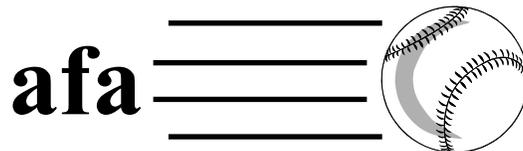


# **American Fastpitch Association Rules of Softball**

The American Fastpitch Association (AFA) gratefully acknowledges the NCAA's generosity in affording the AFA permission to adopt, edit and reprint their official Softball Rules.

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**REVISED: February 1, 2018**

**American Fastpitch Association  
[www.afasoftball.com](http://www.afasoftball.com)**

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## **What is the American Fastpitch Association**

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The AFA is a non-profit organization sanctioned by both the Federal and California state governments to administer the game of softball. It is a program for young ladies, as determined by the official age chart of the AFA. The AFA provides spring, summer and fall playing leagues as well as tournaments throughout the year to provide a well rounded program for all participants.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**Ron Gossmer**

**AMERICAN FASTPITCH ASSOCIATION**

**2926 Calle Frontera, San Clemente, CA 92673**

**949-291-8783 - Fax 888-630-1320**

**info@afasoftball.com or ron@afasoftball.com**

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In organizing the text for this book, the AFA Rules Committee attempted to place each rule under its most logical heading. However, the committee acknowledges that several important rules pertain directly to two or more areas of the game (e.g., batting and base running). In these instances, the committee placed the rule under the heading it considered most appropriate, but it believes it is important to provide a quick reference for these major rules. The rules and page numbers follow:

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## **AFA Mission Statement**

The American Fastpitch Association or AFA, is a nonprofit corporation, under the direction of Ron Gossmer. It was founded in Anaheim, CA in 1980 for the promotion of girls fast pitch softball. AFA added adult slow pitch in 2008 and baseball in 2009. The AFA is operated by a group of volunteers across the country and has no paid staff.

The AFA has held National and International Tournaments for over 20 years. Teams from 40 different states, Canada, Japan, and Taiwan have participated.

Over 10,000 girls that have played AFA have received college scholarships. Many have gone on to become college coaches, play on the U.S. Olympic Softball team, or the Women's Professional Leagues.

The AFA is committed to working hard to provide an environment that produces positive experiences for players, coaches, parents, tournament directors and anyone else involved in the sport of softball and baseball.

Thank you for your support and participation in the AFA,

Ron Gossmer.



## **Code of Conduct**

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**Coaches** are expected to be leaders and must comply with the following principles and ethics:

- a. Develop and maintain a comprehensive knowledge of current AFA soft-ball rules.
- b. Ensure their players are legally equipped and properly attired for competition and practices.
- c. Confine discussion with the game officials to the interpretation of the rules.
- d. Honor all game contracts and play through all tournament brackets as scheduled.
- e. Comply wholeheartedly with the spirit and intent of the rules. The deliberate teaching of players to violate the rules is indefensible.
- f. Teach their players to respect the dignity and integrity of the game, opponents, officials, spectators and the institutions they represent.
- g. Prohibit team personnel from using profanity or making personal or malicious remarks toward opponents, officials and spectators.
- h. Refrain from any personal action that might arouse players or spectators to unsportsmanlike behavior..
- i. Be in control of their players at all times in order to prevent any unsportsmanlike act toward opponents, officials or spectators.
- j. Seek help from the on-site administrator or other appropriate individuals in controlling unruly fans and spectators.
- k. Be courteous and display a dignified attitude toward the game and its participants.

**Umpires** are expected to uphold the integrity of the game and enforce its rules by observing the following guidelines of ethics and professionalism.

- a. Develop and maintain a comprehensive knowledge of current AFA soft-ball rules and umpire mechanics.
- b. Be fair and unbiased in making decisions, rendering them without regard to the score, or the quality of the play on the field.
- c. Honor all assignments and contracts.
- d. Refrain from use of tobacco and alcohol on site.
- e. When in uniform or on site, do not fraternize with players, coaches and/or spectators.
- f. Cooperate with your partner(s) to arrive at decisions that are ultimately correct and fair..
- g. Listen to a coach's concerns and respond in a professional manner..
- h. Refrain from sharing information that might be used by a team's future opponent.

## **Code of Conduct**

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- i. Seek help from the on-site administrator or other appropriate individuals in controlling unruly students and spectators.
- j. Be courteous and display a dignified attitude toward the game and its participants.

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## **Age Qualifications and Boundaries**

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**Age cutoff date is January 1 of the current year.**

**The players age on January 1 determines the age division she is eligible to participate in. Players may play up in age division, but not down.**

10 & Under - A player whose 11th birthday is after January 1, may play.

12 & Under - A player whose 13th birthday is after January 1, may play.

14 & Under - A player whose 15th birthday is after January 1, may play.

16 & Under - A player whose 17th birthday is after January 1, may play.

18 & Under - A player whose 19th birthday is after January 1, may play.

**Rostered Players (Qualifiers and Championship Play)**

No Player will be allowed to be on more than one roster in any age bracket, or classification leading to national play.

**Boundaries,** the AFA has no boundaries or restrictions on players.

## **SECTION 1 – Definitions**

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### **Altered Bat**

A legal bat that has been structurally changed to enhance bat performance.

### **Appeal**

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

### **Approved Ruling (A.R.)**

The official decision of the AFA rules Committee regarding a specific rule or part of a rule. It serves to clarify or illustrate the spirit and application of the rule.

### **Backstop**

A barrier behind home plate to stop a ball from going too far outside the playing area.

### **Ball**

The sphere is pitched, thrown, struck, etc. A ball also refers to a pitch that does not enter the strike zone and is not struck at by the batter.

### **Base**

One of four points which have to be touched by a runner in order to score a run.

### **Base Coaches**

The two representatives of the team at bat who are stationed in the first or third base coaches' boxes to direct the offense. No more than one representative may be in each box.

### **Base on Balls**

An award of first base granted by the plate umpire to the batter who, during her time at bat, receives any combination of four pitches or awards that are declared balls.

### **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 the bases and 3 feet on either side of that line; unless a fielder has the ball in her possession and she is within 3 feet of the runner and prepared to apply a tag. A base runner that attempts to avoid a tag by running more than 3 feet to either side of a fielder with the ball in her possession shall be declared out.

### **Base Runner**

A base runner is an offensive player that is advancing, touching or returning to a base.

## **SECTION 1 – Definitions**

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### **Bat**

The smooth rounded stick used by the batter to contact the pitch. The bat must meet the bat specifications in Rule 3-2 and Appendix A.

### **Batted Ball**

Any pitch that comes in contact with the bat. Contact may result in a fair or foul ball and need not be intentional.

### **Batter**

The offensive player whose turn it is to take a position in either batter's box to receive a pitch.

### **Batter's Box**

The area to which the batter is restricted when batting.

### **Batter-Runner**

The offensive player who started in the batter's box but has left it in an attempt to reach base safely.

### **Batting Order**

The official list of starting offensive players presented in the order in which they are to bat and recorded on a lineup card.

### **Batting Out of Order**

Failing to bat in proper sequence as listed on the official lineup card.

### **Blocked Ball**

A live batted or thrown ball that: (1) contacts non-game personnel, game personnel in unauthorized areas, loose equipment or an object that is neither official game equipment nor part of the official playing area; or (2) crosses into dead-ball territory.

### **Bullpen**

The area in foul or dead-ball territory where substitute pitchers, catchers and other players warm up.

### **Bunt**

A legally batted ball not swung at but intentionally tapped with the bat.

### **Bunt Attempt**

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.

### **Called Game**

A game that is ended by order of the umpire.

## **SECTION 1 – Definitions**

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### **Catch**

The act of a fielder who, with her hand(s) and/or glove/mitt, securely gains possession of a batted, pitched or thrown ball. In establishing the validity of the catch, the fielder must hold the ball long enough to prove she has control of the ball and that her release of the ball is voluntary and intentional. 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. 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 while the fence is vertical is credited with a catch. A catch shall not be credited if:

- a. A fielder catches a batted, pitched or thrown ball with anything other than her hand(s) or glove/mitt in its proper place.
- b. 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.
- c. The fielder uses any equipment or part of her uniform that is displaced from its proper position.
- d. An entire foot is touching dead-ball territory at the time of the catch.
- e. The ball strikes anything or anyone other than a defensive player while it is in flight.

*NOTE: In this case, the ball is ruled a ground ball.*

- f. A collapsible fence is falling to or on the ground when the fielder contacts the ball.
- g. 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 caught but the ball is on the ground and the glove/mitt is over, rather than under, it. 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. A ball prevented from hitting the ground by a player's equipment (providing it is in its proper place) of body shall not be ruled caught until the ball is securely held in the player's hand(s) or glove/mitt.

### **Catcher**

The defensive player to whom the pitcher throws when pitching to a batter. The catcher must be in the catcher's box in order to receive a pitch and, as such, is the only player who can and must be positioned in foul territory at

## **SECTION 1 – Definitions**

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The time of the pitch.

### **Catcher's Box**

The area to which the catcher is restricted from the time the pitcher steps on the pitcher's plate until she releases the pitch.

### **Checked Swing**

The restraining action taken by a batter to stop an attempted hit/slap/bunt.

### **Chin Strap**

A part of the helmet that must be worn when used on offensive or defense. (exception—is not required as part of the catcher's mask/helmet).

### **Coaches' Boxes**

The area to which the two base coaches (one per box) are restricted prior to release of the pitch.

### **Conferences**

A charged offensive conference is a meeting that takes place anytime an offensive team representative delays the game or requests a suspension of play for any reason and delivers a message (by any means) to any offensive player, coach and/or representative.

A defensive conference is a meeting that takes place anytime a defensive team representative delays the game or requests a suspension of play for any reason and delivers a message (by any means) to any defensive player.

### **Courtesy Runner**

Player allowed to run for pitcher or catcher when the courtesy runner rule is being used. Runner is not considered a substitute.

### **Crow Hop**

An illegal act in which the pitcher's rear foot leaves the pitcher's plate and re-contacts the ground before the release of the pitch.

### **Dead Ball**

A ball that is not in play and does not become live again until the pitcher holds it on the pitcher's plate and the umpire calls/signals "Play/Play ball."

### **Dead-Ball Territory**

That area beyond any real playing field boundary such as a fence, backstop, rope, chalk line, bleachers, dugouts or any imaginary boundary line as determined in the pre-game conference.

### **Defense**

A player or team in the field attempting to prevent the offensive team from scoring runs.

## **SECTION 1 — Definitions**

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### **Delayed Dead Ball**

A situation in which a violation of a rule occurs and is recognized by the umpire with a delayed dead ball signal but in which the ball remains live until the conclusion of the play.

### **Designated Player (DP)**

The player who begins the game listed in the team's batting order but not in the defensive lineup.

### **Dislodged Base**

A base displaced from its proper position.

### **Double First Base**

A safety base may be used at first base. The Batter-runner proceeds to the orange portion of the base, and the defense use the white portion.

### **Double-Header**

Two regularly scheduled seven-inning games played in succession, generally against the same opponent.

### **Dugout (Bench)**

The area reserved for team personnel engaged in the game.

### **Ejection**

The exercise of an umpire's authority to remove a player and/or other team personnel from further participation in a game.

### **Extra Inning**

The continuation of play beyond the regulation seven innings in an attempt to break a tie score.

### **Face Mask**

A part of the helmet that protect the face, mandatory for offensive batters, and on deck batters.

### **Fair Ball**

A legally batted ball that touches or bounds over a base, settles on or is touched on or over fair territory. A fair fly, line drive or grounder shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not with respect to the position of the fielder (on fair or foul ground) at the time the ball is contacted (See Rule 11-4).

### **Fair Territory**

That part of the playing field within and including the foul lines from home plate to the bottom of the home run fence and perpendicularly upwards. Home plate, the foul lines and poles are considered part of fair territory.

## **SECTION 1 – Definitions**

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### **Fake Tag**

When a fielder, who neither possesses the ball nor is about to receive the ball, obstructs a runner by pretending to have the ball and simulating a tag, thereby causing the runner to slow down or stop.

### **Field of Play**

The area within which the ball may be legally played and fielded.

### **Fielder**

One of the nine players on the defensive team who takes a position on the field and attempts to stop the offensive team from scoring. It may be the pitcher, catcher, first baseman, second baseman, third baseman, shortstop, left fielder, center fielder or right fielder.

### **FLEX**

The abbreviation for “flexible player”, which refers to the player who begins the game in the defensive lineup but is not in the batting order.

### **Fly Ball**

A batted ball, whether fair or foul, that rises into the air above the top of the batter’s head.

### **Force Out**

A putout in which a runner, who is being forced to advance, is either tagged out or put out by a fielder (holding the ball) touching the base to which the runner is being forced to advance.

### **Force Play**

A play in which the base runner loses her right to occupy a base because the batter becomes a batter-runner who has not yet been put out.

### **Forfeited Game**

A game declared ended and awarded to an offended team by the umpire.

### **Foul Ball**

A legally batted ball that settles on or is touched on or over foul territory. A foul fly, line drive or grounder shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not with respect to the position of the fielder at the time the ball is contacted.

### **Foul Territory**

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.

## **SECTION 1 – Definitions**

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### **Foul Tip**

A batted ball that stays below the top of the batter's head travels directly from the bat to the catcher's hand or glove/mitt and is legally caught by the catcher. It is a strike, and the ball is live.

### **Ground Ball**

A batted ball, whether fair or foul, that bounces along the ground.

### **Halted Game**

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.

### **Helmet**

The protective headwear most commonly worn by an offensive player. Helmets are required while batting, running the bases or in the on-deck circle. Other defensive players may wear a helmet for safety reasons.

### **Home Team**

The team that starts the game on defensive (in the field). The home team may be determined in a variety of ways (i.e., coin flip, mutual agreement, conference or tournament assignment, and custom).

### **Illegal Bat**

A bat that does not meet acceptable specifications (i.e, particular weight, length, barrel diameter, material limits) as set forth in Rule 3-2 and Appendix A.

### **Illegal Pitch**

Any pitch by the pitcher that is in violation of the pitching rules.

### **Illegal Player**

A player who competes in the game but is not entitled to participate.

### **Illegal Re-entry**

A violation of the substitution rules that occurs when an illegal player (one who is not entitled to play) is put back into the game.

### **Illegally Batted Ball**

A pitch contacted by the batter: (1) with an altered bat, (2) with a illegal bat, (3) when any part of either foot is in contact with the plate at the time of bat-ball contact, or (4) 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.

## **SECTION 1 – Definitions**

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### **In Flight**

Any batted thrown or pitched ball that has not touched the ground, an object or a person other than a player.

### **In Jeopardy**

The term indicating that the ball is live, and an offensive player may be put out.

### **Infield**

That portion of the field in fair territory that is normally skinned and covered by the pitcher and infielders.

### **Infield Fly Rule**

A fair fly ball (not a line drive or an attempted bunt) that can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when either all three bases are occupied or runners are on first and second 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 purpose of this rule. The ball is live, the batter is out and runners may advance at their own risk. If a declared infield fly becomes foul, it is treated as a foul ball, not an infield fly. The runner may tag up and advance as soon as a fielder touches the batted ball.

### **Infielders**

Fielders (usually four) who defend the skinned portion of the field. They are the first baseman, second baseman, third baseman and short stop.

### **Inning**

- a. That portion of the game within which the teams alternate on offense and defense and in which there are three putouts for each team.
- b. Half inning. Each team's respective time at bat or in the field. The interval during which one team is on offense and the other is on defense. A half inning ends when there is a third out or when, in the last inning the winning run is scored.
- c. Extra inning. One that extends the game in an attempt to break a tie score.

### **Intentional Base on Balls**

"Ball four" purposely thrown to a batter.

### **Interference, Offensive**

The act of an offensive player, coach, umpire or spectator that denies the fielder a reasonable opportunity to play the ball. The act may be intentional or unintentional and the ball must have been playable.

## **SECTION 1 – Definitions**

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### **Leap**

An illegal act in which the pitcher becomes airborne on her initial movement and push from the pitcher's plate.

### **Line Drive**

A fair or foul batted ball that travels parallel to the ground, neither rising into the air nor dropping to the ground. If caught, it is scored an out.

### **Lineup Card**

The card that contains the first and last names, uniform numbers and positions of all starting players, listed in the order in which they are to bat and the first and last names and uniform numbers of all eligible substitutes.

### **Media Coverage**

Media authorized by the Tournament Director, may be on the playing field, but must not use tripods. All media personnel, must be able to move to avoid being hit by an overthrown, or batted ball. Should they accidentally be hit, the ball remains alive. No equipment can be left on the ground.

### **Mercy Rule**

Game may be called if one team is ahead by 12 or more runs after 4 innings, 10 or more runs after 5 innings, or 8 or more runs after 6 innings.

### **No Contest**

When a team fails to fulfill its contract to play and does not appear (e.g., due to weather conditions, accidents, breakdowns of vehicles, illness or catastrophic causes). This is not a forfeit as there can be no forfeit of a contest until the umpire has assumed jurisdiction of the contest in accordance with the applicable playing rules.

### **Obstruction, Defensive**

The act of a 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 possession of the ball, is fielding a batted ball. The act may be intentional or unintentional.

### **Offense**

Player or team at bat attempting to score runs.

### **On-Deck Batter**

The offensive player who is next in line to bat.

### **On-Deck Circle**

A circular area 5 feet in diameter in which the next batter may warm up.

## **SECTION 1 – Definitions**

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### **Out**

A declaration by the umpire indicating a batter or base runner has been retired. Each team is entitled to three outs per inning.

### **Outfield**

That portion of fair territory that is grass or an artificial grass surface and normally covered by the outfielders.

### **Outfielder**

Fielders (usually three) who defend the grass portion of the field between the skinned infield and home run fence. They are the left fielder, center fielder and right fielder.

### **Overslide**

The act of a base runner who, when sliding, loses contact with a base or passes it.

### **Overthrow**

A thrown ball that goes beyond its intended target. The ball is live unless it enters dead-ball territory or becomes a blocked ball.

### **Penalty**

A punishment imposed on a player or team for a rule infraction.

### **Pinch Hitter**

A player who is inserted into the lineup in the place of the batter. The pinch hitter will stay in the lineup until she is replaced by the player for whom she batted or another substitute.

### **Pinch Runner**

A player who is inserted into the lineup in the place of a base runner. The pinch runner will stay in the lineup until she is replaced by the player for whom she ran or another substitute.

### **Pitch**

A live ball delivered to the batter by the pitcher with a legal underhand motion.

### **Pitcher**

The defensive player designated to deliver pitches to batters.

### **Pitcher's Drag Foot**

The pitcher's foot (right foot of a right-handed pitcher and left foot of a left-handed pitcher) that must maintain contact with the pitcher's plate as the stride foot extends forward on the step. It also is referred to as the pivot or rear foot.

## **SECTION 1 – Definitions**

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### **Pitcher's Pivot Foot**

The pitcher's foot (right foot of a right-handed pitcher and left foot of a left-handed pitcher) that maintains contact with the pitcher's plate, absorbs the body's weight and pushes off against the plate during the initial "step" phase of the pitch. This same foot drags along the ground during the final phase of the pitch and is then referred to as the drag or rear foot.

### **Pitcher's Stride Foot**

The pitcher's foot (left foot of right-handed pitcher and right foot of a left-handed pitcher) that extends forward toward home plate as she steps to deliver the pitch to the batter. It also is referred to as the lead foot.

### **"Play or "Play Ball"**

The order given by the umpire to begin the game or to resume play. It also is the instruction given by the umpire to indicate that the defensive players are in position, the batter is ready to bat and the pitcher may now deliver the pitch.

### **Protest**

The formal, inquiry into the decision of an umpire or ineligible player.

### **Quick Pitch**

A pitch delivered with the obvious intention of catching the batter off balance or otherwise unprepared to bat.

### **Regulation Game**

Seven innings constitutes a regulation game unless:

- a. The home team scores more runs than the visiting team in six-and-one-half innings and/or before the third out in the bottom of the seventh inning or the mercy rule applies.
- b. The game is tied at the end of seven innings. Such a game shall be continued by playing additional innings until one side has scored more runs than the other has at the end of a complete inning, or until the home team has scored more runs in the bottom half of the inning and before the third out is made.
- c. The game is shortened (called). Forfeited halted, protested, tied or timed games or games decided by the mercy rule may or may not be regulation depending upon the circumstances. See Rule 5-12 for the criteria that must be met in order for a called game to be considered regulation.

## **SECTION 1 – Definitions**

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### **Run**

The act of an offensive player legally advancing to and touching home plate without being put out.

### **Rundown**

The act of the defense attempting to put out a base runner who is caught off base between two or more defensive players and who may either attempt to advance or return to the previous base.

### **Safe**

A declaration by the umpire indicating that a runner has successfully taken possession of a base and is no longer in jeopardy.

### **Slap Hit**

A batted ball that has been struck with a short, chopping motion rather than with a full swing. The two most common types of slap hits are (1) those in which the batter takes her 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, and (2) those in which the batter takes running steps (within the batter's box) toward the pitcher before making contact with the pitch.

### **Starter**

The first nine or 10 players (if a designated player is used) listed on the lineup card submitted to the umpire before the start of the game. Each starter is entitled to be replaced and to re-enter one time as long as she assumes her original position in the batting order.

### **Strike**

Any pitch that either enters the strike zone without first touching the ground or is swung at by the batter and missed. A strike also may be called by the umpire for the batter's failure to enter the batter's box when so directed.

### **Strike Zone**

The area above home plate between the batter's forward armpit and the top of her knees when she assumes her natural batting stance. Any part of the ball passing through any part of the strike zone is a strike unless the ball touches the ground before reaching home plate.

### **Substitute**

A player not listed on the lineup and as a starter but who may legally replace one of the first nine or 10 players (if a designated player is used) listed on the lineup card submitted to the umpire before the start of the

## **SECTION 1 – Definitions**

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game. A substitute is entitled to be replaced and to re-enter the game one time as long as she assumes her original position in the batting order.

### **Tag**

The act of a defensive player who puts out a runner by touching her with the ball held in either the hand or glove/mitt.

### **Tagging Up**

Action of a runner returning to a base, or remaining on her base, before she can legally advance on a batted fly ball as it is first touched by a fielder.

### **“Time” or “Timeout”**

A term used by the umpire to temporarily suspend play. The ball is dead, until the umpire indicates a resumption of play.

### **Trapped Ball**

A batted fly ball or thrown ball that is stopped against the ground or boundary structure (i.e., fence, dugout), but not legally caught.

### **Turn at Bat**

The act of entering the batter's box until being put out, becoming a batter-runner or being substituted for while at bat.

### **Umpires**

The persons hired to rule on the plays in the game. They are a plate umpire and one, two or three base umpires.

### **Unreported Player**

A player who has a legal right to enter or re-enter the game but has not been reported to the umpire prior to her participation.

### **Visiting Team**

The team that starts the game on offense (at bat).

## **SECTION 2 — Field of play**

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The following information regarding the playing facility and field specifications applies to all competition. In some cases, specifications applicable to hosting championship play may follow the strictest interpretation of a rule. Note that additional criteria may be required as well.

### **Backstop — SECTION 2.1.**

A backstop is required. It should be a minimum distance of 25 feet and a maximum distance of 30 feet from home plate (see diagram). It is recommended that the backstop be vertical and not extend over the playing field. If the backstop is cement or brick, it is recommended that it be padded.

### **Base, Pitching, Fence Distances — SECTION 2.2.**

<u>Division</u>	<u>Bases</u>	<u>Pitching</u>	<u>Min. Fen</u>	<u>Max. Fen</u>
8-U	60'	30'	150'	225'
10-U	60'	35'	150'	225'
12-U	60'	40'	175'	225'
14-U	60'	43'	200'	225'
16-U	60'	43'	200'	225'
18-U	60'	43'	200'	225'
18-U - 43	60'	43'	200'	225'
Open	60'	43'	200'	225'

### **Bases - First (double), Second and Third — SECTION 2.3.**

The double base (if used) shall be used at first base. The base is 15" x 30", made of canvas or suitable rubberized material, half is white, and half is orange. The white is over fair territory, the orange is over foul territory, and securely fastened to the ground.

***For rules pertaining to the double base, refer to Section 11.00 (page 97)***

*Note: If a field is equipped with a double base, it must be used.*

First, second and third bases shall be white canvas bags or suitable rubberized material securely fastened to the ground. Each base shall be 15" square, filled with soft material to a thickness of 3 to 5 inches. If double first base is used see requirements above. Bases may have tapered edges. A release-type base may be used.

### **Batter's Boxes — SECTION 2.4.**

The batter's boxes, one on each side of home plate, shall be 6 inches from home plate and shall measure 3 feet by 7 feet. The front line of each box shall be 4 feet in front of a line drawn through the center of home plate. The four lines must be drawn (see diagram).

## **SECTION 2 — Field of play**

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### **Catcher's Box — SECTION 2.5.**

The catcher's box shall be 10 feet in length from the rear outside corners of the batters' boxes and shall be 8 feet, 5 inches wide (see diagram).

### **Coaches' Boxes — SECTION 2.6.**

Each coaches' box shall be marked by two lines. The first, a line 15 feet long drawn parallel to and 8 feet from the first and third baselines is extended from the back edge of the bases toward home plate. The second is a line 3 feet long drawn perpendicular to the end of the 15 foot line closest to home plate (see diagram).

### **Dugouts — SECTION 2.7.**

During a game, no one except players, coaches' managers, trainer's, scorekeepers and bat persons shall occupy a team's dugout. All personnel must be in appropriate attire and must be in their team's bench area or bullpen and remain there until the ball has been declared dead or the side has been retired. This excludes the batter, the on-deck batter, base runner(s), base coaches and the nine defensive players.

It is recommended that all softball facilities have dugouts that are enclosed at each end and at the rear. Each dugout must be large enough to accommodate all players and team personnel (approximately 25 people).

It is recommended that each dugout be located on the sidelines at a point of equal distance from home plate and first base and home plate and third base, respectively.

### **Fences — SECTION 2.8.**

It is highly recommended that the playing field be enclosed completely by permanent home run and sideline fences at least 4 feet high. For an unfenced field, an out-of-bounds line shall be used to define dead ball areas.

### **Field of Play — SECTION 2.9.**

It is highly recommended that the infield is skinned and that the outfield is natural grass, or artificial grass.

