

2026 PLAYING RULES

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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 or a rule violation on which an umpire may not make a decision 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 or is touched 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 in order 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 as a result 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 the pitched ball:

- 1 Is batted.
- 2 Touches the ground, plate, or batter.
- 3 Reaches the catcher's box.

CHOPPED BALL: Occurs when the batter strikes downward with a chopping 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 as a result 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 makes contact with 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 makes contact with 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 makes contact with 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 USA Softball 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 have control of their team at all times 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 Marks.

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 other 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 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. **Not allowed in Slow Pitch.**

STRIKE MAT: A mat 24 inches long 36 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 between the batter's back shoulder and the front knee.

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 as a result 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.

WILD PITCH: A legally delivered pitch that the catcher cannot catch or stop and control with ordinary effort.

RULE 3 – EQUIPMENT

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.



Allowed in all games



Allowed in all Slow Pitch, Men's and JO Boys Fast Pitch and Men's Modified Only

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.

A It is each coach's responsibility to have a ASA/USA Softball approved bat list in possession during any game, with his/her players bats identified on the list by make and model number.

EFFECT: Failure to provide evidence that bat meets above legal standards, if noticed during game play, will result in bat and batter being immediately removed from the game. If noticed after ball has been hit into play all base runners must return to original base and the player will be called "out".

- 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. The use of an internal or external bat sensor is allowed provided that the sensor is properly attached.
- 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.
- GRIP:** The handle region of the bat must have a grip made of cork, grip tape, or other synthetic material. 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.
- 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.
- 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.

EXCEPTION: At the umpire's or commissioner's discretion slightly dented bats may be considered legal.

- 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:** A USA Softball Official Bat's characteristics 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.

- J.** The NCCSFL reserves the right to approve or reject **any** softball related equipment for its intended use in the NCCSFL Program. If the NCCSFL believe in any way shape or form that a particular piece of equipment is dangerous or not acceptable for fair play, the NCCSFL reserves the right to immediately ban such equipment.

SECTION 3 – OFFICIAL SOFTBALL

- A. CERTIFIED/APPROVED:** Only softballs provided by the league are approved for in-game use. The men's ball shall be 12" diameter, smooth seamed, concealed stitched or flat surfaced ball provided by the NCCSFL. Maximum C.O.R. will be no greater than .52 and the compression must be a maximum of 300 pounds. The women's ball shall be a 11" diameter, smooth seamed, concealed stitched or flat surfaced ball provided by the NCCSFL. Maximum C.O.R. will be no greater than .52 and the compression must be a maximum of 300 pounds.
- B.** A woman may choose to bat with either the men's or women's ball being pitched to them. Once this decision has been made, it cannot be changed for the duration of this plate appearance.
- C.** During the course of the game, if the provided ball becomes lost or damaged, the team causing the damage or loss is required to provide a NCCSFL approved ball. The ball can be from a previous competition, but must meet the minimum standards. Each coach and the home plate umpire must approve the replacement ball.

SECTION 6 – UNIFORM

- A. Uniforms are not required. Appropriate sporting apparel is required.
- D. All clothing must be worn in modesty. Shirts must be long enough to cover the “beltline”. No undergarments shall be showing during game play.
EFFECT: *If the umpire or commissioner determines that a piece of clothing is inappropriate or revealing, he/she will communicate the issue to the coach of the offending team. The player will not be allowed to play until appropriate clothing is worn or clothing is worn in an appropriate manner.*
- 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 or not 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: *No metal cleats. No metal spikes nor hard plastic or polyurethane spikes similar to metal sole and heel plates are allowed.*
Effect: Players wearing metal cleats after being warned by the umpire, shall be ejected.

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 first name, last name and uniform number.~~

② Eligible roster members may be added to the available substitute list at any time during the game.

C. A team shall consist of players in the following positions:

B 10 Players with Extra Players (EP): **A team shall have a maximum of one eligible player per space allowed on the NCCSFL sanctioned scorebook (usually between 15 and 18 players), with only 10 playing defense.**

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

① *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.*

② *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 team must have a minimum of eight (8) players to start or continue a game.**

B Any vacant positions 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 **If there are eight defensive players, one must be female. If there are nine defensive players, two must be female. If there are ten defensive players, three must be female. One female must play in an outfield/rover position and one must play in an infield position not including the catcher. If there is only one female, she must play in an outfield/rover or infield position not including the catcher.**

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:

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 If another player of the correct gender arrives, that player must be inserted into the line-up in the appropriate vacant spot.
- 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 The rules pertaining to gender in the batting order and 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 5 – RE-ENTRY

- A. Any player may be substituted for or replaced and re-entered once, provided the players occupy their same batting position in the batting order.
- B. The starting player and their substitute may not be in the line-up at the same time.
- C. 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 as a result of the play is legal.*

- ⑤ When a runner and that runner is protested 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.

3 Illegal Runner. Occurs when:

A An offensive player is placed in the line-up as a runner for another offensive player.

C A player does not report as a courtesy runner or an illegal courtesy runner is used.

4 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.

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 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.

B An exclusively one-way electronic communication device to relay signals to the offense.

C No two-way communication devices to include cell phones, pagers, etc., are allowed to be worn or carried on the playing field.

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

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 as long as 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 An exclusively one-way electronic communication device may be used by the defense to relay the pitch or play call from the dugout.

Effect: If a two-way communication device is used, disqualification or ejection from the game occurs after a warning.

SECTION 8 – DISQUALIFICATION 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. A participant may be ejected at any point from the time the umpire crew enters and until they leave the field of play.** An ejected participant must leave the grounds and have no contact with the umpires or participants in the game. The ejected participant is restricted from having contact with the team and is suspended for one additional game. The ejected participant is not permitted to sit in the stands, dugout or general locality of the next game. The ejected participant may appeal the one game suspension to the Championship Protest Committee.
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

The Home team is designated on the official schedule.

Exception: *In the tournament, the home team shall be decided by a coin toss, called by the higher seed.*

SECTION 2 – FITNESS OF THE GROUNDS

The fitness of the grounds for a game shall be decided by the Commissioner and/or Umpire-in-Chief.

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.
- 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.

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.

The score of a forfeited game will be counted as win for the winning team and a loss for the losing team with no runs awarded to either team.

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 8 – HOME RUN RULE

- A. The “one-up” home run rule is in effect. At no point may any team have hit more than one home run than the opposing team.

EXCEPTION: In-the-park home runs are exempt from the “one-up” rule.

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.

