



WBSC

WORLD
BASEBALL SOFTBALL
CONFEDERATION

Game Time!

Softball Technical and Facilities Manual

**For Olympic, World Cup, Regional, and Multi-
Sport Competitions**



TECHNICAL AND FACILITY REQUIREMENTS

WBSC SOFTBALL COMPETITION

The purpose of the WBSC Softball Technical and Facilities Manual is to furnish a broad base of information for the planning and design of a softball venue or fields. We briefly describe the process and considerations necessary to determine the feasibility and sizing of a softball venue or facility. Also included are the WBSC Softball field dimension requirements, some typical field lighting and irrigation layouts.

This manual is simply a guide to orient you to understanding the complexities of field construction. There are a variety of considerations, including but not limited to, safety, maintenance, specific design, weather conditions and legacy.

The technical and facility requirements for hosting Softball World Cups, Regional/Multi-sport Games, Olympic Qualifiers and the Olympics are set out in the WBSC Softball Technical and Procedural Code but only on limited bases. This manual is not all inclusive, however it does cover the basics as well as provide more details in some areas to assist Federations/Organising Committees on fulfilling what is required to host and conduct an WBSC Softball Competition.

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SECTION 1

Venue Guide

1. THE PLAYING FIELD:

- 1.1 The actual softball game playing field must meet the standards established in the WBSC Softball Official Rules of Softball – Rule 2: The Playing Field.
- 1.2 The playing field, in addition to meeting specifications, must be skinned infield (no grass).
- 1.3 Specific details on the actual playing field layout follow on page – Official Dimensions.
- 1.4 The Stadium Playing Field must face Northeast for minimum sun impact on the players.

2. STADIUM SEATING – Spectators:

- 2.1 There must be a main playing stadium with seating for at least 5,000 spectators.
- 2.2 The seating near home plate in the main stadium must be at least partially covered.

3. OUTFIELD SEATING:

- 3.1 Will be required for maximum spectator capacity and optimum visibility of playing field.
- 3.2 There must be restroom facilities in the outfield for the outfield spectators.

4. STADIUM SEATING – VIP’S, Olympic Family:

- 4.1 The IOC usually designates the number of VIP and Olympic Family seats within the Main Stadium.
- 4.2 At the 1996, 2000, 2004 and 2008 Games we had approximately 100 seats designated for VIP’s and members of the Olympic Family.
- 4.3 These seats need to be near home plate and covered seating.

5. STADIUM SEATING – Media:

- 5.1 The media seating will be working space and will need to be able to accommodate at least 100 working media.
- 5.2 These seating needs to be near home plate and also be covered, and must have access to power for laptop computer capabilities.

6. STADIUM SEATING – Participating Athletes:

- 6.1 There are eight (8) total participating teams with two (2) on the field leaving six (6) potential teams in the Participant Seating. (Future Games total participants TBD)
- 6.2 Each team has a maximum of 20 people, which means 120 Participating Athlete seats required.
- 6.2.1 These seats can be located in the main stadium stands down either the first or third base lines. Outfield seating is not acceptable.



Playing Field

Stadium Seating



Outfield Seating



Media Seating

7. PRESS BOX – Scorers and Announcers:

- 7.1 The scorers and announcers must have a glass enclosed press box overlapping the field of play that is located on Level 2 of the Main Stadium.

8. WORKROOMS AND OFFICES:

The following workrooms and offices need to be located somewhere within the Main Stadium Structure behind home plate:

8.1 MEDIA WORKROOM:

- 8.1.1 The Media Workroom needs to be approximately 75 feet x 75 feet (246 m²) with enough space to handle a minimum of 150 working media.
- 8.1.2 This workroom will require computer capabilities, fax, phone and closed circuit TV.

8.2 INTERVIEW ROOM:

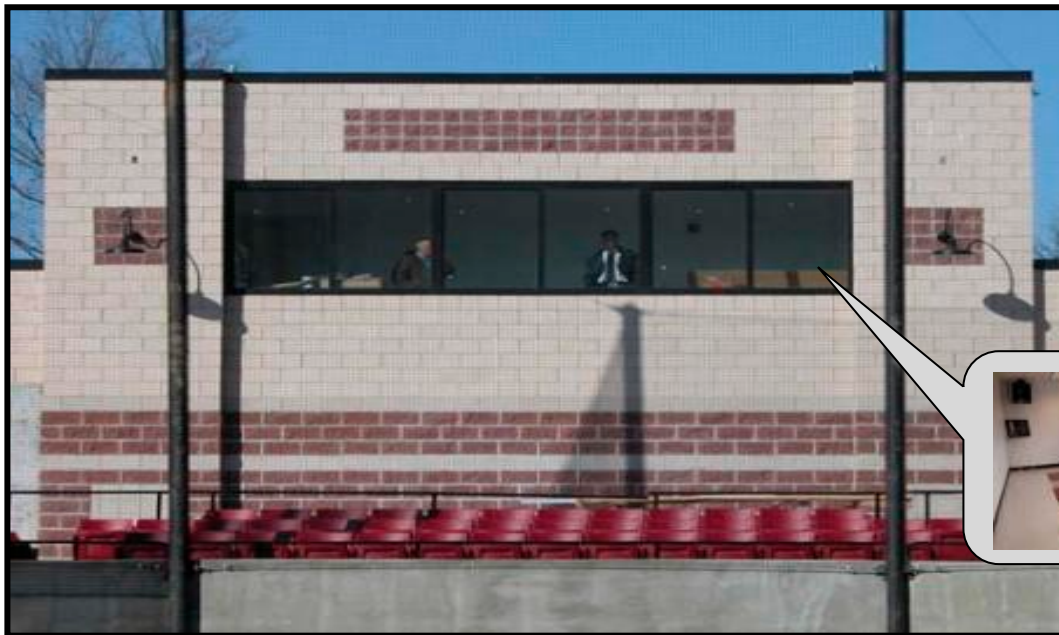
- 8.2.1 This needs to be large enough to hold a minimum of 150 people in theatre style seating with 2-3 head tables.