### **Foul Pole — SECTION 2.10.**

The foul pole should extend vertically upward from the foul line at the point it intersects outside the home run fence. The pole should extend at least 10 feet from the ground. It is recommended that screening be attached to the fair side of the pole to enhance the visibility of a ball leaving the field of play near the pole. The screening width should be at least 6 inches and should extend from the top of the fence to the top of the pole.

*Note: A field that does not have a home run fence shall not have a foul pole.*

## **SECTION 2 — Field of play**

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### **Ground Rules — SECTION 2.11.**

A local ground rule may be adopted where special conditions prevail if agreeable with the visiting team. If teams do not agree, the plate umpire shall determine ground rules.

### **Home Plate — SECTION 2.12.**

Home plate must be a five-sided slab of whitened rubber or other suitable material. The edge facing the pitcher shall be 17 inches wide. The sides shall be parallel to the inside lines of the batters' boxes and shall be 8 ½ inches long. The sides of the point facing the catcher shall be 12 inches long (see diagram).

Home plate shall be set in fair territory with the two 12-inch edges coinciding with the foul lines extending from home plate to first base and to third base and with the 17-inch edge facing the pitcher.

The top edges of home plate shall be beveled, and the plate shall be fixed in the ground level with the ground surface.

### **Infield — SECTION 2.13.**

The infield shall be level, but to allow for natural surface drainage, it is recommended that the entire playing area be graded one percent from the edge of the pitcher's plate to the sideline boundaries of the field.

### **Layout — SECTION 2.14.**

For the layout of the playing field, refer to the drawing showing official dimensions. This section serves as an example for laying out an infield.

### **Lines (Markings) — SECTION 2.15.**

All lines on the playing field shall be marked with chalk or non-burning material that is not injurious to the eyes or skin. Lime or caustic material of any kind is prohibited. All lines must be 2 to 4 inches in width. The outside edge of the first and third base lines and their extensions should correspond with the outside edge of first and third base.

### **Non-regulation Field — SECTION 2.16.**

The umpires have the responsibility to check the playing field to be sure all is legal. Every effort should be made by the umpires to obtain the correct dimensions. Any game started on a non-regulation field shall not be protested for this reason.

*Note: Once a game has started and the pitching distance or base distance is discovered to be in error, the error shall be corrected at the start of the next full inning with no penalty and the game shall continue from that point.*

## **SECTION 2 — Field of play**

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### **On-Deck Circle — SECTION 2.17.**

The on-deck circle shall be a circular area 5 feet in diameter in which the next batter may warm up. It is located to the side and away from home plate (see diagram).

### **Pitcher's Circle — SECTION 2.18.**

The pitcher's circle shall be a circular area with an 8-foot radius, drawn from the center of the front edge of the pitcher's plate (see diagram).

### **Pitcher's Plate — SECTION 2.19.**

The pitcher's plate shall be a rectangular slab of whitened rubber or other suitable material, 24 inches long and 6 inches wide (see diagram). It shall be fixed in the ground, and the top of the plate shall be level with the ground surface.

### **Runner's Lane — SECTION 2.20.**

The runner's lane is bounded by a 30-foot line drawn in the territory parallel to the 3 feet from the first-base line, starting at a point halfway between home plate and the back edge of first base (see diagram). The runner's lane should be skinned.

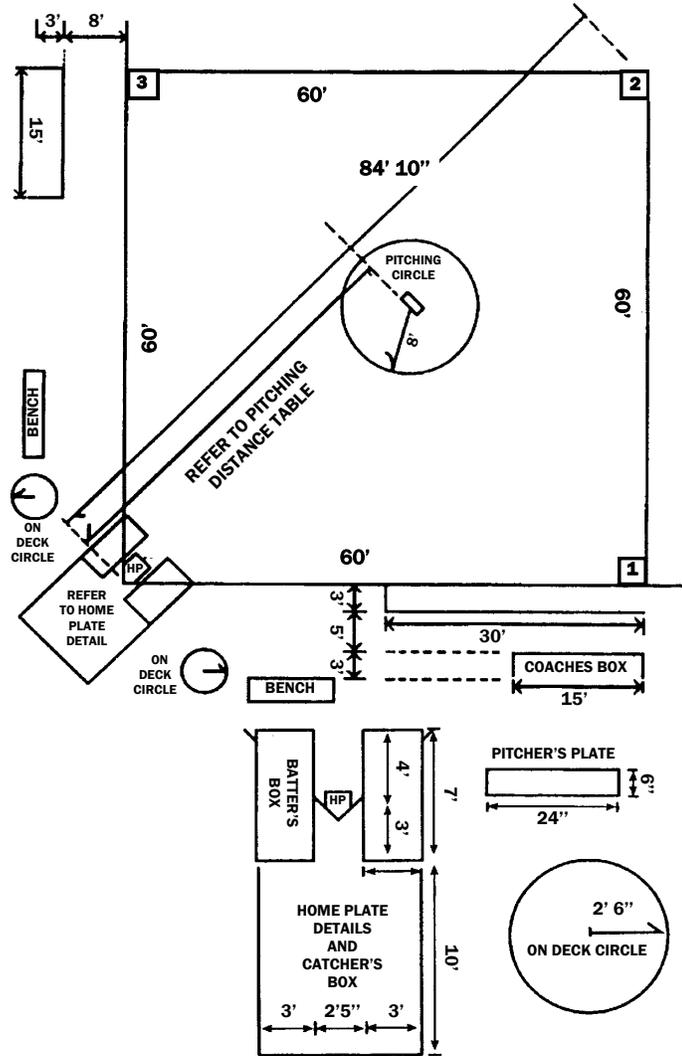
### **Scoreboard — SECTION 2.21.**

A visible display of the score. It is recommended that an electronic scoreboard that shows balls, strikes, outs and the line score be located in such a position on the field that it can be seen easily by both teams and spectators. Scoreboards should not be placed directly in the batter's field of vision.

### **Sideline Territory — SECTION 2.22.**

It is recommended that the unobstructed area between home plate and the backstop, and from the base line to the sideline boundary be a minimum distance of 25 feet or a maximum of 30 feet extended to a point down the line as deep as the home run fence.

## SECTION 2 – Field of play



## **SECTION 3 — Equipment and Uniforms**

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The AFA Rules Committee is responsible for formulating the official playing rules for the sport. The committee is not responsible for testing or approving playing equipment.

Equipment manufacturers have undertaken the responsibility for the development of playing equipment that meets the size and weight specifications. The AFA urges manufacturers to work with various independent testing agencies and/or to take such other steps, as they deem necessary to ensure the production of safe products. Neither the AFA nor the rules committee certifies the safety of any softball equipment. Only equipment that meets the weight and size dimensions specified in the AFA Rules may be used in competition.

While the committee does not regulate the development of new equipment and does not set technical or scientific standards for testing equipment or the approval or disapproval of specific playing equipment, the committee reserves the right to establish size and weight criteria and maximum and/or minimum performance restrictions. In addition, the committee may from time to time provide manufacturers with informal guidelines as to the equipment performance levels it considers consistent with the integrity of the game. The committee reserves the right to intercede in order to maintain that integrity and to ensure a player's performance is more a product of her individual skill than of her equipment.

The rules committee suggests that manufacturers planning innovative changes in softball equipment submit the equipment to the rules committee for review before production.

All equipment used in competition should be of a nature commonly available through retailers to the general public. Uniforms and protective equipment must be worn properly and defective equipment must be repaired or replaced immediately.

### **Ball — SECTION 3.1.**

The yellow optic cover, red-stitch 12-inch ball, with a COR of .47 shall be used in all AFA play. In 10 and under, the yellow optic cover, red-stitch 11-inch ball, with a COR of .47 and 8 and under will use a 10-inch ball.

### **Bats- Game — SECTION 3.2.**

The AFA uses a bat standard, as defined by the NCAA, see Appendix A.

**PENALTY — If a batter enters the batter's box with an illegal bat (one that does not meet the required specifications), upon discovery, the bat shall be removed from the game (i.e., not returned to the dugout), the batter shall be declared out and base runners shall not advance. If a batter enters**

## **SECTION 3 — Equipment and Uniforms**

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the batter's box with an altered bat (one that has been structurally changed to enhance performance); the penalty for an illegal bat shall be imposed in addition to the batter being ejected from the game.

### **Bats-Warm-Up — SECTION 3.3.**

The warm-up bat must weigh no less than 39 ounces and have a minimum barrel diameter of 2 inches. The bat shall be of one-piece construction and shall have a safety grip 10-15 inches from the knob and securely affixed. No attachments allowed on warm-up bats or regular bats in the on deck circle.

**PENALTY — The presence of an illegal bat or attachments in the on-deck circle shall result in the equipment's removal from the game (i.e., not returned to the dugout) and the and player shall be warned. Should the illegal bat or attachments reappear in the on-deck circle, the on-deck batter shall be ejected.**

### **Casts/Braces/Splints/Prostheses — SECTION 3.4.**

Casts, braces, splints and prostheses may be worn by players as long as the equipment is well-padded to protect not only the affected player, but also her opponents. Any such device with exposed rivets, pins, sharp edges or any form of exterior fastener that would present a hazard, must be properly padded.

Cast, braces splints, and prostheses on a pitcher's non-pitching arm shall not be distracting as determined by the umpire. Pitchers may wear casts, braces, splints or prostheses on their pitching arms, provided such devices do not cause safety risks or create unfair competitive advantages. In addition any such device must be neutral in color so as not to be distracting and must function in such a way that it does not alter the natural motion of the pitching arm.

### **Catcher's Equipment — SECTION 3.5.**

All catchers must wear a mask with a built in or attachable throat protector, approved helmet with ear flaps, shin guards which offer protection to at least the foot to knee area, and body protector. Cannot be highly reflective or mirror like. An attachable throat guard shall be commercially manufactured, unaltered, and securely attached to the mask.

**PENALTY — The umpire shall warn the violator(s). If the violator(s) does not immediately comply, she shall not be allowed to receive warm-up pitches or catch for the remainder of the game; however, she shall not be ejected.**

## **SECTION 3 — Equipment and Uniforms**

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*Note: Player's who receive warm-up pitches off the field of play (bullpen area, dead-ball area) must wear a mask with a throat protector. If warming-up within the playing field area a spotter must be present.*

### **Gloves/Mitts — SECTION 3.6.**

All players except the catcher must use a leather fielder's glove/mitt that meets the following maximum specifications. Palm width: 8 inches; top opening of web: 5 inches; web top to bottom: 7 ¼ inches; thumb top to bottom edge: 9 ¼ inches; highest finger top to bottom edge: 14 inches.

The catcher may wear a leather glove or leather mitt of any dimension. The first baseman may wear a leather glove or leather mitt, but each must comply with the specification a fielder's glove.

*Note: In order for the first baseman to be entitled to use a first baseman's mitt, she must be positioned on the right side of the infield at the time of release of the pitch.*

Gloves/mitts worn by players may not be the color of the ball but may be any combination of other colors. The pitcher's glove must be uniform in color, but two tints of the same color are acceptable.

**PENALTY — If noticed before a play, the umpire shall direct the fielder to remove the glove/mitt. Should the illegal glove/mitt reappear, the offending player shall be ejected.**

**If a play is made with the illegal glove/mitt, the offensive coach has the choice of taking the result of the play or having the play nullified. If nullified, the batter returns to bat, runners return to the bases occupied at the time of the last pitch and play is resumed.**

### **Helmets — SECTION 3.7.**

- a. **Offense.** While batting, running the bases or in the on-deck circle, each offensive player is required to wear a double-earflap protective helmet with face mask, and chin strap. Youth players who occupy third or first as coaches, must also comply with this requirement. NOCSAE stamp is required.

*Exception: Women's Open does not require face masks or chin straps for players 19 and over.*

**PENALTY — If an umpire observes a player wearing a damaged or illegal helmet before coming to bat, while at bat, or while on base, the umpire shall direct the player to change to a legal helmet without penalty. Failure to wear a legal helmet when directed by the umpire shall result in the player's ejection.**

## **SECTION 3 – Equipment and Uniforms**

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**Deliberately wearing the helmet improperly or intentionally removing the helmet while the ball is live shall result in the player being declared out but shall not remove a force play.**

- b. **Defense.** A defensive player may wear a helmet. If more than one player wears a helmet, the helmets should be the same color. If a pitcher wears a helmet, it must have a non-glossy finish.

### **Jewelry – SECTION 3.8.**

Players shall not wear exposed jewelry, which is judged by the umpire to be dangerous. Medical alert bracelets may be worn but must be taped to the body so the medical alert information remains visible.

**PENALTY – If an umpire observes a player wearing jewelry other than what is allowed, the umpire shall ask the player to remove it. Failure to remove the jewelry when asked by the umpire shall result in the player's removal from the game.**

### **Shoes – SECTION 3.9.**

All players must wear shoes with plastic, nylon, canvas, leather or similar synthetic material uppers. The soles may be smooth, have soft or hard rubber cleats. Metal cleats will be allowed for 14, 16, 18 & under and women's open. Shoes with detachable cleats that screw into the sole of the shoe are allowed. Pitching toes are allowed for all players as long as the pitching toes are securely fastened.

### **Uniforms – SECTION 3.10.**

All eligible players should be attired with uniforms of the same style, color and trim. Exception: A uniform part that must be changed due to saturation of blood shall not cause the player to be penalized.

- a. Coaches should be neatly dressed in professional coaching attire. Base coaches do not have to be identically dressed.
- b. **Foul-weather wear.** Sweatshirts, sweat pants, nylon windbreakers and jackets may be worn if the weather warrants. Foul-weather garments worn by multiple players should be of the same style, color and trim, but must not be distracting or interfere with the game or pose a safety risk to the player(s) or her opponents.
- c. **Headgear.** Visors, headbands and caps are optional parts of the uniform and may be mixed. All headgear should be of the same predominant color and must be worn as intended by the manufacturer. Plastic visors, bandannas, and handkerchiefs are not allowable headgear.

## **SECTION 3 – Equipment and Uniforms**

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- d. **Jersey.** All uniform jerseys should have a whole number between 0 and 99 inclusive on the back. The number(s) or its outline shall be of contrasting color and shall be at least 6 inches high. Players on the same team shall not wear the same number. If duplicate numbers exist, only one player may be in the game at a time or one of the players must change her number of jersey.
- e. **Knee/shin pads.** Knee or shin pads, if worn, may be mixed in color.
- f. **Pants/Shorts.** The uniform may consist of pants or shorts, but all players on the same team should be attired the same way.
- g. **Undershirts/under shorts (Sliders).** It is not required that players wear undershirts or under shorts, but if more than one wears one, the apparel should be the same in color. Shirt style and sleeve length may vary. Visible undergarments should be in solid colors and worn as intended by the manufacturer (not frayed, torn or slit).

**Penalty (a) thru (g) – The umpire shall issue a warning to any player not complying with the uniform rule. Any player not correcting the uniform violation shall be ejected.**

## **SECTION 4 – Game Personnel**

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### **Assistant Coach – SECTION 4.1.**

An assistant coach is responsible for aiding the head coach and assuming the responsibility of the head coach in the event the head coach is unavailable to perform his/her duties.

### **Authorized Personnel on the Field – SECTION 4.2.**

Only the following personnel involved in the game shall be allowed on the playing field: players, coaches, umpires, medical personnel, authorized team personnel. Tournament play: tournament officials may authorize media and grounds crew personnel.

### **Base Coach – SECTION 4.3.**

A base coach may be any coach, team manager or eligible, team member who occupies the coach's box to direct the offense. Base coaches are restricted to the coaches' boxes (only one base coach per box) prior to release of the pitch.

### **Head Coach – SECTION 4.4.**

The head coach is the person responsible for the team and is accountable for: (1) their conduct; (2) observance of the rules; (3) ensuring that all players are properly, legally and safely equipped; and (4) all communication with the umpire. If the head coach leaves the field, he or she shall inform the umpire of his or her temporary replacement.

### **Official Scorer – SECTION 4.5.**

The home team or director of the tournament shall designate an official scorer. It is recommended that the official scorer be seated in a neutral area (not in or near the dugout) whenever possible. The official scorer shall rule on all scoring within the game and ensure that the home team and visitor's scorebooks concur.

### **Umpires – SECTION 4.6.**

Game officials shall be the plate umpire and one, two or three base umpires. A minimum of two officials should be contracted for each game. However, a game may be played with one official due to unforeseen circumstances. Any umpire has the authority to order a player, coach or team representative to do or refrain from doing anything that affects the administering of these rules and to enforce prescribed penalties. Each umpire is authorized and required to enforce these rules. Further, the umpire(s) shall be obliged to conduct the game under conditions conducive to the highest standards of good sportsmanship.

## **SECTION 5 – The Game**

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The team at bat is known as the offensive team, and its objective is to have its batters become base runners and its runners to advance legally touching all bases. Each time this is done, a run is scored.

The team in the field is known as the defensive team, and its objective is to prevent offensive players from becoming base runners and advancing around the bases. When three offensive players are legally put out, a half inning has been played and the teams change from offense to defense and from defense to offense, respectively.

### **Scoring of Runs – SECTION 5.1.**

- a. The object of each team is to score more runs than its opponent. The winner of the game shall be the team that has scored, in accordance with these rules, the greater number of runs at the conclusion of a regulation game.
- b. One run shall be scored each time a runner legally touches first, second, and third bases and home plate before the third out of an inning.
- c. No run shall be scored during a turn at bat if the third out of an inning is the result of:
  - 1) A batter-runner being called out before reaching first base or any other runner forced out due to the batter becoming a batter-runner.
  - 2) A runner being put out by a tag or live-ball appeal play before the lead runner touches home plate.
  - 3) A preceding runner being declared out on an appeal play.

*Note: An appeal can be made after the third out in order to nullify a run.*

### **Game Winner – SECTION 5.2.**

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

- a. The score of a called regulation game shall be the score at the end of the last complete inning, unless the home team has scored an equal number or more runs than the visiting team in the incomplete inning. In this case, the score shall be that of the incomplete inning.
- b. The score of a regulation tie game shall be the tie score when the game was terminated.
- c. The score of a forfeited game shall be 7-0 in favor of the team not at fault.

### **Starting the Game – SECTION 5.3.**

The game begins when both teams are on the field and ready to play and the plate umpire calls or signals, "Play/Play ball".

## SECTION 5 – The Game

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### Positions of the Offensive Team – SECTION 5.4.

The offensive team:

- a. Must follow the original batting order throughout the game.
- b. May position a base coach in the coaches' boxes at first base and third base during its time at bat.
- c. Must keep all personnel except the base coaches, batter, runner(s) and on-deck batter in the dugout, bullpen or dead-ball area while the ball is in play.
- d. May not take warm-up swings on the field of play with the exception of the batter (provided she is outside the batter's box) and the on-deck batter (provided she is in the on-deck circle).
- e. Must not position any uniformed team members or coaches near or behind home plate, or behind the backstop while the pitcher is throwing warm-up pitches or pitching to a batter.

**PENALTY (d) & (e) – The umpire shall warn the offender, and if the violator does not immediately move away the individual shall be ejected from the game.**

### Positions of the Defensive Team – SECTION 5.5.

At the start of or during a game, all players of the defensive team except the catcher must be in fair territory while the ball is put in play.

- a. **Pitcher.** The pitcher is considered to be in the pitching position when she puts both feet on the pitcher's plate and the catcher is in position to receive the pitch. The pitcher may not take the pitching position on the pitcher's plate without being in possession of the ball, and she may not simulate the pitching position, with or without the ball, when near the pitcher's plate.
- b. **Catcher.** The catcher must be in the catcher's box from when the pitcher steps on the pitcher's plate until she releases the pitch. No part of the catcher's feet may be on or outside the lines until the pitch is released.
- c. **Infielders/Outfielders.** All infielders and outfielders must be in fair territory from the time the pitcher steps on the pitcher's plate until she releases the pitch. No part of the fielder's feet may be on or outside the lines until the pitch is released.

*Note: In order for the first baseman to be entitled to use a first baseman's mitt, she must be positioned on the right side of the infield at the time of release of the pitch.*

### **PENALTY (a)-(c) – Illegal pitch (see Rule 10-8)**

- d. All personnel except the nine defensive players on the field must re-

## **SECTION 5 – The Game**

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main in the dugout, bullpen or dead-ball area while the ball is in play.

### **Team First In Field – SECTION 5.6.**

The members of the designated home team shall take their positions in the field at the start of the game and shall bat last in the inning.

### **Live Ball – SECTION 5.7.**

When the umpire calls “Play/Play ball,” the ball is live and in play. The ball remains live and in play until, for legal cause, or at the umpire’s call of “Time/Timeout” suspending play, the ball becomes dead.

### **Delayed Dead Ball – SECTION 5.8.**

- a. A delayed dead ball is a ball that remains live and in play even though a violation has occurred and been recognized by the umpire (through a delayed dead ball signal). At the end of the playing action the umpire shall call “Time/Timeout,” the ball becomes dead, and a decision is made regarding the rules infraction.
- b. A delayed dead ball is called under the following circumstances:
  - 1) An illegal pitch.
  - 2) Catcher obstruction.
  - 3) Field Obstruction.
  - 4) Plate umpire interference.
  - 5) Detached equipment interference with a batted or thrown ball.

### **Dead Ball – SECTION 5.9.**

- a. A dead ball is a ball that is out of play. It may have become blocked or ruled dead.
- b. While the ball is dead, no player may be put out, no bases may be run and no runs may be scored, except that runners may advance one or more bases as the result of acts that occurred while the ball was live (such as, but not limited to, an illegal pitch, interference, obstruction, an overthrow, a home run or other fair ball hit out of the playing field).
- c. Between pitches and after a dead ball, each runner must return to her base. A runner who must return to a base while the ball is dead need not touch intervening bases.

### **Suspension and Resumption of Play – SECTION 5.10.**

- a. “Time/Timeout” shall be called and signaled for the purpose of suspending play (see Rule 14-10). The umpire holds up a hand instructing the pitcher not to pitch until the batter or umpire is ready. The ball is dead and no other play shall be allowed until the umpire lowers his/her hand signifying “Play/Play ball”.

## SECTION 5 – The Game

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- 1) Players and coaches will not be granted Time/Time out when it is an obvious tactic to delay the game.
  - 2) The umpire shall not call “Time/Timeout” until a play has been completed.
  - 3) After a base on balls, the umpire shall not call “Time/Timeout” until the batter-runner has stopped at first base and each other runner forced to advance has stopped at her next base.
- b. “No pitch” shall be declared if the pitcher pitches while the umpire is holding play.
  - c. A runner, who is touching a base when time is called, may not advance during the suspension of play.
  - d. After a dead ball, play resumes when the pitcher takes her place on the pitcher’s plate with the ball in her possession and the umpire calls/signals “Play/Play ball”. The umpire shall not put the ball in play until all runners have retouched their bases.
    - 1) The pitcher must allow sufficient time for the runner to return to her base.

**EFFECT – When the runner is not given sufficient time to return to a base, she will not be called out for being off base before the pitcher releases the ball. The umpire shall declare “No pitch”.**

- 2) The base runner is obligated to return to her base without undue delay.

**PENALTY – After allowing sufficient time for the runner to retouch at the end of playing action, the umpire shall declare the runner out.**

### **Conferences – SECTION 5.11.**

#### **a. Charged defensive conference.**

- 1) There may be only one charged defensive conference per inning. The plate umpire shall notify the head coach when a defensive conference has been charged and record the inning on the team’s lineup card. A charged defensive conference begins when the coach delays the game or suspends play to deliver a message to the defense, and ends when the coach returns to the dugout.

**PENALTY–The second charged defensive conference in one inning shall result in the removal of the pitcher from the pitching position for the remainder of the game.**

*Note: The removed pitcher may not pitch again for the remainder of the game but may otherwise participate in the game. If the pitcher returns to the pitching position after being removed and one pitch has been thrown, she will be ejected from the game.*

## **SECTION 5 – The Game**

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The following are not charged defensive conferences:

- 1) Giving instructions from the dugout area to the defense without requesting a suspension of play.
- 2) Conferring with the defense during a charged offensive conference or during a suspension of play and being ready to play once the umpire instructs the offensive team "Play/Play ball".
- 3) Requesting a suspension of play in order:
  - a) To remove the pitcher from the pitching position (provided the umpire is informed of the change before the coach steps over the foul line) or to make a defensive substitution.
  - b) To attend to an obviously incapacitated player.
  - c) To attend to a potentially sick or injured player. The process must be supervised by an umpire.
  - d) For a defensive player to make an equipment change.

**b. Charged offensive conference.**

- 1) There may be only one charged offensive conference per inning. The plate umpire shall notify the head coach when an offensive conference has been charged and record the inning on the team's line up card. A charged offensive conference begins when the coach delays the game or suspends play to deliver a message to the offensive (player or coach) and ends when the coach returns to the coaches' box or dugout.

**PENALTY – The umpire shall not permit more than one offensive conference per inning. A coach, who defies an umpire by holding another charged conference, shall be ejected.**

The following are not charged offensive conferences:

- 1) Giving instructions to the offense without requesting a suspension of play.
- 2) Conferring with the offense during a charged defensive conference or during a suspension of play and being ready to play once the umpire instructs the offensive team "Play/Play ball".
- 3) Requesting a suspension of play in order:
  - a) To make an offensive lineup change.
  - b) To attend to an obviously incapacitated player.
  - c) To attend to a potentially sick or injured player. The process must be supervised by an umpire.
  - d) For a batter or base runner to make an equipment change.
  - e) For a base runner put on a jacket/sweatshirt.

## **SECTION 5 – The Game**

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### **Regulation Game – SECTION 5.12.**

- a. A regulation game shall be seven innings unless:
  - 1) The game is extended because of a tied score.
  - 2) The game is shortened because: (a) the home team needs none or only part of its half of the seventh inning to score more runs than the visiting team; (b) the umpire calls the game.
  - 3) The game is called due to the mercy rule.
- b. It is a regulation game when the umpire terminates play by calling, "Game". If, however, a team wishes to lodge an appeal or protest on the final play of the game, it must immediately inform the umpire of that intent.
- c. **Exception:** For tournament play with a time limit, fewer than seven innings may be played, but at least four innings must be played. When no time limit is used at least five innings must be played unless the mercy rule is used, in order for the game to be considered regulation. A full five innings need not be played if the team second at bat scores more runs in four and one-half innings than the team first at bat has scored in five complete innings.

