

SOFTBALL OF IDAHO SLOW PITCH RULEBOOK

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RULE 1 – DEFINITIONS

ALTERED BAT: When the physical structure of a legal softball bat has been changed.

APPEAL PLAY: A play on a rule violation on which an umpire may not decide until requested by a manager, coach, or player.

BALL COMPRESSION: The load force, in pounds, required to compress a softball 0.250 inches when measured in accordance with the ASTM test method for measuring compression-displacement of softballs.

BALL COR: The coefficient of restitution of a softball when measured in accordance with the ASTM test method for measuring coefficient of restitution of softballs.

BASE ON BALLS: Permits a batter to gain first base when four pitches are judged to be out of the strike zone.

BASE LINE: An imaginary line directly between bases.

BASE PATH: A line directly between a base and the runner's position at the time a defensive player is attempting to tag that runner.

BATTED BALL: Any pitched ball that hits the bat or is hit by the bat and lands either in fair territory or foul territory.

BATTER'S BOX: The area to which the batter is restricted when batting.

BATTER-RUNNER: A player who has completed a turn at bat but has not yet been put out or reached first base.

BATTING ORDER: The official listing of offensive players in the order in which they bat.

BLOCKED BALL: A batted, pitched, or thrown ball that is touched, stopped, or handled by a person not engaged in the game, or which touches loose equipment or any object that is not part of the official equipment or official playing area.

BLOOD RULE: Refers to a player, coach or umpire who is bleeding or who has blood on their uniform and treatment is required.

BUNT: A pitched ball that is intentionally tapped with the bat, slowly, within the infield.

CATCH/NO CATCH:

- A. A catch is a legally caught ball, which occurs when the fielder catches a batted, pitched or thrown ball with the hand(s) or glove/mitt.
1. To establish a valid catch, the fielder shall hold the ball long enough to prove control of it and/or that the release of the ball is voluntary.

2. If the ball is merely held in the fielder's arm(s) or prevented from dropping to the ground by some part of the fielder's body, equipment or clothing, the catch is not completed until the ball is in the grasp of the fielder's hand(s) or glove/mitt.
 3. The fielder's feet must be within the field of play, touching the "out of play" line or in the air after leaving live ball territory to have a valid catch. A player who is "out of play" and returns must have both feet touching live ball territory or one foot touching and the other in the air, for the catch to be legal.
- B. It is not a catch:
1. If a fielder, while gaining control, collides with another player, umpire, or a fence, or falls to the ground and drops the ball because of the collision or falling to the ground.
 2. If a ball strikes anything other than a defensive player while it is in flight it is the same as if it struck the ground.
 3. When a fielder catches a batted or thrown ball with anything other than the hand(s) or glove/mitt in its proper place.

CATCH AND CARRY: A legal catch followed by a defensive player carrying the ball into dead ball territory.

CATCHER'S BOX: The area to which the catcher is restricted while catching. The catcher must remain in the box until:

- A. The pitched ball:
1. Is batted.
 2. Touches the ground, plate, or batter.
 3. Reaches the catcher's box.

CHARGED CONFERENCE: When a team representative requests a suspension of play or delays the game for the purpose of delivering a message to another team member unless the pitcher is removed from the pitching position.

CHOPPED BALL: Occurs when the batter strikes downward with a chop-ping motion of the bat.

COACH: A person who occupies the coach's box and / or assists in the direction of their team representatives on the field.

COACH'S BOX: The area in which the base coach is restricted to prior to the release of the pitch.

COURTESY RUNNER: Any player who runs for a runner without a charged substitution.

DEAD BALL: A ball that is not in play.

DEFENSIVE TEAM: The team in the field.

DISLODGED BASE: A base displaced from its proper position.

DISQUALIFIED PLAYER: A player removed from the game for a rule violation.

DOUBLE PLAY: A play in which two offensive players are legally put out because of continuous action.

DUGOUT/TEAM AREA: An out-of-play area designated for players and team representatives.

EJECTED PARTICIPANT: A team representative removed from the game by the umpire, usually for an unsportsmanlike act or conduct.

EXTRA PLAYER (EP): An optional player(s) in these games.

FAIR BALL: A legally batted ball that:

- A. Settles or is touched on or over fair territory between home and first base or between home and third base.
- B. Bounds over or past first or third base, which is in fair territory, regardless of where the ball hits after going over the base.
- C. While on or over fair territory, touches the person, attached equipment or clothing of a player or an umpire.
- D. While over fair territory, an offensive player interferes with a defensive player attempting to field a batted ball.
- E. Touches first, second or third base.
- F. First falls or is first touched on or over fair territory beyond first, second or third base.
- G. While over fair territory, leaves the playing field beyond the outfield fence.
- H. Hits the foul pole.

FAIR TERRITORY: That part of the playing field within, and including, the first and third base foul lines from home plate to the bottom of the playing field fence and perpendicularly upwards.

FAKE TAG: A form of obstruction by a fielder who attempts to tag a runner without the ball and thereby impedes a runner advancing or returning to a base.

FIELDER: Any player of the team in the field.

FLY BALL: A batted ball, fair or foul, that rises into the air.

FORCE OUT: An out which may be made only when a runner loses the right to the base that the runner is occupying because the batter becomes a batter-runner, and before the batter-runner or a trailing runner has been put out.

FOUL BALL: A batted ball that:

- A. Settles or is touched (not caught) on or over foul territory between home and first base or between home and third base.
- B. Bounds or rolls past first or third base on or over foul territory.

- C. While over foul territory, touches the person, attached or detached equipment or clothing of a player or an umpire, or any object foreign to the natural ground.
- D. While over foul territory, an offensive player interferes with a defensive player attempting to field a batted ball.
- E. First hits the ground over foul territory beyond first or third base.
- F. Touches the batter or the bat in the batter's hand(s) a second time while the batter is within the batter's box.
- G. Goes directly from the bat to any part of the catcher's body or equipment and is caught by another fielder.
- H. Hits the pitcher's plate and rolls untouched to foul territory before reaching first or third base.

FOUL TIP: A batted ball that goes sharply and directly from the bat to the catcher's hand(s) or glove/mitt and is legally caught by the catcher.

HOME TEAM: The team that starts the game on defense.

ILLEGAL BAT: A bat that does not meet the requirements of an official bat or warm-up bat.

ILLEGALLY BATTED BALL: Occurs when the batter hits the ball fair or foul and:

- A. At the time the bat contacts the ball, the entire foot is completely outside the lines of the batter's box and on the ground.
- B. At the time the bat contacts the ball, any part of the foot is touching home plate.
- C. An illegal, altered, or non-approved bat is used.
- D. At the time the bat contacts the ball, the batter's entire foot has contacted the ground out of the batter's box and returned to hit the ball while inside the box.

ILLEGAL PLAYER: A player who takes a position in the line-up, either on offense or defense, who does not have a legal right to that position.

IN FLIGHT: The term used for any batted, thrown, or pitched ball which has not yet touched the ground or some object or person other than a fielder.

IN JEOPARDY: A term indicating that the ball is in play and an offensive player may be put out.

INELIGIBLE PLAYER: A player who does not meet the requirements of the Softball of Idaho Code.

INFIELD: That portion of the field in fair territory that includes areas normally covered by infielders.

INFIELDER: A fielder who defends the area of the field around first, second, third, or shortstop areas.

INFIELD FLY: A fair fly ball, not including a line drive or an attempted bunt, which can be caught by an infielder, pitcher, or catcher with ordinary effort when first and second or first, second and third bases are occupied with less than two outs.

INNING: That portion of a game within which the teams alternate on offense and defense and in which there are three outs for each team. A new inning or half inning begins immediately after the final out of the previous inning or half inning.

INTERFERENCE: The act of an offensive player or team member, umpire or spectator that impedes, hinders, or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play. Contact is not necessary.

LINE DRIVE: A batted ball that travels parallel or near the ground through most of its flight.

LINE-UP CARD: The official document listing starting players and substitutes of a given team.

MANAGER: The team representative that must always have control of their team on and off the field.

NON-APPROVED BAT: A bat that does not meet USA Softball specifications or is on the current USA Softball non-approved bat list with USA Softball Certification Mark.

OBSTRUCTION: The act of a defensive team member:

- A. Who hinders or impedes a batter from striking at or hitting a pitched ball.
- B. Who impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running the bases unless the fielder is;
 1. in possession of the ball.
 2. in the act of fielding a batted ball.

Note: Contact is not necessary to impede the progress of the batter-runner or a runner.

OFFENSIVE TEAM: The team at bat.

ON-DECK BATTER: The offensive player who is scheduled to bat next.

ON-DECK CIRCLE: The area nearest the offensive team's dugout in which the next batter is restricted to before the release of the pitch.

OUTFIELD: That portion of the field in fair territory which is normally covered by outfielders.

OUTFIELDER: A fielder who defends the area of the field that the left, left-center, right-center, and right fielders normally play.

OVER SLIDE: The act of an offensive player when, as a runner, slides beyond or loses contact with a base the player is attempting to reach.

OVERTHROW: A thrown ball from a fielder that goes:

- A. Beyond the boundary lines of the playing field (dead ball territory), or
- B. Becomes a blocked ball.

PARTICIPANT: A starting player, substitute, manager, coach, or another team representative located in the dugout, team area or playing field.

PASSED BALL: A legally delivered pitch that should have been held or controlled by the catcher with ordinary effort.

PIVOT FOOT: The foot which:

- A. The pitcher must keep in contact with the pitcher's plate until the ball is released

PLAY: An attempt by a defensive player to retire an offensive player. A pitch is not considered a play except as it relates to an appeal.

PLAY BALL: The term used by the plate umpire to indicate that play shall start.

PROTEST: A formal request to review the decision of an umpire's rule interpretation.

QUICK PITCH: A pitch made with the obvious attempt to catch the batter off balance.

RUNNER: An offensive player who has reached first base and has not yet been put out or scored.

SACRIFICE FLY: Scored when, with fewer than two outs, the batter scores a runner with a fly ball or line drive that is:

- A. Caught.
- B. Dropped by any fielder and, in the scorer's judgment, the runner could have scored after the catch had the fly ball or line drive been caught.

STARTING PLAYER: A player listed on the line-up card that is inspected and approved by the plate umpire.

STEALING: The act of a runner attempting to advance during a pitch:

- A. Runners can advance once the pitched ball reaches the front edge of home plate.

STRIKE MAT: A mat 24 inches long with a V shaped cut out with the edges 12 inches long to fit tight with the point of home plate.

STRIKE ZONE: That space over any part of home plate when a batter assumes a natural batting stance adjacent to home plate:

- A. Between the batter's back shoulder and the front knee.
- B. (***Seniors Slow Pitch***) A rectangle 17" x 32.5" mat is used which includes the plate and the plate extension. Any legally pitched ball not swung at that lands on any part of the

plate or mat will be ruled a strike. The shoulder to the knee strike zone has been eliminated.

SUBSTITUTE: Any member of a team’s roster who is not listed as a starting player, or a player who leaves and re-enters the game.

TAG: A legal tag is the act of a defensive player:

- A. Touching a base with any part of the body while holding the ball securely and firmly in the hand or glove or:
- B. Touching the runner or batter-runner with the ball while securely held in the hand or glove.

TIME: The term used by the umpire to suspend play.

TRIPLE PLAY: A play by the defense in which three offensive players are legally put out because of continuous action.

TURN AT BAT: When a player first enters the batter’s box and continues until the player is substituted for, put out, or becomes a batter-runner while at bat.

RULE 2 – PLAYING FIELD

SECTION 1 – THE PLAYING FIELD

The playing field is the area within which the ball may be legally played and fielded. There shall be a clear and unobstructed area between the foul lines and within the radius of the prescribed fence distances from home plate.

OFFICIAL DISTANCE TABLE

Adult	Division	Bases	Pitching	Min. Fence	Max. Fence
Slow Pitch	Women	70'	50'	265'	300'
	Men	70'	50'	300'	325'
	Senior	70'	50'	300'	315'
	Coed	70'	50'	275'	300'

If the base distances or the pitching distance is found to be at the wrong dimensions during the game, correct the error, with no penalty, and continue playing the game. Every effort should be made by the umpire to obtain the correct dimensions.

SECTION 2 - GROUNDS

Ground or special rules establishing the limits of the playing field may be established by tournament officials. Any obstruction in fair ground less than the prescribed fence distances from home plate should be clearly marked for the umpire’s information. If using a baseball field, the mound should be removed, and the backstop distances must meet those prescribed (minimum of 25 feet or a maximum of 30 feet from home plate).

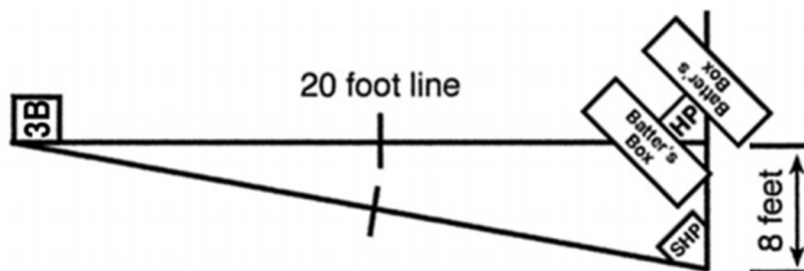
SECTION 3 - LAYOUT

For the layout of the diamond, refer to the drawing showing the official dimensions for a softball diamond. This section serves as an example for laying out a diamond with 70-foot bases and a 50-foot pitching distance. To determine the position of home plate, draw a line in the direction desired to lay out the diamond. Drive a stake at the corner of home plate nearest the catcher. Fasten a cord to this stake and tie knots, or otherwise, mark the cord, at 50 feet, 70 feet, 99 feet, and at 140 feet. Place the cord (without stretching) along the direction line and place a stake at the 50-foot marker. This will be the front line at the middle of the pitcher’s plate. Along the same line, drive a stake at the 99-foot marker. This will be the center of second base. Place the 140-foot marker at the center of second base and, taking hold of the cord at the 70-foot marker, walk to the right of the direction line until the cord is taut and drive a stake at the 70-foot marker. This will be the outside corner of first base and the cord will now form the lines to first and second bases. Again, holding the cord at the 70-foot marker, walk across the field and, in a like manner, mark the outside corner of third base. Home plate, first base, and third base are wholly inside the diamond. To check the diamond, place the home plate end of the cord at the first base stake and the 140-foot marker at third base. The 70-foot marker should now check at home plate and the middle of second base.

- A. The three-foot line is drawn in foul territory parallel to and three feet from the baseline, starting at a point halfway between home plate and first base.
- B. The batter’s on-deck circle is a five-foot circle (2 1/2-foot radius) placed adjacent to the end of the player’s bench or dugout area closest to home plate.
- C. There shall be batter’s boxes, one on each side of home plate. The front line of the box will be drawn from the center of home plate. The inside lines of the batter’s box shall be six inches from home plate.
- D. The catcher’s box shall be as wide as the two batter’s boxes from outside line to outside line, 10’5” for Slow Pitch. The length of the catcher’s box will 10 feet long in all Slow Pitch.
- E. Each coach’s box is behind a line 15 feet long drawn outside the diamond. The line is parallel to and eight feet from the first and third base line, extended from the bases toward home plate.
- F. The pitcher’s plate shall be of rubber or wood, 24 inches long and six inches wide. The top of the plate shall be level with the ground. The front of the pitcher’s plate shall be the prescribed pitching distances from the back point of home plate.
- G. Home plate shall be made of rubber or other suitable material. It shall be a five-sided figure, 17 inches wide across the edge facing the pitcher’s plate. The sides shall be parallel to the inside lines of the batter’s box and shall be 8 1/2 inches long. The sides of the point facing the catcher shall be 12 inches long.

(Senior Slow Pitch) The second home plate shall be placed eight feet from the back tip of home plate on an extended line from first base. A line shall be drawn from third base

to the second home plate.



- H. The bases, other than home plate, shall be 15 inches square, be made of canvas or other suitable material and not more than five inches in thickness. The double base shall be used at first base, in all divisions of play. This base is 15 by 30 inches and both sides of the double base, white and contrasting color, shall be equal in height (5" max). Half the base is white (over fair territory), and half is of contrasting color (over foul territory). The bases should be properly fastened in position.
- I. The outfield fence height for Local Association, Regional, National Championships, National Championship Finals and the USA Softball Championships must be at least four feet high (at least three feet high if using temporary fencing) and it is suggested that it be eight feet in height.
- J. Local Association, Regional, and National Championship Final play; the minimum lighting guidelines can be found at USA Softball.com.

DIMENSION TABLE

<i>Area</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>
Backstop	25' minimum and 30' maximum from home plate.
Bases	15" square.
Base (Double)	15" X 30" of white/contrasting color.
a) Slow Pitch Home Plate to first/third	70' from the back point of home plate to the back of the base.
Batter's Box Slow Pitch	6" from home plate, 3 feet wide by 7 feet long; 4 feet in front of a line drawn through the center of home plate.
Catcher's Box	8' 5" wide in Slow Pitch.
Coaches Box	8' from the first and third base line, 15' long by 3' wide.
Home Plate	17" wide, sides parallel to the batter's box line and are 8 ½" long, sides of the point facing the catcher are 12" long. The width of the black edge is ¾".
On-Deck Circle	5' in diameter and 2' 6" radius.

Pitcher's Circle

8' radius drawn from the front edge of the pitcher's plate.

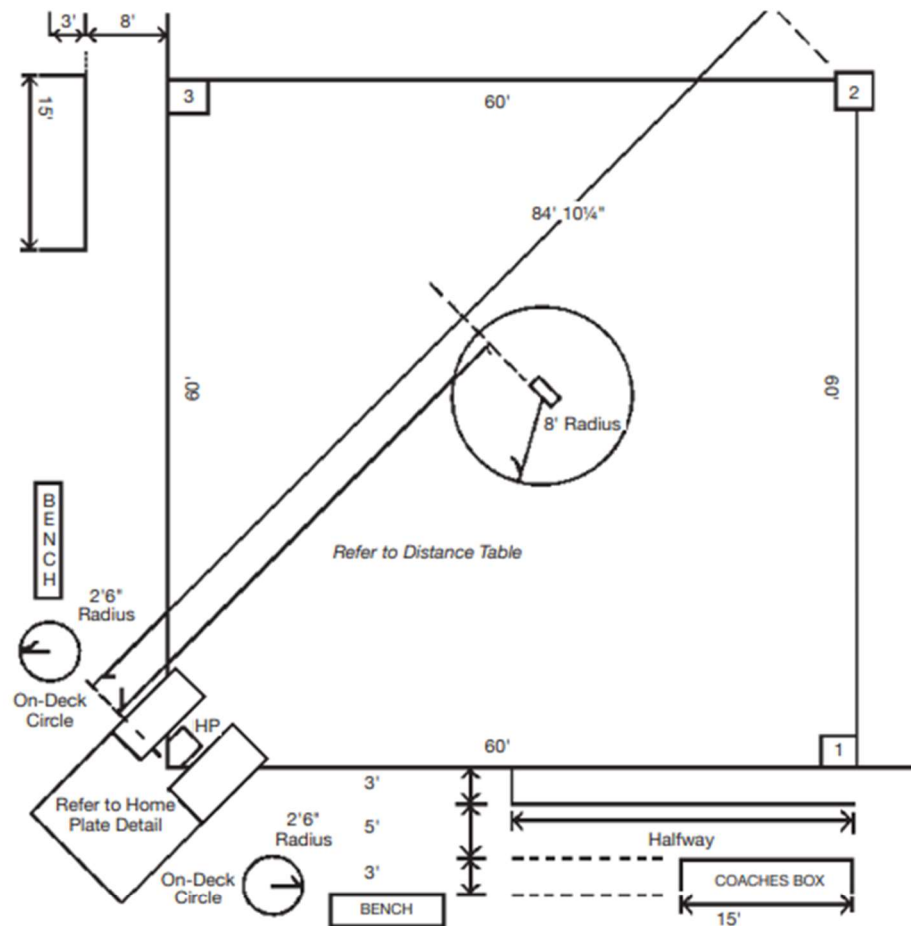
Pitcher's Plate
Running Lane

24" long and 6" wide.
Halfway line drawn in foul territory parallel to and 3' from the first base foul line. It starts halfway from home plate and goes to the back edge of first base.

Skinned Infield

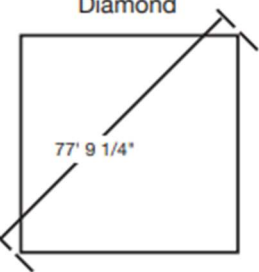
Use front center of the 46' pitcher's plate as the center point of arc.
70' radius is recommended with 70' bases.