8.3 IF and OLYMPIC FAMILY LOUNGES:

- 8.3.1 The WBSC prefers that the IF Lounge be located next to the Olympic Family Lounge.

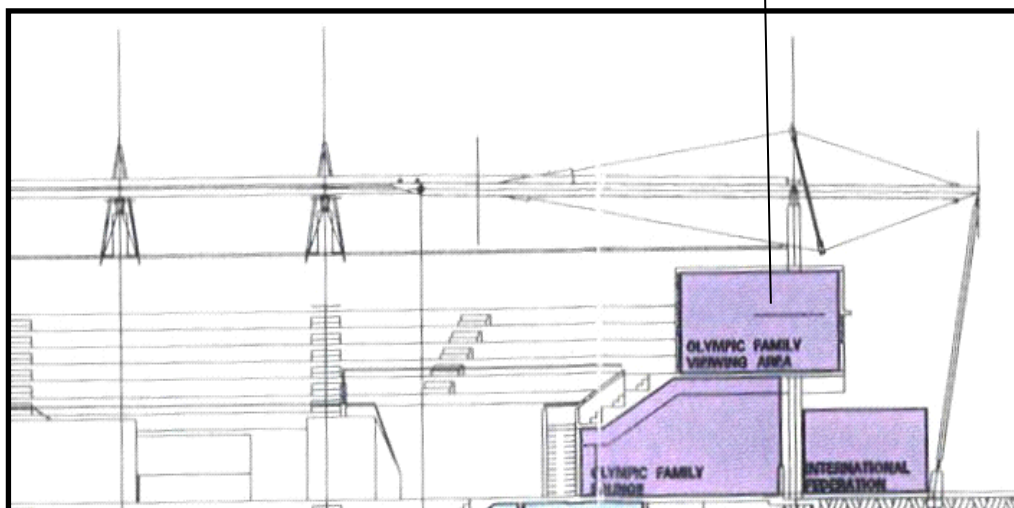
8.4 MEETING and WORKROOMS within the Press Box Structure:

- 8.4.1 The Technical Delegates workroom does not need to overlook the field of play, but should be within the structure of the Press Box, but not within the actual Press Box.
- 8.4.2 This room needs to be private and able to be secured and closed off by walls and doors and not by partitions.
- 8.4.3 This workroom needs to handle up to 10 people comfortably, with computer capabilities, phone and closed circuit TV.
- 8.4.4 WBSC OFFICES - Both the WBSC Softball Chairman and the WBSC Executive Director need to have an office within the Press Box structure. These should each be approximately 12 feet x 12 feet (3.65m) and have closed circuit TV, telephone and computer capabilities.
- 8.4.5 The WBSC Secretariat needs to have a workroom within the Press Box structure large enough to house at least six (6) working staff members complete with partition separations, fax, copy machine, computers and phones.



