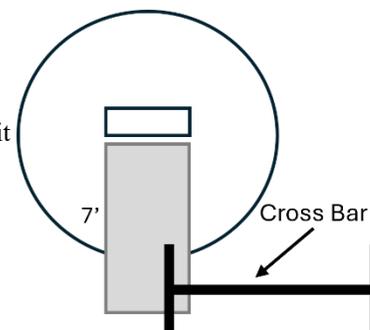
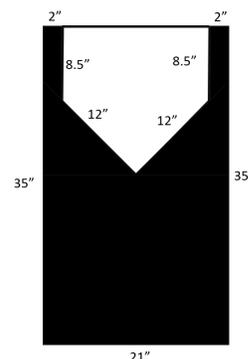


# 2026 BRAAS SOFTBALL RULES

Unless otherwise noted, BRAAS follows the latest USSSA slow-pitch softball rules.

## 1. GENERAL RULES:

- **MERCY RULE:** 15 runs after 3 innings; 12 runs after 4 innings; 10 runs after 5 innings.
- **SCORING:** Each field will have “Flip-Score Scoreboards” in/around the dugout. It is the batings team’s responsibility to update their scores throughout the game. Any disagreement of scores will be decided by the umpire. At the conclusion of each game, Captains or a captain’s representative shall attest to the final score. A picture of the final score will be sent to the commissioners for input. Once the scores are sent the score is final.
- **STRIKE ZONE:** Any ball thrown at the correct arc (6-12 feet) that hits any part of home plate or the strike zone mat is a strike (strike zone mat dimensions: 21”x35”). If the mat is dislodged from its placement, it is the offensive team’s responsibility to replace the mat to its proper position. Any ball thrown flat/high *should be vocally* called out by the umpire, thus letting the batter know that the pitch will be a ball. The batter may still swing at the pitch, however. The umpire’s failure to vocally call a flat pitch does not preclude him from calling the pitch a ball or strike.
- **HOME PLATE:** Runners are required to touch home plate to count as a run scored. The strike zone mat is not considered part of home plate.
- **FIELD DIMENSIONS:**
  - The pitcher’s plate will be 50’ from home plate.
  - The bases will be 70’ apart.
- **COURTESY RUNNER:** Any baserunner may get a courtesy runner after reaching base safely. ***The proper courtesy runner is the last out recorded.*** “Last out recorded” is defined as, the last **player** that was put out (batted, forced, tagged out, etc.), including if that occurred the previous inning. If there has been no out recorded in the game, the last batter listed in the lineup is the courtesy runner. The proper courtesy runner must be used.
  - **Example 1:** If the leadoff hitter in the second inning reaches base and needs a courtesy runner, the last out in the previous inning is the courtesy runner.
  - **Example 2:** If the leadoff hitter in the game reaches base and needs a courtesy runner, the last batter in the lineup is the courtesy runner.
- Only one courtesy runner shall be allowed per lineup slot per inning. A courtesy runner cannot be used to replace a player already courtesy running for another player.
  - **Example:** Player 1 reaches base safely and requests a courtesy runner. As outlined above, the last out recorded, Player 2, enters the game as a courtesy runner for Player 1. Player 2 must remain the courtesy runner until he is either recorded as an out or safely reaches home plate to score. If another out is recorded prior to either of those occurrences, the newly recorded out is **NOT** allowed to replace Player 2 as a courtesy runner.
  - **Exception:** In the rare event that Player 2 is still on base when his spot in the lineup is “in the hole”, on deck, or at-bat, Player 2 may be replaced by a new courtesy runner, Player 3. Player 3 should be the “last recorded out” prior to Player 2. If there were no previous outs, the last batter to score shall now be the new courtesy runner.
- **PITCHER’S NET:**
  - **Net Placement:**
    - At the beginning of a half inning, the pitcher has the option to place the net anywhere he deems appropriate so long as:
      - A portion of the bottom bar of the net is between the pitcher’s plate and home plate (see diagram)
      - Then net is not further than 7’ from the pitcher’s plate.
      - It’s at the beginning of an inning. Once the net is placed, it must remain there for that half inning unless a pitching change is made.
      - The purpose of the net is for the pitcher’s safety, not to gain an advantage over the hitter.



- **Pitching Rules**
  - The pitcher must be in contact with the pitcher's plate when the pitch is released
  - The pitcher must be fully hidden behind the net when the ball crosses the hitting zone.
  - The pitcher is allowed to field any batted ball after contact is made so long as he is behind the net when contact occurs.
  