FIELD DIMENSIONS

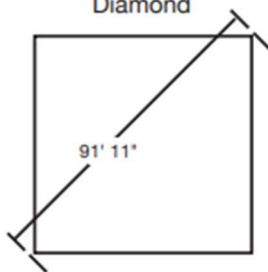


(For base distances, pitching distances and fence distances, see Rule 2, Section 1)

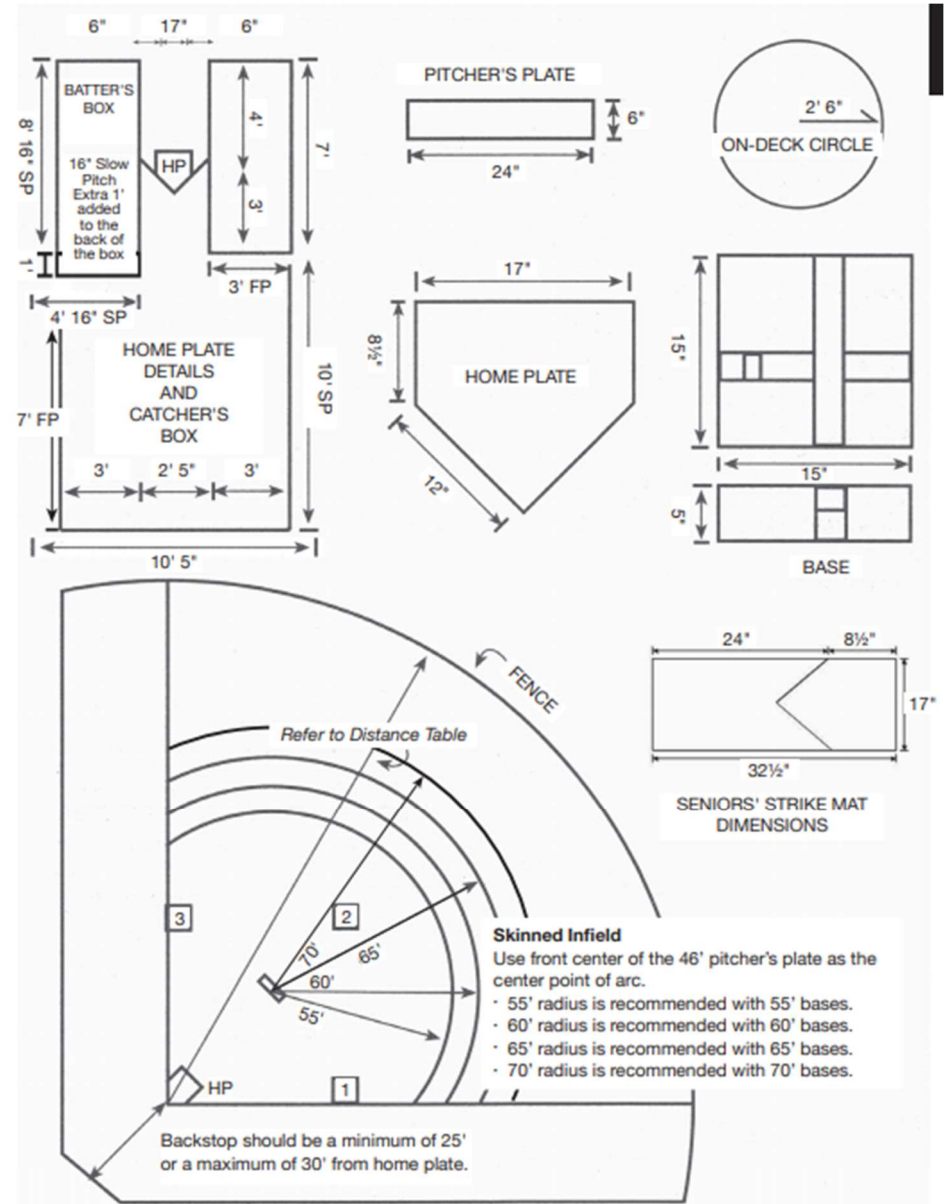
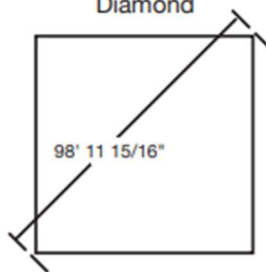
55-Foot Diamond



65-Foot Diamond



70-Foot Diamond



RULE 3 – EQUIPMENT

PREAMBLE TO RULE 3: Rule 3 governs the equipment to be used in USA Softball Championship Play. Equipment bearing USA Softball's approved certification mark(s) should

not be construed as a warranty or guarantee that the equipment is safe or will safeguard participants or spectators from injury. Instead, USA Softball's certification marks merely indicate that the equipment model has been tested and complies with USA Softball's rules for Championship Play. The primary purpose of Rule 3 and USA Softball's equipment standards is to promote competitive balance and to preserve the integrity of the sport of amateur softball. The use of USA Softball approved equipment in Championship Play or otherwise should not be considered a guarantee that participants, spectators, or others will be safe or free from injury or harm. There are risks and dangers incidental to the game of softball including specifically, but not limited to, the danger of being injured by thrown bats, thrown balls, batted balls, or other objects.

SECTION 1 - OFFICIAL BAT

- A. **CERTIFIED/APPROVED**: The official bat for USA Softball Championship Play must meet all the USA Softball specifications and the requirements of Rule 3, Section 1, and:
1. The official bat made up of the knob, handle, grip, taper, barrel, and end cap shall be free of burs, dents, cracks, sharp edges, rattles and show no signs of excessive wear. The official bat may be marked OFFICIAL SOFTBALL by the manufacturer and shall be no more than 34 inches long nor exceed 38 ounces in weight. The official bat shall not be more than 2.250 inches in diameter at its largest part, including any tolerance for expansion. The Official bat must bear the appropriate certification mark as shown below and must not be listed on the USA Softball Non-Approved Bat List with Certification Marks.
AND
 2. must be included on a list of approved bat models published by USA Softball
OR
 3. must, in the sole opinion and discretion of the umpire, have been manufactured prior to 2000 and if tested, would comply with the USA Softball Bat Performance Standard. This includes wooden bats.
Exception: Senior Softball bats may be used in Senior Championship Play only.
- B. **SAFETY KNOB**: The knob shall have a diameter of at least 1.6 inches with no sharp edges. The knob will be permanently attached to the bat and may be covered with grip tape.
- C. **HANDLE**: The region of the bat from the knob, not including the knob, to the start of the taper where the diameter increases. The handle will include a grip.
- D. **GRIP**: The Handle region of the bat must have a grip made of cork, grip tape, or other synthetic material that is permanently attached to the bat. No bare metal, wood or composite material may be exposed in this area. The grip shall not be less than 6" and not more than 15" from the knob. Resin, pine tar or spray substances are permissible on the grip region only.
- E. **TAPER**: The transition area between the handle and the barrel. The taper shall have a generally conical shape. It starts where the barrel decreases in size and ends where the handle diameter becomes constant.
- F. **BARREL**: The region of the bat from the taper to the end cap, not including the end cap. The barrel region shall be smooth and round within 0.050 inches in diameter.

- G. **END CAP**: The cap placed at the barrel end of the bat. The end cap shall be permanently affixed to the bat to prevent alterations to the interior of the bat. It shall be affixed so that it cannot be removed by anyone other than the manufacturer without damaging or destroying the end cap or barrel.
- H. **ALTERED BAT**: An USA Softball Official Bat's characteristic shall remain fixed at the time of manufacture and may not be altered in any way other than specifically provided for in Rule 3, Section 1 or as specifically approved by USA Softball. Approved bats shall be considered altered if they are rolled, shaved, repainted, weighted, or modified to change their characteristics from that produced by the manufacturer. Identifying the bat by means of laser marking, engraving, or painting the name or number of the player will not make the bat an altered bat.
- I. **CONSTRUCTION**: The official bat shall be of one-piece construction, multi-piece permanently assembled or two-piece interchangeable construction. If the bat is designed with interchangeable components, it must meet the following additional criteria:
1. Mating components must have a unique locking key to prevent uncertified equipment combinations in the field.
 2. All component combinations must meet the one-piece bat rules.
 3. Manufacturer must demonstrate that the interchangeable bat fails in a safe manner (i.e., visible damage before locking feature(s) fail(s)).
 4. Bat components must be designed in a way to prevent uncertified equipment alterations.
Note: If the bat is not constructed of wood, and not made of one-piece construction with the barrel end closed, the barrel end shall have a rubber or vinyl plastic or other approved material insert, or end cap at the large end of the bat.

SECTION 2 - WARM-UP BAT

The warm-up bat shall meet the following requirements to be approved:

- A. Stamped with 1/4-inch letters WB on either end of the bat or marked in one-inch letters the words WARM-UP BAT only on the barrel end of the bat.
- B. The warm-up bat shall comply with the safety grip and the safety knob requirements of the official bat.
- C. Be of one-piece construction or a one-piece permanently assembled bat that clearly distinguishes itself as a warm-up bat and is approved by USA Softball.
- D. Shall have a safety knob of a minimum of 1/4 inch protruding at a 90-degree angle from the handle. It may be molded, lathed, welded, or permanently fastened.
- E. Only approved attachments included in the list published by USA Softball can be used on warm-up bats.

SECTION 3 - OFFICIAL SOFTBALL

- A. **CERTIFIED/APPROVED**: Only softballs which bear an ASA or USA Softball approved certification mark signifying compliance with the Ball COR and Ball Compression limitations then in effect, and which satisfy all other applicable provisions in Rule 3, Section 3, will be allowed for use in USA Softball Play. USA Softball has developed two

certification marks for softballs. One mark signifies Ball Compression 300 lbs. or less. The other signifies Ball Compression of more than 300 lbs., but less than 375 lbs. The ball must not appear on the USA Softball Non-Approved Ball List. The markings are also distinguishable by color, where green represents a Ball COR of .520 or under, red represents a Ball COR of .470 or under, black represents a Ball COR of .440 or under and blue represents a Ball COR of .400 or under. One of the following must be appropriately and indelibly stamped on each softball allowed for use in USA Softball Championship Play.



- B. **COVER:** The official softball shall have a cover of leather or synthetic material. The ball shall be regular, smooth-seamed, and smooth-surfaced.
- C. **THE 12-INCH BALL:** The official 12-inch softball shall be at least 12.0 inches in circumference when measured across two seams and shall weigh at least 6.750 ounces. The 12-inch ball shall have no fewer than 88 stitches in each cover, sewn by the two-needle method, or with an authentic facsimile of stitching as approved by USA Softball. It is acceptable for the Slow Pitch ball to be molded and the facsimile of 88 stitches must be red.
1. **Slow Pitch Ball:** The yellow optic cover, red stitch 12-inch ball with a size of 11.875 inches or over, a weight of 6.250 ounces or over, a COR of .520 or under, a compression of 300.0 lbs. or under, and a Dynamic Stiffness of 5500.0 lbs. or under shall be used in the following USA Softball play:
 - a. Men’s, Coed (male batter only), and may be used in Senior Slow Pitch.
 - b. Seniors may use above ball or may use the yellow optic color, red-stitch 12-inch ball with a Ball COR of .440 or under and a Ball Compression of 375.0 lbs.
- D. **THE 11-INCH BALL:** The official 11-inch softball shall be at least 11.0 inches in circumference. It shall weigh at least 6.0 ounces. The smooth-seamed style shall not have fewer than 80 stitches in each cover, sewn by the two-needle method, or with an authentic facsimile of stitching as approved by USA Softball. It is acceptable for the Slow Pitch ball to be molded and the facsimile of 80 stitches must be red.

1. **Slow Pitch Ball:** The yellow optic cover, red-stitch 11-inch ball with a Ball COR of .520 or under, and a Ball Compression of 300.0 lbs. or under, shall be used in the following USA Softball play:
 - a. Women’s Slow Pitch
 - b. Coed Slow Pitch Women’s Batter only
 - c. Women’s Master’s and Seniors Slow Pitch

SOFTBALL	THREAD COLOR	COVER COLOR	SIZE	WEIGHT	MARKING
11” SP	Red	Yellow	At least 11.0”	At least 6.0 oz	ASA or USA Softball Logo Red Marking
12” SP	Red	Yellow	At least 12.0”	At least 6.75 oz	ASA or USA Softball Logo Red Marking
12” SP	Red	Yellow	At least 11.875”	At least 6.25 oz	ASA or USA Softball Logo Green Marking

DIVISION OF PLAY	SIZE	COR	DESCRIPTION	COMPRESSION	DYNAMIC STIFFNESS
Slow Pitch:					
Women’s, Coed (Female)	12”	.520 max	Yellow Optic Cover Red Stitch only	375.0 lbs. max	5,000 lbs. max
Men’s, Coed (Male)	12”	.520 max	Yellow Optic Cover	300.0 lbs. max	5,000 lbs. max
Seniors	12”	.440 max	Yellow Optic Cover Red Stitch	375.0 lbs. max	7,500 lbs. max
Seniors	12”	.520 max	Yellow Optic Cover	300.0 lbs. max	5,500 lbs. max

SECTION 4 - GLOVE/MITT

A Glove/Mitt may be worn by any player. The dimensions of any glove/mitt used by any fielder shall not exceed the specifications set forth below (see drawing and specifications).

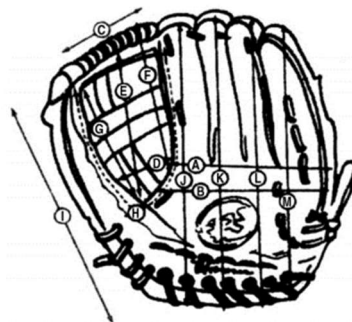
(a) Palm width (top)	8 in.
(b) Palm width (bottom)	8 1/2 in.
(c) Top opening of web	5 in.
(d) Bottom opening of web	4 1/2 in.
(e) Web top to bottom	7 1/4 in.
(f) 1st finger crotch seam	7 1/2 in.
(g) Thumb crotch seam	7 1/2 in.
(h) Crotch seam	17 1/2 in.
(i) Thumb top to bottom edge	9 1/4 in.
(j) 1st finger top to bottom edge	14 in.
(k) 2nd finger top to bottom edge	13 1/4 in.
(l) 3rd finger top to bottom edge	12 1/4 in.
(m) 4th finger top to bottom edge	11 in.

SECTION 5 - CATCHER'S EQUIPMENT, FACE MASK/GUARDS AND HELMET

- A. **FACE MASK/GUARDS:** Any defensive player or offensive player may wear a facemask/guard. Face masks/guards that are cracked or deformed, or if padding has deteriorated or is missing, are prohibited.
- Note:** A NOCSAE approved mask is only compatible with certain NOCSAE approved helmets. Failure to ensure proper compatibility may create unsafe conditions and may affect any manufacturer's product liability obligation. Contact the manufacturer or supplier of the helmet and the mask to ensure proper compatibility and approval of your specific mask-helmet combination.
- B. **HELMETS:** Any defensive player or offensive player may wear a helmet at any time.
1. **Defense:** Any defensive player may wear a helmet, with or without ear flaps, of similar color as the team caps. It must have a bill.
- Exception:** Hockey Style Face Mask.
- C. **PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT:** Unless more stringent equipment is required by these rules any offensive or defensive player may wear any protective equipment. As specifically set forth in these rules, helmets may be required to be worn in certain situations during certain play, however, regardless of whether helmets are mandated by rule, any player shall have a right to wear a helmet at any time and during any part of the game, if that player so desires. Helmets shall have a bill.
- WARNING:** The game of softball involves certain risk, including but not limited to death, serious neck and spinal injuries resulting in complete or partial paralysis, brain damage and serious injury to virtually all bones, joints, muscles, and internal organs. Equipment used may be inadequate to prevent serious injury. However, in certain situations, the player's use of a helmet may prevent or lessen certain injuries. Players choosing to not wear helmets do so with knowledge of the danger involved and agree to accept all

liability for any injury or property loss related in any way to a player's decision not to wear a helmet.

SECTION 6 - UNIFORM



All players on a team shall properly wear uniforms that are like in color and style. Sleeves or straps of the uniform top may be adjusted, with or without tie-ups, to the comfort of the players, provided uniform numbers remain visible. If because of the blood rule a change is required and the uniform part does not match, the player will not be penalized. All protective equipment should be worn properly. If a player is requested by the umpire to remove jewelry, illegal shoes or illegal parts of the uniform and they refuse, the player will not be allowed to play.

Exception: Men's D Slow Pitch, Men's E Rec Slow Pitch, Women's Open, Women's C and D Slow Pitch and Coed C and D Slow Pitch: the

only uniform requirement is matching shirt with number.

- A. **HEADWEAR:**
1. Ball caps and visors are optional for players. If worn, they may be mixed and must be worn properly. Colors to include black, white, gray, beige, or team colors. The colors may be mixed and are not required to be the same for all team members. Handkerchiefs do not qualify as headwear and cannot be worn around the head or neck. Plastic visors are not allowed.
- B. **PANTS/SLIDING PANTS:** All players' pants may be long, short, or mixed in style, if they are like in color. Players may wear a solid-colored pair of sliding pants. It is not mandatory that all players wear sliding pants, but if more than one player wears them, they must be like in color and style. No player may wear ragged, frayed, or slit legs on exposed sliding pants.
- C. **UNDERSHIRTS:** Players may wear a solid-colored undershirt. It is not mandatory that all players wear an undershirt, but if more than one player wears one, they must be like in color and style. No player may wear ragged, frayed, or slit sleeves on exposed undershirts.
- D. **NUMBERS:** An Arabic whole number (0-99) of contrasting color, or outlined in contrasting color, at least three inches high must be clearly visible on all uniform shirts. 00 and 0, 01 and 1 are examples of different numbers. No players on the same team may wear identical numbers. Players without numbers will not be permitted to play. There is no penalty for a player wearing a wrong number or a duplicate number. Correct the number in the score book or have the player(s) change jerseys in case of duplication and continue play.

- E. **CASTS/PROSTHESIS:** All casts and splints must be padded. Prosthesis may be worn. Braces with exposed hard surfaces must be padded. Any of this equipment judged by the umpire to be potentially dangerous is illegal. Any decision by the umpire should be based on whether a device worn or used by an individual with a disability changes the fundamental nature of the game or poses a significant risk to the welfare of other players.
- F. **JEWELRY:** Exposed jewelry, which is judged by the umpire to be dangerous, must be removed and may not be worn during the game. Medical alert bracelets or necklaces are not considered jewelry. If worn, they must be taped to the body, so the medical alert information remains visible.
- G. **SHOES:** Must be worn by all participants. A shoe shall be considered official if it is made with either canvas or leather uppers or similar material(s). The soles may be either smooth or have soft or hard rubber cleats. Ordinary metal sole or heel plates may be used if the cleats on the plates do not extend more than 3/4 of an inch from the sole or heel of the shoe. Shoes with round metal spikes are illegal. Shoes with detachable cleats that screw on are not permitted; however, shoes with detachable cleats that screw INTO the shoe are permitted.
- Exception:** *Coed Slow Pitch and Senior Slow Pitch Play: No metal cleats. No metal spikes nor hard plastic or polyurethane spikes like metal sole and heel plates are allowed.*
- Effect:** Players wearing metal cleats after being warned by the umpire, shall be ejected.

SECTION 7 - ALL EQUIPMENT

- A. Notwithstanding the foregoing, USA Softball reserves the right to withhold or withdraw approval of any equipment which, in USA Softball's sole determination, significantly changes the character of the game, affects the safety of participants or spectators, or renders a player's performance more a product of the player's equipment rather than the player's individual skill.
- Note:** The characteristics of any approved equipment cannot be unnaturally changed. Examples include icing, cooling, or heating of any equipment. In addition, approved bats shall not be rolled, shaved, or modified to change their characteristics from that produced by the manufacturer. Warming devices for bats are not approved.
- B. The National Championship UIC, Assistant UIC or Staff has the right to remove all equipment not meeting Rule 3 including bats and helmets, through pregame inspection, bat testing or during a game. Removed equipment will be marked properly with the name of the team and/or player and will be returned after the team's final game of the Championship. The equipment will be securely stored by the Championship Committee until returned to the team and/or player.

RULE 4 – PLAYERS, COACHES, SUBSTITUTES

SECTION 1 - PLAYERS

- A. A team must have the required number of players present in the dugout or team area to start or continue a game.
1. Line-up cards are to be completed and submitted to the official scorer and umpire at the start of each game. A starting player shall be official when the line-up is

inspected and approved by the plate umpire and team manager at the pre-game meeting. The line-up shall contain the first and last name, defensive position, and uniform number of each player. If a wrong number is on the line-up, correct it and continue playing with no penalty. All available substitutes should be listed in the designated place by their last name, first name and uniform number.

2. Eligible roster members may be added to the available substitute list at any time during the game.
- B. Male rosters shall include only male players and female rosters shall include only female players.
- C. A team shall consist of players in the following positions:
1. **Slow Pitch:**
 - a. 10 Players as follows: Pitcher (F1), catcher (F2), first base (F3), second base (F4), third base (F5), shortstop (F6), left fielder (F7), left center fielder (F8), right center fielder (F9) and right fielder (F10).
 - b. 10 Players with Extra Player (EP): 11 players with only 10 playing defense.
 - c. Senior Slow Pitch (50-55-60): 10 defensive players will bat (F10) and 1 or 2 Extra Players (EP) or has the option of having up to and including all roster players present bat.
Note: The Shorthanded Rule allows the game to continue with one less than is in the batting order.
 - d. Senior Slow Pitch (65-70-75): 11 defensive players will bat (F11) and 1 or 2 Extra Players (EP) or have the option of having up to and including all roster players present bat.
Note: The Shorthanded Rule allows the game to continue with one less than is in the batting order.
Exception: Age 65-Over may use either 10 or 11 defensive players for the Championship, at the discretion of the Championship Director.
 - e. Coed 10 players five male and five females: Pitcher (F1), catcher (F2), first base (F3), second base (F4), third base (F5), shortstop (F6), left fielder (F7), left center fielder (F8), right center fielder (F9) and right fielder (F10). They must have two males and two females in both the infield and the outfield and one male and one female as pitcher and catcher.
 - f. Coed with Extra Player (EP) 12 players: Six male and six females as in 10 players with two Extra Players (EPs).

If discovered using the wrong number of females or males in the outfield or infield and brought to the umpire's attention by the offended team:

1. After a pitch legal or illegal or play made,
Effect: All action stands.
2. Before the next pitch legal or illegal or play made,
3. Before the defense has left the field,
4. Before the umpires have left the field of play,
Effect: 2,3, and 4.

- (a) If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely, and all other runners have advanced at least one base. All action of the batted ball stands.
- (b) If all runners, including the batter-runner, do not advance at least one base, the manager has the option of taking the result of the play, or award the batter first base and advances all runners, if forced.

D. Shorthanded Rule:

1. To start a game:

- a. A game may begin or finish with one less than required to start.
- b. The vacant position must be listed last in the batting order.
- c. An out will be recorded when the vacant position in the batting order is scheduled to bat.
- d. (Coed Slow Pitch) If a team plays shorthanded with either three players in the infield or outfield, at least one must be male and at least one must be a female.

