may not stand anywhere else (i.e., far to the right or left of the pitching plate, or far behind it).

6. LEADING OFF BASE

There is no leading off the base. In fact, runners must remain on the base until contact is made by the hitter! Each team shall be given a warning the first time it happens. After that, players should be called out if they leave the base too early.

7. STEALING BASES

Stealing bases is not allowed in this league.

8. INFIELD FLY RULE

This rule applies only when there are fewer than two outs, and there is a force play at third base (i.e., when there are runners at first and second base, or the bases are loaded). In these situations, if a fair fly ball is in play, and in the umpire’s judgment it is catchable by an infielder with ordinary effort, the umpire shall call “infield fly” (or more often, “infield fly, batter’s out”); the batter will be out regardless of whether the ball is actually caught in flight. If the fly ball is near the foul lines, the umpire is to declare “infield fly, if fair.” If the ball is not caught and ends up foul (including if it lands fair and then rolls foul before passing first or third base without being touched by a fielder), the infield fly call is canceled, and the play is treated as an ordinary foul ball. In contrast, if the ball lands foul and then rolls fair before passing first or third base without being touched, the infield fly takes effect and the batter is out. For an infield fly, the runners can play at their own risk. The ball is still live, for example a runner can tag up.

9. RUNNING THE BASES

- (a) If a **BATTED** ball hits a runner who is in fair territory the runner is out.
- (b) The fielder gets the right of way to field a batted ball. If a runner interferes with a fielder trying to field a batted ball the runner is out.

- (c) Fielders may not, at any point, block a base. If it is deemed that a fielder has not allowed a runner to reach a reasonable portion of the base then the runner is automatically safe. This is a serious safety issue. Please remind newer, less experienced players of this rule. **This is particularly important at home plate. The catcher MAY NOT block the runner's path to home plate. Because the catcher is often the most inexperienced player, please instruct your catcher to stand directly in front of home plate (not in the basepath) when receiving a throw from a fielder. They should be in a position to safely tag the runner without standing in the basepath. To aid in safety, the runner is allowed to touch either home plate or the strike mat to score. On a force, the fielder may only step on home plate.**
 - (d) Double plays. The fielder may not "take out" the second baseman (or shortstop), any attempt to do so and both runners are out! (Please report teams or players that are intentionally trying to "take out" players to the league commissioner). Intentional contact is dangerous and illegal (in our league). Players must also make an attempt to get out of the way of the throw from second to first base (or from third to second base, etc.).
 - (e) Please be careful about sliding! This is for both the runner (turf burns) and the fielder. Any attempt to "take out" a fielder will result in immediate expulsion from the league.
 - (f) A 'safety base' is the orange base placed directly next to the white first base, but placed in foul territory (the white base is in fair territory). On a ground ball to the infield, the batter **MUST** run to the 'safety base'. This gives the first baseman access to the white base and will help to avoid any possible collisions at first base. If the runner does not run to the 'safety base', the runner should be reminded of the rule. **If the baserunner does not run to the safety base, resulting in a collision with the fielder, the runner is out.**
 - (g) Baserunners should also pay attention to overthrows. The brick wall surrounding the playing field is very close to fair territory. Overthrows may bounce off this wall and back towards the runner very quickly.
10. BUNTING
- Bunting is not allowed. The player must take a full swing. A player attempting to bunt who hits the ball will be given one strike. If the batter already has two strikes, the bunt will be treated like a foul ball. **A second attempt to bunt is an automatic out.**
11. FOUL TIPS
- A foul tip that is caught by the catcher must go over the batters head to be an out, otherwise it is a strike.
12. BAT THROWING
- (a) Bat throwing is obviously dangerous. When you hit the ball you should drop the bat. In the past people have thrown the bat such that it has hit the catcher.
 - (b) The first time anyone on a team throws a bat, the team will get a warning.
 - (c) The second time anyone on that team throws a bat, they will automatically be out.
 - (d) The pitcher or catcher of the opposing team shall be the one to call these infractions.
 - (e) Please remind new players of this rule and instruct them on how to drop the bat after making contact.
13. RUN CAP/MERCY RULE
- A team can only score a maximum of 6 runs in an inning. (exception: A team may score as many as possible in the 7th inning.) There is no mercy rule.
14. IN PLAY VERSUS OUT OF PLAY
- In the Ground Rules section, we show what is in and out of play.

