



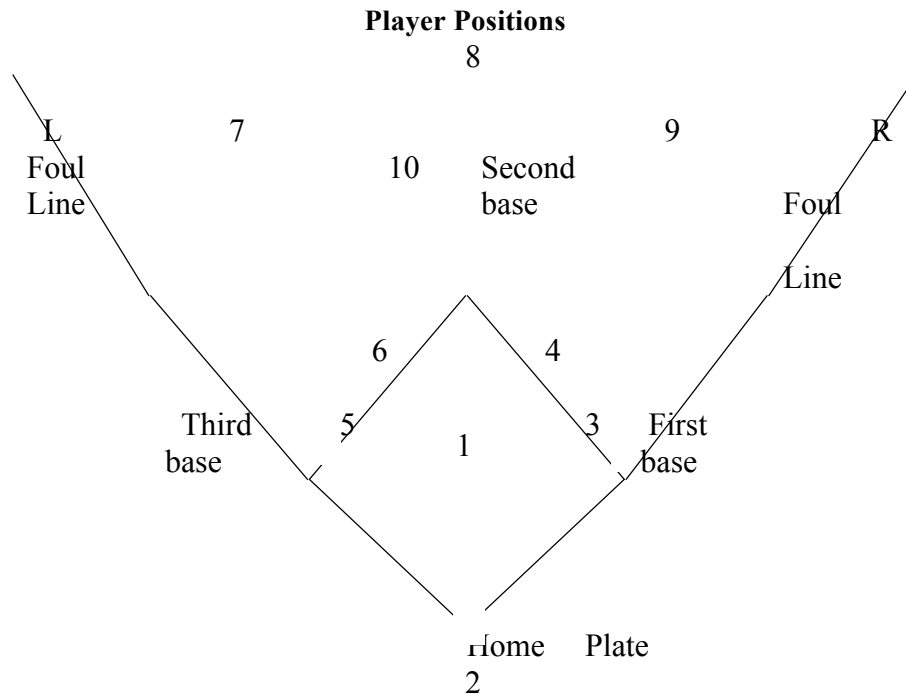
Unit 1: SLOW-PITCH SOFTBALL STUDY GUIDE

The game of softball, developed by George Hancock in 1887, was originally designed as a variation of baseball using a larger ball and smaller bat. The rules of slow-pitch softball are patterned after those of baseball and fast-pitch softball, making it very similar to those games. The games of slow- and fast-pitch softball have many similarities: (a) the ball must be pitched underhand, (b) the game is 7 **innings** long, and (c) the purpose of the game is to get on base and score more runs than the opposing team. Each time a runner crosses and touches home plate without being put out, a **run** is scored. The major difference, as the name of the games imply, is the speed of the pitched ball. In slow-pitch, the ball is slowly pitched with an arch, while in fast-pitch, the ball is delivered fast and parallel to the ground. Other differences between the two games include the following:

<u>Slow-Pitch</u>	<u>Fast-Pitch</u>
No bunting	Bunting is allowed
No base stealing	Base stealing is allowed
10 players per team	9 players per team (no short fielder)
Runners cannot lead-off after a pitch	Runners can lead-off the base after a pitch

FIELD AND POSITIONS

The playing field is divided into the infield and outfield. The infield includes a smooth dirt area consisting of 4 bases that are shaped like a **diamond**. Six players make up the infield and are numbered accordingly in the scorebook: Pitcher (1), Catcher (2), First-base player (3), Second-base player (4), Third-base player (5), and the Shortstop (6). The outfield is the grassy area behind the infield and four players make up the outfield in slow-pitch softball: Leftfielder (7), Centerfielder (8), Rightfielder (9), and the Shortfielder-Rover (10). The shortfielder often plays the gaps in between left and center field or center and right field. See the diagram below.



RULES AND SCORING

Pitching

1. The pitcher must have one foot on the pitching rubber and can only take one step forward.
2. The ball must be pitched underhand in an arch (no higher than 12 feet or lower than 3 feet), and it must travel across the front shoulder and back knee of the batter, and land behind home plate (i.e., in the **strike zone**).
3. A **ball** is called on the batter by the umpire when any of the following occur:
 - A batter does not swing at a pitched ball that does not go over the plate or fall within the strike zone
 - A ball is pitched illegally (i.e., too high, too low, pitcher takes more than one step forward, one foot does not start on the pitching rubber, the ball is not pitched underhand)