- **Balls in Play:**
  - Any BATTED BALL that strikes the net will be treated as a foul ball. All rules that govern foul balls will then be in effect.
  - Thrown balls that strike the net are live and SHALL NOT be deemed a dead ball or a foul ball.
  - A ball that touches any player prior to striking the net will remain a live ball.
  - If the pitcher is not in contact with the pitcher's plate when the ball is released or fully behind the net at the time the ball is in the hitting zone, the umpire shall call "BALK."
  - Once the BALK is called on an illegal pitch, it shall immediately be a "Dead Ball" and the pitch will result in an automatic Ball.
    - Once the ball is dead, any resulting swing from the batter shall not count, a ball will be awarded, and another pitch will be thrown.
  - During a live ball, the defense is not permitted to intentionally move the net. If the umpire determines a defensive play intentionally moves the net, he shall let the play continue and issue each baserunner one additional base. This is a judgement call.
  
- **DESIGNATED BATTER:** There will be **NO** Designated Batter for the "WALK RULE."
  
- **CONDUCT:** Any player who strikes or makes contact with an umpire, team member, member of the opposing team, spectator, or other person will be ejected from the game and must go before the Board. A player will be given a verbal warning and then may be ejected for arguing calls with an umpire or opponent. An ejected player must leave the playing facility. If the ejected player continues to disrupt a game in any way, he may be ejected from the league for the remainder of season, at the discretion of the Board.
  
- **BATTING LINEUP:**
  - Every able player present (and not injured) MUST HIT. There is no requirement that every player must play the field (free defensive substitutions are allowed).
  - Lineups **MUST BE POSTED** in the dugout for each team to view during the game. Lineup sheets will be available to use on each field.
  - If a player is injured during a game and can't resume play or has to leave during the game (after he's hit) his batting spot is thereafter an OUT.
  - A player shows up after the game has started (for whatever reason) but before his team bats through the lineup. He may be inserted anywhere in the lineup that has not batted yet.
  - A player shows up after the game has started (for whatever reason) and after his team has hit through the lineup. He may be inserted at the end of the lineup only.
  - Batting Out of Order
    - The appeal must be made by the defensive team.
    - The "at bat" starts after 1 pitch is thrown to the batter.
    - **Prior to the "at bat":** the defensive team may appeal that the would-be batter is not the correct batter.
      - If this appeal is made the correct batter is brought to bat. No one is called out for batting out of order.
    - **During the "at bat":** the defensive team may appeal that the current batter is not the correct batter.
      - If this appeal is made the correct batter is brought to bat and assumes the current ball/strike count. No one is called out for batting out of order.
    - **After the "at bat":** the defensive team may appeal prior to the start of the next "at bat" that the previous batter was not the correct batter.
      - If this appeal is made the correct batter is declared out, the previous batter is removed from base (unless he recorded an out), any advancement of runners on base are nullified and returned to their prior base, and the next batter in the lineup is brought to bat. If the previous batter resulted in an out, the out is rescinded due to the fact that the correct batter had already been declared out.

- No appeal can be made by the defensive team after the start of the next “at bat”.
- **SENIOR BAT RULES:** A player must be a minimum of 50 years old to use the senior bats. Senior bats will be able to be recognized by the bright pink grip tape. A list of all players over 50 will be given to the captains prior to the start of the season.
  - Any player under 50 years old that finishes an at bat using a senior bat will be declared out. His spot in the lineup will also be declared out for the REMAINDER OF THE GAME. (Examples of “finishing an at bat” = batting a ball into play, being put out by a foul ball, walk, strikeout.) If a player goes to the plate with the incorrect bat, but is corrected prior to finishing the at-bat, no penalty will be given.
  - If a player is determined to have finished an at bat with a senior bat illegally, that offending player and his team are subject to the following punishment(s):
    - If the illegal at bat is caught prior to that game's conclusion, for the remainder of that game, the offending player's spot in the lineup shall be an automatic out.
    - If the illegal at bat is caught after that game's conclusion, for the next scheduled game, the offending player's spot in the lineup shall be an automatic out. The offending player must occupy the exact same spot in the lineup as the game in which the illegal bat violation occurred.

