

Screened areas indicate rule changes or points of emphasis.

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Current Changes to the Rules



SOFTBALL – HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

George Hancock, a reporter for the Chicago Tribune, is credited with inventing the game of indoor softball at the Farragut Boat House in Chicago in 1887. Lt. Lewis Rober, Captain of Fire Station 19 on the University of Minnesota Minneapolis Campus, is credited with inventing an outdoor version in 1895, called kitten ball.

In both instances the game was used as a recreational outlet for the players involved and meant to be a “miniature” less difficult version of baseball. The first outdoor field was located behind fire station # 19 at University Avenue and Oak Street, now just across the street from the home of the Minnesota Golden Gophers football team.

“Miniature” is an understatement as the first diamond had 45’ base paths and a pitching distance of 35’. It was not uncommon for 1,500 fans to show up for a Saturday afternoon game between The Kittens and The Rats.

Rober wrote the first rulebook which sold for 10 cents and sewed the first ball which sold for \$1.25. Bats were wood and no more than two inches in diameter, resembling a big broom stick. At the Farragut Boat Club in Chicago, the first ball was actually a rolled up boxing glove and the bat was a broom handle.

So the game of softball had very humble beginnings and was “invented” as a less formal, less difficult to play version of baseball. The ball was actually **soft** by design.

Over 100 years later the game that was invented as a form of recreation for the masses in many ways can no longer lay claim to that appeal. Technology and competition among bat and ball manufacturers have made the game much faster more difficult and often dangerous to play. Balls are hard and bats flex like a trampoline to propel the ball faster and faster and further and further. Pitchers wear face masks and shin pads to protect themselves on the mound. Some senior leagues actually use batting practice screens to protect the pitcher.

SOFTBALL - HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE (continued)

As the game has become faster, more difficult and oftentimes dangerous to play, participation has dramatically declined. How much is related to the less recreational nature of the game versus societal changes is tough to determine, but with more and more specialization in youth sports prospective participants who never played baseball or softball may have a difficult time picking up the less recreational game of softball as an adult.

Ninety—five per cent of the players in the USA play softball for one night a week for recreation, and maybe a weekend or two. Their goal is to have fun and go to work the next day with all their teeth and faculties intact. The National Softball Federation recognizes this fact and working with park and recreation directors hopes to reinvent a game that is safer, and appeals more to the average recreational participant. This means balls may be less lively and bats as well (this will also reduce the cost of equipment and cost to play the game). While 5% of the players are highly skilled and competitive their desires and the sales motives of equipment manufacturers should not negatively affect participation in the game.

There needs to be rule and equipment differences for the recreational (95%) versus elite participants (5%) – otherwise the steady decline in softball league and tournament participation that began in the 90's, will inevitably continue.



CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

A concussion is an injury to the brain and any injury to the brain is serious. It is caused by a blow to the head or a blow to the body resulting in an injured brain. Even a seemingly minor blow or jolt can cause a brain injury.

All Minnesota NSF-MSF umpires who officiate games in which 18-Under players participate, must undergo concussion training at the website provided below. Check with your state for its requirements, if any.

Common Concussion Symptoms

Headaches	Nausea	Vomiting
Balance Off	Dizziness	Fatigue
Sensitive to Light	Sensitive to Sound	Ear Ringing
Numbness & Tingling	Visual Problems	Mentally Foggy
Difficulty Concentrating	Difficulty Remembering	Confusion
Nervousness	Drowsiness	Slurred Speech

Return to Participation

Athletics should not return to play until:

Evaluation and clearance by Health Care Professional

Athletes must be symptom free at rest and during progressively demanding exercises.

Athletes must remain symptom free upon returning to practice/play.

Detailed Concussion Training is available at
www.cdc.gov/concussion/headsup/youth.html

Additional resources available at
www.mnata.com OF www.braininjurymn.org

Purpose of Rules

The purpose of these rules is to provide for fair play, promote a balance between offense and defense, promote a sporting atmosphere and minimize safety risks to the participants.

To suggest changes or corrections to the rules or obtain a rule interpretation, please email staff@msf1.org.



Rule 1: Field and Equipment

NUMBER 1: THE FIELD

LTR A . . . The softball field shall be free of obstructions between the foul lines, enclosed by a fence.

LTR B . . . Mandated field distances are designated on pages 7, 8 and 9.

LTR C . . . The infield and outfield, including the boundary marks from the rear tip of home plate to first and third, and their extended foul lines, are fair ground. All other area is foul ground.

LTR D . . . While the on-deck circle does not have to be occupied, a player desiring to warm up shall use that area, provided it is safely away from home plate. Neither team's players shall warm up in the other team's on-deck circle.

LTR E . . . The outermost edge of each line is the restricting boundary and shall meet the dimensions defined in the rules. All lines on the field shall be white and marked with a material that is not injurious to the eyes or skin. Lime or caustic material is prohibited.

LTR F . . . Any game began on a non-regulation facility shall not be protested for this reason. Once a game has began, and it is discovered or brought to the attention of the umpire that the pitching distance, base distances or batter's boxes are incorrect, the correction shall be made immediately. The game shall continue and may not be protested.

LTR G . . . When planning a new field, the following factors should be fully considered: protection for contestants (batter, catcher, pitcher and others in that order); comfort and safety for spectators; and obstacles or barriers.

LTR H . . . When laying out a new softball diamond, it is recommended that the line from home plate through the pitcher's plate to second base run east northeast. Designate a point for the apex (rear tip) of home plate. Using a steel tape or a strong cord which will not stretch, measure in an east-northeast direction exactly 84 feet 10¼ inches for fast and modified pitch (60-foot bases) or 91 feet 11 inches for slow pitch (65 foot bases). This will be the center of second base. With the tape still secured at the rear point of home plate, measure 60 or 65 feet toward the first-base area and mark a short arc. Measure 60 or 65 feet toward the third-base area and mark a short arc. Fasten the tape at the center of second base and measure 60 or 65 feet toward first and third bases and strike arcs. Where these arcs intersect the first two arcs struck at first and third bases will be where first and third bases will be located. (See field diagram to see how first and third bases are placed and also how second base is different by being centered on the 60-foot distance from each of first and third bases.) When measuring the distance to first base or third base, measure from the apex of home plate to the back edge of the base. If a skinned infield is used (which is recommended), the area is determined by measuring a 70-foot arc from the front center of the 46-foot pitcher's plate, even if other pitching distances are used.

GETTING FROM NYSTROM

ITEM	DIMENSION
Infield	65' foot square for slowpitch 60' foot square for fastpitch measured from center of second base to back edge of third and first base. Back point of home plate serves as the apex of measurements.
Side Line Area	30' maximum is recommended with 25' minimum. (Consistent depth from back stop to outfield fence.)
Warning Track	10' Width
Fair Pole	At least 10' high painted optic color with minimum 6" screen on fair side.
Fence Height	Both side and outfield minimum of 6' with 8-10' recommended. Also, recommended is optic color fence cap.
Back Stop	30' maximum recommended/25' minimum
Skinned Portion of Infield	60' arc fastpitch 70' arc slowpitch from center of pitchers plate
Bases	Maximum 3.5" thick – 15" square
Athletic Chalk or Paint	Maximum 4" wide/2" minimum
Pitching Distance	Measured from backpoint of home plate to front edge of pitcher's plate
Base Distance	Measured from back point of home plate to farthest edge of 1 st and 3 rd base, center of 2 nd base

Division	Pitching	Base	Fence Min	Fence Max
Youth Slow				
Girls 10U	40'	60'	175'	200'
Girls 12U	46'	60'	175'	200'
Girls 14U	50'	65'	225'	250'
Girls 16U	50'	65'	225'	250'
Girls 18U	50'	65'	225'	250'
Youth Fast				
Girls 10U	35'	60'	175'	225'
Girls 12U	40'	60'	200'	225'
Girls 14U	43'	60'	200'	225'
Girls 16U	43'	60'	200'	225'
Girls 18U	43'	60'	200'	225'
Boys 10U	35'	60'	175'	225'
Boys 12U	40'	60'	200'	225'
Boys 14U	46'	60'	200'	225'
Boys 16U	46'	60'	200'	225'
Boys 18U	46'	60'	225'	250'
Adult Slow				
Women	50'	65'-70'	285'	315'
Men	50'	65'-70'	285'	315'
Co-Rec	50'	65'-70'	285'	315'
Adult Fast				
Women	43'	60'	200'	250'
Men	46'	60'	225'	275'
Co-Rec	46'	60'	225'	275'
Modified Pitch				
Women	40'	60'	200'	275'
Men	46'	60'	275'	300'
Co-Rec	46'	60'	275'	300'

NUMBER 2: SOFTBALLS

LTR A . . . The ball(s) shall be a white or optic yellow sphere formed by either poly core or cork.

LTR B . . . The cover of the ball shall be made of leather. The cover is also sewn on the ball. Synthetic composition material may also be used for the cover.

LTR C . . . The ball specifications shall be as stated in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1

PLAY	SIZE	COR	COMPRESSION	WEIGHT & CIRCUMFERENCE MINIMUMS
Slow Pitch	11"	.44 / .52 max	375 lbs. max / 300 lbs.	6 ounces 11 inches
Slow & Modified Pitch	12"	.52 max	300 lbs.	6 3/4 ounces 12 inches
Fast Pitch	12"	.44 max JOFP (cork) Men's & Women's	375 lbs. max	6 3/4 ounces 12 inches

NOTES:

1. The dynamic stiffness of 12" softballs shall not exceed 7,500 pounds/inch and 11" softballs shall not exceed 9,500 pounds/inch when tested under current ASTM test methods.

2. An 11-inch ball shall be used in girls slow, women's slow pitch, for women in co-rec slow pitch and girls and boys 10-under fast pitch and the bases shall be 65 feet.

LTR D . . . The specifications of color, COR and compression shall be identical for all balls used for each game.

LTR E . . . Any defacing, treatment or device that would change the ball specifications are prohibited and render the ball illegal.

NUMBER 3: GLOVES/MITTS

LTR A . . . Gloves/mitts shall:

1) Excluding the manufacturers logo or lacing, may be a maximum of two colors. Lacing may not be the color of the ball.

2) Not be determined distracting by the umpire.

LTR B . . . The catcher may wear a glove/mitt of any size. Gloves/mitts may be worn by all other players and must conform to the following specifications:

1) Height measured from the bottom edge or heel straight up across the center of the palm to a line even with the highest point of the glove/mitt: 14 inches

2) Width of palm measured from the bottom edge of the webbing farthest from the thumb in a horizontal line to the outside of the little finger edge of the glove/mitt: 8 inches

3) Webbing measured across the top end, or along any line parallel to the top: 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches

LTR C . . . An illegal glove/mitt shall be replaced immediately (8-9-0).

NUMBER 4: BATS

LTR A . . . Until such time that the NSF•MSF establishes its own bat standards for various levels of postseason and registered invitational tournament play, our bat standard and approved/non-approved bats can be found at <http://www.teamusa.org/usa-softball/>. As per the norm, local leagues may enact their own standards, but when safety is at issue, should not lessen the specified standards.

1) . . . **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, may be adjustable, and may be covered with grip tape. A one-piece rubber knob and bat grip combination is not legal. Choke-up devices are not legal.

2) . . . **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 safety grip.

3) . . . **Grip.** The grip can be made of cork, tape, or other synthetic material and must be permanently attached and cover the handle region of the bat. No bare metal may be exposed in the area covered by the grip. It shall not be less than 10 inches and not more than 15 inches. Any attachment such as a molded finger group, flare cone, or choke-up device must be attached to the grip with safety tape. Resin, pine tar, or spray substances are permissible on the safety grip only.

4) . . . **Taper.** The transition area which connects the narrow handle and the wider barrel. The taper shall have a solid surface conical shape. The length and material may vary. It starts where the barrel decreases in size and ends where the handle diameter becomes constant. The taper shall be free of burs, dents, cracks, sharp edges and audible rattles, and show no signs of excessive wear.

5) . . . **Barrel.** The region of the bat from the end of the taper to the end cap, not including the end cap. The barrel region shall be round within 0.050 inches.

6) . . . **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.

7) . . . **Altered Bat.** A bat's characteristics shall remain fixed at the time of manufacture and may not be altered in any way other than provided in Rule 1-3. 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.

8) . . . **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.

- a. Mating components must have a unique locking key to prevent uncertified equipment combinations on the field.
- b. All component combinations must meet the one-piece bat rules.
- c. Manufacturer must demonstrate that the interchangeable bat fails in a safe manner (i.e. visible damage before locking feature(s) fail(s)).
- d. Bat components must be designed in away 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 plastics or other approved material insert, or end cap at the large end of the bat.

LTR B . . . Warm-up bats used in the on-deck circle shall have all parts permanently and securely attached at the time of manufacture and at the time of use. No more than two bats shall be used when warming up in the on-deck circle. Devices added to a bat for warm-up purposes shall be commercially manufactured specifically for a softball bat and shall be securely attached, so as not to disengage during use. Such devices shall take, but not exceed, the general shape and size of a bat including the grip.

NUMBER 5: BATTING HELMETS

LTR A ... A batting helmet with a permanently affixed or embossed NOCSAE stamp and legible exterior warning label is mandatory for each

youth fast pitch batter, on-deck batter, runners and retired runners. The exterior warning label may be affixed to the outside of the helmet, which includes both sides of the bill, in either sticker form or embossed (at the time of manufacture).

LTR B . . . The batting helmet is required to be worn while the ball is live and in live-ball territory until the ball enters dead-ball territory without being touched by a fielder or after being touched, goes directly into dead-ball territory.

LTR C . . . Non-adult bat/ball shaggers shall wear batting helmets while in liveball area, even if the ball is dead. A violation while in live-ball area shall result in a warning to the manager/coach of the team and the individual. A subsequent violation may result in the individual/coach/manager not being permitted on the field.

LTR D . . . The batting helmet shall have extended ear flaps which cover both ears and temples.

LTR E . . . Batting helmets that are broken, cracked, dented, or that have been altered are prohibited from use.

LTR F . . . All youth fast-pitch batting helmets shall be equipped with a NOCSAE approved face protector. The phrase, "Meets NOCSAE Standard" must be permanently affixed or embossed to the face protector.

LTR G . . . If an eye/face shield helmet/mask is worn in the infield or outfield, it may not be reflective/have more than a 50% tint. The player's eyes must be visible to avoid deception/intimidation.

NUMBER 6: CATCHER'S EQUIPMENT

LTR A . . . The fast and modified pitch catcher shall wear a catcher's helmet and mask combination that meets the NOCSAE standard. The helmet shall bear the permanent NOCSAE seal. A throat protector that is part of or attached to the mask shall be worn and extend far enough to adequately protect the throat. An attached throat protector shall be commercially manufactured, properly attached, unaltered and worn properly. Plastic visors attached to the catcher's helmet are prohibited. If an eye shield is worn attached to the catcher's helmet, it must be constructed of a molded, rigid material that is clear and permits 100 percent (no tint) allowable light translucency. It shall not have a glare or mirror-like surface.

LTR B . . . The catcher shall wear a body protector (fast pitch) and baseball/softball protective shin guards (fast and modified pitch).

LTR C . . . (F.P.) Any non-adult warming up a fast pitch pitcher at any location within the confines of the field shall wear an approved catcher's helmet and mask combination and throat protector.

NUMBER 7: OTHER EQUIPMENT

LTR A... Defective equipment shall be repaired or replaced immediately.

LTR B . . . Loose equipment of the teams may not be on or near the field. A discarded bat by the batter or the catcher's mask and helmet are not examples of loose equipment. They are considered part of the playing field.

LTR C . . . Defensive players are permitted to wear face/head/leg protection in the field. Face/head/leg protection worn by defenders shall have a non-glare outer surface. The eye/face/head shield worn may not be reflective or have a tint of more than 50%. The player's eyes must be visible to avoid deception/intimidation.

LTR D . . . All equipment shall be worn properly and as designed by the manufacturer. Any equipment judged by the umpire to be potentially dangerous is illegal.

Rule 2: Definitions**APPEALS**

LTR A . . . A play or rule violation on which the umpire does not make a ruling until requested by a coach or player.

LTR B . . . Types of appeals:

- 1) Missing a base, either advancing or returning (live or dead-ball appeal).
- 2) Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched (live or dead-ball appeal).
- 3) Batting out of order (dead-ball appeal only).
- 4) Attempting to advance to second base after making the turn at first base overrunning first base (live-ball appeal only).

LTR C . . . Methods by which an appeal may be made:

- 1) **Live.** 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 (even if they are standing on another base).

- 2) **Dead.** The dead-ball appeal may be made:

- a. Once all runners have completed their advancement and time has been called, the manager/coach or any defensive player, 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 administering umpire should then make a decision on the play.
- b. If the ball has gone out of play, runners must be given the opportunity to complete their base running responsibilities before the dead-ball appeal can be made.
- c. If "play ball" has been declared by the umpire and the pitcher then requests an appeal, the umpire would again call "time" and allow the appeal.

LTR D . . . When. Appeals must be made:

- 1) before the next legal or illegal pitch;
- 2) at the end of an inning, before all infielders have left fair territory and the catcher vacates her normal fielding position; or
- 3) on the last play of the game, before the umpires leave the field of play.

NOTE: If any situation arises which could lead to an appeal by the defense on the last play of the game, umpires should not leave the field until all infielders have left fair territory and the catcher has vacated her normal fielding position. If teams line up to shake hands there is little chance for an appeal even if the defensive infielders have not crossed the foul line and umpires can leave the game at this point. No appeal can be made once the umpires have left the field.

LTR E . . . Advance. Runners may advance during a live-ball appeal play. If the ball is not dead in fast pitch, each runner may leave their base when the pitcher no longer has possession of the ball within the 16-foot circle, or when the pitcher makes a play on any runner. If the ball is thrown out of play on a live-ball appeal, appropriate bases should be awarded but the appeal can still be made as a deadball appeal once runners have taken their award. If a play is made on a runner prior to completing the live-ball appeal, the appeal can still be made after the play. If time-out is requested for an appeal, the umpire should grant it in either fast pitch or slow pitch, and runners may not advance until the next pitch.

LTR F . . . May Not Return. A runner may not return to touch a missed base or one left too soon on a caught fly ball if:

- 1) they have reached a base beyond the base missed or left too soon and the ball becomes dead.
- 2) they have left the field of play; or
- 3) a following runner has scored.

LTR G . . . Awards. Awarded bases must be touched. An appeal must be honored even if the base missed was before or after an award.

LTR H . . . More Than One Appeal. More than one appeal play may be made but guessing games 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 (the umpire called the runner safe), an appeal may be made at second on the same runner.

LTR I . . . Plate and Missed Tag. If a runner misses home plate and the catcher misses the tag, the umpire should hesitate briefly. If no tag is made, the umpire should declare the runner safe. If an appeal play is then made by tagging either the runner or home plate, the umpire should then make a decision on this appeal play.

LTR J . . . Missing First Base Before the Throw Arrives. If a runner passes first base before the throw arrives, they are considered to have touched the base unless an appeal is made. If an appeal is made, it must be made prior to the runner returning to first base while the ball is live.

LTR K . . . Force Out. If an appeal is honored at a base to which a runner was forced to advance, no runs would score if it was the third out.

