

# Proposed Return to Play Physical Distancing Diamond Layout and Rules

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# Preface

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The purpose of these guidelines is to create minimum standards for a safe return to play of softball under current restrictions, while maintaining the integrity of the game.

These best practices do not supersede any protocols, guidelines, or restrictions outlined by Provincial and/or Federal Health Authorities. All Softball BC stakeholders must continue to follow those guidelines outlined by Provincial and/or Federal Health Authorities.

We strongly urge any Softball BC stakeholder to share with us details of any and all challenges that may arise and which may not be addressed in this document. Once an issue is identified, the Executive Director will work on how to address the issue and then share that information with all involved.

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# Summary

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All safe/out lines may be overrun. Runner will be considered as “crossed” the line safely when any part of the runner’s body makes contact with the ground on or past the line.

No stealing/advancing home on a passed ball.

No tagging.

No Rundowns.

All outs are force outs.

No dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike at any level.

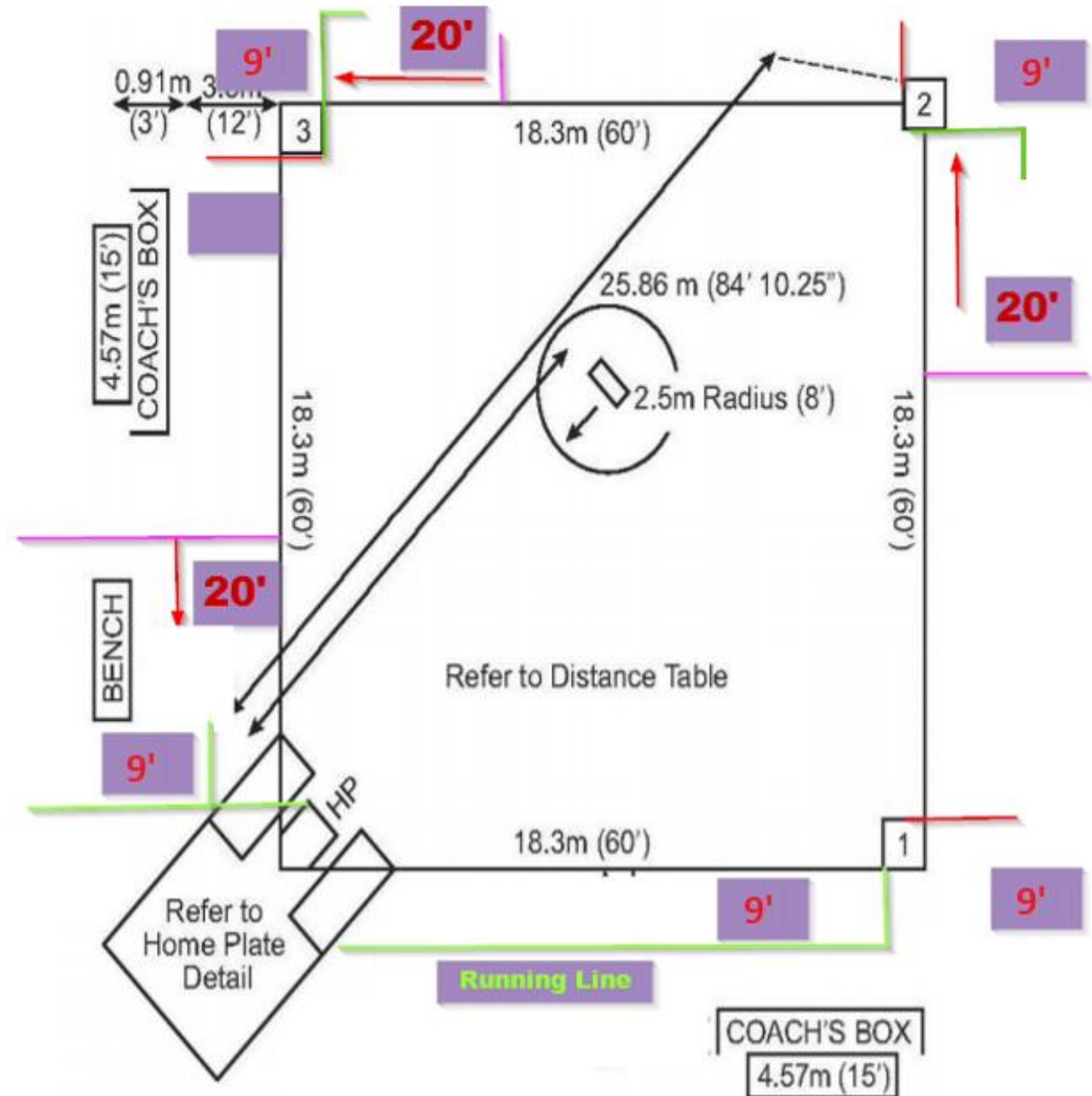
# Diamond Layout Overview

Green Lines are safe/out lines

Red lines are runner start lines

Purple Lines are commitment Lines

On deck circles are eliminated as there are no on deck batters allowed on the field



# Safe/Out Lines

The batter/runner needs to cross the safe line before the defensive player receives control of the ball at the base.

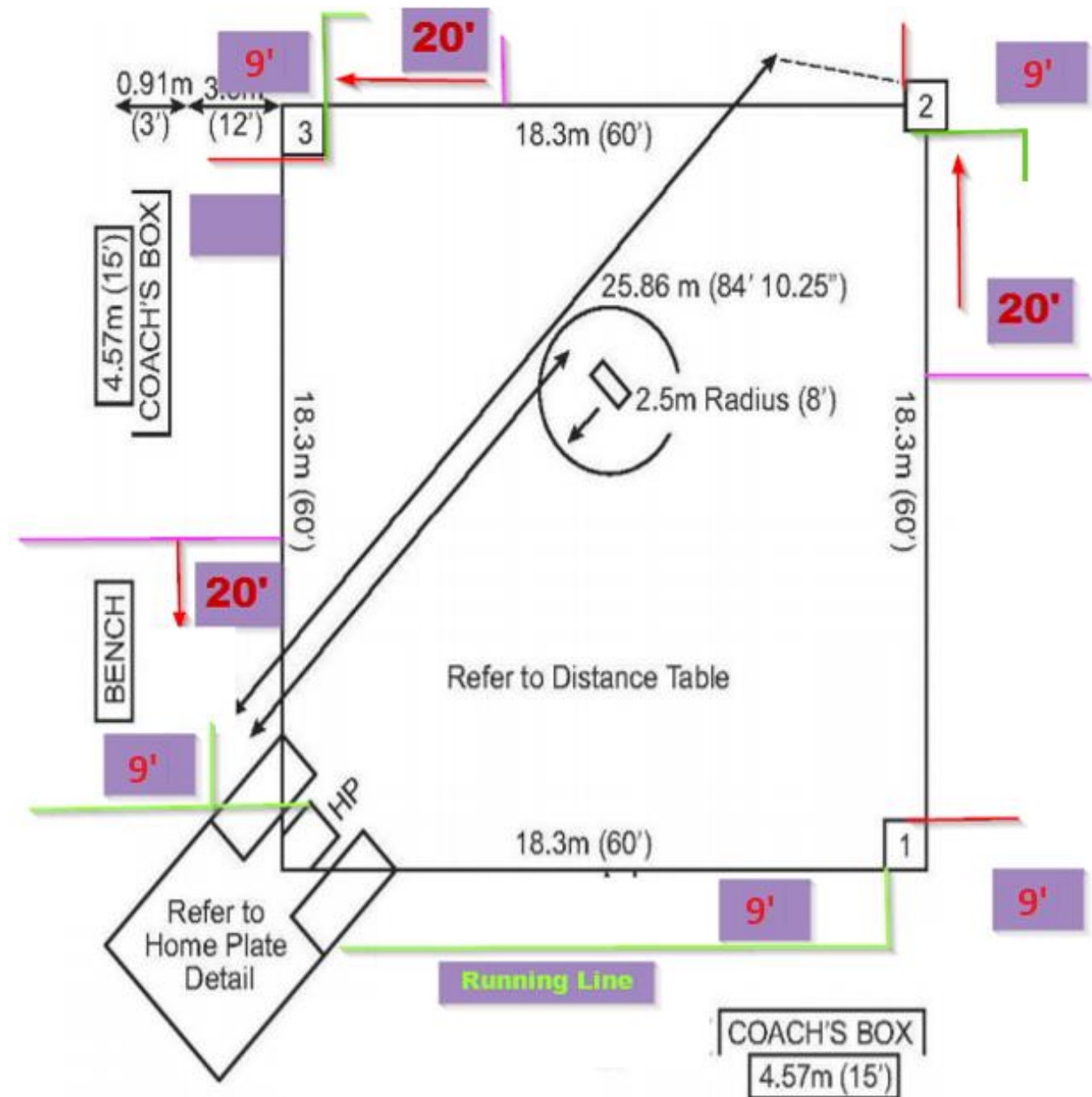
1B safe line is marked from the leading edge of the base measured 9ft from the foul line into foul territory. The batter/runner line is 9ft from the foul line and extends to the left-hand batter's box.