SECTION 9 – RUN AHEAD RULE

- A. 20 after three innings, 15 after four innings or 10 after five innings. 15 after five innings.
EXCEPTION: 10 after five innings in tournament play.
- 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. In regular season play, each team is eligible to score a maximum of seven (7) runs per inning. Once seven runs are earned in the inning that half of the inning is completed, and the game must progress.
EXCEPTION: There is no run limit during the 7th inning. There is also no run limit in any inning in tournament play.

SECTION 10 – TIME LIMIT RULE

During the regular season double-header play, the first game (6pm start), teams will not be allowed start a new inning after 7:15 pm. The second game must start no later than 7:30pm. If the game is tied at the end of seven innings and the time limit has not yet passed, additional innings may be played. Prior to the 5th inning of a game and/or if darkness is in play, both coaches or league commissioners must meet to agree to call “last inning”.

The umpire and/or coaches are empowered to call a game at any time because of darkness, rain, fire, panic or other causes that places the patrons or players in peril. These provisions do not apply to any acts on the part of the players or spectators, which might call for the forfeiture of the game. The umpire may forfeit the game if attacked physically by any team member or spectator.

NOTE: The umpires or league commissioners have the right to stop play even if the coaches disagree.

In tournament play, if the game is tied after seven innings, play shall continue until a winner is determined.

SECTION 12 – DUGOUT AND ON FIELD CONDUCT

- B. Participants may not smoke or use alcoholic beverages inside the dugout or on the playing field.
Effect-Section 12A-C: The first offense is a team warning. Any repeat offense shall result in the ejection of that team member.
- D. 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.
- E. 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 in order 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 6C – PITCHING REGULATIONS

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. The pitcher may take a position from the front edge of the pitcher's plate to 6 feet behind the pitcher's plate with both feet firmly on the ground and with one or both feet within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.
- D. 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.
- E. The pitcher shall not be considered in the pitching position unless the catcher is in position to receive the pitch
Effect: Section 1 A-E Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6C Section 10 for penalty.
- F. 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.

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

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.
- I. The pitcher shall not continue any pitching motion after the ball is released.

- J. The pitcher has five 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 3A-K: *Illegal pitch; refer to Rule 6C Section 10 for penalty.*

SECTION 4 – 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.*

- C. **When a female is up at the plate, Infielders must be positioned on the dirt until the ball crosses the plate.**

Effect: *if an infielder is deemed to be on the grass before the ball crosses the plate, and the ball is fair, the female batter will be awarded 1st base. If foul, the pitch will be deemed a ball.*

SECTION 5 – 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 6 – 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 7 – 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 8 – 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 as long as the player is legally in the game.

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

SECTION 9 – 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. 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 9A-E: The ball is dead, and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled.

SECTION 10 – ILLEGAL PITCH PENALTY

- A. 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 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 2B&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:
 - ① *The correct batter must take the batter's position and assume the ball and strike count.*
 - ② *Any runner advanced and runs scored while the incorrect batter was at bat shall be legal.*
 - ③ *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:

- ① *The incorrect batter's time at bat is negated.*
- ② *The player who should have batted is out.*
- ③ *Any advancement or score of a runner as a result 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.*
- ④ *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 after the pitcher and all infielders have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory; or on the last play of the game, after the umpires leave the field of play:

Effect:

- ① *The turn at bat of the incorrect batter is legal.*
- ② *All runs scored, runners advanced, and outs made are legal.*
- ③ *The next batter shall be that player whose name follows that of the incorrect batter.*
- ④ *No out is called for failure to bat.*
- ⑤ *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 must be constructed in such a way that at least one female must bat in each of the following sections of the batting order: 1-3, 4-7, 8-10 (if 10 players on line-up), 11-13 (if 13 players on line-up), 14-16 (if 16 players on line-up). If official scorebook allows space, batters 17 and 18 may be either male or female. Line-Up is never to exceed more than 3 consecutive male batters, not to include going from bottom to top of line-up rotation, which should never exceed more than 4 consecutive male batters.

SIMPLE BREAKDOWN:

Fewer than 10 players in the line-up requires a minimum of 2 female batters.

10 players in the line-up requires a minimum of 3 female batters.

13 players in the line-up requires a minimum of 4 female batters.

16 players in the line-up requires a minimum of 5 female batters.

NOTE: If not enough females are present to fill additional line-up positions, a team may elect to bat additional male batters and take a charged dead-ball out at the line-up position the female batter(s) should have occupied.

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.*

- G. 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.
- 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 has to be thrown.*

- E. The batter shall not step directly in front of the catcher to the other batter's box while the pitcher (FP) is taking the signal or (SP) 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.

- F. 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.

- G. The batter is not allowed to take a "walking swing," and must have at least one foot constantly contacting the ground when the ball is released from the pitcher's hand.

SECTION 4 – A STRIKE ON THE BATTER

- B. For each legally pitched ball whose initial contact includes any portion of the strike zone mat located behind the plate. 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.

- D. For each legally pitched ball swung at and missed by the batter.

Effect: The ball is dead.

- E. For each foul tip.

Effect:

- ① The ball is dead.
- ② The batter is out if it is the third strike.

- G. For each foul ball, including the third strike.

- H. For each pitched ball swung at and missed which touches any part of the batter.

- I. If a pitched ball is swung at, missed, and then hit on the follow through.

- J. 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 and (FP) has fewer than two strikes.

- K. When a legally pitched ball hits the batter while the ball is in the strike zone.

- L. When a pitched ball is prevented from entering the strike zone by any actions of the batter other than hitting the ball.

Effect - Section 4H-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.

- M. If the batter does not take their position in the batter's box within 10 seconds after being directed by the umpire.

Effect - Section 4M&N:

- ① The ball is dead.
- ② A strike on the batter.

SECTION 5 – A BALL ON THE BATTER

- B. For each legally pitched ball that does not make initial contact with any part of the strike zone mat, 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:

NOTE: A pitched ball striking Home Plate but NOT the strike zone mat is considered a ball.

Effect:

- ① The ball is dead.
- ② A ball on the batter.
- ③ Runners may not advance.

- E. For each illegally pitched ball not swung at.
G. When the catcher fails to return the ball directly to the pitcher as required.
H. For each excessive warm-up pitch.

Effect - Section 5E-H:

- ① The ball is dead.
- ② Runners may not advance.

- I. The umpire will use his/her discretion in judging the height of the pitch and call “flat” if under 6 feet or “too high” if over 10 feet to alert the batter.