Press Box/Working Area

Olympic Family Viewing Area

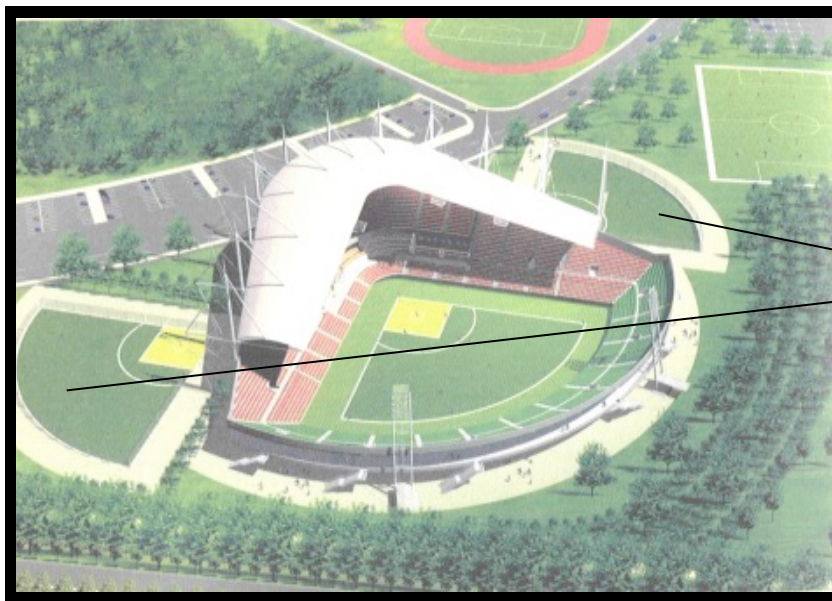


Olympic Family Lounge

International Federation Lounge

9. PRACTICE FIELDS:

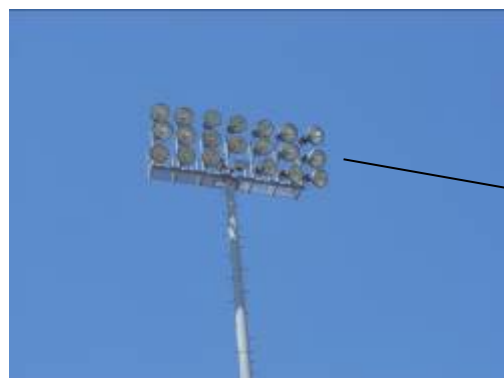
- 9.1 In addition to a main playing stadium, there should be at least two (2) secondary playing fields which the teams will use to practice and warm-up prior to competition.
- 9.2 It is preferred that the fields be adjacent or as close as possible to the main playing stadium.
- 9.3 The infield composition of the practice fields should be of the same dirt/clay/sand mixture as the main stadium infield.
- 9.4 If these two practice fields are side-by-side, then it is preferred they be 20-50 feet apart. (6.09-15.24 m).
- 9.5 These two practice fields do not need to have any additional seating, but they should each have electrical outlets and lights.



Practice Fields

10. LIGHTS:

- 10.1 There must be lights on the main stadium field in addition to both practice fields, if night games are played.
- 10.2 Each field must have a minimum of four (4) light towers to properly light the field of play, in addition to providing adequate lighting for TV games on the main stadium field.



Light tower

11. DRESSING ROOMS:

11.1 **ATHLETES DRESSING ROOMS:** There must be dressing rooms for both teams at the main stadium. Although some teams may choose to dress at their village facilities, dressing rooms for both teams must be available at the stadium facility.

11.1.1 Each teams' dressing room should be large enough to comfortably house 20 people, complete with chairs and lockers.

11.1.2 The WBSC prefers that the athletes enter the dugouts directly from their dressing rooms.

11.1.3 The dressing rooms need to have rest room facilities within them.



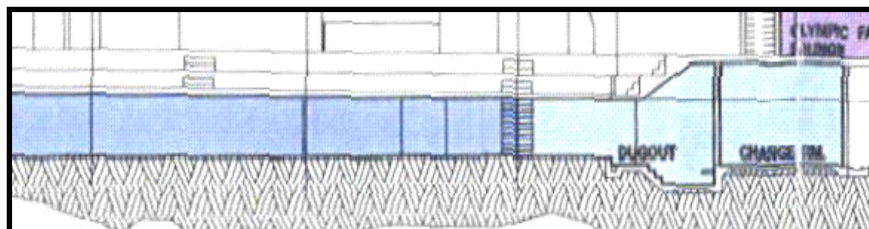
Athletes Dressing Room

11.2 **COACHES DRESSING ROOM:** Within each Athletes Dressing/Locker room there needs to be a Coaches Dressing Room large enough to hold three (3) coaches with shower and dressing facilities.

11.2.1 These Coaches Dressing Rooms will also serve as a private meeting room for the coaching staffs.

11.3 **UMPIRES DRESSING ROOM:** The umpires also will need a dressing room that is separate from those of the teams, with a separate entry.

11.3.1 The Umpire-In-Chief and Assistant should have an indoor area on the ground level (playing field level) with field access that is large enough to hold six (6) people.



12. TRAINING ROOM (PHYSIO ROOM):

12.1 There needs to be one (1) Training Room per team large enough to hold all the modalities and tables necessary for working on and treating injured players. These rooms must have water and electricity in addition to phones.



Training/Physio Room

13. DUGOUTS:

- 13.1 There must be two (2) dugouts on each field.
- 13.2 One on each side of the infield; one located between first base and home plate and the other between home plate and third base.
- 13.3 The dugouts must have roofs and sides with an enclosed back.
- 13.4 They should be below ground level to ensure maximum spectator viewing and TV visibility.
- 13.5 Both dugouts must be located in the out-of-play area and have a protective fence along the front 3 feet (1m) in height. The minimum enclosed space within the dugout should be 30 feet (9 m) by 4 feet (1.2 m) with an entrance to the playing field at each end and an entrance to the locker room in the back.