LTR L . . . Tag-ups. If a runner leaves a base too soon on a caught fly ball and returns in an attempt to retag, this is considered a time play and not a force out. If the appeal is the third out, all runs scored by runners in advance of the appealed runner and scored before the legal appeal would count.

LTR M . . . Fourth-out Appeal. An appeal may be made after the third out as long as it is made properly. (i.e. one out with runner on first and third. The batter hits a fly ball that is caught. Each runner leaves her base before the caught ball is touched. An appeal is made at first base for the third out. The defensive team then makes an appeal at third base before the infielders leave the infield. The runner on third would then be declared out also, and the run would not count.)

BALL, BATTED, BLOCKED, DEAD, DELAYED DEAD, FLY, GROUND, PASSED, ROTATION

LTR A . . . Ball. The ball is one of the playing implements. The term is also used to designate a pitch that is not a strike.

LTR B . . . Batted Ball. A batted ball is any pitch that comes in contact with the bat. Contact may result in a fair or foul ball and need not be intentional.

LTR C . . . Blocked Ball. A blocked ball is a live ball, pitched, batted or thrown, which is touched, stopped or handled by a person not engaged in the game; or touches any object which is not part of the official equipment or official playing area; or touches loose equipment.

LTR D . . . Dead Ball. A dead ball is a ball not in play.

LTR E . . . Delayed Dead Ball. A situation in which a violation of a rule occurs and is recognized by the umpire by giving a delayed dead-ball signal, but is not ruled upon until the ball becomes dead.

LTR F . . . Fly Ball. A fly ball, fair or foul is a batted ball that rises to an appreciable height above the ground.

LTR G . . . Ground Ball. A ground ball is a batted ball that is either fair or foul and bounces along the ground.

LTR H . . . Passed Ball. A passed ball is a pitch the catcher fails to stop or control when she should have been able to do so with ordinary effort on which a runner (other than the batter) is able to advance.

LTR I . . . Ball Rotation. Ball rotation determines which of the balls should be in play.

BASE LINE, PATH

LTR A . . . Base Line. A direct line between two consecutive bases.

LTR B . . . Base Path. The traditional path traveled by a runner who is attempting to advance to the next base. It is defined by a direct line between two bases and three feet on either side of that line, unless a fielder has the ball in their possession and they are within three feet of the runner and prepared to apply a tag. A base runner who attempts to avoid a tag by running more than three feet to either side of a fielder with the ball in their possession shall be declared out.

NOTE: A runner establishes their own base path when she is not being played upon.

BAT: ALTERED BAT, ILLEGAL BAT, NON-APPROVED BAT

LTR A . . . Altered Bat. An altered bat is a legal bat that has been structurally changed.

LTR B . . . Illegal Bat. An illegal bat is a bat that does not meet acceptable specifications.

LTR C . . . Non-approved Bat. A bat that does not meet national specifications and/or has been placed on the current non-approved bat list found at www.teamusa.org.

PENALTY: Players presenting or caught using banned, illegal or altered bats will be disqualified from the game/tournament and be subject to additional penalties.

BATTER, BATTER-RUNNER, ON-DECK BATTER

LTR A . . . Batter. The batter is the player of the team at bat who is entitled to occupy either of the two batter's boxes.

LTR B . . . Batter-runner. The batter-runner is a player who has finished their time at bat until they are put out or playing action ends.

LTR C . . . On-deck Batter. The on-deck batter is a player of the offensive team who is entitled to occupy the on-deck circle closest to their dugout. A single on deck batter shall remain in her team's on-deck circle while the opposing pitcher is warming up. If occupied, the on-deck batter may leave

the circle when they become a batter; to direct runners advancing from third to home plate; or to avoid interfering with a defensive player's opportunity to make an out.

BATTER'S BOX: The batter's box is the area, including the lines, in which the batter is positioned when batting.

BATTING ORDER, OUT OF ORDER

LTR A . . . Batting Order. The batting order is the official list of starting offensive players presented in the order in which they are to bat and recorded on a lineup card.

LTR B . . . Batting Out of Order. Batting out of order is failing to bat in proper sequence as listed on the official lineup/scorecard.

BUNT, ATTEMPTED BUNT, DRAG BUNT

LTR A . . . Bunt. A bunt is a legally batted ball not swung at but intentionally tapped with the bat in fast or modified pitch.

LTR B . . . Attempted Bunt. Any non-swinging movement of the bat intended to tap the ball into play. Holding the bat in the strike zone is considered a bunt attempt. In order to take a pitch, the bat must be withdrawn – pulled backward and away from the ball. Bunting is not allowed in slow pitch.

LTR C . . . Drag Bunt. A drag bunt is attempting to bunt the ball by running forward in the batter's box, carrying the bat with. The movement of the bat is in conjunction with the batter's forward movement.

CATCH

LTR A . . . A catch is the act of a fielder who, with their hand(s) and/or glove/mitt, securely gains possession of a batted, pitched or thrown ball.

LTR B . . . In establishing the validity of the catch, the fielder must prove they have control of the ball and that their release of the ball is voluntary and intentional.

LTR C . . . If the fielder has made the catch but drops the ball either in transferring it to the throwing hand or in making a throw, the ball shall be ruled caught.

LTR D . . . For a legal catch, a fielder must catch and have secure possession of the ball before stepping, touching or falling into a dead-ball area. A fielder

who falls over or through the fence after making a catch shall be credited with the catch. A fielder who catches a ball while contacting or stepping on a collapsible fence, which is not completely horizontal, is credited with a catch.

LTR E . . . A catch shall not be credited if:

- 1) A fielder catches a batted, pitched or thrown ball with anything other than their hand(s) or glove/mitt in its proper place.
- 2) Immediately following a catch, the fielder collides with another player, umpire or fence or falls to the ground and fails to maintain possession of the ball.
- 3) The fielder uses any equipment or part of her uniform that is displaced from its proper position.
- 4) An entire foot is touching dead-ball territory at the time of the catch.
- 5) The ball strikes anything or anyone other than a defensive player while it is in flight. In this case the ball is ruled a ground ball.
- 6) The fielder traps the ball. A batted fly ball or line drive is considered trapped if it hits the ground or a fence on a short hop before being caught. A thrown ball is considered trapped if it is on the ground and the glove/mitt or hand is over it, and the player does not have control. A pitched ball is considered trapped if it is a strike but touches the ground on a short hop before being caught by the catcher.

LTR F . . . A ball prevented from hitting the ground by a player's equipment (providing it is in its proper place) or body shall not be ruled caught until the ball is securely held in the player's hand(s) or glove/mitt.

CATCHER, CATCHER'S BOX

LTR A . . . Catcher. The catcher is the player to whom the pitcher throws when delivering the ball to the batter. When the catcher is in position to receive a pitch, they must be in the catcher's box.

LTR B . . . Catcher's Box. The catcher's box is the area to which the catcher is restricted from the time the pitcher steps on the pitcher's plate until the pitched ball is batted, touches the ground, plate, batter, or reaches the catchers box. The catcher's box is a rectangle 10 feet deep from the rear outside corner of the batter's boxes and is 8 feet, 5 inches wide. Catcher's feet must be totally within these dimensions.

CHECKED SWING: A checked swing is the restraining action taken by a batter to stop an attempted hit/slap/bunt. As an aid in determining a checked

swing, the umpire shall note whether the swing carried the barrel portion of the bat in front of the batter's body and in the direction of the infield. However, the final decision is based on whether the bat actually struck at the ball.

CHOPPED HIT BALL (S.P.): A chopped hit ball (S.P.) is an ILLEGALLY hit ball which is struck with a downward motion.

COACHES/MANAGERS BOX: The coaches box is the area to which the two base coaches (one per box) are restricted prior to release of the pitch.

CONFERENCES: CHARGED, PREGAME

LTR A . . . Charged Conference. A charged conference is when the coach/manager or dugout/bench personnel requests and is granted a time-out to meet with offensive or defensive personnel.

LTR B . . . Pregame Conference. A pregame conference is a meeting involving the umpires and head coaches/managers near home plate.

CONFINES OF THE FIELD: The confines of the field includes the field of play, the designated dugout/bench area, and any enclosed or clearly marked area designated as a warm-up area that is adjacent to the field and within the view of the umpire(s).

CROW HOP: (Fast Pitch) The act of a pitcher who steps, hops or drags off the front of the pitcher's plate, replants the pivot foot, thereby establishing a second impetus, or starting point, pushes off from the newly established starting point and completes the delivery.

DUGOUT (BENCH AREA): The dugout is the area reserved for team personnel engaged in the game.

EFFECT: The effect is the result or consequence of a play, action or rule application.

EJECTION: An ejection is the exercise of an umpire's authority to remove team personnel from further participation in a game.

FAIR BALL

LTR A . . . A fair ball is a batted ball that:

- 1) settles or is touched on or over fair territory between home and first base or home and third base.
- 2) touches or bounds over a base.
- 3) touches first, second or third bases.
- 4) while on or over fair territory touches the person of any umpire or player or their clothing or equipment.
- 5) while over fair territory passes out of the playing field in flight.
- 6) first falls or is first touched on or over fair territory beyond first, second or third base.

LTR B . . . A fair fly shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not as to whether the fielder is in fair or foul territory at the time they touch the ball. It does not matter whether the ball first touches fair or foul territory as long as it does not touch anything foreign to the natural ground in foul territory and complies with all other aspects of a fair ball.

FAKE TAG: An act by a defensive player that simulates an attempt to tag a runner. Faking a tag is always considered obstruction.

FIELD OF PLAY, FAIR TERRITORY, FOUL TERRITORY, DEAD-BALL TERRITORY

LTR A . . . Field of Play. The field of play is the area within which the ball may be legally played and fielded.

LTR B . . . Fair Territory. Fair territory is that part of the playing field within and including the foul lines from home plate to the bottom of the home run fence and vertical. Home plate, the foul lines and poles are considered part of fair territory.

LTR C . . . Foul Territory. Foul territory is that part of the playing field outside the first and third base lines from home plate to the bottom of the home run fence and perpendicularly upwards.

LTR D . . . Dead-ball Territory. Dead-ball territory is the area beyond any real boundary, such as a fence, rope, chalk line, any stands, bleachers, dugouts, player's bench or designated media area, or any imaginary boundary line as determined in the pregame conference. If a ball becomes lodged in a fence or backstop, it is considered to be in dead-ball area.

FIELDERS, INFELDERS, OUTFIELDERS

LTR A . . . Fielders. Fielders are any players of the team in the field.

LTR B . . . Infielders. Infielders are usually the first baseplayer, second baseplayer, third baseplayer, shortstop, pitcher and catcher.

LTR C . . . Outfielders. Outfielders are usually the left fielder, right fielder and center fielder or left, left-center, right-center and right fielder in slow pitch.

FORCE PLAY

LTR A . . . A force play is a play in which a runner (or two or three runners) loses the right to the base occupied and is forced to advance because the batter becomes a batter-runner.

LTR B . . . For a given runner, a force play ends as soon as the runner touches the next base or a following runner is put out.

LTR C . . . If a batted ball is caught before it touches the ground there can be no force play(s).

LTR D . . . If a forced runner, after touching the next base, except home, retreats for any reason towards the base they have first occupied, the force play is reinstated and they may be put out if the defense tags the base to which they are forced.

FOUL BALL, FOUL TIP

LTR A . . . Foul Ball. A foul ball is a batted ball that:

- 1) settles or is touched on or over foul territory between home and first base, or between home and third base;
- 2) bounds past first or third base on or over foul territory;
- 3) first falls to the ground or is first touched on or over foul territory beyond first or third base;
- 4) while on or over foul territory, touches the person of an umpire, a player or any object foreign to the natural ground;
- 5) while over foul territory, a runner interferes with a defensive player attempting to field a batted ball;
- 6) touches the batter or the bat in the batter's hand(s) a second time while the batter is within the batter's box;
- 7) goes directly from the bat to any part of the catcher's body or equipment and is caught by another fielder;
- 8) has a perceptible upward arc off the bat rising above the batter's waist.

LTR B . . . Foul Tip. A foul tip is a batted ball that goes sharply and directly from the bat to the catcher's mitt or hand and is legally caught by the catcher. It is a strike. (In fast pitch and modified pitch, the ball remains live, but in slow pitch, the ball becomes dead.) If it's the third strike, the batter is out. In slow pitch, the catcher does not need to catch the ball.

GAME: HALTED, SUSPENDED, CALLED, REGULATION, FORFEITED

LTR A . . . Halted, Suspended Game. A halted or suspended game is a game that is temporarily suspended by the umpire with the intent that it will be continued at some later time or date. The game shall be resumed from the point of suspension.

LTR B . . . Called Game. A called game is a game that is ended by the umpire.

LTR C . . . Regulation Game. A regulation game is a game that is seven innings (terms at bat) unless extra inning(s) are necessary because of a tie score, or unless shortened because the home team does not require its half of the seventh inning or only a fraction of it, or because of weather or darkness. **LTR D . . . Forfeited Game.** A forfeited game is a game awarded to the opponent of the offending team.

ILLEGALLY BATTED BALL

LTR A . . . Illegally batted ball. An illegally batted ball is a pitch contacted by the batter:

- 1) with a non-approved or altered bat.
- 2) when any part of either foot is in contact with the plate at the time of contact with the ball.
- 3) when one or both feet are on the ground and entirely outside the lines of the batter's box at the time of bat-ball contact.

IN FLIGHT: A ball in flight is any batted, thrown or pitched ball that has not touched the ground, an object or a person other than a player.

INFIELD: The infield is that portion of the field in fair territory that is normally skinned and covered by the pitcher and infielders.

INFIELD FLY RULE: Infield fly rule is, when declared by the umpire, a fair fly (not including a line drive or an attempted bunt) that can be caught by an

infielder with ordinary effort when runners are on first and second or all three bases are occupied and before there are two outs in the inning. Any defensive player positioned in the infield at the time of the pitch shall be considered an infielder for the purposes of this rule. The rule does not preclude outfielders from being permitted to make the catch. The ball is live, the batter is out, which removes the force, but runners may advance at their own risk. The runners may tag up and advance as soon as the batted ball is touched by a fielder. If a declared infield fly becomes foul, it is treated as a foul ball, not an infield fly.

INNING: An inning is 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 begins immediately after the final out of the previous inning.

INTEFERENCE (OFFENSE)

LTR A . . . Interference is an act (physical or verbal) by a member of the team at bat who illegally impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder; or when a runner creates malicious contact with any fielder with or without the ball, in or out of the baseline.

LTR B . . . Other types of interference involve equipment, umpire and spectator.

LEAP: A leap is when both feet are airborne by the pitcher prior to delivering the pitch.

LINE DRIVE: A line drive is a batted ball which travels parallel to or near the ground through most of its flight.

MALICIOUS CONTACT: Malicious contact is an act that involves excessive force with an opponent.

OBSTRUCTION (DEFENSE): Obstruction is the act of the defensive team member that hinders or impedes a batter's attempt to make contact with a pitched ball or that impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running bases, unless the fielder is in proper position to receive a thrown ball, in possession of the ball or is making the initial play on a batted ball. The act may be intentional or unintentional, physical or verbal.

ON-DECK CIRCLE: The on-deck circle is a circle for each team, 5 feet in diameter, located a safe distance to the side and away from home plate. This circle should be at least 30 feet away from the home plate if space allows.

OUT, FORCE OUT, TAG OUT, PUTOUT

LTR A . . . Out. An out is a declaration by the umpire indicating an offensive player has been retired. Each team is entitled to three outs per inning.

LTR B . . . Force Out. A force out is a putout during which an offensive player who is being forced to advance is tagged out, or is put out by a fielder who holds the ball while touching the base toward which the forced runner is advancing.

LTR C . . . Tag Out. A tag out is putting out an offensive player, who is not touching a base, by touching the runner with a live ball or with the glove or hand when the live ball is securely held therein by a fielder. The ball is not considered as having been held securely if it is juggled or dropped after the touching unless the runner deliberately knocks the ball from the hand of the fielder.

LTR D . . . Putout. The act of a fielder retiring an offensive player.

OUTFIELD: The outfield is that portion of fair territory that is beyond the infield.

OVERSLIDING, OVERRUNNING, OVERWALKING: Oversliding, overrunning or overwalking are acts of an offensive player, who after advancing to a base, loses contact and goes past it.

PENALTY: A penalty is the loss assessed by the umpire against a player or team for a rule infraction.

PINCH HITTER, PINCH RUNNER, COURTESY RUNNER:

LTR A . . . Pinch Hitter. A pinch hitter is a player who is inserted into the lineup in the place of the batter. The pinch hitter will stay in the lineup until they are replaced by the player for whom they hit or another substitute. Re-entry rules also apply for pinch hitter(s).

LTR B . . . Pinch Runner (F.P.). A pinch runner is a player who is inserted into the lineup in the place of a base runner. The pinch runner will stay in the lineup until they are replaced by the player for whom they ran for or another substitute. Use of pinch runner does not prevent use of courtesy runner rule as well. Re-entry rule also applies for pinch runner(s).

LTR C . . . Courtesy Runners

- 1) Only one courtesy runner may be used per half inning
- 2) The courtesy runner shall be the last person of the same gender to make an out **OR** the person of the same gender farthest from being due up to bat that is not currently on base (team's choice).
- 3) When announced by a team rep, the courtesy runner is officially in the game.
- 4) If a courtesy runner's time at bat comes while they are on base they will be called out as a base runner, be removed from base and allowed to take their turn at bat.

PENALTY (for violating 1 through 4): An out is declared and runner is removed from base.

Note: In Men's FP & JOFP, courtesy runner will be allowed for pitchers and catchers only. The runner shall be a bench player or player in the lineup that is farthest in the batting order from the pitcher or catcher being run for.

PITCH, ILLEGAL, NO PITCH, QUICK

LTR A . . . Pitch. A pitch is a live ball delivered to the batter by the pitcher with a legal underhand motion.

LTR B . . . Illegal Pitch. An illegal pitch is a live ball violation of the pitching rule which the umpire verbalizes and signals immediately.

LTR C . . . No Pitch. No pitch is a declaration by the umpire that halts play and nullifies the pitch.

LTR D . . . Quick Pitch. A quick pitch is a live ball illegal pitch delivered that catches the batter off balance or otherwise unprepared to bat.

PITCHER: The pitcher is the player who is designated in the scorebook as being responsible for delivering (pitching) the ball to the batter.

PITCHER'S 16-FOOT CIRCLE (F.P.): The 16-foot circle is used for the look-back rule. A pitcher is in the 16-foot circle when both feet are within or partially within the line. The feet may touch the line and extend outside the line.

PITCHER'S PIVOT FOOT: The pitcher's pivot foot is that foot which is in contact with the ground, as opposed to the non-pivot foot with which the pitcher steps toward home plate

PLAY BALL: The directive given by the umpire to indicate play shall start.

RESTRICTED TO THE DUGOUT/BENCH AREA: “Restricted to the dugout/bench area” is the term used to indicate that a participant has been confined to the dugout/bench area for the remainder of the game, generally as a result of an infraction of a playing rule (not a major unsporting act).

RUN: A run is scored when an offensive player legally advances to and touches home plate.

RUNNER, RETIRED RUNNER

LTR A . . . Runner. A runner is an offensive player who is advancing to, touching or returning to a base.

LTR B . . . Retired Runner. A retired runner is a player who has scored, or who has been put out and who is still in live-ball territory.