2B safe line is at the leading edge of the base extending 9ft towards right field.

3B safe line is along the leading edge of the base extending 9ft towards left field.

Home Plate safe line extends from the front corner of home plate on the 3B side and extends to the back stop with a cross hatch mark 9ft from the middle of Home Plate.

\*this is the line the batter/runner must run on towards 1B



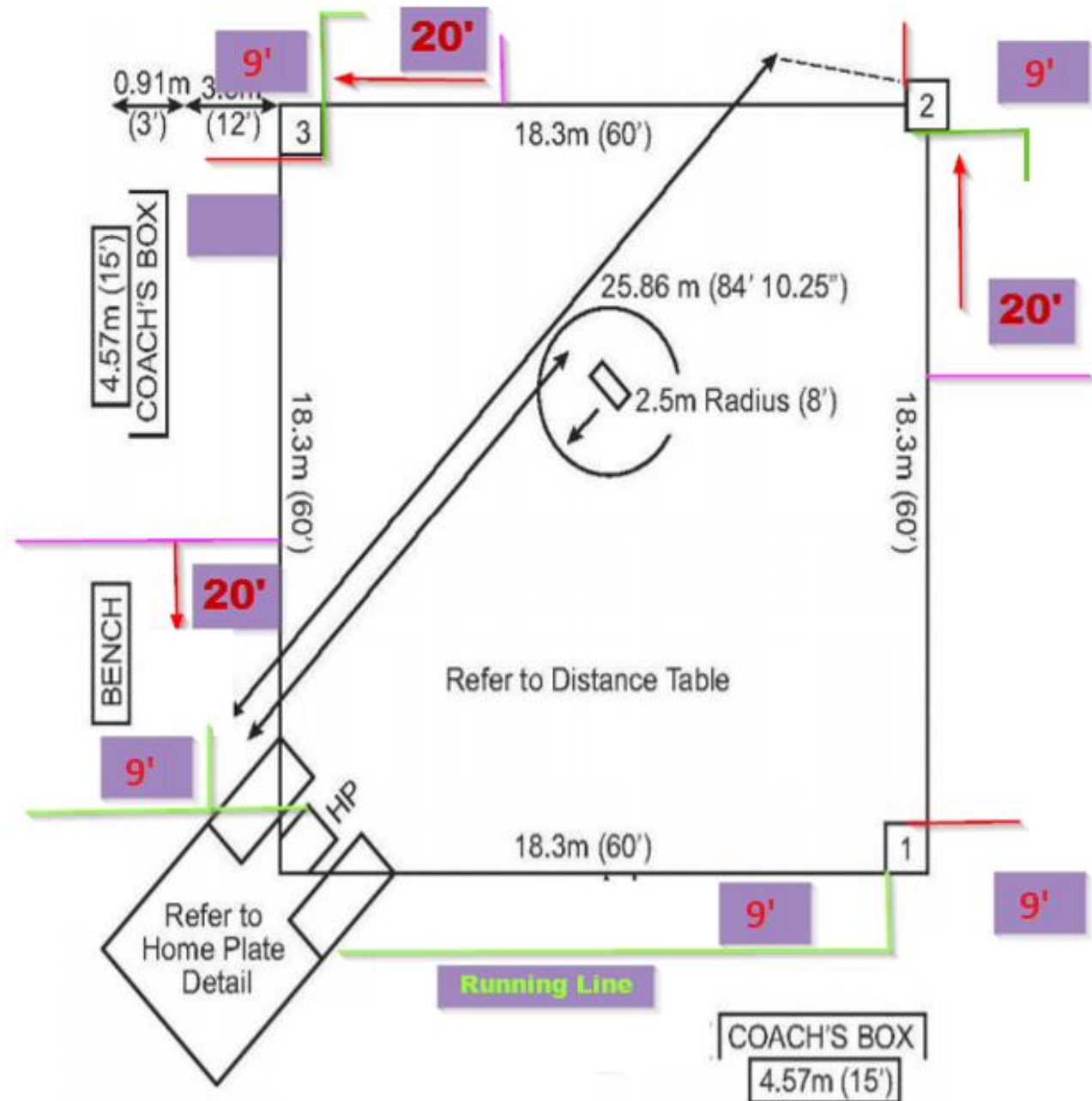
# Commitment Lines

Once the batter/runner crosses a commitment line they must proceed to the next base. The defense now has a force play on the next base.

