***Baseball Rules***

A baseball/softball game is played by two teams who alternate between offense and defense. There are nine players on each side. The goal is to score more runs than the opponent, which is achieved by one circuit of **four bases** that are placed on the diamond.

**The Equipment**

The defense wears baseball/softball gloves, a leather contraption that fits on the hand, to catch the ball. A baseball is a white ball roughly three inches in diameter with red stitching. A softball is roughly twice as big, sometimes yellow (but no softer).

The offense uses a bat, which is made of wood in the professional ranks, and likely made of aluminum or a metal composite at amateur levels. Almost all softball bats are aluminum or metal. When up to bat you must also have a helmet.

**The Field**

The part of the field closest to the bases is called the infield, and the grassy farther reach Go is called the outfield.

The bases are 90 feet apart on the diamond, closer in children's leagues and softball. Other fields are variable, and the outfield fences or the amount of “foul territory” - the amount of ground that borders the field between the long white lines that connect first base to home plate and third base to home plate – varies from field to field.

**Defense: The Positions**

There's a pitcher in the middle of the mound who initiates the action by throwing the ball toward home plate. The catcher catches the ball if it's not hit. The infielders are the first baseman, second baseman, shortstop (between second and third base) and the third baseman. There are three outfielders: The left fielder, center fielder and right fielder.

**The Game**

There are nine innings in professional baseball games (sometimes fewer in lower levels), and each inning is divided in half to the top of the inning (when the visiting team hits and the home team plays defense) and the bottom of the inning (when the home team hits and the visiting team plays defense).

Each team gets three outs in each half of the innings.

**On Offense**

Each team has nine players in its batting order, and they must stick to that order throughout the game (players may substitute in for other players). A play begins with a batter waiting to hit a pitch from the pitcher. If the batter hits the ball into the field of play, the batter runs to first base and can run to as many bases as he or she deems fit without getting "out." But when bunting on a third strike and it’s a foul it counts as a strike out. You may have as many foul balls as you like. If a batter gets hit by a pitch he gets a free base to first.

A batter gets three strikes (a swing and a miss or a ball over the plate in what's deemed the “strike zone” by an umpire) or he or she is out. If there are four balls (a pitch that is not in the “strike zone”), the batter is automatically allowed to go to first base.

When a batter begins running, he or she is then referred to as a "runner". Runners attempt to reach a base, where they are "safe" and can remain on the base until the next hitter comes up. The defensive players attempt to prevent this by putting the runners out using the ball; runners put out must leave the field.

A batter gets a "hit" when he or she reaches a base without getting out, or forcing another runner to get out (and without the defense making an error). Runs are scored when a player completes a circuit of the diamond before there are three outs in the inning.

If a players hits the ball over the outfield fence in fair territory (between the foul lines), it's a home run, and the batter can circle all four bases.

**On Defense**

There are many ways that the team on defense can get an offensive player out. Five common ways are:

* **Strikeouts (hitter misses three pitches)**
* **Force outs (when, after the ball is hit, the defensive player with the ball reaches a base before the runner)**
* **Fly outs (when a player hits the ball in the air and it's caught by a defensive player before the ball hits the ground) this includes foul territory.**
* **Tag outs (when a runner is touched with the ball, or a glove with the ball in it)**
* **Ground outs (when you throw the ball the base before the runner gets to it\_**

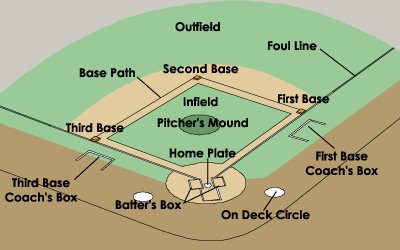
**How Does Softball Differ?**

**In fast-pitch softball, the pitcher throws the ball underhand instead over overhand, and the field is about 1/3 smaller all around. Games typically last only seven innings.**

**They aren’t called Refs, they are called Umpires**

All about umpires, the person or people in charge of the calls and the **rules** interpretation of any organized game of **baseball**.

**Baseball Diamond Info**



* **Bases** - The Bases are the four stations (first base, second base, third base, and home plate) that players must run to after hitting the ball into play. Each base is 90 feet (27 m) apart in a Major League Baseball game. A run is scored when a player reaches home plate.
* **Base paths** - The base path is the line between each base that the player must run along to reach a base. A player can be called out for running outside of the path.
* **Pitcher's mound** - The pitcher's mound is the raised mound of dirt in the middle of the infield on which the pitcher stands.
* **Batter's box** - The batter's box is marked off by two small rectangles flanking home plate. The batter must stand within the borders of the box to hit.

**Websites used;**

[**http://entertainment.howstuffworks.com/baseball2.htm**](http://entertainment.howstuffworks.com/baseball2.htm)

[**http://baseball.about.com/od/thebasics/a/basebasicrules.htm**](http://baseball.about.com/od/thebasics/a/basebasicrules.htm)

[**http://images.google.ca/images?hl=en&q=baseball%20diagram&um=1&ie=UTF-8&sa=N&tab=wi**](http://images.google.ca/images?hl=en&q=baseball%20diagram&um=1&ie=UTF-8&sa=N&tab=wi)