14. SCOREBOARDS:

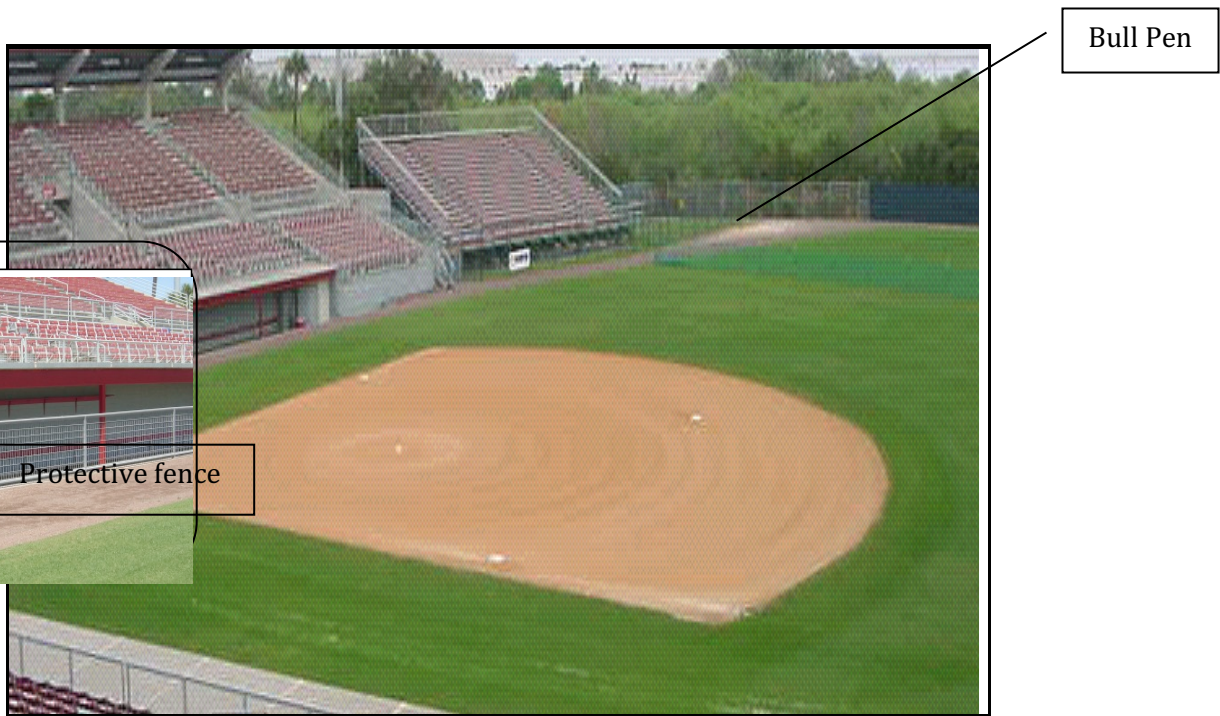
- 14.1 There must be an electronic scoreboard together with a reader board and Video Board located in either left or right field behind the outfield fence and not blocking any spectator views.
- 14.2 The scoreboard must not be placed in direct centerfield to prevent distractions to the batters.
- 14.3 The main scoreboard in the outfield will exhibit video images of the game as well as statistics and updates on the reader board.
- 14.4 The main outfield scoreboard must display each inning, the current batter, the runs, hits and errors per team, the number of outs, strikes, and balls.
- 14.5 An additional, a smaller scoreboard must be located on the third base side of the field near home plate for the outfield spectators.



Scoreboard

15. BULLPENS:

- 15.1 There needs to be two (2) bullpens on the main stadium field - one on each side of the field.
- 15.2 These bullpens are for pitching warm-up areas and should have two (2) pitching rubbers and home plates (43 feet or 13.1 m) in each bullpen.
- 15.3 These pitching rubbers need to be at least 15 feet apart (4.57m) so that two (2) pitchers can warm up simultaneously.



16. STORAGE FACILITY AT MAIN STADIUM:

- 16.1 It's crucial that there be an on-site storage facility at least 40 feet x 70 feet (12.19m x 21.33m).
- 16.2 This facility will house all field maintenance equipment like lawnmowers, tractors, field maintenance items and all infield surface materials.

17. FENCES:

- 17.1 VENUE PERIMETER FENCE: There shall be a permanent or temporary fence 6 feet (2.0m) high running completely around the softball stadium to enclose the venue.
 - 17.1.1 This fence can be either chain-link, wood or any other type of material and should be covered to prevent visibility from outside the venue into the field of play.
- 17.2 BACKSTOP: There shall be a standard type backstop that is at least 25 feet (7.62m) and not more than 30 feet (9.14m) from home plate.
 - 17.2.1 This backstop needs to be made out of netting and not out of chain-link fencing. Netting is much easier for spectators and TV cameras to see through.

17.3 SIDE FENCES: There shall be boundary fences from the backstop running down each sideline linking the backstop with the outfield fence.

17.3.1 The portions of the sideline fences that are along the top of the dugouts and running along the base of the backstop in front of any spectator seating must also be made out of netting. The sideline fences that go beyond first and third base and go out to the outfield fence can be made out of metal chicken wire.

17.3.2 The recommended height for these sideline fences is 4-6 feet (1.2m - 2m).

17.3.3 The portion of the sideline fence that is on the field of play must have a dirt-warning track that is 12-15 feet (3.65m - 4.57 m).

17.4 OUTFIELD FENCE: The outfield fence can be either permanent or temporary and should be 4 feet to 6 feet high (1.2m- 2m).