Effect: Failure to have the required number of eligible players to start or continue a game will result in a forfeit.

2. To continue a game once started with a full team listed on the line-up card:

- a. If a team begins play with the required number of players as listed, that team may continue a game with one less player than is currently in the batting order whenever a player leaves the game for any reason other than ejection. Under no circumstances shall a team be permitted to bat 1) less than 9 in Slow Pitch, 3) less than 10 in Slow Pitch when using an EP and 4) less than 11 in Slow Pitch when using two EPs.
- b. If playing shorthanded and a substitute arrives the substitute must be inserted immediately into the vacant spot. If the substitute refuses to enter for any reason that player becomes ineligible for the remainder of the game.
- c. (Coed) If another player of the correct gender arrives, that player must be inserted into the line-up in the vacant spot by alternating genders.
- d. If the player leaving the game is a runner or batter, the runner or batter shall be declared out.
- e. When the player who has left the game is scheduled to bat, an out shall be declared for each turn at bat. An inning or the game can end with an automatic out.
- f. The player who has left the game cannot return to the line-up.
Exception: A player who has left the game under the blood rule may return even after missing a turn at bat.
- g. (Coed) The batting order must still alternate, and the defensive positioning remains as required.

Effect: Failure to have the required number of eligible players to start or continue a game will result in a forfeit.

SECTION 2 - AMERICAN DISABILITY ACT RULE

These Rules shall be subject to requests for reasonable modification for purposes of complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) unless such modifications would change the fundamental nature of the activity or would pose a significant risk to the safety of other participants. A person who, because of a disability, would like a reasonable modification to the Rules to participate should advise the applicable Local Association Member, league, tournament director, and/or event organizer of the requested modification, why it is needed, and how the modification would avoid disability discrimination, including how the modification will address the player's specific disability. Such modification requests should be made sufficiently in advance so that an individualized inquiry may be undertaken to decide whether to allow the requested modification. Such an inquiry will include consideration of the participant's specific circumstances and the purpose of the rule, policy, or practice at issue. It is highly recommended that participants provide notice of such requests to the applicable Local Association Member, league, tournament director, and/or event organizer sufficiently in advance of and prior to or during the league or tournament.

- A. This rule may be used for a player that has been determined by the American Disabilities Act of July 25, 1990, to be physically challenged. As a result of the player's disability, the player can play either offense or defense.
- B. In appropriate circumstances, the following Rules may be used in the event a person is determined to be an ADA Player. For these ADA Flex Player, EP and DP rules to apply, the ADA player's specific disability shall correspond to the need for the application of these Flex Player, EP and DP rules.
- C. Teams using a physically challenged player on offense or defense must have 11 players. If the physically challenged player can play both, 10 players are needed.
- D. When a physically challenged person plays offense only, the team will follow the EP rule as written. There would be 11 hitters including the ADA player, and only 10 who play defense.
- E. When a physically challenged player plays defense only, they will be listed as the FLEX and placed last in the line-up. The team has the option to bat 10 or 11 players (if the EP is also used). When using a FLEX, it must be made known prior to the start of the game.
- F. If a team starts the game with the FLEX option, the FLEX player can never play offense. If this person for any reason cannot continue to play and the team has no other physically challenged player for a substitute, the EP can now play defense.
- G. The FLEX position has the same re-entry status as any other starting position if the person substituted is also determined to be physically challenged under the ADA program. The original FLEX player may re-enter only in the same spot in the batting order.
- H. (Coed) When a FLEX or two FLEX players, one male and/or one female are used, the name(s) must be inserted at the end of the line-up. The EP or two EP's can be listed anywhere in the first 10 positions.

Note: This special rule has been adopted to accommodate the athlete who is physically challenged. The intent is not to change the game and/or not to deprive any player from

playing who would normally play, therefore, when using the EP, the normal EP rules will be followed including substitutions and re-entry. If the EP is used in addition to the FLEX, the FLEX must play defense and any of the other 11 players will be eligible to play defense. Only 11 can bat.

- I. Any eligible player on the official line-up, including available substitutes, may be used as a courtesy runner for an ADA player. Unlimited courtesy runners are allowed each inning.
- J. A participant who is hearing-impaired may use a sign language interpreter or other auxiliary hearing aid during play to assist that hearing-impaired participant. A sign language interpreter shall be allowed in the dugout, on the field of play (fair or foul territory), or in other areas to be able to provide communication to the hearing-impaired participant, but such sign language interpreter shall be subject to any other rules, policies, or practices generally applicable to participants, including submitting to and passing an annual background check screening, if applicable. Any concerns, issues or requests concerning the specific location of such interpreters on the field of play shall be resolved by the umpire(s) during gameplay and such concerns or requests shall be addressed to and resolved by the applicable Local Association Member, league, tournament director, and/or event organizer in advance of gameplay. It is highly recommended that participants provide notice of such requests to the applicable Local Association Member, league, tournament director, and/or event organizer sufficiently in advance of and prior to or during the league or tournament registration process prior to the start of a season or tournament.
- K. Subject to the requirements of this rule, any player with a disability, including a diabetic condition, who needs to come out of the ball game while on offense or defense due to the disability, including when batting due to a sugar imbalance caused by diabetes, may have a replacement player substitute for the player until such time as the disability subsides. To qualify under this rule, the player with the disability must be disclosed and noted by the player's manager to the umpire at the home plate conference at the outset of play. In the umpire's discretion, the umpire may waive the requirement that the subject player be disclosed at the home plate conference at the outset of play. For purposes of this rule, the term disability shall be defined and construed consistent with the definition of disability in the Americans with Disabilities Act.

SECTION 3 – DESIGNATED PLAYER (Fast Pitch)

Section removed as it only applies to fast pitch.

SECTION 4 - EXTRA PLAYER

- A. An extra player is optional, but if used, it must be made known prior to the start of the game and be listed in the line-up card in the regular batting order. If the extra player is used, the extra player must be used the entire game. If an extra player is used and not listed on the line-up card the following occurs:

Effect:

1. If discovered while the non-listed extra player is at bat, the legal batter enters the game and assumes count, or

2. If discovered while the non-listed extra player is on base and before a pitch legal or illegal has been thrown to the next batter, treat as batting out of order. The player who should have batted is out. Any advancement or score of a runner because of the non-listed EP is negated. The person not listed in line-up is disqualified from the game, or
 3. If discovered while the non-listed extra player is on base and a pitch has been thrown to the next batter, remove the non-listed extra player from the base, or if the player has scored, nullify the run, and disqualify the player from the game.
- B. The extra player must remain in the same position in the batting order for the entire game.
 - C. When an extra player is used, all 11 on the starting line-up must bat and any 10 of those 11 may play defense.
 - D. The extra player may be substituted for at any time. The substitute must be a player who has not yet been in the game. The starting extra player may re-enter.
 - E. If the extra players are used in Coed, all 12 must bat and any 10, (five male and five female), may play defense. Defensive positions may be changed if the Coed positioning is followed. The batting order must remain the same throughout the game.
 - F. (Seniors). One or two extra players may be designated at any place in the batting order. The extra player(s) may enter the game on defense at any time, but the batting order must remain the same throughout the game.

SECTION 5 - RE-ENTRY

Any player may be substituted for or replaced and re-entered once, provided the players occupy their same batting position in the batting order.

- A. The starting player and their substitute may not be in the line-up at the same time.
- B. If a player re-enters the game a second time or a player re-enters the game in a position in the batting order other than their original starting or substitute position, this is considered an illegal re-entry.

Effect - Section 5A-C: Violation of the re-entry rule is considered an illegal player. The illegal player shall be disqualified. Rule 4, Section 6F [4].

SECTION 6 - SUBSTITUTES/ILLEGAL PLAYER

A substitute may take the place of a player whose name is in their team's batting order. The following regulations govern player substitutions:

- A. The manager or team representative of the team making the substitution shall notify the plate umpire at the time the substitute enters. The plate umpire shall then report the change to the scorer.
- B. A substitute shall be considered officially in the game when reported to the plate umpire. The player does not violate the unreported substitute rule until a pitch, legal or illegal, or a play has been made. The use of an unreported substitute is handled as a protest by the offended team while the player is in the game.

Effect: Upon being properly protested, the player will now be officially in the game, and subject to penalties as appropriate and listed in Rule 4, Section 6C [1-9].

- C. A substitute who enters the game without reporting is considered an unreported substitute:
1. After a pitch, legal or illegal, or a play made.
Effect: Player is officially in the game and all action stands.
 2. When an unreported substitute is discovered while at bat.
Effect: The unreported substitute is officially in the game and assumes the ball and strike count and all action stands.
 3. When discovered after completing their turn at bat and:
 - a. BEFORE the next pitch, legal or illegal.
 - b. BEFORE the defense has left the field of play.
 - c. BEFORE the umpires have left the field of play.
Effect:
 1. The unreported substitute is officially in the game and called out.
 2. All other outs that occur on this play stand.
 3. All other runners will return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.
 4. When discovered after completing their turn at bat and:
 - a. AFTER the next pitch, legal or illegal.
 - b. BEFORE the defense has left the field.
 - c. BEFORE the umpires have left the field of play.
Effect:
 1. The unreported substitute is officially in the game.
 2. Any advance of a runner because of the play is legal.
 5. When a runner and that runner is brought to the attention of the umpire BEFORE a pitch, legal or illegal, or a play made.
Effect: No penalty. Replace the unreported substitute with the correct player or enter them as a legal substitute.
 6. When a runner and that runner is protested AFTER a pitch, legal or illegal, or a play made.
Effect: The runner is officially in the game. Any advance of the runners is legal.
 7. When on defense is protested by the offense BEFORE a pitch, legal or illegal.
Effect: No penalty. Replace with the correct player or enter them as a legal substitute.
 8. When on defense MAKES A PLAY and is protested:
 - a. BEFORE the next pitch, legal or illegal.
 - b. BEFORE the defense has left the field.
 - c. BEFORE the umpires have left the field of play.
Effect: The unreported substitute is officially in the game and the offensive team has the option to:
 1. Take the result of the play or
 2. Have the last batter return to bat and assume the ball and strike count and
 3. All runners return to the last base occupied prior to the play.
 9. When on defense is protested AFTER a pitch, legal or illegal, to the next batter.
Effect: The unreported substitute is officially in the game and all play stands.

Note: If the substitute is an illegal player for any reason, the substitute will be subject to the penalty for that violation.

- D. If an injury to a batter-runner or runner prevents them from proceeding to an awarded base, and the ball is dead, a substitute for the batter-runner or runner may be made. The substitute will be allowed to proceed to any awarded base(s). The substitute must legally touch any awarded or missed base(s) not previously touched. This is not a courtesy runner, but a legal substitute.
- E. A player will not violate the illegal player rule until a pitch, legal or illegal, or a play made. The use of an illegal player is handled as a protest by the offended team while the player is in the game.
Effect: Once the umpire has been informed, the illegal player shall be disqualified and can be legally replaced either by a substitute or a starter who re-enters the game.
- F. Illegal Players Include:
 1. **Illegal Pitcher.** A player who returns to pitch after being removed from the pitching position by the umpire,
Effect: Once discovered, the illegal pitcher shall be disqualified and all play stands.
 2. **Illegal Runner.** Occurs when:
 - a. An offensive player is placed in the line-up as a runner for another offensive player.
Exception: Adult Slow Pitch and Senior (pitcher and catcher only), and in the Tie-Breaker Rule. Rule 5, Section 11.
 - b. A player does not report as a courtesy runner, or an illegal courtesy runner is used.
 3. **Illegal Re-Entry.** Occurs when:
 - a. A starting player returns to the game a second time after being substituted for twice.
 - b. A starting player returns to the game but is not in their original position in the batting order.
 - c. A substitute returns to the game a second time after being replaced twice.
Effect - Rule 4, Section 6F [2-4]: The Illegal Player is disqualified and replaced with a legal substitute. All other provisions of Rule 4, Section 6A-C [1-9] apply.

SECTION 7 - COACH

- A. A coach is responsible for the team's actions on the field and will represent the team in communications with the umpire and opposing team. A player may be designated as a coach in the event the coach is absent or that player is acting as a player/coach.
- B. Coaches must be neatly attired or dressed in the team uniform. If a coach wears a hat/cap, it must be approved head wear.
Effect: The coach(s) cannot be on the playing field to coach their team.
- C. A base coach is an eligible team member or coach of the team at bat who occupies the coach's box at first or third, to direct the offensive players.
 1. When in the coach's box a base coach may have a score book (electronic or paper), pen, pencil, or electronic marker and an indicator all of which shall be used for scorekeeping or record keeping purposes only.

2. A base coach shall stay within the confines of these boxes with both feet.
 - a. A coach may leave the coach's box to signal the runner to slide, advance or return to a base or move out of a fielder's way if the coach does not intentionally interfere with the play.
 - b. A coach may not leave the coach's box to give verbal communications or signals to the batter.

Effect: After a warning, an offensive conference will be charged.

3. Base coaches may not use language that will reflect negatively upon players, umpires, or spectators.
4. A base coach may address only their team members.
5. No electronic equipment, to include cell phones, pagers, etc., can be worn or carried on the playing field.

Effect: Disqualification or ejection from the game after a warning.

SECTION 8 - DISQUALIFIED OR EJECTED PARTICIPANT

- A. A disqualified player is prohibited from playing but can remain in the team area or serve as a coach/manager.

Effect: If found playing, the game is forfeited.

- B. An ejected participant must leave the grounds and have no contact with the umpires or participants in the game.

Effect: The game is forfeited.

- C. Any arguing on the judgment of balls and strikes will result in a team warning.

Effect: Any repeat offense shall result in the ejection of that team member.

- D. If a player is disqualified a team can play shorthanded, however if a player is ejected and the team does not have enough players, play cannot continue.

Effect: The game is forfeited.

SECTION 9 - BLOOD RULE

A game participant or umpire who is bleeding or who has blood on their uniform shall be prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment can be administered. If medical care or treatment is administered in a reasonable length of time, the individual will not have to leave the game. The length of time that is considered reasonable is left to the umpire's judgment. Uniform rule violations will not be enforced if a uniform change is required. The umpire shall:

- A. Stop the game and immediately, call a coach, trainer or other authorized person to the injured player and allow treatment.
- B. Apply the rules of the game regarding substitution, short-handed rule, and re-entry if necessary.

SECTION 10 - INJURED PLAYER

During a live ball situation, when a player becomes injured, and in the umpire's, judgment requires immediate attention, the umpire shall call "DEAD BALL".

Effect: Award any bases that would have been reached.

RULE 5 - THE GAME

SECTION 1 - HOME TEAM

Prior to the start of all games, the home team shall be decided by a coin toss.

SECTION 2 - FITNESS OF THE GROUNDS

The fitness of the grounds for a game shall be decided solely by the plate umpire.

SECTION 3 - REGULATION GAME

- A. A regulation game shall consist of seven innings. A full seven innings need not be played if the team second at bat scores more runs in six and one-half innings and/ or before the third out in the last of the seventh inning, the run-ahead rule is applied or after the time limit has expired in JO Play.
- B. A game that is tied at the end of seven innings, or after time limit has expired shall be continued by playing additional innings until one side has scored more runs than the other at the end of a complete inning, or until the team second at bat has scored more runs in their half of the inning before the third out is made.
- C. A game called by the umpire shall be regulation if five or more complete innings have been played, or if the team second at bat has scored more runs in four or more innings than the other team has scored in five or more innings. The umpire is empowered to call a game at any time because of darkness, rain, fire, panic, or any other cause that places the patrons or players in peril.
- D. Games that are not considered regulation shall be resumed at the exact point where they were stopped.
- E. A regulation tie game shall be declared if the score is equal when the game is called at the end of five or more complete innings, or if the team second at bat has equaled the score of the first team at bat in the incomplete inning.
- F. Games that are regulation tie games shall be resumed at the exact point where they were stopped.

SECTION 4 – FORFEITED GAMES

A forfeited game shall be declared by the umpire in favor of the team not at fault in the following cases:

- A. If an umpire is physically attacked by any team member and/or spectator.
- B. If a team fails to appear on the field, or being on the field, refuses to begin a game for which it is scheduled or assigned within a time set for forfeitures by the organization that the team represents.
- C. If one side refuses to continue to play after the game has begun unless the game has been suspended or terminated by the umpire.
- D. If, after play has been suspended by the umpire, one side fails to resume playing within two minutes after "play ball" has been declared by the umpire.
- E. If a team employs tactics noticeably designed to delay or to hasten the game.
- F. If, after a warning by the umpire, any rules of the game are willfully violated.
- G. If the order for the ejection of a game participant is not obeyed within one minute.

- H. If the ejection of a player or players from the game results in fewer than the required number of players to continue the game.
- I. If an ejected participant is discovered participating or has contact with the umpires or other participants in the game.
- J. If a team is playing one player short and another player becomes injured or ill leaving the team with two less players than the required number.
- K. Once a game has been forfeited the forfeit cannot be changed.

SECTION 5 - SCORING OF RUNS

- A. One run shall be scored each time a runner:
 1. Touches first, second, third base and home plate.
 2. When using the tie breaker rule, a runner starting at second base, touches third base and home plate.
Exception: Any fair ball hit over the fence for a home run or a four-base award, the batter and all runners are credited with a run. The batter and all runners are not required to run the bases.
- B. No run shall be scored if the third out of the inning is the result of:
 1. A batter-runner being called out prior to reaching first base or any other runner forced out due to the batter becoming a batter-runner. On an appeal play, the force out is determined when the appeal is made, not when the infraction occurred. Therefore, if the batter-runner or trail runner is put out prior to an appeal, the out on the appeal will not be considered a force out.
 2. A runner being put out by a tag, called out for passing a runner or a live ball appeal prior to the lead runner touching home plate.
 3. A preceding runner is declared out on an appeal play.
- C. No run shall be scored if a "fourth out" is the result of an appeal of a base missed or left too soon on a runner who has scored.

SECTION 6 - GAME WINNER

The winner of the game shall be the team that scores more runs in a regulation game.

- A. The score of a called regulation game shall be the score at the end of the last complete inning, unless the team second at bat has scored an equal number or more runs than the first team at bat in the incomplete inning. In this case the score shall be that of the incomplete inning.
- B. The score of a regulation tie game shall be the tie score when the game was terminated.
- C. The score of a forfeited game shall be seven to zero in favor of the team not at fault.

SECTION 7 - CONFERENCES

- A. Offensive Conference: There shall be only one charged conference between team representatives and the batter, another team representative, and/or runners in an inning. The umpire shall not permit any such conferences more than one in an inning.
Effect: Ejection of the manager or team representative who insists on another charged conference.

- B. Defensive Conference: There shall be only three charged conferences between the manager or other team representative from the dugout with any defensive players in a seven-inning game. For every inning beyond seven, there shall be one charged conference per inning between the manager or other team representative from the dugout with any defensive players.
Effect: The fourth and each additional, charged conference in a seven-inning game, or for any charged conference more than one per inning in an extra inning game, shall result in the removal of the pitcher from the pitching position for the remainder of the game. The removed pitcher can play another position on defense but cannot pitch again.

SECTION 8 - HOME RUN RULE

- A. (Men's, Men's Masters, Coed and Women's Slow Pitch) A limit of over-the-fence home runs will be used in all Men's, Men's Masters, Coed and Women's slow pitch divisions. The following limitations are per team per game:
 1. Twelve (12) - Class AA
 2. Ten (10) - Class A
 3. Eight (8) - Coed Open
 4. Seven (7) – Men's Class B
 5. Six (6) – Industrial
 6. Five (5) - Masters 35, 40, and 45-over, Class C Coed, Men's, and Women's Class C
 7. Four (4) - Church
 8. Three (3) - Men's Class D, Class D Coed, and Women's Class D
 9. One (1) - Men's and Women's Class E/REC
Note: CEO will establish a home run limit for Men's Super Slow Pitch Championship.
Effect: For any in excess, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and no runners can advance.
Note:
 - a. Any fair fly ball touched by a defensive player that clears or has cleared the fence in fair territory, should be declared a four base award and shall not be included in the total of over-the-fence home runs.
 - b. A home run will be charged for any ball hit over the fence whether runs score or not.
 - c. Both male and female home runs count toward the Coed limit.
- B. The following limitations are per team per game:

Seniors 50-55-60-65:

 1. Nine (9) plus "one-up" - Major Plus
 2. Six (6) plus "one-up" - Major
 3. Three (3) - AAA
 4. One (1) - AA

Seniors 70 & 75:

 5. Six (6) – Major

6. Three (3) - AAA

Effect: For any in excess, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and no runners can advance.

Note: One-up Ruling: If both teams have reached the limit of home runs, either team can hit an additional home run, to go one home run ahead of the opposing team. (Example: With a six-home run limit, the home team hits their sixth home run in the 2nd inning. The visiting team can then hit a total of seven home runs and do so in the top of the 3rd inning. In the bottom of the 3rd, the home team could then hit two more home runs to go "one-up" again, with a total of eight. This can continue throughout the game until the bottom of the 7th inning.) The home team can only equal the number of home runs by the visitors (more than six) in this inning. If neither team has hit six home runs by the bottom of 7th, the home team can hit their sixth.

SECTION 9 - RUN AHEAD RULE

- A. A run ahead rule must be used at all National Tournaments.
 - 1. Slow Pitch:
 - a. Slow Pitch (except Men's Class A, B, and Seniors): 20 after three innings, 15 after four innings or 10 after five innings.
 - b. Men's Class A, B, and Seniors: 20 after four innings, 15 after five innings.
 - c. CEO will establish a run ahead limit for Men's Super-Slow Pitch.
- B. Complete innings must be played unless the home team scores the run ahead limit while at bat. When the visiting team reaches the limit in the top half of the inning, the home team must have their opportunity to bat in the bottom half of the inning.
- C. **(Men's Senior Slow Pitch Only)** All age groups will have a maximum number of runs allowed per inning except for the seventh inning, the last inning of a time limit game or any extra inning. The Major and Major Plus will have a maximum of 7 runs and the AAA & AA Divisions will have a maximum of 5 runs. The seventh inning, the last inning of a time limit game or any extra innings will have unlimited runs allowed.