EXCEPTION: If the batter chooses to still swing at the pitch, the pitch is considered legal in height and if hit in fair territory, the ball is “live”. If a batter swings at any illegal pitch, the pitch is then legal and play call resumes as normal (strike, foul or hit).

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 any 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.
- 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.
 - 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 6B-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 makes contact with the bat.
- G. When any part of a foot is touching home plate at the time the ball makes contact with the bat.
- H. When a batter leaves the batter's box and returns to the box and makes contact with the ball.
- J. When the batter bunts or chops the ball.
- K. 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.
- M. When the batter hits a fair ball with the bat a second time in fair territory.

Effect - Section 6F-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:

- ① 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.

- ② 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.

- ③ 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.

- N. After a third strike, including a foul ball that is hit after two strikes.
- Q. Whenever the batter due up has left the game under the Short-Handed Rule.
- R. When hindering the catcher from catching or throwing the ball by stepping out of the batter's box.
- S. When actively hindering the catcher while in the batter's box.
- T. When intentionally interfering with a thrown ball, in or out of the batter's box.
- U. When interfering with a play at home plate.

Effect - Section 6R-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 makes contact with the catcher's return throw to the pitcher.

Effect:

A *The ball is dead.*

B *Any advancement of runners shall be nullified.*

V. When a batter steps directly in front of the catcher to the other batter's box while the pitcher (FP) is taking a signal or (SP) is in position to pitch, or anytime thereafter.

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.
C. When four balls have been called by the umpire. The batter-runner is awarded first base.

Effect:

- ③ *The ball is dead, and runners may not advance unless forced*
④ *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.*

- ⑤ *A walk to a male batter on four straight pitches, when batting in front of a female, 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.*

- ⑥ *When a team is left with a vacant spot in the lineup, and has two outs in the inning, the opposing team may not intentionally or unintentionally walk the previous batter, in order to get to the “automatic out” created by the vacant spot in the batting order, If the batter is walked, the vacant spot in the batting order is skipped, the “automatic out” is waived, and the next batter is the player whose name follows the vacant spot in the batting order.*

NOTE: *If the batter has 2 strikes in the count, this rule shall not apply.*

- D. 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 as a result 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.

- E. 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 1E [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 contacts a runner and another fielder has the opportunity to make an out.

Effect - Section 1E [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.

C If the ball is dead the batter-runner is awarded first base and runner advance if forced.

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

- B. After hitting a fair ball and the batter-runner is put out prior to reaching first base.

Exception: A batter-runner is not allowed to be thrown out on their way from Home Plate to First Base on a throw originating from the designated outfield area.

- C. 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 2A-C: The ball remains live.

- D. When the batter-runner fails to advance to first base and enters the team area after:

① A batted fair ball.

④ Catcher Obstruction.

Exception: The ball is dead when runners are not required to run bases. Other than on a home run or a four base award runners cannot advance unless forced.

E. When the batter-runner runs outside the three-foot running 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.

F. 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 making contact with 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.

Note: If this interference is an attempt to prevent a double play, the runner closest to home plate shall be called out.

G. When the batter-runner interferes with a play at home plate in an attempt to prevent an out at home plate.

Effect: The runner is also out.

H. 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.

I. When an infield fly is declared.

J. 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.

K. 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.
- ④ If an infield fly is ruled, it has precedence over an intentionally dropped ball.

L. 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 in an attempt 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.

M. For excess over-the-fence home runs.

N. 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.
- 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:

- ① *The ball is dead.*
- ② *The batter-runner is out.*
- ③ *Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of interference.*

O. 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.

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

- B. On a thrown ball or a fair batted ball that is not blocked.

- C. On a thrown ball that hits an umpire.

- D. When a legally caught fly ball is first touched by a defensive player.

- E. 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.

- F. 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.*
- 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.*

- G. When a live ball becomes lodged in a defensive player's uniform or equipment.

- H. 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.

- I. After overrunning first base, the runner attempts to continue to second base.

- J. After dislodging a base, a runner attempts to continue to the next base.

- L. 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:

① *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.*

② *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.

- D. When forced to vacate a base because the batter was awarded first base.
- F. 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.
- 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.

- G. 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:

- ① When a fielder loses possession of the ball, and the ball leaves live ball territory or becomes blocked.

Effect:

- A The ball is dead.
- B Each runner is awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the ball entered dead ball territory or became blocked.

- ② 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.

- ③ If the ball becomes blocked due to offensive equipment not involved in the game.

Effect:

- A The ball is dead.
- B Runners are returned to the last base touched at the time of the blocked ball.

C ~~If the blocked ball prevented the defense from making an out, the runner being played on is out.~~ **The runner closest to Home Plate shall be called out.**

④ If a base is awarded in error, after a legal or illegal pitch the error cannot be corrected.

H. 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.*

I. 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 of 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.*

J. 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.*

K. 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.*

L. 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.*

M. 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.
- G. When base stealing is not allowed.
Effect: Runners must return to their base after each pitch.
- H. 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:

 - ① The ball is dead.
 - ② The runner is out and the run is nullified.
 - ③ 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:*
- The pitcher and all infielders have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the team area, or*
 - 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.*
- If the ball leaves live ball territory, a dead ball appeal cannot be made until completion of all legal advancement by base runners.*
 - If the pitcher has possession of the ball and is in contact with the pitchers plate when making a verbal appeal, no illegal pitch is called.*
 - 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:

- The ball is dead.*
- The runner is out.*
- The batter-runner is awarded first base.*
- Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.*
- 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.*
- ① **“Down and out” – Following a putout at second base, a runner who is or was on their way from first to second must slide, duck, or veer out of the path of the thrown ball to first base.**
Effect: The batter-runner is also declared out, even if the ball is not thrown.
- 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:

- The ball is dead.*
- The runner is out.*
- The batter-runner is awarded first base.*
- 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. 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.

- U. 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.*

- V. When a runner is positioned behind and not in contact with a base to get a running start on any fly ball.

Effect:

The ball remains live.