17.4.1 There must also be a 10 - 12 foot (3.05 - 3.65m) dirt-warning track in front of the entire outfield fence.

17.4.2 If temporary, the outfield fence must be secured so that it will not blow down in the event of wind.





Backstop

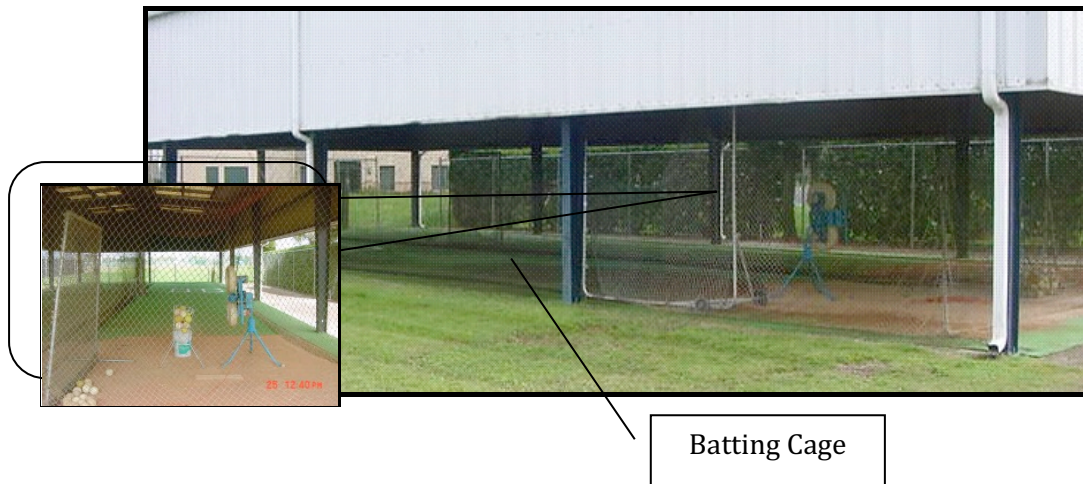
Outfield fence

18. BATTING CAGES:

- 18.1 There must be a minimum of two (2) batting cages on the main stadium field complete with electricity and lighting.
- 18.2 The WBSC prefers that these batting cages have a covered top.



Batting Cage



19. TARP:

- 19.1 The main stadium field needs a tarp to cover the infield surface in the event of rain.
- 19.2 This tarp needs to be a regulation softball infield size tarp and not a baseball infield size tarp. Since a baseball infield is larger than that of a softball field, the larger baseball tarp will hang out beyond the infield surface onto the outfield grass and kill the grass.
- 19.3 When the tarp is not in use it is to be rolled up and stored on a tarp tube, out of the field of play.



20. FOUL POLES:

- 20.1 On each field there needs to be two (2) foul poles; one down the first base line against the outfield fence and on the out-of-play side, and one down the third base line on the outfield fence on the out-of-play side.
- 20.2 Each foul pole needs to be at least 15 feet or (4.57m) high.
- 20.3 The foul poles need to be yellow in color so they stand apart from the outfield fence.

21. BASES:

- 21.1 Second and Third base must be 15 inches (38.1cm) x 15 inches (38.1 cm), and a maximum height of 5 inches (12.7 cm).
- 21.2 These bases are white.
- 21.3 First base must be a double-base safety base for safety purposes, measuring 15 inches (38.1 cm) x 30 inches (76.2cm).
- 21.4 Half of the double base is white and the other half is orange. The white base is in fair territory, while the orange base is in foul territory.
- 21.5 The first base foul line runs down the middle of the safety base (as shown).





WBSC

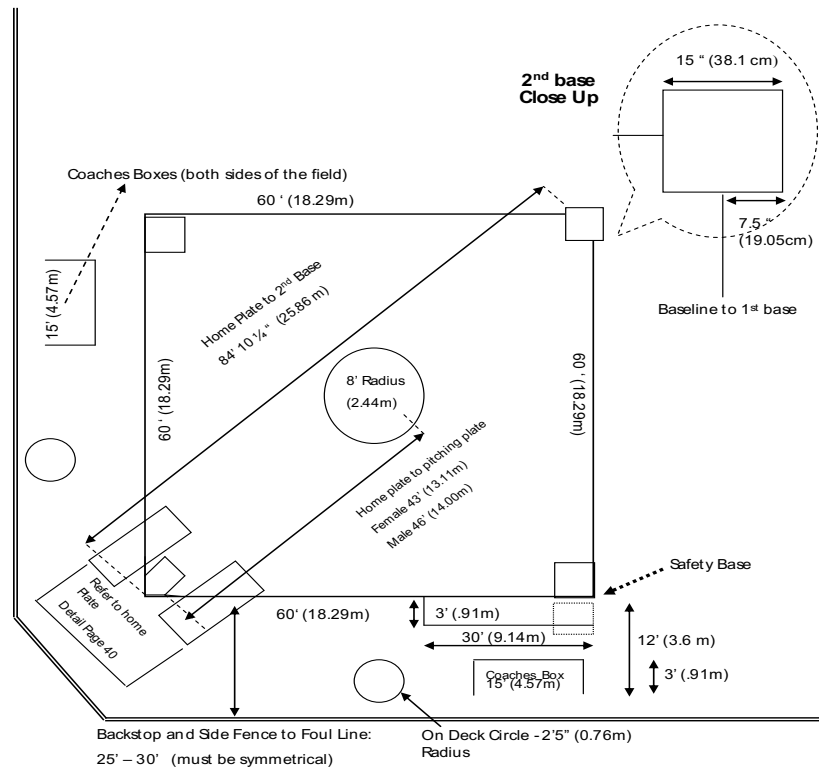
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SECTION 2