SECTION 10 - TIE-BREAKER RULE

(Men's 40-Over, Men's Masters 50-Over & Seniors, Men's Senior Slow Pitch) When after the completion of seven innings of play, the score is tied, the following Tie-Breaker Rule will be played to determine a winning team.

- A. Starting with the top of the eighth inning, and each half inning thereafter, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player who is scheduled to bat last in that respective half inning being placed on second base (e.g., if the number five batter is the leadoff batter, the number four batter in the batting order will be placed on second base. A substitute may be inserted for the runner).
- B. If a team is in the tiebreaker and the Short-Handed Rule is in effect, do not declare an out if the absent player is the one who should begin the half inning at second base. Instead, place on second base the player whose name precedes the absent player's name in the line-up.

SECTION 11 - DUGOUT AND ON FIELD CONDUCT

- A. Coaches, players, substitutes, and other bench personnel shall not be outside the designated bench, dugout/team area except when the rule allows or is justified by the umpire.
- B. Adult: Participants may not smoke or use alcohol beverages inside the dugout or on the playing field.
- C. No person may knowingly possess or have under his/her control a weapon or explosive device on the playing field or in the dugout. For purposes of this subsection, a "weapon" means any firearm, or any weapon of the kind usually known as slung shot, sand club, or metal knuckles, or any knife, dagger, dirk, or other similar weapon that is capable of causing death or bodily injury and is commonly used with the intent to cause death or bodily injury, but the definition of weapon shall specifically exclude an ordinary pocket knife or any softball-related equipment.
Effect-Section 12A-D: The first offense is a team warning. Any repeat offense shall result in the ejection of that team member.
- D. A participant who is hearing-impaired may use a sign language interpreter or other auxiliary hearing aid during play to assist that hearing-impaired participant. A sign language interpreter shall be allowed in the dugout, on the field of play (fair or foul territory), or in other areas to be able to provide communication to the hearing-impaired participant, but such sign language interpreter shall be subject to any other rules, policies, or practices generally applicable to participants, including submitting to and passing an annual background check screening, if applicable. Any concerns, issues or requests concerning the specific location of such interpreters on the field of play shall be resolved by the umpire(s) during gameplay and such concerns or requests shall be addressed to and resolved by the applicable Local Association Member, league, tournament director, and/or event organizer in advance of gameplay. It is highly recommended that participants provide notice of such requests to the applicable Local Association Member, league, tournament director, and/or event organizer sufficiently in advance of and prior to or during the league or tournament registration process prior to the start of a season or tournament.

RULE 6 - PITCHING REGULATIONS (SLOW PITCH)

SECTION 1 - PRELIMINARIES

- A. The pitcher shall take a position with both feet firmly on the ground and with one or both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate.
- B. (Seniors) The pitcher may take a position from the front edge of the pitcher's plate to ten feet behind the pitcher's plate within the 24-inch width of the pitcher's plate with both feet firmly on the ground.
- C. The pitcher must come to a full and complete stop with the ball in front of the body. The front of the body must face the batter. This position must be maintained at least one second before starting the delivery.
- D. The pitcher shall not be considered in the pitching position unless the catcher is in position to receive the pitch.

Effect: Section 1 A-D Delayed Dead Ball. Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6C Section 10 for penalty.

- E. The pitcher shall not simulate a legal pitch while not in contact with the pitcher's plate.

Effect:

1. The ball is dead.
2. Illegal pitch, Ball on the batter
3. A warning is issued, and a repeat action would result in the pitcher ruled illegal and removed from the pitching position.

SECTION 2 - STARTING THE PITCH

The pitch starts when the pitcher makes any motion with the ball after the required stop. While on the pitcher's plate prior to the required stop, any motion may be used.

SECTION 3 - LEGAL DELIVERY

- A. The pitcher shall not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.
- B. The delivery is a continuous motion.
- C. The pitcher shall not use a delivery in which there is a stop or reversal of the pitching motion.
- D. The pitcher shall deliver the ball toward home plate on the first forward swing of the pitching arm past the hip with an underhand motion. The palm of the pitcher's hand may be over or under the ball.
- E. The pivot foot shall remain in contact with the pitcher's plate until the pitched ball leaves the hand. If a step is taken, it may be forward, backward, or to the side, provided the pivot foot remains in contact with the pitcher's plate and the step is simultaneous with the release of the ball.
- F. The pitch shall be delivered on the throwing arm side of the body and not behind the back or through the legs.
- G. The pitch shall be released at a moderate speed. The speed is left entirely up to the judgment of the umpire.

Effect:

1. Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6C Section 10 for penalty.
 2. The umpire shall warn the pitcher who delivers a pitch with excessive speed. If the pitcher repeats such an act after being warned, they shall be removed from the pitching position for the remainder of the game.
- H. The ball shall be delivered with perceptible arc and reach a height of at least 6 feet from the ground, while not exceeding a maximum height of 10 feet from the ground.
- Exception:** Senior Slow Pitch Only shall not exceed a maximum height of 12 feet from the ground.
- I. The pitcher shall not continue any pitching motion after the ball is released.
- J. The pitcher has 5 seconds to release the next pitch after receiving the ball or after the umpire indicates "play ball".
- K. The pitcher shall not deliver a pitch from the glove.

Effect - Section 3 A-K: Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6C Section 10 for penalty.

SECTION 4 – INTENTIONAL WALK

This section has been removed as it applies to fast pitch only.

SECTION 5 - DEFENSIVE POSITIONING

- A. The pitcher shall not deliver a pitch unless all defensive players are positioned in fair territory, except the catcher who shall be in the catcher's box.
- B. A fielder shall not take a position in the batter's line of vision or, with deliberate unsportsmanlike intent, or act in a manner to distract the batter. A pitch does not have to be released.

Effect: The offending player shall be ejected from the game.

SECTION 6 - FOREIGN SUBSTANCE

A defensive player shall not, at any time during the game, be allowed to use any foreign substance upon the ball, the pitching hand, or the fingers. Under the supervision and control of the umpire, powder resin may be used to dry the hands. The pitcher may wear tape on the fingers or a sweatband on the wrist or forearm of the pitching arm. Batting gloves shall not be worn on the pitching hand.

Effect:

1. Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6C Section 10 for penalty.
2. If any defensive player continues to place a foreign substance on the ball, that player shall be ejected.

SECTION 7 – CATCHER

- A. The catcher shall remain within the lines of the catcher's box until the pitched ball is batted, touches the ground, home plate, the batter or reaches the catcher's box.
- B. The catcher shall return the ball directly to the pitcher after each pitch, except after a strikeout.

Effect - Section 6B: A ball on the batter.

Exception: Does not apply with runners on base or the batter becoming a batter-runner.

SECTION 8 - QUICK PITCH

The pitcher shall not attempt a quick return of the ball before the batter has taken a position in the batter's box or when the batter is off balance.

Effect: Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6C Section 10 for penalty.

SECTION 9 - WARM-UP PITCHES

At the beginning of each half inning, or when a pitcher relieves another, not more than one minute may be used to deliver not more than three warm-up pitches. Play shall be suspended during this time. A pitcher returning to pitch in the same half inning will not receive warm-up pitches. There is no limitation as to the number of times a player can return to the pitching position if the player is legally in the game.

Effect: For excessive warm-up pitches award a ball to the batter for each pitch more than three. This does not apply if the umpire delays the start of play due to substitution, conference, injuries, or other umpire duties.

SECTION 10 - NO PITCH

No pitch shall be declared:

- A. When the pitcher pitches during the suspension of play.
- B. When a runner is called out for leaving a base before the pitched ball is batted, touches the ground, or reaches home plate.
- C. When a pitch is delivered before a runner has retouched their base after being legitimately off that base.
- D. When the ball slips from the pitcher's hand during the delivery or during the back swing.
- E. When a player, manager, or coach calls time, employs any other word or phrase, or commits any act while the ball is live for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit an illegal pitch.

Effect: A warning shall be issued to the offending team, and a repeat of this type act by any member of the team warned shall result in the offender being ejected from the game.

Effect - Section 9 A-E: The ball is dead, and all subsequent action on that pitch is cancelled.

SECTION 11 - ILLEGAL PITCH PENALTY

If a batter swings at or contacts any illegal pitch, it is nullified and all play stands. B. If the batter does not swing, a ball shall be called on the batter.

RULE 7 – BATTING

SECTION 1 - ON-DECK BATTER

- A. The on-deck batter shall take a position within the lines of the on-deck circle nearest the offensive team area.
- B. The on-deck batter may loosen up with no more than two official softball bats, an approved warm-up bat, or a combination not to exceed two. Any attachment placed on the bat must be approved by USA Softball.
- C. The on-deck batter may leave the on-deck circle:
 - 1. When they become the batter.
 - 2. When directing runners advancing from third base to home plate.
- D. The on-deck batter may not interfere with a defensive player's opportunity to make an out.

Effect:

- 1. The ball is dead.
- 2. If it involves a runner, the runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out.
- 3. If it is with the defensive fielder fielding a fly ball, the batter is out.

SECTION 2 - BATTING ORDER

- A. The batting order shall show the names, first and last, in the order in which the players are scheduled to bat.

- B. The batting order delivered to the umpire must be followed throughout the game unless a player is replaced by:
 - 1. A substitute who must take the place of the removed player in the batting order.
- C. The first batter in each inning shall be the batter whose name follows the last player who completed a turn at bat in the previous inning.

Note - Section 2 B&C: Batting out of order is an appeal play that may be made by the defensive team only. The appeal must be made before the next pitch, legal or illegal, before the pitcher and all infielders have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory; or on the last play of the game, until the umpires leave the field of play.

- D. If batting out of order is discovered:
 - 1. While the incorrect batter is at bat:
 - a. The correct batter must take the batter's position and assume the balls and strikes count.
 - b. Any runner advanced and runs scored while the incorrect batter was at bat shall be legal.
 - c. There is no penalty whether discovered by the offense or defense while the incorrect batter is at bat.
 - 2. After the incorrect batter has completed a turn at bat and before the next pitch, legal or illegal, before the pitcher and all infielders have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory; or on the last play of the game until the umpires leave the field of play:

Effect:

 - a. The incorrect batter's time at bat is negated.
 - b. The player who should have batted is out.
 - c. Any advancement or score of a runner because of the incorrect batter is negated. Runners not called out must return to the last base occupied at the time of the pitch. Any runner, who is called out prior to the discovery of the infraction, remains out.
 - d. The next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player called out for failing to bat.
 - 3. After a pitch, legal or illegal, to the next batter, or before the pitcher and all infielders have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory; or on the last play of the game, until the umpires leave the field of play:

Effect:

 - a. The turn at bat of the incorrect batter is legal.
 - b. All runs scored, runners advanced, and outs made are legal.
 - c. The next batter shall be that player whose name follows that of the incorrect batter.
 - d. No out is called for failure to bat.
 - e. Players who have not batted and who have not been called out have lost their turn at bat until their spot in the batting order is reached again.
 - 4. Runners shall not be removed from the base occupied, except the batter-runner who has been removed from a base by the umpire as in (2) above to bat in the

- proper position. The correct batter misses their turn at bat with no penalty. The batter following the correct batter in the batting order becomes the legal batter.
- E. The batting order for Coed shall alternate genders. Coed play will use an 11-inch red-stitch ball for female batters and a 12-inch red stitch ball for male batters. Effect: When the wrong ball is used, the manager of the offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play or having the last batter bat again assuming the ball and strike count prior to the wrong ball being discovered.
- F. When the third out in an inning is made before the batter has completed their turn at bat, that player shall be the first batter in the next inning.

SECTION 3 - BATTING POSITION

- A. Prior to the pitch, the batter must have both feet completely within the lines of the batter's box. The batter may touch the lines, but no part of the foot may be outside the lines prior to the pitch.
- B. The batter shall assume a one ball, one strike count upon entering the batter's box.
Except: Senior Slow Pitch
- C. The batter must take the batter's position in the batter's box within 10 seconds after being directed to do so by the umpire.
Effect:
1. The ball is dead.
 2. A strike on the batter.
Note: No pitch must be thrown.
- D. The batter shall not step directly in front of the catcher to the other batter's box while the pitcher is in position to pitch, or anytime thereafter prior to the release of the pitch.
Effect:
1. The ball is dead.
 2. The batter is out.
 3. Runners may not advance.
- E. After the ball is live, the batter may not step out of the batter's box to stop play unless time has been granted by the umpire.
Effect:
1. All play shall continue.
 2. The pitch will be judged a ball or strike.

SECTION 4 - A STRIKE ON THE BATTER

- A. For slow pitch with stealing, each legally pitched ball entering the strike zone.
Effect:
1. The ball remains live.
 2. Runners may advance with liability to be put out.
- B. For each legally pitched ball passing through the strike zone before touching the ground and the batter does not swing. Any pitched ball that hits the ground or plate cannot be legally swung at by the batter. If the batter swings and misses prior to the ball hitting the ground or plate, it is a strike.
Effect: The ball is dead.

- C. (Seniors) When the pitch touches home plate or the strike mat.
- D. For each legally pitched ball swung at and missed by the batter. (Slow Pitch with stealing)
Effect:
1. The ball remains live.
 2. Runners may advance with liability to be put out.
 3. (Slow Pitch without stealing)
Effect: The ball is dead.
- E. For each foul tip.
Effect: (Slow Pitch with stealing)
1. The ball remains live.
 2. Runners may advance with liability to be put out.
 3. The batter is out if it is the third strike.
Effect: (Slow Pitch without stealing)
 4. The ball is dead.
 5. The batter is out if it is the third strike.
 6. The ball remains live.
 7. Runners cannot advance.
 8. The batter is out if it is the third strike.
- F. For each foul ball, including the third strike.
- G. For each pitched ball swung at and missed which touches any part of the batter.
- H. If a pitched ball is swung at, missed, and then hit on the follow through.
- I. When any part of the batter's person or clothing is hit with a batted ball while the batter is in the batter's box.
- J. When a legally pitched ball hits the batter while the ball is in the strike zone.
- K. When a pitched ball is prevented from entering the strike zone by any actions of the batter other than hitting the ball.
Effect - Section 4 H-L:
1. The ball is dead.
 2. A strike on the batter.
 3. Each runner must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.
- L. If the batter does not take their position in the batter's box within 10 seconds after being directed by the umpire.

SECTION 5 - A BALL ON THE BATTER

- A. For each 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. 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.
Effect:
1. The ball is dead.
 2. A ball on the batter.
 3. Runners may not advance.
- B. (Seniors) For each legally pitched ball that does not touch home plate or the strike mat.

- C. For each illegally pitched ball not swung at.
Exception: Slow Pitch with stealing unless the ball hits the ground before reaching home plate, hits the plate or hits the batter.
- D. When a pitched ball hits the batter outside the strike zone.
- E. When the catcher fails to return the ball directly to the pitcher as required.
- F. For each excessive warm-up pitch.
Effect - Section 5 E-H:
 1. The ball is dead.
 2. Runners may not advance.

SECTION 6 - THE BATTER IS OUT

- A. When the third strike is:
 1. Swung at and the pitched ball touches any part of the batter's person.
 2. Not swung at, and the pitched ball hits the batter while the pitch is in the strike zone.
 3. A pitched ball, in the umpire's judgment, which was prevented from entering the strike zone by actions of the batter other than hitting the ball.
- B. When a batter enters the batter's box with or is discovered using an Altered or Non-Approved bat.
Effect:
 1. The batter is out.
 2. Ejected.
 3. If in a tournament, may be subject to future penalties by the Tournament Protest Committee.
- C. When discovered using an Altered or Non-Approved bat after completing their turn at bat and before the next pitch, legal or illegal.
Effect:
 1. The batter is out.
 2. Ejected.
 3. If in a tournament, the player may be subject to future penalties by the Tournament Protest Committee.
 4. All outs stand.
 5. All other runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.
- D. When the batter enters the batter's box with or is discovered using an Illegal bat.
Effect: The batter is out.
- E. When discovered using an Illegal bat after completing their turn at bat and before the next pitch, legal or illegal.
Effect:
 1. The batter is out.
 2. All outs stand.
 3. All other runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.

Note - Section 6 B-E: If a previous batter has used the same Altered, Non-Approved, or Illegal bat and a pitch, legal or illegal, has been thrown, the current batter is out.

- F. When an entire foot is touching the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box at the time the ball contacts the bat.
- G. When any part of a foot is touching home plate at the time the ball contacts the bat.
- H. When a batter leaves the batter's box and returns to the box and contacts the ball.
- I. When the batter bunts or chops the ball.
- J. When members of the team at bat, including those in the team area other than runners, interfere with a player attempting to field a fair or foul fly ball.
- K. When the batter hits a fair ball with the bat a second time in fair territory.
Effect - Section 6 F-M:
 1. The ball is dead.
 2. The batter is out.
 3. Runners must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.

Exception:

 4. When the batter is in the batter's box and contact is made while the bat is in the batter's hands.
Effect: Foul ball, even if the ball is hit a second time over fair territory.
 5. When the batter drops the bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory, and, in the umpire's judgment, there was no intent to interfere with the ball.
Effect: The ball remains live.
 6. When contact is made on the follow through after missing the pitch on the initial swing.
Effect:
 - a. The ball is dead.
 - b. A strike is called.
- L. After a third strike, including a foul ball that is hit after two strikes.
- M. Whenever the batter due up has left the game under the Short-Handed Rule.
- N. When hindering the catcher from catching or throwing the ball by stepping out of the batter's box.
- O. When actively hindering the catcher while in the batter's box.
- P. When intentionally interfering with a thrown ball, in or out of the batter's box.
- Q. When interfering with a play at home plate.
Effect - Section 6 R-U:
 1. The ball is dead.
 2. The batter is out.
 3. Each runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.
Exception: If no play is being made and the batter accidentally contacts the catcher's return throw to the pitcher.
Effect:
 - a. The ball is dead.
 - b. Any advancement of runners shall be nullified.

RULE 8 - BATTER-RUNNER AND RUNNER

SECTION 1 - THE BATTER BECOMES A BATTER-RUNNER

- A. As soon as the batter legally hits a fair ball.
- B. When four balls have been called by the umpire. The batter-runner is awarded first base.
Effect:
1. The ball is dead, and runners may not advance unless forced. (Slow Pitch with stealing) The ball remains live, and the batter-runner may not advance past first base unless there is a play on another runner or an errant throw.
Exception: (Slow Pitch with stealing) Unless the ball hits the ground before reaching home plate, hits home plate or the batter.
 2. If the defensive team desires to walk a batter intentionally, they may do so by notifying the plate umpire who shall award the batter first base. When two consecutive batters are to be walked intentionally, the second walk may not be administered until the first batter reaches first base. If the umpire mistakenly allows two walks at one time and the first batter fails to touch first base, an appeal shall not be honored on the first batter.
Effect: The ball is dead.
 3. (Coed) A walk to a male batter will result in a two-base award. The next batter (a female) shall bat.
Effect:
 - a. The ball is dead.
 - b. A male batter-runner advancing to second base without touching first base shall be called out if properly appealed.
Exception: With two outs, the female batter has the option to walk or bat. Should the female batter choose to walk and pass a male batter-runner while advancing to first base, no out shall be called during this dead ball period.
- C. When the catcher obstructs a batter's attempt to hit a pitched ball.
Effect: Delayed dead ball.
1. If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely or has passed that base and is considered to have reached it, and all other runners have advanced at least one base.
Effect:
 - a. Obstruction is canceled.
 - b. All action because of the batted ball stands.
 - c. No option is given.
 2. If all runners, including the batter-runner, do not advance at least one base.
Effect:
 - a. The manager has the option of taking the result of the play,
or
 - b. Enforcing obstruction by awarding the batter first base.
 - c. Runners are advanced one base if forced.

3. The catcher steps on or in front of home plate without the ball and prevents the batter from hitting the ball.
Effect:
 - a. The ball is dead.
 - b. The batter is awarded first base.
 - c. Runners are advanced one base if forced.
- D. When a fair batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of an umpire or a runner:
1. After touching a fielder including the pitcher.
 2. After passing a fielder other than the pitcher and no other fielder had an opportunity to make an out.
Effect - Section 1 E [1 & 2]: The ball remains live.
 3. Before passing a fielder without being touched.
 4. Before passing a fielder, excluding the pitcher and contacts a runner who is off the base.
 5. After passing a fielder and another fielder can make an out.
Effect - Section 1 E [3-5]:
 - a. The ball is dead.
 - b. The runner is out.
 - c. The batter-runner is awarded first base.
 - d. Runners are advanced one base if forced.
 6. While the runner is in contact with a base.
Effect:
 - a. The runner is not out.
 - b. The ball is live, or dead depending on the position of the fielder closest to the base.
 7. Or contacts an umpire before passing a fielder other than the pitcher.
Effect:
 - a. The ball is dead.
 - b. The batter-runner is awarded first base.
 - c. Runners are advanced one base if forced.

SECTION 2 - THE BATTER-RUNNER IS OUT

- A. After hitting a fair ball and the batter-runner is tagged or first base is tagged prior to the batter-runner reaching first base.
- B. After hitting a fly ball that is caught by a fielder before it touches the ground, any object or person other than a defensive player.
Effect - Section 2 A-C: The ball remains live.
- C. When the batter-runner fails to advance to first base and enters the team area after:
1. A batted fair ball.
 2. (Slow Pitch with stealing) A base on balls.
 3. A dropped third strike.