- (a) A fielder must catch the ball when his or her last point of contact was in play.
- (b) If a fielder catches a ball while standing out of play, an out is not recorded. It will either be a homerun or a foul, as appropriate.
- (c) An out may be recorded if a player is standing in play but reaches to catch a ball that would otherwise land out of play.
- (d) A player may also record an out if they leave in-play territory and catch the ball before contacting out-of-play territory.

15. OVERTHROWS

This is the most misplayed and misunderstood rule. When a ball is thrown out of play (see Ground Rules) by a fielder every runner gets the base he/she was going to plus one. **The “base he is going to” is defined as follows: if the runner is **more than halfway** to the next base and is running towards that base, he is “going to” that base. This is judged at the time the ball becomes out of play.**

- (a) EXAMPLE 1 (and probably the most common)...Force play at first on a ground ball: In this case, if the ball gets past the first baseman and goes out of play, the runner gets ‘the base going to’ (1B), ‘plus one’ (2B). I think this is pretty self explanatory, and I think everyone has been doing this. TOTAL EXTRA BASES: 1 (2 if you consider 1B an ‘extra’). Please remember to use “common sense”. An example of this occurrence is on a play in the infield where there would be a close play at first base, but the throw (often from the shortstop or third baseman) is wild. The runner will then overrun and possibly round 1B, but has no intention of ‘going to’ 2B when the ball goes out of play (**as they are far less than 1/2 there**). Thus, the runner gets the ‘base going to’ (1B) ‘plus one’ (2B).
- (b) EXAMPLE 2...Runner trying to get back to a base: There are certain times when a runner may be trying to get back to a base and the ball is thrown out of play. If a runner is ****going back to a base**** when the ball goes out of play, the runner gets ‘the base going to’ (runner’s previous base) ‘plus one’ (the next base).
 - i. Example 2a: Say there is a runner on 1B. There is a line drive to another infielder, which is caught. The runner on 1B started to go, and, once the ball was caught, was trying to get back to 1B. The ball is then thrown past the first baseman and out of play. In this case the runner gets the ‘base going to’ (1B) ‘plus one’ (2B). TOTAL EXTRA BASES: 1
 - ii. **Example 2b: Similar to 2a. Say there is a runner on 1B. There is a line drive to the outfield. Thinking that it will fall, the runner runs to and possibly beyond 2nd base. The outfielder makes an amazing catch. Seeing that he needs to return to first, the runner begins to retreat. The throw from the outfielder to 1B is wild and goes out of play. Even if the runner is more than 1/2 of the way towards 2B when the ball goes out of play, he is retreating TOWARDS 1B, and therefore gets the ‘base he is going to’ (1B) , ‘plus one’ (2B). TOTAL EXTRA BASES: 1**
 - iii. Example 2c: Say there is a runner on 2B. There is a fly ball to the outfield (or a line drive to an infielder), which is caught. Now, say the runner was off the base (not tagging up) and is trying to get back to the base. The infielder tries to get the runner at 2B, however, the ball gets by the second baseman. In this case, the ball may not get out of play very quickly. If the runner realizes the ball has gotten by the fielder and tries to get to 3B while the ball is still IN PLAY, which eventually goes out of play, then the runner gets the ‘base going to’ (3B) ‘plus one’ (Home). The key here is that the runner was intentionally trying to get to the next base (**is more than halfway towards 3B**) when the ball went out of play. TOTAL EXTRA BASES: 2
- (c) Example 3: Runner is not moving when the ball goes out of play: If the runner is just standing around, waiting for something to happen, the runner is not intentionally going to the next base. So, the runner gets the ‘base going to’ (which is none in this case) ‘plus one’ (the next base). TOTAL EXTRA BASES: 1

