



RULES TO BE ADOPTED - FOR 2021 NATIONAL LEAGUE

1. No balls are to be thrown around the infield during an innings changeover.
2. Fourth inning - Runners on 1st and 3rd as opposed to a runner on first base.
3. DH to be replaced with DP.
4. Offensive Power Play ([change to rule in blue](#))

Each team is allowed 'one' offensive power play.

- The Crew Chief will indicate a power play by pumping their fist above their head.
- The offensive team can reduce the defensive team by 1 player for two consecutive batters at any point in the game.
- The two consecutive batters cannot run into the next inning.
- Coaches are required to notify the Home Plate Umpire of their intention to initiate the power play prior to a new batter stepping up to the plate. The power play cannot be applied during an at bat.
- The defensive team will then remove one player from the field for the next two consecutive batters (not outs).
- The same defensive player is removed for both batters.
- If the defensive player removed is an infielder, they are to return to their dugout.
- If the defensive player removed is an outfielder, they are to move to the fence in foul territory
- *If a "live" ball is touched by the removed fielder, then the batter-runner, if applicable, and all other base runners will be awarded two bases, unless, in the umpire's judgement, a fair batted ball would have been a homerun, in which case all runners will score. NB the defensive player interfering in this way will receive a Red Card*
- Once the power play has concluded no more are available for that team.

The RULES of FASTBALL 45

FASTBALL 45 is innovative and dynamic! An exciting new product with modifications to provide a higher paced and intense version of softball.

The concept is designed to enhance the best parts of the game with higher frequency. To achieve this state of play traditional rules have been broken and radicalised to; increase the amount of ball in play, increase double plays, scoring opportunities and the points system itself.

FASTBALL 45 Overview:

- 45 mins or 4 innings
- 3 balls and 3 strikes
- 3 outs per inning
- Double play clears an inning
- Runner(s) starting on base every inning
- Double points for successful squeeze plays
- Baserunners able to lead off earlier
- Offensive power plays
- Offensive declaration rule
- Yellow and red cards.

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Note WBSC rules apply except for the following modifications.

1. THE GAME

REGULATION GAME

- 4 innings or 45 mins.

INNING

- 3 outs per inning

TEAM ROSTERS

- The regional Fastball 45 rounds will see a limit of 15 players per team. For the finals weekend only 13 players are allowed on the team roster.

TEAM REPLACEMENTS

- After the regional winning men's & women's teams are determined, these teams will be permitted replacements if players need to pull out due to injuries or extreme circumstances which prevent them from attending the Fastball 45 finals weekend. Medical documentation highlighting injury needs to be produced and sent to Softball NZ. Any replacements will need to be from the three other regional teams that participated in their Regional Fastball 45 series. Any replacements need approval from SNZ.

Once the Fastball 45 finals weekend commences, there are no replacement players allowed.

TIME LIMIT PLAYING RULES

- Time Limit for all FASTBALL 45 games shall be 45 mins. Where time does not allow for the complete playing of games as per Rule 1.2.1 (SNZ). The following governs the rules surrounding the time keeping of such games.
 - a. One person to monitor time (official scorer, who will call the game with an airhorn)
 - b. If a regulation game is completed prior to time then the game ceases
 - c. If a regulation game is incomplete at time, then the score will revert back to the last completed innings unless the home team (team batting second) is winning. If the last completed innings is a tie, then the winner will be determined by, 1) Double plays 2) Runs scored in squeeze plays 3) Runs scored in power play 4) Number of hits 5) Number of home runs 6) Double steals
 - d. The new inning starts when the final out is made (Rule 1.1.5) not when the first pitch is thrown
 - e. No time stoppage is allowed for injury or protests, unless the injury is significant, and a player cannot be moved from the field.
- New innings will not commence with less than 5 minutes to go.

OFFENSIVE DECLARATION

- In all games during the competition, including finals, the batting team may declare their innings closed at any time, but only once during the game.

TIE BREAKER OPTION (Non Sky Sport production)

Tournament organisers may apply a “tie breaker” to determine an outright winner, as below.

- The offensive team begins the inning with loaded bases; with the seventh hitter in the batting order placed on third base, the eighth on second and the ninth on first base.
- The offensive team has “one” out to score as many runs as possible.
- Once the offensive team is retired the defensive team will have an opportunity to bat with the same scenario as above.
- If the scores are still locked, further tie breakers will be played to determine an outright winner.

Please note: This option is purely for the purposes of clubs and associations running regional tournaments and not Softball NZ events in collaboration with Sky Sport.

2. RESULT

GAMES AFFECTED BY WEATHER

- A games affected by weather will be rescheduled by the tournament committee.
- In the event a game(s) is cancelled due to inclement weather and unable to be rescheduled teams will be awarded 2 points each.

REGULATION GAME

- A game called by the Umpire will be regulation game if two or more complete innings have been played, or if the team second at bat has scored more runs than the other team has scored in two or more innings, or if the run ahead rule is invoked. The Umpire is empowered to call a game at any time because of darkness, rain, fire, panic, or other cause which puts the patrons or team members in physical danger.

