

Softball – infield positions – playing the pitcher position (defensive fielding)

- See also separate instructions on how to pitch.
- The starting position is in the pitcher's circle, on the pitcher's rubber; this will be 35 feet from home plate for 10u, 40 feet for 12u, and 43 feet for older players.
- The pitcher will get about 5 warm up pitches before the inning starts. On the last warm-up pitch, the catcher will throw down to 2nd base and the pitcher will duck down to not get in the way of the throw.
- If there is a ground ball toward short stop / 3rd base and they are making the throw to 1st, duck down to stay out of the way of the throw.
- Area of coverage is the area in front of you, a bit more than halfway between you and the catcher, including hits and bunts. Also, roughly 6 feet behind you in any direction for pop flies; note the other infielders will typically have an easier play on the ball because they are moving forward to it and you are moving backward; someone should be calling for the ball and calling off their teammates.
- Look to possibly run to 1st base on a hit between 1st and 2nd that pulls in the 1st base person and 2nd base person; the pitcher may be the one that needs to run and cover 1st base.
- Look to run in to home plate for the following situations:
 - Runner is at 3rd and you throw a pitch that gets past the catcher. Run to the spot right in front of home plate and right in front of where the runner stealing home will be trying to slide in. Give your catcher a low target with your glove. Catch and make the tag in front of home plate.
 - Runner is at 3rd and the catcher leaves the home plate area to chase back the runner toward 3rd and get them in a possible pickle situation. Run in to home plate for a possible throw back from 3rd base (unless your coach has the 1st base person cover this instead).
- When there are base runners, the ball is live until the pitcher has control of the ball in the pitcher's circle and is not making any "softball moves" (e.g. making a throwing motion at a runner). At this point, the play is over and the runners have about 1 second to move to a base and not change their mind and reverse course—otherwise, they are out, under the "lookback" rule.
- If there are runners at 1st, 2nd, or 3rd that are taking a big lead and somewhat slow to get back; once the pitcher gets the ball back from the catcher, they can potentially try to throw to one of these bases to get the runner out.
- Know the situation in the game and where the ideal play is before the ball is hit. If the bases are loaded and less than two outs in a close game, your coach may want you to throw it home. Otherwise, you are usually trying to get an out at whichever base makes sense, taking into account where you are when you field the ball. When in doubt, go for the out at 1st base.