- (d) Example 4: Single to the outfield: The runner will probably round 1B on a single to the outfield, with no real intent to get to second. Now, if an overthrow occurs, the runner will probably be able to start moving towards 2B before the ball goes out of play. **If the runner is more than halfway to 2B when the ball goes out of play**, the runner gets the 'base going to' (2B) 'plus one' (3B). TOTAL EXTRA BASES:2 ***NOTE*** **If the runner was less than halfway to 2B, than they only get the 'base they were going to' (which is 1B, since they weren't more than half way to 2B) 'plus one' (2B). This another instance of invoking the 'common sense' rule.**

The IMPORTANT thing to remember is that the runner should be intentionally going to the next base (as evidenced by being more than 1/2 way there) when the ball goes out of play.

16. INTER-FIELD INTERFERENCE

- (a) In the event that a ball from one field goes onto the other playing field, please try to stop play in the game whose field the ball has entered. **Do not touch the ball** and allow the fielder from the other field to get it.
- (b) Outfielders should talk to outfielders from the other field and warn them if a ball is coming.
- (c) Please use common sense and ERR ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION.

17. MISCELLANEOUS

- (a) ABSOLUTELY NO CHEWING TOBACCO OR SUNFLOWER SEEDS ON THE TURF
The athletic department gets very upset about this.
- (b) NO ALCOHOL OR BOTTLES on the field.

4 Ground Rules

Please pay extra attention to this section. We have rewritten the ground rules with consistency and simplicity in mind, to reduce the number of arguments and confusion over rules.

4.1 Ground Rules for Both Fields

1. There are many obstructions on the field so please be careful!
 - (a) If possible, move soccer goals to out of play regions. If not please push the goals as far away from the playing field as possible. Goals should not be left anywhere in the outfield for safety reasons. **DO NOT place the soccer goals on top of the brick walls, as we have been yelled at by the athletics department for doing this in the past. Please also make sure that no one on your team is standing on top of the goals, as we do not want to damage them.**
 - (b) If there are unmovable structures (covered benches) that are in the outfield **IN PLAY**, a ball hitting them on the fly or on the bounce is a **ground rule double**.
 - (c) Poles - there are many light poles on the field in fair territory (mostly Field A). We will use this general rule:
 - i. A ball striking the **padded** portion of a pole ON THE FLY is a **ground rule double**.
 - ii. A ball striking the **bare** portion of a pole ON THE FLY is a **homerun**.
 - iii. Otherwise, any ball that bounces into a pole is a ground rule double.
 - iv. For clarification, see Figure 1.



Figure 1: Ground rules for poles.

2. Trees

- (a) A ball striking a tree (usually a foul ball on Field A) is a dead ball.
 - i. The exception to the above rule is a home run (over the fence) that hits a tree (generally Field B). This is still a home run.

3. Other Ground Rule Doubles/Triples

- (a) These will be defined for each field.

4.2 Field A

Field A is illustrated in Figure 2. It is at the corner of the soccer field closest to the trucks. Home plate will be placed at the edge of the soccer playing field. First and third base will be placed 60 feet from home plate on the lines of the soccer field (just pace it off for now). Second base should be in line with home plate and 60 feet from first and third base. The pitchers mound will be directly in between first and third base and in line with home and second base. Note that

1. The sidewalk in fair territory is in play (except for the area by the benches). Everything off the fence is also in play.
2. The sidewalk and benches in left field (foul territory) is out of play.
3. There is now a large net that runs through foul territory along 3B. Anything behind this net is out of play (see Figure 2) Also note that any overthrows that hit this net will be considered **out of play**.
4. The grass in right field (beyond the brick wall) is foul but in play (this would apply to a deep fly ball to right field that hooks foul).
5. Foul balls (out of play) include anything in the natural grass, **over the third base net**, and above the brick wall along the first base line. **This also applies to overthrows.**
6. Overthrows hitting the brick walls and staying in play are in play.
7. Temporary Fences



Figure 2: Field A.