- ② *The runner is out.*

- W. Whenever a runner on base leaves the game under the Shorthanded Rule. (Rule 4, Section 1D)

- X. 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.*
- ③ *If the Illegal, Altered, or Non-Approved Bat is discovered prior to the next pitch, legal or illegal,*
 - A *any runners put out prior to the discovery shall remain out.*
 - B *all other runners return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch.*

- Y. 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 in order 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 comes in contact with 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

A. Adult Slow Pitch Courtesy Runner.

- ① A courtesy runner is officially in the game when reported to the plate umpire.
 - A The umpire must be informed and announce all pinch runners prior to the at-bat.
 - B The batter must safely reach first base on their own accord. The courtesy runner will take over once the batter-runner safely reaches base and play has ended.
 - C The courtesy runner must be the last person of the same sex determined "out" on the scoreboard.
EXCEPTION: If there have not been any designated outs, the pinch runner must be the last person listed on the roster of the same sex.
- ② Any eligible player may be a courtesy runner once per inning for any player other than the pitcher. This player, or any other eligible player, may also be a courtesy runner for the pitcher providing the pitcher bats for themselves and reaches base safely.
Effect: If a courtesy runner is used more than once for a player other than the pitcher they will be called out and removed from the base.
- ③ If a courtesy runner is used, the courtesy runner cannot be replaced by a substitute.
- 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 9A[4&5]:
 - A Violations result in an out.

B *The runner is removed from the base.*

6 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.*

7 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. In Coed two courtesy runners are allowed for players other than the pitcher, one male and one female. All courtesy runners including those running for the pitcher must be of the same gender as the player they replace.

NOTE: 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.

8 **Once a player has used a courtesy runner, they must continue using one for the duration of the game.**

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 PROTESTS

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

- A. The protest is considered to be 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

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 of 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.

Each team shall provide at least one umpire (ideally 2 or more) while their team is at-bat. This umpire shall take position behind the plate.

Coaches/Managers are responsible for providing competent/qualified umpires for the games their team has been designated to officiate. Scheduling a minimum of two (2) umpires per game is highly recommended.

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 is in conflict 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.** 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 make a decision which conflicts with the official playing rules or with an umpire's decision.

The Home team will be the official score and it is the obligation of the visiting team to verify the score at the end of each half inning.

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.

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.

- 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 make a decision 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. When the ball is live in fast pitch, each runner may leave their base when:

- ① The pitcher no longer has possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle.
 - ② The pitcher makes a play on any runner; a fake throwing motion is considered a play. If time out is requested for an appeal, the umpire should grant time and runners may not advance until the next pitch.
- 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.
- 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 in an attempt 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 as long as 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.

3 – BAT WITH DENTS, RATTLES, EXCESSIVE WEAR OR DELAMINATIONS

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.

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.

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 making contact with the ball. The ball is dead, and the batter is out whether the ball is fair or foul. If contact is not made with the ball, there is no penalty. When there are no batter's box lines, the batter must be able to touch Home Plate with the bat held in both hands, while in his/her batting stance. If there is any question, the umpire may request proof-by-action. If the batter is unable to properly perform the requested task, he/she will be required to alter his/her batting stance in order to be in compliance, and a warning shall be issued. If subsequent violations occur, the batter will be called "out", the ball will be "dead", and runners may not advance.

10 – CHECK SWING / BUNT STRIKE

Normally, there are four areas which could constitute whether or not 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 make an attempt 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

- A. Communication / electronic devices, including audio / video equipment, used to communicate between coaches or with anyone outside the field of play are not allowed on the playing field. Head phones and ear phones 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.
- B. An exclusively one-way electronic communication device may be used by the defense or offense to relay the pitch or play call from the dugout or field.

12 – COURTESY RUNNER

- C. Courtesy runners may be any eligible player on the line-up card and may be used once per inning for a player other than the pitcher. In addition, the same courtesy runner or any other eligible player is allowed for the pitcher providing the pitcher bats for themselves and reaches base safely. In Coed two courtesy runners are allowed, one male and one female. All courtesy runners must be of the same gender as the player they replace.

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

In an effort 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 running 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 1-8 Fast Pitch and Modified Pitch) (Rule 6, Section 1-7 Slow Pitch and 16-Inch 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.

16 – 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.

17 – 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.

19 – 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 on 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.

20 – 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. As long as the defensive player has not stepped outside the playing area, the other side of fence, the catch is legal.

21 – 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.

22 – 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. 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.

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.

A foul tip is a batted ball, which goes directly from the bat, not higher than the batter’s head, to the catcher’s hands or glove/mitt, and is legally caught by the catcher.

23 – 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.

24 – 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 comes in contact with 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, don’t 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.

25 – HOME RUNS AND RUNNING BASES

This rule applies only to games involving all Adult and Junior Olympic Boys 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.

26 – 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. 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.

27 – 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 in order 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.

28 – 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.

29 – 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.

30 – INTENTIONALLY DROPPED BALL

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

32 – 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.

33 – 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. Merely running in front of a batted ball or jumping over a batted ball is not interference, even if it may be distracting to the fielder. In order for a runner to be called out they must commit an act of interference.
 - 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 or not 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. If on the third strike, the batter is out.

E For crash interference, refer to RS #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.

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. **Any member of the offensive team (including players and coaches) shall not interfere, either physically or vocally, with a player attempting to field either a fair or foul ball.**

Effect: The ball is dead, the batter is out, and any base runner(s) must return to the base that they occupied at the time of the pitch

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.

H. Offensive team interference occurs when a thrown ball strikes loose equipment left in live ball territory; but only when play is actually affected (RS #17).

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 running lane over fair or foul territory and interferes with a thrown ball to first base.

35 – 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.

36 – 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 or not 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 as a result 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 RS #8 - Catcher's Box)*

37 – OVER-RUNNING 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. Overrunning first base on the look back rule is covered under RS # 34.

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.

38 – OVERTHROWS

Runners are always awarded two bases on balls that are overthrown or become blocked as a result of hitting loose equipment that belongs to the defensive team and should not be on the field (RS #17). 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.*

39 – 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.

41 – PITCHER'S UNIFORM

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.

42 – 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 as long as 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.

43 – RUN SCORING ON THE THIRD OUT OF AN INNING

A run can not 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. Any runs scored prior to the runner being appealed count.

44 – 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)

45 – 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.

46 – 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 not legal. Polyurethane or plastic cleats shaped to look like a metal triangle, toe or heel plate are illegal. 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.

47 – SHORTHANDED TEAMS (Starting the Game)

A team may begin the game one player short, that is with nine players. When a team plays one short, an out must be recorded in the last position in the batting order. 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.

48 – 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 as long as 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.
- 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. 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.

49 – 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.

51 – 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.

52 – 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.

53 – 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 RS #42, 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.

