

2021

WHEELCHAIR SOFTBALL AUSTRALIA RULE BOOK



Version 1.0

1/1/2021

Wheelchair Softball Australia Rules and Regulations

The rules and regulations that have been used for Wheelchair Softball Australia (WSA) are rules set by the National Wheelchair Softball Association (NSWA). Their rulebook will be used and has set guidelines listed below. These are in addition to Softball Australia and Softball Victoria rules and regulations .

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1.0 Wheelchair Softball Australia Code of Conduct

- 1.1 All players, officials, scorers, umpires and spectators are bound to and agree to follow Softball Australia Code of Conduct
- 1.2 All players, officials, scorers, umpires and spectators are bound to and agree to follow the rules of the Wheelchair Softball Australia competition
- 1.3 It is the responsibility of all players, officials, scorers, umpires and spectators to know and understand the Wheelchair Softball Rules and Regulations and the Softball Australia Code of Conduct
- 1.4 By registering to be a part of Wheelchair Softball Australia, all players, officials, scorers, umpires and spectators accept these terms mentioned in 1.1, 1.2 & 1.3

2.0 Field Dimensions

2.1 The playing field will be the netball courts located at Casey Softball, Sweeney Reserve, Melzak Way, Berwick

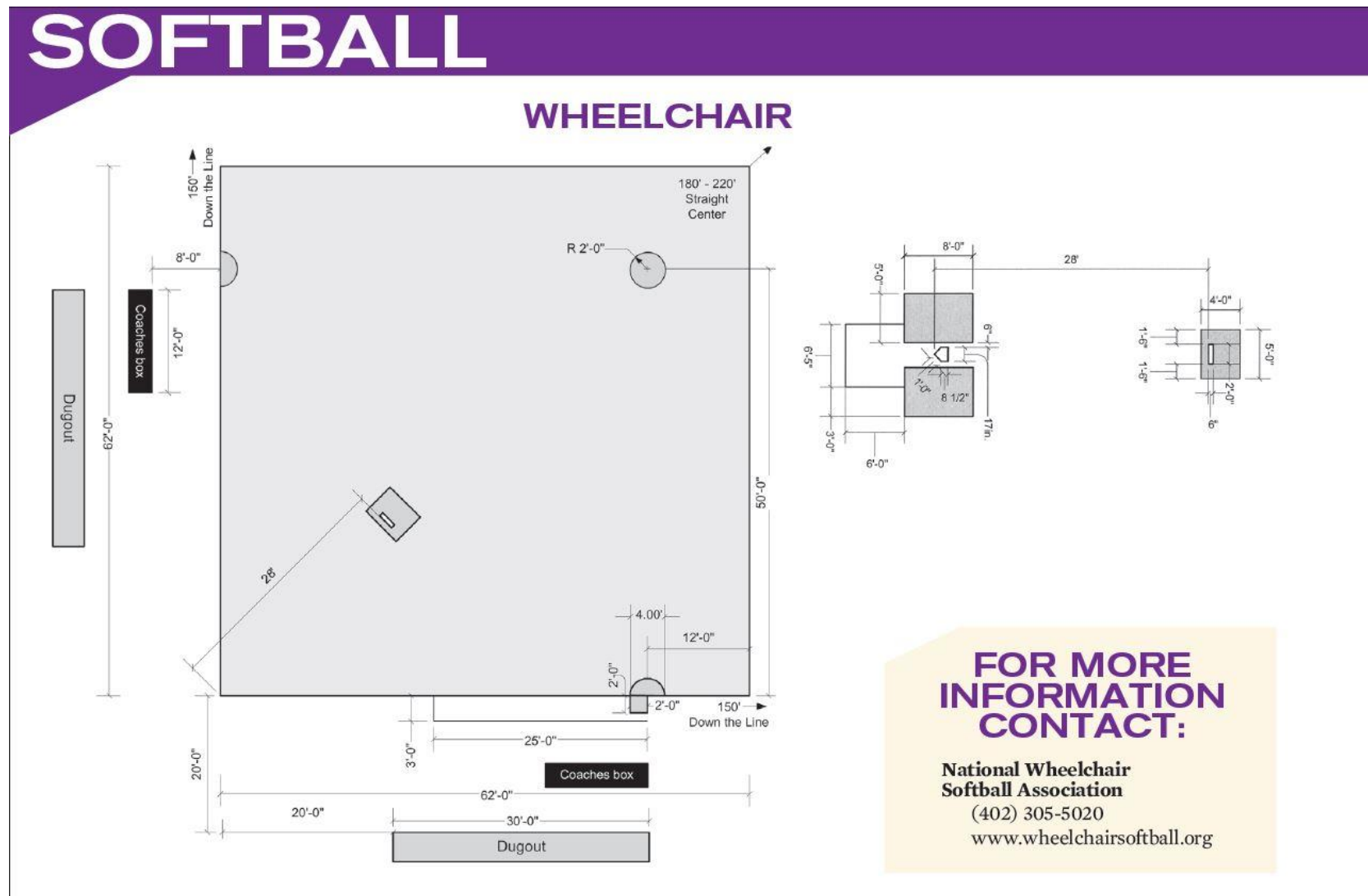
2.2 The dimensions are:

- Straight Centre- 167 feet*
- Left Foul Line- 124 feet*
- Right Foul Line- 112 feet*

*Sweeney Reserve netball courts visualization (Guide only. May not be to scale)



*Minimum requirements by NWSA is: 150 feet on the left and right foul lines and 180-220 feet to straight center



2.3 The official diamond shall have 50 feet between all bases and 70 feet, 8.5 inches from home plate to 2nd base

- 2.4 The pitching stripe extending perpendicularly 1 foot on either side of the diagonal from home to 2nd base shall be located 28 feet from home base
- 2.5 At 2nd base, the base is a 4 feet diameter circle. 1st and 3rd base, in fair territory, the bases are a 4 feet diameter semicircle. The bases shall be painted white
- 2.6 At 1st base only, the base is extended into foul territory. The extension shall be 24 inches deep and 24 inches wide beginning at the 50 feet mark and shall be orange. This extension may be used by the base runner only as an extended tag area for 1st base.
- 2.7 A restraining line shall be marked 12 feet from the bases and parallel to the baselines, which run from 1st base to 2nd base, and from 2nd to 3rd base
- 2.8 A semicircle restraining line shall be marked in the outfield 70 feet from home plate and extend to each foul line

3.0 Players and Teams

- 3.1 Wheelchair Softball Australia (WSA) tournament teams will consist of a minimum of 8 players and a maximum of 12 players.
A player must be aged 13+ at the time of the tournament to be eligible to play. Proof of age may be required
- 3.2 A maximum of 9 players only are allowed to field or bat with extra players named on the bench
- 3.3 Rules surrounding classification (see 4.0) will not be enforced during tournament competition at this stage. They will however apply to any teams chosen for representative teams (Regional Teams, State Teams and Team Australia)
- 3.4 The purpose of the WSA is to promote and grow wheelchair softball as a disability sport in Australia. All efforts will be made to be inclusive and encourage those with physical disabilities to get involved

4.0 Classification Criteria

- 4.1 Wheelchair Softball Australia (WSA), at this stage has no classification rules or player eligibility in place for tournaments. This is largely due to wheelchair softball being a very new disability sport in Australia. With the emphasis being on player participation and growth of the sport, WSA feel that classification is not needed at this time.
- 4.2 However, all state and national selected representative team players will be subject to being classified based on the same criteria used by Paralympics Australia for classification of wheelchair basketball and wheelchair rugby. This is what is used by the National Wheelchair Softball Association (NWSA) in all states, national and international wheelchair softball competitions and tournaments.
- 4.3 The WSA invites qualified men, women, and juniors to compete in the adult division of wheelchair softball. All competitors, regardless of gender or age, must receive a functional classification point assignment and classification certification to compete in representative teams
 - 4.3.1 There is no women's only representative team at this time due to player availability.
 - 4.3.2 To be eligible for play in the representative teams, a player shall have:
 - A permanent physical disability which consistently reduces the function of the lower limbs to a degree where they cannot run, pivot or jump at speed and with the control safety, stability, and endurance required to play running softball or basketball as an able-bodied player
 - A disability that must be of a nature that it can be objectively verified by acknowledged medical and/or paramedical investigations such as measurement, X-ray, CT, MRI, etc.
 - Including, but not limited to hip or knee joint replacements, and have provided confirmation of the relevant surgery from their attending physician or surgeon, and supporting X-rays/scans
 - In the instance of amputation, at minimum total removal of the first ray of one foot
 - In the instance of a leg length discrepancy, a minimum of a 6 cm difference in leg length as measured from the greater trochanter to the ground, as is verified by standing X-ray or confirmed by a measurement taken by independent Classifier, except that the 6 cm minimum shall not apply to junior players
 - Findings such as soft tissue contracture, edema or disuse atrophy, or symptoms such as pain or numbness without other objective findings shall not be considered a permanent lower extremity disability. Degrees of pain and/or numbness are not considered measurable and permanent disabilities within the meaning of Article 1, Section 1 of the NWSA Policies & Procedures.
 - 4.3.3 To be eligible to participate in any representative competitions, a player who does not have a lower extremity impairment, which can be established by observation alone, will need to apply for consideration of their eligibility to the NWSA under section 1.2 of these policies and procedures. Completed applications should be forwarded to Head Classifier for Review by the Classification Committee for determination.
 - 4.3.4 An otherwise able-bodied player with a temporary disability is not considered eligible.
 - 4.3.5 A player deemed eligible to play by an Independent classifier, NWSA Head Classifier, Classification Panel, or the Classification Committee shall be eligible to participate in representative wheelchair softball games.