INDIVIDUAL GAMES

- Points will be awarded on 4 for a win, 2 for a tied game loss and 1 for a loss by 2 or less. Where tied game loss points are awarded no other points can be gained.

DETERMINING A WINNER FROM A TIED GAME.

- If the score is tied after the completion of the game, the score will revert back to the previous completed inning/s to see if one of the teams is leading the other, this will determine an outright winner. If a winner cannot be determined (each completed innings is a tie), the team with the most of the following criteria will be determined the winner:

- 1) Double plays
- 2) Runs scored in squeeze plays

- 3) Runs scored in power play
- 4) Number of hits
- 5) Number of home runs
- 6) Double steals

ROUND ROBIN TIED TEAM FORMULA

- If 3 teams are tied on points after the round robin the top two teams will be determined by the following criteria:
 1. Double plays
 2. Runs scored in squeeze plays
 3. Runs scored in power play
 4. Number of hits
 5. Number of home runs
 6. Double steals
- If two teams are tied on points the winner will be determined by who beats who in round robin play.

OVERALL REGIONAL QUALIFIER WINNER

- The team with the most points at the conclusion of the Regional Qualifier will qualify for the Finals weekend. In the event games are postponed due to weather (or other unforeseen circumstances), these games will be re-scheduled before the finals weekend commences. In the event the re-scheduling of games cannot be played, the winner will be the team with the highest seeding going into their regional qualifying weekend.

OVERALL NATIONAL LEAGUE WINNER

- The team that wins the final will be the National League winner.
- If the final is unable to be completed or played the winner will be the highest ranked team after the round robin.

RUNNERS ON BASE

Offensive teams will start their innings as follows:

- 1st inning, a runner will start on first base
- 2nd inning, runners will start on first and second base
- 3rd inning, runners will start on first, second and third bases.
- 4th inning, runners will start on first and third bases.

- Runner/s may be any player from the team line-up (not substitutes) providing they are not due to bat in the next 4 batting slots.
- Runner/s cannot be changed during the innings.

DEFENSIVE

- A double play gets the defensive side out of the innings regardless of the current number of outs.

OFFENSIVE POWER PLAY

Each team is allowed 'one' offensive power play.

- The Crew Chief will indicate a power play by pumping their fist above their head.
- The offensive team can reduce the defensive team by 1 player for two consecutive batters at any point in the game.
- The two consecutive batters cannot run into the next inning.
- Coaches are required to notify the Home Plate Umpire of their intention to initiate the power play prior to a new batter stepping up to the plate. The power play cannot be applied during an at bat.
- The defensive team will then remove one player from the field for the next two consecutive batters (not outs).
- The same defensive player is removed for both batters.
- If the defensive player removed is an infielder, they are to return to their dugout.
- If the defensive player removed is an outfielder, they are to move to the fence in foul territory
 - o If a "live" ball is touched by the removed fielder, then the batter-runner, if applicable, and all other base runners will be awarded two bases, unless, in the umpire's judgement, a fair batted ball would have been a homerun, in which case all runners will score. NB the defensive player interfering in this way will receive a Red Card
- Once the power play has concluded no more are available for that team.

SCORING RUNS

- A run scored off a squeeze play or safety squeeze is worth two points.
- The home plate umpire will notify both sides and scorers that a squeeze play has been successful.

SQUEEZE PLAY DECISIONS

- Homeplate umpire will notify both sides and scorers when a squeeze play has taken place. If this is challenged the Home Plate Umpire can confer with his crew. Scorers communicate to commentary team if need be.

3. PLAYING FIELD AND EQUIPMENT

OFFICIAL SOFTBALL

- The Mizuno 150 is the official game ball.
- 6 balls to be available throughout the game to ensure the game flows.

HOME RUN FENCE

- Where possible the home run fence will be 5 metres shorter than the International distance for both men and women i.e.
 - o 71 Metres (Men)
 - o 61 Metres (Women)

4. DEFENCE

ONE WARM-UP PITCH

- The pitcher to have one warm-up pitch at the start of the game and none between other innings. A replacement pitcher may also have one warm-up pitch when they enter the game. A pitcher returning to pitch will not be entitled to warm-up pitches.

BALLS & STRIKES

- 3 balls and 3 strikes

WALKS IN A POWER PLAY

- Hitters cannot be walked to negate the power play or increase the options for double plays.
- Any player that is walked (intentionally, by being pitched 3 balls or hit by pitch) during a power play will go to 2nd base. That would mean any players on base would advance accordingly if forced e.g. if there are runners on 2nd & 3rd the runner on 3rd would score and the runner on 2nd would advance to 3rd. NB bases must still be touched in legal order.