4. Catcher Obstruction.
Exception: The ball is dead when runners are not required to run bases. Other than on a home run or four base award runners cannot advance unless forced.
- D. When the batter-runner runs outside the three-foot lane and, in the umpire's judgment, interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base. The batter-runner may run outside the three-foot lane to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball. When the defensive player uses the foul portion of the double base, the batter-runner can run in fair territory when the throw is coming from the foul side of first base, and if hit by the thrown ball, it is not interference. If intentional interference is ruled, the runner is out.
- E. When the batter-runner interferes:
1. With a fielder attempting to field a batted ball.
 2. With a fielder attempting to throw the ball.
 3. With a thrown ball while out of the batter's box.
 4. By contacting a fair batted ball before reaching first base.
 5. By discarding their bat in a manner that prevents the defense from making a play on the ball.
- F. When the batter-runner interferes with a play at home plate to prevent an out at home plate.
Effect: The runner is also out.
- G. When the batter-runner steps back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.
Effect - Section 2D-H:
1. The ball is dead.
 2. The batter-runner is out.
 3. Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.
- H. When an infield fly is declared.
- I. When an infield fly is declared, and the fair batted ball hits the batter-runner before reaching first base.
Effect:
1. The ball is dead.
 2. The infield fly is invoked.
- J. When an infielder intentionally drops a fair fly ball, including a line drive or a bunt, which can be caught with ordinary effort with first, first and second, first and third or first, second and third bases occupied with fewer than two outs.
Effect:
1. The ball is dead.
 2. The batter-runner is out.
 3. Runners must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.
- K. When the immediate previous runner who is not out intentionally interferes, in the umpire's judgment, with a fielder who is attempting to catch a thrown ball or throw a ball to complete the play on the batter-runner.
Effect:
1. The ball is dead.
 2. The batter-runner is out.
3. Runners must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.
- L. For excess over-the-fence home runs.
- M. The double base shall be used at first base in all divisions of play. The following rules should be enforced:
1. A batted ball hitting or bounding over the white portion is fair.
 2. A batted ball hitting or bounding over the contrasting color portion is foul.
 3. When a play is being made on the batter-runner, the defense must use the white portion and the batter-runner the contrasting color portion of the base.
Effect: The batter-runner is out when there is a play being made at first base and the batter-runner touches only the white portion, providing the defense appeals prior to the batter-runner returning to first base. Once the runner returns to the white or contrasting color portion of the base, an appeal shall not be honored.
 4. On any force out attempt from the foul side of first base the defense and the batter-runner may use either the white or contrasting color portion of the base.
 5. On an errant throw pulling the defense off the white portion of the base into foul ground, the defense and the batter-runner can use either the white or contrasting color portion.
 6. Once the batter-runner reaches first base, they may start on either the white or contrasting color portion of the entire base.
 7. On balls hit to the outfield with no play on the batter-runner advancing to first base, the batter-runner may touch the white or contrasting color portion. Should the batter-runner return, the runner and defense can use the white or contrasting color portion.
 8. When tagging up on a fly ball, the white or contrasting color portion of the base may be used. On an appeal for the runner leaving the base too soon, the defense may use the white or contrasting color of the base.
 9. (Slow Pitch with stealing) On an attempted pick-off play, the runner may return to the white or contrasting color portion of the base.
 10. On plays at 1B when the batter-runner touches only the white portion and collides with the fielder about to catch a thrown ball while on the white portion of the base.
Effect:
 - a. The ball is dead.
 - b. The batter-runner is out.
 - c. Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.
- N. When a spectator reaches into live ball territory and interferes with a fielder's opportunity to catch a fly ball.
Effect:
1. The ball is dead.
 2. The batter-runner is out.
 3. Runners are awarded the bases that in the umpire's judgment would have been reached had the interference not occurred.

SECTION 3 - TOUCHING BASES IN LEGAL ORDER

- A. When a runner must return to a base while the ball is live or dead, the bases must be touched in reverse order.
Effect: If properly appealed the runner is out.
Exception: On a foul ball.
- B. When a runner or batter-runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out, the runner or batter-runner is entitled to hold that base until legally touching the next consecutive base or is forced to vacate it for a trailing runner. When a runner passes a base, the runner is considered to have touched that base. This also applies to awarded bases.
- C. When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, that runner and all trailing runners are not required to follow a base out of position.
Effect - Section 3B-C:
1. The ball remains live.
 2. Runners may advance or return with liability to be put out.
- D. A runner shall not run bases in reverse order to confuse the fielders nor to make a travesty of the game.
Effect:
1. The ball is dead.
 2. The runner is out.
- E. Two runners may not occupy the same base at the same time.
Effect:
1. The runner who first legally occupied the base is entitled to that base, unless forced to advance.
 2. The other runner may be put out by being tagged with the ball.
- F. Failure of a previous runner to touch a base or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball, and who is declared out, does not affect the status of a trailing runner who touches bases in proper order. If the failure to touch a base in regular order or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball is the third out of the inning, no trailing runner may score a run.
- G. No runner may return to touch a base missed or one left too soon after a trailing runner has scored or once they leave live ball territory.
- H. Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched prior to advancing to awarded bases.
- I. Awarded bases must be touched in legal order.
Exception: On any fair batted ball hit over the fence for a home run or on a four-base award, the batter and all runners are credited with a run. The batter and any runners on base are not required to run the bases. This eliminates any possible outs called or any appeal on the batter-runner or runners for any base running infractions.

SECTION 4 - RUNNERS ARE ENTITLED TO ADVANCE WITH LIABILITY TO BE PUT OUT

- A. On a thrown ball or a fair batted ball that is not blocked.
- B. On a thrown ball that hits an umpire.
- C. When a legally caught fly ball is first touched by a defensive player.
- D. If a fair ball:

1. Contacts an umpire or a runner after having passed a fielder other than the pitcher, provided no other fielder had a chance to make an out, or:
 2. When a fair batted ball has been touched by a fielder, including the pitcher, and the runner did not intentionally interfere with the batted ball or the fielder attempting to field the batted ball.
Effect - Section 4A-E: The ball remains live.
- E. (Men's & Women's Slow Pitch) Runners may advance when the ball reaches home plate, or:
1. When a pitched ball is batted.
 2. Until the pitcher has possession of the ball in the infield and all playing action has ceased.
 3. (Slow Pitch with stealing) Runners may advance when a pitched ball, legal or illegal, reaches the front edge of home plate.
 4. When a pitched ball that hits behind home plate and strikes the umpire, or a thrown ball by the catcher that strikes the umpire.
- F. When a live ball becomes lodged in a defensive player's uniform or equipment.
- G. When a runner fails to touch a base before attempting to make the next base while the ball is live or when bases have been awarded.
- H. After overrunning first base, the runner attempts to continue to second base.
- I. After dislodging a base, a runner attempts to continue to the next base.
- J. When an infield fly is declared and caught runners may tag-up and advance. If the ball is not caught runners may advance at their own risk.

SECTION 5 - RUNNERS ARE ENTITLED TO ADVANCE WITHOUT LIABILITY TO BE PUT OUT

- A. When forced to vacate a base because the batter was awarded a base on balls.
Effect: The ball is dead.
- B. When a fielder not in possession of the ball or not in the act of fielding a batted ball obstructs the progress of a runner or batter-runner.
Effect: Delayed dead ball.
1. An obstructed runner may not be called out between the two bases where obstructed.
Exceptions:
 - a. When an obstructed runner, after the obstruction, safely obtains the base they would have been awarded, in the umpire's judgment, had there been no obstruction and there is a subsequent play on a different runner.
 - b. An act of interference, or
 - c. If passing another runner.
Effect A-C: The obstructed runner is no longer protected between the bases where obstructed and may be put out.
 - d. Missing a base.
 - e. Leaving a base before a fly ball was first touched.
Effect D-E: The obstructed runner is out if properly appealed.

2. If the obstructed runner is put out prior to reaching the base which would have been reached had there been no obstruction.
Effect:
 - a. The ball is dead.
 - b. The obstructed runner and all other runners shall always be awarded the base or bases which would have been reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there been no obstruction.
3. If the obstructed runner is put out after passing the base which would have been reached had there been no obstruction or advanced beyond the two bases where the obstruction occurred,
Effect:
 - a. The ball remains live.
 - b. The obstructed runner is called out.
4. When a runner, while advancing or returning to a base:
 - a. Is obstructed by a fielder who neither has the ball or
 - b. Is attempting to field a batted ball, or
 - c. When a fielder fakes a tag without the ball**Effect:**
 - i. The obstructed runner and all other runners shall always be awarded the base or bases which would have been reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there been no obstruction.
 - ii. In the umpire's judgment, a defensive player making a fake tag could be ejected from the game.

Note 1: Obstructed runners are required to touch all bases in proper order and may be called out if properly appealed.

Note 2: Should an act of interference occur following any obstruction, the interference takes precedence.
- C. (Slow Pitch with stealing) When a pitched ball that remains live becomes blocked or goes out of live ball territory.
Effect:
 1. The ball is dead.
 2. The batter is awarded first base on ball four.
 3. Runners are awarded one base only.
- D. When forced to vacate a base because the batter was awarded first base.
- E. When a fielder intentionally contacts or catches a fair batted, thrown, or pitched ball with any part of the uniform or equipment that is detached from its proper place.
Effect: Delayed dead ball. The batter and runners are entitled to:
 1. Three bases from the time of the pitch on a batted ball.
 2. Two bases from the time of the throw on a thrown ball.
 3. One base from the time of the pitch on a pitched ball.
 - a. In all games with stealing, runners may advance farther with liability to be put out.
4. If the illegal catch or touch is made on a fair batted ball which, in the umpire's judgment, would have cleared the outfield fence in flight, the batter-runner shall receive a four-base award.
5. On a pitched ball that eludes the catcher and is retrieved with detached equipment, there is no penalty if:
 - a. Runners are not advancing,
 - b. No apparent play is possible,
 - c. No advantage is gained.
- F. When the ball is live and is overthrown or is blocked:
Effect:
 1. All runners shall be awarded two bases.
 2. The award shall be governed by the position of the runners when the ball left the fielder's hand.

Note: Runners must return to touch a base missed or left too soon. When two runners are between the same two bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner. Once a base runner advances to the next awarded base, the runner may no longer return to touch any base missed or left too soon.

Exception:

 - a. When a fielder loses possession of the ball, and the ball leaves live ball territory or becomes blocked.
Effect:
 - i. The ball is dead.
 - ii. Each runner is awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the ball entered dead ball territory or became blocked.
 - b. When the ball becomes dead, runners must return to touch a base missed or left too soon if they have advanced, touched, and are a base beyond the base missed or left too soon.
Note: Runners must be given the opportunity to complete their base running responsibilities. A runner shall not be declared out if a fielder deliberately carries or throws the ball into dead ball territory to prevent that runner from returning to a base missed or left too soon. Once a runner leaves live ball territory, they cannot return to touch any base missed or left too soon.
 - c. If the ball becomes blocked due to offensive equipment not involved in the game.
Effect:
 - i. The ball is dead.
 - ii. Runners are returned to the last base touched at the time of the blocked ball.
 - iii. If the blocked ball prevented the defense from making an out, the runner being played on is out.
 - d. If a base is awarded in error, after a legal or illegal pitch the error cannot be corrected.
- G. When a fair batted fly ball strikes the foul pole above the fence level or leaves the playing field in fair territory without touching the ground or going through the fence.

Effect: The batter-runner shall be entitled to a home run, unless it passes out of the grounds at a distance less than the prescribed fence distances from home plate, in which case the batter-runner is entitled to two bases.

- H. When a fair batted ball:
1. Bounces over, rolls under or through a fence or any designated boundary of the playing field.
 2. Deflects off the defensive player and goes out of play.
 3. Hits the fence and then deflects off the defensive player and goes over the home run fence.
 4. Deflects off a runner or umpire and goes out of play, after passing an infielder, excluding the pitcher and provided no other fielder had a chance to make an out.
- Effect:**
- a. The ball is dead.
 - b. All runners are awarded two bases from the time of the pitch.
- I. When a live ball is unintentionally carried by a fielder from live ball territory, or a fielder carries a live ball into the team area to tag a player.
- Effect:**
1. The ball is dead.
 2. Runners are awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the fielder left live ball territory.
- J. When, in the judgment of the umpire, a fielder intentionally carries, kicks, pushes, or throws a live ball into dead ball territory.
- Effect:**
1. The ball is dead.
 2. Runners are awarded two bases from the last base touched at the time the fielder entered or the ball was kicked, pushed, or thrown into dead ball territory.
- K. When there is spectator interference with any thrown or fair batted ball.
- Effect:
1. The ball is dead.
 2. The batter and runners are awarded the bases they would have reached had there been no interference.
- L. When a ball gets lodged in an:
1. Umpire's gear or clothing.
 2. Offensive player's clothing.
- Effect:**
- a. The ball is dead.
 - b. Runners are awarded the bases they would have reached in the judgment of the umpire.

SECTION 6 - A RUNNER MUST RETURN TO THEIR BASE

- A. When a batted ball is foul.
- B. When an illegally batted ball is declared by the umpire.
- C. When a batter, batter-runner or runner is called out for interference. All other runners shall return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.

- D. (Slow Pitch with stealing) When the plate umpire interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw out a runner who is stealing, or an attempted pick off play.

Effect:

1. Delayed dead ball at the time of the interference. If the runner is ruled out, the ball remains live.
2. If the runner is not out, the ball becomes dead. Runners shall be returned to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.

Note: It is not umpire interference if, on a passed ball or wild pitch, the umpire gets hit by a thrown ball from the catcher. The ball remains live.

- E. (Slow Pitch) When base stealing is not allowed.

Effect: Runners must return to their base after each pitch.

Exception: (Slow Pitch with stealing) Runners may advance after the ball reaches the front edge of home plate.

- F. When an intentionally dropped fly ball is ruled.

SECTION 7 - THE RUNNER IS OUT

- A. When running to any base in regular or reverse order and the runner runs more than three feet from the base path to avoid being touched by the ball in the hand or glove of a fielder.
 - B. When the ball is live and while the runner is not in contact with a base, the runner is legally touched with the ball in the hand(s) of a fielder.
 - C. When, on a force play, a fielder contacts the base while holding the ball or tags the runner before the runner reaches the base. If the forced runner, after touching the next base, retreats for any reason toward the base first occupied, the force play is reinstated, and the runner may again be put out if the defense tags the runner or the base to which the runner is forced.
- Effect - Section A-C:** The ball remains live.
- D. When a runner physically passes a preceding runner before that runner has been called out. If this was the third out of the inning, any runs scored prior to the out for passing a preceding runner count.
- Effect:**
1. The ball remains live.
 2. The runner who passes the preceding runner is out.
- E. When any offensive team member, other than another runner, physically assists a runner while the ball is live.
- Effect:**
1. The ball remains live.
 2. The runner being assisted is out.
- Exception – Section E:** After a runner has scored and missed home plate and then is physically assisted back to home plate:
- a. The ball is dead.
 - b. The runner is out, and the run is nullified.
 - c. Runners must return to the last base touched at the time the ball became dead.

- F. When the runner leaves a base to advance to another base before a caught fly ball has touched a fielder, providing the ball is returned to the infield and properly appealed.
- G. When the runner fails to touch a base or bases in regular or reverse order and the ball is returned to the infield and properly appealed. If the runner put out is the batter-runner at first base, or any other runner forced to advance because the batter became a batter-runner, this is a force out.
- H. When the batter-runner legally overruns first base, attempts to run to second base and is legally touched with the ball while not in contact with the base.
- I. When running or sliding for any base and the runner fails to touch it, provided the defense properly appeals.
- Effect - Section 7F-I:**
1. These are appeal plays. The defensive team loses the opportunity of having the runner called out if any of the following occur.
 - a. The pitcher and all infielders have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the team area, or
 - b. On the last play of the game the umpires have left live ball territory.
 2. (Live Ball Appeal) If properly appealed by any defensive player during a live ball, the runner is out.
 3. (Dead Ball Appeal) Once the ball has been returned to the infield and time is called, any coach or infielder with or without possession of the ball, may make a verbal appeal on a runner missing a base or leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball. No runner may leave a base during this period as the ball remains dead until the next pitch.
 - a. If the ball leaves live ball territory, a dead ball appeal cannot be made until completion of all legal advancement by base runners.
 - b. If the pitcher has possession of the ball and is in contact with the pitcher's plate when making a verbal appeal, no illegal pitch is called.
 - c. If "play ball" has been declared by the umpire and the pitcher then requests an appeal, the umpire shall call "time" and allow the appeal process.
- J. When a runner interferes:
1. With a fielder attempting to field a batted fair ball or a foul fly ball, or
 2. With a fielder attempting to throw the ball, or
 3. With a thrown ball.
- Effect:**
- a. The ball is dead.
 - b. The runner is out.
 - c. The batter-runner is awarded first base.
 - d. Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.
 - e. If the interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the runner is put out, the immediate trailing runner shall also be called out.
 - f. If the interference prevents the fielder from catching a routine fly ball, fair or foul, with ordinary effort, the batter is also out.
4. Intentionally with any defensive player having the opportunity to make an out with the deflected batted ball.
- Effect:**
- a. The ball is dead.
 - b. The runner is out.
 - c. The batter-runner is awarded first base.
 - d. Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.
- K. When a runner is struck with a fair untouched batted ball while not in contact with a base and before it passes an infielder, excluding the pitcher, or if it passes an infielder and another fielder has an opportunity to make an out.
- L. When a runner intentionally contacts a fair ball that an infielder missed.
- Effect - Section 7K & L:**
1. The ball is dead.
 2. The runner is out.
 3. The batter-runner is awarded first base.
 4. Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.
- M. When the coach near third base runs in the direction of home plate on or near the baseline while a fielder is attempting to make a play on a batted or thrown ball and thereby draws a throw to home plate.
- N. When members of the offensive team stand or collect around a base to which a runner is advancing, confusing the fielders, and adding to the difficulty of making the play.
- O. When a coach intentionally interferes with:
1. A batted ball.
 2. A thrown ball.
 3. The defensive team's opportunity to make a play on another runner.
- Note:** A batted or thrown ball that unintentionally hits a base coach is not considered interference.
- P. When, after being declared out or after scoring, an offensive player interferes with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play on another runner.
- Note:** A runner continuing to run and drawing a throw may be considered a form of interference. This does not apply to a batter-runner who is entitled to run on the dropped third strike rule.
- Effect - Section 7M-P:**
1. The ball is dead.
 2. The runner closest to home is out.
 3. Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.
- Q. When a defensive player has the ball, and the runner remains upright and crashes into the defensive player.
- Effect:**
1. The ball is dead.
 2. The runner is out.
 3. Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.
 4. If flagrant, the offender is ejected.

- R. When the runner fails to keep contact with the base to which they are entitled until a pitched ball is batted, touches the ground, or reaches home plate.
- S. When a runner abandons a base and enters the team area or leaves live ball territory.
Effect:
 - 1. The ball is dead.
 - 2. The runner is out.
 - 3. Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the infraction.
- T. When a runner is positioned behind and not in contact with a base to get a running start on any fly ball.
Effect:
 - 1. The ball remains live.
 - 2. The runner is out.
 - 3. Whenever a runner on base leaves the game under the Shorthanded Rule. (Rule 4, Section 1D)
- U. Prior to a legal or illegal pitch to the next batter, if the runner was discovered having used an Illegal, Altered or Non-Approved Bat.
Effect:
 - 1. The runner is out.
 - 2. If the bat was Altered or Non-Approved, the runner shall also be ejected.
- V. If the Illegal, Altered, or Non-Approved Bat is discovered prior to the next pitch, legal or illegal, any runners put out prior to the discovery shall remain out.
- W. When base runners switch positions on the bases, they occupied following any conference.
Effect: Each runner on an improper base shall be declared out. In addition, the manager shall be ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct.

SECTION 8 - THE RUNNER IS NOT OUT

- A. When a runner runs behind or in front of the fielder and outside the base path to avoid interfering with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball.
- B. When a runner does not run in a direct line to a base, provided the fielder in the direct line does not have the ball in their possession.
- C. When more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball and the runner meets the one who, in the umpire's judgment, could not have made an out.
- D. When a runner is hit with a fair untouched batted ball that has passed an infielder, excluding the pitcher, and in the umpire's judgment, no other fielder had an opportunity to make an out.
- E. When a runner is hit with a fair untouched batted ball over foul territory that, in the umpire's judgment, no fielder had an opportunity to make an out.
- F. When a runner is hit by a fair batted ball after it touches or is touched by any fielder, including the pitcher, and the runner could not avoid contact with the ball.
- G. When a runner off a base:
 - 1. Is touched with a ball not securely held by a fielder.
 - 2. Is touched with a hand or glove of a defensive player and the ball is in the other hand.

- H. When the defensive team does not appeal:
 - 1. Until after the next legal or illegal pitch, or
 - 2. Until after the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the team area, or
 - 3. On the last play of the game, until the umpires have left live ball territory.
- I. When a batter-runner overruns first base after touching it and returns directly to the base.
- J. When the runner is not given sufficient time to return to a base.
Effect:
 - 1. The ball is dead.
 - 2. "No pitch" will be called by the umpire.
 - 3. The runner will not be called out for being off a base before the pitcher releases the ball.
- K. When the runner has legally started to advance.
Effect: The runner may not be stopped by the pitcher receiving the ball while on the pitcher's plate or by the pitcher stepping on the pitcher's plate with the ball in their possession.
- L. When the runner stays on the base until a fly ball is touched by a fielder and then attempts to advance.
- M. When hit by a batted ball while in contact with a base unless the runner intentionally interferes with the ball or a fielder making a play.
- N. When the runner slides into a base and dislodges it from its proper position. The base is considered to have followed the runner.
- O. When a fielder makes a play on a batter, batter-runner or runner while using an illegal glove/mitt, and it is discovered by the umpire before:
 - 1. The next legal or illegal pitch or
 - 2. The pitcher and all infielders have vacated their normal defensive positions and have left fair territory or
 - 3. On the last play of the game, the umpires have left live ball territory,
Effect: The manager of the offended team is given two options:
 - a. Have the entire play nullified with each runner returning to their original base and the batter batting again, assuming the ball and strike count prior to the pitch that was hit or on a steal attempt.
 - b. Take the result of the play.
- P. When a runner legally returns to a base left too soon or missed prior to an appeal being made or is returning to a base during a dead ball.