2B commitment line is marked 20 feet from 2B and extends 9ft from the natural base line towards right field.

3B commitment line is marked 20 feet from 3B and extends 9ft from the natural base line toward left field.

Home plate commitment line is marked 20 feet from HP and extends to the backstop from the base line.



# Runner start line

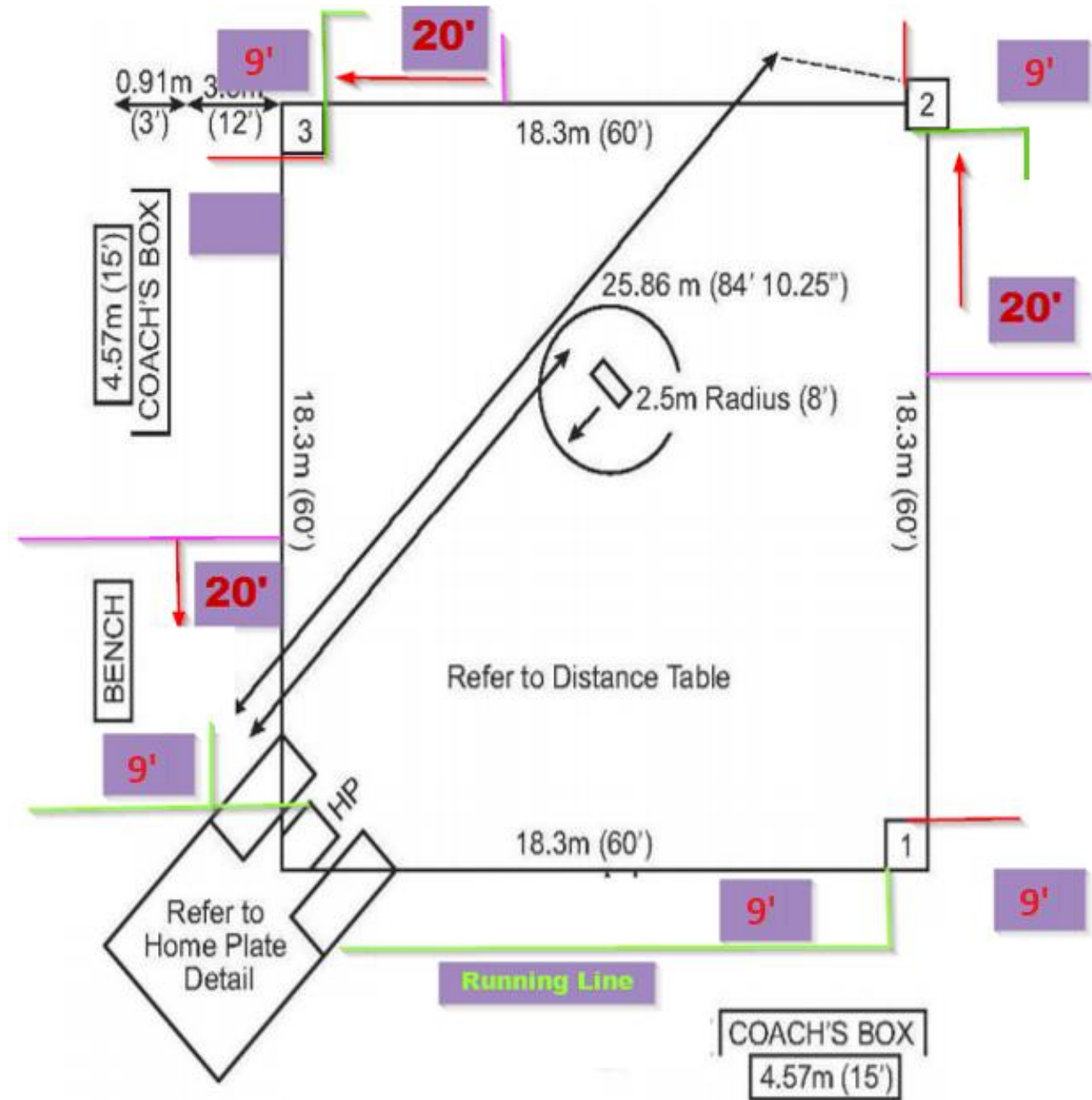
This is the point where a runner starts from on the next play once they have obtained the base safely. The runner may start from any point of the line to observe 3m distancing.

