

Welcome to Softball Training



Agenda

- Pitching rules and regulations



Pitching

PITCHING RULES AND REGULATIONS



Objective

- "To develop a thorough understanding of softball pitching rules and regulations by mastering legal pitching mechanics, recognizing common violations, and applying proper techniques to ensure fair play, consistency, and competitive integrity in all game situations."

SECTION 1: PITCHING REGULATIONS



Rule 6-1-1 Pg. 49

Prior to starting the delivery (pitch), the pitcher shall take a position with the pivot foot **on or partially on** the top surface of the pitcher's plate and the non-pivot foot in contact with or behind the pitcher's plate. Both feet must be on the ground within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.

- a. Prior to pitching, the pitcher must take a position with shoulders in line with first and third base **with the ball in the glove or pitching hand, and with the hands separated.**
- b. While in this position and in contact with pitcher's plate, the pitcher **shall take (or simulate taking)** a signal from the catcher.
- c. After completing "b" above, the pitcher shall bring the hands together in front of the body for not less than one second and not more than 10 seconds before releasing the ball. The hands may be motionless or moving. **(There was an argument last year about this. Can they take the sign with hands together? Joe Defranco ruled that to be legal. He said spirit of the rule is met which is to avoid a quick pitch)**
- d. The pitcher shall not be considered to be in pitching position unless the catcher is within the lines of the catcher's box and in position to receive the pitch.
- e. The pitcher may not take the pitching position on or near the pitcher's plate without having possession of the ball.
- f. The pitcher may remove herself from the pitching position as follows:
 1. before the hands come together, the pitcher may legally step back from the pitcher's plate with both feet;
 2. when the hands are together and no part of the windup motion has been made, **the pitcher may legally step back** from the pitcher's plate with both feet;
 3. either foot may be removed first.

PENALTY: An illegal pitch shall be declared immediately by the umpire (delayed dead-ball signal). The batter is awarded a ball.

EXCEPTION: When the pitcher completes the delivery of the ball to the batter and the batter hits the ball fair or foul, or becomes a base runner, the coach of the team at bat shall have the option of the result of the play or the penalty for an illegal pitch.

SECTION 1: PITCHING REGULATIONS



Rule 6-1-2 Pg. 50

About the Pitch:

- a. **The pitch starts when the pitchers hands separate** after the hands have come together while the pivot foot is in contact with the pitcher's plate. [Hands Come Together](#)
- b. Any step back with the non pivot foot must begin before the start of the pitch (6-1-2a). Once the pitch has started (the hands separate), the pitcher shall not take more than one step which must be forward, toward the batter and simultaneous with the delivery. EXCEPTION: See Rule 6-1-1f(2) - When removing self from the pitcher's position. [Stepping Back](#)

NOTE: "Toward" is interpreted as within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.

While pushing off from the pitcher's plate, both feet may be disengaged from the playing surface as long as they remain within or partially within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate and do not create a replant of the pivot foot resulting in the pitcher being farther away from the pitcher's plate. Pushing off with the pivot foot from a place other than the pitcher's plate resulting in the non-pivot foot becoming closer to home plate is illegal. [Stepping Outside the 24 inch Pitching Plate](#) and [Sliding the Pivot Foot Forward](#)

[Officiating Softball - Pitch with replant discussion](#)

NOTE: It is not a step if the pitcher slides her foot in any direction on the pitcher's plate, provided contact is maintained.

SECTION 1: PITCHING REGULATIONS



Rule 6-1-3 Pg. 52

A legal delivery shall be a pitched ball that is delivered to the batter with an underhand motion.

- a. The release of the ball and the follow-through of the hand and wrist must be forward past the vertical line of the body.
- b. The hand shall be below the hip and the wrist not farther from the body than the elbow. (look for sidearm throws, they are illegal)
- c. The pitch shall be delivered on the throwing arm side of the body and not behind the back or between the legs.
- d. The pitch is completed with a step toward the batter.

SECTION 1: PITCHING REGULATIONS



Rule 6-1-4 Pg. 52

The pitcher may use any windup desired provided:

- a. no motion to pitch is made without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.
- b. the pitcher does not use a rocker action in which, after having the ball in both hands in pitching position, she removes one hand from the ball, takes a backward and forward swing and returns the ball to both hands in front of the body.
- c. the pitcher does not use a windup in which there is a stop or reversal of the forward motion.
- d. the pitcher does not make more than 1½ clockwise revolutions of the arm in the windmill pitch. The ball does not have to be released the first time past the hip.
- e. the pitcher does not continue to wind up after taking the forward step or after the ball is released.

NOTE: Continuation of the windup is considered any action that, after the ball is released, causes the arm to continue to rotate past the shoulder.