Diagrams

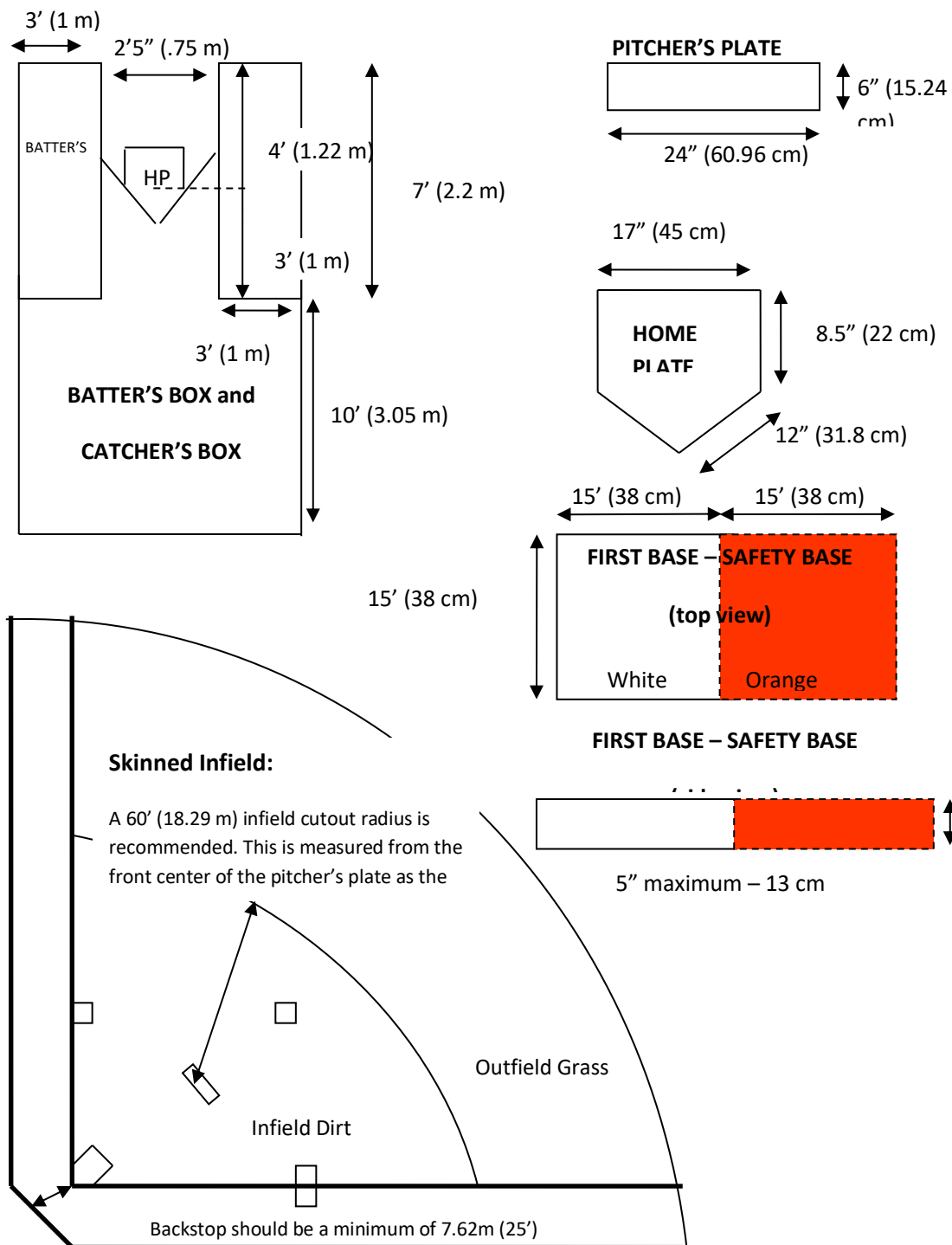
OFFICIAL DIMENSIONS FOR SOFTBALL DIAMONDS



DISTANCE TABLE (ADULT)

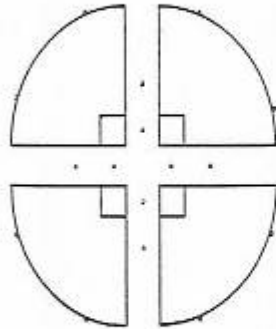
Game	Division	Bases	Pitching	Fences
Fast Pitch	Female	60' (18.29m)	43' (13.1m)	220 (67.1m)
	Male	60' (18.29m)	46' (14.0m)	250 (76.2m)

WBSC OFFICIAL SOFTBALL FIELD DIMENSIONS

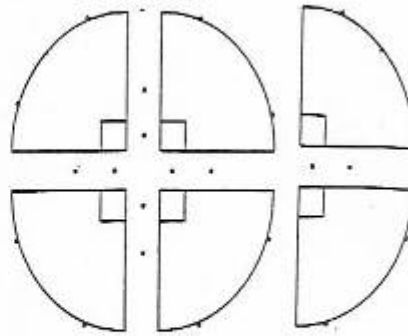


SAMPLE PRACTICE FIELD VENUES

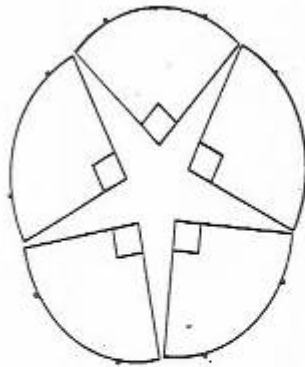
A. FOURPLEX (Four Fields)
A "Wagon Wheels"
Average Acres: 18-20



