

## History of Mush Ball

16-inch softball (sometimes called mushball,<sup>[1]</sup> cabbageball<sup>[2][3]</sup> or blooperball) is a variant of softball, but using a bigger, squishier ball with no gloves or mitts on the fielders. Although it most closely resembles the original game as developed in the 19th century by George Hancock, today it remains popular almost exclusively in Chicago but is also popular in Portland, Oregon, where Mushball has had leagues since the 1960s. The first set of rules were published in 1937 by the Amateur Softball Association, in the same manual as the rules for fastpitch softball

16 inch softball game play is mostly consistent with standard softball game play. 16 inch softball, compared to standard or 12 inch softball, is played with a ball 16" in circumference. Leagues may form co-ed teams, all-male or all-female teams. Additionally, teams may choose competitive or recreational leagues. There may be rule variations associated with the specific field or league of play. When playing in a co-ed league, there may be other rules that apply related to the male to female ratio of team members and batting order.<sup>[6][7]</sup> The National Softball Association (NSA) also has a published set of rules governing 16 inch softball play.

The earliest known softball game of any kind was played in Chicago on Thanksgiving Day 1887. The first softball was a wrapped up boxing glove and the bat was a broom. Harvard and Yale students invented the game while waiting to hear the results of the annual Harvard-Yale football game. Until the turn of the 20th century, ball sizes ranged from 12 to 17 inches in circumference. The 16 inch softball was eventually adopted in Chicago because it didn't travel as far as the popular 12 or 14 inch balls. This allowed for play on smaller playgrounds or even indoors accommodating the Chicago landscape and climate. Another advantage of the 16 inch ball was that it allowed everyone to play barehanded. Gloves were a rare luxury as the Great Depression hit Chicago particularly hard.

After the first national championship held in 1933 at the Century of Progress World's Fair, the sport grew in popularity. A professional league was formed that lasted through the 1950s. Teams drew crowds of over 10,000 each night. Leagues continue today but not at the same level of popularity. There are co-ed recreational leagues, competitive leagues and even a league for Chicago Public School students.<sup>[9]</sup>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/16-inch\\_softball](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/16-inch_softball)

### **HITTING RULES:**

1. Stay 5 yards away from the batter on the first base line or it is an automatic out.
2. You only get two pitches!
3. If you foul on the last pitch, you're out.
4. The ball must pass the pitcher when batted or it is considered a strike.
5. Do not throw the bat!
6. Set up a batting order and do not deviate from it. Everyone must bat.
7. There are no bunts.

### **RUNNING:**

1. You may over run first base only.
2. When there are base runners behind you, you must run or it could be a force out.
3. A fly ball that is caught - runner must tag and run or stay on her base.
4. There is no sliding, no stealing bases and no lead offs.
5. Overthrows -- if out of bounds - one base if in bounds - as many as you can
6. You are out if you run out of the base path.
7. Third base rule -- all runners may advance only one base

**FIELDING:**

1. Force out - touch the base with your foot when all bases behind a runner are occupied.
2. Tags -- if the runner is not forced to run, you must tag them with the ball.

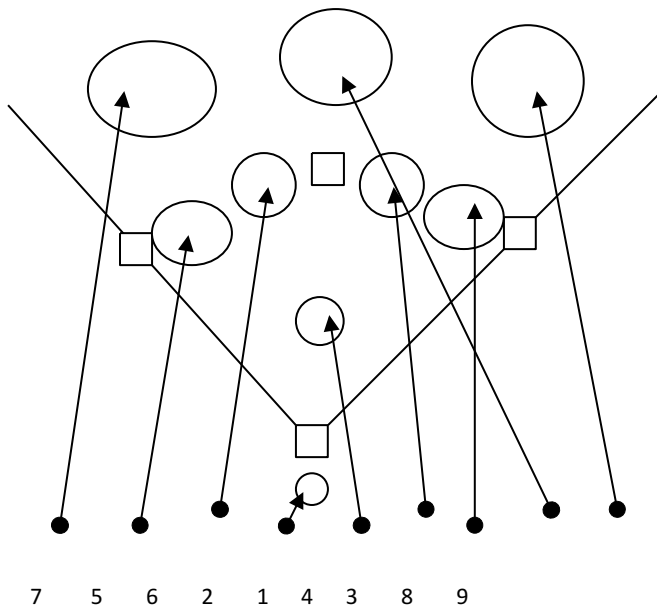
If the runner is forced to run, you may tag the base or the runner.

3. If runner leaves too soon on a caught fly, touch the base for the out.
4. You pitch and catch for your own team. The pitcher can not touch a batted ball. If the ball hits the pitcher, the batter is out. The catcher makes no plays at home because she is on the batting team.

Refer to the third base rule.

5. Third base rule -- Throw the ball in front of the runner going home from third base. The throw must be below the runners waist and before the home plate. If it is thrown successfully in front of the runner, she gets a free walk back to third. If the bases are loaded and it is a force run -- she is out and the run does not score. If she is hit by the ball, the runner is safe and the run scores.

**FIELDING POSITIONS:**



- |                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Pitcher            | 6. Shortstop      |
| 2. Catcher            | 7. Left fielder   |
| 3. First base player  | 8. Center fielder |
| 4. Second base player | 9. Right fielder  |
| 5. Third base player  |                   |