### **Tie breaker Rule – SECTION 5.13.**

If, after the completion of seven innings of play (or a time limit has expired), the score is tied, the following tie breaker may be used to determine a winner.

- a. Starting with the top of the predetermined inning and each half-inning thereafter, the offensive team shall begin its turn at bat with the player scheduled to bat ninth in that half inning being placed on second base (e.g., if the No. 5 batter is the lead-off batter, the No. 4 batter in the batting order will be placed on second base). A substitute may be inserted for the runner for scoring.
- b. Whether or not the tie breaker procedure will be used, and when it shall be invoked, must be determined at the pre-game meeting. Use of the tie breaker rule also can be determined by tournament policy.

### **Called Game – SECTION 5.14.**

- a. A regulation called game shall be declared by the plate umpire if, after five or more innings have been completed, he or she terminates play (for reasons such as lightning, darkness, rain, fire, panic or other causes that place the patrons or players in danger). The score shall be that of

## SECTION 5 – The Game

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the last equal inning played, except in the following circumstances, the score of the game shall be the total number of runs that each team has scored:

- 1) If the home team has scored more runs at the end of its fourth inning than the visiting team has scored in their five offensive half-innings.
  - 2) If the home team has scored, in an unequal number of innings, more runs than the visiting team.
  - 3) If the home team is at bat when the game is called and has scored in the incomplete inning the same number of runs or more runs than the visiting team.
  - 4) If the mercy rule is in effect and a team is ahead by 12 or more runs after four innings, 10 or more runs after five innings or 8 or more runs after six innings.
- b. After consultation with the tournament official, the game may at any time due to facility problems, crowd behavior or other causes that place the patrons or players in danger.

*Note: If a game is delayed due to inclement weather, a facility problem, etc., a reasonable amount of time ( not less than 30 minutes) must elapse before the game is called.*

### **Halted Game – SECTION 5.15.**

- a. A halted game shall be declared by the plate umpire if play must be temporarily suspended with the intent that it will be continued at some later time or date. When play resumes after having been temporarily suspended, it must start at exactly the point of being halted. The lineups and batting orders of both teams must be exactly the same as they were, subject to the rules of substitution, and any player who played or was announced as a substitute before the game was halted must be in the lineup when play resumes or be ineligible for the remainder of the game.
- b. Whether or not the halted game rule will be used must be determined at the pre-game meeting. Use of the halted game rule also can be determined by tournament policy.

*Note: If the halted game rule is not utilized, a game stopped with the score tied is considered a regulation tie game, not a halted game, and may not be resumed.*

## **SECTION 5 – The Game**

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### **Forfeited Game – SECTION 5.16.**

- a. A forfeited game shall be declared by the umpires in favor of the team not at fault in the following cases:
- 1) If a team is on-site but refuses to begin a game which it is scheduled or assigned within five minutes after the umpire has called "Play/Play ball," unless such delay in appearing or in commencing the game is unavoidable.
  - 2) If, after the game has begun, one side refuses to continue to play.
  - 3) If, after play has been suspended by the umpire, one side fails to resume play within two minutes after the umpire has called "Play/Play ball."
  - 4) If a team employs tactics obviously designed to delay or shorten the game.
  - 5) If, after warning by the umpire, any one of the rules of the game is willfully and persistently violated.
  - 6) If the order for the removal of a player, coach or team personnel is not obeyed in a timely manner and a final 60-second forfeit warning has been issued and has elapsed.
  - 7) If, because of the removal of players from the game by the umpire or for any cause, there are fewer than eight players on either team.
  - 8) If an ejected player is discovered to be participating again.
- b. The score of a forfeited game shall be 7-0 in favor of the team not at fault.

*Note: All game umpires must agree in order to declare a game forfeited.*

## SECTION 6 — Appeals and Protests

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### Appeals — SECTION 6.1.

The umpire does not make a ruling on an appeal play until asked to do so by a coach or player.

There is no penalty for submitting an inaccurate line up card, simply correct the error and continue play. A player arriving late may be added to the line up card.

- a. The following may be appealed:
  - 1) Batting out of order.
  - 2) Missing a base.
  - 3) Leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched.
  - 4) Attempting to advance to second base after making the turn at first base.
- b. A runner is assumed safe until put out. If a proper appeal is not made, the runner is safe.
  - 1) If a runner misses home plate and the catcher misses or makes no attempt to tag the runner, the umpire should make a safe signal and declare "No tag". If a proper appeal play is made, by tagging the plate or runner before the runner returns to the plate, the runner shall be declared out.
  - 2) If a runner passes first base before the throw arrives, she is considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made.
- c. Appeals may be made when the ball is live (in play) or dead (out of play).
  - 1) A **live-ball appeal** is made by touching the base the runner missed or left too soon on a caught fly ball, or by tagging the runner who committed the violation, provided she is still on the playing field. Runners may advance during the live-ball appeal play. Each runner may leave her base when (a) the pitcher no longer has possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, or (b) the pitcher makes a play on any runner.
  - 2) A **dead-ball appeal** is made verbally. Once the ball has been returned to the infield and time has been called, any infielder (including the pitcher or catcher), with or without the ball, may ask the umpire to make a decision on a runner missing a base or leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball. The administering umpire whose responsibility it was to observe the base and runner steps forward and makes the safe or out call. If the appeal is directed toward the wrong umpire, that umpire should refer the question to the responsible umpire. The responsible umpire should then step

## **SECTION 6 — Appeals and Protests**

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forward and make the call. If timeout is requested for an appeal, the umpire should grant it. No runner may leave her base during this period as the ball remains dead until the next pitch.

Notes:

1. *If the ball goes out of play, the dead-ball appeal cannot be made until the umpire places a new ball into the game.*
  2. *If the pitcher has possession of the ball and is in contact with the pitching plate when making a verbal appeal, no illegal pitch is called.*
  3. *If "Play/Play ball" has been declared by the umpire and the pitcher then requests an appeal, the umpire would again call "Time/Timeout" and allow the appeal process.*
- d. An appeal must be made:
- 1) Before the next pitch, whether legal or illegal.
  - 2) Before the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.
  - 3) Before the umpires leave the field of play (on the last play of the game). If any situation arises that could lead to an appeal by the defense on the last play of the game, umpires should wait until all defensive infielders have crossed the foul line.

*Note: If teams line up for high fives, there is little chance for an appeal even if the defensive infielders have not crossed the foul line; umpires can leave the game at this point. No appeal can be made once the umpires have left the field.*

- e. 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.

- f. A runner may not return to touch a missed base or one left too soon on a caught fly ball if:
- 1) She has left the field of play.
  - 2) A following runner has scored.
  - 3) She is standing on a base beyond the base she left too soon and "Time/Timeout" has been called by the umpire, or the ball becomes dead.

*Note: If the runner is between any two bases and attempting to return to the base left too soon, she can continue.*

## **SECTION 6 — Appeals and Protests**

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- g. With regard to the scoring of runs:
- 1) If there are two outs before the appeal on a runner, the appeal becoming the third out, no runners following the appealed out shall score, and if the appeal is a force out, no runners preceding or following the appealed out shall score.

*Notes:*

- a. *If a forced runner, after touching the next base, retreats for any reason toward the base she had last occupied, the force play is reinstated and she may again be put out if the defense tags the base to which she is forced.*
- b. *There cannot be a force out if the batter does not become a batter-runner or runner.*
  - 1) 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 ahead of the legal appeal would count.
  - 2) An appeal may be made after the third out in order to nullify a run as long as it is made properly.

**EXAMPLE:** With one out and runners 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 then will be declared out also, and the run will not count.

**Protests — SECTION 6.2.**

- a. Protests will not be received or considered if they are based solely on a decision involving the accuracy of judgment of an umpire.
- b. Any game started on a non-regulation field shall not be protested for that reason.
- c. Protests shall be allowed in the following cases:
  - 1) Participation by an ineligible player or one who is temporarily ineligible due to suspension as a result of unsportsmanlike behavior.
  - 2) Failure to apply the correct rule to a situation (e.g., a batted ball hits the foul pole in flight and is declared a foul ball).
  - 3) Failure to impose the correct penalty for a given violation (e.g., a base runner is awarded one base for a fielder's throw that enters dead-ball territory).

## **SECTION 6 — Appeals and Protests**

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- 4) Misapplication of a playing rule (e.g., the umpire ejects a base runner for failure to slide at the plate even though the catcher had not yet received the ball).
- d. Protests may involve both a matter of judgment and the misinterpretation of a rule.

**EXAMPLE:** With one out and runners on second and third, the batter flies out. The runner on third base tags up after the catch, but the runner on second does not. The runner on third crosses the plate before the ball is played at second base for the third out. The umpire does not allow the run to score. The questions as to whether the runners left their bases before the catch and whether the play at second base was made before the runner on third crossed the plate are solely matters of judgment and are not subject to protest. It is a misinterpretation of a playing rule and a proper subject for protest, however, if the umpire fails to allow the run to score.

- e. The coach shall immediately (before the next pitch) notify the plate umpire of his/her intent to protest. If the game ends (legal contest) in a situation that can be protested, the offended team must immediately inform the umpire of its intent to protest. The plate umpire shall in turn notify the opposing head coach, official scorer and public-address announcer. **Exception:** Protest may be made at any time during and including the conclusion of the game if the protest involved participation by an ineligible player.

## **SECTION 6 – Appeals and Protests**

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## SECTION 7 – Players and Substitutes

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### Players on a Team – SECTION 7.1.

- a. A team must have the required number of players present in the dugout or team area to start or continue a game. Players listed in the starting lineup and not available at game time may be substituted for and re-entered later. The players and the numbers by which they are identified are as follows:

- 1) Without a designated player—nine positions: pitcher (1), catcher (2), first baseman (3), second baseman (4), third baseman (5), shortstop (6), left fielder (7), center fielder (8), right fielder (9).

*Note: If a team starts a game with nine players, a designated player may not be used.*

- 2) With a designated player – 10 positions: pitcher (1), catcher (2), first baseman (3), second baseman (4), third baseman (5), shortstop (6), left fielder (7), center fielder (8), right fielder (9), designated player (DP).

- b. A defensive player is entitled to change to a different defensive position at any time. The plate umpire and official scorekeeper need not be notified.
- c. A game may begin with 8 players, but when and if another player arrives, that player must be inserted into the lineup at the ninth batting position. Whenever a team is playing with only eight players, an out will be taken when the last position in the batting order appears. A player arriving late may be added to the line-up card.

*Note: If starting the game shorthanded and a player is inserted in the lineup, she is considered a substitute.*

- d. Under no circumstances shall a team be permitted to bat less than 8. A game shall not continue with less than 8 players.

### Designated Player/Defense Only – SECTION 7.2.

The following regulations govern the use of a designated player (DP) and a defense only (FLEX):

#### Designated Player (DP)

##### a. Lineup Card

1. One player in the starting lineup may be batted for by a designated player (DP), provided the DP is declared on the lineup card before the game.

#### Defense Only (FLEX)

##### a. Lineup Card

1. The player for whom the DP bats is called a FLEX. There cannot be a DP without a FLEX. The FLEX must be declared on the lineup card before the game.

## SECTION 7 – Players and Substitutes

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2. The DP's name, uniform number and position must be placed in one of the first 9 batting positions in the lineup.

*Note: The DP's position shall be entered as "DP".*

3. The DP must remain in the same position in the batting order throughout the entire game and can only bat/run for the FLEX — no one else.

**b. Primary Role**

The DP plays offense (bats/runs) for the FLEX.

**c. Uncharged Substitution**

The DP may go in and out of the game for any player (including the FLEX), at any defensive position, any time and any number of times without it counting as a substitution for anyone except the FLEX. This movement in and out of the game must be reported to the plate umpire to avoid an unreported player violation.

2. The FLEX's name, uniform number and position number must be placed in the 10th (non-batting) position in the lineup, immediately after the batting order.

*Note: The FLEX's position number, depending upon the particular defensive position she plays, is either #1 (P), #2 (C), #3 (1B), #4 (2B), #5 (3B), #6 (SS), #7 (LF), #8 (CF) or #9 (RF).*

3. The FLEX may remain in the tenth position for the entire game, or may assume the DP's position in the batting order and bat/run for herself — no one else.

**b. Primary Role**

The FLEX plays defense only, but it can be at any position.

**c. Uncharged Substitution**

The FLEX, may go in and out of the DP's position in the batting order any time and any number of times. This action counts as a substitution for the DP. This movement in and out of the game must be reported to the plate umpire to avoid an unreported player violation.

**PENALTY — Placing the FLEX into one of the first nine positions in the batting order for someone other than the original DP (or her substitute) results in ejection of the FLEX.**

## SECTION 7 – Players and Substitutes

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### **d. Charged Substitution**

1. The DP and all players except the FLEX are charged with a substitution only when they leave the batting order. Their movement on and off the field defensively does not count but must be reported to the plate umpire.
2. The DP may be substituted for at any time either by the FLEX or by a pinch hitter/pinch runner off the bench. If replaced by the FLEX, the number of players in the game is reduced from 10 to 9. If the DP does not re-enter, the game may legally end with 9 players.

### **e. Re-entry**

1. The starting DP, once replaced offensively, may re-enter (return to her original position in the batting order) one time. If she does re-enter, she must bat/run for the FLEX. She may just play offense for the FLEX or, at the same time that she plays offense she may either play defense for the FLEX or play defense for another player in the batting order.
2. If the FLEX re-enters to play defense and the DP was playing in the field for her, the DP can (a) return to just playing offense for the FLEX (b) play offense for the FLEX and defense for another batter in the order, or (c) leave the game

### **d. Charged Substitution**

1. The FLEX is charged with a substitution only when she is taken out of the defensive lineup. Movement in and out of the DP's position in the batting order does not count but must be reported to the plate umpire.
2. The FLEX may be substituted for at any time, either by the DP or by a player off the bench. If replaced by the DP, the number of players in the game is reduced from 10 to 9. If the FLEX does not re-enter, the game may legally end with 9 players.

### **e. Re-entry**

1. If the DP re-enters and the FLEX was batting in her spot, the FLEX can (a) return to the 10th position in the lineup and play defense only, anywhere on the field, (b) leave the game and let the DP play defense for her, or (c) leave the game and let a player come off the bench to become a substitute FLEX.
2. The starting FLEX, once replaced defensively, may re-enter one time. She may return to the 10th position in the lineup and play defense only, anywhere on the field; or she may assume the position in the

## SECTION 7 – Players and Substitutes

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and let a player come off the bench to become a substitute DP. If the FLEX re-enters to play offense and defense, the DP must leave the game.

3. A substitute DP may re-enter one time offensively.

**f. Options**

1. The DP may play offense only (for the FLEX).
2. The DP may play both offense and defense for the FLEX.
  - a) The FLEX must leave the game, and it counts as a substitution for the FLEX.
  - b) It does not count as a substitution for the DP.
  - c) The number of players in the game is reduced to 9 and, if the FLEX does not re-enter, the game may legally end with 9 players.
3. The DP may play offense for the FLEX and defense for another player in the batting order – not the FLEX.
  - a) The player for whom the DP plays defense just bats/runs and is not considered to have left the game because she remains in the batting order.
    - 1) The DP is now playing offense for the FLEX

batting order occupied by the DP or a substitute FLEX, and play both offense and defense.

3. A substitute FLEX may re-enter one time defensively.

**f. Options**

1. The FLEX may play defense only.
2. The FLEX may play both offense and defense for the DP.
  - a) The DP must leave the game, and it counts as a substitution for the DP.
  - b) It does not count as a substitution for the FLEX.
  - c) The number of players in the game is reduced to 9 and, if the DP does not re-enter, the game may legally end with 9 players.
  - d) The FLEX must leave the 10th position in the lineup and assume the DP's spot in the batting order.
3. The FLEX may play defense only, and both the DP and the FLEX may play defense at the same time.

## SECTION 7 — Players and Substitutes

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and defense for the position player.

- 1) The position player is just playing offense.
  - 2) The FLEX is still just playing defense (batted for by the DP).
- b. No one is charged with a substitution as no offensive player has left the batting order and the FLEX has not left the defensive lineup.

**g. Limitations**

1. The DP may not play defense only. While playing defense, the DP must continue to bat/run.
2. The DP cannot play offense at the same time as the FLEX.
3. The same player may not be listed as the DP and FLEX on the lineup card.

**g. Limitations**

1. The FLEX may not play offense only. While batting/running, the FLEX must continue to play defense.
2. The FLEX may not play offense at the same time as the DP.
3. The same player may not be listed as the DP and FLEX on the lineup card.

**Ejected Player/Coach/Personnel — SECTION 7.3.**

- a. Umpires have the authority to remove a player and/or other team personnel from further participation in a game for just cause.
- b. The order for the removal of a player, coach or team personnel must be obeyed in a timely manner.

**PENALTY — If the order for removal of a player, coach or team personnel is not obeyed in a timely manner, a one-minute forfeit warning shall be issued. If the warning expires, a forfeited game shall be declared.**

- c. An ejected player may remain in the dugout but may not communicate with opponents or umpires. An ejected coach must leave the playing field, including the dugout area, and must not communicate with opponents or umpires. An umpire may also rule a player or coach to leave the grounds.

**PENALTY — The ejected player who communicates with opponents or umpires must leave the site of competition.**

## **SECTION 7 – Players and Substitutes**

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d. Ejected non-playing personnel must leave the playing field and dugout and may not communicate further with the teams or umpires. They may occupy space along the right field and left-field foul lines beyond first base and third base or behind the home run fence, but they may not go behind the backstop near the dugout or bullpen, or along the infield portion of the first and third base lines.

e. An ejected player or coach may not participate in the game again.

**PENALTY (d and e) – If the order for removal of a player, coach or team personnel is not obeyed in a timely manner, a one-minute forfeit warning shall be issued. If the warning expires, a forfeited game shall be declared by the umpires in favor of the team not at fault.**

### **Starting Player – SECTION 7.4.**

a. Once the lineup card has been reviewed and submitted to the umpire, it becomes official.

b. Each player is entitled to be replaced and to re-enter the game one time as long as she assumes her original position in the batting order.

**Exception:** The FLEX may re-enter either in the designated player's position in the batting order or in her original (tenth non-batting) position in the lineup.

### **Substitute Player – SECTION 7.5.**

a. Player Substitutions. Each player is entitled to be replaced and to re-enter the game one time as long as she assumes her original position in the batting order. Player substitutions shall be governed by the following:

- 1) Any player may be substituted for at any time when the ball is dead.
- 2) The coach of the team making the substitution shall immediately notify the plate umpire at the time a substitute enters the game. Projected re-entries are not allowed.
- 3) Substitutes shall be considered officially in the game when reported to the plate umpire.
- 4) The substitute must take the place of the replaced player on the team's lineup card.
- 5) The plate umpire shall record any substitutions on the lineup card and announce immediately, or cause to be announced any such substitutions.
- 6) The plate umpire shall report the change to the scorer and the opposing team before the next pitch.
- 7) If two or more substitutes of the defensive team enter the game

## **SECTION 7 – Players and Substitutes**

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simultaneously, the coach or a representative shall immediately designate to the plate umpire the position of each in the team's batting order.

- 8) The batter may be removed before having received a pitch, whether or not she has completed her turn at bat and whether or not the side has been retired.
- b. **Pitcher substitutions.** Substitutions shall be governed by the following:
- 1) The pitcher may be removed from the pitching position before having delivered a pitch, whether or not the first batter facing her has completed her turn at bat and whether or not the side has been retired.
  - 2) The umpire must remove the pitcher from the pitching position if the defensive team is charged with two conferences with the same pitcher in the same inning. The removed pitcher may not pitch again for the remainder of the game but may otherwise participate in the game.

**PENALTY — A pitcher who is removed by the umpire shall be ejected if she returns to the pitching position and delivers one pitch.**

- 3) Following a pitching change, a relief pitcher may throw no more than five warm-up pitches. Play shall be suspended during this time.

**PENALTY — A ball shall be awarded to the batter for each warm-up pitch in excess of five. Exception: This penalty does not apply if the umpire delays the start of play for any reason.**

- 4) A pitcher is not entitled to warm-up pitches if she returns to pitch in the same half inning.

**PENALTY — A ball shall be awarded to the batter for each warm-up pitch. Exception: This penalty does not apply if the umpire delays the start of play for any reason.**

- c. **Injured player substitutions.** The following regulations govern substitutions for an injured player:
- 1) Substitutes for an injured player must be allowed adequate time to warm up. Play shall be suspended during this time.
  - 2) If an injury to a batter-runner or runner prevents her from proceeding to an awarded base, the ball is dead and substitution may be made. The substitute must legally touch all awarded or missed bases not previously touched.
- d. **Unreported substitutions.** The following regulations govern unreported substitutions:

## **SECTION 7 — Players and Substitutes**

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- 1) If the coach in violation informs the plate umpire before the offended team's challenge, there is no penalty regardless of the length of time the unreported player was in the game. The unreported player shall be declared officially in the game.
- 2) If an unreported player is reported to the plate umpire by the opposing team before a pitch is made (legal or illegal); there is no penalty. The unreported player shall be declared officially in the game.
- 3) If the unreported player is reported by the defense before the offensive coach in violation informs the umpire and:
  - a) A pitch has been thrown, but the unreported player still is at bat.

**PENALTY — The unreported player is called out and declared officially in the game. Any advance by base runners while the unreported player was at bat is legal.**

- b) The unreported player has completed her turn at bat, but the next pitch (legal or illegal) has not yet been thrown, or the pitcher and all infielders clearly have not vacated their normal fielding positions and have not left fair territory.

**PENALTY — The unreported player is called out and declared officially in the game. Any advance by base runners as a result of the unreported player becoming a batter-runner is nullified.**

- c) The unreported player has completed her turn at bat, but a pitch (legal or illegal) has been thrown to the next batter, or the pitcher and all infielders clearly have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.

**PENALTY — If on base, the unreported player is called out and declared officially in the game. Any advance by base runners while the unreported player was at bat or due to her becoming a batter-runner is legal.**

- 4) If the unreported player is reported by the offense before the defensive coach in violation informs the umpire, and:
  - a) The unreported player has made a play, but the next pitch (legal or illegal) has not yet been thrown, the pitcher and all infielders clearly have not vacated their normal fielding positions and have not left fair territory, or it is the last play of the game, and the umpires have not yet left the field.

**PENALTY — The unreported player is declared officially in the game. The offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play or having the last batter return and assume the ball and strike count she had before the report of the unreported player with each runner returning to the base legally occupied at the time of the last pitch.**

## **SECTION 7 — Players and Substitutes**

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- b) The unreported player has made a play, and the next pitch (legal or illegal) has been thrown, or the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.

**PENALTY — The unreported player is declared officially in the game, and all play will stand. In addition, each runner on base at the time of the report is awarded one base.**

- c) The unreported player has not made a play, and the next pitch (legal or illegal) has been thrown.

**PENALTY — The unreported player is declared officially in the game, and all play will stand.**

*Notes:*

1. *If an unreported player is also an illegal player, the penalty for an illegal player applies.*
2. *Violation of the unreported player rule may be reported to the umpire at any time.*

**e. Illegal Player(s).**

- 1) Players who compete in the game but are not entitled to play include:
  - a) A player who has re-entered the game a second time.
  - b) A player who was removed from the pitching position as a result of a second charged defensive conference in one inning returned to the pitching position and delivered one pitch.
  - c) An ejected player entering or re-entering the game.
- 2) The following regulations govern illegal players:
  - a) If the coach in violation informs the plate umpire before the offended team's challenge, all play stands, regardless of the length of time the illegal player was in the game. The illegal player is ejected.
  - b) If the illegal player is reported to the plate umpire by the opposing team before a pitch is thrown (legal or illegal), the illegal player is ejected.
  - c) If the illegal player is reported by the defense before the offensive coach in violation informs the umpire and:
    - (1) A pitch has been thrown, but the illegal player is still at bat.

**PENALTY — The player is called out and ejected. Any advance by base runners while the player was at bat is legal.**

- (2) The illegal player has completed her turn at bat, but a pitch (legal or illegal) has not been thrown to the next batter, or

## **SECTION 7 — Players and Substitutes**

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the pitcher and all infielders clearly have not vacated their normal fielding positions and have not left fair territory.

**PENALTY — The illegal player is called out and ejected. Any advance by base runners as a result of the illegal player becoming a batter-runner is nullified.**

- (3) The illegal player has completed her turn at bat, but a pitch (legal or illegal) has been thrown to the next batter, or the pitcher and all infielders clearly have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.

**PENALTY — The player is called out and ejected. Any advance by base runners while the illegal player was at bat or due to her becoming a batter-runner is legal.**

- d) If the illegal player is reported by the offense before the defensive coach in violation informs the umpire and:

- (1) The illegal player has made a play, but the next pitch (legal or illegal) has not yet been thrown, or the pitcher and all infielders have not vacated their normal fielding positions and have not left fair territory.

**PENALTY — The player is ejected. The offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play or having the last batter return and assume the ball and strike count she had before the report of the illegal player with each runner returning to the base legally occupied at the time of the last pitch.**

- (2) The illegal player has made a play, and the next pitch (legal or illegal) has been thrown.

**PENALTY — The player is ejected, and all play will stand. In addition, each runner on base at the time of the report is awarded one base.**

- (3) The illegal player has not made a play, and the next pitch (legal or illegal) has been thrown.

**PENALTY — The player is ejected and all play will stand.**

*Note: Violation of the illegal player rule may be reported to the umpire at any time.*

## **SECTION 7 — Players and Substitutes**

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### **Re-entry — SECTION 7.6.**

- a. Any of the players, including a DP and FLEX, may be substituted and re-entered once, providing players occupy the same batting positions whenever in the order. The starting player and her substitute may not be in the lineup at the same time.

**PENALTY — A player who illegally re-entered the game shall be ejected and subject to illegal player penalties.**

*Notes:*

1. *Violation of the re-entry rule may be reported to the umpire at any time.*
2. *If a substitution violates both the re-entry and the player substitution rules, the illegal/unreported player shall be ejected and subject to illegal player penalties.*
- b. A player removed from the pitching position as a consequence of a second charged defensive conference in one inning may re-enter the game at another position but cannot return to the pitching position.

**PENALTY — The pitcher shall be ejected if she returns to the pitching position and delivers one pitch.**

### **CR (Courtesy Runners) — SECTION 7.7.**

The team at bat may use a CR for the pitcher and/or catcher at any time. The pitcher and catcher are identified as those players who actually were playing those positions at the end of the previous half-inning. In the top of the first inning only, the pitcher and catcher are identified as the players listed as such on the line up card. Neither the pitcher nor the catcher is required to leave the game under this rule.