- (a) At times facilities will put up a temporary fence that in general follows this boundary. However we define it here explicitly so people know how to play the ball regardless of whether there is a fence or not.
- (b) Assuming the fence is close to the grass-turf boundary (within a foot or two), it is the boundary for the field.

8. Ground Rule Doubles/Triples

- (a) Anything bouncing or rolling into a home run region is a ground rule double.
 - i. **EXCEPTION:** a ball rolling into the natural grass **BEYOND** (to the right of) the covered benches (see Figure 2) is a groundrule triple. This is because this is generally a very good hit, and is therefore rewarded to be a triple instead of a double.
- (b) If there is a temporary fence that stops the ball, thereby keeping it in play, there is no ground rule double (or ground rule triple, depending on where the ball strikes the temporary fence).
 - i. If the ball is physically stuck in the fence (not sitting at its base) or rolls underneath the fence and into the grass it is a ground rule double.
 - ii. If the fences are very close (as mentioned above) to the boundaries defined above, and they stop the ball from rolling into the grass, but the ball is sitting on the very edge of the grass, it is not a ground rule double (common sense rule).

9. Home Runs. Note that anything that goes into the red region **on the fly** is a homerun. This includes

- (a) The natural grass by the shotput area, and the shotput area itself.
- (b) Anything hitting the scoreboard.
- (c) Anything hitting the benches in left field or landing on the concrete by the benches.

We clarify here some ground rules in Figure 3.