The following is a brief description of how the WSA are now classifying player eligibility. Bear in mind this is for representative teams only.

- Twenty-eight (28) points will be the new total player point value maximum on the field for any representative wheelchair softball games.
- Players must use their existing Wheelchair Basketball or Wheelchair Rugby certified classifications in wheelchair softball if they have them. Provided they have been classified under the current criteria.
- Previously unclassified or new wheelchair softball players will be initially classified by a certified local classifier, which will then be verified by opposing team classifiers, and certified at the World Series or International tournament by NWSA classification panel.
- Player's wishing to play as a quad player must have an existing valid classification, get classified by a local classifier before being selected, or get classed at the Wheelchair Softball World Series.

More information will be available in the Classification Policy and Procedure manual that will be published by the NWSA

4.4 Players will be allocated points based on registration information and a trial of wheelchair use. If a player's classification falls under 2 of the above criteria, they can be determined to be at 1.5, 2.5, 3.5 or 4.5

4.5 An independent classification representative may be called upon to classify every player should it be deemed a necessity

4.6 As there is no separate tournament for men and women, women shall play at one classification less than their official classification

4.4 A team's total points on the field must not exceed 28 points at any stage of the game

4.4.1 The captain/manager, will be responsible for writing a roman numeral next to each player listed on the team's roster in the official score book before each game to indicate a player's classification score

4.4.2 The official scorer shall be responsible for seeing that players on the field for either team at any given time does not exceed the above balance rule. This will only have to be checked at the beginning of the game and at time of substitutions

5.0 Rules of Play

5.1 All players must be in manual wheelchairs with foot platforms

5.2 Games will be 90 minutes in duration or a maximum of 7 innings. If a team is leading by 12 runs or more after 4 completed innings or 10 runs or more after 5 completed innings, the game will end. If the home team achieves this in their at bat innings, the game ends