- a. The CR may run for either the pitcher or the catcher anytime during the game.
- b. The CR may run for the DP, if the DP was physically pitching or catching at the end of the previous half-inning.
- c. The CR may not run for both the pitcher and the catcher during the same game.
- d. The CR may not have participated in the game previously as a player.
- e. The CR may not be a substitute for any player during the half inning she ran as a CR.
- f. The CR may not run for the DP if the DP is batting for the pitcher or the catcher.
- g. The CR may not be replaced by another CR or the pitcher or catcher for whom she is running. EXCEPTION: should an injury occur, another CR or

## **SECTION 7 – Players and Substitutes**

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the pitcher or catcher may run.

- h. The CR may not be used during the inning a substitute entered to bat for the pitcher and/or catcher, even if she re-entered.
- i. EXCEPTION: Should any offensive player be injured or unable to continue for any reason, with no substitutes available, the CR must be used to re-place that player and enters the game as a substitute. If the CR is still on base, the pitcher or catcher for whom she is running must now return as a base runner.
- j. The coach of the team at bat must report each use of the CR to the plate umpire, otherwise, she is an unreported substitute. A player who is not eligible or violated the CR rule is considered to be an illegal substitute.

## **SECTION 8 — Blocked Ball**

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### **Blocked Ball**

A blocked ball is a live batted or thrown ball that contacts: (a) non-game personnel, (b) game personnel in unauthorized areas, (c) loose equipment, (d) an object that is neither official game equipment nor part of the official playing area or (e) dead-ball territory.

### **Equipment Blocked Ball — SECTION 8.1.**

- a. No loose equipment (i.e, gloves, hats, helmets, jackets, balls, on-deck batter's bats), miscellaneous items, or detached parts of a player's uniform, other than that being legally used in the game at the time, should be within playable territory as it could cause a blocked ball. Official equipment which may be within playable territory with no penalty includes the batter's bat, the catcher's mask, umpire paraphernalia, and any helmet which has inadvertently fallen off the head of an offensive or defensive player during the course of play.
- b. No base runner may intentionally remove her helmet or other personal equipment to deliberately interfere with a batted or thrown ball.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, the runner is out, and each other base runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

*Notes:*

1. *Calling a runner out for removing her helmet does not affect force play situations.*
2. *If a removed batting helmet is accidentally hit with a live ball, the ball remains in play.*

### **Foul Batted Blocked Ball — SECTION 8.2.**

A foul-batted ball becomes blocked when it contacts game or non-game personnel or loose equipment belonging to either team.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. A foul ball is called. Runners return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

### **Fair Batted Blocked Ball — SECTION 8.3.**

A fair-batted ball becomes blocked:

- a. When it contacts loose offensive equipment not involved in the game, but on the playing field.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. If no apparent play is obvious, no one is called out. Each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time the ball became blocked.**

**If the blocked ball prevented the defense from making a play, interference is ruled. The runner closest to home at the time of the interference**

## **SECTION 8 — Blocked Ball**

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**shall be declared out, and the other runners must return to the last base legally touched before the batted ball hit the loose equipment.**

- b. When it contacts loose equipment belonging to the defense.
- c. When it bounces over, wedges under, or passes through a fence or any designated boundary of the playing field; or lodges in the fence, in shrubbery or in the vines on the fence.
- d. When it deflects off a defensive player and crosses into dead-ball territory; or passes an infielder (excluding the pitcher), deflects off a runner or umpire, and crosses into dead-ball territory, provided no other infielder has a chance to make a play.

**EFFECT (b)-(d) — The ball is dead. The batter is awarded second base and credited with a two-base hit (double). Each runner is awarded two bases from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

- e. If it strikes the foul pole above the fence level, or leaves the playing field in fair territory without touching the ground or going through the fence.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. The batter-runner are entitled to a home run, and base runner(s) are awarded home plate.**

### **Live Thrown Blocked Ball — SECTION 8.4.**

A live thrown ball becomes blocked:

- a. When it is overthrown and crosses into dead-ball territory.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. The batter and each runner are awarded two bases from their respective positions when the ball left the fielder's hand.**

**Notes:**

1. *The direction that a runner is headed when an overthrow occurs has no bearing on the award. (For example, when an overthrow is made on a runner returning to a base, she is awarded two bases from that base. If she was returning to first base and the throw was from the outfield, and it left the outfield's hand before the runner got back to first base, the runner would be awarded third base).*
2. *If a runner touches the next base and returns to her original base, the original base she left is considered the last base touched for the purpose of an overthrow award.*
3. *If two runners are between the same bases when an overthrown ball leaves the fielder's hand, the award is based on the position of the lead runner, (i.e., two runners between first and second will be awarded second and third; however, if two runners are between second and third, both will be awarded home).*

## **SECTION 8 — Blocked Ball**

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**Exception:** When a fielder loses possession of the ball, such as on an attempted tag, and the ball becomes blocked, each runner is awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the ball became blocked.

b. When it contacts loose **offensive** equipment not involved in the game, but on the playing field.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. If no apparent play is obvious, no one is called out. Each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time the ball became blocked. If the blocked ball prevented the defense from making a play, interference is ruled. The runner closest to home at the time of the interference shall be declared out, and each other runner must return to the last base legally touched before the thrown ball hit the loose equipment.**

c. When it contacts loose **defensive** equipment not involved in the game, but on the playing field.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. The batter and each runner are awarded two bases from their respective positions when the ball left the fielder's hand. If two runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner.**

### **Pitched Blocked Ball — SECTION 8.5.**

A pitched ball becomes blocked when it lodges in or goes under, over or through the backstop.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. If the batter receives a base on balls and the fourth ball becomes blocked, she will be awarded first base only. All runners are awarded one base from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

### **Catch and Carry Blocked Ball — SECTION 8.6.**

A live batted or thrown ball becomes blocked when it is caught by a fielder and carried into dead-ball territory. This is commonly referred to as a “catch and carry” (See Rule 12-11).

### **Game Personnel in Unauthorized Areas — SECTION 8.7.**

A fair batted or thrown ball becomes blocked when it contacts game personnel in unauthorized areas (e.g., outside the dugout but in the field of play).

a. When a fair-batted ball contacts a member of the offensive team.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. If no apparent play is obvious, no one is called out each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time the ball became blocked. If the blocked ball prevented the defense**

## **SECTION 8 — Blocked Ball**

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from making a play, interference is ruled. The runner closest to home at the time of the interference shall be declared out, and each other runner must return to the last base legally touched before the thrown ball became blocked.

b. When a fair ball contacts a member of the defensive team.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. The batter is awarded second base and credited with a two-base hit (double). Each runner is awarded two bases from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

c. When a live thrown ball contacts a member of the offensive team.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. If no apparent play is obvious, no one is called out. Each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time the ball became blocked. If the blocked ball prevented the defense from making a play, interference is ruled. The runner closest to home at the time of the interference shall be declared out, and each other runner must return to the last base legally touched before the thrown ball became blocked.**

d. When a live thrown ball contacts a member of the defensive team.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. The batter and each runner are awarded two bases from their respective positions when the ball left the fielder's hand. If two runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner.**

## **SECTION 9 – Interference & Obstruction**

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### **Interference (Offensive)**

Interference is an act that denies a defensive player a reasonable opportunity to make a play (field/throw) anywhere on the playing field. The act may be intentional or unintentional, and the ball must have been playable. Interference may be caused by individual offensive players (batter, on-deck batter, batter-runner, runner), coaches, umpires, non-game personnel or spectators as well as by the offensive team as a whole or by loose equipment that belongs to them.

As a general rule, when batter, batter-runner, on-deck batter, runner or coach interference occurs: (1) the ball becomes dead, (2) someone is called out, and (3) each runner must return to the last base which, in the umpire's judgment, was legally touched at the time of the interference, except when forced to go to the next base because the batter became a batter-runner. If the batter-runner has not touched first base at the time of the interference, each runner shall return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. When a runner(s) is called out for interference, the batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit.

### **Batter Interference – SECTION 9.1.**

Batter interference occurs while the batter is at bat and before she completes her turn at bat.

- a. The batter shall not step from one batter's box, directly in front of the catcher, to the other batter's box while the pitcher is in position ready to pitch.

**PENALTY – The ball is dead, the batter is out, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

- b. The batter shall not hinder the catcher from catching or throwing the ball by stepping out of the batter's box or intentionally hinder the catcher (e.g., on a steal/pick-off throw or a play at the plate) while standing within the batter's box.

**PENALTY – The ball is dead, the batter is out, and each runner must return to the last base that, in the umpire's judgment, was legally touched at the time of the interference.**

#### **Exceptions:**

1. If a runner is advancing to home plate and there are fewer than two outs, the runner, instead of the batter, is out. The ball is dead.
2. If the batter strikes out and interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw out a runner, the runner also is out. The ball is dead.

*Note: The batter's box is not a sanctuary for the batter when a play is being made at the plate.*

## **SECTION 9 – Interference & Obstruction**

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- c. The batter may not swing and miss a pitched ball and then intentionally hit it on a second swing or after it bounces off the catcher or her glove/mitt.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, the batter is out, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

*Note: If the batter swings and misses the pitched ball but accidentally hits it on the follow through, it is not interference, but the ball is dead, and all runners must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.*

- d. The batter may not release the bat in such a manner that it hits the catcher and prevents her from making a play.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, the batter is out, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

*Note: If the batter merely drops her bat and the catcher trips over it, there is no interference.*

### **Batter-Runner Interference — SECTION 9.2.**

- a. The batter may not, after hitting/bunting/slapping a fair ball, contact the ball with the bat a second time in fair territory. For example:

- 1) The batter may not contact the ball a second time if she is out of the batter's box and the bat is still in her hand(s).

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, the batter is out, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of her pitch.**

- 2) The batter may not drop or throw the bat such that it hits (lands on) the ball in fair territory.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, the batter is out, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

#### **Exceptions:**

1. If the bat is out of the batter's hands (on the ground), the ball rolls against the bat, and in the umpire's judgment there was no intent to interfere with the course of the ball, the ball is live, no one is out for interference, and base runner(s) may advance with liability to be put out.
  - a) If the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory, it remains live. If it stops or is touched in fair territory, it is a fair ball.
  - b) If the ball touches the bat in fair territory and then rolls to foul ground and stops it is a foul ball. If the ball rolls against the bat in foul territory, it is a foul ball.

If the batter, after hitting/slapping/bunting a fair ball, is still holding the bat in her hand(s) and is still in the batter's box when she contacts the ball a second time in fair territory, a foul ball is ruled; the ball is dead; and each

## **SECTION 9 – Interference & Obstruction**

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**runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

- 3) The batter may not throw the whole bat into fair territory, whether intentionally or not, and interfere with a defensive player attempting to make a play.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, the batter is out, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. If, in the umpire's judgment, interference prevented a possible double play, two outs may be declared.**

*Notes:*

1. *If the bat breaks and a part of it is hit by the batted ball in fair territory or a part of it hits a runner or fielder, the ball remains live, and there is no interference.*
2. *If a part of the bat is touched by the batted ball in foul territory, it is a foul ball.*
3. *If the batter simply drops her bat and the catcher trips over it, no interference is called.*
- b. The batter-runner shall not interfere with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball. For example:
  - 1) The batter-runner may not make contact with a fair batted ball before reaching first base.
  - 2) The batter may not, after hitting/bunting/slapping a foul ball, intentionally deflect the course of the ball in any manner while running to first.
- c. The batter-runner may not interfere with the catcher's attempt to field a third strike.
- d. The batter-runner may not interfere with a fielder's attempt to throw or to receive a thrown ball. For example, the batter-runner may not run outside the runner's lane and, in the umpire's judgment, interfere with the fielder taking the throw at first base. **Exception:** The batter-runner may run outside the runner's lane to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball and/or to touch the base on the last stride.

*Note: The batter-runner is considered outside the runner's lane if either foot is completely outside either line and in contact with the ground.*
- e. The batter-runner may not intentionally interfere with a thrown ball while out of the batter's box.

*Note: A batter-runner being hit with a thrown ball does not necessarily constitute interference.*

**PENALTY (b)-(e) — The ball is dead, the batter-runner is out, and each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interfer-**

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ence.

If the interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the runner closest to home plate shall also be called out.

f. The batter-runner may not interfere with a play at home plate in an attempt to prevent an obvious out at home plate.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead. The batter-runner and runner at the plate are both out. Each other runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

### **Coach Interference — SECTION 9.3.**

a. A coach may not interfere with a fielder who has a reasonable opportunity to make a play on a foul fly ball.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, the batter is out, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

b. With a runner in scoring position, the coach near third base shall not run in the direction of home plate (on or near the baseline) while a fielder is attempting to make a play, thereby, drawing a throw to home plate.

c. A coach, while in or out of the coach's box, shall not intentionally interfere with a thrown ball, or interfere with the defensive team's opportunity to make a play on another runner.

**PENALTY (b)-(c) — The ball is dead, the runner closest to home plate shall be declared out, and each other runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference. Exception: If a thrown ball accidentally touches a coach in foul territory, the ball is live. It is unintentional (accidental) interference if the individual tries to evade the ball or is not aware that the ball is coming.**

d. A coach (or anyone other than another runner) may not physically assist (e.g., touch, hold, push) a base runner while the ball is in play.

**PENALTY — The ball is live, the assisted runner is out, and each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

*Note: The coach's box is not a sanctuary.*

### **Non-game Authorized Personnel Interference — SECTION 9.4.**

If a live batted or thrown ball accidentally hits non-game personnel (e.g., media, field attendants), the ball remains live. It is unintentional (accidental) interference if the individual tries to evade the ball or is not aware that the ball is coming. However, no non-game personnel may intentionally interfere with a live batted or thrown ball (i.e., kick or push the ball).

## **SECTION 9 – Interference & Obstruction**

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**EFFECT** — The umpire shall award the offended team the appropriate compensation (e.g., extra bases, an out) that, in his/her opinion, would have resulted had interference not taken place.

*Note: Authorized media may be in foul territory but must be ready to move quickly to avoid being hit by a batted or overthrown ball. All photographic equipment must be carried. No equipment may be left on the ground. Photographers may use a monopod, but tripods are not allowed.*

### **On-Deck Batter Interference — SECTION 9.5.**

The on-deck batter may not interfere with the defensive player's reasonable opportunity to make a play.

**PENALTY** — If the interference is with a defensive player fielding a fly ball, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and each other runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

If the interference involves a base runner, the ball is dead. The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out, and each other runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference, unless forced to advance.

### **Runner Interference — SECTION 9.6.**

- a. The base runner may not interfere with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball. For example:
  - 1) A base runner may not contact a fair-batted ball, while off base before it touches a fielder or before it passes an infielder (other than the pitcher), who has a reasonable chance to make a play.
  - 2) The base runner may not contact a fair-batted ball after it passes an infielder if another fielder has a chance to make a play.
  - 3) The base runner may not intentionally kick a ball that an infielder has missed.
  - 4) Any physical contact by the base runner with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball, whether intentional or unintentional, shall be interference, provided the fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.
- b. If the defensive player, while watching the flight of a ball, bumps a runner who is standing on a base and fails to make a catch on a catchable ball, the runner shall not be called out unless the hindrance is intentional. A runner must vacate any space needed by a fielder to make a play on a batted ball, unless the runner has contact with a legally occupied base when the hindrance occurs. This is an exception to the rule that defensive players must be given the opportunity to field the ball

## **SECTION 9 – Interference & Obstruction**

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- anywhere on the playing field without being hindered.
- c. Merely running in front of the fielder or jumping over the ball while proceeding to the next base is not interference, even though it may be distracting to the fielder or screen her view of the ball. The runner may not at any time, however, unnecessarily wave her arms or verbally distract the fielder.
  - d. It is still interference if a batted ball is misplayed and remains in front of a fielder such that the fielder still has an opportunity to obtain an out, and the runner contacts the fielder. **Exception:** If the misplayed ball bounds away or past the fielder and then contact occurs as the fielder and runner collide, this may be considered inadvertent contact.
  - e. If two fielders try to field a batted ball and the runner contacts one or both, the umpire shall decide which one is entitled to field the ball, and that fielder only is entitled to protection.
  - f. Interference occurs when the ball ricochets off one defensive player and another player still has the opportunity to make a play, but the runner interferes with the second fielder.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. The offending runner is out. If forced, each other runner advances one base without liability to be put out. If unforced, each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

**Exceptions:**

- 1. If the interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the runner is put out, the immediate runner also shall be called out.
  - 2. If the interference prevents the fielder from catching a routine fly ball, the batter is also out.
- b. The base runner may not interfere with a fielder attempting to throw the ball.
  - c. The base runner may not intentionally interfere with a thrown ball.

*Note: A runner being hit with a thrown ball does not necessarily constitute interference.*

**PENALTY (b)-(c) — The ball is dead. The offending runner is out. If forced, each other runner advances one base without liability to be put out. If unforced, each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference. Exception: If the interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the runner is put out, the immediate trailing runner also shall be called out.**

## **SECTION 9 – Interference & Obstruction**

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- d. A runner, who is not yet out, may not intentionally interfere, in the umpire's judgment, with a fielder who is attempting to catch a thrown ball or to throw a ball in an attempt to complete the play.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, the batter-runner and runner are out, and each other runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

- e. A base runner, after being declared out or after scoring, may not interfere with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play on another runner.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, and the runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out. Each base runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

- f. A base runner may not remain on her feet and deliberately, with great force, crash into a defensive player (holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag).

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, and the batter-runner/runner shall be declared out even if the defensive player loses possession of the ball. Each other base runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

**Exceptions:**

- 1. If the runner deliberately crashes into a defensive player holding the ball before she (the runner) is put out and, in the judgment of the umpire, it is an attempt to break up an obvious double play, the immediate trailing runner also shall be declared out.**
- 2. If the deliberate crash occurs after the runner is called out, the runner closest to home plate also shall be declared out.**

**If, in the umpire's judgment, the collision is flagrant the runner shall be declared out and also ejected from the contest. The ball is dead, and each other base runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

**Notes:**

- 1. In order to prevent a deliberate crash ruling, the runner can slide, jump over the top of the defender holding the ball, go around the defender (within three feet) or return to the previous base touched.*
- 2. Should an act of interference (offensive) occur following any obstruction (defensive), enforcement of the interference penalty would take precedence. For example, if an obstructed runner deliberately crashes into a fielder holding the ball, the obstruction call will be ignored, and the runner will be called out for offensive interference.*

## **SECTION 9 – Interference & Obstruction**

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- g. It is not interference, and the runner is not out:
- 1) When 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 a play.
  - 2) When the runner is hit with a fair, untouched batted ball that has passed an infielder (other than the pitcher) and, in the umpire's judgment, no other infielder had a reasonable chance to make a play. If said ball contacts the runner while still in flight, thereafter, it shall be considered a ground ball; it cannot be caught as a fly ball.
  - 3) When the runner is hit by a fair batted ball after it touches, or is touched by, any fielder (including the pitcher) and she could not avoid contact with the ball.
  - 4) When a batted ball is misplayed, the ball bounds away or past the fielder, and then the fielder and runner collide. This is considered inadvertent contact.
  - 5) If the bat breaks and a part of it is hit by the batted ball in fair territory or a part of it hits a runner or a fielder.
  - 6) When the runner is hit with a fair untouched batted ball (that has not touched or passed a base) while standing in foul territory and no infielder has a reasonable chance to make a play.

**EFFECT (1)-(6) – The ball is live, and all runners (including the batter-runner) may advance with liability to be put out.**

- 7) When the runner is hit by a fair-batted ball while in contact with a base, unless she intentionally interferes with the ball or a fielder making a play.

**EFFECT – The ball is live or dead depending on the position of the fielder closest to the base:**

**The ball is live if the closest defensive player is in front of the base. All runners (including the batter-runner) may advance with liability to be put out.**

**The ball is dead if the closest defensive player is behind the base. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. If forced, each runner advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

**Spectator Interference – SECTION 9.7.**

No spectator(s) shall reach out of the stands or enter the field and interfere with a play. Exception: It is not interference if the fielder reaches into the stands or over a fence. The field belongs to the fielder, and the stands

## **SECTION 9 – Interference & Obstruction**

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belong to the spectator.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. The umpire shall award the offended team the appropriate compensation (e.g., extra bases, an out) that, in his/her opinion, would have resulted had interference not taken place.**

**If the act clearly prevented a fielder from catching a fly ball in the field of play, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and the umpire shall award the offended team the appropriate compensation (e.g., extra bases, an out) that, in his/her opinion, would have resulted had interference not taken place.**

### **Team (Offensive) Interference — SECTION 9.8.**

- a. No offensive team personnel (players not at bat, on-deck or on base; coaches not in the coaches' boxes; managers; trainers; scorekeepers; and bat persons) shall 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.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, and the runner is out. Each other runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

- b. Offensive team personnel shall not interfere with a defensive player attempting to field a fly ball.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, and the batter is out. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

- c. Offensive team personnel, other than base coaches shall not touch a batter who has hit an out-of-the-park home run until she has contacted home plate.

**PENALTY — For a first offensive in a game, the umpire shall issue a warning to the offending team. For a second offense, the ball is dead, and the batter is out and credited with the last base legally touched at the time of the interference. Each other base runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

- d. Offensive team personnel, including the batter, once the pitch has crossed the plate, may not interfere with a fielder who has a reasonable chance to make a play within the field of play.

**PENALTY — If the interference is with a defensive player fielding a ball, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

**If the interference involves a base runner, the ball is dead. The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out, and each other runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference, unless forced to advance.**

## **SECTION 9 – Interference & Obstruction**

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### **Umpire Interference – SECTION 9.9.**

Umpire interference occurs:

- a. When a fair, untouched batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of an umpire before passing a fielder (other than the pitcher), or after passing an infielder (including the pitcher) but another fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.
- b. When a fair untouched batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of an umpire before touching a fielder (including the pitcher).

**EFFECT (a)-(b) – The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. If forced, each base runner advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. Exception: It is not interference, the ball remains in play, and the runner is not out, if the ball: (1) hits the umpire after passing a fielder, other than the pitcher, and no other infielder has a reasonable chance to make a play; or (2) hits the umpire after touching a fielder (including the pitcher).**

*Note: If said ball touches the umpire while still in flight, thereafter, it shall be considered a ground ball. It cannot be caught as fly ball.*

- c. When the plate umpire or his/her clothing interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw out a runner on a pick-off or steal attempt.

**EFFECT – Delayed dead ball. If the runner is not out, she must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. If the runner is ruled out, the ball remains live, and there is no interference.**

*Note: It is not interference if a pitched or thrown ball strikes an umpire. The ball is live, and each base runner is entitled to advance with liability to be put out.*

### **Obstruction (Defensive)**

#### **Obstruction – SECTION 9.10.**

- a. Obstruction is the act of a 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 possession of the ball or in the act of fielding a batted ball.

*Notes:*

1. *The defensive player must have possession of the ball. When a play is imminent, a defensive player may not block a base or the base line without possession of the ball. If the defensive player has the ball, it is*

## **SECTION 9 – Interference & Obstruction**

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*the runner's responsibility to avoid the fielder. If the defensive player does not have the ball, it is the responsibility of the fielder to avoid and not impede the runner's progress.*

2. *The act may be intentional or unintentional.*

- b. Whenever obstruction occurs, whether a play is being made on a runner or not, the umpire will declare obstruction and signal a delayed dead ball. The ball remains live until the conclusion of the play at which time the umpire will notify the offensive head coach of his/her options, if any.

*Note: If other runners are advancing and an umpire inadvertently calls "Time/Timeout" following a play on an obstructed runner, a rule of thumb for placement of the other runners is: If they have not reached half way to the next base, they must return to the previous base. However, if they have advanced over half way, they are allowed to advance to the next base.*

- c. 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.
- d. An obstructed runner may not be called out between the two bases where she was obstructed unless properly appealed for missing a base, leaving a base before a fly ball was first touched, for an act of interference or when another violation is being played upon (e.g., a runner leaving second base too soon on a fly ball is returning after the ball is caught and is obstructed between second base and third base. If the runner had made it back to second base prior to the throw arriving, she would remain out).
- e. If an obstructed runner is awarded a base she would have made had there been no obstruction and a preceding runner is on that base, the obstructed runner will be awarded that base, and the preceding runner shall be entitled to the next base without liability to be put out.
- f. If the obstructed runner attempts to advance past the base she would have reached had there not been obstruction, or past the base she would have been awarded for the obstruction, she is running with liability to be put out. The ball remains live.
- g. Should an act of interference (offensive) occur following any obstruction (defensive), enforcement of the interference penalty takes precedence.

### **Types of Obstruction – SECTION 9.11.**

Obstruction includes:

- a. **Flagrant Player Obstruction:** The fielder shall not at any time flagrantly (with deliberate unsportsmanlike intent) impede the batter, batter-runner or runner.

## **SECTION 9 – Interference & Obstruction**

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### **PENALTY – Delayed dead ball.**

In addition to the appropriate obstruction penalty, the offender shall be ejected without warning.

#### **b. Catcher Obstruction**

- 1) The catcher shall not obstruct, hinder or prevent the batter's attempt to make contact with a pitched ball.

### **PENALTY – Delayed dead ball.**

If the batter contacts the ball and reaches first base safely and each other runner has advanced at least one base on the batted ball, catcher obstruction is canceled. All action as a result of the batted ball stands, and no option is given. Once a runner has passed a base, she is considered to have reached that base even if she missed it. No option is given.

If the batter does not reach first base or if one of the other runners does not advance at least once base, the coach of the offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play. If the coach does not take the result of the play:

- a) The batter is awarded first base.
- b) If forced each base runner advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each base runner returns to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. *Exception.* If the catcher steps on or in front of home plate or touches the batter or her bat while a pitched ball is on the way to the plate and there is a runner on third attempting to score on a squeeze play, each base runner advances one base without liability to be put out whether forced or not.