1B runner start line is marked starting at the inside edge of the white bag closest to 2B and extending 9ft towards right field.

2B runner start line starts at the inside edge of the bag closest to 3B and extends 9ft toward left field.

3B runner start line is marked at the inside edge of 3B closest to Home Plate and extends 9ft into foul territory towards the backstop.

The Start Line becomes the Safe/Out line for a runner retreating to a previously held base





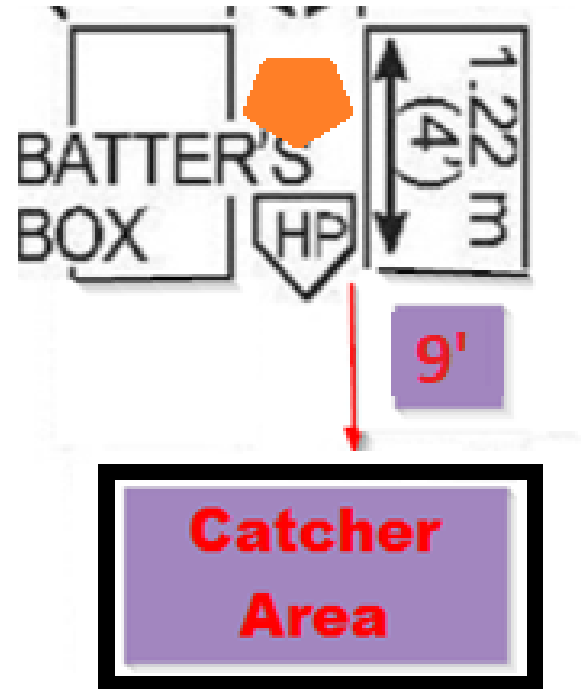


# Catcher Area U10 and below using a Tee

Batters is shortened to 4ft

Catcher area should be marked  
starting 9ft from the back of the  
batter's box.