NCCSFL 1 – PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

- A.** The NCCSFL has only one adult-coed division. Players must have reached the age of 16 by the tournament date.
EXCEPTION: An individual may qualify if he/she has reached the age of 15 by the time the tournament and his/her parent/guardian is present at the field during the duration of play.
- B.** Any player participating in any NCCSFL Sanctioned Event must be physically able to participate. By physically able, the player must be able to walk on and off the field and play the game as intended. This is intended to keep injured people from further injury.
- C.** It is highly recommended that every player participate in a minimum of two (2) church services per month.
- D.** Pick-up players (players not normally on that team) can only be used to supplement the number of players to field a team of 10 with a minimum of 3 girls. If, at the start of the game, there are enough players to meet the total of 10 players with 3 girls minimum required, no pick-up players will be permitted to play.
- ❶ If pick-up players are needed for a team to avoid forfeiting a game, the pick-up player will bat in the last available gender spot in the batting order according to the league batting lineup requirements.
 - ❷ Any pick-up player, regular sub or regular player is required to sign the NCCSFL Liability waiver prior to playing.
 - ❸ During a tournament, a pick-up player may only play on a team if they have played during the regular season.
- E.** All tournament-eligible players must have played a minimum of 40% of the regular-season/tournament-play games.
EXCEPTION: The Commissioning Council must approve any potential exceptions, including players playing for another team, before Tournament play begins. All exceptions are dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

NCCSFL 2 – CALLING INFIELD FLY

When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire shall immediately declare ‘INFIELD FLY – BATTER IS OUT’ to aid the runners. If the ball is near the foul lines, the umpire shall declare ‘INFIELD FLY – BATTER IS OUT, IF FAIR’. The ball is alive and runners may advance at the risk of the ball being caught, or re-touch and advance after a fielder touches the ball or it makes contact with the ground. If the hit ball becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any other foul ball.

APPENDIX – THE PENALTY PAGE

PENALTY	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
Altered of non-approved Bat	7	6	B Effect
Appeal plays	8	7	F-I Effect [1-3]
Assisting another runner	8	7	E Effect
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Batting out of order	7	2	D [1-4] Effect
Batting position – timing	7	3	C
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Coach leaving the coaches box to communicate with batter	4	7	C [2B] Effect
Coach, unsportsmanlike & communication device	4	7	C [3-5] Effect
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Contacting or catching the ball with detached equipment	8	5	F Effect [1-5]
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Disqualified participant	4	8	A-D
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Exceeding Home Run limit	8	2	A, B Effect
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Illegal bat in the batter’s box	7	6	C
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Illegal pitch swung at or not swung at	7	5	E
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Intentional crash	8	7	Q
Intentionally dropped fly ball	8	2	K
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Interference by a base coach on a batted ball or thrown ball	8	7	O Effect
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Interference by a batter at Home Plate	7	6	R-U
Interference by a batter-runner	8	2	F
Interference by a batter-runner at Home Plate	8	2	G Effect
Interference by a batter-runner running outside 3’ lane	8	2	E

PENALTY	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
Interference by an immediate preceding runner	8	2	L Effect
Interference by an on-deck batter	7	1	D
Interference by offensive equipment on the field	8	5	G Exception 3
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Interference by a runner struck by a fair untouched batted ball	8	7	K
Interference by a runner on a deflected batted ball	8	7	J4
Interference by a spectator fly ball	8	2	O Effect
Interference by a spectator on a thrown ball or batted ball	8	5	L
Interference by an Umpire	8	6	F
Members of the offensive team collected around the same base	8	7	N Effect
Obstruction by catcher	8	1	D
Obstruction by a fielder	8	5	B 1-4 Effect
Over the fence HR	8	2	M
Runner discovered using an illegal bat before a pitch	8	7	X Effect
Passing a runner	8	7	D Effect
Possession of a ball that become blocked	8	5	G Exception 1
Runner abandons a base	8	7	U
Runner leaving a base too soon	8	7	R Effect
Runner leaves a base under the Short-Hand Rule	8	7	W
Runners on the same base	8	3	E Effect
Runners switch bases	8	7	Y
Running bases in proper order	8	3	A Effect
Running bases in reverse order	8	3	D Effect
Running outside base path to avoid a tag	8	7	A
Short-Handed Rule	4	1	D [1, 2]
Time to release the next pitch	6	3	O, N, J, H Effect
Wearing metal cleats when not allowed	3	6	G Effect

PLAYING RULES & RULES SUPPLEMENT INDEX

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
ALTERED BAT	1		
Bat specifications	3	1	H
Batter is out	7	6	B & C
APPEAL PLAYS (R/S #1)	1		
Dead ball appeal	8	7	F-I EFFECT 3
Batting out of order	7	2	D EFFECT (1-4)
May not return	8	3	G
Live ball appeal	8	7	F-I EFFECT 2
Team loses the right	8	7	F-I EFFECT 1
AUTOMATIC OUT			
Continue game	4	1	D (2) (A-G)
Start of the game	4	1	D (1) (D)
AWARDED BASES			
Can't return	8	5	G Note
BALL			
Called by umpire	7	5	
Fair ball	1		
Foul ball	1		
Intentionally carried (R/S #27)	8	5	K
Unintentionally carried (R/S #27)	8	5	J
BASE ON BALLS	1		
Awarded First Base	8	1	C
BASE PATH	1		
Runner out	8	7	A
Runner not out	8	8	A, B
BAT	3	1	
Carrying bat on bases (R/S #52)			
Illegal specifications	3	1	A-G & I
Throwing bat (R/S #52)			
With dents (R/S #3)	3	1	A
BATTER			
Automatic out	4	1	D (1C)(2E)
Becomes a batter-runner	8	1	
Check swing (R/S #10)			
Chopping down on ball	1, 7	6	J
Continue game	4	1	D (2)
Enters batter's box with altered bat	7	6	B
Feet in the batter's box	7	3	A
Hindering the catcher	7	6	R-U
Hit by pitch	7	4	H, J, K
Hitting a fair ball with the bat a second time (R/S #24)	7	6	M
Hitting with an illegal bat (R/S #4)	7	6	E