SLAP HIT

LTR A . . . A slap hit (F.P) is a batted ball that has been struck with a short, chopping motion rather than with a full swing. Slap hits are not allowed in slow pitch.

LTR B . . . The two most common types of slap hits are:

- 1) Those in which the batter takes their stance as if to bunt but then either drives the ball into the ground with a quick, short swing or punches it over the infield.
- 2) Those in which the batter takes running steps toward the pitcher before making contact with the pitch.

SLIDE: LEGAL, ILLEGAL

LTR A . . . Legal Slide. A legal slide may be either feet first or head first. If a runner slides feet first, at least one leg and buttock shall be on the ground. If a runner slides, the runner shall be within reach of the base with either hand or a foot when the slide is completed.

LTR B . . . Illegal Slide. A slide is illegal if:

- 1) the runner uses a rolling or cross-body slide into the fielder;
- 2) the runner's raised leg is higher than the fielder's knee when the fielder is in a standing position;
- 3) the runner goes beyond the base and makes contact with or alters the play of the fielder;

- 4) the runner slashes or kicks the fielder with either leg; or
- 5) the runner tries to injure the fielder.

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

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

LTR A . . . (Slow pitch with stealing) Runners can advance once the pitched ball reaches the front edge of home plate.

LTR B . . . (Fast Pitch) Runners can advance once the pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand.

STRIKE ZONE

LTR A . . . Strike Zone (F.P.). The strike zone (F.P.) is the space over home plate which is between the batter's forward armpit and the top of the knees when the batter assumes a natural batting stance. Any part of the ball passing through the strike zone in flight shall be considered a strike. The umpire shall determine the batter's strike zone according to the batter's usual stance.

LTR B . . . Strike Zone (S.P.) The strike zone (S.P.) is the space over any part of home plate which is between the batter's back shoulder and front knee when the batter assumes a natural batting stance. Any part of the ball passing through the strike zone in flight shall be considered a strike. The umpire shall determine the batter's strike zone according to the batter's usual stance when swinging at a pitch.

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

TEAM MEMBERS: Team members are players listed on the team's official roster and lineup as submitted to the umpire at the pre-game conference.

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

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

WALK, INTENTIONAL WALK (BASES ON BALLS)

LTR A . . . Walk. A walk is three pitches thrown out of the strike zone awarding the batter first base (S.P.) and four pitches (F.P./M.P.).

LTR B . . . Intentional Walk (Base on balls): A request made to the umpire by the defensive coach/manager or catcher, for the purpose of awarding the batter first base. No pitches are thrown. An intentional walk is considered a time at bat, therefore the appeal of the previous play may not be made following the intentional walk.

Rule 3: Players, Substitutes & Coaches**NUMBER 1: PLAYERS, POSITIONS**

LTR A . . . Each of the two teams must start with nine players (S.P.-10 players). In slow pitch only, a team may use an 11th player called the Extra Player (EP). In fast pitch only, a team may use the Designated Player/Flex option (DP/FLEX). The use of a DP/FLEX (F.P.) and the EP (S.P.) is optional. **NOTE:** (S.P.) In slow pitch, the extra player (EP) is able to go on defense at any time unless she takes the pitcher's position. In that case the pitcher shall have met the requirements set for the pitcher in 3-3-B Note. When entering the game, the EP need only inform the umpire that they are the EP and who they are replacing.

LTR B . . . One or more players may be designated manager/coach. The manager/coach may represent the team in communications with umpires, provide the plate umpire with the team's lineup card, and inform all players as to special ground rules as announced by the plate umpire.

LTR C . . . The team's lineup card shall include first initial and last name, jersey number, position and batting order of each starting player and should include each eligible substitute. Lineups become official after they have been exchanged, verified and then accepted by the plate umpire during the pregame conference.

PENALTY: After the lineup card has been submitted to and verified by the umpire and a change is subsequently made to a player/substitute name or number, or if a player/substitute is added to the lineup card, the umpire shall issue a team warning to the head coach/manager of the team involved. Any further changes made to a player/substitute name or number results in the head coach/manager being restricted to the dugout/bench area for the remainder of the game.

NOTE: In NSF-MSF Postseason Tournament Play, players may not be added to the scorecard once the first pitch is thrown.

LTR D . . . A player is designated in the scorebook by name, jersey number and by fielding position. 1-Pitcher; 2-Catcher; 3-1st Baseplayer; 4-2nd Baseplayer; 5-3rd Baseplayer; 6-Shortstop; 7-Left Fielder; 8-Center Fielder; 9-Right Fielder; 10-Short Fielder (S.P.); U-Umpire.

LTR E . . . At the time of the pitch, all fielders shall be on fair ground except the catcher who shall be in the catcher's box.

LTR F . . . A player may change to a different fielding position at any time, except as in 3-3-B Note.

NUMBER 2: UNIFORMS, PLAYER EQUIPMENT

LTR A . . . Uniforms/shirts of all team members shall be of the same basic color.

LTR B . . . A number on the front, back or sleeve of each player's jersey is required and shall be at least 6 inches high or 4 inches high on shirt front or sleeve. The number must be of solid color contrasting with the color of shirt. No players on the same team shall wear identical numbers (0 and 00 are considered the same number).

LTR C . . . Caps, visors and headbands are optional and may be of mixed color and style. If worn, visors and caps must be worn forward. Head scarves are not allowed.

LTR D . . . A uniform shall not have any dangerous or reflective buttons or ornaments.

LTR E . . . A pitcher shall not wear any item on the pitching hand, wrist, arm or thighs which may, in the umpire's judgment, be distracting to the batter.

PENALTY: (LTRs A-E) Illegal equipment shall be removed. If the uniform violation can be corrected in a reasonable amount of time (as determined by the umpire), the violation shall be remedied before the player(s) may participate. Tape numbers are not acceptable.

LTR F . . . Shoes are required equipment. Metal cleats or spikes are not permitted in slow pitch or girls fast pitch. Shoes with detachable rubber cleats or spikes that leave a metal post exposed when they are removed are not legal. **PENALTY: Game disqualification of violating player.**

NOTE: Metal toe plates are permitted.

LTR G . . . Exposed jewelry, which is judged by the umpire to be dangerous, must be removed and not 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.

EXCEPTION: Unadorned devices, such as bobby pins, barrettes and hair clips, no longer than 2 inches, may be worn to control a player's hair.

LTR H . . . Hard and unyielding items (guards, casts, braces, splints, etc.) must be padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than ½" thick. Knee and ankle braces which are unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production do not require any additional padding/covering.

NOTE: Each association may authorize the use of prostheses which in its opinion are no more dangerous to players than the corresponding human body part(s) and do not place an opponent at a disadvantage.

LTR I . . . Any equipment judged by the umpire to be potentially dangerous illegal.

NUMBER 3: SUBSTITUTING

LTR A . . . A player who is not listed as an eligible substitute on the lineup/scorecard shall not be prohibited from playing.

LTR B ... A substitute may replace any player when the ball is dead or time has been called. The substitute or coach shall report to the plate umpire at the time of the change by stating name and shirt number of the player entering the game for the first time, the player re-entering, the FLEX who is batting for the DP, the DP who is playing defense for the FLEX, the player entering the game as a courtesy runner or being replaced in the batting order and the position to be occupied in the field if the player is not a courtesy runner.

LTR C . . . The plate umpire shall record all substitutions on the lineup card and then announce immediately any change(s) to the opposing team's manager/coach. Projected substitutions (players who do not immediately participate in the game) are not permitted. Should there be no announcement of substitutions, a substitute has entered the game when the ball is live and:

- 1) a runner takes the place of a runner they have replaced.
- 2) a pitcher takes her place on the pitcher's plate.
- 3) a fielder reaches the position usually occupied by the fielder they have replaced.
- 4) a batter takes their place in the batter's box.
- 5) and, in each of the above situations, when the ball is declared live by the plate umpire.

LTR D . . . A substitute or courtesy runner shall not enter the contest unreported.

LTR E . . . Any player, starter or substitute may be withdrawn from the game and re-entered once, provided such player occupies the same batting position whenever in the lineup. A starter and any substitute for a starter may not be in the game at the same time. A violation results in illegal substitution.

LTR F . . . (F.P.) A team may use the DP/FLEX option provided it is made known at the pre-game conference.

- 1) The DP's name is indicated on the lineup as one of the nine hitters in the batting order.
- 2) The name of the player for whom the DP is batting (FLEX) will be placed in the 10th position in the lineup.
- 3) The DP must remain in the same position in the batting order for the entire game.
- 4) The DP may be substituted for at any time by a legal substitute or the FLEX may play offense for the DP. In either case, the DP will leave the game. If

replaced by a substitute, the DP position remains in the lineup. A starting DP may re-enter one time, provided the DP returns to the original position in the batting order.

- a. If replaced by the FLEX, this reduces the number of players from ten (10) to nine (9). The game may legally end with nine (9) players.
- b. If the DP re-enters or a substitute enters as the DP and the FLEX was batting in the DP's spot, the FLEX can: a) return to the number 10 position and play defense, or b) leave the game if the DP plays defense for the FLEX.

5) The DP may play defense at any position. Should the DP play defense for a player other than the FLEX, that player will continue to bat but not play defense, and is not considered to have left the game. The DP may play defense for the FLEX and the FLEX is considered to have left the game, reducing the number of players from ten to nine.

6) The FLEX may be substituted for at any time by a legal substitute or the DP may play defense for the FLEX. In either case, the FLEX will leave the game. If replaced by a substitute, the FLEX position remains in the lineup. The FLEX may re-enter the game one time provided she returns to the tenth position in the lineup.

7) If replaced by the DP, this reduces the number of players from ten (10) to nine (9). The game may legally end with nine (9) players.

8) If the FLEX re-enters or a substitute enters as the FLEX and the DP was playing defense in the FLEX player's spot, the DP can return to batting only, play defense for another player or leave the game if the FLEX plays offense for the DP.

9) Placing the FLEX into one of the first nine positions for someone other than the DP's position is considered an illegal substitution. The illegal substitute shall be removed from the game and restricted to the dugout/bench.

LTR G . . . (S.P.) By association adoption, a team may use an 11th player called an Extra Player (EP).

1) An Extra Player is optional. If one is used, it must be made known prior to the start of the game and the player must be listed on the lineup card in the regular batting order.

2) The EP must remain in the same position in the batting order for the entire game.

3) If the EP is used, all 11 players must bat and any 10 may be used on defense. Defensive positions may be changed, but the batting order must remain the same.

4) The EP may be substituted for at any time, either by a pinch runner or by a pinch hitter, who then becomes the EP. The substitute must be a player who has not been in the game. The starting EP may re-enter in the same spot in the batting order.

LTR H . . . If a team is playing with 9 (F.P.), 10 (S.P. or F. P. if DP/FLEX is used), or 11 (S.P. if an EP is used) and there are no available substitutes when a runner advancing on an awarded base or after reaching base is unable to continue:

1) The previous batter not on base is allowed to replace that player as a temporary runner until she is put out, scores or the half-inning ends.

2) When the player who could not continue is scheduled to bat, an out shall be called.

3) When the half-inning ends and the team assumes a defensive position, refer to 4-3-1g.

4) Once a team has gone short-handed and another eligible player is available, that player may fill the empty space in the lineup.

LTR I . . . Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.

LTR J . . . A coach/manager or athlete who is bleeding, has an open wound, has any amount of blood on the uniform, or has blood on his/her person, shall be directed to leave the game until the bleeding is stopped, the wound is covered, the uniform and/or body is appropriately cleaned, and/or the uniform is changed before returning to competition. If medical care or treatment can be administered in a reasonable amount of time, the individual does not have to leave the game. The length of time that is considered reasonable is umpire judgment. The re-entry rule would apply to players taken out of the game for this rule.

NUMBER 4: ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTE

LTR A . . . Illegal offensive or defensive players may be discovered by the umpire or either team anytime after the ball becomes live and an illegal substitute has taken a position as:

- 1) a runner she has replaced or as a batter in the batter's box;
- 2) a pitcher on the pitcher's plate, or as a fielder reaching a position usually occupied by the fielder being replaced; or
- 3) a courtesy runner if that player has violated the courtesy runner rule.

PENALTY: (LTR A) Restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game. (LTR A1, 3) They are also called out.

LTR B . . . Illegal offensive players may be discovered:

- 1) when in the batter's box, the ball is live and/or before the batter-runner reaches first base, or is put out and before a pitch is delivered to the next batter of either team;
- 2) when the illegal batter-runner or runner advances, scores or causes a play to be made that allows another runner(s) to advance or score, and the infraction is detected before the next pitch by either team;
- 3) when an illegal batter-runner or runner advances, scores or causes a play to be made that allows another runner(s) to advance or score, and the infraction is detected after the next pitch by either team;
- 4) in a game-ending play prior to all infielders and/or umpires leaving the diamond.

PENALTY: (LTR B) The illegal substitute is restricted to the bench/dugout for the remainder of the game. (LTR B 1, 2) They are called out. (LTR B 3, 4) If still on base, they are called out. (LTR B 1) The proper batter is considered to have lost their turn at bat. The next proper batter shall bat. (Exception: Co-rec play; so two males or females do not bat consecutively).

(LTR B 2, 3) Play is nullified. Outs made on play stand. Runners not put out return to base(s) occupied at the time of the pitch. (LTR B 3) Play stands.

NOTE: The penalty for illegal substitution takes precedence over the batting-out-of-order penalty.

LTR C . . . Illegal defensive player is discovered before the next pitch to either team when:

- 1) involved in a play with batted ball;
- 2) a non-batted ball is handled or touched by an illegal substitute that leads to a runner being put out;
- 3) a non-batted ball is handled or touched by an illegal substitute that alters the play, but no runner is put out (i.e., on an overthrow on a stealing runner, the illegal substitute retrieves ball and prevents runner from advancing farther).

PENALTIES: (LTR C)

1. The illegal player/substitute shall be restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game. (LTR C 1, 2) Team on offense has option of taking the play or accepting the penalty (out is nullified, runners return to

base occupied at time of pitch.) (LTR C 3) Umpire may award bases based on his/her judgment and the circumstances concerning the play. (LTR C 1) The batter is allowed to bat again with the same count. (LTR C 2, 3) The pitch is canceled if it is a strike or stands if it is a ball.

2. After another pitch, all play stands but the illegal player/substitute is still restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game.

3. Any time a non-batted ball is handled or touched by an illegal substitute and does not lead to a runner being put out or alter a play, the play stands and the illegal substitute is restricted to the dugout/bench.

NUMBER 5: COACHING

LTR A . . . Prior to the start of the game at the pregame conference, a head coach/manager shall be responsible for verifying to the plate umpire that the lineup card is correct, all his/her players are legally equipped, and that players and equipment are in compliance with all rules.

PENALTY: (LTR A) The game may not begin until the head coach/manager attends the pregame conference and verifies player and equipment compliance.

NOTE: Although umpires have the right to inspect equipment, the responsibility for proper equipment rests with coaches, managers, and their parents/guardians, if applicable.

LTR B . . . Any member of the team at bat who has not been restricted or ejected may occupy each coach's box while that team is at bat. The person in the coach's/manager's box may address base runners or the batter.

LTR C . . . Any time a coach/manager is in live-ball area to confer with players or an umpire, or to occupy a coach's box, the coach/manager shall be attired in team jersey or jacket with team colors.

PENALTY: (LTR C) A coach/manager not dressed in appropriate attire shall not be permitted in the field of play following the pregame conference for the duration of the game or until the situation has been remedied.

LTR D . . . A coach/manager shall not physically assist a runner during playing action.

PENALTY: (LTR D) The runner is out and the ball is in play.

LTR E . . . Offensive team personnel, other than the base coach, shall not be near a base to which a runner is advancing or returning; nor shall anyone fail to vacate any area (including a coach's/manager's box) needed by a fielder in an attempt to put out a batter or runner.

PENALTY: (LTR E) The ball is dead. The runner closest to home is out and all runners not out must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.

EXCEPTION: If a thrown live ball accidentally touches a base coach in the coach's box, or a pitched or thrown ball touches an umpire, the ball is live and in play.

LTR F . . . If any offensive team member, other than a runner or retired runner, interferes with a batted fair ball or foul fly ball, the batter is declared out. If, in the judgment of the umpire, the interference prevented a possible double play, the batter and runner closest to home shall be declared out. Other runners shall be returned to the last base legally touched at the time of interference.

PENALTY: (LTR F) The ball is dead immediately and the batter and runner may be out.

ART. 7 . . . A coach/manager may leave the bench/ dugout to attend to a player who becomes ill or injured if recognized by the umpire.

NUMBER 6: BENCH & FIELD CONDUCT

LTR A . . . Team personnel shall wear or use legal and/or required equipment.

PENALTY: (LTR A) Illegal equipment shall be removed or made legal. The umpire shall issue a team warning. The next offender and the head coach/manager shall be restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game.

LTR B . . . A player shall not fake a tag without the ball.

LTR C . . . A team member shall not carelessly throw a bat.

LTR D . . . Hitting the ball to teammates on defense is prohibited after the game has started.

LTR E . . . Entering the area behind the catcher while the opposing pitcher and catcher are in their positions is prohibited.

LTR F . . . Only the batter, runner(s), on-deck batter, coaches/managers in the coach's box, bat/ball shaggers or one of the nine players on defense (S.P. 10) are permitted to be outside the designated dugout/bench or designated warm-up areas.

NOTE: Bench personnel are permitted to engage in throwing and running activities during the one minute designated for the pitcher to throw their three (F.P. & Modified) or two (S.P.) warm-up pitches at the beginning of each half inning.

LTR G . . . Players and substitutes shall not enter the contest unreported.

LTR H . . . Use of excessively loud boomboxes or playing music with offensive lyrics before or during the game is prohibited. Use of amplifiers, bullhorns or noisemakers for coaching/managing purposes during the course of the game is prohibited.

LTR I . . . Team personnel shall not call “time” or use any command or commit any act for the purpose of causing an illegal pitch.

LTR J . . . Objects, other than stopwatches and scorekeeping materials/devices, in the coach’s box are prohibited.

PENALTY: (LTR B through J) The umpire shall issue a team warning to the coach/manager of the team involved and the next offender on that team shall be restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game. (LTR B) A fake tag without the ball is obstruction. (LTR G) The head coach/manager is also restricted to the dugout/bench for the remainder of the game. (LTR H, I , J) For coaches/managers who violate, depending on the severity of the act, the umpire may issue a warning, restrict the offender to bench/dugout for the remainder of the game or eject the offender.

LTR K . . . Electronic communication devices, television monitors and/or replay equipment shall not be used for coaching/managing purposes or to protest decisions of the umpires during the course of the game.

LTR L . . . Tobacco or alcohol products, in any form, are prohibited in the dugout or on the playing field.

LTR M . . . Coaches, bench personnel and players/substitutes may not be outside the dugout/bench area except when the rules allow.

LTR N . . . Unsporting acts shall not be committed, including, but not limited to:

- 1) use of words or actions to incite or try to incite spectators to demonstrate.
- 2) use of profanity, intimidation and/or deceitful tactics, or baiting or taunting.
- 3) behavior in any manner not in accordance with the spirit of fair play.

LTR O . . . Team personnel shall not charge an umpire.