PENALTY: (Arts. 2, 3, 4) Illegal pitch. The ball is dead at the end of playing action, if the ball is pitched. A ball is called on the batter. (6-1-1 EXCEPTIONS)

SECTION 2: INFRACTIONS BY THE PITCHER



Rule 6-2-1 pg. 52

The pitcher shall not deliberately drop, roll, bounce, etc., the ball while in pitching position in order to prevent the batter from striking it.

PENALTY: Any infraction is an illegal pitch. The ball is dead at the end of playing action. The batter is awarded a ball.

SECTION 2: INFRACTIONS BY THE PITCHER



Rule 6-2-2 pg. 52

The pitcher shall:

- a. not be allowed to use tape or other non approved substances on the ball or contact points of the pitching hand or fingers; nor shall any other player apply a foreign substance to the ball. Note: Dirt is not considered a foreign substance and does not have to be wiped from the hand prior to contacting the ball.
(CHALK DOES!!)
- b. Wipe off their fingers before contacting the ball if they have licked their fingers.
- c. Be allowed to, under the supervision and control of the umpire, powdered rosin or any comparable drying agent listed on the USA Softball's certified equipment webpage to dry the hand. It is not necessary to wipe off these drying agents before making contact with the ball.

PENALTY: An illegal pitch shall be called immediately. (See 6-1-1 Penalty)

Note: A pitcher shall not wear any item on the pitching hand, wrist, arm, or thighs which an umpire judges to be distracting to the batter. (3-2-9)

What is legal?



In softball, only **powdered rosin bags** or other comparable drying agents that are explicitly listed on the [USA Softball certified equipment webpage](#) are legal for use by the pitcher. 📧

Key regulations include:

- **Powdered Rosin is Legal:** The material inside the bag must be a finely ground powder. It is used to dry the hands and provide a better grip, not to make them sticky.
- **"Rock Rosin" is Not Legal:** Bags that contain lumps or "gravel-like" material (often called rock rosin) are typically not allowed because they can transfer a sticky residue to the ball. Umpires will usually check the bags if they appear lumpy or large.
- **Umpire Supervision:** The use of the rosin bag is always under the supervision and control of the umpire. The umpire-in-chief is responsible for placing the official rosin bag on the ground behind the pitcher's plate.
- **Proper Use:** Neither the pitcher nor any other player may dust the ball with the rosin bag, apply rosin to their glove, or dust any part of their uniform with it. The substance is strictly for use on the bare hands.
- **Other Approved Agents:** Some leagues may also permit other manufactured drying agents, such as certain "grip enhancer" towels, provided they are on the league's approved list (e.g., the USA Softball list). 📧

The screenshot shows the top portion of the USA Softball website. The header is dark blue with the USA Softball logo on the left, a "Menu" button, a search icon, and a "BECOME A MEMBER" button. Below the header is a large image of a softball bat leaning against a fence. Overlaid on the image is the text "USA SOFTBALL CERTIFIED EQUIPMENT". To the right of the image is a "Contact Us" section with the text: "If you are an equipment manufacturer and interested in certifying your equipment, please contact [Kevin Ryan](#)." Below the image is a list of categories: "BATS", "BALLS", "FOREIGN SUBSTANCE/PROTECTIVE WRAPS" (highlighted with a red underline), "WARM-UP ATTACHMENTS", "WARM-UP BATS", and "NON LINEAR BAT COMPRESSION THRESHOLDS". To the right of the categories is a text box containing "Rule 6 Section 6 (Fast Pitch/Modified Pitch), Foreign Substance / Protective Wraps" and a quote: "Under the supervision and control of the umpire, powder resin and / or an approved drying agent that is included on the list published by USA Softball may be used by the pitcher." Below the quote is a scrollable list with "Approved" at the top and "Gorilla Gold Grip Enhancer" below it.

For a complete updated listing of USA Softball certified equipment, click on the appropriate category you are searching for below.

BATS

BALLS

FOREIGN SUBSTANCE/PROTECTIVE WRAPS

WARM-UP ATTACHMENTS

WARM-UP BATS

NON LINEAR BAT COMPRESSION THRESHOLDS

Rule 6 Section 6 (Fast Pitch/Modified Pitch), Foreign Substance / Protective Wraps

"Under the supervision and control of the umpire, powder resin and / or an approved drying agent that is included on the list published by USA Softball may be used by the pitcher."

Approved

Gorilla Gold Grip Enhancer

SECTION 2: INFRACTIONS BY THE PITCHER



Rule 6-2-3 pg. 53

Once the ball has been returned to the pitcher to prepare for the next pitch, she has 20 seconds to release the pitch.

PENALTY: The batter is awarded a ball.

EXCEPTION: Intentionally violating the rule in order to walk the batter without pitching shall not result in a ball being awarded to the batter. See 3-6-13 (unsporting act) for additional penalties.