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
Intentional walk	8	1	C (3)(4)
Not taking position in 10 seconds	7	3	C
	7	4	M
On-deck batter	7	1	
Out	7	6	
Start of game	4	1	D (1) D
Stepping across home plate while pitcher is in the pitching position	7	3	E
Stepping out of the batter's box (R/S #7)	7	6	F-H
When third out is made while at bat	7	2	G
BATTER-RUNNER	1		
Batter becomes batter-runner	8	1	
Injury prevents running to awarded base	4	6	D
Batter-runner is out	8	2	
Going directly to First Base	8	2	D
Home run does not have to run	8	3	I
Moving back to home	8	2	H
Overrunning First Base (R/S #37)	8	7	H
Running outside three-foot line	8	2	E
BATTING ORDER	1		
Extra player	1		
Out of order	7	2	
BLOCKED BALL	1		
Offensive equipment on field	8	5	G Exception (3)
BLOOD RULE	4	9	
BOX SCORE	11	2	
BUNT (R/S #10)	1		
With two strikes on the batter	7	6	J
CASTS	3	6	E
CATCH			
Legally caught ball	1	A	
CATCH AND CARRY	1		
Intentionally carried out of play	8	5	K
Unintentionally carried out of play	8	5	J
CATCHER'S OBSTRUCTION	8	1	D
CHOPPED BALL	7	6	J
CLEATS	3	6	G Exception, Effect
COACH	4	7	
Assists runner	8	7	E
Communications equipment (use of)	4	7	C (5)
Coach draws throw	8	7	M
Coach intentionally interferes	8	7	O
Leave the coach's box	4	7	C (2)
	10	1	
Scorebooks in coach's box	4	7	C (1)
Uniform	4	7	B

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
COED RULES			
Courtesy runner	8	9	B2
Batting order	7	2	E
Defensive positioning	4	1	C (3E)
Extra Player (EP) (number of)	4	1	C (3F)
Male base on balls	8	1	C (4)
Shoes	3	6	G
Shorthanded	4	1	D (1)(D)(2)(C & G)
Use of wrong number of males/females	4	1	C (3F) 1-4
COURTESY RUNNER (R/S #12)	8	9	B2 & C
DEFENSIVE TEAM	1		
Defensive player distracts batter	6C	4	B
DELAYED DEAD BALL (R/S #14)			
Illegal pitch	6C	1-7	
Illegal pitch penalty	6C	10	
Catcher obstruction	8	1	D (1&2)
Detached equipment hitting ball	8	5	F
Obstruction	8	5	B
Plate umpire interference	8	6	G
DETACHED EQUIPMENT	8	5	F
DELIBERATE CRASH (Runner) (R/S #13)	8	7	Q
DISLODGED BASE	1		
Following a base	8	3	C
Not out if off dislodged base	8	8	N
Runner attempts to continue	8	4	J
DISQUALIFIED PLAYER	4	6	E Effect
Altered / Non approved bat	7	6	A & D
Batter	4	6	C (1-4)
Pitcher	4	6	C (7-8)
Re-entry	4	5	
	4	6	F4
Runner	4	6	F3
DOUBLE BASE			
Batter-runner interference	8	2	N
Batter-runner touching white portion during play	8	2	N 3 & 9
Errant or missed throw	8	2	N (5)
DROPPED BALL DURING WIND UP	6C	9	D
DUGOUT	1		
Conduct (R/S #16)	5	12	
EJECTED PARTICIPANT	4	8	B & C
EJECTION FROM GAME	4	8	B-D
Crash	8	7	Q
Second offense after warning	4	8	C
Violation of the rules	10	1	
EQUIPMENT	3	1-7	

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
Left on field (R/S #17)	8	5	G Exception (3)
EXTRA PLAYER (EP)	1		
Minimum number of players	4	1	C (3) (B, C, D, F)
Substitute	4	5	A
FAKE TAG (R/S #19)	1		
FITNESS OF GROUNDS	5	2	
FLY BALL	1		
Carried into dead ball area	8	5	J-K
FORCE OUT (R/S #21)	8	7	G
FOREIGN SUBSTANCE ON PITCHING HAND	6C	5	
FORFEITED GAME	5	4	
Score of	5	6	C
FOUL TIP	7	4	E
FOUR BASE AWARDS (R/S #26)	5	8	A Note A
GAME CALLED	5	3	C
Illegal glove usage (R/S #23)	8	8	O Effect
GROUND RULE DOUBLE	8	5	H & I
HEIGHT OF PITCH	6C	3	H
HOME RUN (R/S #26)	8	5	H
Home run rule	5	8	
Running bases (R/S #25)	8	3	I Exception
ILLEGAL BAT	1		
Legal bat	3	1	
ILLEGAL BATTER	4	6	F (2)
ILLEGAL PITCH	6C	1-7	
Illegal pitch penalty	6C	10	
ILLEGAL PLAYER	4	6	F
ILLEGAL RE-ENTRY	4	6	F (4)
ILLEGAL RUNNER	4	6	F (3)
ILLEGALLY BATTED BALL	1		
Runner must return	8	6	B
Batter is out	7	6	D-J, M
ILLEGALLY CAUGHT BALL			
Detached equipment	8	5	F
Illegal glove/mitt	8	8	O
INCOMPLETE GAME	5	3	D, F
INFIELD FLY	8	2	I-J
INJURED PLAYER (R/S #29)	4	10	
INJURED RUNNER	4	6	D
Blood rule	4	9	
INNINGS	1		
Regulation games	5	3	
INSULTING REMARKS TOWARD PLAYERS OR UMPIRES	4	7	C (3)
INTENTIONALLY CARRIED/THROWN BALL (R/S #27)	8	5	K
INTENTIONALLY DROPPED FLY BALL (R/S #30)	8	2	K

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
INTENTIONAL WALK (R/S #32)	8	1	C (2-5)
INTERFERENCE (R/S #33)	1		
Aiding a runner	8	7	E
By base coach	8	7	M, O
By base umpire	8	1	E (7)
By batter	7	6	R-U
By batter-runner	8	2	E-H
By on-deck batter	7	1	D
By plate umpire	8	6	F
By runner	8	7	J, K, L, P, Q
Crash by runner (R/S #13)	8	7	Q
Offensive equipment on field	8	5	G Exception 3
Runners return	8	6	C
	8	7	J-Q Effect
Spectator	8	2	O
	8	5	L
While fielding foul ball	7	6	K
With a bat	7	6	M
JEWELRY	3	6	F
Medical alert bracelets / necklaces	3	6	F
LEAVE GAME (Re -entry)	4	5	
Substitutes	4	6	
LEGAL DELIVERY OR PITCH	6C	3	
LINE-UP CARD	4	1	
LINE-UP TO START GAME	4	1	A
MAXIMUM/MINIMUM ARC	6C	3	H
MEDIA COVERAGE (R/S #35)			
Illegal glove penalty	8	8	O
NO PITCH	6C	9	
OBSTRUCTION (R/S #36)	8	5	B
Catcher obstruction	8	1	D
OFFICIAL SCOREKEEPER	11	1	
ON-DECK BATTER	7	1	
ON-DECK CIRCLE			
Violation	7	1	D Effect
OVVERRUN FIRST BASE (R/S #37)	8	8	I
	8	7	T
OVERSLIDE	1		
Runner is out	8	7	B
OVERTHROW (R/S #38)	8	5	G Exception
PINE TAR	3	1	D
PITCH			
Delivered with catcher out of catcher's box	6C	6	A
Height of pitch	6C	3	H
Illegal pitch	6C	1-7	