Four balls equal a **walk**

4. A **strike** is called on the batter by the umpire when any of the following occur:
 - A batter swings at a pitched ball and misses it (“swing & miss”)
 - A batter does not swing at a “good” pitch that travels within strike zone
 - A batter hits a fly ball in foul territory that is not caught by a fielder or a ground ball in foul territory
 - A batter hits a foul tip that remains lower than the batter’s head and is caught by the catcher
 - A batter is hit by his/her batted ball

Three strikes equal an **out**

Batting

1. Batters must follow the same batting order throughout the entire game.
2. The **batter is out** when:
 - Three strikes have been called by the umpire
 - A fly ball or line drive is caught by a fielder
 - The batter steps outside the batter’s box to hit the ball
 - A foul ball is hit after two strikes have been called
 - The **Infield Fly Rule** is called by the umpire
3. A batted ball is called a **fair ball** when:
 - An infielder touches the ball or the ball stops in fair territory
 - The ball lands in fair territory in the outfield, even though it may roll into foul territory
 - The ball touches any base
4. A batted ball is **foul** if:
 - The ball stops in foul territory between home and first base or home and third base
Without being touched by a fielder
 - The ball touches foul ground beyond first or third base off a fly ball or line drive

Base Running

1. Base runners must touch each base in order (first, second, third, and home plate).
2. Base runners may overrun first base and home plate without being tagged out.
Runners can be tagged out with the ball if they overrun second and third base (caught off the base).
3. After a fly ball has been caught, base runners must **tag-up** before running to the next base.
4. A runner is out if the following occurs:

- Tagged with the ball before reaching a base
- The ball reaches first base before the runner reaches the base (**force out**)
- The ball reaches a base ahead of a runner who is forced to occupy that base (**force out**)
- The offensive player runs more than 3 feet outside the **baseline** to avoid being tagged
- The offensive team **i**nterferes with a fielder trying to field the ball
- An offensive player is hit by a batted ball while running to a base before it passes or is touched by fielder
- An offensive player leaves a base before the pitched ball crosses the plate or is hit by a batter
- A base runner passes the base runner ahead

COMMON TERMS

Advance	A base runner runs from one base to the next.
Ball	A “ball” is called by the umpire when a pitched ball is illegal or does not cross the strike zone.
Base Path	The direct running path between each base, 3 feet on each side of the line.
Double	A hit that allows the batter to safely make it to second base.
Double Play	One defensive play that results in two outs off a batted ball.
Error	A mistake made by a fielder that allows players to advance or score.
Fly Ball	A ball that is hit long and up in the air into the outfield.
Force Out	An out made when a base runner, forced to run to the next base because another player must occupy that base, cannot reach the next base safely. A force out also can occur at first base when the batter hits the ball.
Full Count	When a batter has a count of 3 balls and 2 strikes. The next pitch will either result in a walk, strikeout, or hit.
Grand Slam	A home run that is hit when there are players on first, second and third base (i.e., bases are loaded). A grand slam hit results in 4 runs.
Home Run	A hit that allows the batter to safely make it all the way to home plate and score a run (usually the ball is hit over a fence or well beyond the outfielders).
Infield Fly Rule	If the batter hits a playable fair ball pop-up (infield fly) in the infield, the batter is automatically called out by the umpire if runners are on first and second, or first, second and third base and there are less than two outs. If the fielder drops the ball, the batter is still out and base runners do not have to run; however, runners may advance at their own risk. This rule prevents the defense from intentionally dropping an easy catch and making a double or triple play.

Inning	An inning is when both teams rotate through batting and fielding.
Lead Off Hitter	The first batter in the hitting order. This batter usually hits well and has a high likelihood of getting on base.
Line Drive	A hard hit ball that travels in a straight line - parallel to the ground.
On Deck	The batter in line to follow the person who is batting.
Pop Up	A ball that is hit short and high in the air into the infield.
Run	A run is a score when a runner rounds the bases and touches home plate without getting put out.
Sacrifice	A batted ball that is intended to advance base runners; however, results in an out for the batter.
Single	A hit that allows the batter to safely reach first base.
Strike	A “strike” is called by the umpire when the batter: (a) does not swing at a legal pitch that crosses the strike zone, (b) swings and missed a pitched ball, or (c) hits a foul ball that is not caught in the air by a fielder.
Strike Out	When a batter has acquired three strikes, it is considered a strike out.
Strike Zone	The area from which the ball can be successfully hit by the batter.
Tag-Up	Runners must wait on the base they occupy until a fly ball is caught before attempting to advance to the next base.
Triple	A hit that allows the batter to safely make it all the way to third base.
Walk	A batter gets a free trip to first base when the fourth ball is called by the umpire (base on balls).