LTR P . . . Arguing ball and strike calls or other umpire judgment calls is prohibited.

LTR Q . . . Team personnel shall not deliberately throw bats, helmets or any other piece of equipment.

PENALTY: (LTRs K-Q) The umpire shall eject the offender from the game, unless the offense is judged to be of a minor nature. If minor, the umpire may warn the offender and eject if the offense is repeated. (LTRs K, N) For coaches/managers who violate, the umpire may restrict the offender to bench/dugout for the remainder of the game, or eject the offender.

LTR R . . . Team personnel shall not intentionally remove any lines of the batter’s box or on the field of play.

PENALTY: (LTR R) A strike shall be called on the batter if a member of the offense intentionally removes the line and a ball awarded to the batter if a member of the defense intentionally erases a line. A team warning shall be issued, with the next offense resulting in a strike/ball, the offender and the head coach/manager being restricted to the dugout.

LTR S . . . Initiating malicious contact is prohibited.

LTR T . . . Team personnel shall not participate in a fight or leave his/her position/bench area when a fight has broken out or may break out. A coach who enters the field to restrain combatants from his/her team shall not be considered to have violated this rule.

NOTE: Fighting is any attempt by a player or non-player to strike or engage an opponent in a combative manner unrelated to softball. Such acts include, but are not limited to, attempts to strike an opponent(s) with the arm(s), hand(s), leg(s) or foot (feet), whether or not there is contact.

PENALTY: (LTRs S, T) Considered serious offenses, the offender shall be ejected and must leave the playing area including the parking lot. (LTR S) If by the offense, the play is dead immediately, the offender is declared out unless they have already been put out or scored and all runners return to the last base touched at the time of the malicious contact. If by the defense, the offender is ejected at the end of playing action.

LTR U . . . Any participant restricted to the bench/dugout for the remainder of the game shall be ejected for subsequent misconduct. A player who is restricted or ejected shall remain in the dugout/bench area. A coach/manager who is ejected shall leave the vicinity (out of sight and out of sound) of the playing area and parking lot immediately and is prohibited from any further contact (direct or indirect) with the team during the remainder of the game. Failure to comply with the rules of ejection shall result in the game being forfeited.

NUMBER 7: CHARGED CONFERENCES

LTR A . . . Each team, when on defense, may be granted not more than three charged conferences without penalty during a seven-inning game to permit coaches/managers or their representatives to confer with a defensive player or players. In any extra-inning game, each team shall be permitted one charged conference without penalty each inning while on defense. The number of charged conferences permitted is not cumulative. A request for time for a conference may be made by a coach/manager, player, substitute or bench personnel. Time granted for an obviously incapacitated player shall not constitute a charged conference. A conference is not charged when the pitcher is removed as pitcher. This defensive team charged conference rule coverage is effective when the ball first becomes live at the start of each half-inning.

PENALTY: (LTR A) After three charged conferences in a seven-inning game, or for any charged conference in excess of one in each extra inning, the pitcher shall be removed a pitcher for the duration of the game.

LTR B . . . Each team, when on offense, may be granted not more than one charged conference per inning to permit the coach/manager or any of that team's personnel to confer with base runners, the batter, the on-deck batter or other offensive team personnel. The umpire shall deny any subsequent offensive team requests for charged conferences. This offensive team charged conference rule coverage is effective when the ball first becomes live at the start of each half inning. Time granted for an obviously incapacitated player shall not constitute a charged conference.

LTR C . . . When either team has a charged conference, the other team may also have a conference which is not charged, provided the non-charged conference concludes when the opposing team's charged conference concludes, thus not delaying the game.

Rule 4: Starting & Ending Game

NUMBER 1: STARTING A GAME

LTR A . . . The umpire and league/tournament director shall decide whether the grounds and other conditions are suitable for starting the game.

LTR B . . . Pregame Conference. The pregame conference should take place approximately two minutes prior to the game and before the home team takes the field. During the pregame conference:

- 1) There shall be no balls hit or thrown in live-ball territory.
- 2) The home team and then the visiting team shall deliver their respective lineup/scorecards to the plate umpire. The umpire shall then permit inspection by both coaches/managers. The substitution regulations as in Rule 3 are then in effect.
- 3) Ground rules, as in 4-1-C, shall be announced.
- 4) Umpires shall ask head coaches to verify that their players are legally and properly equipped and shall remind participants about proper sporting behavior.

LTR C . . . Ground Rules. If there are unusual conditions, such as spectators or obstacles too near the playing field, the umpire shall designate special ground rules.

1) The field should be clearly marked. Markings should include flags on foul poles along the foul lines past first base and third base and vertical foul-line markings on any wall that limits the outfield.

2) When a fair or foul fly lands near a stand or fence, Rule 7-4-K applies. If there is a screen behind the catcher or any permanent obstruction in front of the stands, a batted ball that goes behind these becomes dead. It is recommended that no such obstruction be less than 25 feet from the diamond.

3) Wild pitches, overthrows and batted balls that go over or through a fence or into a dugout are governed by Rule 8-4-C-3; if the field has unusual obstructions, ground rules should attempt to be similar to this rule.

4) For special field conditions, such as a drain pipe that makes a spot where it is impossible or very difficult for a fielder to retrieve the ball, the ball should become dead if it goes to that spot, and each runner's advance should be limited to two bases.

5) For an unfenced field, a chalk or imaginary out-of-bounds line should be established to define live-ball area. If cars are parked along the out-of-play lines, umpires should consider these the same as bleachers and the ball becomes dead if it bounces into the line of cars. The umpires should anticipate such a situation and announce the ground rule in advance.

LTR D . . . The visiting team shall be the first to take its turn at bat. On a neutral field or by agreement, either team may be designated as home team as determined by a coin flip or the respective league schedule.

LTR E . . . The game begins when the umpire calls "Play Ball."

LTR F . . . After the game starts (when the umpire calls "Play Ball"), the umpires/league and tournament UIC/director are sole judges as to whether conditions, including grounds, are fit for play.

NUMBER 2: ENDING A GAME

LTR A . . . A game ends when the team behind in score has completed its turn at bat in the seventh inning or in any extra inning. If the home team scores a go-ahead run in the bottom of the seventh inning or in any extra inning, the game is terminated at that point.

LTR B . . . If a league game ends because of weather conditions, or darkness interferes with play so that the game is called (ended) by the umpire, it is a regulation game provided:

1) five full innings have been played; or if the home team has scored an equal or greater number of runs in four or four and a fraction turns at bat than the visiting team has scored in five turns.

2) play has gone beyond five full innings and is called when the teams have not had an equal number of completed turns at bat. The score shall be the same as it was at the end of the last completed inning; unless the home team, in its half of the incomplete inning, scores a run (or runs) which equals or exceeds the opponent's score, in which case, the final score shall be as recorded when the game is called.

LTR C . . . A state or local league/tournament may adopt game-ending procedures that determine how games are ended, including suspended games. However, if a state association does not have established game-ending procedures, by mutual agreement of the opposing coaches/managers and the plate umpire, any remaining play may be shortened at any time or the game terminated.

NOTE: If a state or local league/tournament has adopted game-ending procedures, only those game-ending procedures may be used should the opposing coaches wish to terminate a game.

LTR D . . . If a game is called before completion of the number of innings and conditions as specified in 4-2-B, the umpire shall declare the contest “no game” unless play is terminated by 4-2-C.

LTR E . . . If a regulation called game has a tie score when ended as in 4-2-B, it is a tie game unless the local league has any prescribed game-ending procedures. Batting and fielding records are counted, but the game is not counted in computing percentages of games won and lost.

LTR F . . . By local league/tournament adoption, a tie-breaker procedure may be instituted at a point in the game specified by the state or local league/tournament.

LTR G . . . By local league/tournament or state adoption the following run ahead rules are recommended and result in the game being called: Slow Pitch – 20 after 4, 12 after 5; Fast Pitch – 15 after 3, 8 after 5; Modified – 15 after 4, 10 after 5.

NUMBER 3: FLOP RULE FOR SLOWPITCH:

Flop Rule Option: To assist in keeping league and tournament play running on time, the “Flop Rule” will be employed, provided both team managers agree to its use prior to the pre-game coin flip utilized in tournament play.

If the home team is losing at the start of the 7th inning, or an inning where the run rule may/will be invoked, the home team shall “Flop” at-bats with the visiting team, batting two times in a row. If the new visiting team scores enough runs to avoid the run rule, or ties or goes ahead in the seventh inning, the original visiting team shall bat as the new home team for the remainder of the game. **NOTE:** Local leagues and registered invitational tournaments may wish to make use of the “Flop Rule” automatic when multiple games are played on a field.

NUMBER 4: FORFEITING A GAME

LTR A . . . A game shall be forfeited to the offended team by the umpire when a team:

- 1) is late in appearing or in beginning play after the umpire calls “Play Ball.”

State/local league/ tournaments are authorized to specify the time frame and/or circumstances before a forfeit will be declared for a late arrival by one of the teams.

- 2) refuses to continue play after the game has started.
- 3) delays more than one minute in resuming play after the umpire calls "Play Ball" or in obeying the umpire's order to remove a participant for violation of the rules.
- 4) persists in tactics designed to delay or shorten the game.
- 5) willfully and persistently violates any one of the rules after being warned by the umpire.
- 6) cannot provide 9 players (F. P.), 10 players (S.P.) or 11 players (S.P. if an EP is used) to start the game.
- 7) cannot provide 8 players (F.P.), 9 players (S.P.) or 10 players (S.P. if an EP is used) in the batting order to finish the game. An out is called in that spot of the batting order. If that player has safely reached base, then the most recent batter not on base is allowed to run for that player, until that player is put out, scores, or the half-inning ends.
- 8) on its home field, fails to comply with the umpire's order to put the field in condition for play.

LTR B . . . Score of a forfeited game is 7 to 0 unless the game is forfeited after the number of innings required for a regulation game and the offending team is behind. Then the score remains as recorded. If the offending team is leading, the score shall be 7 to 0; otherwise, the score shall be the score at the time of the forfeit if the team ahead at the time of the forfeit is not the offending team. All individual and team averages shall be included in the official records, except that no pitcher shall be credited with a victory or charged with a loss in such a game if it is not a regulation game (4-2).

Rule 5: Dead Ball & Suspension of Play

NUMBER 1: DEAD BALL

LTR A . . . Ball becomes dead immediately when:

- 1) a pitch touches a batter or the batter's clothing.
NOTE: (F.P. and Modified) The ball becomes dead even though the batter strikes at it.
- 2) the ball is illegally batted or comes in contact with the bat a second time.
- 3) the batter enters the batter's box with an illegal bat.
- 4) any batted ball, while on or over foul ground,
 - a. touches any object other than the ground or any person other than a fielder;

- b. goes directly from the bat to the catcher's protector, mask or person without first touching the catcher's glove or hand; or
 - c. becomes an uncaught foul.
- 5) there is interference by a runner or a retired runner or by any person.
- 6) a fair batted ball, which is on or over fair ground,
- a. touches a runner or an umpire before touching any fielder and before passing any fielder other than the pitcher;
 - b. touches a runner after passing through or by a fielder and another fielder could have made an out;
 - c. touches a spectator; or
 - d. goes over, through or wedges in the field fence.
- 7) a pitch or any other thrown ball;
- a. is touched by a spectator;
 - b. is touched by nonparticipating team personnel;
 - c. goes into a stand or players' bench (even if it rebounds to the field);
 - d. goes over or through or wedges in the field fence; or
 - e. lodges in an umpire's equipment, or touches loose equipment.
- 8) the umpire handles a live ball, calls "Time" for inspecting the ball, or for any other reason.
- 9) a fielder, after catching a fair or foul batted ball (fly or line drive), leaves the field of play by stepping with one foot or by falling into a designated deadball area (i.e., bench, dugout, stand/bleacher, etc.).
- NOTE:** If a chalk line or imaginary line is used to determine dead-ball (out-of-play) territory, the line is considered in play.
- a. If the fielder's feet are touching the line or are in live-ball territory, they are considered in the field of play and legally may field, catch or throw the ball without penalty.
 - b. If the player's entire foot (no part of the foot is touching in fair territory) is beyond the line and touches dead-ball territory at the time they catch, field or throw the ball, they have entered dead-ball territory, the ball is dead, no play is allowed.
 - c. If a fielder has one foot in play and the other foot in the air, they legally may catch, field or throw the ball unless her entire foot contacts the ground in dead- ball territory, at which time the ball becomes dead, no play is allowed, and the penalty is applied.
 - d. If a fielder contacts dead-ball territory with any part of the body except the foot, they are considered out of play. No play is allowed, and the penalty is applied. When the fielder completely leaves and then reestablishes herself

within live ball territory (both feet in live-ball territory), a catch would be allowed.

10) any personnel connected with the offensive team requests "Time" or uses any other command or commits an act for the purpose of trying to cause the opposing pitcher to commit an illegal pitch.

11) (S.P.) after each strike or ball, as soon as a pitch touches the ground, or when an intentional base on balls is awarded. (S.P., F.P., M.P.)

12) an infielder intentionally drops a fair fly, fair line drive or fair bunt in flight with at least first base occupied and with less than two outs.

EXCEPTION: Infield Fly Rule

13) a runner interferes with a fielder attempting to catch a foul fly.

14) the batter-runner steps backward toward home plate to avoid or delay being tagged out.

15) a batted, thrown or pitched ball touches in an occupied designated media area (a ball that passes through a dead-ball area in flight is not considered dead).

16) an illegal pitch occurs, but no pitch is delivered to the batter.

17) there is interference by a batter.

LTR B . . . It is a delayed dead ball when:

1) an illegal pitch is delivered.

2) a catcher or any fielder obstructs a batter or obstructs the ball through use of detached player equipment.

3) the umpire interferes (F.P. & Modified; and S.P. where stealing is allowed) with a catcher who is attempting to throw a nonbatted ball.

4) a ball touches an illegal glove/mitt.

5) anyone who is required to wear a batting helmet deliberately removes the helmet while the ball is live.

LTR C . . . The ball becomes dead when time is taken to make an award when a catcher or any fielder illegally obstructs a runner.

LTR D . . . After a dead-ball situation, the ball becomes live when it is held by the pitcher on the pitcher's plate and the umpire calls and/or signals "Play Ball".

NUMBER 2: SUSPENSION OF PLAY

LTR A . . . "Time" shall be called by the umpire and play suspended:

1) as in (5-1-A).

2) when the umpire considers the weather or ground conditions unfit for play.

NOTE: After 30 minutes, the umpire may declare the game ended or, by state/league/tournament adoption, suspended.

- 3) when a player, bench personnel or spectator is ordered from the field of play, or player is ordered to secure protective equipment.
- 4) when an umpire or player is incapacitated, unless injury occurs during a live ball, then time shall not be called until no further advance or putout is possible.

NOTE: If necessary, the umpire may suspend play immediately if, in the umpire's judgment, further play may cause injury or jeopardize a participant's safety.

- 5) when a player or coach is granted time for a substitution, conference with the pitcher, or for similar cause.
- 6) when play is suspended for any other cause, including an award of a base after an infraction, inspection of the ball, or the ending of a half-inning.

LTR B . . . When the ball becomes dead:

- 1) no action by the defense during that time can cause a player to be put out, except a proper dead-ball appeal.
- 2) a runner may not advance, nor return to a base that was not touched or that the runner was not in contact with on a caught fly ball during a live ball if the runner had advanced to or beyond a succeeding base.
- 3) any runner may advance when awarded a base or bases for an act which occurred before the ball became dead. All awarded bases must be touched.

Rule 6: Pitching Regulations

NUMBER 1: PRELIMINARIES (Fast Pitch)

Before starting the delivery (pitch), the pitcher must comply with the following:

LTR A . . . When taking the pitching position in contact with the pitcher's plate, the pitcher must have their hands separated and must have the ball in either the glove or the pitching hand.

LTR B . . . The pitcher shall not be considered in the pitching position unless the catcher is in the position to receive the pitch.

LTR C . . . Both feet must be on the ground. The shoulders shall be in line with first and third base.

- 1) (Male) The pitcher shall take a position with their pivot foot in contact with the pitcher's plate and their pivot foot in contact or behind the pitcher's plate.
- 2) (Female) The pitcher shall take a position with both feet in contact of the pitcher's plate within its 24" width.

LTR D . . . While on the pitcher's plate, the pitcher shall take the signal or appear to take a signal with the hands separated. The ball must remain in either the glove or pitching hand.

LTR E . . . The pitcher shall bring the hands together for not less than one second and not more than 10 seconds before releasing the ball.

- 1) (Male) A backward step may be taken before, simultaneous with or after the hands are brought together. The pivot foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate at all times prior to the forward step.
- 2) (Female) Both feet must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate at all times prior to the forward step.

EFFECT: LTRs A-E: An illegal pitch shall be declared immediately by the umpire (delayed dead ball signal). The batter is awarded a ball.

1. If the batter reaches first base safely, and if all other runners have advanced at least one base on the batted ball, the illegal pitch is nullified. All action stands and the illegal pitch is canceled. No option is given. When a runner passes a base, the runner is considered to have touched that base.
2. If the batter does not reach first base safely or if any base runner fails to advance at least one base, the coach of the team at bat shall have the option of the result of the play or the penalty of the illegal pitch.
3. If an illegal pitch hits the batter out of the strike zone, the batter is awarded first base and all runners are awarded one base only if forced.
4. If ball four is an illegal pitch, the batter is awarded first base and each base runner is awarded one base only if forced.

NUMBER 2: STARTING THE PITCH (Fast Pitch)

The pitch starts when one hand is taken off the ball after the hands have been placed together.

EFFECT: Illegal pitch.

1. If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely, and if all other runners have advanced at least one base on the batted ball, the illegal pitch is nullified. All action as a result of the batted ball stands. No option is given. When a runner passes a base, the runner is considered to have touched that base.
2. Otherwise the coach/manager has the option to take the result of the play, or illegal pitch is enforced by awarding a ball to the batter and advancing all runners one base.
3. If an illegal pitch hits the batter out of the strike zone, the batter is awarded first base and all runners are awarded one base only if forced.

NUMBER 3: LEGAL DELIVERY (Fast Pitch)

LTR A . . . The pitcher must not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.

LTR B . . . The pitcher must not use a pitching motion in which, after bringing the hands together, the pitcher removes one hand from the ball, and returns the ball to both hands.

LTR C . . . The pitcher must not make a stop or reversal of the forward motion after separating the hands.

LTR D . . . The pitcher must not make two revolutions of the arm on the windmill pitch. A pitcher may drop the arm to the side and to the rear before starting the windmill motion.

LTR E . . . The delivery must be an underhand motion with the hand below the hip and the wrist not farther from the body than the elbow.

LTR F . . . The pitch shall be delivered on the throwing arm side of the body and not behind the back or through the legs.

LTR G . . . The release of the ball and follow through of the hand and wrist must be forward and past the straight line of the body.

LTR H . . . (Men's & Boys Fast Pitch) In the act of delivering the ball, a backward step may be taken before or simultaneous with or after the hands are brought together. One forward crow hop is legal provided the ball leaves the pitcher's hand simultaneous with the replanting of the front foot (cannot skip – only one jump or leap). Part of one foot must be touching the pitcher's rubber when the pitching motion is initiated.