\*If using a pitcher, see U14c and below  
guidelines

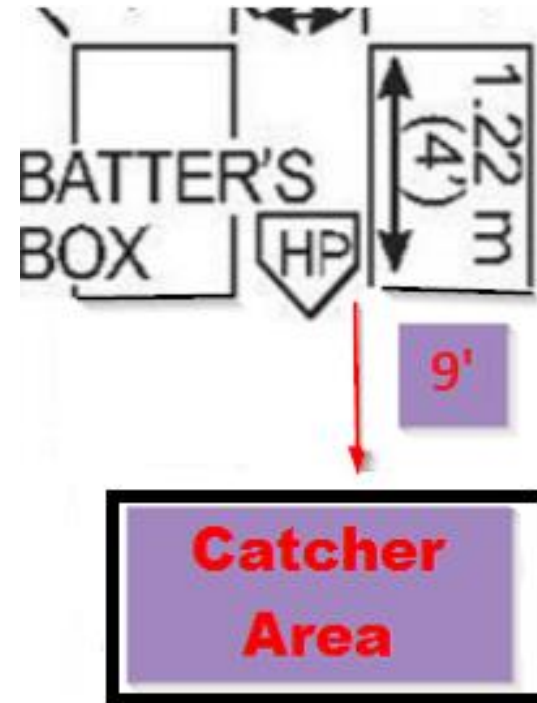


Tee in orange place in  
front of home

# Catcher Area U14C and U12C

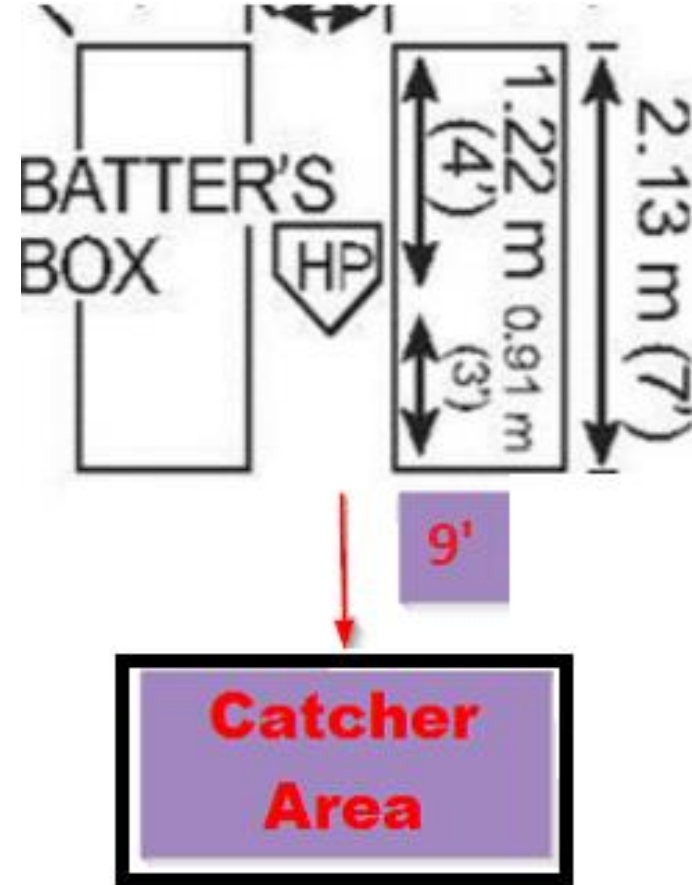
Batters is shortened to 4ft

Catcher area should be marked starting 9ft from the back of the batter's box.



# Catcher Area U16C and up All A and B

Catcher area should be marked starting 9ft from the back of the batter's box.



# Increased Awareness and Calling of Obstruction

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- If no play is likely at the base and the runner is likely to round the base to continue to the next base, all defensive players must stay clear of the runner as per Softball Canada Rule 1-63 (Obstruction)
- It is recommended to strictly enforcing the Obstruction rule as outlined above.
- Players will be instructed and taught on how to observe 3 m distancing during play.

# Rule Adjustments

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- All batters/runners' foot must contact the ground on or across the safe/out line and not the base except in an extra base hit scenario.
- Extra Base hits: The batter/runner may use the white portion of 1B or in close proximity and continue to touch the bases or in close proximity until a play is to be made by the defense at the next base at which time the runner is to use the Safe/Out line.
- Once the batter/runner crosses the commitment line the defense has a force play at the next base and the runner may not return to the previous base.
- If a direct play is being made on the batter/runner and they have not crossed the commitment line, the runner will be made Out at the base they are moving/advancing/retreating to. The runner may reverse direction once and retreat to the previous base to avoid being put out. However, if the runner stops or changes more than once, a Dead Ball will be called and the runner will be called Out. \*If the ball is overthrown into foul territory in this scenario, a Dead Ball will be called and the runners will be advanced one base.
- All runners who are not having a play made on them may stop, slow down, change direction until the defence focuses their attention on them, in which the above rules apply.
- If a runner is retreating to a base and hasn't crossed the commitment line, the starting line now becomes the safe/out line for that base the runner is retreating to.

# Rule Adjustments

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- The batter may not proceed on to the field until the previous play is completed
- If a player crosses the start line before a pitch is released, this is a lead off.
- On any pitched ball that ends up on the ground in front of the catcher and is out of their reach, a dead ball is assumed, the batter will back out of the box, and then the catcher will retrieve the ball. No runners may advance.
- Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> strike is not in effect at any level.
- Tag plays are prohibited
- Stealing is prohibited.

# Protocol for Changes to these Guidelines

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Due to the uncertain aspects in returning to play, these guidelines are expected to change based on new/updated safety procedures outlined by Provincial and/or Federal Health Authorities or feedback to Softball BC Directors.

- All participants should always follow Provincial and/or Federal Health Authority guidelines.
- The Executive Director will revisit these guidelines as new guidelines/restrictions are announced by the PHO/ViaSport