In addition to the JPL C League rules, what follows is an interpretation of general softball rules that seem to come up every season.

Pinch runners:

Most softball rules allow pinch runners for batters reaching base. Nominally it is the last batter out of the same sex as the runner. JPL C League allows pinch runners for the batter. The pinch runner aligns him/herself with the 3rd base foul line with their back to first base. The pinch runner should keep an eye out for foul tips. After the batter makes contact the runner runs to first base.

Pitching:

While C League does not have balls and strikes, a strike is defined as a ball that arcs over the batters head, but not higher than 12 feet and lands on the plate or plate extension mat. Any ball that lands in front of the plate is a dead ball. This is for safety reasons.

Runner hit by batted ball:

If a runner is hit by a batted ball that is not touched by a fielder first, or passes through the infield (pitcher doesn’t count), the runner is out, the ball is dead and the batter is awarded first base. No runners can advance, except if forced. (e.g. – bases loaded, runner going from 2nd to 3rd is hit by the ball, the ball is dead and the batter gets first, the runner on first gets second and the runner on third stays there). Runners can’t run and fielders can’t make another play if the ball comes to them. However if the runner is hit while on base, the ball is dead, the batter gets first and runners do not advance unless forced. In above example if the runner is hit while on second base, the batter would get first and all runners advance including the runner from third. Any intentional interference with the ball whether on base or not gets the runner called out and the ball is dead as above. If the batter touches a struck ball in fair territory outside of the batter’s box (e.g. they hit a dribbler up the first base line and then kick it on their way to first), they are out, the ball is dead, and no runners may advance. Also if a runner is hit running behind an infielder who lets it go through their legs, this is not interference and the ball is live.

Infield fly:

Fair ball with less than 2 out and runners on 1st and 2nd or bases loaded. Not a line drive; generally called on a fair fly ball to the infield area. Called if the player can get to it “with ordinary effort”. This can be widely interpreted in C League. Batter is automatically out and runners do not have to advance if ball is dropped. This prevents a double play with an intentional drop. Runners can advance “at their own risk”; for example runners may tag up if ball is caught and attempt to advance.

Right to the base path:

Fielder has the right to be in the base path if fielding a batted ball, or has possession of the ball. They must yield to the runner otherwise. This includes while receiving a throw. Fielders must vacate the base path for runners if there is no play or no throw near their base. Catchers, as well, must give access to home plate; often their best place during a play is in front of home plate. That’s why you see fielders straddling a base while awaiting a throw while the runner slides. In C League if the runner does not want to slide the fielder should be able to stand a little to the side and the runner should make an attempt to duck or avoid the fielder’s throw to another fielder.

Runners being forced:

If you are forced going to a base on a ground ball and the fielder has the ball and is coming to tag you, you cannot run backward to avoid the tag. You are out, and the fielder can throw to another base to try and make a play. You may stop and drop to the ground to do the “worm” and the fielder will need to tag you. Also, running out of the baseline to avoid a tag is an out. The baseline is roughly 3 feet on each side and is defined as the direct route to a base by the runner. This only applies if you are trying to avoid a tag.

Picking runners off base:

You can’t take a lead until the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand. There is no stealing in slow pitch. If a runner gets too far off the base they can be forced out by a throw from the catcher to the baseperson. The runner does not need to be tagged. The rule states that if the throw is dropped or is thrown away the runner can advance without coming back to the base (tagging up for want of a better term). C League has been requiring the runner to tag up (most of the time they are trying to get back anyway). I have never gotten an explanation of what happens if the throw is dropped, can the runner be tagged while off the base? Also what if the throw comes in on a bounce and the baseperson fields it cleanly, can it still be a force? I would propose that a runner is always forced if the fielder can come up with the ball before the runner gets back. The runner can also be tagged out in a similar fashion.

Overthrows that go out of play:

Two bases from the base you occupy when the throw leaves the fielder’s hand.

Running to first:

When you overrun first it doesn’t matter which way you turn, you are only liable to be tagged out if you “make an attempt” to go to second.

The two first bases:

For safety, two bases are placed at first. They should straddle the foul line. The foul base counts as part of first base only for the batter running to first, to avoid collisions with the first baseperson. To all other players, including runners starting at first base, the base does not count as anything. First basemen may not step on it to get batters out, runners starting at first may not use it (if returning to first after a lineout), etc.

Home plate and the plate extension:

Both are fair for the runner to touch in C League. This is in the interest of safety.

No bunting, chops or otherwise incomplete swings.

Fair and foul balls:

It doesn’t matter where the fielder is, only where the ball is. A ball on the ground if it passes over 1st or 3rd base is fair. A ball that lands fair and rolls foul before 1st or 3rd is foul. A ball that lands foul and rolls fair before 1st or 3rd base is fair. A ball that lands past 1st or 3rd is what it is when it hits the ground regardless of where it rolls to. The bases, plate and foul lines are in fair territory.

**A (batted) baseball is *fair* if:**

* it stops in fair territory before it reaches first or third base **(A)**, or
* it hits a base **(B)**, or
* bouncing or rolling, it passes first or third base on or above fair territory **(C)**, or
* it passes first or third base in the air and makes its first bounce in fair territory **(D)**, or
* the baseball is hit so far that it leaves the playing field between the foul poles or hits one of them (both of which types of events are very good for the batter) **(E)** or
* the defense touches it while it is moving on or above fair territory.

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| * http://official-rules.org/image/baseball-field-bounces.jpg
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| Diagram 3: Green represents fair ballsRed represents foul balls |

Ground rules at Hahamonga:

Right field out of play area:

We have been playing anything in right field that goes on the dirt area under the trees (dirt field) or down the hill (grass field) as a ground rule double. Some teams pick a spot in center, where to the left, the ball is still in play since the runner pretty much has a homer.

Loose base rule:

If the field conditions warrant it, usually wet fields, a loose base rule may be adopted. This allows for runners to touch near the base if there is no play to avoid slipping. If there is a play, one must step on the base.