LTR I . . . (Women's and all girls F.P. play) In the act of delivering the ball, the pitcher shall not take more than one step which must be forward with the non-pivot foot simultaneous with the delivery of the ball. The step must be forward and toward the batter within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. It is not a step if the pitcher slides the pivot foot across the pitcher's plate toward the batter, or if the pivot foot turns or slides in order to push off the pitcher's plate, provided contact is maintained with the plate. Raising the foot off the pitching plate and returning it to the plate creates a rocking motion and is an illegal act.

LTR J . . . Pushing off with the pivot foot from a place other than the pitcher's plate is illegal.

LTR K . . . (Women's and all girls F.P. Play) Pushing off and dragging the pivot foot in contact with the ground is required. If a hole has been created, the pivot foot may be no higher than the level plane of the ground. "Crow hopping" and "leaping" are illegal.

LTR L . . . (Men's & Boys F.P.) Pushing off and dragging the pivot foot in contact with the ground, or if both feet are in the air, having the toes of the pivot foot in the downward direction is required.

LTR M . . . The pitcher must not make another revolution after releasing the ball.

LTR N . . . The pitcher shall not deliberately drop, roll or bounce the ball in order to prevent the batter from hitting it.

EFFECT: Any infraction of A-N is an illegal pitch.

1. If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely, and if all other runners have advanced at least one base on the batted ball, the illegal pitch is nullified. All action as a result of the batted ball stands. No option is given. When a runner passes a base, the runner is considered to have touched that base.

2. Otherwise the coach/manager has the option to take the result of the play, or illegal pitch is enforced by awarding a ball to the batter and advancing all runners one base.

3. If an illegal pitch hits the batter out of the strike zone, the batter is awarded first base and all runners are awarded one base only if forced.

LTR O . . . The pitcher has 20 seconds to release the next pitch after receiving the ball or after the umpire indicates "play ball."

EFFECT: Results in a ball on the batter.

NUMBER 4: INTENTIONAL WALK (Fast Pitch)

If the pitcher desires to walk a batter intentionally, the request is made to the umpire by the coach/manager, pitcher or catcher.

NUMBER 5: DEFENSIVE POSITION (Fast Pitch)

LTR A . . . The pitcher shall not deliver a pitch unless all available defensive players are positioned in fair territory, except the catcher who must be in the catcher's box.

LTR B . . . A fielder shall not take a position in the batter's line of vision or, with deliberate unsportsmanlike intent, 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.

EFFECT: Any infraction of A or B is an illegal pitch.

1. If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely, and if all other runners have advanced at least one base on the batted ball, the illegal

pitch is nullified. All action as a result of the batted ball stands. No option is given. When a runner passes a base, the runner is considered to have touched that base.

2. Otherwise the coach/manager has the option to take the result of the play, or illegal pitch is enforced by awarding a ball to the batter and advancing all runners one base.

3. If an illegal pitch hits the batter out of the strike zone, the batter is awarded first base and all runners are awarded one base only if forced.

NUMBER 6: FOREIGN SUBSTANCE/PROTECTIVE WRAPS (Fast Pitch)

LTR A . . . A defensive player shall not at any time during the game be allowed to use any foreign substance upon the ball. Under the supervision and control of the umpire, powdered resin and/or approved drying agent may be used to dry the hands. Applying resin in the glove and then placing the ball in the glove is an illegal act. Resin must be kept on the ground behind the pitcher's plate. A pitcher who licks their fingers must wipe the fingers off before bringing them in contact with the ball.

EFFECT: Illegal pitch.

1. If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely, and if all other runners have advanced at least one base on the batted ball, the illegal pitch is nullified. All action as a result of the batted ball stands. No option is given. When a runner passes a base, the runner is considered to have touched that base.

2. Otherwise the coach/manager has the option to take the result of the play, or illegal pitch is enforced by awarding a ball to the batter and advancing all runners one base.

3. If an illegal pitch hits the batter out of the strike zone, the batter is awarded first base and all runners are awarded one base.

NOTE: After the first offense, if any defensive player continues to place a foreign substance on the ball, that player shall be ejected from the game. If any other substance is found in the pitcher's pocket, the pitcher shall be ejected. **LTR B . . .** A pitcher shall not wear any item on the pitching hand, wrist, forearm, elbow or thighs, which may, in the umpire's judgment, be distracting to the batter. Batting gloves may not be worn on the pitching hand.

NUMBER 7: CATCHER (Fast Pitch)

LTR A . . . The catcher must remain within the lines of the catcher's box until the pitch is released.

EFFECT: Illegal pitch.

1. If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely, and if all other runners have advanced at least one base on the batted ball, the illegal pitch is nullified. All action as a result of the batted ball stands. No option is given. When a runner passes a base, the runner is considered to have touched that base.

2. Otherwise the coach/manager has the option to take the result of the play, or illegal pitch is enforced by awarding a ball to the batter and advancing all runners one base.

3. If an illegal pitch hits the batter out of the strike zone, the batter is awarded first base and all runners are awarded one base only if forced.

LTR B . . . The catcher shall return the ball directly to the pitcher after each pitch, except after a strikeout, a put out or an attempted put out made by the catcher.

EFFECT: A ball on the batter.

EXCEPTION: Does not apply with a runner(s) on base or the batter becoming a batter-runner.

NUMBER 8: THROWING TO A BASE (Fast Pitch)

The pitcher shall not throw to a base during a live ball while either foot is in contact with the pitcher's plate after the pitcher has taken the pitching position. If the throw from the pitcher's plate occurs during a live ball appeal play, the appeal is canceled. The pitcher may move back from the pitching position by stepping back off the pitcher's plate prior to separating their hands. Stepping forward or sideways at any time constitutes an illegal pitch.

EFFECT: Illegal pitch. A ball on the batter and award all runners one base.

NUMBER 9: WARM-UP PITCHES (Fast Pitch)

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 five pitches. Play shall be suspended during this time. For excessive warm-up pitches, a pitcher shall be penalized by awarding a ball to the batter for each pitch in excess of five. This does not apply if the umpire delays the start of play due to substitution, conference, injuries, or other umpire responsibilities. 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, a pitcher shall be penalized by awarding a ball to the batter for each pitch in excess of five. This does not apply if the umpire delays the start of play due to substitution, conference, injuries, or other umpire responsibilities. 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.

NUMBER 10: NO PITCH (Fast Pitch)

No pitch shall be declared when:

LTR A . . . The pitcher pitches during the suspension of play.

LTR B . . . The pitcher attempts 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.

LTR C . . . A runner is called out for leaving a base prior to the pitcher releasing the ball.

LTR D . . . If a pitch is delivered before a runner has retouched their base after being legitimately off that base.

LTR E . . . No player, manager or coach shall call time, employ any other word or phrase, or commit 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: Rule 10 A-E: The ball is dead, all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled.

NUMBER 11: DROPPED BALL (Fast Pitch)

If the ball slips from the pitcher's hand during the delivery, a ball is declared on the batter, the ball will remain live and the runner(s) may advance at their own risk.

NUMBER 1: PRELIMINARIES (Modified Pitch)

Before starting the delivery (pitch), the pitcher must comply with the following:

LTR A . . . When taking the pitching position in contact with the pitcher's plate, the pitcher must have their hands separated and must have the ball in either the glove or the pitching hand.

LTR B . . . The pitcher shall not be considered in the pitching position unless the catcher is in the position to receive the pitch.

LTR C . . . The pitcher shall take a position with both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate. Both feet must be on the ground within 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. The shoulders shall be in line with first and third base.

LTR D . . . While in the pitcher's plate, the pitcher shall take the signal or appear to take the signal with the hands separated. The ball must remain in either the glove or the pitching hand.

LTR E . . . The pitcher shall bring the hands together for not less than one second and not more than 10 seconds before releasing it, and both feet must remain in contact with the pitching plate at all times prior to the forward step.

EFFECT: (LTR A-E): An illegal pitch shall be declared immediately by the umpire (delayed dead ball signal). The batter is awarded a ball.

1. If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely, and if all other runners have advanced at least one base on the batted ball, the illegal pitch is nullified. All action as a result of the batted ball stands. No option is given. When a runner passes a base, the runner is considered to have touched that base.
2. Otherwise the coach/manager has the option to take the result of the play, or illegal pitch is enforced by awarding a ball to the batter and advancing all runners one base.
3. If an illegal pitch hits the batter out of the strike zone, the batter is awarded first base and all runners are awarded one base only if forced.

NUMBER 2: STARTING THE PITCH (Modified Pitch)

The pitch starts when the hands are separated once they have been placed together.

EFFECT: illegal pitch.

1. If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely, and if all other runners have advanced at least one base on the batted ball, the illegal pitch is nullified. All action as a result of the batted ball stands. No option

is given. When a runner passes a base, the runner is considered to have touched that base.

2. Otherwise the coach/manager has the option to take the result of the play, or illegal pitch is enforced by awarding a ball to the batter and advancing all runners one base.

3. If an illegal pitch hits the batter out of the strike zone, the batter is awarded first base and all runners are awarded one base only if forced.

NUMBER 3: LEGAL DELIVERY (Modified Pitch)

LTR A . . . The pitcher must not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.

LTR B . . . The pitcher must not use a pitching motion in which, after bringing the hands together in the pitching position, the pitcher removes one hand from the ball and returns the ball to both hands.

LTR C . . . The pitcher shall not make a stop or reversal of the forward motion after separating the hands.

LTR D . . . The pitcher may take the ball behind the back on the back swing.

LTR E . . . The pitcher must not use a windmill or slingshot-type pitch or make a complete revolution in the delivery.

LTR F . . . Position of the ball:

1. (9 Player) No restriction on the back swing or on the downward motion and during the complete delivery.
2. (10-Player) The ball must not be outside the pitcher's wrist on the back swing, at the top of the back swing, on the downward motion, or during the complete delivery.

LTR G . . . The delivery must be an underhand motion with the hand below the hip and the pitcher's palm may be pointing downward.

LTR H . . . The pitch shall be delivered on the throwing arm side of the body and not behind the back or through the legs.

LTR I . . . Arm, shoulder, hip:

1. (9 Player Major/A) No restrictions on the arm. The shoulders and driving hip must be squared to home plate when the ball is released.
2. (10-Player) On the forward swing of the pitching arm, the elbow must be locked at the point of release, and the shoulders and driving hip must be squared to home plate when the ball is released.

LTR J . . . The release of the ball must be on the first forward swing of the pitching arm past the hip. The release must have a complete, smooth follow-through with no abrupt stop of the arm near the hip.

LTR K . . . In the act of delivering the ball, the pitcher must take one step simultaneous with the release of the ball. The step must be forward and toward the batter within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.

1. (9 Player Major) The pivot foot must drag and not lose contact with the ground. Raising the foot off the pitching plate and returning it to the plate creates a rocking motion and is an illegal act.

2. (9 Player A / 10Player) The stepping foot must be pointed toward home plate and must not touch the ground in front of, or cross over a straight line between the pivot foot and home plate. It is not a step if the pitcher slides the pivot foot across the pitcher's plate, provided contact is maintained with the plate. Raising the foot off the pitching plate and returning it to the plate creates a rocking motion and is an illegal act.

LTR L . . . Pushing off with the pivot foot from a place other than the pitcher's plate is illegal.

LTR M . . . The pitcher shall not deliberately drop, roll or bounce the ball in order to prevent the batter from hitting it.

EFFECT: Infraction of A-M: illegal pitch.

1. If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely, and if all other runners have advanced at least one base on the batted ball, the illegal pitch is nullified. All action as a result of the batted ball stands. No option is given. When a runner passes a base, the runner is considered to have touched that base.

2. Otherwise the coach/manager has the option to take the result of the play, or illegal pitch is enforced by awarding a ball to the batter and advancing all runners one base.

3. If an illegal pitch hits the batter out of the strike zone, the batter is awarded first base an all runners are awarded one base only if forced.

LTR N . . . The pitcher has 20 seconds to release the next pitch after receiving the ball or after the umpire indicates "play ball".

EFFECT: Results in a ball on the batter.

NUMBER 4: INTENTIONAL WALK (Modified Pitch)

If the pitcher desires to walk a batter intentionally, the request is made to the umpire by the coach/manager, pitcher, or catcher.

NUMBER 5: DEFENSIVE POSITIONING (Modified Pitch)

LTR A . . . The pitcher shall not deliver a pitch unless all available defensive players are positioned in fair territory, except the catcher who must be in the catcher's box.

LTR B . . . A fielder shall not take a position in the batter's line of vision or, with deliberate unsporting intent, 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.

EFFECT: Infraction of A or B: illegal pitch.

1. If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely, and if all other runners have advanced at least one base on the batted ball, the illegal pitch is nullified. All action as a result of the batted ball stands. No option is given. When a runner passes a base, the runner is considered to have touched that base.

2. Otherwise the coach/manager has the option to take the result of the play, or illegal pitch is enforced by awarding a ball to the batter and advancing all runners one base.

3. If an illegal pitch hits the batter out of the strike zone, the batter is awarded first base and all runners are awarded one base only if forced.

NUMBER 6: FOREIGN SUBSTANCE (Modified Pitch)

LTR A . . . A defensive player shall not at any time during the game be allowed to use any foreign substance upon the ball. Under the supervision and control of the umpire, powdered resin and/or approved drying agent may be used to dry the hands. Applying resin in the glove and then placing the ball in the glove is an illegal act. Resin must be kept on the ground behind the pitcher's plate. A pitcher who licks their fingers must wipe the fingers off before bringing them in contact with the ball.

EFFECT: Illegal pitch.

1. If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely, and if all other runners have advanced at least one base on the batted ball, the illegal pitch is nullified. All action as a result of the batted ball stands. No option is given. When a runner passes a base, the runner is considered to have touched that base.

2. Otherwise the coach/manager has the option to take the result of the play, or illegal pitch is enforced by awarding a ball to the batter and advancing all runners one base.

3. If an illegal pitch hits the batter out of the strike zone, the batter is awarded first base and all runners are awarded one base only if forced.

NOTE: After the first offense, if any defensive player continues to place a foreign substance on the ball, that player shall be ejected from the game. If any other substance is found in the pitcher's pocket, the pitcher shall be ejected.

LTR B . . . A pitcher shall not wear any item on the pitching hand, wrist, forearm, elbow or thighs, which may, in the umpire's judgment, be distracting to the batter. Batting gloves may not be worn on the pitching hand.

NUMBER 7: CATCHER (Modified Pitch)

LTR A . . . The catcher must remain within the lines of the catcher's box until the pitch crosses home plate.

EFFECT: Illegal pitch.

1. If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely, and if all other runners have advanced at least one base on the batted ball, the illegal pitch is nullified. All action as a result of the batted ball stands. No option is given. When a runner passes a base, the runner is considered to have touched that base.

2. Otherwise the coach/manager has the option to take the result of the play, or illegal pitch is enforced by awarding a ball to the batter and advancing all runners one base.

3. If an illegal pitch hits the batter out of the strike zone, the batter is awarded first base and all runners are awarded one base only if forced.

LTR B . . . The catcher shall return the ball directly to the pitcher after each pitch, except after a strikeout, a put out or an attempted put out made by the catcher.

EFFECT: A ball on the batter.

EXCEPTION: Does not apply with a runner(s) on base or the batter becoming a batter-runner.

NUMBER 8: THROWING TO A BASE (Modified Pitch)

The pitcher shall not throw to a base during a live ball while either foot is in contact with the pitcher's plate after the pitcher has taken the pitching position. If the throw from the pitcher's plate occurs during a live ball appeal play, the appeal is canceled. The pitcher may move back from the pitching position by stepping back off the pitcher's plate

prior to separating their hands. Stepping forward or sideways at any time constitutes an illegal pitch.

EFFECT: Illegal pitch. A ball on the batter and award all runners one base.

NUMBER 9: WARM-UP PITCHES (Modified Pitch)

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 five pitches. Play shall be suspended during this time. For excessive warm-up pitches, a pitcher shall be penalized by awarding a ball to the batter for each pitch in excess of five. This does not apply if the umpire delays the start of play due to substitution, conference, injuries, or other umpire responsibilities. 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, a pitcher shall be penalized by awarding a ball to the batter for each pitch in excess of five. This does not apply if the umpire delays the start of play due to substitution, conference, injuries, or other umpire responsibilities. 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.

NUMBER 10: NO PITCH (Modified Pitch)

No pitch shall be declared when:

LTR A . . . The pitcher pitches during the suspension of play.

LTR B . . . The pitcher attempts 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.

LTR C . . . A runner is called out for leaving a base prior to the pitcher releasing the ball.

LTR D . . . If a pitch is delivered before a runner has retouched their base after being legitimately off that base.

LTR E . . . No player, manager or coach shall call time, employ any other word or phrase, or commit 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: Rule 10 A-E: The ball is dead, all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled.

NUMBER 11: DROPPED BALL (Modified Pitch)

If the ball slips from the pitcher's hand during the delivery, a ball is declared on the batter, the ball will remain live and the runner(s) may advance at their own risk.

NUMBER 1: PRELIMINARIES (Slow Pitch)

LTR A . . . The pitcher must take a position with both feet firmly on the ground and with one or both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate.

EFFECT: Delayed dead ball. Illegal pitch ruled.

EXCEPTION: Slow pitch pitchers have the option to take a position up to six feet behind the 50' pitcher's plate as a safety and defensive measure. Once they take their position, the pitcher must come to a full and complete stop (one second) with both feet firmly on the ground. Also, one foot must remain in contact with the ground at least partially within the width area of the pitcher's plate until the pitched ball leaves the hand.

LTR B . . . 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 for at least one second before starting the delivery.

EFFECT: Delayed dead ball. Illegal pitch ruled.

LTR C . . . The pitcher shall not be considered in the pitching position unless the catcher is in position to receive the pitch.

EFFECT: Delayed dead ball. Illegal pitch ruled.

NUMBER 2: STARTING THE PITCH (Slow Pitch)

The pitch starts when the pitcher makes any motion with the ball after the required stop. While on the pitching plate or up to six feet back prior to the required stop, any motion may be used.

NUMBER 3: LEGAL DELIVERY (Slow Pitch)

LTR A . . . The pitcher must not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.

LTR B . . . The delivery is a continuous motion.

LTR C . . . The pitcher must not use a delivery in which there is a stop or reversal of the pitching motion.

LTR D . . . The pitcher must 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 hand may be over or under the ball.

LTR E . . . One foot must remain partially in contact with the pitcher's plate (**Exception: see pitch back rule for slow pitch**) until the pitched ball leaves the hand. If a step is taken, it may be forward, backward, or to the side, provided one foot is in contact with the pitcher's plate and the step is simultaneous with the release of the ball.

LTR F . . . The pitcher must not pitch the ball behind the back or through the legs.

LTR G . . . The pitch shall be released at a moderate speed. The speed is left entirely up to the judgment of the umpire. The umpire shall warn the pitcher who delivers a pitch with excessive speed. If the pitcher repeats such an act after being warned, the pitcher shall be removed from the pitcher's position for the remainder of the game. (Delayed dead ball call)

LTR H . . . The ball must be delivered with perceptible arc and reach a height of at least six feet from the ground, while not exceeding a maximum height of 12 feet from the ground. (Delayed dead ball call)

LTR I . . . The pitcher must not continue any pitching motion after the ball is released or walk or run at the batter.