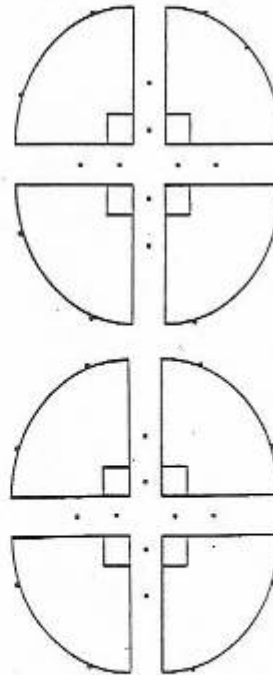
C. SIMPLEX (Six Fields)
Average Acres: 28-30



B. FIVEPLEX (Five Fields)
"Wagon Wheel"
Average Acres: 23-25



D. EIGHTPLEX (Eight Fields)
Average Acres: 36-40





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SECTION 3

GENERAL SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

GENERAL SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Both the frequency and severity of insurance claims incurred participating teams and officials have been increasing. This increase is especially noticeable in the area of liability claims. Injuries and lawsuits now seem to be an integral part of amateur sports around the world. It is important that officials do everything in their power to reduce injuries and minimize the exposure to lawsuits, since these impede and interfere with the ability to conduct softball operations.

An awareness of the types of injuries and the nature of lawsuits that occur in softball is important. Being aware of the more common problems will better enable officials to avoid and prevent these situations from occurring in the future.

Here are some of the steps that officials can take to help put downward pressure on insurance and litigation costs:

1. **AWARENESS:** Officials should familiarize themselves with the activities and situations that commonly result in injuries and lawsuits. Use your common sense to avoid and minimize the more common and more severe kinds of injuries. Create an awareness of these statistics among your deputy and district commissioners, tournament officials, umpires, managers, coaches and players.
2. **INSPECTION OF FIELDS:** Be sure you are familiar with and that you or your designated representative have personally inspected all fields being used in your area. Review the enclosed field owner checklist. Make sure that these routine safety measures are followed on fields in your area. If field owners do not cooperate, use other fields that are safe. Overseeing and maintaining the condition of fields is the first step in improving the safety of the game of softball. Umpires can help with these inspections and can be of invaluable assistance in maintaining safe, hazard-free field conditions.
3. **SAFETY AND ACCIDENT PREVENTION:** Emphasize proper instruction in the fundamentals of the game of softball, especially for Junior Olympic players. Since sliding injuries are among the most frequent and serious, review the steps that can be taken in your area to minimize sliding injuries. Review the kinds of protective equipment that are required, and make sure that these requirements are enforced.
4. **WAIVER AND RELEASE FORMS:** It is good business practice to utilize waiver forms for all players in your area for tournament games. This will protect you, the organization, other officials and field owners against unwarranted lawsuits, particularly for those injuries that are expected to occur and are a part of the game of softball. Review the suggested form that is enclosed in this report with your attorney and then require that it be used by all teams in your area.
5. **INSURANCE:** Since you cannot prevent all softball injuries from occurring and cannot stop lawsuits, frivolous or not, from being filed against you, insurance protection is highly recommended for all tournaments.
6. **WRITTEN REPORTS AND DOCUMENTATION:** It is important to have written incident reports on file regarding all injuries. Written reports include completed routine and special field inspection checklists and incident reports for known injuries. Injury reports are especially helpful if prepared immediately after the injury has occurred. These reports should include time and date, exact location, nature of injury, description of the events leading up to the injury, description of emergency or first aid care, condition of the field, weather report at the

time of injury, names of the teams involved, names of umpires involved, and a list of witnesses. In the event of a serious injury, it is important to ask for written statements from witnesses or from individuals actually involved in the incident. Statements from witnesses tend to be more accurate if taken immediately. Both tournament officials and field owners should retain copies of such reports.

GENERAL MAINTENANCE AND CONDITION OF THE FIELD MINIMUM SAFETY STANDARDS

1. The dimensions of the field should conform with the specifications in the WBSC Official Rules of Softball set forth by the WBSC.
2. The entire playing area should be free of any holes, depressions, raised sprinkler heads and other hazards.
3. Clear infield of stones, pieces of glass, foreign objects and debris.
4. Position backstop to be sure it is the proper distance from home plate. Ensure that screening is secure with no sharp protruding edges.
5. Be sure all fences are in good repair and free of protruding hazards or sharp edges.
6. Inspect stands/bleachers for structural soundness and safety.
7. Be sure warning tracks are properly situated and meet WBSC recommendations.
8. Make sure the spectator areas are a safe distance from the field of play and are properly screened. Pay special attention to screening for spectator areas behind first base and third base, to protect against foul balls and overthrows.
9. Light stanchions, fence posts and trees that are near the field of play should be properly cushioned or protected and always be declared as "out of play" areas. All "out of play" areas should, ideally, be cushioned or fenced off or, at the minimum, marked by paint or chalk lines.
10. Dugout areas should be properly positioned, fenced and set back from the field of play.
11. Pay careful attention to the installation and maintenance of home plate and the pitcher's rubber. Be careful of protruding edges or corners that are raised above ground level.
12. If the field is used for other sports, inspect for fixtures or equipment that may have been left, such as base pegs.
13. Require that officiating be done exclusively by properly certified WBSC Softball umpires.