SECTION 9 - ADULT SLOW PITCH / MASTERS AND SENIOR FAST PITCH

- A. Adult Slow Pitch.
 - 1. (Senior Men and Senior Women) Unlimited courtesy runners are allowed each inning.
 - 2. (Adult Slow Pitch except Seniors) Any eligible players that may participate on offense or defense and are on the official line-up including available substitutes may be used as a courtesy runner. A courtesy runner may be used once per inning.

In coed two courtesy runners are allowed, one male and one female, must be of the same gender.

NOTE Section 9 A & B: Should an injury or disqualification occur, and no substitutes are available, the courtesy runner must be used as a substitute and take the place of the injured player. Should the courtesy runner be on base and is entered as a substitute, the player for whom the courtesy runner is running must run in their place.

B. Courtesy Runners.

1. A courtesy runner is officially in the game after a pitch, legal or illegal, or a play is made.
2. A courtesy runner whose turn at bat comes while on base:

Effect:

- a. The player who the courtesy runner is running for will be called out.
 - b. The courtesy runner will be removed from the base and take their turn at bat.
 - c. A second courtesy runner or a substitute is not permitted at this time.
 - d. If a courtesy runner is used, the courtesy runner cannot be replaced by a substitute.
3. A player may be a courtesy runner only once an inning.

Effect: If a courtesy runner is used more than once they will be called out and removed from the base.

4. A courtesy runner may not run for an existing courtesy runner except for an injury.
5. A runner who is replaced with a courtesy runner may not be used as a courtesy runner for the remainder of the inning.

Effect - Section 9C [4&5]:

- a. Violations result in an out.
- b. The runner is removed from the base.

C. Senior Slow Pitch.

1. Defensive players can touch only the original home plate and runners can touch only the second home plate.
2. Runners must touch the second home plate located adjacent to the right-handed batter's box to be safe at home.
3. Runners tagged by a defensive player instead of touching the original home plate will not be out.
4. Should a defensive player touch the second home plate and still touch the original home plate before the runner reaches the second home plate, the runner is out.
5. If the runner touches the original home plate, the runner is out, and the ball remains live.
6. Once a runner passes the commitment line, 20-foot marking from a second home plate, the runner cannot return to third base.

Effect:

- a. The ball remains live.
 - b. If the runner returns, the runner is out.
7. If the runner has passed the commitment line, 20-foot marking, and continues running on the original foul line, and interferes with the fielder taking a throw at or

in contact with the original home plate:

Effect:

- a. The ball is dead.
- b. The runner is out.
- c. Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.

SECTION 10 – COURTESY RUNNERS

This section has been removed as it applies to fast pitch only.

RULE 9 – PROTESTS

SECTION 1 - TYPES OF PROTESTS

There are three types of protests:

- A. Misinterpretation of a playing rule - must be made:
 1. Before the next pitch legal or illegal.
 2. Before the next play.
 3. Before all infielders have left fair territory.
 4. On the last play of the game before the umpires leave live ball territory.
- B. Illegal player - must be made while the player in question is in the game and before the umpires leave the playing field.

Note A-B: An umpire cannot reverse a decision after a pitch, legal or illegal.
- C. Ineligible player - can be made any time. Eligibility is the decision of the protest committee.

SECTION 2 – PROTESTS NOT CONSIDERED

Protests will not be considered if based solely on a decision involving the accuracy of judgment on the part of an umpire.

- A. Examples of protests which will not be considered are:
 1. Whether a batted ball was fair or foul.
 2. Whether a runner was safe or out.
 3. Whether a pitched ball was a ball or a strike.
 4. Whether there is a legal or illegal pitch.
 5. Whether a runner did or did not touch a base.
 6. Whether a runner did or did not leave a base too soon on a caught fly ball.
 7. Whether a fly ball was or was not caught legally.
 8. Whether a batted ball was or was not an infield fly.
 9. Whether there was or was not interference or obstruction.
 10. Whether the field is or is not fit to continue or resume play.
 11. Whether there is or is not sufficient light to continue play.
 12. Whether a player or live ball did or did not leave the live ball territory or touch some object or person in a dead ball area.
 13. Whether a batted ball did or did not clear the fence in flight.
 14. Whether a batted ball was or was not touched by a fielder before clearing the fence in flight.

- B. Any other matter involving only the accuracy of the umpire's judgment.

SECTION 3 – PROTESTS ALLOWED

Protests may only involve the interpretation of a rule.

SECTION 4 - PROTEST NOTIFICATION

The manager, acting manager or captain of the protesting team shall immediately notify the plate umpire that the game is being played under protest. The plate umpire shall in turn notify the opposing manager and official scorekeeper. To aid in the correct determination of the issue, all interested parties shall take notice of the information, details and conditions surrounding the decision to protest.

SECTION 5 - PROTESTS OF ELIGIBILITY

Protest of eligibility can be made or appealed at any time. Eligibility protests cannot be waived by the Local Association.

SECTION 6 - WRITTEN PROTESTS

The written protest should contain the following information:

- A. The date, time, and place of the game.
- B. The names of the umpires and scorers.
- C. The rule and section of the official rules or local rules under which the protest is made.
- D. The information, details, and conditions relevant to the decision to protest.
- E. All essential facts concerning the matter protested.

SECTION 7 - RESULTS OF PROTEST

The decision rendered on a protested game must result in one of the following:

- A. The protest is invalid, and the game score stands as played.
- B. When a protest is determined to be valid because of the misinterpretation of a playing rule, the decision will be corrected, and the game shall be resumed from the point at which it was protested. If the protesting team wins the game the protest, then becomes meaningless.
- C. When a protest for ineligibility is determined to be valid, the offending team shall forfeit the game being played or the game last played to the offended team.

RULE 10 - UMPIRES

Failure of umpires to adhere to Rule 10 shall not be grounds for protest. These are guidelines for umpires.

SECTION 1 - POWER AND DUTIES

The umpires are representative of the league or organization by which they have been assigned to a particular game and, as such, are authorized and required to enforce each section of these rules. They have the power to order a player, coach, captain, or manager to carry out or to omit any act which, in their judgment is necessary to give force and effect to one or all these rules, and to impose penalties as herein prescribed. The plate umpire shall

have the authority to make decisions on any situations not specifically covered in these rules. The following is the general information for umpires.

SECTION 2 - CHANGE OF UMPIRES

Teams may not request a change of umpires during a game. No umpire may be replaced during a game unless incapacitated by injury or illness.

SECTION 3 - UMPIRE'S JUDGMENT

- A. There will be no protest on any decision involving accuracy of judgment. No decision rendered by any umpire shall be reversed except when the umpire is convinced it is in violation of one of these rules. In case the manager, acting manager or captain of either team does seek a reversal of a decision based solely on a point of rules, the umpire whose decision is in question, will, if in doubt, confer with the other umpire(s) before taking any action. Under no circumstances shall any player or person, other than the manager, acting manager or captain of either team, have the right to protest any decision and seek its reversal on a claim that it conflicts with these rules.
- B. Under no circumstances will any umpire seek to reverse a decision made by an associate, nor shall any umpire criticize or interfere with the duties of their associate(s), unless asked to do so.
- C. The plate umpire may rectify any situation in which the reversal of an umpire's decision or a delayed call by an umpire places a batter-runner, a runner, or the defensive team in jeopardy. This correction is not possible after one pitch legal or illegal, or after the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout area, or after the last play of the game, the umpires have left the field of play.

SECTION 4 - SUSPENSION OF PLAY

- A. Umpires may suspend play when, in their judgment, conditions justify such action.
- B. An umpire shall call time to perform other duties.
- C. The umpire shall suspend play whenever a batter or pitcher steps out of position for a legitimate reason.
- D. An umpire shall suspend play if a fair batted ball hits the umpire prior to passing an infielder.
Effect: The batter-runner is awarded a base hit. No runners are advanced unless forced to advance.
- E. An umpire shall not call time while any play is in progress, including when a thrown ball hits an umpire.
Exception: During live ball situations, when a player becomes injured and requires immediate attention, an umpire shall call time.
- F. An umpire shall not call time if requested by the offensive team after the pitcher has started the delivery.
- G. During live ball situations, when a player becomes injured and in the umpire's judgment requires immediate attention, the umpire shall call "TIME" and award any bases that would have been reached.

- H. Umpires shall not suspend play at the request of players, coaches, or managers until all action in progress has been completed.
- I. (Slow Pitch) When, in the judgment of an umpire, all immediate play is apparently completed, the umpire will call time.

RULE 11 – SCORING

Failure of official scorer to adhere to Rule 11 shall not be grounds for protest. These are guidelines for the official scorer.

SECTION 1 - OFFICIAL SCORER

The official scorer shall keep records of each game as outlined in the following rules. The official scorer shall have sole authority to make all decisions involving judgment in relation to scorekeeping. For example, it is the scorer's responsibility to determine whether a batter-runner's advance to first base is the result of a hit or an error; however, a scorer shall not decide which conflicts with the official playing rules or with an umpire's decision.

SECTION 2 - THE BOX SCORE

- A. Each player's name and the position or positions played shall be listed in the order in which the player batted or would have batted had the player not been removed or had the game not ended before the player's turn at bat.
 - 1. The extra player (EP) is optional, but if one is used it must be made known prior to the start of the game and be listed on the score sheet in the regular batting order. There will be 11 names for men's and women's slow pitch and 12 names for Coed slow pitch on the official batting order and all will bat.
 - 2. (ADA Slow Pitch) If the physically challenged player is playing defense only (FLEX), they will be listed last on the score sheet.
- B. Each player's batting and fielding record must be tabulated.
 - 1. The first column will show the number of times at bat by each player, but a time at bat will not be charged against the player when:
 - a. The player hits a sacrifice fly that scores a runner.
 - b. The player is awarded a base on balls.

Note: A slap hit is defined as a fake bunt followed by a controlled swing and resulting in the runner(s) advancing, as in the case of a sacrifice bunt.
 - c. The third out occurs and the batter is not entitled to run to first base.

Exception: Third strike foul rule in slow pitch.
 - 2. The second column will show the number of runs scored by each player.
 - 3. The third column will show the number of base hits made by each player. A base hit is a batted ball that permits the batter to reach base safely:
 - a. On a fair ball which settles on the ground, clears the fence, or strikes the fence before being touched by a fielder.
 - b. On a fair ball which is hit with such force or such slowness or which takes such an unnatural bounce that it is impossible to field with ordinary effort in time to make an out.

- c. When a fair ball which has not been touched by a fielder becomes dead because of touching the person or clothing of the umpire.
 - d. When a fielder unsuccessfully attempts to retire a previous runner and in the scorer's judgment, the batter-runner would not have been retired at first base by perfect fielding.
- 4. The fourth column will show the number of opponents put out by each player.
 - a. A put out is credited to a fielder each time they:
 - i. Catch a fly ball or line drive.
 - ii. Catch a thrown ball that retires a batter-runner or runner.
 - iii. Touch a runner with the ball when the runner is off the base to which the runner is entitled.
 - iv. Are nearest the ball when a runner is declared out for being struck by a fair batted ball or for interference with a fielder, or when a runner is called out for being in violation of Rule 8, Sections 7E, J, S or T.
 - v. Are the nearest fielder to an unreported substitute who is declared out in accordance with Rule 4, Section 6C [3]
 - b. A put out is credited to the catcher:
 - i. When a third strike is called.
 - ii. When the batter bunts or chops the ball.
 - iii. When the batter fails to bat in correct order.
 - iv. When the batter interferes with the catcher.
 - v. When the batter hits a third strike foul ball.
 - vi. When a batter hits a home run more than the limit.
 - 5. The fifth column shall show the number of assists made by each player. An assist shall be credited:
 - a. To each player who handles the ball in any series of plays which results in the put out of a runner or batter-runner. One assist only shall be given to any player who handles the ball on any put out. The player who makes the put out in a rundown or similar type play shall be credited with both an assist and a put out.
 - b. To each player who handles or throws the ball in such a manner that a put out would have resulted except for an error of a teammate.
 - c. To each player who, by deflecting a batted ball, aids in a put out.
 - d. To each player who handles the ball on a play which results in a runner or batter-runner being called out for interference or for running out of the base path.
 - 6. The sixth column will show the number of errors made by each player. Errors are recorded:
 - a. For each player who commits a misplay which prolongs the turn at bat of the batter or extends the existence of the runner.
 - b. For the fielder who fails to touch a base after receiving a thrown ball to retire a runner on a force out, or when a runner is compelled to return to a base and provided the thrown ball could be caught by the fielder with ordinary effort.

- c. For the catcher if a batter is awarded first base because of catcher obstruction.
- d. For the fielder who fails to complete a double play because of a dropped ball.
- e. For a fielder if a runner advances a base because of that fielder's failure to catch, stop or try to stop a ball accurately thrown to a base, provided there was occasion for the throw. When more than one player could receive the throw, the scorer must determine which player should receive the error.

SECTION 3 - BASE HITS

A base hit shall not be scored:

- A. When a runner is forced out on a batted ball or would have been forced out except for a fielding error.
- B. When a player fielding a batted ball retires a preceding runner with ordinary effort.
- C. When a fielder fails to retire a preceding runner and, in the scorer's judgment, the batter-runner could have been retired at first base.
- D. When a batter reaches first base safely because of a preceding runner being called out for interfering with a batted or thrown ball, or with a defensive player.

SECTION 4 - RUNS BATTED

A run batted in is a run scored because of:

- A. A safe hit.
- B. An infield put out or fielder's choice.
- C. A runner forced home because of obstruction, a hit batter, or a base on balls.
- D. A home run and all runs scored as a result.
- E. Subject to the provisions of Rule 11, Section 4G, when the batter ends a game with a safe hit which drives in as many runs as are necessary to put a team in the lead, the batter shall be credited with only as many bases on the hit as are advanced by the runner who scores the winning run, and then only if the batter runs out the hit for as many bases as are advanced by the runner who scores the winning run.
- F. The batter ends a game with a home run hit out of the playing field and all runners on base are entitled to score.

SECTION 5 - PITCHER CREDITS

A pitcher shall be credited with a win:

- A. When a starting pitcher has pitched at least four innings and the pitcher's team is not only in the lead when the pitcher is replaced but remains in the lead for the remainder of the game.
- B. When a starting pitcher has pitched at least three innings and the pitcher's team scores more runs than the opposing team in a game that is terminated after five innings of play, or in a game that is terminated after the pitcher's team has scored more runs in four or more innings than the opposing team has scored in five or more innings, and provided that the pitcher's team is not only in the lead if the pitcher is replaced after three innings of pitching but remains in the lead for the remainder of the game.

SECTION 6 - PITCHER LOSSES

A pitcher will be charged with a loss:

Regardless of the number of innings the pitcher has pitched, a pitcher shall be charged with a loss if replaced when the pitcher's team is behind in the score and fails to tie the score or gain the lead thereafter.

SECTION 7 - THE SUMMARY

The summary shall list the following items in this order:

- A. The score by innings and the final score.
- B. The runs batted in and by whom.
- C. Two-base hits and by whom.
- D. Three-base hits and by whom.
- E. Home runs and by whom.
- F. Sacrifice flies and by whom.
- G. Double plays and players participating in them.
- H. Triple plays and players participating in them.
- I. Number of bases on balls charged to each pitcher.
- J. Number of strike outs by each pitcher.
- K. Number of hits and runs allowed by each pitcher.
- L. The name of the winning pitcher.
- M. The name of the losing pitcher.
- N. The time of the game.
- O. The names of the umpires and scorers.
- P. (Slow Pitch with Stealing) Stolen bases and by whom. This includes a batter advancing to second base on an awarded base on balls.

SECTION 8 - STOLEN BASES

(Slow Pitch with Stealing) A stolen base is credited to a runner whenever they advance one base unaided by a hit, put out, force out, fielder's choice, passed ball, wild pitch, an error, illegal pitch, or obstruction.

SECTION 9 - FORFEITED GAMES

All records of a forfeited game will be included in the official records except that of a pitcher's won-lost record.

SECTION 10 - TIE BREAKER RULE

In scoring, the run scored by the player starting as a runner at second base shall be charged to the defensive team and not the pitcher. Depending on the judgment of the official scorekeeper, a run scored by any other player will be charged to the pitcher's ERA.

RULE 12 - USE OF USA SOFTBALL PLAYING RULES

- A. USA Softball Playing Rules shall only apply to USA Softball Championship Play. Provided, however, in accordance with USA Softball Procedural Code, USA Softball Local Associations as well as other organizations may adopt or use all or any part of the USA Softball Playing Rules as they deem appropriate for use in Non-Championship Play. The use of all or any part of such rules is strictly a local matter, and such rules may be altered as league officials deem appropriate or necessary to conduct Non-Championship Play.
- B. Non-Championship Local League. USA Softball, as National Governing Body for Softball in the United States understands that local city or county leagues may adopt and use USA Softball's official playing rules. The use of any or all of USA Softball's playing rules is strictly a local matter and the rules may be altered as league officials deem necessary to conduct their own league play. USA Softball expressly disclaims all liability associated with the use of its official playing rules or any modification of its official playing rules, including its equipment standards, is to promote competitive balance and to preserve the integrity of the sport of amateur softball. USA Softball's official playing rules, or any modification thereof, should not be considered a guarantee that participants, spectators, or others will be safe or free from injury or harm. As stated in the preamble to the USA Softball Code, there are many risks and dangers incidental to the game of softball and USA Softball disclaims all liability associated with the game of softball or the use of its rules or Code. USA Softball does not review, sanction, or approve of any modifications to its official playing rules. To the extent USA Softball's official playing rules are modified by local leagues; such modification may increase the potential or likelihood of injury, death, or property loss, including the dangers associated with increased batted ball speeds. USA Softball shall not be responsible for any injury (including death) or property loss to any person in connection with any modification of USA Softball's official playing rules or the use of USA Softball's rules or any modified rules at any game or event.
- C. Use of USA Softball Official Playing Rules. USA Softball's official playing rules are designed to be used at USA Softball championship events and implemented by USA Softball officials and volunteers. USA Softball shall not be responsible for any injury (including death) or property loss to any person in connection with the use and implementation of USA Softball's official playing rules at any event, whether the event is recognized or sanctioned by USA Softball.
2. Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched.
3. Attempting to advance to second base after making a turn at first base.
4. Batting out of order.
- B. Live. In all games an appeal may be made during a live ball by any fielder in possession of the ball touching the base missed or left too soon on a caught fly ball, or by tagging the runner committing the violation if they are still on the playing field.
- C. Dead. The dead ball appeal may be made:
1. Once all runners have completed their advancement and time has been called. Runners must be given ample opportunity, in the umpire's judgment, to complete their base running responsibilities. Any coach or infielder, with or without the ball, may make a verbal appeal on a runner missing a base or leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball. The pitcher and the catcher are considered infielders for the appeal process. The appropriate umpire should then decide on the play.
 2. When a ball goes out of play, runners must be given the opportunity to complete their base running responsibilities before the dead ball appeal can be made.
- D. May Not Return. A runner may not return to touch a base missed or one left too soon on a caught fly ball if:
1. They have left the field of play.
 2. A following runner has scored.
 3. Once a runner advances to and passes the next base awarded.
Note: A "dead ball" should be called, and runners given the opportunity to complete their base running responsibilities. Returning to touch a base missed or one left too soon must occur prior to an award; therefore, on an overthrow the umpire should hesitate in making the award while watching what the runner does. If the runner shows no intention of returning to touch a base missed or re-tag a base left too soon, then the umpire should make the award. Once the umpire awards bases, and if a runner reaches the first base of the award, and then for any reason retreats to a previous base missed or left too soon, this is an illegal act. The defense may appeal, and the umpire should rule the runner out.
- E. When appeals must be made:
1. Before the next pitch, legal or illegal.
 2. At the end of an inning, before the pitcher and all infielders have left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout area.
 3. On the last play of the game, an appeal can be made until the umpires leave the field of play.
- F. Advance. Runners may advance during a live ball appeal.
- G. More Than One Appeal. More than one appeal play may be made but guessing should not be allowed.
Example: The runner misses second base by a step, but just touches the corner of third base. Even though an appeal is made at third base and the umpire called the runner safe, an appeal may be made at second base on the same runner.
- H. Awards. An appeal should be honored even if the base missed was before or after an award.

RULES SUPPLEMENT

1 - APPEALS

- A. Types.
1. Missing a base, forward or backward, or touching the white portion only of the double base when a play is being made on the batter-runner at first base. Exception: A play from foul territory, or an errant or missed throw pulling the defensive player into foul territory.