LTR J . . . The pitcher has 10 seconds to release the next pitch after receiving the ball, or after the umpire indicates "play ball".

LTR K . . . The pitcher shall not deliver a pitch from the glove.

EFFECT: Violation of A-K results in a ball on the batter.

NUMBER 4: INTENTIONAL WALK (Slow Pitch)

If the pitcher desires to walk a batter intentionally, the request is made to the umpire by the coach/manager, pitcher, or catcher.

NUMBER 5: DEFENSIVE POSITIONING (Slow Pitch)

LTR A . . . The pitcher shall not deliver a pitch unless all players are positioned in fair territory, except the catcher who must be in the catcher's box.

LTR B . . . A fielder shall not take a position in the batter's line of vision or with deliberate unsporting 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.

NUMBER 6: FOREIGN SUBSTANCE (Slow Pitch)

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, powdered 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 may not be worn on the pitching hand.

EFFECT: An illegal pitch shall be called on the first offense. If any defensive player continues to place a foreign substance on the ball, the player should be ejected from the ball game.

NUMBER 7: CATCHER (Slow Pitch)

LTR A . . . The catcher must remain within the lines of the catcher's box until the pitched ball is batted, touches the ground, plate, batter, or reaches the catcher's box.

LTR B . . . The catcher shall return the ball directly to the pitcher after each pitch, except after a strikeout.

EFFECT Number 6A and 6B: A ball on the batter.

EXCEPTION: Does not apply in 6B with a runner(s) on base or the batter becoming a batter-runner.

NUMBER 8: QUICK PITCH (Slow 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 Numbers 2-4A, 6A & 7:

LTR A . . . Any infraction of 2-4, 7 is an illegal pitch.

LTR B . . . If a batter swings at or contacts any illegal pitch, it is nullified and all play stands.

LTR C . . . If the batter does not swing, a ball shall be called on the batter.

NUMBER 9: WARM-UP PITCHES (Slow Pitch)

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. For excessive warm-up pitches, a pitcher shall be penalized by awarding a ball to the batter for each

pitch. This does not apply if the umpire delays the start of play due to substitution, conference, injuries, and other umpire responsibilities. 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.

NUMBER 10: NO PITCH (Slow Pitch)

No pitch shall be declared when:

LTR A . . . The pitcher pitches during the suspension of play.

LTR B . . . A runner is called out for leaving a base before the pitched ball reaches home plate, is batted, or touches the ground before reaching home plate.

LTR C . . . A pitch is delivered before a runner has retouched their base after being legitimately off that base.

LTR D . . . The ball slips from the pitcher's hand during the delivery or during the back swing.

LTR E . . . No player, manager or coach shall call time, employ any other word or phrase, or commit 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 LTRs A-E: The ball is dead, and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled.



Rule 7: Batting**NUMBER 1: POSITION AND BATTING ORDER**

LTR A . . . Each player of the team at bat shall become the batter and shall take their position within the batter's box (on either side of home base), in the order in which their name appears on the lineup card as delivered to the umpire and the opposing team prior to the game. This order shall be followed during the entire game except that an entering substitute shall take the replaced player's place in the batting order. A batter is in proper order if they follow the preceding player in the lineup, even though such preceding batter may have batted out of order. An improper batter is considered to be at bat as soon as they enter the batter's box and one pitch has been thrown. When an improper batter's infraction is first discovered, time may be requested and the improper batter replaced by the proper batter who will assume the improper batter's ball and strike count, provided the infraction is detected before the improper batter is put out or becomes a base runner.

LTR B . . . After the first inning, the first batter in each inning shall be the player whose name follows that of the last batter who completed their time at bat in the preceding inning.

PENALTIES: (LTR A, B):

1. A batter shall be called out on appeal when they fail to bat in their proper turn and another batter completes a time at bat in their place.

NOTE: Only the defensive team may appeal batting out of order after the batter has completed their time at bat.

2. When an improper batter becomes a runner or is put out and the defensive team appeals to the umpire before the next pitch (legal or illegal), or prior to an intentional base on balls (S.P.), or before all infielders have left fair territory and the catcher vacates their normal field position if a half-inning is ending. The umpire shall declare the batter who should have batted out (not the improper batter). The improper batter's time at bat is negated and they are returned to the dugout/bench area. All outs stand and runners who were not declared out must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. If a runner advances because of a stolen base, wild pitch, passed ball (F.P. or Modified) or an illegal pitch (F.P. or Modified) while the improper batter is at bat, such advance is legal. NOTE: If any substitution arises which could lead to an appeal by the defense on the last play of the game, umpires should not leave the field until all infielders have left fair territory and the catcher has vacated their normal field position. If teams line up to shake hands there is little chance for an appeal made even if the defensive infielders have not crossed the foul line and umpires can leave the game at this point. No appeal can be made once the umpires have left the field.

3. When an improper batter becomes a runner or is put out and a legal or illegal pitch has been delivered to the succeeding batter, or an intentional base on balls has occurred, or all infielders have left the diamond if a half-inning has ended and, in all cases, before an appeal is made. The improper batter becomes the proper batter and the results of their time at bat become legal.

4. When the proper batter is called out because they have failed to bat in turn. The next batter shall be the batter whose name follows that of the proper batter who was called out.

5. When an improper batter becomes a proper batter because no appeal is properly made as above. The next batter shall be the batter whose name follows that of such legalized improper batter. The instant an improper batter's actions are legalized, the batting order picks up with the name following that of the legalized improper batter.

6. When several players bat out of order before discovery so that a player's time at bat occurs while a runner. Such player remains on base, but they are NOT out as a batter.

NUMBER 2: STRIKES, BALLS & HITS

LTR A . . . A strike is charged to the batter when:

- 1) a pitched ball enters any part of the strike zone in flight and is not struck at.
- 2) a pitched ball is struck at and missed.
- 3) a pitched ball becomes a foul when the batter has less than two strikes.
- 4) a pitched ball becomes a foul tip (even on a third strike) or a foul from an attempted bunt (F.P. or Modified).
- 5) a penalty strike is called because a batter delays.
- 6) a batted ball contacts the batter in the batter's box (foul ball).
- 7) a pitched ball contacts the batter while swinging at the ball or the batter is hit by the pitch that is in the strike zone (dead-ball strike).
- 8) a pitched ball, in the umpire's judgment, is prevented from entering the strike zone by any actions of the batter (dead-ball strike).
- 9) when a member of the offensive team intentionally removes a line.

LTR B . . . A ball is credited to the batter when a pitch is not touched by the bat and is not a strike, when there is an illegal pitch, or for catcher's or pitcher's delay.

EFFECT: Any pitch that touches the plate shall be called a ball if the batter does not swing at it.

LTR C . . . A foul hit or fair hit, which may be a bunt in (F.P.), occurs when a pitch is touched by the bat of the batter who is in the box.

EXCEPTION: Foul Tip.

NUMBER 3: BATTING INFRACTIONS

LTR A . . . A batter shall not delay the game by failing to promptly take their position with both feet completely inside in the batter's box within 10 seconds after the ball is returned to the pitcher to prepare for the next pitch, or by stepping out of the box when the pitcher is on the pitcher's plate.

PENALTY: (LTR A) If a pitcher has brought the hands together, the batter leaves the box at the risk of having a strike called while being out of position. For failure of the batter to be ready within 5 seconds after the ball has been returned to the pitcher, the umpire shall call a strike. If it is the second strike (S.P.) or third strike (F.P. & Modified), the umpire shall call time and declare the batter out.

EFFECTS:

1. After entering the batter's box, the batter leaves it at the risk of being charged with delay. The batter may request time-out if they desire to step out for a valid reason and, if granted, the 5-second count will begin anew. The umpire is authorized to refuse to grant time-out if the batter repeatedly causes delay or if their leaving the batter's box appears to be an attempt to worry the pitcher or to gain some other advantage.

2. If the pitcher stops or hesitates delivery as a result of the batter stepping out of the box or holding up her hand to request time, it shall not be an illegal pitch. However, if the batter steps out of the box or holds up their hand to request time and the pitcher legally delivers the ball, it shall be called a strike and the ball remains live. If a pitch is not delivered, a rule has been violated by both the batter and the pitcher. The umpire shall call time, declare "no-pitch" and begin play anew. If the umpire judges the batter's action to be a deliberate attempt to create an illegal pitch, the umpire will penalize according to 3-6-I.

LTR B . . . A batter shall not permit a pitched ball that is only partially in the batter's box to touch them; an attempt to avoid being hit by the pitch is required. EXCEPTION: Slow Pitch

PENALTY: (LTR B) The batter remains at bat (pitch is a ball or strike), unless pitch was strike three or ball four.

NUMBER 4: BATTER IS OUT WHEN:

LTR A . . . A team is playing with one less than the starting number in the batting order and their turn to bat is reached.

NOTE: Check with your state, league/tournament for any modification of this rule.

LTR B . . . The batter enters the batter's box with an illegal bat or is discovered having used an illegal bat and the infraction is detected before the next legal or illegal pitch (only the umpire or defense may detect an illegal bat).

LTR C . . . The batter disconcerts the pitcher by stepping out of the box on one side of home plate to the box on the other side while the pitcher is in position ready to pitch.

LTR D . . . The batter interferes with the catcher's fielding or throwing by leaning over home plate, by stepping out of the batter's box, by making any movement which hinders action at home after the pitch reaches the catcher or the catcher's attempt to play on a runner, or by failing to make a reasonable effort to vacate congested area when there is a throw to home and there is time for the batter to move away.

LTR E . . . (F.P. & Modified) A third strike is caught. (7-2)

LTR F . . . (S.P.) A second strike (in flight) is not caught or a second foul ball on the second strike is not caught.

LTR G . . . (F.P. & Modified) A third strike (in flight) is not caught, a runner occupies first base at the time of the pitch and there are less than two outs.

NOTE: (F.P. & Modified) If there are two outs or if no runner occupies first base, the batter is not out unless the third strike is caught. The batter is entitled to try to reach first base before being tagged out or thrown out.

LTR H . . . The batter hits the ball fair or foul while either foot is touching the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box or while touching the plate.

NOTE: A follow-through with the bat may carry one of the batter's feet entirely outside the box so it touches the ground as the ball is leaving the bat. It is customary for the umpire to ignore this if both feet were in legal position at the start of the swing and if it is not considered an attempt to circumvent the spirit of the rule.

LTR I . . . (F.P. & Modified) A bunt on a third strike is foul.

LTR J . . . (S.P.) The batter bunts or chops the ball downward.

LTR K . . . A foul ball (not a foul tip, on any strike) with a perceptible upward arc that rises above the batter's waist is caught in flight by a fielder, or such a catch is prevented by a spectator reaching into the playing area.

LTR L . . . Any coach or member of the offensive team, other than a runner, interferes with a fielder attempting to field a foul fly ball.

LTR M . . . After hitting or bunting a ball, the bat hits the ball a second time while the ball is on or over fair territory, or is on or over foul territory and, in the umpire's judgment, had a chance to become a fair ball.

EXCEPTION: If the batter is in the batter's box and the bat is in the batter's hands when the second contact occurs, it is a foul ball regardless of whether the ball was on or over fair or foul territory unless, in the umpire's judgment, the batter intentionally hit the ball a second time.

LTR N . . . The batter throws the whole bat and interferes with a defensive player attempting a play.

NOTE: If the bat breaks and a portion is hit by the ball or hits a runner or fielder, no infraction has occurred.

PENALTY: (Number 4) The batter is out. (LTRs B, C, E, F, H, I, J, L, M) The ball is dead immediately. (LTRS B, F, I, J, K, M) All runners must return to the base occupied at the time of pitch. (LTR B) Runners would not return if they were put out on the play. (LTR D, N) Runners must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.

Rule 8: Batter-Runner & Runner

NUMBER 1: THE BATTER BECOMES A BATTER-RUNNER

LTR A . . . A batter becomes a batter-runner with the right to attempt to score by advancing to first, second and third and then home plate in the listed order when:

- 1) they legally hit a fair ball.
- 2) (F.P. & Modified) the catcher fails to catch the third strike before the ball touches the ground when there are fewer than two outs and first base is unoccupied at the time of the pitch, or anytime there are two outs.
- 3) an intentional base on balls is awarded (S.P.), or a third ball is called by the umpire.

EFFECTS:

1. (F.P. & Modified) **The ball is in play unless it has been blocked.**
2. (S.P.) **The ball is dead and runners may not advance unless forced. If the pitcher desires to walk a batter intentionally, they may do so by notifying the plate umpire who shall award the batter first base.**
- 4) the catcher or another defensive player obstructs, hinders or prevents the batter from striking or hitting a pitched ball.

EFFECTS:

1. **The umpire shall give a delayed dead-ball signal.**

2. If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely and if all other runners have advanced at least one base on the batted ball, catcher obstruction is canceled. All action as a result of the batted ball stands. No option is given. Once a runner has passed a base, the runner is considered to have reached that base (whether missing the base or not) and no options are given.

3. Otherwise, the coach or manager of the team at bat, after being informed by the plate umpire of the obstruction, has the option to take the result of the play, or have the obstruction enforced by awarding the batter first base and advancing all other runners only if forced.

- 1) The catcher or any other fielder shall not:
- Step on, or in front of home plate without the ball, or
 - On a swing or attempted bunt (F.P. & Modified), touch the batter or their bat with a runner on third base trying to score by means of a squeeze play or a steal.

PENALTY: (Art. 1) The runner would be awarded the base on the attempted steal or squeeze. The batter shall also be awarded first base on the obstruction and the ball is dead.

LTR B . . . A batter is awarded first base when:

- 1) a fair batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of an umpire or a runner.

EFFECTS:

- If, after touching a fielder (including the pitcher), the ball is in play.
- If, after passing a fielder other than the pitcher, and no other fielder had a chance to make an out, the ball is in play.
- If before passing a fielder without being touched, the ball is dead. If the runner is hit by the ball while off base and before it has passed an infielder, excluding the pitcher, or if it passes an infielder and another fielder has an opportunity to make an out, the runner is out and the batter-runner is entitled to first base without liability to be put out. Any runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the base reached prior to the interference.

When a fair ball touches a runner who is in contact with a base, the ball is dead or live depending on whether the closest fielder is in front of the base (live) or behind the base (dead). The runner is not out unless she intentionally interferes.

4. If the fair batted ball hits an umpire before passing a fielder other than the pitcher, the ball is dead and the batter-runner is entitled to first base without liability to be put out.

2). (F.P. & Modified) a pitched ball not swung at nor called a strike touches any part of the batter's person or clothing. It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter. The batter's hands are not to be considered a part of the bat.

PENALTIES: (LTR B).

1. The ball is dead. The batter is entitled to one base without liability to be put out. If no attempt is made to avoid being hit or there is an obvious attempt to get hit by the pitch, the batter will not be awarded first base unless it is ball four (F.P. & Modified) or strike two (S.P.).

2. If the batter is hit anywhere on the body, including on the hands, while swinging at a pitch and hits the ball fair or foul, the ball is dead and a strike called. If it is strike three (F.P. & Modified) or strike two (S.P.), the batter is out.

NUMBER 2: BATTER-RUNNER IS OUT

The batter-runner shall be called out when:

LTR A . . . (F.P. & Modified) The catcher drops the third strike and is legally put out prior to reaching first base with two outs or less than two outs and first base is not occupied at the time of the pitch.

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

LTR C . . . After a fly ball is hit, the ball is caught by a fielder before it touches the ground, any object or person other than a defensive player.

EFFECT: (Arts. 1, 2, 3) The ball is in play.

LTR D . . . The batter-runner fails to advance to first base and enters the team area after a batted fair ball, a base on balls, a hit batter (F.P.), a dropped third strike (F.P.), or catcher obstruction.

EXCEPTION: (S.P.) The ball is dead on a base on balls, or on a hit batter (F.P. & Modified) the ball is dead, the batter-runner is not out and runners cannot advance unless forced.

PENALTY: (LTR D) The ball is dead and the runner(s) must return to the last base touched at the time of the infraction.

LTR E . . . Batter-runner runs outside the three-foot lane and, in the judgment of the umpire, interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base

(there must be a throw); however, the batter-runner may run outside the three-foot (0.91m) lane to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball. A runner is considered outside the running lane if either foot is completely outside the lane and in contact with the ground.

LTR F . . . The batter-runner interferes with a fielder attempting to make an initial play, interferes with a fielder attempting to throw the ball, intentionally interferes with a thrown ball while out of the batter's box, makes contact with a fair batted ball before reaching first base, or (F.P. & Modified) interferes with a dropped third strike. If this interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the runner closest to home plate shall be called out. A batter-runner being hit with a thrown ball does not necessarily constitute interference.

LTR G . . . The batter-runner interferes with a play at home plate in an attempt to prevent an obvious out at home plate.

LTR H . . . The batter-runner steps back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.

PENALTY: (LTRs E through H) The ball is dead and runner(s) must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference. (LTR G) The runner is also out.

LTR I . . . Batter hits an infield fly.

NOTE: When an infield fly is not initially called, the batter-runner is declared out if brought to the umpire's attention before the next pitch.

LTR J . . . 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. A trapped ball shall not be considered as having been intentionally dropped.

PENALTY: (LTR J) The ball is dead, and each runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the pitch. If an infield fly is ruled, it has precedence over an intentionally dropped ball.

LTR K . . . The immediate preceding runner who is not yet 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.

PENALTY: (LTR K) Interference is ruled, the ball is dead, the batter-runner and the interfering runner are out, and all other runners are returned to the base last occupied at the time of interference.

LTR L . . . If a spectator reaches into the field of play and interferes with a fielder's opportunity to catch a fly ball.

PENALTY: (LTR L) The ball is dead, the batter-runner is out and the umpire should award the runners the bases in the umpire's judgment that they would have reached had the interference not occurred.

LTR M . . . The on-deck batter commits interference or offensive team equipment causes a blocked ball (and interference).

PENALTY: (LTR M) The batter-runner being played on is out. If no play is obvious, no player is out, but runners shall return to the last base touched at the time the ball is declared dead.

NUMBER 3: TOUCHING BASES IN LEGAL ORDER

LTR A . . . An advancing runner shall touch first, second, third and then home plate in order.

LTR B . . . When a runner must return to a base while the ball is in play or dead, the runner must touch the base(s) in reverse order.

EXCEPTION: On a foul ball.

EFFECT: (LTRs A, B) Offensive players could be ruled out on a proper appeal by the defensive team.

LTR C . . . 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 the base until touching the next base in order or is forced to vacate it for a succeeding runner.

LTR D . . . When a runner passes a base, they are considered to have touched that base. This also applies to awarded bases.

LTR E . . . When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither the runner nor the succeeding runner(s) in the same series of plays are compelled to follow a base out of position.

EFFECT: (LTRs C, D, E) The ball is in play and runners may advance or return with liability to be put out.

LTR F . . . A runner shall not run bases in reverse order either to confuse the fielders or to make a travesty of the game.

PENALTY: (LTR F) The ball is dead and the runner is out.

LTR G . . . Two runners may not legally occupy the same base simultaneously. **EFFECT: The runner who first legally occupied the base shall be entitled to it, unless forced to advance. The other runner may be put out by being touched with the ball.**

LTR H . . . Failure of a preceding 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 succeeding 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 *succeeding* runner may score a run.

LTR I . . . No runner may return to touch a missed base or one left too soon after a following runner has scored or once they leave the field of play.