LIGHTNING SAFETY OUTDOORS

Each year, hundreds children and adults are struck by lightning while working outside, at sports events, on the beach, mountain climbing, mowing the lawn or during other outdoor activities. Finishing the game, getting a tan, or completing a work shift aren't worth death or crippling injury.

- **All thunderstorms produce lightning and are dangerous.**
Lightning kills more people each year than tornadoes.
- **Lightning often strikes as far as 10 miles away from any rainfall.**
Many deaths from lightning occur ahead of the storm because people try and wait to the last minute before seeking shelter.
- **You are in danger from lightning if you can hear thunder.**
If you can hear thunder, lightning is close enough that it could strike your location at any moment.
- **Look for dark cloud bases and increasing wind.**
Every flash of lightning is dangerous, even the first. Head to safety before that first flash. If you hear thunder, head to safety!
- **Blue Skies and Lightning.**
Lightning can travel sideways for up to 10 miles. Even when the sky looks blue and clear, be cautious. If you hear thunder, take cover. At least 10% of lightning occurs without visible clouds overhead in the sky.

The Single Most Dangerous Place

Outdoors is the most dangerous place to be during a lightning storm. When lightning is seen or thunder is heard, or when dark clouds are observed, quickly move indoors or into a hard-topped vehicle and remain there until well after the lightning storm ends. Listen to forecasts and warnings through your local TV and radio stations. If lightning is forecast, plan an alternate activity or know where you can take cover quickly.

Safety Rules

1. **POSTPONE ACTIVITIES PROMPTLY. DON'T WAIT FOR RAIN.**
Many people take shelter from the rain, but most people struck by lightning are not in the rain! Go quickly inside a completely enclosed building, not a carport, open garage or covered patio. If no enclosed building is convenient, get inside a hard-topped all-metal vehicle. A cave is a good option outside but move as far as possible from the cave entrance.
2. **BE THE LOWEST POINT. LIGHTNING HITS THE TALLEST OBJECT.**
In the mountains if you are above tree line, you ARE the highest object around. Quickly get below tree line and get into a grove of small trees. Don't be the second tallest object during a lightning storm! Crouch down if you are in an exposed area.
3. **KEEP AN EYE ON THE SKY.**
Look for darkening skies, flashes of lightning, or increasing wind, which may be signs of an approaching thunderstorm.

4. **LISTEN FOR THE SOUND OF THUNDER.**
If you can hear thunder, go to a safe shelter immediately.
5. **IF YOU SEE OR HEAR A THUNDERSTORM COMING, IMMEDIATELY SUSPEND YOUR GAME OR PRACTICE AND INSTRUCT EVERYONE TO GO INSIDE A STURDY BUILDING OR CAR.**
Sturdy buildings are the safest place to be. Avoid sheds, picnic shelters, baseball dugouts, and bleachers. If no sturdy building is nearby, a hard-top vehicle with windows closed will offer some protection. The steel frame of the vehicle provides some protection if you are not touching metal.
6. **AVOID METAL.**
Drop metal backpacks, stay away from clothes lines, fences, exposed sheds and electrically conductive elevated objects. Don't hold on to metal items such as softball bats. Large metal objects can conduct lightning. Small metal objects can cause burns.
7. **MOVE AWAY FROM A GROUP OF PEOPLE.**
Stay several yards away from other people. Don't share a bleacher bench or huddle in a group.

What to do if someone is struck by lightning.

1. **CALL FOR HELP**
Call your local ambulance service. Get medical attention as quickly as possible.
2. **GIVE FIRST AID**
If the victim has stopped breathing, begin rescue breathing. If the heart has stopped beating, a trained person should give CPR. If the person has a pulse and is breathing, address any other injuries.
3. **CHECK FOR BURNS IN TWO PLACES**
The injured person has received an electric shock and may be burned. Being struck by lightning can also cause nervous system damage, broken bones, and loss of hearing or eyesight. People struck by lightning carry no electrical charge that can shock other people. You can examine them without risk.

SOFTBALL FIELD SAFETY CHECKLIST

Field Name _____ Date _____

Location _____ Inspector _____

Condition: **S**=Safe, **NA**=Needs Attention, **D**=Dangerous, Unsafe

<u>Infield</u>	Home	1st	2nd	3rd
1. Low/High Spots	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Base Anchors too high/angled	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Homeplate or base damaged	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Plate or base set too high/low	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Pitching rubber damaged	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Rubber not anchored properly	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Stones, glass, debris	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Other	_____	_____	_____	_____

<u>Outfield</u>	Home	LF	CF	RF
1. Holes in field, low/high spots	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Sprinkler heads protruding	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Other	_____	_____	_____	_____

Player Benches**Location**

- | | | |
|--|-------|-------|
| 1. Exposed or broken concrete footings | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Loose/missing nuts or bolts | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Splintered or rotted wood | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Damaged planks or posts | _____ | _____ |
| 5. Other | _____ | _____ |

Bleachers/Stand**Location**

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| 1. Loose/missing nuts or bolts | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Splintered or rotted wood | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Damaged planks or supporting posts | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Damaged bleacher frame | _____ | _____ |
| 5. Protective fencing/screening | _____ | _____ |
| 6. Other | | |