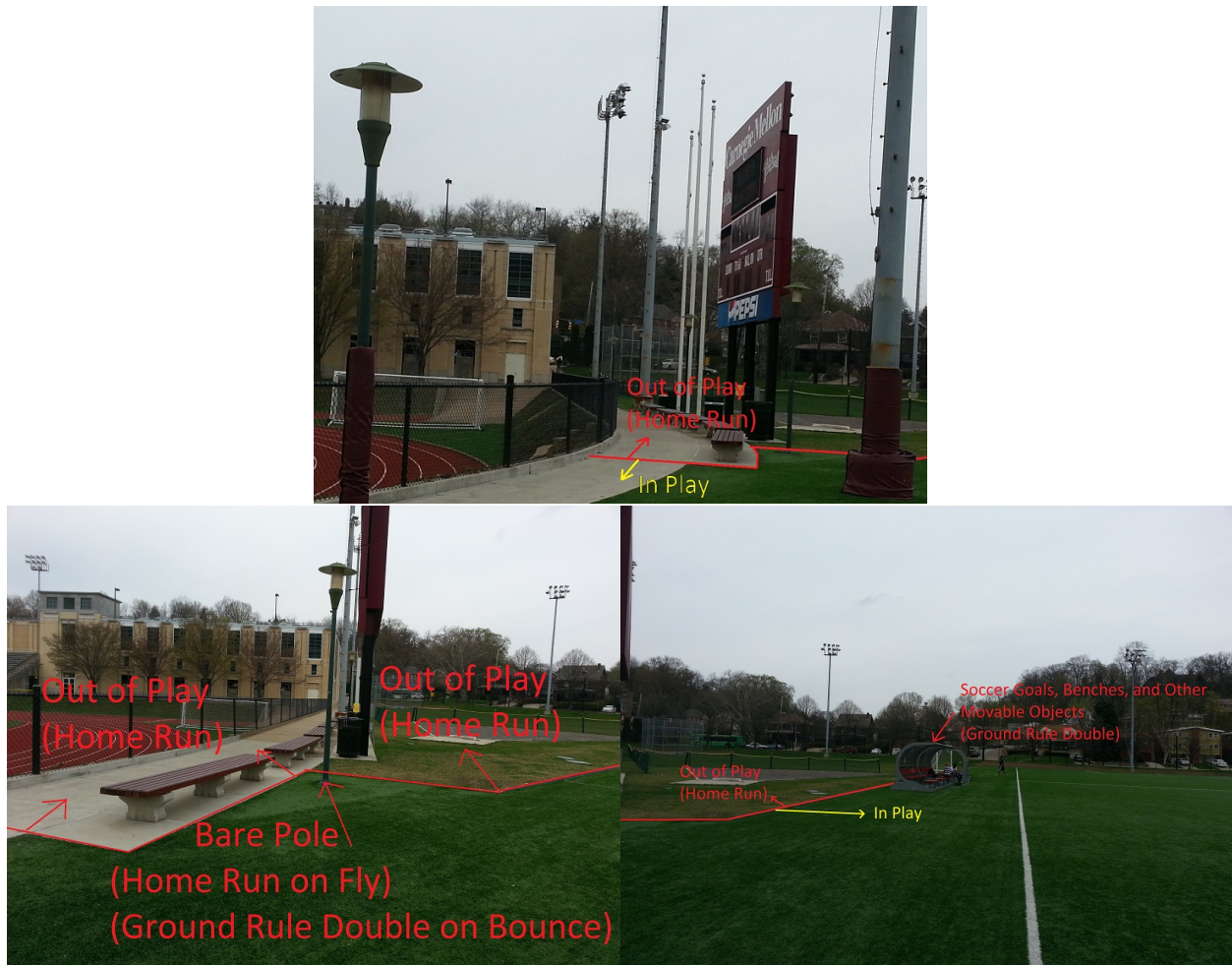


Figure 3: Pictures showing what is a homerun and what isn't. Also note that temporary structures that are IN PLAY (benches, soccer goals, etc.) are ground rule doubles if the ball hits them. Goals should be removed from the field if possible.



Figure 4: Field B.

4.3 Field B

Field B is illustrated in Figure 4. It is at the corner of the soccer field closest to the parking garage. Home plate will be placed at the edge of the soccer playing field. First and third base will be placed 60 feet from home plate on the lines of the soccer field (just pace it off for now). Second base should be in line with home plate and 60 feet from first and third base. The pitchers mound will be directly in between first and third base and in line with home and second base. Note that

1. The grass in left field is IN PLAY. Anything off the fence **or net above the fence** is IN PLAY.
2. Foul balls (out of play) include anything in the natural grass and above the brick wall along the third base line and the natural grass along the first base line. **This also applies to overthrows.**
3. The natural grass along the first base line is out of play. If possible, please place your bags/belongings in the grass, not on the turf which is in play. Also try not to put anything by or stand by first base, as overthrows from the infielders can be dangerous here.
4. Brick wall
 - (a) Balls striking the brick wall are in play. The top of the brick wall also represents what is a homerun.
5. Ground Rule Double
 - (a) Anything bouncing over the short brick wall is a ground rule double (see Figure 5).
 - (b) Anything that gets stuck in the left field fence (chain link or netting) is a ground rule double.
6. Ground Rule Triple
 - (a) Anything bouncing over the tall brick wall (i.e., into the bleachers or to the right of the bleachers) is a ground rule triple. (see Figure 5) Note that a ball contacting the metal bars on a bounce is a ground rule triple.



Figure 5: Ground rule double versus ground rule triple on Field B. Note that anything over the brick walls on the fly is a home run.

7. Home Runs. Note that anything that goes into the red region on the fly is a homerun. This includes
 - (a) Anything over the big fence
 - i. There is no limit to HRs over the big fence. We reserve the right to change this rule if this becomes an issue.
 - (b) Anything over the brick wall
 - i. If a fly ball hits the bars in front of the bleachers, it is a home run (as it is over the brick wall).
 - ii. Note that the grass above the brick wall is out of play. If a fielder runs onto this grass to make a catch, it is a homerun, not an out. (See Figure 6).

4.4 Unforeseen Changes

The field is used at other times of the day by many other groups. On occasion there may be a semi-permanent structure added to the field that cannot be removed. The team captains should meet before the game to determine a ground rule for the new structure or change to the field. If it appears that the structure or field change will persist for more than one day, please contact the commissioner so that a universal rule may be determined for the league.

If you are confused about any of these rules, please ask. We'll try to clarify. Use your common sense when problems arise. Remember, this league is for FUN.



Figure 6: Field B - Showing in and out of play regions in left field.