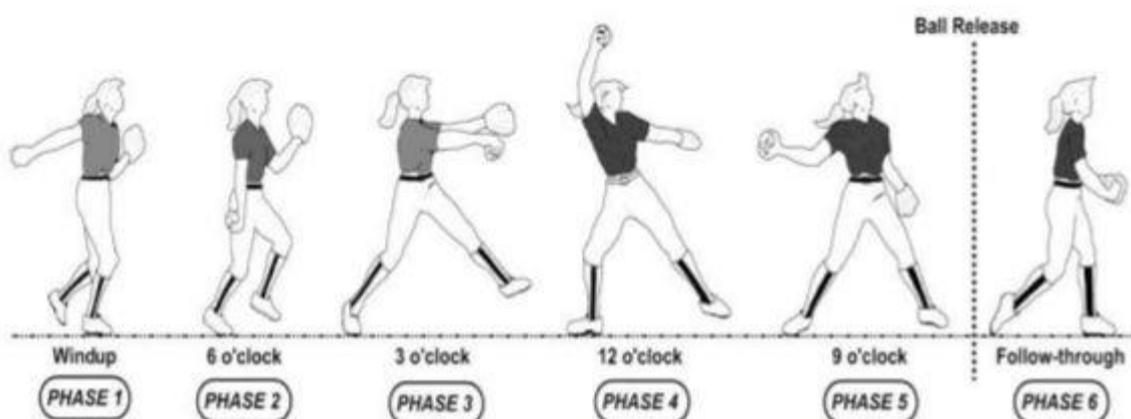
TEMPORARY CATCHERS

- A temporary catcher can come into the game if the catcher in the line-up isn't ready. The relieving catcher will not be charged as a substitution.
- If a Temporary Catcher is used, they must complete at least one batter.

5. BATTING AND BASERUNNING

BASERUNNERS

- Baserunners can lead off the base once the pitcher's arm is in the 9 o'clock position.



DESIGNATED RUNNER

- A Designated Runner will apply and will be used once within any given inning.

TEMPORARY RUNNER

- The temporary runner for the catcher can apply regardless of the number of outs (including if the catcher is due on base at the commencement of an inning).
- The runner/s may be any player from the team line-up (including substitutes) providing they are not due to bat in the next 4 batting slots.
- An incorrect runner can be corrected during the time they are on base but not after they have scored. An incorrect runner on base that is due to bat should be removed from the base and **not** replaced on base.

6. APPENDIX

APPENDIX - SCORING

TWO SCORERS

- Two scorers are required; one as a spotter, one to score. The spotter will also relay information to the commentary team.

APPENDIX - UMPIRES

4 UMPIRE CREW

- A 4 umpire crew is preferred. Changes to be undertaken off the diamond saving time allowing the game to continue (see below).

CHANGE OVERS

- 1 minute for inning change overs as per umpire's judgement who will use a stopwatch. If one team is deemed not to be ready when 1 minute has elapsed a ball or a strike will be called on the batter depending on if it is the defensive or offensive team at fault. No latitude will be given if the catcher in the line-up is not ready, the temporary catcher rule will come into effect.

DEFENSIVE AND OFFENSIVE CHANGES

- No penalties for incorrect defensive changes. Usual penalties should apply for incorrect offensive changes e.g. if a defensive substitute is not announced – no penalty but if an offensive player is not announced Rule 3.2.8 Effect applies. This would only occur when the unreported offensive substitute is in the game.
- Umpires will not be involved in player changes/substitutions apart from calling time for a temporary runner to come on to base. A member of the team (not the head coach) will communicate player changes/substitutions directly through the Official scorer.
- Official scorers will ensure the integrity of the hitting line-up is kept i.e.; Official scorer will inform the team if the wrong hitter is on deck but are not solely responsible for this and will call time to the Plate Umpire if a team is batting out of order.
- Changes to the offence must be undertaken 'prior' to the batter leaving the on-deck circle i.e. a batter cannot be changed while on their way to the batter's box or in the box unless injury occurs in the box.

Should any situation arise that is not covered under the Softball New Zealand Rule book or the variations listed above they will be determined by the tournament committee

NEW INNINGS

- New innings will not commence with less than 5 minutes to go before time expires i.e., after 40 minutes.
- No balls are to be thrown around the infield during an innings changeover.

NO PROTESTS

- In an attempt to play with the spirit of the FASTBALL 45 concept and to keep the game moving protests will not be permitted. The Chief Umpire for the tournament will always be next to the diamond, with the ability to consult with the umpires and teams quickly and efficiently on any rules. This will allow clarity, and help diffuse any misunderstanding between teams and umpires, especially as it is new to everyone.

POWER PLAY

- Signal for the Power Play i.e. pumping the fist above the head.

REMAIN IN POSITION

- Umpires are to remain in position between innings unless hydration required.

SQUEEZE PLAY DEFINITION

- The runner on third base starts for home plate as soon as the ball is being pitched and the batter bunts or push bunts the ball to give the runner a chance to score.

YELLOW AND RED CARDS

- A yellow card is to be used as a warning, two yellow cards equates to a red.
- A red card to be used in the same manner as an ejection in the current rules.

Should any situation arise that is not covered under the Softball New Zealand Rule book or the variations listed above they will be determined by the tournament committee