*Note: If a batter, during preliminary loosening-up swings, hits the catcher or the catcher's glove/mitt during the back swing, the umpire should immediately call "Time/Timeout" and not obstruction. Catcher's obstruction on a batter should be called only on the batter's attempt to make contact with the pitch. The pitch or swing should not be allowed, however, since the batter's concentration or rhythm could be affected.*

- c. **Fielder Obstruction:** A fielder who is not in possession of the ball, or not in the act of fielding a batted ball, may not impede the batter, batter-runner or runner. In addition, a fielder may not fake a tag (a tag without the ball) on a runner advancing or returning to a base

### **PENALTY – Delayed dead ball.**

If the obstructed batter, batter-runner or runner is put out before reaching the base she would have reached had there not been obstruction, the obstructed player shall be awarded the base she would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there not been obstruction. Subsequent violation

## **SECTION 9 – Interference & Obstruction**

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by the same individual may result in a one base award to the obstructed player, and each other runner forced to advance.

Exceptions:

1. A fielder shall not at any time obstruct a runner rounding or returning to a base. A fielder who is waiting to receive a throw may not impede the progress or return of a runner.
2. A fielder shall not position herself in the runner's line of vision to intentionally distract the runner or intentionally prohibit her from seeing the release of the pitch.

Exception (1)-(2) – Delayed dead ball. First violation: The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual and notify her coach. Subsequent violation by the same individual shall result in a one base award to the obstructed runner, and each other runner forced to advance.

3. A fielder shall not at any time obstruct a runner from her base path during a rundown and prohibit her from advancing or returning to a base.

**PENALTY** – Delayed dead ball.

The runner shall be awarded the lead base. If the ball is overthrown after the obstruction, the runner is entitled to the lead base but may advance farther with liability to be put out

4. A fielder shall not position herself in the batter's line of vision or act in a manner to distract the batter.

**PENALTY** – Delayed dead ball.

If the batter contacts the ball and reaches first base safely and each other runner has advanced at least one base on the batted ball, the illegal pitch is canceled. All action as a result of the batted ball stands, and no option is given. Once a runner has passed a base, she is considered to have reached that base, whether missing the base or not, and no option is given.

If the batter does not reach first base safely or if one of the other runners does not advance at least once base the coach of the offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play, or the illegal pitch is enforced by awarding a ball to the batter and advancing each other runner one base. If the illegal pitch is "Ball four" or hits the batter, the batter is awarded first base, and each runner is awarded one base. The pitch does not have to be released.

First violation: The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual and notify her coach. Subsequent violation by the same individual shall result in ejection.

## **SECTION 9 – Interference & Obstruction**

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- d. **Equipment Obstruction:** A fielder shall not intentionally contact or catch a fair batted or thrown ball with her cap, helmet, mask, chest protector glove, or any part of her uniform that is detached from its proper place on her person.

**PENALTY — Delayed dead ball.**

If a batted ball is interfered with, the batter-runner and each runner is awarded three bases from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch but may advance farther with liability to be put out.

If the illegal catch or touch is made on a fair hit ball that, in the judgment of the umpire, would have cleared the home run fence in flight, the batter-runner is entitled to a home run, and each base runner is awarded home plate. The ball may have been prevented from going over the fence by a spectator or by detached player equipment, which is thrown, tossed, kicked or held by a fielder.

If a thrown ball is interfered with, the batter-runner and each runner is awarded two bases from the last base legally touched at the time of the throw but may advance farther with liability to be put out.

## **SECTION 10 — Pitching**

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### **Defensive Positioning Required for a Legal Pitch — SECTION 10.1.**

- a. The pitcher is considered to be in the pitching position when she steps forward, puts both feet on the pitcher's plate, and the catcher is in position to receive the pitch.
- b. The pitcher may not take the pitching position on the pitcher's plate without being in possession of the ball, and she may not simulate the pitching position with or without the ball when near the pitcher's plate.
- c. The catcher must be in the catcher's box from when the pitcher steps on the pitcher's plate until she releases the pitch. No part of the catcher's feet may be on or outside the lines until the pitch is released.
- d. If the batter is positioned in front of the batter's box to receive a pitch, the catcher may move closer to the plate without penalty. At all times, however, the catcher must avoid catcher's obstruction as the batter legally has the right to the entire batter's box.
- e. No part of an infielder or outfielder's foot may be on or outside the foul line from the time the pitcher steps on the pitcher's plate until she releases the pitch. No fielder may 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.

**PENALTY (a)-(d) — Illegal pitch (see Rule 10-8).**

### **Pitching Procedure**

### **Taking the Signal — SECTION 10.2.**

- a. Before starting a pitch, the pitcher must comply with the following:
  - 1) Both feet must be on the ground and in contact with the pitcher's plate. Her whole foot must be on or within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.
  - 2) Shoulders must be in line with first and third base.
  - 3) Hands must be separated.
  - 4) The ball must be held in one hand, either bare or gloved, in front of, at the side of or behind the body.
- b. While in this position, the pitcher must pause to take (or simulate taking) a signal. *Note: The rule does not preclude the pitcher from taking an earlier signal from someone who indicates the desired pitch and/or location nor the pitcher from referring to an arm band prior to complying with Rule 10.2.b*
- c. After receiving the signal, the pitcher's hands must come together for no more than 5 seconds before starting the pitch.

*Note: The hands do not have to come to a complete stop and, therefore, may be moving during the touch.*

**PENALTY (a)-(c) — Illegal pitch (see Rule 10-8).**

## **SECTION 10 — Pitching**

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### **Start of the Pitch — SECTION 10.3.**

The pitch officially begins when the pitcher has taken (or simulated taking) a signal, both hands have touched, and the hands separate.

### **Pitching**

### **Step/Stride — SECTION 10.4.**

In the act of delivering the ball, the pitcher must push off with the pivot/drag foot from the pitcher's plate and take one step/stride forward toward the batter, on or within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate.

- a. The rear, pivot/drag foot must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate at all times before the forward step.
- b. It is not a step if the pitcher turns her pivot/drag foot to push off or slides her foot across the pitcher's plate, provided contact with the plate is maintained. No rocking or lifting movement that pulls the foot off the pitcher's plate is allowed.
- c. Having pushed off from the pitcher's plate, the rear pivot/drag foot must stay in contact with the ground without creating a second push-off point before the stride foot lands.
  - 1) No leaping is allowed. The pitcher may not become airborne on the initial drive from the pitcher's plate. The rear foot must slide/drag on the ground.
  - 2) No crow hopping is allowed. The pitcher may not replant, gain a second starting point and push off her pivot/drag foot. Once having lost contact with the pitcher's plate, the drag foot may trail on the ground but not bear weight again until the pitch is released.

### **PENALTY (a)-(c) — Illegal pitch (see Rule 10-8)**

### **The Windup — SECTION 10.5.**

The pitcher may use any windup desired providing she does not, after having taken the signal and brought her hands together:

- a. Make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.
- b. Separate her hands and then return the ball to both hands.
- c. Stop and change direction more than twice.
- d. Allow the arm to pass the vertical plane of the ear (whether the windup begins with the pitching arm going forward or backward, it may not pass the vertical plane or the ear in either case).

*Note: The pitcher may drop her arm to the side and to the rear before starting her windup. Her pitching hand may go past her hip twice as long as there are not two complete revolutions.*

## **SECTION 10 — Pitching**

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### **PENALTY (a)-(d) — Illegal pitch (see Rule 10-8).**

#### **Delivery — SECTION 10.6.**

In delivering the ball to the batter, the pitcher must comply with the following:

- a. Once the hands have separated and the pitching arm begins its clockwise motion that will result in the release of the pitch, no more than 1½ revolutions of the pitching arm may occur.
- b. The step/stride and delivery of the ball to the batter must take place simultaneously.
- c. The pitched ball must be released underhand.
  - 1) The hand must be below the hip.
  - 2) The wrist must not be farther from the hip than the elbow.
- d. The release of the ball and follow through of the hand and wrist must be forward and past the straight line of the body.
- e. The pitcher may not make another arm revolution after releasing the ball.

### **PENALTY (a)-(d) — Illegal pitch (see Rule 10-8).**

#### **The Pitch**

#### **Dropped During Pitch — SECTION 10.7.**

- a. If the ball accidentally slips from the pitcher's hand during the act of delivering the pitch, the following penalty will be invoked.

**PENALTY — A ball is awarded to the batter, the ball remains in play, and runners may advance with liability to be put out.**

- b. The pitcher shall not deliberately drop, roll or bounce the ball in order to prevent the batter from hitting the pitch.

### **PENALTY — Illegal pitch (see Rule 10-8).**

#### **Illegal Pitch — SECTION 10.8.**

When an illegal pitch occurs, the plate or base umpire shall call it immediately.

- a. The plate umpire calls "Illegal" loud enough for the catcher and batter to hear. The base umpire calls "Illegal" loud enough for nearby players to hear. Failure of players to hear the call shall not void the call.
- b. Simultaneously, the umpire gives the delayed dead ball signal and waits to call "Time/Timeout" until the pitch has reached the plate, or the play on a batted ball has been completed.
  - 1) If the batter contacts the ball and reaches first base safely and each other runner advances at least one base on the batted ball, the play

## **SECTION 10 — Pitching**

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stands, and the illegal pitch is canceled.

- 2) If the batter does not reach first base safely or if any runner fails to advance at least one base the coach of the offensive team may choose the result of the play or the standard penalty for an illegal pitch, which is that a ball is awarded to the batter, and each runner advances one base.
  - 3) If the batter is hit by an illegal pitch, the batter is awarded first base, and each runner advances one base.
  - 4) If ball four is an illegal pitch, the batter is awarded first base, and each runner advances one base.
- c. The umpire who called the illegal pitch shall explain the violation to both the pitcher and her coach.

### **Quick Pitch — SECTION 10.9.**

A quick pitch, intended to catch the batter by surprise, shall be ruled by the plate umpire to be “No pitch.”

**EFFECT — The ball is dead, and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled.**

### **No Pitch — SECTION 10.10.**

“No pitch” shall be declared when:

- a. The pitcher pitches while play is suspended.
- b. A base runner is legitimately off base (i.e., following a foul ball) and the pitcher fails to allow sufficient time for the runner to return.
- c. The pitcher delivers a quick pitch.
- d. A runner is called out for leaving her base before the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand.

**EFFECT (a)-(d) — The ball is dead, and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled.**

- e. A player or coach commits any act (i.e., calls “Time/Timeout” or employs any similar word or phrase) while the ball is live and in play for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher deliver an illegal pitch.

**PENALTY — No pitch (see Rule 10-8) and warning. A repeat of any such act by any member of the team that has been warned shall result in the offender(s) being ejected from the game.**

### **Regulations Governing Pitching Situations**

#### **Aborting a Pitch/Stepping Off the Pitcher’s Plate — SECTION 10.11.**

- b. The pitcher is considered to be in pitching position when she puts both feet on the pitcher’s plate. The pitcher may legally remove herself from

## **SECTION 10 — Pitching**

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the pitching position by stepping backward (not forward or sideways) off the pitcher's plate.

- c. The pitch officially begins and cannot be legally aborted when the pitcher has taken (or simulated taking) a signal, both hands have touched, and the hands have separated.

**PENALTY (a)-(b) – Illegal pitch (see Rule 10-8).**

### **Ball Rotation — SECTION 10.12.**

- a. To start the game, the plate umpire shall have a minimum of two game balls. Once the game has started, additional balls must be furnished (as needed) by a home team or tournament representative. All game balls must meet the specifications of Rule 3-1.
- b. As a general rule, the current game ball is in play until such time as it leaves the playing field or is rejected by an umpire because it is discolored, scuffed or otherwise unsuitable for play. However, each pitcher shall have a choice of game balls at the start of her respective half-inning.
  - 1) If the pitcher does not like the ball she has, she must first hand or toss it to the plate umpire who may then put an alternative ball into the game for play.
  - 2) The pitcher may not hold more than one ball at a time for trial purposes.
  - 3) The game shall not be unduly delayed (e.g., to retrieve a particular ball that has been fouled away from the playing field).

### **Foreign Substance on the Ball/Items on Pitcher — SECTION 10.13.**

- a. The pitcher shall not at any time be allowed to use any moisture or foreign substance on the ball, the pitching hand or fingers or do anything to deface the ball. Neither shall any other player or team personnel apply moisture or a foreign substance to the ball nor do anything to deface the ball. Under the supervision and control of the umpire, powdered resin may be used to dry the hands.

**PENALTY — For the first offense, an illegal pitch (see Rule 10-8) shall be called. On the second offense, the pitcher shall be ejected.**

*Note: This rule is not designed to prohibit the pitcher from going to her mouth inside the pitching circle; however, she must wipe off her hand before toeing the pitcher's plate with either foot.*

- b. The pitcher shall not wear any item on the pitching fingers, hand, wrist forearm or thighs that may be distracting to the batter. This includes a batting glove, sweatband and jewelry of any kind. **Exception:** The

## **SECTION 10 — Pitching**

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pitcher's fingers, hand, wrist, forearm or elbow may be taped for injury, providing such tape is a neutral color.

- c. The pitcher shall not wear clothing items that a batter or umpire considers distracting (e.g., loose lacing on a glove, ball-colored logos).

**PENALTY (b)-(c) — The pitcher shall remove the item upon request of the umpire or be ejected from the game.**

### **Intentionally Pitching at a Batter — SECTION 10.14.**

The pitcher shall not intentionally attempt to hit the batter with a pitch.

**PENALTY — If the plate umpire believes such a violation has occurred, the umpire shall warn the pitcher and both opposing coaches that future violations by any pitcher will be cause for immediate ejection from the game of the pitcher and the head coach. If, in the umpire's judgment, the situation warrants drastic action to diffuse a potentially volatile situation, the umpire may eject the pitcher without first warning her. Each coach should be warned, but the coach of the offending team may be ejected at this time if the umpire believes it is appropriate. A warning may be issued to both teams before the start of the game or at any time during a game.**

### **Intentional Base on Balls — SECTION 10.15.**

If the pitcher intentionally walks a batter, the ball is live and all pitches (including a pitchout) must be legally pitched to the catcher.

**PENALTY — The penalty for not delivering each pitch legally to the catcher is an illegal pitch (see Rule 10-8). *Exception:* Intentionally violating the rule in order to walk the batter without pitching shall not result in a ball being awarded to the batter but each runner shall advance one base without liability to be put out.**

### **Returning a Pitched Ball to the Pitcher — SECTION 10.16.**

The catcher must return the ball directly to the pitcher after each pitch.

*Exceptions:*

1. When there is a runner(s) on base.
2. When the batter becomes a runner.
3. Following a strikeout.
4. Following a putout or an attempted putout made by the catcher.

**PENALTY — A ball shall be awarded to the batter. The ball is dead, and runners may not advance. On the first offense, the umpire shall issue a warning to the offending player. On the second offense, the offender shall be ejected from the game.**

## **SECTION 10 — Pitching**

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### **Throwing to a Base From the Pitcher's Plate — SECTION 10.17.**

The pitcher shall not throw to a base during a live ball while her foot is in contact with the pitcher's plate after she has taken the pitching position. If the throw from the pitcher's plate occurs during a live-ball appeal play, the appeal is canceled.

*Note: The pitcher may remove herself from the pitching position by stepping backward off the pitcher's plate before separating her hands.*

**PENALTY — Illegal pitch (see Rule 10-8).**

### **Time Allowed Between Pitches — SECTION 10.18.**

The pitcher must be on the pitcher's plate and the batter in the batter's box within 10 seconds after the pitcher receives the ball or after the umpire calls "Play ball". After both the pitcher and batter are in position, the pitcher has 5 seconds to begin her pitching motion.

**PENALTY — If 5 seconds have elapsed and the pitcher has not yet pitched, an additional ball shall be awarded to the batter. If two minutes have elapsed and the pitcher has not yet pitched, a forfeited game shall be declared by the umpire in favor of the team at bat.**

**Exception:** Intentionally violating the rule in order to walk the batter without pitching shall not result in a ball being awarded to the batter, but each runner shall advance one base without liability to be put out. On the first offense, the umpire shall issue a warning to the offending player. On the second offense, the offending player shall be ejected from the game.

### **Warm-Up Pitches Allowed — SECTION 10.19.**

- a. At the beginning of each half-inning, not more than 1 minute may be used to throw no more than five warm-up pitches. Play shall be suspended during this time.
- b. After a pitching change, a relief pitcher may throw no more than five warm-up pitches. Play shall be suspended during this time. A pitcher shall not be allowed warm-up pitches if returning to pitch in the same half-inning.

**PENALTY (a)-(b) — A ball shall be awarded to the batter for each warm-up pitch in excess of five. Exception: This penalty does not apply if the umpire delays the start of play for any reason.**

- c. After injury to a pitcher, the plate umpire must allow the relief pitcher adequate time to warm up. Play shall be suspended during this time.
- d. The plate umpire must give the pitcher adequate time to warm up after any substantial delay due to inclement weather, etc. After shorter delays for substitution and conferences, the pitcher must be ready to pitch when the umpire calls, "Play/Play ball."

## **SECTION 11 — Batting**

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### **Batter**

#### **On-Deck Batter — SECTION 11.1.**

- a. The on-deck batter is restricted to the on-deck circle.
- b. The on-deck batter must wear an approved helmet with face mask and chin strap.
- c. The game bat or warm-up bat with no attachments used by the on-deck batter must meet the specifications of Rule 3-3.
- d. The on-deck batter may leave the on-deck circle to take her turn in the batter's box, to direct a teammate attempting to score or to avoid interfering with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play.

**PENALTY — If the on-deck batter interferes with a defensive player attempting to field a fly ball, the ball is dead, the batter shall be declared out, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

**If the on-deck batter interferes with a defensive player attempting to make a play on a runner, the ball is dead, the runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out, and each other runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

### **Batting**

#### **Legal Position in the Batter's Box — SECTION 11.2.**

- a. The batter must take her position in the batter's box within 10 seconds after being directed by the plate umpire.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead. A strike is called. The batter is declared out after the third strike regardless of the pitch.**

- b. The batter must have both feet completely within the lines of the batter's box. No part of a foot may be on or outside the lines until the pitch is released.

**PENALTY — If the umpire sees a line violation before the start of the pitch, the umpire shall call "Time/Timeout" and direct the batter to get into the box. If the batter fails to comply within 10 seconds, a strike is called. No pitch has to be thrown. The ball is dead.**

- c. Once the pitcher has taken (or simulated taking) a signal, both hands have touched, and the hands have separated, she must deliver the pitch, and the batter shall not leave her position in the batter's box.

**PENALTY — If the batter steps out of the box or holds up her hand or uses any other action as if requesting time and the pitcher legally delivers the ball, it shall be called a ball or strike, depending upon the location of the**

## SECTION 11 — Batting

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pitch. The ball remains live.

If the pitcher stops or hesitates in her delivery as a result of the batter stepping out of the box, holding up her hand or using any other action as if requesting time, it shall not be an illegal pitch. However, both the pitcher and the batter have violated the rule. The umpire shall call "Time/Timeout," declare "No pitch" and begin play again.

If the umpire judges the batter's action to be a deliberate attempt to create an illegal pitch, the ball is dead, "No pitch" is called, and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled. A warning shall be issued to the batter and to the offending team. A repeat of this type of act by any member of the team warned shall result in the offender being ejected from the game.

d. At the moment of bat-ball contact, the batter may not hit/bunt/slap a ball fair or foul when any part of the foot is touching home plate, even though she may be touching the lines of the batter's box. In addition, the batter may not hit/bunt/slap a ball fair or foul when an entire foot is touching the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box.

**PENALTY — The batter shall be declared out immediately, whether the ball is fair or foul. The ball is dead.**

*Notes:*

1. *The batter's feet may not leave the box before bat-ball contact.*
2. *The batter's hands may leave the bat before bat-ball contact.*
3. *In cases where there are no batter's box lines evident, good judgment must be used and the benefit of any doubt must go to the batter.*

### **Balls and Strikes — SECTION 11.3.**

- a. **Strike zone.** Any part of the ball passing through any part of the strike zone is a strike unless the ball touches the ground before reaching home plate.
- 1) The pitch shall be judged to be a strike or a ball as it crosses home plate, not where it is caught by the catcher.
  - 2) The plate umpire shall determine if the pitch is a strike or a ball in relation to the batter's natural position as the pitch crosses home plate.
- b. **Called ball.** A ball is awarded to the batter:
- 1) When a legal pitch that is not struck at by the batter does not enter the strike zone on the fly, touches the ground before reaching home plate or touches home plate.

*Note: If a pitched ball strikes the ground in front of the batter and the batter swings at it, the ball is in play if hit and a strike if missed.*

## **SECTION 11 — Batting**

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c. **Called Strike.** A strike is charged to the batter:

- 1) For each legally pitched ball that enters the strike zone without first touching the ground. Any part of the ball passing over any part of the plate, from the top of the kneecaps to under the batter's forward armpit is a strike.
- 2) For each legally pitched ball that is swung at by the batter and missed.

**EFFECT (1)-(2) — The ball is live, and each runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

- 3) For each foul tip.

**EFFECT — The ball is live, and each runner may advance with liability to be put out. The batter is out if it is the third strike.**

- 4) For each foul ball when the batter has fewer than two strikes.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, and each runner must return, without liability to be put out, to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

- 5) When the batter bunts foul after the second strike.

**EFFECT — If the bunt attempt is caught in the air, the ball is live. If the bunt attempt results in a foul ball not legally caught, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and each runner must return, without liability to be put out, to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

- 6) For each pitched ball swung at and missed that touches any part of the batter.
- 7) For each batted ball that touches any part of the batter's person or clothing when she is in the batter's box and has fewer than two strikes.

- 8) For each pitch that hits the batter while the ball is in the strike zone.

**EFFECT (6)-(8) — The ball is dead, and runners may not advance. Each runner must return, without liability to be put out, to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

- 9) When the batter fails to take her position in the batter's box within 10 seconds after being directed to by the plate umpire.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead. No pitch has to be thrown. A strike is called. Each runner must remain on the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

**Fair Ball — SECTION 11.4.**

A fairly batted ball shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not with respect to the position of the fielder (on fair or foul ground) at the time the ball is contacted. A legally batted ball shall be judged fair if:

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- a. The ball settles or is touched on or over fair territory (including home plate) between home plate and first base or between home plate and third base.
- b. The ball, while on or over fair territory (including home plate), touches the person, attached equipment or clothing of a player or umpire.
- c. The ball touches first, second or third base, unless it was previously touched by a fielder or runner while the ball was in foul territory.
- d. The ball bounds over or past first base or third base regardless of where the ball hits after passing the base.
- e. The ball first falls or is first touched on or over fair territory beyond first or third base.
- f. The ball in flight hits the foul pole or while over fair territory passes out of the playing field beyond the home run fence.

*Note: If a batted ball hits the top of the fence while in fair territory and then bounces over the fence, it is a home run.*

### **Foul Ball — SECTION 11.5.**

A foul fly, line drive or grounder shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not with respect to the position of the fielder at the time the ball is contacted. A legally batted ball shall be judged foul if:

- a. The ball touches the batter or touches the dirt of home plate and then hits the batter while she is still within the batter's box.
- b. The ball touches the bat or touches the dirt of home plate and then hits the bat a second time while it is still in the batter's possession and the batter is still within the batter's box.
- c. The ball settles on or is touched on or over foul territory between home plate and first base or between home plate and third base.
- d. The ball, while on or over foul territory, touches the person, attached equipment or clothing of a player or umpire or any object foreign to the natural playing surface.
- e. The ball bounds or rolls past first base or third base on or over foul territory.
- f. The ball first falls or is touched on or over foul territory beyond first or third base.

### **Foul Tip — SECTION 11.6.**

- a. A batted ball that stays below the top of the batter's head travels directly from the bat to the catcher's hand or glove/mitt and is legally caught by the catcher.

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*Note: Any batted ball that travels directly from the bat, not higher than the batter's head, to any part of the catcher's body or equipment other than the hand(s) or glove/mitt is a foul ball and dead. It is not a foul tip.*

b. A runner may advance from one base to another on a foul tip without tagging. The foul tip is treated as if it were a swing and miss.

**EFFECT (a)-(b) — A strike is charged to the batter, the ball is live and each runner may advance with liability to be put out. The batter is out if it is the third strike.**

### **Hits, Bunts, Slaps — SECTION 11.7.**

- a. **Hit.** A hit is legally batted fair ball.
- 1) No intent to bat the ball is necessary.
  - 2) The batter becomes a batter-runner as soon as she legally hits a fair ball.
  - 3) The ball is live
  - 4) The batter is liable to be put out.
  - 5) Base runners advance with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.
  - 6) If a fair-hit ball should touch a runner or umpire while still in flight, thereafter, it shall be considered a ground ball. It cannot be caught as fly ball.
- b. **Bunt.** A bunt is a legally batted ball not swung at but intentionally tapped with the bat.
- 1) 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 away from the ball.
  - 2) On a missed bunt attempt with two strikes, the dropped third strike rule applies.
  - 3) If, with less than two strikes, the batter's attempt to bunt results in a foul ball not legally caught, it is a strike, and the ball is dead. With two strikes, however, the batter is declared out, and the ball is dead.
  - 4) A bunt that is caught in the air remains live and in play regardless of the number of strikes on the batter and whether it is fair or foul.
- c. **Slap.** A slap hit is a batted ball that has been struck with a short, chopping motion rather than with a full swing. A ball that is slapped foul is treated like any other foul ball and shall not result in an out unless caught in flight.

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### Regulations Governing Batting

#### **Bat — SECTION 11.8.**

- a. **Altered bat.** A batter shall not take an altered bat into the batter's box. Any bat that, in the umpire's judgment, has been altered so as to affect the distance factor or cause an unusual reaction on the softball shall be removed from the game (i.e., not returned to the dugout). Inserting material into the bat, replacing its handle or knob, or applying excessive (more than two) layers of tape constitute altering a bat. Replacing a legal grip with another legal grip does not render the bat altered.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead. The batter shall be declared out and ejected from the game. Each runner must return to the last base legally occupied. The bat shall be removed from the game (i.e., not returned to the dugout).**

- b. **Broken bat.** If the bat breaks and a part of it is hit by the batted ball in fair territory or a part of it hits a runner or a fielder, the ball remains live. It is not interference. If a part of the bat is touched by the batted ball in foul territory, it is a foul ball.
- c. **Illegal bat.** A batter shall not take an illegal bat into the batter's box. An illegal bat is a bat that does not meet acceptable specifications (i.e., particular weight, length, barrel diameter, material limits) set forth in Rue 3-2.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead. The batter shall be declared out. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied. The bat shall be removed from the game (i.e., not returned to the dugout).**

- d. **Thrown bat.** If a whole bat is thrown into fair territory, whether intentionally or not, and it interferes with a defensive player attempting to make a play, interference shall be called.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, the batter is out and base runners shall not advance. If, in the umpire's judgment, interference prevented a possible double play, two outs may be declared. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

#### **Batted Ball Off Batter, Attached Equipment, Clothing — SECTION 11.9.**

When a batted ball hits the batter or hits the dirt or home plate and then hits the batter, the ball is dead immediately.