- I. Plate and Tag Missed. If a runner misses home plate and the catcher misses the tag, the umpire should hesitate slightly. If no tag is made, the umpire should call the runner safe. If an appeal play is made by tagging the runner or home plate, the umpire should then render a decision.
- J. Force Out. When an appeal is the third out and a force out, no runs shall score. The force is reinstated when a forced runner retreats toward the base first occupied and they may be put out if the defense tags the runner or the base to which they are forced. When the batter-runner is put out prior to reaching first base, all force outs are eliminated. On an appeal play, the force out is determined when the appeal is made, not when the infraction occurred. Therefore, if the batter-runner or trail runner is put out prior to an appeal, the out on the appeal will not be considered a force out.
- K. Tag-Ups. When a runner leaves a base too soon on a caught fly ball and returns to retouch, this is considered a time play and not a force out. When the appeal is the third out, all runs scored in advance of the appealed runner and prior to the legal appeal count.
- L. Missing First Base Before the Throw Arrives. When a runner passes first base before the throw arrives, they are considered to have touched the base unless properly appealed. On appeals involving the double base, when the batter-runner touches the white rather than the contrasting color portion and a play is made, the same procedure applies. When an appeal is made in both situations, it must be made prior to the runner returning to first base while the ball is live.
Exception: If a play is being made from first base foul territory, or an errant or missed throw pulls the defensive player into foul territory, the runner may touch the white or contrasting color portion of the base. This is not considered missing the base.
- M. Fourth-Out Appeal. An appeal may be made after the third out of an inning if it is made properly. The appeal must be made on a runner who has scored but missed a base or left a base too soon. EXAMPLE: One out with runners on first and third base. The batter hits a fly ball that is caught. Both runners leave their base before the caught ball is touched. An appeal is made at first base for the third out. The defense then makes an appeal at third base before all infielders leave the infield. The runner on third base should be called out, and the run does not count.
- N. End of Game. When a situation arises that could lead to an appeal by the defense on the last play of the game, umpires should wait until all infielders have crossed the foul line on their way to the dugout before leaving the infield. If teams line up for “high-fives” there is little chance for an appeal even if the infielders have not crossed the foul line. Umpires should leave the field at this time. No appeal can be made once the umpires leave the field.

2 - BALL ROTATION PROCEDURE

Many local associations now use the same ball rotation procedure that is used in championship play. The procedure is as follows:

- A. The pitcher has a choice of which ball to use at the start of each half inning. However, if both balls do not get into play in the first half of the first inning, the pitcher in the bottom half of the first inning **MUST** throw the unused ball. No choice is offered.
- B. The current game ball should be used until it goes out of play or becomes unplayable. When the ball goes out of play, the umpire should put another ball in play. The pitcher now **MUST** pitch with that ball unless the ball is deemed unplayable by the umpire.
- C. If the pitcher requests another ball because it is unplayable, give them another ball and remove the unplayable ball from the game. Do **NOT** give the pitcher a choice of balls when nothing is wrong with the ball.
- D. After an inning is completed, the ball should be returned to the vicinity of the pitcher’s plate by the team leaving the field. The pitcher taking the field now has a ball with which to start the next half inning. The pitcher may request another ball from the plate umpire, and the umpire should give them another ball after receiving the ball from the pitcher. The pitcher has now made their choice and must pitch that ball.

3 - BAT WITH DENTS, RATTLES, EXCESSIVE WEAR OR DELAMINATIONS. COMPRESSION TESTING PSI REQUIREMENTS

When bats with dents, excessive wear or a rattle are found, that bat shall be removed and held until the Championship is over. When noticeable delamination appears on the Easton style bats designed to show delamination on the barrel area more than an inch in any direction, remove that bat and hold it until the end of the Championship.

Approved bats shall not be rolled, shaved, or modified to change their characteristics from that produced by the manufacturer and shall be considered an altered bat.

- A. All bats used at National Championships except for Seniors, are required to be compression tested.
 - 1. Bats used in Slow Pitch games must meet or exceed the compression threshold of 1450 PSI.
 - 2. A non-linear bat, a bat whose structure deviates from the traditional design, must meet or exceed the compression thresholds that are listed for that make and model on the USA Softball website under certified equipment, Non-Linear Bat Compression Thresholds for divisions of play.

4 - BATTING WITH AN ILLEGAL, ALTERED, OR NON-APPROVED BAT

When a batter uses an illegal, altered, or non-approved bat and reaches base safely, and the next batter steps into the batter’s box with the same bat, the following penalty is in effect:

- A. If noticed before a pitch is thrown to the next batter, the umpire should call out the batter who used the bat and is now on base.
- B. If the bat is altered or non-approved, the player is ejected from the game and subject to future penalties by the tournament protest committee. The bat is removed from the game, runners put out prior to discovering this infraction remain out, and runners not put out return to the base they occupied at the time of the batted ball.

- C. After a pitch to the current batter, that batter is called out and there is no penalty to the previous batter for using the illegal or altered bat.

5 - BATTER REMAINS IN BATTER'S BOX

This rule is not intended to penalize the player but is used to speed up the game. The batter can still get a signal with one foot in the box and take practice swings.

If the batter leaves the box illegally, a warning should be given. Any number of warnings on the same batter may be given. A strike should not be called without a warning. One, two or three strikes may be called on the same batter under this ruling.

6 - BATTING ORDER IS OFFICIAL

The batting order is considered official when it is reviewed by the manager and the plate umpire at the Pre-Game Meeting. Once the manager approves the line-up and returns it to the umpire, any changes thereafter are considered a substitution.

7 - BATTING OUT OF THE BATTER'S BOX

To call a batter out for batting out of the batter's box, one foot or both feet must be on the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box when contact is made with the ball. The lines of the batter's box are considered inside the batter's box.

A batter should be called out immediately for hitting a pitched ball while out of the batter's box, or for re-entering the batter's box and contacting the ball. The ball is dead, and the batter is out whether the ball is fair or foul. When there are no batter's box lines, good judgment should be used, and the benefit of doubt should go to the batter. If contact is not made with the ball, there is no penalty.

8 - CATCHER'S BOX

The catcher's box is described in Rule 2, Section 3D.

The catcher may not have any part of their body or equipment touching the ground outside the lines of the catcher's box until the ball is batted, touches the ground or plate, hits the batter, or reaches the catcher's box. It is an illegal pitch if the catcher touches the ground outside the lines of the catcher's box. The catcher, even when within the catcher's box, may still obstruct the batter.

Obstruction does not require contact between the catcher and the bat or the batter. The umpire's request for the catcher to move farther away from the batter to avoid injury or obstruction should be obeyed. (See catcher obstruction under Rules Supplement number 33.)

9 - CHARGED CONFERENCES

- A. Defensive. A defensive charged conference occurs when the defense requests a suspension of play for any reason, and a representative enters the playing field to communicate with any defensive player. Should a defensive player approach the dugout and receive instructions, this is considered a defensive conference. The umpire should advise a team representative when a defensive conference has been charged. A TEAM IS ALLOWED THREE CONFERENCES PER SEVEN INNINGS. It is not a charged conference if

the pitcher is removed. They may use all three conferences in one inning or spread them out over a seven-inning game. Once the three conferences have been used, the pitcher must be removed for each additional charged conference. In extra-inning games, there will be one charged conference allowed in each extra inning. On the second conference in an extra inning of a game, the pitcher must be removed. If the pitcher returns to the pitching position after being removed and one pitch is thrown, the pitcher is disqualified.

- B. Offensive. An offensive charged conference occurs when the offensive team requests a suspension of play and is granted time by an umpire to permit a team representative to confer with a batter, a runner(s), or another team representative. Only one such conference is allowed per inning. The umpires should refuse to grant the second conference.
- Effect:** If the offensive team insists on holding a second conference in an inning after being informed by the umpire that it is not permitted, the umpire should eject the team representative from the game. It is not an offensive conference when a team representative confers with a batter and / or runner(s) during a defensive charged conference if they are ready to play when the defense is ready, or when the pitcher is putting on a warm-up jacket.
- C. Umpires. A conference should not be charged to either team when time-out is called by the umpire for a legitimate reason. EXAMPLE: An injured player, blood rule, scorekeeper problems, field maintenance repairs, etc. A coach may confer with a pitcher, batter, or a runner during an umpire's time-out without penalty, if they are ready to continue once the problem is resolved.

10 - CHECK SWING/BUNT STRIKE

Normally, there are four areas which could constitute whether a batter swung at the pitched ball or checked their swing.

- A. Did the batter roll their wrists?
B. Did the batter swing through the ball and bring back the bat, unless the batter draws the bat back before the pitch arrives?
C. Was the bat out in front of the body?
D. Did the batter try to hit the pitch?

On a bunt attempt where the batter puts the bat across the plate and the pitched ball is out of the strike zone, a ball should be called unless the batter moves the bat toward the ball. In each of the above situations, the umpire should think in terms of priorities. First, was the pitch in the strike zone? If so, it is simply a strike. Second, did the batter swing at the pitched ball, or, in the case of a bunt attempt, did the batter move the bat toward the pitched ball? In either case, it is the plate umpire's call. If in doubt, or if blocked out, the umpire should call the pitch a ball. If the umpire calls the pitch a ball and the catcher requests the umpire to go for help, the plate umpire should ONLY ask for help if there is doubt in their mind as to whether or not the batter swung at the pitched ball. On a missed bunt attempt with two strikes, the dropped third strike rule applies. (Rule 8, Section 1B)

11 - COMMUNICATION / ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Communication / electronic devices, including audio / video equipment, are not allowed on the playing field. Headphones and earphones have been used by coaches to communicate from one coaches' box to the other, to communicate between coaches and the dugout, and from the stands to the dugout. Signs and signals have been stolen while outside the field of play, stands or the outfield area and communicated to coaches or players. Therefore, umpires must prohibit any use of such equipment. Electronic scorebooks, however, are permitted for use by base coaches.

12 - COURTESY RUNNER

The Courtesy Runner is a part of all Adult Slow Pitch divisions of play.

- A. In all Adult Slow Pitch except Seniors, courtesy runners may be ANY player on the line-up card and may be used once per inning. In coed two courtesy runners are allowed, one male and one female, must be of the same gender.
- B. In Senior Men and Senior Women's Slow Pitch, unlimited courtesy runners may be used and can be ANY player on the line-up card.
- C. Any ADA Player or Slow Pitch may use a courtesy runner once they reach base. Any player may be used for the ADA player. A courtesy runner not reported is disqualified when brought to the umpire's attention by the offended team. See Rule 8, Sections 9 and 10 for other guidelines to follow.

13 - CRASHING INTO A FIELDER WITH THE BALL (Interference)

To prevent injury and protect a defensive player attempting to make a play on a runner, a runner must be called out when they remain on their feet and crash into a defensive player who is holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag. To prevent the out ruling, the runner may slide, jump over the defender holding the ball, go around the defender or return to the previous base touched. If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender is ejected. A runner may slide into the fielder.

- A. When a runner is called out for crashing into a fielder holding the ball, the ball becomes dead. Each runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the crash as this constitutes interference.
- B. When, as in A above, the runner crashes into a fielder holding the ball before being put out and, in the judgment of the umpire, it was an attempt to break up an obvious double play, the immediate succeeding runner is also called out. (Rule 8, Section 7J)
- C. When a crash occurs after the runner is called out, the runner closest to home plate is also out. (Rule 8, Section 7P)
- D. When an obstructed runner crashes into a fielder holding the ball, the obstruction is ignored, and the runner is out. (Rule 8, Section 7Q) This type of award, Rule 8, Section 5B [2 & 3], does not give the runner the right to violate Rule 8, Section 7Q.
- E. When a runner runs outside the three-foot lane to avoid a crash with a defender holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag, the runner should be called out.
- F. When a defensive player is fielding a thrown ball and the flight of the ball carries or draws them into the path of the base runner, it is not a crash.

14 - DELAYED DEAD BALL

There are five situations in which a violation of a rule occurs, the umpire recognizes the violation, but the ball remains live until the conclusion of play. These situations are:

- A. An illegal pitch. (Rule 6, Section 1-7 Slow Pitch)
- B. Catcher's obstruction. (Rule 8, Section 1D)
- C. Plate umpire interference. (Rule 8, Section 6F)
- D. Obstruction. (Rule 8, Section 5B)
- E. Batted or thrown ball contacts detached equipment. (Rule 8, Section 5F)

In each situation, once the play is completed, the proper enforcement should be made.

15 - DUGOUT CONDUCT

This rule reflects on all game participants. Once the game begins, only players involved in the game may be outside the dugout, except when the rule allows, or the reason is justified by an umpire. A manager walking on the field for a conference is an example of a rule allowing a coach or player on the field. An example of umpire justification is when a game participant must leave the dugout to go to the restroom. Except for the on-deck batter, players may not be out of the dugout between innings standing near the batter's box observing the pitcher warming up, nor should game participants be allowed to step outside the dugout to observe the game from behind the backstop. Participants may not smoke or use alcoholic beverages inside the dugout or on the playing field.

16 - EQUIPMENT ON THE PLAYING FIELD

Loose equipment, miscellaneous items, or a detached part of a player's uniform, other than that being legally used in the game at the time, should not be within live ball territory. Official equipment which may be in live ball territory with no penalty includes the batter's bat, the catcher's mask, umpire paraphernalia, a helmet which has inadvertently fallen off an offensive or defensive player during play or any equipment belonging to a person assigned to the game. Loose equipment, miscellaneous items or detached uniform parts which are in live ball territory and are not being legally used in the game at the time could cause a blocked ball or interference.

- A. Thrown Ball.
 - 1. When a thrown ball hits loose equipment belonging to the team at bat, the ball is dead immediately. If such action interferes with a play, interference should be ruled. The runner being played on at the time of the interference is called out, and each runner must return to the last base touched prior to the interference. If a play is not apparent, a blocked ball should be ruled, no one is called out, and all runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the dead ball.
 - 2. When the loose equipment belongs to the team in the field, it becomes a blocked ball and the overthrow rule applies.
- B. Batted Ball.
 - 1. A batted foul ball touching loose equipment is a foul ball.
 - 2. A batted fair ball touching loose equipment belonging to:

- a. The offense, it is a dead ball and runners return, unless they are forced to advance when the batter-runner is awarded first base on a base hit, or
- b. The defense, it is a dead ball and all runners, including the batter-runner, are awarded two bases from their position at the time of the pitch.

17 - EXTRA PLAYER OR EP

If a team uses the EP, it must be indicated on the line-up card at the start of the game. The team must end the game with 11 players or play using the shorthanded rule.

All 11 players bat, but only ten play defense. Defensive changes may be made at any time; however, the batting order may not change. EXAMPLE: The EP may sit on the bench one inning, play third base one inning, play the outfield one inning, sit on the bench again and then play first base. All these defensive changes are legal if the EP remains in the same position in the batting order. This applies to all of the starting 11 players.

Any of the 11 starting players may leave the game once and re-enter. A starting player and their substitute may not be in the game at the same time. If this occurs, the player listed in the wrong position in the batting order is disqualified.

18 - FAKE TAG

A fake tag occurs when a fielder without the ball deceives the runner by impeding their progress; for example, causing a runner to slide, slow down or stop running.

- A. Obstruction is called when a fake tag is made as mentioned above. The umpire should signal delayed dead ball and let the play continue to its completion. The obstructed runner, and each runner affected by the obstruction, should always be awarded the base, or bases they would have reached had the obstruction not occurred. Again, each runner is awarded only the base or bases that in the judgment of the umpire they would have reached had there not been obstruction.
- B. The umpire should rule obstruction on all fake tags. Continued fake tags should result in ejections. In flagrant cases where the sliding player gets hurt, the offending player should be ejected without warning.
- C. When a fielder fakes a tag, but the runner continues to the next base without sliding or breaking stride, there is no rule violation since the runner's progress was not impeded. However, a warning should be given.

19 - FALLING OVER THE FENCE ON A CATCH

The fence is an extension of the playing field, which makes it legal for a player to climb the fence and make the catch. When a player catches a ball in the air and their momentum carries them through or over the fence, the catch is legal, the batter-runner is out, the ball is dead, and with fewer than two outs all runners are advanced one base without liability to be put out. Guidelines are as follows:

- A. When a player catches the ball before they touch the ground outside the playing area, the catch is legal, or

- B. When a player catches the ball after they touch the ground outside the playing area, it is not a catch. When a collapsible, portable fence is used and a defensive player is standing on the fence when the catch is made, it is a legal catch. A defensive player may climb a fence to make a legal catch; therefore, a defensive player may also stand on a fence that has fallen or is falling to the ground. If the defensive player has not stepped outside the playing area, the other side of fence, the catch is legal.

20 - FORCE OUT

A force out can be made by tagging a runner who is forced to advance to a base as the result of the batter becoming a batter-runner, or by touching the base to which they are being forced. It is not possible to have a force out on a caught fly ball as the batter-runner is no longer a runner. On an appeal play, the force out is determined at the time the appeal is made, not when the infraction occurred.

21 - FOUL BALL/FOUL TIP

The reference of the "height of the batter's head" as it relates to a Foul Ball and Foul Tip no longer applies. This change, instituted in 2006, allows more opportunity for the catcher to obtain "outs" by catching foul batted balls the same as any other fielder who is playing closer to home plate. Umpires only need to judge whether the ball moves from the bat "sharply" and "directly" versus a ball that has a perceptible arc and / or if the catcher moves their glove / mitt to catch the ball after contact with the bat.

The definition of a foul ball has not changed. However, a foul tip is now defined as a batted ball that goes sharply and directly from the bat to the catcher's glove / mitt or hand and is legally caught by the catcher. It is not a foul tip unless caught and any foul tip that is caught is a strike, and the ball remains live in Slow Pitch with stealing. It is not a catch if the ball rebounds off the catcher unless the ball has first touched the catcher's glove / mitt or hand. Again, a foul tip can only be caught by the catcher. Examples of foul ball and foul tip follow:

- A. A foul ball with "perceptible" arc goes toward the catcher's left and the catcher moves their glove / mitt to catch the ball. In this situation, the batter is out, and the ball remains live just as it would when any other fielder catches a foul fly ball.
- B. The foul ball rebounds from the bat with a "perceptible arc" shoulder high and the catcher moves upward with the glove / mitt to make the catch. In this situation, the batter is out, and the ball remains live just as it would when any other fielder catches a foul fly ball.
- C. The pitcher throws a rise ball, and the catcher is moving up as the pitch is on the way to home plate. The batter squares to bunt the ball above their head and the ball goes in a straight line from the bat to the glove / mitt and the catcher catches the ball. In this situation, it is a foul tip. It does not matter that the ball is above the batter's head. The only thing that matters when determining whether it is a foul tip is the fact that the ball goes directly from the bat to the catcher's glove / mitt or hand and then is caught by the catcher.

Umpires must be alert to the fact that runners need to tag-up on a batted foul ball that is caught. This increases the opportunity for more “outs”, not only with the catcher catching the ball but the opportunity for more appeal plays with a runner leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball. Remember, the runner must wait until “first touch” before breaking contact with a base on a caught fly ball, fair or foul. Runners may leave when the pitch reaches the front edge of home plate in Slow Pitch with stealing if the ball is judged to be a foul tip.

22 - GLOVE/MITT (Using an Illegal Glove / Mitt)

If discovered or brought to the umpire’s attention, it should be corrected immediately. If a player refuses to correct the use of an illegal glove / mitt, they may not play.

23 - HITTING THE BALL A SECOND TIME

When considering the act of a batter hitting the pitched ball a second time, umpires should place the act into one of three categories.

- A. If the bat is in the hands of the batter when the ball contacts the bat, and the batter is in the batter’s box, it is a foul ball. If, when the bat contacts the ball a batter’s entire foot is completely outside the batter’s box, the batter is out. When in doubt, do not guess the batter out. Call a foul ball.
- B. If the bat is out of the batter’s hands, dropped or thrown, and it hits the ball a second time in fair territory, the ball is dead, and the batter-runner is out. However, if the BALL hits the bat on the ground, the batter is not out, and the umpire must then determine whether the ball is fair, or foul based on the fair / foul rule. If the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory, the ball remains live. If the ball stops or is touched in fair territory, it is a fair ball. If the ball touches the bat in fair territory and then rolls to foul ground and stops, it is a foul ball. If the ball rolls against the bat in foul territory, it is a foul ball.
- C. If a batter swings at and misses the pitched ball but:
 - 1. Accidentally hits it on the follow-through, or
 - 2. Intentionally hits it on the second swing, or
 - 3. Hits the ball after it bounces off the catcher or mitt / glove.

The ball is dead, and all runners must return to the base they occupied prior to the pitch. (Slow Pitch with Stealing) In (2) and (3), if the act is intentional with runners on base, the batter is called out for interference.

24 - HOME RUNS AND RUNNING BASES

This rule applies only to games involving Adult Slow Pitch. When an over-the-fence home run is hit, the batter and all base runners may go directly to the dugout. Appeals for runners missing a base are not allowed. Also, the batter-runner or runners may not be called out for any base running infraction. This speeds up the game as batters and runners do not have to run the bases.

25 - HOME RUNS/FOUR BASE AWARDS/TWO BASE AWARDS

When a ball does not hit the ground and leaves the playing field in fair territory, it is a home run. In Slow Pitch, any fair fly ball touched by a defensive player on either side of the fence

that clears or has cleared the fence in fair territory, should be declared a four-base award and shall not be included in the total of over-the-fence home runs.

- A. A batted ball hitting a foul pole above the fence is a home run.
- B. A batted ball hitting the top of the fence and bouncing over in fair territory is a home run.
- C. A batted ball hitting a defensive player in fair territory but going over the fence in foul territory is a two-base award.
- D. A batted ball that leaves the park in fair territory and first touches the ground in foul territory is a home run.
- E. A batted ball that touches the fence, then touches a player and goes over the fence in fair territory is a two-base award.

26 - IMAGINARY LINE OR DEAD BALL AREA

When a fielder carries a live ball into a dead ball area, the ball becomes dead, and a base or bases are awarded to all runners. If the act is unintentional, the award is one base. If the act is intentional, the award is two bases. The base award is governed from the last base legally touched at the time the ball became dead.

When a chalk line is used to determine an out-of-play area, the line is in play. If a fielder is touching the line, the fielder is in the field of play and may make a legal catch or throw. If a foot is on the ground completely in dead ball territory, not touching the line, the ball becomes dead, and a play may not be made.

When a player has one foot inside the line or touching the line, and another foot in the air at the time the catch is made, the catch is legal, and the batter is out. If the fielder then steps into a dead ball area, foot on the ground, the ball becomes dead, and all runners are awarded one base from the last base touched when the ball became dead. Defensive players cannot take advantage and intentionally throw or step into a dead ball area to prevent a runner who has missed a base or left a base too soon from returning to the base. If it is ruled that the defensive player intentionally threw the ball or stepped into the dead ball area, allow the runner to return to the base.