LTR J . . . Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched prior to advancing to awarded bases.

LTR K . . . Awarded bases must be run legally.

EXCEPTION: (S.P.) The batter and runners on base are credited with a four base award on all fair balls in flight over the outfield fence. Batter/runners need not run the bases and no appeal plays allowed.

NUMBER 4: RUNNERS ENTITLED TO ADVANCE

LTR A . . . Runners may advance with liability to be put out when:

- 1) (F.P. & Modified) the ball leaves the pitcher's hand on the delivery.
- 2) (S.P.) a pitched ball is batted or in certain classifications of play the ball crosses home plate.
- 3) a thrown ball or a fair batted ball is not blocked.
- 4) a thrown ball hits an umpire.
- 5) a legally caught fly ball is first touched by any defensive player.
- 6) a fair ball strikes an umpire or a runner after having passed a fielder other than the pitcher, and provided no other fielder had a chance to make an out, or when a fair batted ball has been touched by a fielder, including the pitcher.
- 7) the ball gets lodged in a defensive player's uniform or equipment.

EFFECT: (LTR A) The ball is in play.

LTR B . . . A runner forfeits exemption from liability and may be put out when:

- 1) the ball is in play or on awarded bases, the runner fails to touch a base before attempting to make the next base.
- 2) after overrunning first base, the runner attempts to continue to second base.
- 3) after dislodging a base, a runner attempts to continue to the next base.

LTR C . . . A runner is entitled to advance without liability to be put out when:

- 1) forced to vacate a base because the batter was awarded first base.

EFFECT: (F.P. & S.P) The ball remains in play unless it is blocked. Any runner affected is entitled to one base and may advance farther at their own risk if the ball is in play. (S.P.) The ball is dead unless a classification of play where "stealing" is allowed.

- 2) a fielder not in possession of the ball or not making an initial play on a batted ball, impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner who is legally running bases. Obstructed runners are still required to touch all bases in proper order, or they could be called out on a proper appeal by the defensive team. Should an act of interference occur following any obstruction, enforcement of the interference penalty would have precedence.

PENALTY: (LTR C.2) When any obstruction occurs (including a rundown), the umpire will signal a delayed dead ball. The ball will remain live.

a. If the obstructed runner is put out prior to reaching the base that would have been reached had there not been obstruction, a dead ball is called and the obstructed runner and each other runner affected by the obstruction will be awarded the base or bases which would have been reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there not been obstruction. An obstructed runner may not be called out between the two bases where they were obstructed.

EXCEPTIONS:

1. When an obstructed runner, after the obstruction, safely obtains or returns to 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, the obstructed runner is no longer protected between the bases where she was obstructed and may be put out.
2. When properly appealed for missing a base or leaving a base before a fly ball was first touched while advancing. If obstruction occurred while a runner was returning to touch the base, they are protected.
3. When committing an act of interference.
4. When passing another runner.
5. When the batter flies out for the third out.
6. When the batter-runner is obstructed between two bases and she flies out.

b. If the obstructed runner is put out after passing the base she would have reached had there been no obstruction, the obstructed runner will be called out. The ball remains live.

c. When a runner, while advancing or returning to a base, is obstructed by a fielder who neither has the ball nor is attempting to field a batted ball, or a fielder who fakes a tag without the ball, the obstructed runner and each other runner affected by the obstruction, will be awarded the base or bases which would have been reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there been no obstruction.

3) (F.P. & Modified) a wild pitch or passed ball lodges in or goes under, over or through the backstop.

PENALTY: (LTR C.3) The ball is dead and all runners are awarded one base only. The batter is awarded first base only on the fourth ball (F.P. & Modified) or third ball (S.P.).

4) (F.P. & Modified) a pitcher makes an illegal pitch, providing the offensive coach does not take the result of the play.

5) a fielder intentionally contacts or catches a fair batted, a thrown, or a pitched ball with her cap, helmet, mask, protector, pocket, detached glove or any part of the uniform which is detached from its proper place on their person.

PENALTY: (LTR C.5) The batter and runner would be entitled to three bases from the time of the pitch if a batted ball, two bases from the time of the throw if a thrown ball, or one base from the time of the pitch if a pitched ball and in (F.P. & Modified) may advance farther at their own risk. If the illegal catch or touch is made on a fair hit ball that, in the judgment of the umpire, would have cleared the outfield fence in flight, the batter-runner shall be awarded four bases.

6) the ball is in play and is overthrown (beyond the boundary lines) or is blocked by the defense.

PENALTY: (LTR C.6) All runners will be awarded two bases, and the award will be governed by the positions of the runners when the ball left the fielder's hand. Runners may return to touch a missed base or base left too soon. If two runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner.

EXCEPTIONS:

1. When a fielder loses possession of the ball, such as on an attempted tag, and the ball enters the dead-ball area or becomes blocked, each runner is awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the ball entered the dead-ball area or becomes blocked.

2. When the ball becomes dead, no runner may return to touch a missed base or a base left too soon if they have advanced, touched and remains a base beyond the missed base or the base left too soon. 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 missed base or a base left too soon. In this case, the runner(s) may return to a missed base or base left too soon.

3. If the ball becomes blocked due to offensive equipment not involved in the game, the ball is ruled dead and runners are returned to the last base touched at the time of the blocked ball. If the blocked ball prevented the defense from making an out, the runner being played on is called out.

4. If an awarded base is in error, after one pitch is thrown (legal or illegal), the error cannot be corrected.

7) 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. It shall entitle the batter-runner to a home run.

8) a fair ball bounces over or rolls under or through a fence or any designated boundary of the playing field. Also, when it deflects off of a defensive player and goes out of play in foul territory, deflects off a runner or umpire and goes out of play after having passed an infielder excluding the pitcher and provided no other fielder had a chance to make an out.

PENALTY: (LTR C.8) The ball is dead and all runners are awarded two bases from the time of the pitch.

9) a live ball is unintentionally carried by a fielder from playable territory into dead-ball territory. A fielder carrying a live ball into the dugout or team area to tag a player is considered to have unintentionally carried it there.

PENALTY: (LTR C.9) The ball is dead. Each runner is awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the fielder entered dead-ball territory.

10) in the judgment of the umpire, a fielder intentionally carries, kicks, pushes or throws a live ball from playable territory into dead-ball territory.

PENALTY: (LTR C.10) The ball is dead. Each runner is 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.

11) there is spectator interference with any thrown or fair batted ball, the ball is dead at the moment of interference.

12) a ball gets lodged in (a) umpire's gear or clothing or (b) in an offensive player's clothing.

PENALTY: (LTRS C.11, C.12) The ball is dead and the umpire should award the runners the bases in the umpire's judgment they would have reached.

NUMBER 5: RUNNER MUST RETURN TO THEIR BASE

A runner must return to the last base legally occupied when:

LTR A . . . A batted ball is foul.

LTR B . . . An illegally batted ball is declared by the umpire.

LTR C . . . A batter, batter-runner or runner is called out for interference. Each other runner shall return to the last base which, in the umpire's judgment, was touched by the runner at the time of the interference.

LTR D . . . (F.P. & Modified) Any part of the batter's person or clothing is touched by a pitched ball that is swung at and missed.

LTR E . . . (F.P. & Modified) A batter is hit by a pitched ball, unless forced to advance because of the batter being awarded first base.

PENALTY: (LTRs A through E) The ball is dead. Each runner must return to their base without liability to be put out, except when forced to go to the next base because the batter became a batter-runner. Runners need not touch the intervening bases in returning to their base.

LTR F . . . The plate umpire or any part of the plate umpire's clothing interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw out a runner stealing, or an attempted pick off play (F.P. & Modified).

PENALTY: (LTR F) This is a delayed dead ball at the time of the interference. If the runner is ruled out, the ball remains live. If the runner is not out, she must return to the base occupied at the time of the pitch. It is not umpire interference if, on a passed ball or wild pitch, the umpire gets hit by a thrown ball from the catcher or if contact is made with the catcher trying to retrieve the ball. The ball would remain live.

LTR G . . . (S.P.) Base stealing is not allowed except in certain state, league, tournament classifications of play.

EFFECT: Each runner may leave a base when a pitched ball is batted, touches the ground or reaches home, but must return to that base immediately after each pitch not hit by the batter except in certain state, league, tournament classifications of play.

LTR H . . . An intentionally dropped ball is ruled.

NUMBER 6: THE RUNNER IS OUT

A runner is out when:

LTR A . . . 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(s) of a fielder.

LTR B . . . The ball is in play 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.

LTR C . . . On a force play, a fielder contacts the base while holding the ball, touches the ball to the base or tags the runner before the runner reaches the base.

LTR D . . . The runner physically passes a preceding runner before that runner has been put out. If this was the third out of the inning, any runs scoring prior to the out for passing a preceding runner would count. A runner(s) passing a preceding obstructed runner, is not out.

LTR E . . . Any offensive team member, other than another runner, physically assists the runner.

PENALTY: (LTRs A through E) The ball is in play and the runner is out.

LTR F . . . The runner leaves a base to advance to another base before a caught fly ball has touched a fielder, provided the ball is returned to the infield and properly appealed.

LTR G . . . The runner fails to touch the intervening 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.

LTR H . . . The batter-runner legally overruns first base, attempts to run to second base and is legally touched while off the base.

LTR I . . . Running or sliding for home plate and the runner fails to touch it, and a fielder properly appeals to the umpire for the decision.

PENALTY: (LTRs F through I) These are appeal plays. See 2-1.

LTR J . . . The runner interferes:

- 1) with a fielder attempting to make the initial play on a fair batted ball.
- 2) with a fielder attempting to field a fly ball over foul territory.
- 3) with a fielder attempting to throw the ball.
- 4) intentionally with a fielder or thrown ball.

NOTE: Jumping, hurdling and leaping are all legal attempts to avoid a fielder only if the fielder is lying on the ground.

LTR K . . . The 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 any fielder has an opportunity to make an out.

LTR L . . . The runner intentionally contacts a fair ball that an infielder has missed.

LTR M . . . The runner does not legally slide and causes illegal contact and/or illegally alters the actions of the fielder in the immediate act of making a play on her. Runners are never required to slide but, if the runner elects to slide, the slide shall be legal.

LTR N . . . Runner remains on their feet and maliciously crashes into a defensive player. Malicious contact supersedes obstruction.

PENALTY: (LTRs J through N) The ball is dead and the runner is out. Each other runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference. When a runner is called out for interference, the batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a fielder's choice. If this interference, in the judgment of the umpire, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the runner is put out, the

immediate succeeding runner shall also be called out. If interference occurs by the runner on a foul fly ball, the runner is out and the ball is dead. A foul ball is called in this situation and the batter remains at bat unless it was a bunt attempt with two strikes on the batter (F.P. & Modified) or it was the second strike (S.P.); the batter is also out in these cases. (LTR N) The runner is also ejected.

LTR O . . . The on-deck batter commits interference or offensive team equipment causes a blocked ball (and interference).

PENALTY: (Art. LTR O) The runner being played on is out. If no play is obvious, no player is out, but runners shall return to the last base touched at the time the ball is declared dead.

LTR P . . . The coach/manager 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.

LTR Q . . . A coach/manager intentionally interferes with a thrown ball while in the coach's box, or interferes with the defensive team's opportunity to make a play on another runner.

LTR R . . . After being declared out or after scoring, a runner 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 the batter-runner running on the dropped third strike rule (F.P. & Modified).

PENALTY: (LTRs P, Q, R) The ball is dead and the runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out. Each other runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.

LTR S . . . Member(s) of the offensive team stand or collect around a base to which a runner is advancing, thereby confusing the fielders and adding to the difficulty of making the play. Members of a team include bat/ball shaggers or any other person authorized to sit on the team's bench.

PENALTY: (LTR S) The ball is dead and the runner is out. Each other runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the interference.

LTR T . . . (S.P.) 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.

EXCEPTION: S.P. Classifications which allow "stealing" once the ball has crossed home plate.

LTR U . . . (F.P. & Modified) The runner fails to keep contact with the base to which the runner is entitled until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.

PENALTY: (LTRs T, U) The ball is dead, "no pitch" is declared when applicable, and the runner is out.

LTR V . . . The runner abandons a base, enters her team area or leaves the field of play.

LTR W . . . The runner positions them self behind and not in contact with a base to get a running start on any fly ball. The ball remains live.

LTR X . . . Prior to a pitch (legal or illegal) to the next batter, if the runner was discovered having used an illegal bat, they shall be declared out and any runners put out prior to the discovery shall remain out.

NUMBER 7: (F.P. & Modified) LOOK-BACK RULE

LTR A . . . The look-back rule will be in effect when the ball is live, the batter-runner has touched first base or has been declared out, and the pitcher has possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle.

LTR B . . . The runner(s) may stop once, but then must immediately return to the base or attempt to advance to the next base.

LTR C . . . Once the runner stops at a base for any reason, they will be declared out if they leaves the base.

LTR D . . . Responsibilities of batter-runner after completing a turn at bat, and while the pitcher has the ball within the 16-foot pitching circle, including a base on balls or a dropped third strike are as follows:

- 1) A batter-runner who rounds first base toward second base may stop, but then must immediately, without stopping, return to first or attempt to advance to second base.
- 2) A batter-runner who overruns first base toward right field, turns left and immediately stops, must then return non-stop to first or attempt to advance to second base.
- 3) A batter-runner who overruns first base toward right field, turns left and moves directly toward second base and stops is committed to second and must attempt to advance non-stop to second base.
- 4) A batter-runner who overruns first base toward right field, turns left and moves back toward the infield in any direction except directly toward second base is committed to first and must return to first base.
- 5) A batter-runner who overruns first base toward right field, and turns right, is committed to first base and must return to first base.

PENALTY: (Arts. 2, 3, 4) The ball is dead. "No pitch" is declared when applicable, and the runner is out. If two runners or more are off their bases, when one is called out, the ball is dead and other runners are returned to the last base touched. Only one runner may be called out.

EXCEPTION: The runner will not be declared out if a play is made on another runner (a fake throw is considered a play), the pitcher no longer has possession of the ball within the 16-foot circle, or the pitcher releases the ball on a pitch to the batter.

NUMBER 8: RUNNER IS NOT OUT

LTR A . . . 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 make the initial play on the ball.

LTR B . . . 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 her possession.

LTR C . . . More than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball and the runner comes into contact with the one who, in the judgment of the umpire, could not have made an out.

LTR D . . . A runner is hit with a fair, untouched batted ball that has passed an infielder, excluding the pitcher, and, in the judgment of the umpire, no other fielder had a chance to make an out.

LTR E . . . A runner is hit with a fair untouched batted ball over foul territory that, in the judgment of the umpire, no fielder had a chance to make an out.

LTR F . . . A runner is hit with 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.

LTR G . . . A runner is touched while off a base:

- 1) with a ball not securely held by a fielder.
- 2) with a hand or glove of a defensive player and the ball is in the other hand.

LTR H . . . The defensive team does not request the umpire's decision on an appeal play.

LTR I . . . A batter-runner overruns first base after touching it and returns directly to the base.

LTR J . . . The runner is not given sufficient time to return to a base. The runner will not be called out for being off base before the pitcher releases the ball.

EFFECT: "No pitch" will be called by the umpire and the runner(s) will be permitted to return to the proper base(s) without penalty.

LTR K . . . Has legally started to advance when the pitcher receives the ball while in the 16-foot circle, or when the pitcher steps into the 16-foot circle with the ball in her possession (F.P. & Modified).

LTR L . . . The runner stays on the base until a fly ball touches a fielder and then attempts to advance.

LTR M . . . Hit by a fair batted ball when touching the base, unless the runner intentionally interferes with the ball or a fielder making a play.

LTR N . . . The runner slides into a base and dislodges it from its proper position. The base is considered to have followed the runner.

EFFECT: A runner reaching a base safely will not be out for being off the base if it becomes dislodged. The runner may return without liability to be put out when the base has been replaced. A runner forfeits this exemption if they attempt to advance beyond the dislodged base before it is again in proper position.

LTR O . . . A fielder makes a play (a pitch by the pitcher is not considered making a play) on a batter, batter-runner or runner while using an illegal glove, and it is discovered before:

- 1) the next pitch (legal or illegal).
- 2) the pitcher and all infielders have left fair territory and the catcher has left her normal fielding position on the way to the dugout.
- 3) The umpires have left the field.

PENALTY: (LTR O) The offended coach/manager may have the entire play nullified with each runner returning to their original base and the batter batting over again, assuming the ball and strike count prior to the steal attempt or pitch that was hit; or the offended coach may take the result of the play and disregard the illegal act.

LTR P . . . 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.

LTR Q . . . A runner physically passes an obstructed preceding runner.

NUMBER 9: COURTESY RUNNERS

LTR A . . . Courtesy Runners

- 1) Only one courtesy runner may be used per half inning
- 2) The courtesy runner shall be the last person of the same gender to make an out **OR** the person of the same gender farthest from being due up to bat that is not currently on base (team's choice).
- 3) When announced by a team rep, the courtesy runner is officially in the game.

4) If a courtesy runner's time at bat comes while they are on base they will be called out as a base runner, be removed from base and allowed to take their turn at bat.

PENALTY (for violating 1 through 4): An out is declared and runner is removed from base.

Note: In Men's FP & JOFP, courtesy runner will be allowed for pitchers and catchers only. The runner shall be a bench player or player in the lineup that is farthest in the batting order from the pitcher or catcher being run for.

NUMBER 10: DOUBLE FIRST BASE

LTR A . . .The defense must use the white portion and the batter-runner the colored portion when a play is being made on the batter-runner.

PENALTIES (LTR A):

1. The batter-runner is out when there is a play being made at first base and the batter-runner touches only the white portion provided the defense appeals prior to the next pitch (see below exceptions in A and B on the requirement to use the colored base).

2. The batter-runner is out for interference when there is a force play and the batter-runner touches only the white portion and collides with the fielder about to catch a thrown ball while on the white. See Rule 8-2-E Penalty.

3. Obstruction is called on the defense when there is a force play on the batter-runner, who touches only the colored portion and collides with the fielder about to catch a thrown ball, while also on the colored portion. See 8-4-C.2 Penalty.

LTR B . . .The defense and the batter-runner may use either the white or colored portion:

- a. On any force out attempt from the foul side of first base.
- b. On an errant throw pulling the defense off the base into foul ground.
- c. When the defensive player uses the colored 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.

LTR C . . .The batter-runner or runner may touch the white or colored base:

- 1) When advancing on a fair ball hit to the outfield with no play being attempted or when returning to first base.

- 2) When tagging up on a fly ball.
- 3) (F.P. & Modified) When returning on an attempted pick-off play.
- 4) When advancing on a base on balls.

Rule 9: Scoring & Record Keeping

NUMBER 1: HOW A TEAM SCORES

LTR A . . . A runner scores one run each time they legally advance to and touches first, second and third and then home plate before there are three outs to end the inning.

EXCEPTION: A run is not scored if the runner advances to home plate during action in which the third out is made as follows:

- a. by the batter-runner before touching first base;
- b. by another runner being forced out;
- c. by the preceding runner who is declared out because of failing to touch one of the bases;
- d. when a third out is declared on an appeal play resulting in a force out (This play takes precedence if enforcing of it would negate a score.);
- e. when there is more than one out declared by the umpire which terminates the half inning (the defensive team may select the out which is to its advantage);

LTR B . . . The number of runs scored by each team is entered on the scorebook/card for each inning. The team whose runners score the greatest total number of runs for the entire regulation game wins.