**EFFECT — If the batter is in the batter's box, a foul ball is called, a strike is charged to the batter if she has fewer than two strikes, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

**If the batter is out of the batter's box and the ball is considered fair, the batter is declared out, and each runner must return to the base legally oc-**

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cupied at the time of the pitch.

If the batter is out of the batter's box and the ball is considered foul, a foul ball is called, a strike is charged to the batter if she has fewer than two strikes, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

When the batter is:	And the batted ball is:	The effect is:
In the box	Fair or foul	Foul ball
Out of the box	Foul	Foul ball
Out of the box	Fair	Batter out

### Batting Order — SECTION 11.10.

The batting order that is delivered to the plate umpire must be followed throughout the game, except that a starting player may be replaced by a substitute who must take the place of the starting player in the batting order. In addition, if the FLEX bats for the DP, she assumes the DP's spot in the batting order until the DP returns or the DP's sub enter the game. The first batter. The first batter listed on each team's lineup card shall lead off her respective team's half of the first inning. After the first inning, the first (leadoff) batter in each inning shall be the player whose name follows that of the last batter who completed her full term at bat in the preceding inning. If the third out in an inning is made before a batter completes her turn at bat, she shall be the first batter in the next inning; she shall start with a 0-0 count.

### Batting out of Order — SECTION 11.11.

- A player is batting out of order when she fails to bat in proper sequence as listed on the official lineup card.
- Batting out of order is an appeal play that may be made only by the defensive team. The defensive team forfeits its right to appeal batting out of order when one legal or illegal pitch has been made to the following batter or when the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.
- The penalty for batting out of order varies depending upon when the infraction is reported to the plate umpire.

**PENALTY (a)-(c) — If the error is reported while the incorrect batter is at bat, the correct batter may take her place and legally assume any balls and strikes. Any runs scored or bases advanced while the incorrect batter was at bat shall be legal.**

*Note: The offensive team may correct a wrong batter at the plate with no penalty.*

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If the error is reported after the incorrect batter has completed her turn at bat and before a legal or illegal pitch has been delivered to the following batter or before the pitcher and all infielders clearly have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory: (a) the player who should have batted is out; (b) any advance or score made because of a ball batted by the improper batter or because of the improper batter's advance to first base as a result of obstruction, an error, a hit batter, walk, dropped third strike or a base hit shall be nullified; (c) the next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player called out for failing to bat; and (d) if the batter declared out under these circumstances is the third out, the correct batter in the next inning shall be the player who would have come to bat had the player been put out.

If the error is reported after the first legal or illegal pitch to the next batter or after the pitcher and all infielders clearly have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory: (a) the turn at bat of the incorrect batter is legal, (b) all runs scored and bases run are legal and (c) the next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player that was scheduled to bat.

*Notes:*

1. *Players who have not batted and who have not been called out have lost their turn at bat until reached again in the regular order.*
2. *No runner shall be removed from the base she is occupying except the batter who has been taken off the base by the plate umpire as in the penalty above to bat in her proper place. She merely misses her turn at bat with no penalty. The batter following her in the batting order becomes the legal batter.*
3. *The announcer shall announce the players as listed on the lineup card. The public-address announcer, umpires or official scorer shall not call attention to the improper batter. If this occurs, the plate umpire shall warn the public-address announcer and/or the official scorer that on the next infraction he/she will be removed from that position.*

### **Checked Swing — SECTION 11.12.**

- a. A pitched ball should be called a strike if it is in the strike zone, regardless of whether or not the batter checked her swing.
- b. A pitched ball should be called a ball if the plate umpire is in doubt or blocked out, regardless of whether or not the batter checked her swing.
- c. If the plate umpire calls the pitch a ball and the catcher requests help, the plate umpire may ask for help.

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*Note: As a general rule, there are four factors when attempting to determine if a batter has swung at the ball or checked the swing: (1) Did she roll her wrists? (2) Did she swing through the ball and bring the bat back or draw the bat back before the pitch arrived? (3) Was the bat out in front of the body? (4) Did she make an attempt to hit/bunt/slap the pitch?*

### **Dropped Third Strike Rule — SECTION 11.13.**

- a. When the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground, the batter is automatically out if there are fewer than two outs and first base is occupied. The ball is live, and base runners may advance with liability to be put out.
- b. When the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground, the batter is not out if there are two outs, or there are fewer than two outs, and first base is unoccupied. The ball is live, the batter becomes a batter-runner with liability to be put out, and base runners advance with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.
- c. In 8 and under play, a dropped third strike the batter is out, but the ball remains live for runners who can advance or steal.

### **Hitting Ball a Second Time — SECTION 11.14.**

- a. The batter may not, after hitting/bunting/slapping a fair ball, contact the ball with the bat a second time in fair territory.

**PENALTY — If the bat is still in the batter's hand(s) when the ball is contacted a second time and the batter is in the batter's box, the ball is dead, a foul ball is ruled, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

**If the bat is still in the batter's hand(s) when the ball is contacted a second time and the batter is out of the batter's box, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

**If the bat is out of the batter's hand(s) (on the ground), the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory and, in the umpire's judgment, there was no intent to interfere with the course of the ball, the ball is live. If it stops or is touched in fair territory, it is a fair ball. If the ball touches the bat in fair territory and then rolls to foul ground and stops, it is a foul ball. If the ball rolls against the bat in foul territory, it is a foul ball regardless.**

**If the bat is out of the batter's hand(s) (dropped or thrown) and it hits the ball in fair territory, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

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### Hitting the Ball a Second Time

Batter	Bat	Batted Ball	Penalty/Effect
In box	In hands	Fair or foul	Foul ball
Out of box	In hands	Fair	Batter out
Out of box	In hands	Foul (accidental)	Foul ball
Out of box	In hands	Foul (intentional)	Batter out
In/out of box	Out of hands (ball hits bat)	Fair	Live
In/out of box	Out of hands (ball hits bat)	Foul	Foul ball
In/out of box	Out of hands (bat hits ball)	Fair	Batter out
In/out of box	Out of hands (bat hits ball)	Foul (accidental)	Foul ball
In/out of box	Out of hands (bat hits ball)	Foul (intentional)	Batter out

- b. The batter may not, after hitting/bunting/slapping a foul ball, intentionally deflect the course of the ball in any manner while running to first, or intentionally interfere with the catcher's attempt to field a third strike.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, the batter is out, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

- c. The batter may not swing and miss a pitched ball and then accidentally hit it on the follow-through or after it bounces off the catcher or her glove/mitt.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. The pitch is a strike. The batter is declared out if the pitch was a third strike; otherwise, she remains at bat. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

- d. The batter may not swing and miss a pitched ball and then intentionally hit it on a second swing or after it bounces off the catcher or her glove/mitt.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, the batter is declared out, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

#### Hit Batter (by Pitch) – SECTION 11.15.

- a. A batter is awarded first base when a pitched ball neither swung at nor called a strike touches any part of the batter's person or clothing while she is in the batter's box.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. The batter is entitled to first base without liability to be put out. Runners may not advance unless forced.**

#### Notes:

1. It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter.
2. The batter's hands are not considered part of the bat.
3. If a batter swings and the ball hits her hands which sends it into fair or foul territory, the ball is dead and a strike is called on the batter.

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b. The hit batter shall not be awarded first base under the following circumstances:

- 1) The batter made no attempt to avoid the pitch or obviously tried to get hit by the pitch.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead, the pitch is a ball or strike (depending on its location), and the batter remains at bat, except the batter is declared out if the pitch was a third strike or the batter is awarded first base if the pitch was “ball four.”. Runners advance if forced.**

*Note: The benefit of any doubt must go to the batter.*

- 2) The batter is hit by a pitch in the strike zone.

**EFFECT—The ball is dead. The pitch is a strike. The batter is declared out if the pitch was a third strike; otherwise, she remains at bat. Each runner must return, without liability to be put out, to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

- 3) The pitched ball touches any part of the batter’s person as she swings and misses for a third strike.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, the batter is declared out and each runner must return, without liability to be put out, to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

c. The pitcher shall not intentionally attempt to hit the batter with a pitch.

**PENALTY — The umpire shall warn the pitcher and both opposing coaches that future violations by any pitcher will be cause for immediate ejection of the pitcher and the head coach. If, in the umpire’s judgment, the situation warrants drastic action to diffuse a potentially volatile situation, the umpire may eject the pitcher without first warning her. Each coach should be warned, but the coach of the offending team may be ejected at this time if the umpire believes it is appropriate. A warning may be issued to both teams before the start of the game or at any time during a game.**

### **Illegally Batted Ball — SECTION 11.16.**

An illegally batted ball occurs when the batter hits/bunts/slaps the ball fair or foul and:

- a. Either one or both of the batter’s feet are in contact with the ground entirely outside the lines of the batter’s box.
- b. Any part of the batter’s foot is touching home plate, even though she may be touching the lines of the batter’s box.

**PENALTY (a)-(b) — The ball is dead. The batter shall be declared out immediately, regardless of whether the ball is fair or foul.**

*Note for (a) and (b): In cases where there are no batter’s box lines evident,*

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*good judgment must be used, and the benefit of any doubt must go to the batter.*

c. An altered bat is used.

**PENALTY — The batter shall be declared out and ejected from the game. Base runners shall not advance. The bat shall be removed from the game.**

d. An illegal bat is used.

**PENALTY — The batter shall be declared out. Base runners shall not advance. The bat shall be removed from the game.**

### **Infield Fly Rule — SECTION 11.17.**

The infield fly rule is in effect when the batter hits a fair fly ball (not including a line drive or an attempted bunt) that can be caught by an infielder with ordinary effort when first and second base; or first, second and third bases are occupied and there are less than two outs.

**EFFECT — The ball is live. The batter-runner is out if the batted ball is fair. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out after the ball is caught. Each runner may tag up and advance once the batted ball is touched (before it is caught); the same as on any caught fly ball. If a declared infield fly is dropped intentionally or allowed to fall untouched, the ball is live, the batter-runner is out, and each runner may advance with liability to be put out. A runner need not retouch her base(s).**

*Notes:*

- 1. When it seems apparent that a batted ball will be an infield fly, the umpire shall immediately declare, "Infield fly, the batter is out" for the benefit of the runners. If the ball is near the foul line, the umpire shall declare, "Infield fly, the batter is out if fair."*
- 2. The infield fly is ruled when the ball reaches its highest point based on the position of the closest infielder regardless of who makes the play.*
- 3. Any defensive player who positions herself on the infield at the start of the pitch shall be considered an infielder for the purpose of this rule.*
- 4. If a declared infield fly becomes a foul ball, it is treated the same as any foul.*

### **Intentionally Dropped Fair Fly Ball — SECTION 11.18.**

- a. An intentionally dropped ball is a batted ball that is legally and actually caught and then deliberately dropped. A ball that is guided to the ground should not be considered an intentionally dropped ball. A ball that is trapped shall not be considered as having been intentionally dropped.
- b. An infielder may not intentionally drop a fair fly ball, a line drive or a

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bunt when there are less than two outs and runners are on first; first and second; first and third; or first, second and third.

**PENALTY (a)-(b) — The ball is dead, the batter is declared out, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

**Exception:** The batter is not out if the infielder permits the ball in flight to drop untouched to the ground, except when the infield fly rule applies. If an infield fly is ruled, it has precedence over an intentionally dropped ball.

**Stepping Out of the Box — SECTION 11.19.**

a. The batter shall not step from one batter's box to the other while the pitcher is in the pitching position.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, the batter is declared out, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

b. The batter shall not leave her position in the batter's box when the pitcher is in pitching position on the pitcher's plate unless permission is granted by the umpire.

**PENALTY — The batter leaves the batter's box at the risk of having a strike delivered, unless she requests and is granted "Time/Timeout" from the plate umpire. If the plate umpire does not suspend play as requested by the batter and the pitcher legally delivers the pitch, it shall be called a ball or strike depending upon the location of the pitch. The ball remains live.**

c. Once the pitcher has take the sign and started her windup (brought her hands together and separated them), she must deliver the pitch, and the batter shall not leave her position in the batter's box.

**PENALTY — If the batter steps out of the box, holds up her hand or uses any other action as if requesting time and the pitcher legally delivers the pitch, it shall be called a ball or strike, depending upon the location of the pitch. The ball remains live.**

If the pitcher stops or hesitates in her delivery as a result of the batter stepping out of the box, holding up her hand or using any other action as if requesting time, it shall not be an illegal pitch. However, both the pitcher and the batter have violated the rule. The plate umpire shall call "Time/Timeout," declare "No pitch" and begin play again.

If the umpire judges the batter's action to be a deliberate attempt to create an illegal pitch, the ball is dead, "No pitch" is called, and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled. A warning shall be issued to the batter and to the offending team. A repeat of this type of act by any member of the team warned shall result in the offender being ejected from the game.

d. The batter shall not hinder the catcher from catching or throwing the ball by stepping out of the batter's box or intentionally hinder the

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catcher (e.g., on a steal/pickoff throw or a play at the plate) while standing within the batter's box.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, the batter is out, and each runner must return to the last base that in the umpire's judgment was legally touched at the time of the interference.**

**Exceptions:**

1. If a runner is advancing to home plate and there are fewer than two outs, the runner, instead of the batter, is out. The ball is dead.
2. If the batter strikes out and interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw out a runner, the runner also is out. The ball is dead.

**Batter is Out — SECTION 11.20.**

The batter is out when:

- a. The on-deck batter or any other member of the team at bat interferes with a defensive player attempting to field a fly ball.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

- b. The batter enters the batter's box with or is discovered using an altered bat.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead. The batter is ejected. The bat shall be removed from the game. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

- c. The batter enters the batter's box with or is discovered using an illegal bat.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. The bat shall be removed from the game. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

- d. The offense bats out of order, and the defense challenges the action after the incorrect batter has completed her turn at bat and before a legal or illegal pitch has been made to the following batter or before the pitcher and all infielders clearly have vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. Any advance or score made because of a ball batted by the incorrect batter or because of the incorrect batter's advance to first base as a result of obstruction, an error, a hit batter, a walk, a dropped third strike or a base hit, shall be nullified. The next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player called out for failing to bat.**

- e. The batter's entire foot is touching the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box at the moment of bat-ball contact, whether the ball is fair or foul.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. Each runner must return to the base legally**

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**occupied at the time of the pitch.**

*Note: In cases where there are no batter's box lines evident, good judgment must be used, and the benefit of any doubt must go to the batter.*

f. Any part of the batter's foot is touching home plate at the moment of bat-ball contact, whether the ball is fair or foul.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

g. The batter throws the whole bat into fair territory, whether intentionally or not, and it interferes with a defensive player attempting to make a play.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. If, in the umpire's judgment, interference prevented a possible double play, two runners may be declared out.**

h. A batted ball hits the batter, or hits the dirt of home plate and then hits the batter when the batter is out of the batter's box, and the batted ball is considered fair.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

i. The batter hits a fair ball with the bat a second time in fair territory.

**EFFECT — If the batter is out of the batter's box and the bat is still in the batter's hand(s) when the ball is contacted a second time, the ball is dead. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. Exception: If the batter is standing in the batter's box and contact is made while the bat is in the batter's hand(s), a foul ball is ruled even if the ball is hit a second time over fair territory.**

**If the bat is out of the batter's hand(s) (dropped or thrown) and it hits (lands on) the ball in fair territory, the ball is dead. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

*Note: If the batter drops the bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory, and, in the umpire's judgment, there was no intent to interfere with the course of the ball, the batter is not out, and the ball is live and in play.*

j. The batter swings and misses a pitched ball and then intentionally hits it on a second swing or after it bounces off the catcher or her glove/mitt.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

k. The batter bunts foul after the second strike.

**EFFECT — If the bunt attempt is caught in the air, the ball is live. Runners**

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may tag and advance with liability to be put out.

If the bunt attempt results in a foul ball not legally caught, the ball is dead. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

l. The batter's third strike is a foul tip.

**EFFECT — The ball is live. Runners may advance without tagging but with liability to be put out.**

m. A called or swinging third strike is legally caught by the catcher.

**EFFECT — The ball is live. Runners may advance with liability to be put out.**

n. The catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground when there are fewer than two outs and first base is occupied.

**EFFECT — The ball is live. Runners may advance with liability to be put out.**

o. A pitched ball touches any part of the batter's person, including her hands, as she swings and misses for a third strike.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

p. The batter, with two strikes, is hit by a pitch in the strike zone, makes no attempt to avoid a pitch in the strike zone or obviously tries to get hit by the pitch.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

q. The batter hinders the catcher from catching or throwing the ball by stepping out of the batter's box or intentionally hinders the catcher (e.g., on a steal/pickoff throw or a play at the plate) while standing within the batter's box.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, the batter is out, and each runner must return to the last base that, in the umpire's judgment, was legally touched at the time of the interference.**

**Exceptions:**

1. If a runner is advancing to home plate and there are fewer than two outs, the runner, instead of the batter, is out. The ball is dead.

2. If the batter strikes out and interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw out a runner, the runner also is out. The ball is dead.

r. The batter steps from one batter's box to the other while the pitcher is in the position ready to pitch.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

## **SECTION 12 — Base Running**

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### **8 & Under only**

Runners starting at first or second base are entitled to advance or steal one base only per pitch with liability to be put out. Runners starting at third base may not steal or advance home but are liable to be put out if they come off the base.

- a. A runner, attempting to advance beyond the one base they are entitled to advance or steal, may be put out while between bases. A runner cannot be put out while in sole contact with a base.
- b. After all play ceases, and the ball becomes dead, if a runner occupies a base beyond the one the runner was entitled to advance or steal, the runner will be returned to the correct base without liability to be put out.
- c. If a batter strikes out and the ball is dropped, the batter is out and cannot advance to first base, but the ball remains live for the purpose of throwing the advancing runner out.
- d. A batter, who receives a base on ball, cannot advance past first base. If the batter-runner advances further, once the ball becomes dead, return the batter-runner to first base.
- e. The Infield fly rule is not used for 8 & under.

### **Batter-Runner**

#### **Double First Base—SECTION 12**

When using the double first base, the following rules will be in effect:

- a. A batted ball hitting the white portion is declared fair and a batted ball hitting the orange portion is declared foul.
- b. Whenever a play is being made on the batter-runner, from home to first running through the bag, the defense must use the white portion and the batter-runner the orange portion.
- c. On any force out attempt from the foul side of first base, or an errant throw pulling the defense into foul ground, the batter-runner can use either the white or orange portion. The defense must use the white portion of the base.
- d. On extra base hits or balls hit to the outfield when there is no play being made at the double base, the batter-runner may touch the white or orange portion. Should the batter-runner return, the runner must return to the white portion.
- e. When tagging up on a fly ball, the white portion must be used.
- f. On an attempted pick-off play, the runner must return to the white portion.
- g. The defense can never use the orange portion (or safety base). The

## **SECTION 12 — Base Running**

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white portion is the regular first base. The orange portion is the safety base even though some may be white in color.

### **Batter Becomes a Batter-Runner — SECTION 12.1.**

The batter becomes a batter-runner with liability to be put out:

- a. When the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground with two outs or when there are fewer than two outs, and first base is unoccupied. This is called the dropped third strike rule (Rule 12-14).

*Note: If the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground with fewer than two outs and first base occupied, the batter is automatically out; the ball is live; and each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.*

- b. After a legally batted fair ball that is not blocked.
- c. When a fair batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of a runner or an umpire after touching an infielder (including the pitcher).

*Note: If said ball touches the runner/umpire while still in flight, thereafter, it shall be considered a ground ball. It cannot be caught as a fly ball.*

- d. When a fair batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of a runner or an umpire after passing an infielder (other than the pitcher), and no other infielder had a chance to make a play.

**EFFECT (a)-(d) — The ball is live. The batter becomes a batter-runner and advances with liability to be put out. Each base runner advances with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.**

### **Base Awards — SECTION 12.2.**

- a. **First base.** The batter is awarded first base with no liability to be put out:

- 1) After “ball four.”

**EFFECT — The ball is live, unless blocked. The batter may advance beyond first base with liability to be put out. If forced, each base runner advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each base runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

- 2) After catcher obstruction.

**EFFECT — Delayed dead ball.**

**If the batter contacts the ball and reaches first base safely and each other runner has advanced at least one base on the batted ball, catcher obstruction is canceled. All action as a result of the batted ball stands, and no option is given. Once a runner has passed a base, she is considered to**

## **SECTION 12 — Base Running**

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have reached that base even if she missed it. No option is given.

If the batter does not reach first base or if one of the other runners does not advance at least one base, the coach of the offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play. If the coach does not take the result of the play:

- a) The batter becomes a batter-runner and is awarded first base.
- b) If forced, each other base runner advances one base without liability to be put out. If not forced, each other base runner returns to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.

*Note: If a batter, during preliminary loosening-up swings, hits the catcher or the catcher's glove/mitt during the back swing, the umpire should immediately call "Time/Timeout" and not obstruction. Catcher's obstruction should be called only on the batter's attempt to make contact with the pitch. The pitch or swing should not be allowed, since the batter's concentration or rhythm could be affected.*

- 3) When a pitched ball, not swung at or called a strike, touches any part of the batter's person or clothing while she is in the batter's box. It doesn't 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. **Exception:** If the batter makes no attempt to avoid being hit by the pitch, or obviously tries to get hit by the pitch, a "Ball" or "Strike" is called (depending upon the ball's location). The batter stays at bat unless the pitch was a third strike (the batter is declared out), or the pitch was ball four (the batter is awarded first base). The benefit of any doubt must go to the batter.
- 4) When a fair-batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of an umpire before touching an infielder (including the pitcher) or passing an infielder (other than a pitcher), who has a reasonable chance to make a play.
- 5) When a fair-batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of an umpire after passing an infielder (including the pitcher), and another fielder had a chance to make a play.
- 6) When a runner intentionally kicks the ball that an infielder has missed.

**EFFECT (3)-(6) — The ball is dead, and the batter is awarded first base. Each base runner, if forced, advances one base with no liability to be put out. If not forced, each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

**EFFECT (4)-(6) — The batter is credited with a base hit.**

## **SECTION 12 — Base Running**

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- 7) When a fair-batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of a runner before touching an infielder (including the pitcher) or passing an infielder (other than a pitcher) that has a reasonable chance to make a play.
- 8) When a fair-batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of a runner after passing an infielder (including the pitcher), and another fielder had a chance to make a play.

**EFFECT (7)-(8) — The batter becomes a batter-runner and is awarded first base and credited with a base hit.**

**If off base when struck by a fair ball, the runner is out, and each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the base she legally touched at the time of the interference. If forced, each other runner advances one base without liability to be put out. The ball is dead.**

**If on base when struck by a fair ball, the runner is not out. The ball is live or dead, depending on the position of the fielder closest to the base. If the closest defensive player is in front of the base the runner is in contact with, the ball is live. However, if the closest defensive player is behind the base, the ball is dead. If forced, each runner advances one base with no liability to be put out. If unforced, each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

- b. **Second base.** The batter is awarded second base with no liability to be put out:
  - 1) When a fielder intentionally contacts or catches a thrown ball with her cap, helmet, mask, chest protector, glove/mitt or any part of her uniform that is detached from its proper place on her person.

**EFFECT — Delayed dead ball. The batter-runner and each base runner are entitled to advance two bases from the time of the throw but may advance farther with liability to be put out.**

- 2) When a fair batted ball touches loose equipment belonging to the defense.
- 3) When a fair-batted ball bounces over, wedges under or passes through a fence or any designated boundary of the playing field, or becomes blocked.
- 4) When a fair-batted ball lodges in the fence, or in shrubbery or vines on the fence.
- 5) When a fair batted ball deflects off a defensive player and crosses into dead-ball territory; or passes an infielder (excluding the pitcher), deflects off a runner or umpire, and crosses into dead-ball territory, provided no other infielder has a chance to make a play.

## **SECTION 12 — Base Running**

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**EFFECT (2)-(5) — The ball is dead. The batter is awarded second base and credited with a two-base hit (double). Each other base runner is awarded two bases from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

c. **Third base.** The batter is awarded third base with no liability to be put out:

- 1) When a fielder intentionally contacts or catches a fair batted ball with her cap, helmet, mask, chest protector, glove/mitt or any part of her uniform that is detached from its proper place on her person.
- 2) When an illegal catch or touch is made on a batted ball that in the opinion of the umpire might become fair.

**EFFECT (1)-(2) — Delayed dead ball. The batter is awarded third base and credited with a three-base hit (triple) but may advance farther with liability to be put out. Each other base runner is awarded home plate.**

d. **Home plate.** The batter is awarded home plate with no liability to be put out:

- 1) When a fair-batted fly ball strikes the foul pole above the fence level or leaves the playing field in fair territory without touching the ground or going through the fence.
- 2) An illegal catch or touch is made on a fair hit ball that, in the judgment of the umpire, would have cleared the home run fence in flight.

*Note: The ball may have been prevented from going over the fence by a spectator or by detached player equipment, which is thrown, tossed, kicked or held by a fielder.*

**EFFECT (1)-(2) — The ball is dead. The batter runner is entitled to a home run, and each other base runner is awarded home plate.**

e. **Judged bases.** A batter, batter-runner or runner is entitled to advance the number of bases that the umpire judges to be appropriate when a fielder, not in possession of the ball, not in the act of fielding a batted ball or not about to receive a thrown ball, fakes a tag without the ball or otherwise impedes her.

**EFFECT — Delayed dead ball.**

**If the obstructed batter, batter-runner or runner is put out before reaching the base she would have reached had there not been obstruction, the obstructed player and each other runner affected by the obstruction will always be awarded the base(s) she would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there not been obstruction. Subsequent violation by the same individual may result in a one base award to the obstructed player and each other runner forced to advance (see Rule 9-18-c-1).**

## **SECTION 12 — Base Running**

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### **Batter-Runner is Out — SECTION 12.3.**

The batter-runner is out:

a. When she hits a fair ball and is legally put out before reaching first base.  
**EFFECT — The ball is live. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.**

b. When she hits a fair or foul fly ball, other than a foul tip, and it is caught by a fielder before it touches the ground, any object or person other than a defensive player.

c. When she is legally put out before reaching first base when the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground with two outs, or when there are fewer than two outs, and first base is unoccupied.