## 2. REGULAR SEASON RULES:

- **GAME LENGTH:** Each game is 7 innings or 55 minutes of play, whichever occurs first. An inning ends—and the subsequent inning begins—when the third out is made. The umpire shall keep the game clock and stoppages are at the umpire’s discretion (rules discussions/injuries/etc.).
- **ATTENDANCE/HOME RUN TRACKER:** Captains or a captain’s representative are responsible for notifying the commissioners about attendance and any homeruns after the game.
- **SUBSTITUTIONS:** A captain may add as many substitutions as needed to field a team of 9 players. All substitutions must be in accordance with the sub list. **Substitutions are only permitted during the regular season.**
- **PLAYERS:** A team may play with only 9 players and not be required to take an out in the 10th batting spot. A team that plays with less than 9 players, however, must take an out each time the vacant spot(s) comes to bat. This is only for the **REGULAR SEASON**.
- **BALLS/STRIKES:** Each batter starts his at bat with a 1-1 count. Once the batter reaches two strikes, he is allowed **ONE** additional foul ball. A second foul ball is an out.
- **EXTRA INNINGS:** The “international rule” is used. A runner starts at second base, with zero outs and the inning is played as normal. The runner placed on second base at the start of each half-inning will be the player in the batting order immediately preceding that half-inning’s leadoff hitter. If the proper runner cannot run, the courtesy runner is the person that proceeds him in the batting order. If the game is still tied after 1 extra inning, the game results in a TIE.

## 3. PLAYOFF RULES:

- **SEEDING:**
  - Winning percentage (descending)
  - Number of wins (descending)
  - Number of losses (ascending)
  - Winner of One-Pitch Tournament (if applicable)
  - Winning percentage vs tied teams (all tied teams must’ve played each other an equal number of times: descending)
  - Average run differential (max/min of +/-10 runs per game, descending)
  - Average runs scored (descending)
  - Coin flip
- **GAME LENGTH:** Each game is 7 innings or 55 minutes of play, whichever occurs first. An inning ends—and the subsequent inning begins—when the third out is made. Countdown clocks will be present on each field for teams to view during the game. Clock stoppages are at the umpire’s discretion (rules discussions/injuries/etc.).

- **HOME/AWAY DESIGNATION:** Higher seeded teams will decide the HOME/AWAY designation until the Championship Round where the Winner's Bracket team will decide the HOME/AWAY designation. If the "IF NEEDED" game is played the decision of the HOME/AWAY designation is given to the team that won the 1<sup>st</sup> championship game.
- **PLAYER QUALIFICATION/SUBSTITUTIONS:** Each player must be present for at least half of the regular season games to qualify for the playoffs. No substitutions allowed in playoffs. A team must play with at least 10 players in the **POSTSEASON**. A team that plays with less than 10 players must take an out each time the vacant spot(s) come to bat.
- **BALLS/STRIKES:** Each batter starts his at bat with a 1-1 count. Once the batter reaches two strikes, he is allowed **ONE** additional foul ball. A second foul ball is an out.
- **EXTRA INNINGS:** For the playoffs, standard extra inning rules apply. That is, there is no "international rule" in the playoffs. Game will proceed until a winner is determined.

#### 4. ONE-PITCH TOURNAMENT RULES:

- **GAME LENGTH:** Each game is 7 innings or 25 minutes of play, whichever occurs first. An inning ends—and the subsequent inning begins—when the third out is made. Clock stoppages are at the umpire's discretion (rules discussions/injuries/etc.).
- **HOME/AWAY DESIGNATION:** A coin toss will determine which team decides the HOME/AWAY designation in the Winners Bracket and first two rounds of the Losers Bracket. In the Losers Bracket, the team coming from the Winners Bracket will decide the HOME/AWAY designation. In the Championship, the Winner's Bracket team will decide the HOME/AWAY designation. If the "IF NEEDED" game is played the decision of the HOME/AWAY designation is given to the team that won the 1<sup>st</sup> championship game.
- **SUBSTITUTIONS:** A captain may add as many substitutions as needed to field a team of 9 players. All substitutions must be of equal or less caliber as the player being replaced and must be approved by the opposing captain.
- **PLAYERS:** A team may play with only 9 players and not be required to take an out in the 10th batting spot. A team that plays with less than 9 players, however, must take an out each time the vacant spot(s) comes to bat.
- **BALLS/STRIKES:** Each batter starts his at bat with a 3-2 count. Each batter may foul off **ONE** pitch. A second foul ball is an out.
- **EXTRA INNINGS:** The "international rule" is used. The "international rule" is used. A runner starts at second base, with zero outs and the inning is played as normal. The runner placed on second base at the start of each half-inning will be the player in the batting order immediately preceding that half-inning's leadoff hitter. If the proper runner cannot run, the courtesy runner is the person that proceeds him in the batting order. Game will proceed until a winner is determined.