27 - INFIELDER

An infielder, pitcher, or catcher for purposes of an appeal play or the infield fly rule is any player who defends the area of the field around first, second, third or shortstop areas. This also assists in placing fielders in the Coed slow pitch game, which requires four players in the outfield and four in the infield.

28 - INJURED PLAYER

During any live ball, when a player becomes injured and, in the umpire’s judgment, requires immediate attention, the umpire should call time and allow first aid treatment. If runners are on base when time out is called, those runners should be awarded the bases that the umpire judges they would have reached if time out not been called.

29 - INTENTIONALLY DROPPED BALL

The ball cannot be intentionally dropped unless the fielder has caught it, and then drops it. Merely guiding the ball to the ground is not an intentionally dropped ball.

30 - INTENTIONAL WALK

An intentional walk is permissible and occurs during a dead ball. A pitch is not required, and the intentional walk starts by the defensive team notifying the plate umpire of their intent. The umpire should call time out and award the batter first base without liability to be put out. A possible appeal on a previous play is nullified. When two successive batters are walked intentionally, the second walk may not be administered until the first batter reaches first base.

31 - INTERFERENCE

Interference is the act of an offensive player or team member that impedes, hinders, or confuses a defensive player attempting to execute a play. Interference may be in the form of physical contact, verbal distraction, visual distraction, or any type of distraction that hinders a fielder in the execution of a play. Defensive players must be given the opportunity to field the ball anywhere on the playing field or throw the ball without being hindered.

A. Runner interference includes:

1. A runner or batter-runner who interferes with a fielder executing a play, including the batter-runner touching the white portion of the double base at first base and colliding with the fielder trying to catch a thrown ball from a fielder,
 - a. When a runner interferes with a fielder, the umpire must determine if the interference occurred before or after the runner who interfered was put out and then apply the appropriate rule.
 - b. When a runner is hit by a fair batted ball, it is interference if it occurred before the ball passed an infielder, excluding the pitcher, and provided the runner was not in contact with the base. It is interference if the batted ball deflects off one defensive player and the runner intentionally interferes with any defensive player who has an opportunity to make an out.
 - c. A runner could be standing on a base and a defensive player bumps the runner while watching the flight of the ball. If the defensive player fails to make a catch on a ball that could have been caught, it is the umpire's judgment whether interference should be called. The rule provides that a runner must vacate any space needed by a fielder to make a play on a batted ball unless the runner has contact with a legally occupied base when the hindrance occurs. In this case, the runner should not be called out unless the hindrance is intentional.
 - d. If interference occurs by the runner on a foul fly ball not caught but, in the umpire's judgment, could have been caught with ordinary effort had interference not occurred, the runner is out, and the batter is also out. If, in the judgment of the umpire, the foul fly ball could not have been caught with ordinary effort, a strike is called, the ball is dead, and the batter remains at bat. (Slow Pitch) If on the third strike, the batter is out.

e. For crash interference, refer to Rules Supplement number 13.

2. A runner or batter-runner who is hit by a fair touched or untouched batted ball, or
3. Interfering with a thrown ball.

- B. Batter interference occurs while the batter is at bat and before the ball is batted. The batter's box is not a sanctuary for the batter when a play is being made at the plate. Interference could also occur when a batter releases the bat in a manner that it hits the catcher and prevents them from making a play. If the batter merely drops the bat and the catcher trips over it, there is no interference. Batter interference is also discussed in Rules Supplement number 23B.
- C. Offensive players in the dugout may be charged with interference if they interfere with a fielders' opportunity to make an out on a fly ball.
- D. On-deck batters may be charged with interference if they interfere with a throw, a possible tag on a runner, or a fielder's opportunity to make an out on a fly ball.
- E. Coach's interference occurs when a base coach runs toward home and draws a throw or when they interfere with a fielder attempting to catch or throw a ball. The coach's box is not a sanctuary.
- F. Spectator interference occurs when a spectator:
 1. Enters the field and interferes with a play.
Effect: The batter and runner(s) should be placed at the bases that they would have reached had spectator interference not occurred. The field belongs to the fielder and the stands belong to the spectator. Or
 2. Reaches onto the field from the stands and prevents a fielder from catching a fly ball in the field of play.
Effect: A dead ball is ruled, and the batter is out. All runners should be placed at the bases they would have reached had the interference not occurred. It is not interference if the fielder reaches into the stands.
- G. Umpire interference occurs:
 1. When an umpire is hit by a fair, untouched batted ball before it passes an infielder, excluding the pitcher. The batter-runner is awarded first base. This is an exception to the statement that someone must be called out on interference.
 2. (Slow Pitch with Stealing) When an umpire interferes with a catcher's attempt to put out a runner stealing, or an attempted pick-off from the catcher to any base. It is interference only if the runner is not put out; in which case runners are returned to the base they occupied at the time of the pitch. Umpire interference may not be called in any other case. When batter, batter-runner, runner, on-deck batter, or coach interference occurs, the ball is dead, someone must be called out, and each other runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.
- H. Offensive team interference occurs when a thrown ball strikes loose equipment left in live ball territory; but only when play is affected Rules Supplement number 16.
- I. Batter-Runner interference occurs when the batter-runner steps back while running to first base to avoid a tag by a defensive player, or when running to first base, runs outside the three-foot lane over fair or foul territory and interferes with a thrown ball to first base.

32 - MEDIA COVERAGE

Media authorized by the tournament committee can be on the playing field. All media personnel must be able to move to avoid being hit by an errant throw or by a batted ball. Should the media accidentally be hit, the ball remains live. All photographic equipment must be carried or on the photographer. No equipment can be left on the ground, including tripods. Should an errant throw or batted ball become lodged in the photographer's equipment, the overthrow or out of play rule applies.

33 - OBSTRUCTION

Obstruction is the act of a fielder:

- A. Not in possession of the ball, or
- B. Not in the act of fielding a batted ball, which impedes the progress of a batter-runner or runner who is legally running the bases.

It is obstruction if a defensive player is blocking the base or base path without the ball and the runner or batter-runner is impeded. In past years, coaches taught their players to block the base, catch the ball and make the tag. Now defensive players must catch the ball, block the base, and then make the tag.

Whenever obstruction occurs, whether a play is being made on a runner, the umpire should declare obstruction and signal a delayed dead ball. The ball remains live. If the obstructed runner is put out prior to reaching the base they would have reached had obstruction not occurred, a dead ball is called and the obstructed runner, and all other runners affected by the obstruction, shall be awarded the base(s) they would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had obstruction not occurred. An obstructed runner may be called out between the two bases the runner was obstructed if the runner is properly appealed for missing a base or leaving a base before a fly ball is first touched. If the runner committed an act of interference after the obstruction or passed another runner, this also would overrule the obstruction.

When an obstructed runner is awarded a base that they would have reached had obstruction not occurred and a preceding runner is on that base, the obstructed runner shall be awarded that base and the runner occupying it is entitled to the next base without liability to be put out.

When an obstructed runner safely obtains the base, they would have been awarded, in the umpire's judgment, had obstruction not occurred and there is a subsequent play on a different runner, the obstructed runner is no longer protected between the two bases where they were obstructed. That runner may now be put out anywhere on the base paths.

It should also be clear that the statement "a runner cannot be called out between the two bases the runner was obstructed" does not apply when the runner committed another violation, and that violation is being played upon. EXAMPLE: A runner leaving second base too soon on a fly ball is returning after the ball is caught and is obstructed between second

base and third base. If the runner would not have made it back to second base prior to the throw arriving, the runner remains out.

Should the obstructed runner be put out after passing the base they would have reached had obstruction not occurred, the runner is advancing at their own risk and, if tagged, should be called out. The ball remains live and other plays may be made.

When the runner is obstructed during a rundown, a delayed dead ball is declared and signaled. If the runner is tagged out after being obstructed, a dead ball is called, and the runner is awarded the base they would have made had obstruction not occurred. Should the ball be overthrown after the obstruction, the runner may advance. The runner may not be called out between the two bases where they were obstructed.

Catcher Obstruction is a delayed dead ball call. Should catcher obstruction be called when the batter hits the ball and the batter-runner reaches first base safely and all other runners advance at least one base, the obstruction is canceled. All action because of the batted ball stands. Should the batter not reach first base, or if one of the other runners does not advance at least one base, the manager of the offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play or taking the award. The award is, place the batter at first base and runners are advanced ONLY if forced because of the award to the batter. Note: The batter must be given the opportunity to hit the ball. Should the batter delay their swing, and clearly the attempt is no longer to hit the ball but rather to interfere with the catcher's throw on a steal attempt, interference should be called on the batter. (Also see Rules Supplement number 8 Catcher's Box.

(Slow Pitch with stealing allowed) Should a catcher reach forward, over or in front of home plate, to catch the pitched ball, catcher's obstruction may be ruled.

34 - OVERRUNNING FIRST BASE

After over-running first base, the batter-runner may legally turn to their left or right when returning to the base. If any attempt is made to advance to second base, regardless of whether the runner is in fair or foul territory, they are liable for an appeal out if tagged with the ball by a defensive player while off the base.

When using the double base, the batter-runner may use the white portion any time a play is not being made at first base. If a play is made at first base, but the ball is overthrown or the fielder is pulled off the base by an errant or missed throw, the batter runner is now allowed to use the white portion of the base. Should the batter-runner overrun first base and return to either portion of the base before an appeal, an appeal is not allowed.

35 - OVERTHROWS

Runners are always awarded two bases on balls that are overthrown or become blocked because of hitting loose equipment that belongs to the defensive team and should not be on the field Rules Supplement number 16. Regardless of who made the throw, two bases are awarded from the last base touched at the time the thrown ball was released.

The runner's direction of movement has no effect on the award. When an overthrow is made on a runner returning to a base, the runner is awarded two bases from that base.

Exception: When the runner is returning to first base and the throw is from the outfield, it leaves the outfielder's hand while the runner is between 2B and 3B, but the runner is between 1B and 2B when the ball goes out of play, the runner is awarded home plate. When two runners are between the same bases at the time of the award, the award is determined by the position of the front runner. Two runners between first base and second base will be awarded second base and third base; however, if two runners are between second base and third base, both will be awarded home plate. Should the umpire err in the award of bases, after one pitch, legal or illegal, the umpire may not change the award. When a fielder loses possession of the ball on an attempted tag and the ball then enters dead ball territory or becomes blocked, all runners are awarded one base from the base last touched at the time the ball entered dead ball territory or became blocked.

(Slow Pitch with Stealing) On pitched balls that go out of play, runners are awarded one base from the last base touched at the time of the pitch. Should a batter receive a base on balls and the fourth ball gets away from the catcher and goes out of play, the award is first base only.

36 - PASSING A RUNNER

Passing a runner may occur while runners are advancing or returning to a base. Normally it occurs when a lead runner stops to see if a ball will be caught and the trail runner, also watching the ball, does not see the lead runner stopped. The trail runner, the runner doing the passing, is called out and the ball remains live. To pass a runner, the trail runner must pass the entire body of the lead runner, not just an arm or leg ahead of the trail runner.

37 - PITCHER'S UNIFORM

A pitcher should be dressed identically to the other players on the team. A long-sleeve sweatshirt of any color is acceptable under the jersey. If worn, the sweatshirt sleeves may not extend past the wrist so a clear gap can be seen between the ball and the end of the shirt. If two or more players, including the pitcher, wear sweatshirts, they must be identical in color and style. No player may wear ragged, frayed, or slit sleeves on an exposed undershirt.

A pitcher may wear a batting glove and / or wristband on the glove hand and wrist. A pitcher may wear the pitcher's toe plate on their shoe.

A pitcher may wear a wristband on the pitching arm, may have tape on the pitching fingers and wear any color fielder's glove. A batting glove may not be worn on the pitching hand.

38 - PROTESTED GAME UPHeld AND RESUMED

When the protest of a game is upheld, the game shall be resumed from the point at which it was protested. Although the same line-ups must be used when the game is resumed, there is no penalty for substitutions legally placed into the line-ups. Even if a player was not at the protested game, they are legal for substitution purposes when the game is rescheduled if they are on the roster at the time of the rescheduled game. If a player was ejected or

disqualified in the original game after the protest was filed, that player may legally play in the rescheduled game because they were legally in the game at the time of the protest, unless the ejection also drew suspension for unsportsmanlike conduct.

39 - RUN SCORING ON THE THIRD OUT OF AN INNING

A run cannot score when the third out of an inning is a putout of the batter-runner at first base, or at another base if a preceding runner is forced because of the batter becoming a batter-runner.

Bases missed could result in a force out. FOR EXAMPLE, should the runner from first base miss second base on a base hit and, when properly appealed, that is the third out of the inning, any runs scored do not count. Remember, on an appeal play the force out is determined when the appeal is made, not when the infraction occurred. Therefore, if the batter-runner or trail runner is put out prior to an appeal, the out on the appeal will not be considered a force out.

An appeal play on a runner leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball is a time play, not a force. When the appeal results in the third out of an inning, any run scored prior the appeal counts.

40 - RUNNER HIT BY A FAIR BATTED BALL

- A. While in contact with the base, a runner who is hit by a fair batted ball while in contact with the base should not be called out unless the act is intentional. The ball remains live, or becomes immediately dead, depending on the closest defensive player. When the closest defensive player is in front of the base that the runner is in contact with, the ball remains live. However, when the closest defensive player is behind the base, the ball is dead. Should the ball be ruled dead, and the batter awarded a base hit, only runners forced to advance because the batter was placed on first base shall advance one base.
- B. While not in contact with the base, a runner who is hit by a fair batted ball while not in contact with a base should be called out or ruled safe, depending on the interference rule. (Rule 8, Section 7J & K or Rule 8, Section 8D-F)

41 - RUNNERS SWITCHING POSITIONS ON THE BASE PATH

Following a "Time Out", should two or more base runners change positions on the base they originally held, the runners involved shall be called out and the manager of the offending team ejected.

42 - SHOES

Shoes in USA Softball do not include sandals or flip flops as they are not allowed. The uppers must be solid, and the toe must be closed. Metal cleats are legal in Adult Slow Pitch. They are not legal in Adult Coed Slow Pitch and Seniors. Polyurethane or plastic cleats shaped to look like a metal triangle, toe or heel plate are illegal in youth, seniors, and Coed play. If there are nubbins or round plastic cleats in addition to the triangle plate, the shoe is legal. Cleats that screw onto a post are illegal but cleats that screw into the shoe are legal. Players wearing metal cleats after being warned by the umpire that they are not to do so shall be ejected.

43 - SHORTHANDED TEAMS (Starting the Game)

All divisions of play may begin the game one player short, that is Slow Pitch and Coed may start with nine players. When a team plays one short, an out must be recorded in the last position in the batting order. In Coed, the out is in the 9th or tenth position, depending on which gender is missing from the alternate batting order. If a player arrives after the game begins, that player must be placed in the last position in the batting order. If the player brings the team to a full batting order, and a player leaves for any reason other than an ejection, it is permissible to return to one less and continue play shorthanded.

In Slow Pitch, should a team begin the game with nine players, they are not allowed to use the Shorthanded Rule and play with eight.

44 - SHORTHANDED TEAMS (Continuing after Starting with Full Team)

After beginning the game with a full team, a team may continue a game with one player less than it uses to begin a game if the player vacancy is not created by an ejection. This rule is designed to avoid forfeits whenever possible. In all divisions of play, when a team starts with the required number of players, and a player leaves the game for any reason other than an ejection, the following guidelines apply:

- A. When a team is short one player due to a player being disqualified, the game continues using the shorthanded rule. If the team is already playing shorthanded and the disqualification occurs, the game is forfeited.
- B. When a player leaving the game is a runner, the runner is called out even if the runner reached base safely.
- C. Each time the absent player is due to bat, an out is recorded. This is the same in Coed play; therefore, two males or two females may not follow each other in the batting order without an out.
- D. When a team plays shorthanded because a player leaves the game, the player may not return to the line-up.
Exception: A player being treated under the blood rule may return. (Rule 4, Section 9)
- E. If there is an eligible substitute at the game, or if an eligible substitute arrives before the game is over, the substitute MUST enter the game. Refusal to do so makes the player ineligible for the remainder of the game.
- F. A team may not bat less than nine in Slow Pitch. The game is forfeited. Should a team have only ten players, one is injured in the third inning, a substitute arrives in the fifth inning and is entered in the game, and another player becomes injured, the team can continue play with nine players. If the same team does not have a substitute when the second person is injured, this reduces the number of players to eight and the game must be forfeited. The purpose of this rule is to allow all players on a team to play without fear of injury or illness that previously created forfeitures. Playing shorthanded is not a strategic option for a coach.

45 - SPORTING BEHAVIOR

The values of softball competition are based on good sporting behavior and fair play. The following are examples, although not limited to, of unsporting behavior:

- A. Uniforms not worn properly, such as jerseys not tucked in, sleeves rolled under, and caps worn backwards.
- B. Exposed undergarments of different colors worn by different teammates on the same team.
- C. Coaching tactics that endanger the safety of players.
- D. After equipment check, illegal equipment being put back into play.
- E. Use of equipment for other than its intended design.
- F. The use of artificial noisemakers during championship play is prohibited.

46 - STEALING

Since the ball is dead on balls and strikes, the runner is not out, and they are returned to the base held at the time of the pitch. Because a runner may not steal, the runner cannot be picked off either. Runners should be called out when they fail to keep contact with a base to which they are entitled until a legally pitched ball is batted, touches the ground, hits the batter, or reaches the front edge of home plate.

Base stealing is legal in Adult Slow Pitch. This does not apply to Men's Master and Senior's play. Stealing is permitted if the runner does not leave the base until the ball reaches the front edge of home plate. If the ball either hits the plate or touches the ground prior to reaching the front edge of home plate, the ball is dead, and runners may not advance. The ball remains live until the pitcher has possession of the ball in the infield and the completion of all immediate play is apparent. The ball is also dead when the pitched ball hits the batter. During a live ball, runners may advance when:

- A. A play is made on a runner.
- B. The pitcher fails to catch the ball.
- C. The catcher hits the batter on a throw to the pitcher or to a base during a play. When a play is made on a runner, the ball is live, and runners may advance.

47 - SUBSTITUTIONS

All substitutions must be reported to the plate umpire who, in turn, will report the changes to the official scorer. All substitutes' names and numbers should be listed on the official line-up card that is submitted to the plate umpire at the start of the game; however, should a player not be listed on the card but is on the official roster, the player can be added after the game begins.

A substitute is considered in the game when reported to the plate umpire. An unreported substitute is considered in the game after a pitch, legal or illegal, has been thrown or a play has been made.

Should an unreported substitute bat and it is discovered prior to the next pitch, all runners are returned to their original base, any outs recorded stand, the unreported substitute is officially in the game and called out. If the unreported substitute is discovered on the last play of the game and before the umpires leave the field, runners are returned to their previous base and the unreported substitute is officially in the game and called out. Any

player may be substituted for or replaced, and re-enter once, providing players occupy the same batting position whenever in the line-up.

A game is forfeited to a substitution violation when a player is removed by the umpire returns to the same game as this is use of an illegal player, or if the ejection creates a situation where there are not enough players to continue the game.

48 - THROWING OR CARRYING A BAT

When a player throws the bat intentionally in anger, the player should be ejected. Should the bat slip from the batter's hands, there is no penalty unless the discarded bat prevents the defense from making a play on the ball, and then interference should be ruled. There is no penalty when a player carries a bat to first base or any other base. Should the player use the bat to prevent a defensive player from making a play, then interference should be ruled.

49 - TIE GAMES OR GAMES CALLED WHICH ARE LESS THAN REGULATION

When games that are called with less than the regulation innings completed or tied are rescheduled, the same procedure should be followed as stated in Rules Supplement number 38, PROTESTED GAME UPHeld AND RESCHEDULED.

In determining tie games after five innings have been played, regulation game, the home team must have had the opportunity to bat and tie the score. If the home team has scored more runs than the visiting team and the game is called in the bottom of the fifth or sixth inning, the home team shall be the winner. If the visiting team has scored more runs than the home team in the sixth or seventh inning and the home team has not had the opportunity to complete its turn at bat, the game reverts to the previous inning. If that score was tied, it is a tie game. If the score is not tied, a winner is declared if one team is ahead, and five full innings have been played.

Should a game be called before five full innings are played, four and one-half if the home team is ahead, the game should be resumed at the point it was called.

50 - TIE BREAKER RULE

(Men's Masters 40-0, 50-0, 60-0 and Men's Senior Slow Pitch).

During each half inning of the inning used to enforce the tiebreaker, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player scheduled to bat last in that respective half inning being placed at second base. For example, if the number five batter is to lead off, the number four batter in the batting order should be placed on second base. A substitute may be inserted for the runner.

It is the responsibility of the umpire and scorer to notify the teams involved as to which player starts the half inning at second base. Should the wrong player be placed on second base and it is brought to the umpire's attention, there is no penalty. Correct the error and place the correct person on the base. This should occur even if a pitch has been thrown, or the runner has advanced a base. An unreported substitute would be legally in the game after a pitch has been thrown or a play has been made.

When a team playing shorthanded is involved in the tiebreaker and it is the shorthanded spot in the batting order that should start at second base, do not call an out. Instead place on second base the player who precedes the absent player in the line-up.

In scoring, the run scored by a player starting as a runner at second base shall be charged to the defensive team and not the pitcher. Depending on the judgment of the official scorer, a run scored by any other player should be charged to the pitcher's ERA.

51 - WHEEL CHAIR USE

Under the American Disability Act ruling of July 25, 1990, known as the ADA ruling, wheelchairs are allowed on the playing field. Players while batting, running bases or playing defense, coaches in coaching boxes and umpires behind the plate or on the bases may use wheelchairs. The ADA ruling for slow pitch is explained under Rule 4, Section 2.