5.3 The team written as first in the fixture will be deemed the home team and will bat second (bottom of innings)

5.4 A team must have a minimum of 8 players to start the game. If they don't, it could result in a forfeit.

- 5.5 A team can only field and bat a maximum of 9 players at any one time
- 5.6 A batting innings ends when a team has 3 outs or a maximum of 9 runs is scored
- 5.7 Player substitutions can be done when the ball is dead or time has been called (see 6.0 regarding substitutions)
- 5.8 Base runners can be tagged out between bases by a fielder. A tag is when the fielder has the ball and touches the runner with it on any part of their body or wheelchair above the knees of the baserunner
 - 5.8.1 A tag on the runner or chair is required to record an out on a non-force play
 - 5.8.2 A touch of the base is all that is required to record an out on a force play
- 5.9 A run is only scored when a baserunner reaches home plate safely as per established softball rules
- 5.10 The “Chop Hit” is allowed in Wheelchair Softball
 - Chopped Hit Ball.** A chopped hit ball is a hit ball which is struck with a downward motion. A chop hit is legal for all players
- 5.11 The defensive baseman and the base runner must touch the circle with one or more wheels in order to tag the base. These wheels include the 2 front caster wheels and the two rear wheels. Anti-tip casters (rear caster wheels) are not considered as a wheel
- 5.12 The baserunner must be seated in their wheelchair and make contact with the base with either one or more wheels, or may tag the base with their hand
- 5.13 If a baserunner is knocked out of his/her chair, they may proceed to the previous or next base by any means other than hopping, walking, or running, and make contact with the base with any part of their body
- 5.14 A baserunner may not place a lower extremity (from the waist down) on the ground or someone else’s chair to stop their chair. If they do, the play is dead, the runner is out, and all base runners return to the last base achieved
- 5.15 No fielder may advance toward or play the ball with any lower extremity in contact with the ground. A player may return to their chair and then advance toward the ball. The infraction will be treated as a delayed dead ball
- 5.16 The fielder has the right to field/throw/catch the ball and batters/runners cannot interfere with that. Runners or batters that obstruct/interfere will be called out
- 5.17 Fielders without the ball cannot obstruct base runners. The runner will be awarded the base they are advancing to if obstruction/interference is called
- 5.18 The hitter cannot have a lower extremity in contact with the ground when hitting. If they do, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and all base runners return to the last base achieved before the illegal at-bat
- 5.19 All 4 infielders must have at least one wheel on the line or on the infield area side of the restraining line until the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand. If any infielder fails to observe the restraining line rule, the umpire will immediately award 1st base to the batter. The infraction shall be treated as a walk

- 5.20 All outfielders must remain behind the outfield restraining line until the pitcher releases the ball during a pitch
- 5.21 Quadriplegics can bunt, but must inform the umpire before first at bat of quad status during any given game. No other batter can bunt. A bunt attempt will be called a strike
- 5.22 The player classified as a quad may wear a glove on either or both hands regardless of position (including pitcher). Any player may wear a fielding glove at any fielding position if they choose to. Fielding gloves are not mandatory.
- 5.23 The player classified as a quad may alter their bat to improve the grip. The altered bat must be approved by the head umpire for safety concerns (no sharp or pointed edges, etc.)
- 5.24 Overthrow
 - 5.24.1 If an overthrown ball leaves the field of play or becomes blocked, baserunners will be awarded two bases, defined by their position at the time of the throw
 - 5.24.2 If an overthrown ball still stays in the field of play, baserunners can advance as many as they want at their own risk
- 5.25 Blocked ball (either batted or pitched)
 - 5.25.1 Baserunners will be awarded one base, defined by their position at the time of the ball becoming blocked
- 5.26 All baserunners may advance at any time after the pitcher releases the ball at their own risk
- 5.27 If a fly ball is taken either in fair or foul territory, the baserunner must return to their original base before the catch was taken
 - 5.27.1 A baserunner can be thrown out if they don't reach the base in time
 - 5.27.2 A baserunner can advance, after the catch is taken, provided they have returned to their original base. They can be thrown out if they don't reach the next base in time

6.0 Substitutions

- 6.1 Player substitutions can be done when the ball is dead or time has been called
 - 6.1.1 The substitute or coach shall report to the plate umpire at the time of the change by stating name and number of the player entering the game for the first time or the player re-entering
 - 6.1.2 The plate umpire shall record all substitutions on the lineup card and then announce immediately any change(s) to the scorekeeper and the opposing team
 - 6.1.3 Substitutes shall be considered officially in the game when reported to the plate umpire.
 - 6.1.4 If two or more substitutes of the defensive team enter the game simultaneously, the coach or a representative shall immediately designate to the plate umpire the position of each in the team's batting order
- 6.2 In regards to point classification (if used), no checking of the teams total points value will be necessary for the following:
 - 1 substitutes for any player

- 2 substitutes for a 2, 2.5, 3, 3.5, 4, 4.5 or 5
- 2.5 substitutes for a 2.5, 3, 3.5, 4, 4.5 or 5
- 3 substitutes for a 3, 3.5, 4, 4.5 or 5
- 3.5 substitutes for a 3.5, 4, 4.5 or 5
- 4 substitutes for a 4.5 or 5
- 4.5 substitutes for a 4.5 or 5
- 5 substitutes a 5