*Note: If the catcher fails to catch a third strike before the ball touches the ground with fewer than two outs and first base occupied, the batter is automatically out.*

**EFFECT (b)-(c) — The ball is live. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

d. When she does not proceed to first base after a fair-batted ball or a dropped third strike (with two outs, or when there are fewer than two outs and first base is unoccupied).

**EFFECT — The ball is live. The batter-runner shall be declared out if she is touched while off base, the base is touched before she reaches it, or she leaves the field of play. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

e. When she does not proceed to first base after:

1) A base on balls.

**EFFECT — The ball is live. The batter-runner is out if and when she leaves the field of play. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

2) Being hit by a pitch.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. The batter-runner should proceed directly to first base; however, if she requires medical treatment, she may receive it before proceeding to first base. (The batter-runner is not out if she leaves the field for necessary medical treatment). Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

3) Catcher obstruction.

**EFFECT — Delayed dead ball.**

**If the coach elects to take the result of enforced catcher obstruction, the batter-runner is awarded first base, and each runner may advance only if forced.**

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- f. When, after reaching a base safely, a batter-runner or runner(s) abandons her base and obviously heads toward her position or the dugout (e.g., believing she was put out), or leaves the field of play for any reason.

**EFFECT — The ball is live, the batter-runner or runner(s) is out, and each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

- g. When she hits an infield fly, and the infield fly rule is in effect.

**EFFECT — The ball is live. The batter-runner is out if the batted ball is fair. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out after the ball is caught. Each runner may tag up and advance once the batted ball is touched (before it is caught), the same as on any caught fly ball. If a declared infield fly is dropped intentionally or allowed to fall untouched, the ball is live, the batter-runner is out and each runner may advance with liability to be put out. A runner need not retouch her base(s).**

- h. When either of her feet is completely outside the runner's lane, in contact with the ground, and, in the judgment of the umpire, she interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base. **Exception:** She may run outside the runner's lane to avoid a fielder, attempting to field a batted ball and/or to touch the base on the last stride.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. Each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

- i. When, with less than two outs and first, first and second, first and third, or first, second and third bases occupied, an infielder intentionally drops a batted or bunted fair fly ball or line drive which could have been caught with ordinary effort.

*Note: An intentionally dropped ball is a batted ball that is legally and actually caught and then deliberately dropped. A trapped ball shall not be considered as having been intentionally dropped. A ball that has been guided to the ground should not be considered an intentionally dropped ball.*

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch. Exception: The batter is not out if the infielder permits the ball in flight to drop untouched to the ground, except when the infield fly rule applies. If an infield fly is ruled, it takes precedence over an intentionally dropped ball.**

- j. When she runs the bases in reverse order to confuse opponents or to make a travesty of the game.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

- k. When she moves back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a

## SECTION 12 — Base Running

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fielder.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. Each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the infraction.**

l. When she interferes with a play at home plate in an attempt to prevent an obvious out.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. The batter and the runner at home are both declared out. Each other runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

m. When she interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball, 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 interferes with a dropped third strike.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. Each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference. If the interference, in the umpire's judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the runner closest to home plate also shall be called out.**

*Note: A batter-runner being hit with a thrown ball does not necessarily constitute interference.*

n. When 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 a play.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. The batter-runner and the runner are declared out. Each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

o. When, after hitting a home run, providing her team previously was warned for a first offense, any member of the offensive team other than the base coach touches the individual, before touching home plate.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. The batter is out and credited with the last base legally touched at the time of the interference. Each other runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

p. When a spectator enters the field of play or reaches onto the field from the stands and clearly prevents a fielder from catching a fly ball in the field of play.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead at the moment of the interference. The umpire shall award appropriate compensation, be it an out, extra bases, etc.**

*Note: It is not interference if the fielder reaches into the stands or over a fence and a spectator interferes with a possible catch. The field belongs to the fielder and the stands belong to the spectator.*

## **SECTION 12 — Base Running**

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### **Base Runner(s)**

**For 8 & under see 8 & under rules. (page 97)**

#### **Base Runner May Advance With Liability to Be Put Out — SECTION 12.4.**

A runner may advance with liability to be put out:

- a. When a pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
- b. Following a dropped third strike with two outs or when there are fewer than two outs, and first base is unoccupied.
- c. Following a legally batted fair ball that is not blocked.
- d. Following a fair-batted ball that strikes the person attached equipment or clothing of a runner or an umpire after touching an infielder (including the pitcher).
- e. Following a fair-batted ball that strikes the person, attached equipment or clothing of a runner or an umpire after passing an infielder (other than the pitcher), and no other infielder had a chance to make a play.
- f. When a legally caught fly ball is first touched.
- g. When a pitched or thrown ball hits an umpire.
- h. When a pitched or thrown ball enters foul territory but is not blocked.
- i. When a foul tip is legally caught.

*Note: No tag-up is necessary.*

- j. When a runner is hit by a fair-batted ball while in contact with a base, and the closest defensive player is in front of that base.

**EFFECT (a)-(j) — The ball is live.**

#### **Base Runner Awards — SECTION 12.5.**

In addition to any special ground rules established, the following awards are in effect:

- a. **One base.** A base runner is entitled to advance one base with no liability to be put out:
  - 1) If forced to vacate a base because of a one-base award to the batter.

**EFFECT — The ball is live unless blocked. Each runner advances one base if forced and may advance farther with liability to be put out. If unforced, each runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

- 2) When a pitcher makes an illegal pitch, provided the offensive coach does not take the result of the play.

**EFFECT — Delayed dead ball. Each runner is awarded one base from the base occupied at the time of the pitch. The batter is awarded a ball. If the pitch is "Ball four" or the illegal pitch hits the batter, the batter is awarded first base.**

## **SECTION 12 — Base Running**

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- 3) When a pitched ball is blocked (i.e., lodges in or goes under, over or through the backstop).

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. The batter is awarded first base only on the fourth ball. Each runner is awarded one base from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

- 4) When a live ball is carried by a fielder from playable territory into dead-ball territory (“catch and carry”).

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. Each runner is awarded one base from the last base legally touched at the time the fielder entered dead-ball territory.**

- 5) When a fielder loses possession of the ball, such as on an attempted tag, and the ball enters the dead-ball areas or becomes blocked.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. Each runner is awarded one base from the last base legally touched at the time the ball became blocked.**

b. **Two bases.** A base runner is entitled to advance two bases with no liability to be put out:

- 1) If forced to vacate a base because of a two-base award to the batter.

**EFFECT — The ball is live unless blocked. Each runner advances two bases if forced and may advance farther with liability to be put out. If unforced, each runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

- 2) When a fair ball deflects off a defensive player and enters dead-ball territory.
- 3) When a fair ball deflects off a runner or umpire and enters dead-ball territory after having passed an infielder (excluding the pitcher) provided no other infielder had a chance to make a play.

**EFFECT (2)-(3) — The ball is dead. The batter-runner and each other runner are awarded two bases from the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

- 4) When the ball is in play and is overthrown (beyond the boundary lines) or is blocked.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. Each runner is awarded two bases from the last base legally touched when the ball left the fielder’s hand. 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**

## SECTION 12 — Base Running

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**ball became blocked.**

*Note: If a runner touches the next base and returns to her original base, the original base she left is considered the last base touched for the purpose of an overthrow award.*

**2. If the ball becomes blocked due to offensive equipment not involved in the game, the ball is ruled dead, and each runner must return to the base legally touched at the time of the blocked ball. If the blocked ball prevented the defense from making a play the runner being played on is called out (If this player has scored before the blocked ball was ruled, the runner closest to home is called out).**

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

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. Each runner is awarded two bases from the last base legally touched at the time the ball enters dead-ball territory.**

**c Home plate.** A base runner is entitled to advance to home plate with no liability to be put out if forced to vacate a base because of a three or four-base award to the batter.

**d Judged bases.** A batter, batter-runner or runner is entitled to advance the number of bases that the umpire judges to be appropriate:

1) When a fielder not in possession of the ball, not in the act of fielding a batted ball or not about to receive a thrown ball fakes a tag without the ball or impedes her.

**EFFECT — Delayed dead ball. If the obstructed batter, batter-runner or runner is put out before reaching the base she would have reached had there not been obstruction, the obstructed player and each other runner affected by the obstruction will always be awarded the base(s) she would have reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there not been obstruction. Subsequent violations by the same individual may result in a one base award to the obstructed player, and each other runner forced to advance (see Rule 9-18-c-1).**

*Notes:*

1. *Base runner(s) may advance farther with liability to be put out.*
2. *An obstructed runner may not be called out between the two bases where she was obstructed unless properly appealed for missing a base, leaving a base before a fly ball was first touched or for an act of interference.*
- 2) When a spectator reaches out of the stands or enters the field and interferes with a play.

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**EFFECT — The ball is dead. The umpire shall award appropriate compensation, be it an out, extra bases, etc.**

*Note: It is not interference if the fielder reaches into the stands or over a fence and a spectator interferes with a possible catch. The field belongs to the fielder, and the stands belong to the spectator.*

### **Base Runner Forfeits Exemption From Being Put Out — SECTION 12.6.**

A base runner forfeits exemption from liability to be out:

- a. If, after overrunning first base, the batter-runner feints or attempts to continue to second base.
- b. If, after dislodging a base, the runner attempts to reach the next base.
- c. If, while the ball is in play or on awarded bases, the runner fails to touch a base before attempting to make the next base. 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.
- d. If the ball is live and a runner, after reaching an awarded base, attempts to advance farther.
- e. If the ball is live and a runner, after reaching base safely, abandons her base (e.g., obviously heads toward her position or the dugout believing she was put out or that another batter/runner was put out to end the inning).

### **Base Runner Is Out — SECTION 12.7.**

The base runner is out.

- a. When, on a force play, a fielder (1) contacts the base while holding the ball, (2) touches the ball to the base or (3) tags the runner before she reaches the base.
- b. If the ball is in play and she is not in contact with a base when she is legally touched by the ball securely held in the hand(s) or glove/mitt of a fielder.

#### **Exceptions:**

- 1) When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither she nor the succeeding runner(s) in the same series of plays is compelled to follow the base out of position. The base is considered to have followed the runner, and the ball is live. The runner may stay where she is without liability to be put out, or she may attempt to advance farther with liability to be put out. Other runners may advance with liability to be put out.
- 2) A batter-runner who reaches first base safely and then overruns or over-slides may immediately return without liability to be put out, provided she does not feint or attempt to advance to second.

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- c. When she physically passes a preceding runner before that runner has been put out.

*Note: If this were the third out of the inning, any runs scoring before the out for passing a preceding runner would count.*

**A.R.** With fewer than two outs, if a batter, while running the bases after a home run outside the playing field, passes a preceding runner, the batter is out, but all preceding runners score. With two outs, only those preceding runners score who have touched the plate before the batter is declared out. This is a time play, not an appeal play.

- d. When anyone other than another runner physically assists her while the ball is in play.
- e. When, after play has resumed, she fails to return to touch the base she previously occupied, and the defensive team makes a proper appeal.

**EFFECT (a)-(e) — The ball is live. Each other base runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

- f. When she is running to any base in regular or reverse order, and she attempts to avoid or delay a tag by running more than three feet to either side of a fielder who has the ball in her possession.

**EFFECT—The ball is live. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

**Exception:** It is not an infraction if a fielder is attempting to field a batted ball in the runner's proper path, and the runner runs in front of or behind the fielder to avoid interfering with her.

- g. When she interferes with a fielder attempting to field a batted ball interferes with a fielder attempting to throw the ball or intentionally interferes with a thrown ball.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

**If the 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.**

*Notes:*

- 1. If a ball ricochets off one defensive player and another player has the opportunity to make a play, the runner will be ruled out if she interferes with the second fielder.*
- 2. If two fielders attempt to field a batted ball, the umpire shall determine which fielder is more likely to make the play, and only that fielder is protected from interference by the runner. The runner is not out when*

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*more than one fielder attempts to field a batted ball, the runner comes into contact with the one who, in the judgment of the umpire, could not have made a play.*

- h. When she is struck with a fair-batted ball while not in contact with a base and before it passes an infielder, excluding the pitcher, who has a reasonable chance to make a play.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

**If two runners are hit by the same fair ball, only the first runner is out. If the runner is off a base and hit by an infield fly, both the runner and the batter are out. If the runner is touching a base when hit by an infield fly, she is not out.**

- i. When she is struck by a batted ball while in contact with a base, or otherwise interferes with the fielder attempting to field a batted ball, she is not out unless the umpire rules intentional interference with the ball or the fielder making a play.

**EFFECT — If the umpire rules intentional interference, the ball is dead, and the batter is out if there are two outs. If there are fewer than two outs, both the batter and the runner are out. Each other runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

- j. When she intentionally kicks a ball that an infielder has missed.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

- k. When, after being declared out or after scoring, a runner interferes with a defensive player's opportunity to make a play on another runner.
- l. When a coach, while in the coach's box, intentionally interferes with a thrown ball or interferes with the defensive team's opportunity to make a play on another runner.

*Note: If a thrown ball accidentally touches a coach in foul territory, the ball is live and in play.*

- m. When the coach near third base runs in the direction of home plate on or near the baseline while a fielder is attempting to make a play on a batted or thrown ball and thereby draws to throw a home plate.

**EFFECT (k)-(m) — The ball is dead. The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

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- n. When a defensive player has the ball, and the runner remains on her feet and deliberately, with force, crashes into the defensive player.

*Note: If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender shall also be ejected.*

- o. When one or more members 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.

*Note: Members of a team include all persons authorized to be in the team's dugout.*

**EFFECT (n)-(o) — The ball is dead. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

- p. When she leaves the base she is occupying before the pitch is released.  
q. When a runner is legitimately off her base after a pitch or as a result of a batter completing her turn at bat, and while the pitcher has the ball within the pitcher's circle, she fails to immediately return to her base or attempt to advance to the next base.  
r. When, once she returns to a base for any reason, she leaves the base unless (1) a play is made on her or another runner, (2) the pitcher no longer has possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, or (3) the pitcher releases the ball on a pitch to the batter.

**EFFECT (p)-(r) — The ball is dead, "No pitch" is declared, and each other runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

- s. When, after reaching a base safely, she abandons her base and obviously heads toward her position or the dugout, for whatever reason.  
t. When a runner uses a running start (from a position behind and not in contact with, the base) to tag up on a caught fly ball.

**EFFECT (s)-(t) — The ball is live. Base runners may advance with liability to be put out.**

### **Base Runner is Out After a Proper Appeal — SECTION 12.8.**

The base runner is out after a proper appeal:

- a. When she fails to touch each base (including home plate) in order when advancing or returning to a base. Either the runner or the missed base may be tagged.

*Note: No runner may return to touch a missed base after a following runner has scored or after leaving the field of play.*

- b. When she fails to retouch her base before a fielder tags her or the base after a fair or foul fly ball is legally caught.  
c. When she leaves her base to advance to another base before a caught

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fly ball first touches the fielder. Either the runner or the base may be tagged.

Notes:

1. *Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched before advancing to awarded bases.*
2. *No runner may return to touch a base, which she left too soon if she has left the field of play or if a following runner has scored.*
- d. When she legally overruns first base, but attempts to run to second base and is legally tagged while off base.
- e. When she is running or sliding for home plate, fails to touch it and make no attempt to return to it, and a fielder (while touching the plate) properly appeals to the umpire for the decision.

### **Base Runner is Not Out — SECTION 12.9.**

The base runner is not out:

- a. When she is hit with a fair-batted ball over foul territory, and in the judgment of the umpire, no infielder has a reasonable chance to make a play.
- b. When she is hit with a fair, batted ball that has passed an infielder (excluding the pitcher), and, in the judgment of the umpire, no other infielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.
- c. When she is hit by a fair-batted ball after it touches or is touched by any fielder (including the pitcher), and she could not avoid contact with the ball.
- d. When hit by a batted ball while touching her base, unless she intentionally interferes with the ball or a fielder making a play.
- e. When a batter-runner overruns first base after touching it and returns directly to the base.
- f. When she fails to return to base at the end of playing action because she is not given sufficient time. She will not be called out for being off base before the pitcher releases the ball. The umpire will call “No pitch”.
- g. When she keeps contact with her base until a fly ball touches a fielder and then attempts to advance.
- h. When she has legally started to advance. She may not be stopped by the pitcher receiving the ball while on the pitching plate, or by the pitcher stepping on the plate with the ball in her possession.
- i. When she does not run in a direct line to a base provided a fielder in the direct line does not have the ball in her possession.
- j. When she runs behind or in front of the fielder and outside the baseline

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in order to avoid interfering with a fielder attempting to field the ball in the base path.

- k. When 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 a play.
- l. When she slides into a base and dislodges it from its proper position. The base is considered to have followed the runner.
- m. When she is touched while off a base:
  - 1) With a ball not securely held by a fielder.
  - 2) With a hand or glove/mitt of a defensive player when the ball is in the player's hand.
- n. When the defensive team does not request the umpire's decision on an appeal play until after the next legal or illegal pitch, or until after the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.
- o. When a fielder makes a play on a batter, batter-runner or runner while using an illegal glove/mitt.

### **Regulations Governing Base Running**

#### **Abandoning a Base or Effort to Run the Bases — SECTION 12.10.**

No batter-runner or runner may abandon a base or effort to run the bases by:

- a. Not proceeding to first base after a fair-batted ball or a dropped third strike (with two outs, or when there are fewer than two outs and first base is unoccupied).

**EFFECT — The ball is live. The batter-runner shall be declared out if she is touched while off base, the base is touched before she reaches it, or she leaves the field of play. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

- b. Not proceeding to first base after a base on balls.

**EFFECT — The ball is live. The batter-runner is out if and when she leaves the field of play. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

- c. Not proceeding to first base after being hit by a pitch.

**EFFECT — The ball is dead. The batter-runner should proceed directly to first base; however, if she requires treatment, she may receive it before proceeding to first base. (The batter-runner is not out if she leaves the field for necessary treatment). Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

- d. Not proceeding to first base after catcher obstruction (see Rule 9-18-b).

**EFFECT — If the coach elects to take the result of the play, the batter-runner**

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is out if and when she leaves the field of play, and each runner may advance with liability to be put out.

If the coach elects to take the result of enforced catcher obstruction, the batter-runner is awarded first base, and each runner may advance only if forced.

- e. After reaching a base safely, obviously heading toward her position or the dugout (e.g., believing she was put out), or leaving the field of play for any reason.

**EFFECT — The ball is live. The batter-runner or runner(s) is out. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

### **Catch and Carry — SECTION 12.11.**

A fielder may not catch or field a live ball and carry it into dead-ball territory. This is commonly referred to as a “catch and carry.”

**PENALTY — The ball is dead. The batter and each runner are awarded one base, without liability to be put out; from the last base legally touched at the time the fielder entered dead-ball territory. Exception: If the ball is a legally caught fly ball, the batter is out.**

If, in the judgment of the umpire, a fielder intentionally kicks, pushes, pitches or throws a live ball from playable territory into dead-ball territory, the ball is dead, and each runner is awarded two bases from the last base legally touched at the time the ball entered dead-ball territory.

*Notes: If a line is used to determine dead-ball (out-of-play) territory, the line is considered in play.*

1. *If a fielder's foot is touching the line, she is considered in the field of play and legally may field, catch or throw the ball with no penalty.*
2. *If a player's entire foot is over the line and touching dead-ball territory at the time she catches, fields or throws the ball, she has entered dead-ball territory, no play is allowed, and the penalty is applied.*
3. *If a player has one foot in play and the other foot in the air, she legally may catch, field or throw the ball until and 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.*
4. *If a player contacts dead-ball territory with any part of the body except the foot, she is considered out of play. No play is allowed, and the penalty is applied.*

### **Collisions — SECTION 12.12.**

In order to prevent injury and protect the defensive player attempting to make a play on a runner, the runner must be called out if she remains

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on her feet and deliberately, with great force, crashes into a defensive player holding the ball and waiting to apply a tag. In order to prevent a deliberate crash ruling, the runner can slide, jump over the top of the defender holding the ball, go around the defender (if outside the three-foot lane, the runner would be called out), or return to the previous base touched.

*Note: If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender may be ejected.*

**PENALTY — The ball is dead. The runner is called out for deliberately crashing into a fielder holding the ball. Each runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of interference.**

**If the runner deliberately crashed into a fielder holding the ball before she was put out and, in the judgment of the umpire, it was an attempt to break up an obvious double play, the immediate trailing runner will also be declared out.**

**If the deliberate crash occurs after the runner was called out, the runner closest to home plate will be declared out.**

**If an obstructed runner deliberately crashes into a fielder holding the ball, the obstruction call will be ignored, and the runner will be called out.**

b. Simply because there is contact between the defensive and offensive player does not mean that obstruction or interference has occurred.

### **EXAMPLES:**

1. The right-handed batter who lays down a bunt in front of home plate is on a collision course with the catcher if she runs in a direct line to first base. Each player at this point is within legal rights – the batter taking a path in a direct line to first base, and the catcher coming out from behind home plate to field the ball. The questions that have to be answered are: (1) did the batter alter direction in any way and draw contact in an attempt to receive an obstruction call? (2) Did the catcher alter her attempt to field the ball in any way so as to draw an interference call? and (3) Could the catcher actually make an out on the play?
2. The batter-runner collides with the first baseman who is attempting to make a play on an errant throw up the line (towards home plate). The runner has a right to the base line in this case, and the first baseman has the right to field an errant thrown ball. This is the result of the “normal” flow of the game, and the play should be ruled incidental contact with no effect or penalty.

### **Dislodged Base — SECTION 12.13.**

- a. When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither she nor the succeeding runner(s) in the same series of plays is compelled to

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follow the base out of position. The base is considered to have followed the runner.

**EFFECT — The ball is live, and the runner may stay where she is without liability to be put out, or she may attempt to advance farther with liability to be put out. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

- b. Each runner who attempts to advance to or past the dislodged base must touch the spot where the base belongs.
- c. At the conclusion of play, “Time/Timeout” shall be called, and the dislodged base shall be returned to its proper position.

### **Fake Tag — SECTION 12.14.**

A fake tag occurs when a fielder who neither possesses the ball nor is about to receive the ball obstructs a runner by pretending to have the ball and simulating a tag, thereby, causing the runner to slow down or stop. A fielder may not fake a tag on a runner advancing or returning to a base.

**PENALTY — Delayed dead ball. The umpire shall award the obstructed player the base or bases she would have reached, in the umpire’s judgment, had there not been obstruction. Subsequent violation by the same individual may result in a one-base award to the obstructed player and each other runner forced to advance.**

### **Hit by a Batted Ball — SECTION 12.15.**

An umpire or base runner is considered hit by a batted ball if the ball contacts his/her person, attached equipment or clothing:

- a. When an umpire, or a runner not in contact with a base, is struck by a fair batted ball after it has passed an infielder (other than the pitcher), and, in the judgment of the umpire, no other infielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.
- b. When a umpire, or a runner not in contact with a base, is unavoidably struck by a fair batted ball after it touches or is touched by a fielder (including the pitcher), and no other fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

**EFFECT (a)-(b) — The ball is live. The batter becomes a batter-runner and advances with liability to be put out. Each runner may advance with liability to be put out, whether forced or not.**

*Note: If said ball touches the umpire/runner while still in flight, thereafter, it shall be considered a ground ball. It cannot be caught as a fly ball.*

- c. When a runner is struck by a fair-batted ball while in contact with a base, she is not out unless she intentionally interferes with the ball or the fielder making a play. The ball is live or dead depending on the

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position of the fielder closest to the base.

**EFFECT — If the closest defensive player is in front of the base the runner is in contact with, the ball is live. The batter-runner and each other base runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

**If the closest defensive player is behind the base the runner is in contact with, the ball is dead. The batter is awarded first base, credited with a base hit, and each other runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

**If the umpire rules intentional interference, the ball is dead and the batter is out if there are two outs. If there are fewer than two outs, both the batter and the runner are out. Each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

- d. When a runner is struck by a fair batted ball while not in contact with a base and (1) before the ball touches an infielder, including the pitcher (2) before the ball passes an infielder, excluding the pitcher who has a reasonable chance to make a play or (3) after passing an infielder including the pitcher, and another fielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

**EFFECT — Runner interference.**

**The ball is dead, and the runner is out. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

**If two runners are hit by the same fair ball, only the first runner is out.**

**If the runner is off a base and is hit by an infield fly, both the runner and the batter are out. If the runner is touching a base when struck by an infield fly, she is not out.**

- e. When a runner intentionally kicks a ball than an infielder has missed.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, and the runner is out. The batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a base hit. Each runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

- f. When a runner is struck by a fair-batted ball over foul territory and, in the judgment of the umpire, no infielder had a reasonable chance to make a play.

**EFFECT — The ball is live and in play. The runner who was struck and each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.**

**Illegal Glove/Mitt Used to Make a Play — SECTION 12.16.**

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A fielder shall not make a play on a batter, batter-runner or runner while using an illegal glove or mitt.

**PENALTY — The coach of the offended team shall have the option to:**

- a. Nullify the entire play.
  - 1) The batter assumes the ball and strike count she had before the pitch and continues her turn at bat.
  - 2) Each runner returns to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.
- b. Take the result of the play and disregard the illegal act.
- c. If the illegal catch or touch is made on a fair batted fly ball that, in the judgment of the umpire, would have cleared the home run fence, the batter-runner is entitled to a home run, and each other base runner is awarded home plate. The ball may have been prevented from going over the fence by a spectator or by detached player equipment, which is thrown, tossed, kicked or held by a fielder.

*Note: If the illegal glove/mitt does not meet specifications (Rule 3-7), it shall be removed from the game (i.e., not returned to the dugout).*

### **Leading Off Base — SECTION 12.17.**

Once a runner returns to a base for any reason, she may not leave the base unless (1) a play is made on her or another runner, (2) the pitcher does not have possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, or (3) the pitcher releases the pitch to the batter. A base runner must be in contact with her base at the time a pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand **Exception:** If the pitcher does not allow sufficient time for a runner to return to a base, the runner shall not be called out for being off the base before the pitcher releases the pitch.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, "No pitch" is declared, and the offending base runner(s) is out. Each other base runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

### **Look-Back Rule — SECTION 12.18.**

- a. The look-back rule is in effect when the ball is live, there are one or more runners, and the pitcher has possession and control of the ball within the pitcher's circle. The pitcher is considered to be in the pitcher's circle when both her feet are on or within the lines.
- b. When a runner is legally off her base after a pitch or as a result of a batter completing her turn at bat, and she is in motion as the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, the runner may continue moving forward in the direction she is going without stopping

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or she may immediately and directly go back in the other direction. If the runner is stopped as the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle, the runner must immediately and directly go forward or back. A base on balls or a dropped third strike is treated as a base hit as long as the batter-runner continues past first base.