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
Illegal pitch penalty	6C	10	
Legal delivery	6C	3	
No pitch declared	6C	9	
Quick return pitch	6C	7	
Returned by catcher	6C	6	B
Slips from pitcher's hand	6C	9	D
Warm-up pitches	6C	8	
PITCHER			
Allotted time	6C	3	J
Batting glove on pitching hand	6C	5	
Foreign substance on ball	6C	5	
Illegal pitch penalty	6C	1-7	Effect
	6C	10	E
Legal delivery	6C	3	
Position of feet	6C	3	E
Re-enter	4	5	
Starting pitcher	4	1	C (3)
Tape on fingers (R/S #41)	6C	5	
Warm-up pitches allowed between innings	6C	8	
Wristbands	6C	5	
PITCHER'S PLATE			
Contact at delivery	6C	3	E
Pitcher throws while in contact with	6C	1	E/F
PITCHING POSITION	6C	1	A-E
PLAY BALL	1		
Fail to resume play in two minutes	5	4	D
PLAY MADE BY UNANNOUNCED SUBSTITUTE	4	6	C (7-9)
PLAYERS	4	1	
Minimum number to play	4	1	C
Officially entering the game	4	6	A, B
Positions	4	1	C (1-3)
Short-handed rule	4	1	D
PLAYING FIELD			
Fitness for play	5	2	
PROSTHESIS USAGE	3	6	E
PROTESTS (R/S #42)	9	1-7	
Correcting errors	9	1	A
Decisions	9	7	
Examples	9	2	A, B
Information needed	9	6	
Notification of intent	9	4	
Time limit	9	5	
Types	9	1	
QUICK RETURN PITCH	6C	7	
RE-ENTER GAME	4	5	

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
RE-ENTRY, PENALTY OF ILLEGAL	4	5	A-C Effect
	4	6	F (4)
REFUSING TO PLAY	5	4	B-D
REGULATION GAME	5	3	
REMOVAL FROM GAME	5	4	G, H
Batter using altered bat	7	6	B & C
Re-entry	4	5	
Substitute not announced	4	6	C
RESIN	6C	5	
RETURN OF PITCH TO PITCHER	6C	6	B
REVERSAL OF UMPIRE'S DECISION	10	3	B, C
ROSTERS (Male and Female)	4	1	B
RUNNER	1		
Abandons base	8	7	U
Aiding a runner who misses Home Plate	8	7	E Exception
Assisted by anyone	8	7	E
Award of bases on overthrow of ball out of play	8	5	G
Base stealing	8	4	A
	8	4	F
Bases touched in legal order	8	3	
Coach draws throw at home	8	7	M
Comes into contact with fielder attempting to field ball	8	7	J
Comes into contact with fielder who could not have made an out	8	8	C
Correcting errors on awards	8	5	G (4)
	9	2	A
Courtesy runner	8	9	B2
Deliberate contact with a fielder with the ball	8	7	Q
Enters team area	8	7	U
Entitled to advance with liability to be put out	8	4	
Entitled to advance without liability to be put out	8	5	
Fails to keep contact with base until pitched ball reaches Home Plate	8	7	R
Hit by batted ball (R/S #44)	8	8	D-F
Illegal bat	8	7	X
Illegal runner	4	6	F(3)
Intentionally contacting ball	8	7	L
Interferes with play after being declared out	8	7	P
Interferes with play before being declared out	8	7	J
Leading off	8	7	R Effect
Leaving base on an appeal	8	7	F-I Effect
Leaving base too soon	8	3	H
	8	8	L
Misses Home Plate	8	7	I
Must return to his base	8	6	
Not out	8	8	
Obstructed	8	5	B

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
Offensive team collecting to confuse the defense	8	7	N
Out	8	7	
Overruns First Base and attempts to go to second	8	7	H
Passes another runner (R/S #39)	8	7	D
Return after thrown ball goes out-of-play	8	5	G
Running the bases in reverse order	8	3	D
Running out of baseline	8	7	A
Running start	8	7	V
Struck by fair ball while off base	8	7	K
Struck by fair ball while on base	8	8	M
Switching positions on base after a time out (R/S #45)	8	7	Y
Two occupying a base at the same time	8	3	E
RUN AHEAD RULE	5	9	A
RUNS NOT SCORED	5	5	B-C
	8	3	F
Force out	5	5	B (1)
RUNS SCORED ON THIRD OUT (R/S #43)	5	5	B
SHOES (R/S #46)	3	6	G
SHORT HANDED TEAMS (PR/S #47-48)	4	1	D
Continuing a game	4	1	D (2)
Forfeit	5	4	J
Starting less than ten	4	1	D (1)
Continuing a game	4	1	D (2)
SPECTATORS, ABUSIVE LANGUAGE			
Attacking umpire	5	4	A
SPEED OF PITCH	6C	3	G
SPIKES	3	6	G
STARTING LINE-UP	4	1	A
Number of players	4	1	C
Positions	4	1	C
Re-entry	4	5	
STEALING	8	6	F, G
Not allowed	8	6	G
When allowed to leave	8	4	F3
STEP TAKEN BY PITCHER	6C	3	E
STEPPING OUT OF BATTER'S BOX	7	6	F-H
	7	3	E & F
STRIKE	7	4	
Ball hitting batter on third strike	7	4	H, J, K
Dropped third strike	8	1	B
SUBSTITUTIONS (R/S #51)	1		
No substitute available	5	4	H
	4	1	C & D
Notify umpire	4	6	A
Officially in game	4	6	B