6.3 It will only be necessary to check the total points value for the following:

- 5 substitutes for a 4.5, 4, 3.5, 3, 2.5, 2 or 1
- 4.5 substitutes for a 4, 3.5, 3, 2.5, 2, 1.5 or 1
- 4 substitutes for a 3.5, 3, 2.5, 2, 1.5 or 1
- 3.5 substitutes for a 2.5, 2, 1.5 or 1
- 3 substitutes for a 2.5, 2, 1.5 or 1
- 2.5 substitutes for a 2, 1.5 or 1
- 2 substitutes for a 1.5 or 1
- 1.5 substitutes for a 1

7.0 Pitching

- 7.1 The softball used in Wheelchair Softball Australia competition is a 16" Softball, known as F16 and supplied by DeBeer. This is to be used for all batters, regardless of physical disability
- 7.2 The pitching distance is 28 feet and slow-pitch is used in Casey Wheelchair Softball. The ball must be pitched underarm, it must be tossed in the air at a minimum height of 6 feet and a maximum height of 10 feet. If the pitch doesn't achieve the minimum height, it will be an illegal pitch and called a ball. Height will be determined by the plate umpire and/or base umpire
- 7.3 A pitcher can pitch more than 1 innings. However, their maximum pitch count must not exceed 100 pitches. Scorers will need to record each pitch a pitcher throws
- 7.4 A pitcher can be substituted out of the game, or can be replaced on the mound and moved to a fielding position. The pitcher can return to pitch again or if substituted out of the game, they can return to the game at any stage, provided it is in the same batting position as before.
- 7.5 For a pitch to be called a strike:

- 7.5.1 For each legally pitched ball passing through the strike zone before touching the ground and the batter does not swing
- 7.5.2 The batter swings at any pitch and misses, including a pitch that fails to meet minimum height requirements
- 7.5.3 The pitch hits the home plate or ground but is swung at by the batter before it hits the home plate or ground
- 7.5.4 The batter hits the ball and it goes in to foul territory
- 7.5.5 A foul ball can be caught by any player and if it is, the batter will be out. A catcher may catch a foul tip ball. If there is 2 strikes on the batter, they will be called out

7.6 For a pitch to be classified as a ball:

- 7.6.1 A legally pitched ball that does not enter the strike zone, touches the ground before reaching home plate, or touches home plate, and the batter does not swing
- 7.6.2 Any pitched ball that hits the ground or plate cannot be legally swung at by the batter. If the batter swings at a pitch after the ball hits the ground or plate, it is a ball
- 7.6.3 A pitch that hits the batter or their wheelchair, provided the wheelchair or players feet are not in the strike area.

Strike Zone. The strike zone is the space over any part of home plate which is between the batter's highest shoulder and the knees when the batter assumes a natural batting stance. Any part of the ball passing through the strike zone in flight shall be considered a strike.

The umpire shall determine the batter's strike zone according to the batter's usual stance when swinging at a pitch.

8.0 Registration and Fees

- 8.1 All players need to be registered with Softball Australia under the social competition registration. This is an additional nominal amount for all Wheelchair Softball Australia tournaments
- 8.2 The fee per team to play in tournaments will include amount to cover all players for Softball Australia fees and insurance. Wheelchair Softball requires additional fees to cover this
- 8.3 If a player is currently registered with any Softball affiliated association, the fees for such association do not include Wheelchair Softball Australia tournament fees
- 8.4 Registration and fees will cover all tournament payments, umpire payments and all equipment costs (bases, balls, may include softball bats, may include gloves) and wheelchair hire costs (if necessary)

9.0 Representative Teams

WSA players may have the opportunity to play in representative teams for Regional, State, National or International competition

9.1 All players wanting to play must have a physical disability in some way. This is an IWSF and NWSA rule and will be adhered to

9.2 All players will be classified according to a classification score as used by the IWSF and NWSA. The Classification Criteria is covered under section 4.0.

9.3 As of 2020, the current Classification used is based on classification set out by the International Wheelchair Basketball Federation (IWBF) and the Wheelchair Rugby classification system. This classification may differ from your current classification and all players will be required to be classified by an independent classification representative.

9.4 All teams chosen for representative competition must include a minimum of 2 players that are classified as a quadriplegic. Teams must play and field one quadriplegic player at all times. This is the rule of the NWSA and it will be enforced.

9.5 Players/Managers/Coaches/Support Staff in representative teams will be responsible for all payments and costs associated with travel, accommodation meals etc., for any tournaments and competitions