NUMBER 2: RECORDING GAME ACTIVITY

The **scorebook** of the home team shall be the official scorebook, unless the plate umpire is keeping a scorecard. An official scorekeeper if present, as designated by the umpire, shall keep records as outlined in the following rules and has the final authority when judgment is involved in determining whether a batter-runner's advance to first base is the result of an error or of a base hit, and in similar situations.

NUMBER 3: PLAYER'S BATTING RECORD

LTR A . . . Each player's batting record shall include:

- 1) the number of times batted , the runs scored, and the base hits made (LTR B).
- 2) in the summary, the number of total base hits and the type (single, double, triple or home run), sacrifice hits, and number of runs batted in.
- 3) slugging percentage, which is total bases (i.e., double = two bases, triple = three bases, etc.) divided by official at bats.
- 4) on-base percentage, which is the number of hits, walks and hit by pitch, divided by the number of plate appearances (official at-bats, sacrifices, walks and hit by pitch).

LTR B . . . A base hit is credited to a batter when the batter-runner advances to first base safely:

- 1) because of a fair hit, rather than because of a fielder's error. It is not a base hit if any runner is out on a force play caused by the batter advancing toward first base.

NOTE: Base hits include any fair hit which cannot be fielded in time to throw out or tag out a batter-runner or any other runner when being forced to advance. Illustrations are as follows: (1) Ball is stopped or checked by a fielder in motion who cannot recover in time. (2) Ball moves too slowly; (3) Ball is hit with such force to a fielder that neither the fielder nor an assisting fielder can handle it.

- 2) without liability of being put out because a runner is declared out for being hit by the batted ball, or the umpire is hit by a batted ball.
- 3) because of a fielder's choice when a fielder attempts to put out another runner but is unsuccessful and the scorekeeper believes the batter-runner would have reached first base even with perfect fielding.

NOTE: Scorekeepers use the term in the following ways: (1) to indicate the advance of the batter-runner who takes one or more bases when the fielder who handles the batted ball plays on a preceding runner; (2) to indicate the advance of a runner, other than by stolen base or error, while a fielder is trying to putout another runner; and (3) to indicate the advance of a runner due to the defensive team's refusal to play on the runner (F.P. & Modified, an undefended steal).

LTR C . . . A base hit for extra bases is credited to the batter when it is the sole reason for safe arrival at second (double), third (triple) or home base (home run).

LTR D . . . A sacrifice hit is credited to the batter when, with not more than one out, a bunt (F. P. & Modified) enables any runner to advance or a fly ball enables a runner to score; but, in either case, batter-runner is put out

before reaching first or would have been put out if the hit had been fielded without error.

LTR E . . . A run batted in is credited to the batter when a runner scores because of:

- 1) a base hit, including the batter-runner's score on a home run.
- 2) a sacrifice hit.
- 3) any putout.
- 4) a forced advance, such as for a base on balls or batter being hit.
- 5) an error, provided two are not yet out and the error is such that the runner on third would have scored even if there had been no error.

EXCEPTION: It is not a run batted in if there is a double play from a force out, or one in which the batter is put out or should have been put out on a batted ball.

LTR F . . . When a strikeout involves more than one batter, it is charged to the one who received at least two strikes (F.P. & Modified) or one strike (S.P.). If no batter received more than one strike, it is charged to the batter who received the third strike.

NUMBER 4: PLAYER'S BASERUNNING RECORD

A stolen base (F.P. & Modified) shall be credited in the summary to a runner each time the runner advances a base without the aid of a base hit, a putout or a fielding (including battery) error.

EXCEPTION: No runner is credited with a stolen base if:

- a. after reaching the base, the runner overslides and is put out;
- b. in an attempted double or triple steal, any runner is put out; or
- c. opponents are in collusion, such as a deliberate attempt to help establish a record.

NUMBER 5: PLAYER'S FIELDING RECORD

LTR A . . . Each player's fielding record shall include: the times the fielder put out a batter or runner; the times the fielder assisted a teammate in putting out a runner, and the number of errors the fielder committed.

LTR B . . . A putout is credited to a fielder who catches a batted ball in flight, who tags out a runner, or who puts out a runner by holding the ball while touching a base to which a runner is forced to advance or return (2-38-4).

EXCEPTIONS:

1. Catcher is credited with the putout when the batter is out for illegally batting the ball, for bunting a third strike foul (F.P. & Modified), for hitting a second ball foul on strike two (S.P.), for the batter being hit by own batted ball or for batting out of turn;
2. for an infield fly, the putout is credited to the fielder who would ordinarily have made the catch; or
3. for runner being out because of being hit by a batted ball, the putout is credited to the fielder who is nearest the ball at the time.

LTR C . . . An assist is credited to a fielder each time the fielder handles or deflects the ball during action which is connected with the putout, or the fielder handles the ball prior to an error which prevents what would have been a putout. If several fielders handle the ball or one fielder handles it more than once during a play (such as when a runner is caught between bases), only one assist is credited to each fielder.

NOTE: If the catcher tags out or throws out a runner after the pitch, the pitcher is not credited with an assist.

LTR D . . . A double play or triple play is credited to one or more fielders when two or three players are put out between the time a pitch is delivered and the time the ball next becomes dead or is next in possession of the pitcher in pitching position.

LTR E . . . An error is charged against a fielder for each misplay that prolongs the time at bat of the batter; or prolongs the time a player continues to be a runner; or permits the runner to advance one or more bases. If it is impossible to assign an error to an individual player, then the team will be assessed with an error.

EXCEPTIONS:

1. A pitcher is not charged with an error for a base on balls, a batter being hit, an illegal pitch, a passed ball, or a wild pitch.
2. A catcher is not charged with an error for a wild throw in an attempt to prevent a stolen base, unless the base stealer advances another base because of the wild throw.
3. Neither catcher nor infielder is charged with an error for a wild throw in an attempt to complete a double play, unless the throw is so wild that it permits a runner to advance an additional base. However, if a player drops a thrown ball when a double (or triple) play would have been completed by holding onto it, it is an error.
4. It is a passed ball when the catcher fails to stop or control a pitch when catcher should have been able to do so with ordinary effort and on which a runner (other than the batter) is able to advance. When a passed ball occurs

on a third strike (F.P. & Modified), permitting a batter to reach first base, score a strikeout and a passed ball.

5. A fielder is not charged with an error for accurately throwing to a base when the baseman fails to stop or tries to stop the ball, provided there was good reason for such throw. If the runner advances because of the throw, the error is charged to the baseman, or fielder who should have covered that base.

6. If a fielder drops a fair fly ball but recovers in time to force out a runner, the fielder is not charged with an error. It is recorded as a force out.

NUMBER 6: PITCHER'S RECORD

LTR A . . . A wild pitch (F.P. & Modified) shall be charged to the pitcher when a ball legally delivered to the batter is so high, or so low (including any pitch which touches the ground in front of home base), or so far away from home base that the catcher does not stop or control it with ordinary effort and the batter-runner advances to first base or any runner advances a base.

NOTE: (F.P., Modified & S.P. in classifications where stealing is allowed):

When the catcher enables a runner (other than the batter-runner) to advance by failing to control a pitch which should have been controlled, it is not a wild pitch but a "passed ball." For dropping third strike (F.P. & Modified) see 9-5-E Exception 4.

LTR B . . . The number of bases on balls, batters being hit by a pitch (F.P. & Modified), strikeouts, and base hits allowed by each pitcher shall be recorded in the summary. If a batter is hit by what would have been the fourth ball (F.P. & Modified), it is recorded as a hit batter.

LTR C . . . An earned run shall be charged against the pitcher when a runner advances to home base because of a safe hit, a sacrifice, a stolen base, a putout, a base on balls, a hit batter (F.P. & Modified), or a wild pitch (even when the wild pitch is a third strike F.P. & Modified), provided that in each case it is before the team in the field has had an opportunity to make a third putout. When there is doubt as to whether an act is an error or as to which base a runner would have been held if there had been perfect fielding, the pitcher shall be given the benefit. If a pitcher commits a fielding error, it is treated the same as any other fielder's error.

NOTE: For the tie-breaker procedure, the run scored by the player starting as a runner at second base shall be charged to the defensive team, not to the pitcher.

LTR D . . . A strikeout is credited to the pitcher when a third strike is delivered to a batter, even though the batter might reach first base because the third strike is a wild pitch (F.P. & Modified) or is not caught (F.P. & Modified). It is also a strikeout if an attempted third strike bunt (F.P. & Modified) is an uncaught foul.

LTR E . . . A relief pitcher shall not be charged with any earned run scored by a runner who was on base when such pitcher entered nor with any hit or advance by a batter who had more balls than strikes when such pitcher entered.

LTR F . . . Winning and losing pitchers are determined as follows:

- 1) The starting pitcher is credited with a win in the following circumstances:
 - a. When she pitches at least half of the innings in the game and her team stays ahead for the remainder of the game.
 - b. When she pitches the required number of innings, her team is ahead or tied when she is replaced, she re-enters the game with her team behind, and her team subsequently recaptures the lead.
- NOTE:** A pitcher cannot receive credit for a save if she receives the win.
- 2) The relief pitcher is credited with a win in the following circumstances:
 - a. The starting pitcher did not pitch the required number of innings, or their team fell behind.
 - b. The relief pitcher who pitches most effectively after the starting pitcher did not pitch the required number of innings, more than one relief pitcher was used and the lead was never lost.
 - c. The relief pitcher was the pitcher of record when their team gained the lead and stayed in the lead.
 - d. A relief pitcher left the pitching position while the score was tied or their team was behind, and re-entered as the pitcher and regained the lead.
 - 3) If a pitcher is replaced by a pinch hitter or a pinch runner, the runs scored by the team during the inning of removal are to be credited to that pitcher's benefit for deciding the pitcher of record when the team takes the lead.
 - 4) A pitcher shall be charged with the loss when the team is behind or falls behind because of runs assessed to that pitcher and the team does not subsequently tie the score nor take the lead.
 - 5) A pitcher cannot be given credit for pitching a shutout if the pitcher does not pitch the complete game, unless the player enters the game with no one out before the opponents have scored in the first inning and they do not permit the opposition to score during the game.

LTR G . . . In order for a pitcher to be credited with a save, she shall meet all three of the following criteria:

- 1) they are the last pitcher in a game won by her team; and
- 2) they are not the winning pitcher; and
- 3) they meet at least one of the following:
 - a. they enter the game with a lead of not more than three runs and pitches at least one inning; or
 - b. they enter the game, regardless of the count on the batter, with the potential tying run either on base, at bat or on deck; or
 - c. they pitch effectively for at least three innings.

NOTE: A starting pitcher who is replaced and then re-enters as pitcher can be credited with a win but not a save.

NUMBER 7: GENERAL SUMMARY

LTR A . . . The game summary includes the following:

- 1) total score and runs scored in each inning.
- 2) stolen base(s) for each runner (F.P., Modified & S.P. in classifications where "stealing" is allowed).
- 3) sacrifice(s) by each batter.
- 4) base hit(s) by each batter and total against each pitcher.
- 5) wild pitch(es) (F.P. & Modified) by each pitcher.
- 6) time(s) each pitcher hits batter with pitch, as well as the names of those hit (F.P. & Modified).
- 7) two- or three-base hit(s) and home runs.
- 8) time(s) at bat for each player and total against each pitcher.
- 9) strikeout(s) by each pitcher.
- 10) base(s) on balls by each pitcher.
- 11) passed balls by catcher (F.P., Modified & S.P. in classifications where "stealing" is allowed).
- 12) name of each umpire.

LTR B . . . Percentage records are computed as follows:

- 1) percentage of games won and lost—divide the number of games won by the total games won and lost.
- 2) batting average—divide the total number of base hits, not the total bases on hits, by the total times at bat.
- 3) fielding average—divide the total putouts and assists by the total of putouts, assists and errors.
- 4) earned-run average—divide the total runs earned while pitching by the total number of innings pitched (average runs per inning) and multiply by seven (average runs per game).

5) slugging percentage is total bases (i.e., double = two bases, triple = three bases, etc.) divided by official at bats.

6) on-base percentage is total times on base divided by official at bats, walks, errors, interference, etc.

NOTE: If there is a fraction of $\frac{1}{2}$ or more, a full point is added.

Rule 10: Umpiring

NUMBER 1: GENERAL

LTR A . . . Game officials include the plate umpire and may include one, two or three field umpires. Any umpire has the authority to order a player, coach/manager or bench personnel to do or refrain from doing anything which affects the administering of these rules, and to enforce prescribed penalties.

LTR B . . . Umpire jurisdiction begins upon the arrival of one umpire within the confines of the field and ends when the umpires leave the field of play at the conclusion of the game.

LTR C . . . If there is only one umpire, that umpire has complete jurisdiction in administering the rules and shall take a position behind the catcher.

LTR D . . . Any umpire's decision which involves judgment, such as whether a hit is fair or foul, whether a pitch is a strike or ball, or whether a runner is safe or out, is final. If there is a reasonable doubt about some decision being in conflict with the rules, the coach/manager may ask that the correct ruling be made. The umpire making the decision may ask another umpire for information before making a final decision. The use of videotape by game officials for the purpose of making calls or rendering decisions is prohibited. No umpire shall criticize or interfere with another umpire's decision unless asked by the one making it.

NOTE: The plate umpire sometimes asks for aid from the base umpire when there is a question as to whether a batter's half-swing is to be called a strike.

LTR E . . . The umpire's right to disqualify players or to remove nonplayers for objecting to decisions or for unsporting conduct is absolute.

LTR F . . . Umpires shall not use tobacco products in any form in the vicinity of the playing field.

NUMBER 2: PLATE UMPIRE

LTR A . . . If there are two (or more) umpires, the plate umpire shall stand behind the catcher, call and count balls and strikes, signal fair hits, and call out

“foul ball” while signaling each foul hit and make all decisions on the batter. The plate umpire shall make all decisions except those commonly reserved for the field umpire.

LTR B . . . The plate umpire has final authority to forfeit a game, and has jurisdiction over any rules matters not mentioned in 10-2-A and not assigned to

LTR C . . . The duties include those listed in 10-2-A and also the following:

- 1) conduct the pregame conference as in 4-1-B. Inspect equipment, including batting and catcher’s helmets, bats, inspect the condition of the field, define the dugout/bench areas, if necessary, designate the official scorekeeper (9-2-B).
- 2) call and/or signal “Play Ball” to start the game or to resume play, and call and/or signal “Time” or “Dead Ball” whenever the ball becomes dead.
- 3) eject or restrict to the dugout/bench a player, coach/manager or bench personnel.
- 4) announce each substitute.
- 5) call game during league play if conditions become unfit.
- 6) penalize for rules infractions, such as illegal pitch, interference, delay, unwarranted disputing of decision, unsporting conduct or defacement of the ball.
- 7) make final decision on points not covered by the rules.
- 8) forfeit the game for prescribed infractions by spectators, players or bench personnel.
- 9) when game is played under the auspices of an organization which permits protests to be filed, the plate umpire shall report the protest to the organization along with all related conditions at the time of the protested play, provided the protest is brought to the attention of an umpire by the offended team at the time of the play and before the next pitch after such play.

NOTE: If the protest occurs during a tournament contest the umpire shall for consultation with tournament director/UIC prior to resuming play.

EXCEPTION: Protests resulting from the last play of the game shall be brought to the attention of an umpire by the offended team prior to the umpires leaving the field. The plate umpire shall then inform the coach of the opposing team and the official scorekeeper.

NOTE: If there is a question about a rule that was possibly misapplied, the team’s coach or captain shall inform the umpire at the time of the play and before a pitch to the next batter of the team currently at bat or before the first batter for the team that was on defense, if the teams have changed

positions; or before the umpires leave the field, if the play in question was the last play of the game.

10) keep a record of defensive and offensive team charged conferences and team warnings for each team.

11) immediately remove a player from the game who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion.

12) penalize for equipment violations.

13) rectify any situation in which an umpire's decision that was reversed has placed either team in jeopardy.

14) correct a scorekeeping error if brought to an umpire's attention before the umpires leave the field when the game is over.

NUMBER 3: FIELD UMPIRE

LTR A . . . A field umpire shall aid the plate umpire in administering the rules. The field umpire shall make all decisions on the bases except those reserved for the plate umpire. The field umpire shall have concurrent jurisdiction with the plate umpire in calling time, illegal pitches, defacement or discoloration of ball by the pitcher, when a fly ball is caught, or in disqualifying any player for blatant, unsporting conduct or infraction as prescribed by the rules. In some instances, the field umpire will rule on the ball being fair or foul.

LTR B . . . When there is only one field umpire, that umpire shall make all decisions at first and second base, unless a play takes the field umpire beyond the infield, in which case the plate umpire shall make the call at those bases.

The field umpire also shall make such decisions at third that cannot be made by the plate umpire.

LTR C . . . If additional field umpires are used, also referred to as base umpires, they have concurrent jurisdiction with the first field umpire.

NUMBER 4: EQUIPMENT & APPAREL

LTR A . . . Umpires working the plate in fast and modified pitch shall wear a throat protector that is part of or attached to the mask and extends far enough to adequately protect the throat. An attached throat protector must be commercially manufactured, properly attached, unaltered and worn properly. A chest protector and shin pads are recommended in fast pitch.

LTR B . . . The proper uniform for an umpire consists of an NSF-MSF logoed powder blue button style shirt, heather gray slacks, NSF-MSF logoed navy blue jacket, MSF logoed cap, and navy or gray ballbag (plate umpire only).

In slowpitch, the umpire may wear navy blue shorts and navy ball bag. Shoes, socks and belt shall be black.

EXCEPTION: In slow pitch, white athletic socks are permitted with two or three navy blue socks or white anklet style socks.

If an undershirt is worn under the powder blue shirt, it shall be white and short sleeved.

LTR C . . . Casts, splints and braces may be worn, if padded.



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LIGHTNING PROTOCOL

League, tournament directors and umpires should familiarize themselves with information on dealing with adverse weather from the local office of the National Weather Service.

A few recommendations are listed below:

- 1) If you can hear the thunder from a thunderstorm you could be in danger of being struck by lightning. (Lightning can travel as far as 10 miles from the parent cloud)
- 2) Always go indoors during a thunderstorm if possible. If not possible, avoid things that might attract lightning such as metal, tall trees, fences or power lines. If you are caught out in the open, with no shelter available, crouch down with your hands on your knees.
- 3) Employ the 30-minute rule. Once play has been suspended due to the presence of lightning, thunder or high winds, wait 30 minutes until the last clap of thunder is heard or a flash of lightning is seen.

EQUIPMENT STANDARDS/SAFETY

The NSF does not scientifically test or verify the safety of equipment.

That responsibility lies with the manufacturers who are responsible for testing/safety verification and meeting the standards by these rules.

The game of softball is a physical activity, and as such an inherent risk of injury exists at all times including by thrown balls, sliding, swinging, throwing, running and collisions.

The NSF, or its affiliates, make no claim that these rules will prevent the occurrence of accidents or injuries and all participants; players, coaches, managers, umpires, administrators and spectators participate at their own risk.

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