	RULE	SECTION	ARTICLE
Re-entry	4	5	
Unreported	4	6	C
SUBSTITUTE RUNNER			
Automatic out	4	1	D (1C)
Injury to runner	4	6	D
SUSPENSION OF PLAY	5	4	D
	7	3	E
	10	4	
TAPE ON PITCHING HAND	6C	5	
TEAM	4	1	
Delay or hasten game	5	4	E
Home team	5	1	
Refusing to play	5	4	B-D
To continue playing	4	1	D (2)
To start a game	4	1	A, D (1)
THIRD STRIKE RULE	7	6	G
	7	4	G
THREE FOOT RUNNING LINE			
Violations	8	2	E
THROWING BAT (R/S #52)			
THROWING GLOVE AT BALL	8	5	F
TIE GAMES (R/S #53)	5	3	B, E, F
Regulation tie	5	3	B, E, F
TIME	1		
By umpire	10	4	
Player, manager, coach	6C	9	E
TIME LIMIT RULE	5	10	
UMPIRES	10	1-4	
Hit by thrown ball	10	4	E
Interference	8	1	E
	10	4	D
Judgment	10	3	
Reversal of decision	10	3	B
WINNING TEAM	5	6	

NCCSFL RULES CHEAT SHEET

- Rule 3 – Section 1 – A(3A)** Coaches must have an approved bat list in possession during any game, with their bats identified by make/model number on it.
- Rule 3 – Section 1 – F** Slightly dented bats may be considered legal at the umpire’s/commissioner’s discretion.
- Rule 3 – Section 3 – B** Women may choose to hit with the men’s ball.
- Rule 3 – Section 3 – C** If a ball is lost or damaged, the team causing it to be lost/damaged replaces it with a league-approved ball from a previous competition. Each coach must approved the replacement ball.
- Rule 3 – Section 6 – A, B** Uniforms are not required, but appropriate sporting apparel is. Clothing must be worn in modesty.
- Rule 4 – Section 1 – C(B)** A team can bat at many people as there are spaces in the NCCSFL sanctioned scorebook, with only 10 playing defense.
- Rule 4 – Section 1 – D(1A)** A team must have a minimum of eight (8) players to start or continue a game.
- Rule 4 – Section 1 – D(1D)** With 8 defensive players, one must be female (playing OF/Rover). With 9 defensive players, two must be female. With ten defensive players, three must be female. One female must play OF/Rover, and one must play IF (not including C).
- Rule 5 – Section 8 – A** “One-up” home run limit, excluding “in-the-park” home runs.
- Rule 5 – Section 9 – A, C** Maximum 7 runs per inning per side, except in the 7th inning or in tournament play. 15-run “mercy rule” after 5 (10 runs after 5 in tournament play).
- Rule 5 – Section 10** In the first game, no new innings may start after 7:15. The second game must start no later than 7:30. The game may be called due to darkness if both coaches agree. “Last” inning to be declared for games ending early.
- Rule 6C – Section 4 – C** Infielders must play in the infield for female batters until the ball is hit.
- Rule 7 – Section 2 – E** The batting order must include at least one female in each of the following sections: 1-3, 4-7, 8-10, 11-13 (if 11-13 players), 14-16 (if 14-16 players). If scorebook allows space, batters 17/18 may be either male or female. Line-Up is never to exceed more than 3 consecutive male batters, not to include going from bottom to top of line-up rotation, which should never exceed more than 4 consecutive male batters. **SIMPLE BREAKDOWN:** <10 players in line-up requires 2+ female batters. 10 players in line-up requires 3+ female batters. 13 players in line-up requires 4+ female batters. 16 players in line-up requires 5+ female batters. Any empty spots will be charged dead-ball outs.
- Rule 7 – Section 3 – G** No “walking swings” allowed—at least one foot must stay planted once the pitch is thrown.
- Rule 7 – Section 4 – B, 5 - B** Any legal pitch making initial contact with any portion of the strike zone mat (located behind the plate) is a strike. A pitch making initial contact with Home Plate but NOT the strike zone mat (and not swung at) is a ball.
- Rule 7 – Section 5 – I** The umpire calls “flat” for balls under 6ft and “too high” for balls over 10ft to alert batters of illegal pitches prior to their landing. Batters may still choose to swing. Swinging makes these legal pitches.
- Rule 8 – Section 1 – C(5)** A male walked on four straight balls in front of a female gets a 2-base walk and the female may choose to take first base for free or bat
- Rule 8 – Section 1 – C(6)** When a team has a vacant spot in the lineup, and has two outs in the inning, the opposing team may not intentionally or unintentionally walk the previous batter, in order to get to the “automatic out”

created by the vacant spot. If the batter is walked, the vacant spot in the batting order is skipped, the “automatic out” is waived, and the next batter is the player whose name follows the vacant spot in the batting order.

NOTE: If the batter has 2 strikes in the count, this rule shall not apply.

Rule 8 – Section 2 – B Batters cannot be thrown out heading to first on a throw from the outfield

Rule 8 – Section 3 – A(1,8) Pinch runner must be announced prior to the at-bat and take effect once the batter safely reaches base. The last person “out” (of the same gender) is the runner. If nobody has gotten out, the last person in the lineup (of the same gender) is the runner. One a runner is taken, they must use one all game.

Rule 8 – Section 7 – J(3E) Runners heading from first to second must get out of the way of a potential throw to first for a double play

Rule 8 – Section 9 – G(3C) Interference by offensive equipment results in a dead ball.

Rule 10 – Section 1 We self-umpire during the regular season, with the batting team providing at least 1 ump.

Rule 11 – Section 1 Home team is the official score. Visiting team is required to verify the score throughout

Rules Supplement – #7 When there are no batter’s box lines, the batter must be able to touch Home Plate with the bat held in both hands, while in his/her batting stance. The umpire may have them demonstrate.

Rules Supplement – #22 A foul tip is a batted ball which does not go above the batter’s head.

Rules Supplement – #33 Players and coaches are not allowed to physically *or verbally* attempt to interfere with a defensive play

Rules Supplement – NCCSFL #1

- A. Players must be at least 16 by the tournament date. 15-years-olds may qualify if they are 15 by the time the tournament and his/her parent/guardian is present at the field during the duration of play.
- B. Any player participating in any NCCSFL Sanctioned Event must be physically able to participate (able to walk on and off the field and play the game as intended).
- C. Players should participate in a minimum of two (2) church services per month.
- D. Pick-up players can only be used to get to 10 total players (with three women). They will bat last in the lineup and are required to sign the liability waivers prior to playing. During tournament, they may only play on a team if they played on it during the regular season.
- E. All tournament-eligible players must have played at least 40% of the regular season games.

Rules Supplement – NCCSFL #2 Umpires should declare infield fly to aid the runners.

EDITS AND CHANGELOG

Version 1.0 April 18, 2026 Initial draft of modified rulebook