SECTION 2: INFRACTIONS BY THE PITCHER



Rule 6-2-4 pg. 53

No pitch shall be declared when:

- a. the pitcher pitches during a suspension of play.
- b. the pitcher attempts a quick return of the ball before the batter has taken position or is off balance as a result of a previous pitch.
- c. the runner is called out for leaving the base too soon.
- d. the pitcher pitches before a base runner has retouched the base occupied after a foul ball has been declared and the ball is dead.
- e. a player, manager or coach calls "Time" or employs any other word or phrase or commits any act, while the ball is live and in play, for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit an illegal pitch.

PENALTY: (Art. 4a through d) The ball is dead immediately and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled. (Art. 4e) If the batter tries to cause the pitcher to commit an illegal pitch after the pitcher has started her delivery, the ball remains live if the pitcher legally delivers the pitch. (See 3-6-9 and 7-3-1 Effect 2)

SECTION 2: INFRACTIONS BY THE PITCHER



Rule 6-2-5 pg. 53

At the beginning of each half-inning or when a pitcher relieves another, no more than one minute may be used to deliver no more than five balls to the catcher or other teammate. The one-minute time limit begins from the third out of the previous half-inning. Play shall be suspended during this time.

NOTES:

1. A pitcher returning in the same half inning will not be granted any warm-up pitches.
2. Umpire is authorized to allow more pitches when weather is inclement or if pitcher was removed due to an injury.

PENALTY: For excessive warm-up pitches, a pitcher shall be penalized by awarding a ball to the batter for each pitch in excess of five. This does not apply if the umpire delays the start of play due to substitution, conference, injuries, etc. (PLEASE USE CAUTION WITH THIS! GAME MANAGEMENT!!)

SECTION 2: INFRACTIONS BY THE PITCHER



Rule 6-2-6 pg. 53

When the ball slips from the pitcher's hand during the backswing or forward motion, it is a pitch.

EFFECT: A ball is awarded to the batter, and the ball remains in play and runners may advance with liability to be put out. A defensive player may immediately retrieve the ball as long as the batter has no opportunity to contact the pitch.

EXCEPTION: If the batter has a legitimate opportunity to hit the ball and swings at the pitch, a strike is called if she does not make contact and the ball is in play if it is batted.

SECTION 2: INFRACTIONS BY THE PITCHER



Rule 6-2-7 pg. 53-54

The pitcher shall not throw to a base while a foot is in contact with the pitcher's plate after having taken the pitching position.

PENALTY: Illegal pitch, the ball is dead immediately. A ball is called on the batter.

NOTE: The pitcher may remove herself from the pitching position by stepping backwards off the pitcher's plate with both feet before separating her hands or making any motion that is part of the windup after the hands have come together. She may step with either foot first. Stepping forward or sideways constitutes an illegal pitch.

SECTION 2: INFRACTIONS BY THE PITCHER



Rule 6-2-8 and 6-2-9 pg. 54

6-2-8. A fielder shall not take a position in the batter's line of vision or, with deliberate unsporting intent, act in a manner to distract the batter; a pitch does not have to be released.

6-2-9. The pitcher shall not deliver a pitch until all defensive players are positioned in fair territory, except the catcher, who must be in the catcher's box.

PENALTY: (Arts. 8, 9) Illegal pitch. (See 6-1-1 Penalty)

Again, game management!



SECTION 3: INFRACTIONS BY THE CATCHER

Rule 6-3-1 and 6-3-2 pg. 54

6-3-1. The catcher shall be inside the lines of the catcher's box when the pitcher takes a position to pitch and when the pitch is released.

PENALTY: Illegal pitch. (See 6-1-1 Penalty)

6-3-2. The catcher shall return the ball directly to the pitcher after each pitch, except after a strikeout or putout made by the catcher, or to play on a base runner.

PENALTY: The batter is awarded a ball.

EXCEPTION: Intentionally violating the rule in order to walk the batter without pitching shall not result in a ball being awarded the batter. (See 3-6-13 for additional penalties)

SECTION 5: PITCHING REGULATIONS



Rule 6-4 is for slow pitch

Rule 6-5-1 and 6-5-2 pg. 56

6-5-1. The pitcher has a choice of balls at the start of each half inning unless both balls do not get put into play. In that case, the pitcher in the bottom of the first inning must throw the unused ball. Thereafter, the ball in play should be returned to the 16-foot circle after every half inning.

6-5-2. The pitcher may request the other ball before throwing a warm-up pitch by giving the ball in her possession to the plate umpire, the pitcher has now made a choice and must pitch that ball until such time as the ball goes out of play or becomes blocked.

A large, glowing pink question mark graphic is centered on the page. The question mark is composed of a thick, neon-like line that forms the shape of a question mark. The glow is brightest in the center and fades towards the edges. The background is solid black.

Questions?