- c. Once the runner has determined a direction, she may not change it unless the pitcher:
- 1) Throws the ball from within the pitcher's circle.
  - 2) Carries the ball outside the pitcher's circle.
  - 3) Has one foot completely outside the pitcher's circle, on the ground, and is in possession of the ball.
  - 4) Sets the ball on the ground.
  - 5) Loses possession of the ball, including handing it to another player.
  - 6) Makes a play on the runner or another runner.

*Note: if the pitcher's circle is not visible, the umpire must use good judgment.*

- d. The pitcher is considered to have made a play if:

- 1) She fakes a throw.

*Note: Raising the throwing arm into throwing position is considered a fake throw regardless of whether the pitcher's arm moves forward.*

- 2) She makes any aggressive body movement toward the base runner (e.g., steps toward the runner, head and body fakes toward the runner).

- e. There is no obligation on the part of the pitcher to look, fake or throw in order to force the runner to comply with the look-back rule. The obligation to comply rests solely with the runner.

- f. When the pitcher takes possession of the ball within the pitcher's circle:

- 1) A runner standing off her base must immediately return to the base she last occupied or advance to the next base.
- 2) A runner who starts back to the base she last occupied or starts forward toward the next base shall not stop or reverse direction.
- 3) The batter-runner may not step off any base after stopping at it.
- 4) The batter-runner, after overrunning first base, may not retouch the base and advance toward second base.

**PENALTY (1)-(4) — The ball is dead, the offending runner is out, and each other runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the infraction. If two runners are off base and the umpires call different runners out, the umpires must determine which runner was called out first, as it is not possible to obtain more than one out under the look-back rule. The ball**

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**is dead when the first runner is called out, and the other runner must return to the base last touched at the time of the infraction.**

- g. The batter-runner may overrun first base, not stop and advance toward second base after the pitcher has the ball within the pitcher's circle. This is legal as long as the runner does not retouch first base on her way to second base. When the runner has legally started to advance, she may not be stopped by the pitcher receiving the ball while in the pitcher's circle or by the pitcher stepping on the pitcher's plate with the ball in her possession.

### **Missing a Base — SECTION 12.19.**

- a. A runner must touch each base in order when she is advancing or returning to a base and the ball is in play. Missing a base is an appeal play. The umpire does not make a ruling on an appeal play until asked to do so by a coach or player.
- b. A runner is assumed safe until put out. If a proper appeal is not made, the runner is safe.
- 1) If a runner misses home plate and the catcher misses the tag, the umpire should hesitate slightly to allow the players to finish the play. If no tag is made, the umpire should declare the runner safe. If an appeal play is made (i.e., by tagging either the runner or home plate), the umpire should then make a decision on the appeal.
  - 2) If a runner passes first base before the throw arrives, she is considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made.
- c. An appeal must be honored even if the base missed was before or after an award.
- d. A runner who must return to a base while the ball is in play or dead must retouch the base(s) in reverse order. **Exception:** A runner, who must return to a base after a foul ball, need not touch intervening bases.
- e. A runner may not return to touch a missed base if: (1) she has left the field of play, (2) a following runner has scored, or (3) she is standing on a base beyond the base she missed, and "Time/Timeout" has been called by the umpire, or the ball becomes dead. If the runner is between any two bases and is attempting to return to the base missed, she can continue.
- f. The failure of a preceding runner to touch a base and who is declared out) does not affect the status of a following runner who touches each base in proper order. However, after two are out, a following runner cannot score a run when a preceding runner is declared out for failing

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to touch a base in regular order.

- g. Any runner, who misses the first base to which she is advancing and who is late called out, shall be considered as having advanced one base.

### **Occupying Bases — SECTION 12.20.**

- a. A runner or batter-runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out and is entitled to hold the base until she has legally touched the next base in order or is forced to vacate it for a succeeding runner.
- b. Two runners may not occupy the same base simultaneously. The runner who first legally occupied the base is entitled to it, unless forced to advance. The other runner may be put out by being touched with the ball.

*Note: If a runner is being run down between bases and the following runner occupies the same base the first runner has left, the second runner cannot be put out while occupying said base, if the first runner, however, returns safely to the base she left and both runners then are occupying the same base, the second runner is out if touched with the ball.*

- c. A runner, who is touching a base when “Time/Timeout” is called, may not advance during the suspension of play.

### **Overrunning or Over-sliding Bases — SECTION 12.21.**

- a. A batter-runner, who touches first base safely and then overruns or over-slides it, may immediately return without liability to be put out. The batter-runner may legally turn to her left or her right when returning to the base. If, however, she feints or makes any attempt to advance to second, regardless of whether she is in fair or foul territory, she may be tagged out (while she is off base) by a defensive player with the ball. This is an appeal play.
- b. A batter-runner may round a base and go directly to the next base without stopping. If, however, she stops after rounding a base, and the pitcher has possession of the ball in the pitching circle, she must comply with the look-back rule.

*Note: A batter, who is entitled to advance after a walk or dropped third strike, is treated the same as if she batted the ball.*

- c. A runner may legally touch home plate and then overrun or over-slide without liability to be put out.

### **Running Out of the Base Line / Out of the Runner’s Lane — SECTION 12.22.**

- a. The traditional path traveled by a runner, who is attempting to advance

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to the next base, is defined by a direct line between the bases and three feet on either side of that line, unless a fielder has the ball in her possession, and she is within three feet of the runner and prepared to apply a tag. A base runner, who is running to any base in regular or reverse order and who attempts to avoid a tag by running more than three feet to either side of a fielder with the ball in her possession, shall be declared out.

**PENALTY — The ball is live. The offending runner is out, but each other runner may continue to advance with liability to be put out.**

**Exceptions:**

- 1) A runner is not out when she runs behind or in front of a fielder and outside the base line in order to avoid interfering with the fielder attempting to field the ball in the base path.
  - 2) The runner is not out when she fails to run in a direct line to a base provided the fielder in the direct line does not have the ball in her possession.
- b. The batter-runner shall not run outside the runner's lane and, in the judgment of the umpire, interfere with the fielder taking the throw at first base. This is an interference violation.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, the offending runner is out, and each other runner must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.**

**Exceptions:**

- 1) The batter-runner may run outside the runner's lane to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball.
- 2) The batter-runner may run outside the runner's lane to touch the base on the last stride.
- 3) The infraction is ignored if the act does not interfere with the fielder taking the throw at first base.

**Notes:**

1. *The batter-runner is considered outside the runner's lane if either foot is in contact with the ground and is completely outside either line.*
2. *A batter runner being hit with a thrown ball does not necessarily constitute interference.*

**Tag and Force Plays — SECTION 12.23.**

- a. A batter-runner or runner is considered tagged out if the ball is in play, and she is not in contact with a base when she is legally touched by the ball securely held in the hand(s) or glove/mitt of a fielder. It is sufficient for the runner to be touched with the hand(s) or glove/mitt holding

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the ball.

### Exceptions:

- 1) A batter-runner, who reaches first base safely and then overruns or over-slides it, may immediately return without liability to be put out provided she does not feint or attempt to advance to second
  - 2) If a runner passes first base before the throw arrives, she is considered to have touched the base unless an appeal play is made.
  - 3) When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither she nor the succeeding runner(s) in the same series of plays is compelled to follow the base out of position. The base is considered to have followed the runner, and the ball is live. The runner may stay where she is without liability to be put out, or she may attempt to advance farther with liability to be put out. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out.
- b. A batter-runner is out when she legally overruns first base, attempts to run to second base and is legally tagged while off base.
- c. A batter-runner or runner is considered forced out if she must advance to the next base or to home plate in order to make room for another base runner, but:
- 1) She is tagged (legally touched with the ball in the hand(s) of a fielder) before she reaches the forced base.
  - 2) The fielder, while holding the ball, contacts the base in advance of the batter-runner or runner.
  - 3) The fielder touches the ball to the forced base in advance of the batter-runner or runner.
- d. The runner is out if she is off base when a fair or foul ball is legally caught, and she fails to retouch the base (occupied at the time of the pitch) before a fielder tag her or the base.
- e. If an appeal is honored at a base to which a runner was forced to advance and the out is a force out, no runs would score if it was the third out. If a forced runner, after touching the next base, retreats for any reason towards the base she had last occupied, the force play is reinstated, and she may again be put out if the defense tags the base to which she is forced.
- Note: There cannot be a force out if the batter does not become a batter-runner.*
- f. The batter-runner or runner is not out:
- 1) When touched while off a base with a ball not securely held by a fielder.

## **SECTION 12 — Base Running**

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*Note: The ball is not considered securely held if it is juggled or dropped after the touch unless the runner deliberately knocks the ball from the hand(s)/glove/mitt of the fielder.*

- 2) When touched while off a base with a fielder's hand or glove/mitt when the ball is in the fielder's other hand.
- 3) When played on by a fielder using an illegal glove/mitt.
- 4) When an improper live-ball appeal is made (See Appeals, Rule 6-1).

### **Tagging Up After a Caught Fly Ball — SECTION 12.24.**

- a. The initial contact of the ball by a fielder releases the runner(s) from the base(s) occupied at the time of the pitch. A base runner is out if she leaves her base too soon. Either the runner or the base (left too soon) may be tagged. This is an appeal play.
- b. An appeal must be honored even if the base left too soon was before or after an award. Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be re-touched before advancing to awarded bases.
- c. A runner who must return to a base while the ball is in play or dead must retouch the base(s) in reverse order. **Exception:** A runner who must return to a base after a foul ball, need not touch intervening bases.
- d. A runner may not return to touch a base left too soon on a caught fly ball if: (1) she has left the field of play; (2) a following runner has scored; (3) she is standing on a base beyond the base she left too soon, and "Time/Timeout" has been called by the umpire; or (4) the ball becomes dead.

*Note: If the runner is between any two bases and attempting to return to the base left too soon, she can continue.*

- e. The failure of a preceding runner to legally tag up on a caught fly ball (and who is declared out) does not affect the status of a following runner who touches each base in proper order. However, after two are out, a following runner cannot score a run when a preceding runner is declared out for failing to legally tag up on a caught fly ball.
- f. 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 ahead of the legal appeal would count.
- g. A runner may not use a running start from a position behind and not in contact with a base.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, "No pitch" is declared, and the offending base runner(s) is out. Each other base runner(s) must return to the base legally**

## SECTION 12 — Base Running

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occupied at the time of the pitch.

### Touching the Bases — SECTION 12.25.

- a. An advancing runner must touch each base in legal order (first, second, third and home). All awarded bases must also be touched, and in legal order.

*Note: Obstructed runner's are still required to touch all bases in legal order, or they could be called out on a proper appeal by the defensive team.*

- b. Bases missed or left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched before advancing. However, no runner may return to touch a missed base or one she has left too soon on a caught fly ball: (1) once she has left the field of play, (2) once a following runner has scored, (3) when she is standing on a base beyond the base she left too soon and "Time/Timeout" has been called by the umpire or (4) when the ball becomes dead.

*Note: If the runner is between any two bases and attempting to return to the base left too soon, she can continue.*

- c. A runner who must return to a base while the ball is in play or dead must retouch the base(s) in reverse order. **Exception:** A runner, who must return to a base after a foul ball, need not touch intervening bases.

**PENALTY (a)-(c) — For failure to touch a base when advancing or returning while the ball is in play, the runner is out if, before she reaches each untouched base, she is touched by the ball in the hand(s) of a fielder. If the base is one to which the runner is forced, she is out when tagged or if the ball is held by a fielder on the base she failed to touch (including home plate).**

*Notes:*

- 1) *If a runner does not touch home plate and does not make an attempt to touch it, the fielder may touch either the runner or home plate. If a runner misses home plate and the catcher misses the tag, the umpire should hesitate slightly. If no tag is made, the umpire should 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 the appeal.*
  - 2) *When a runner is legally returning to tag up after a caught fly ball, the runner can be put out by being tagged, or by the defense touching the base the runner occupied at the time of the pitch. Each other runner may advance or return with liability to be put out.*
- d. A runner shall not run bases in reverse order either to confuse the field-

## **SECTION 12 — Base Running**

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ers or to make a travesty of the game.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, the runner is out, and each other runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

e. The batter-runner may not move back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.

**PENALTY — The ball is dead, the batter-runner is out, and each runner must return to the base legally occupied at the time of the pitch.**

f. The failure of a preceding runner to touch or retouch a base or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball (and who is declared out) does not affect the status of a following runner who touches each base in proper order. However, after two are out, a following runner cannot score a run when a preceding runner is declared out for failing to touch a base in regular order or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball.

g. When a runner has legally started to advance, she may not be stopped by the pitcher receiving the ball while on the pitcher's plate or by the pitcher stepping on the plate with the ball in her possession.

h. When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither she nor the succeeding runner(s) in the same series of plays is compelled to follow the base out of position. The base is considered to have followed the runner.

**EFFECT — The ball is live, and the runner may stay where she is without liability to be put out, or she may attempt to advance with liability to be put out. Each other runner may advance with liability to be put out. Each runner who attempts to advance to or past the dislodged base must touch the spot where the base belongs. At the conclusion of play, "Time/Timeout" shall be called, and the dislodged base shall be returned to its proper position.**

i. When a runner or batter-runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out, she is entitled to hold the base until she has legally touched the next base in order or is forced to vacate it for a succeeding runner. Two runners may not 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. For example, if a runner is being run down between bases and the following runner occupies the same base the first runner has left, the second runner cannot be put out while occupying said base. If the first runner returns safely to the base she left, however, and both runners are then occupying the same base, the second runner is out if touched with**

## **SECTION 12 — Base Running**

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**the ball.**

- j. Between pitches and after a dead ball, each runner must return to her base. The pitcher is obligated to allow sufficient time for the runner to return to her base, and the base runner is obligated to return to her base without undue delay.

**PENALTY — When the ball is live and the runner is not given sufficient time to return to a base, she will not be called out for being off base before the pitcher releases the ball. The umpire shall declare “No pitch”.**

**When the ball is dead, the umpire shall not put the ball in play until each runner has retouched her base. However, after allowing sufficient time for each runner to retouch at the end of playing action, the umpire shall declare the runner out.**

- k. Should “Time/Timeout” be called while a runner is touching a base, she may not advance during a suspension of play.

## **SECTION 13 — Conduct**

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### **Conduct of Coaches, Players, Spectators and Other Personnel**

#### **Coaches' Conduct — SECTION 13.1.**

The highest standards of sportsmanship and conduct are expected of players, coaches and others associated with the game. Coaches are expected to be leaders by complying with the principles and ethics described in the Code of Conduct.

#### **Coaches' Misconduct — SECTION 13.2.**

Misconduct is any act of unprofessional behavior that discredits the game of softball. Specifically, a coach shall not remove his or her team from the field or refuse to continue play due to a dispute with game officials.

#### **Unsportsmanlike Conduct — SECTION 13.3.**

No coach, player or team shall at any time, whether from the bench, the coach's box, the playing field or elsewhere:

- a. Incite or attempt to incite, by word or sign, a demonstration by spectators.
- b. Use profanity toward, bait or otherwise taunt an opponent or umpire.
- c. Make insulting or disparaging remarks to or about opposing players or game officials.

**PENALTY (a)-(c) — The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual and notify her coach. If the umpire judges the act to be flagrant, the offender shall be ejected without warning. Subsequent violation by the same individual shall result in ejection.**

- d. Call "Time/Timeout" or employ any other word or phrase or commit any act while the ball is in play for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher throw an illegal pitch. If an illegal pitch is thrown, it shall be declared "No pitch."

**PENALTY — No pitch (see Rule 9-8) and warning. A repeat of any such act by any member of the team that has been warned shall result in the offender(s) being ejected from the game.**

- e. Take a position in the batter's line of vision or act in any manner to distract the batter.

#### **PENALTY — Delayed dead ball.**

**If the batter contacts the ball and reaches first base safely and each other runner has advanced at least one base on the batted ball, the illegal pitch is canceled. All action as a result of the batted ball stands, and no option is given. Once a runner has passed a base, she is considered to have reached that base, whether missing the base or not, and no option is given.**

## **SECTION 13 — Conduct**

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If the batter does not reach first base safely or if one of the other runners does not advance at least one base, the coach of the offensive team has the option of taking the result of the play, or the illegal pitch is enforced by awarding a ball to the batter and advancing each other runner one base. If the illegal pitch is "Ball four" or hits the batter, the batter is awarded first base, and each runner is awarded one base.

The pitch does not have to be released.

**First violation:** The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual and notify her coach. Subsequent violation by the same individual shall result in ejection.

- f. No fielder shall position herself in the runner's line of vision to intentionally distract the runner or intentionally prohibit her from seeing the release of the pitch.

**PENALTY — Delayed dead ball.**

**First violation:** The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual and notify her coach. Subsequent violation by the same individual shall result in a one-base award to the obstructed runner and each other runner forced to advance.

### **Fighting — SECTION 13.4.**

The AFA Softball Rules committee believes there is no place in softball for physical abuse of officials or fighting among opponents. While coaches are responsible for the actions of their players, cooperation is needed from players, coaches, and game officials to prevent incidents.

- a. Physical abuse of game officials is any threat of physical intimidation or harm to include pushing, shoving, kicking, throwing at or attempting to make physical contact.
- b. Fighting is any physical abuse of an opposing player, including attempting to strike with the arms, hands, legs, feet or equipment in a combative manner.

**PENALTY (a)-(b) — Participants who fight or who physically abuse an official shall be ejected from the game.**

#### **Exceptions:**

1. A player involved in a fight who was defending herself and not contributing to the fight shall not be ejected or suspended.
2. If a player or coach makes physical contact with another player in an obvious attempt to prevent a fight or confrontation, he or she shall not be ejected or suspended.

## **SECTION 13 — Conduct**

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### **Equipment Abuse — SECTION 13.5.**

No player or coach shall deliberately throw a piece of equipment as a result of disgust or frustration.

**PENALTY — The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual, unless the umpire judges the act to be so flagrant that the offender shall be ejected without warning. Any subsequent offense shall result in ejection of the offender.**

### **Intentionally Pitching at a Batter (Pitcher) - SECTION 13.6.**

A pitcher shall not intentionally pitch at a batter.

**PENALTY — If the plate umpire believes such a violation has occurred, the umpire shall warn the pitcher and both opposing coaches that future violations by any pitcher will be cause for immediate ejection of the pitcher and the head coach. If, in the umpire's judgment, the situation warrants drastic action to diffuse a potentially volatile situation, the umpire may eject the pitcher without first warning her. Each coach should be warned, but the coach of the offending team may be ejected at this time if the umpire believes it is appropriate. A warning may be issued to both teams before the start of a game or at any time during a game.**

### **Use of Video Equipment — SECTION 13.7.**

No coach or player may use television monitoring or replay equipment during a contest. Electronic equipment may be used to record only games in which the team is a participant. Radar Guns are not permitted.

**PENALTY — The umpire shall issue a warning to the offending individual. If use of the equipment continues, the offender shall be ejected.**

### **Use of Tobacco Products — SECTION 13.8.**

a. The use of tobacco products by players, managers, coaches and trainers is prohibited while on site for practice and competition. For the purpose of this rule, the field, bullpens and dugouts are considered to be on site.

**PENALTY — Players, managers, coaches and athletic trainers who use tobacco products during practice or competition shall be ejected for the remainder of that practice or competition.**

b. Umpires, scorers and other game personnel are prohibited from using tobacco products from the commencement of pre-game activities until they leave the competition site.

**PENALTY — If observed by the umpire or game administrator, the offender shall be directed to immediately dispose of the tobacco product. Failure to comply when directed shall result in ejection.**

## **SECTION 14 — Umpires**

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*Failure of umpires to adhere to Rule 14 shall not be grounds for protest.*

### **Apparel and Equipment — SECTION 14.1.**

The AFA has adopted a mandatory umpire uniform for use throughout all regions of the U.S. and Canada. Heather grey slacks are mandatory for all age levels. Shorts are not acceptable. The AFA has adopted two primary colors for umpire shirts, black and grey. These shirts must have the AFA logo present on the breast of the shirt. An optional third color is acceptable for special tournaments and championship assignments. The AFA National Director of Umpires must approve any use of any other umpire shirts. Black or grey AFA umpire caps are the only acceptable options. They should bear the AFA logo. No other logo, or insignias are permissible. Grey or black ball bags are acceptable for the home plate umpire. Black shoes without any lettering markings, or insignia are required for all AFA umpires (plate and base).

***NOTE: All AFA Umpire apparel must be purchased through an approved, and officially licensed AFA supplier. Any reproduction of the AFA logo, or official apparel is prohibited, unless approved by the AFA.***

- a. The plate umpire shall wear a black mask, black padding and black throat protector (An extended wire protector may be worn in lieu of a throat protector on the mask).

*Note: An attached throat protector must be commercially manufactured, properly attached and unaltered. A throat protector that is part of the mask shall extend far enough to adequately protect the throat.*

- c. It is required that the umpiring crews have a current AFA Softball Rules Book accessible during the competition.
- d. It is strongly recommended that all umpires wear appropriate protective equipment.

### **Duties — SECTION 14.2.**

Any umpire has the authority to order a player, coach or team personnel to do or refrain from doing anything that affects the administering of these rules and to enforce prescribed penalties. Each umpire is an approved official and is authorized and required to enforce each section of these rules. Further, the umpires shall be obliged to conduct the game under conditions conducive to the highest standards of good sportsmanship. The plate umpire shall have the authority to make decisions on any situations not specifically covered in the rules. The following is general information for umpires:

- a. It is recommended that the umpire not be affiliated with a team.

## **SECTION 14 – Umpires**

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- b. The umpires should confirm the date, time and place of the game and shall report to the playing field at least 20 minutes ahead of time, start the game at the designated time and leave the field when the game is over. The umpire's jurisdiction begins when he/she arrives on the field and reports to the home coach, and it ends when he/she leaves the field after the game.
- c. The umpires should introduce themselves to the coaches and other appropriate game management personnel.
- d. The umpires shall inspect the playing field and equipment.
- e. At the pre-game meeting, the plate umpire shall clarify all ground rules for the representatives of each team.
- f. Each umpire shall have the power to make decisions on violations committed during playing tie or during suspension of play.
- g. No umpire has the authority to set aside decisions made by another umpire within the limits of his or her respective duties as outlined in these rules.
- h. An umpire should consult his or her associate(s) upon the request of a head coach; however, the final decision will rest with the umpire whose exclusive authority it is to make the decision and who requests the opinion of the other umpire(s).
- i. In order to define respective duties, the umpire whose primary responsibility is the judging of balls and strikes shall be designated as the plate umpire, while the umpire(s) whose primary responsibility is the rendering of base decisions shall be designated as the base umpire(s).
- j. The plate umpire and base umpires shall have equal authority to: (1) call a runner out for leaving a base too soon; (2) call "Time/Timeout" for suspension of play; (3) eject or suspend a player, coach or other team personnel; and (4) call illegal pitches.
- k. The umpire shall declare the batter or runner out, without waiting for an appeal for such decisions, in all cases where such player is retired in accordance with these rules. Unless appealed to, the umpire shall not call a player out for: (1) missing a base, (2) leaving a base on a caught fly ball before the ball is first touched, (3) attempting to advance to second base after making the turn at first base and (4) batting out of order.
- l. The umpire shall not penalize a team for any infraction of a rule when imposing the penalty would be an advantage to the offending team.

### **Plate Umpire – SECTION 14.3.**

The plate umpire shall:

## **SECTION 14 – Umpires**

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- a. Have full charge of and be responsible for the proper conduct of the game.
- b. Take a position behind the catcher.
- c. Have the authority to make decisions on any situations not specifically covered in the rules.
- d. Call and count all balls and strikes and give a clear visual and verbal indication of all balls and strikes.
- e. By agreement and in cooperation with the base umpire, make decisions on plays, fair or foul balls and legally or illegally caught balls. On plays that necessitate the base umpire leaving the infield in a two-umpire system, the plate umpire will assume the duties normally required of the base umpire.
- f. Determine and declare whether: (1) a batter bunts, (2) a batted ball touches the person or clothing of the batter and (3) a fly ball is an infield or an outfield fly.
- g. Call or indicate “Play/Play ball” to start the game or resume play, “Time/Timeout” to temporarily suspend play and “Game” to terminate play for a regulation game.
- h. Announce each substitution to the opposing coach, official scorer and public-address announcer, if applicable.
- i. Render base decisions as indicted in the AFA umpire’s manual.
- j. Have the lights turned on when necessary for safety reasons. Whenever possible, this should be done at the beginning of an inning.
- k. Be the sole judge as to the suspension, resumption or termination of play should bad weather or unfit conditions prevail during a game.
- l. Penalize rule infractions (such as illegal pitch, interference, delay of the game, unwarranted disputing of a decision, unsportsmanlike conduct or defacement of the ball by the pitcher).
- m. Conduct the pre-game meeting with the representatives of the opposing teams five minutes before the scheduled starting time.
- n. Assume all duties when circumstances warrant starting or finishing a game as a single umpire.

### **Base Umpire(s) – SECTION 14.4.**

The base umpire(s) shall:

- a. Take such positions on the playing field as outlined in the AFA umpire’s manual.
- b. Assist the plate umpire in administering the rules of the game.
- c. Render base decisions as indicated in the AFA umpire’s manual.
- d. Call base runners out for leaving before the pitch has been released.

## SECTION 14 — Umpires

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### **Change of Umpires — SECTION 14.5.**

Teams may not request a change of umpires during a game unless an umpire is incapacitated by injury or illness.

### **Pre-game Responsibilities — SECTION 14.6.**

Before the start of the game, the plate umpire shall:

- a. For legality and safety, inspect the equipment, particularly the bats and batting helmets. Umpires should make certain that dented bent or illegal bats or broken helmets are not available for use during the game (i.e., not allowed in the dugout).

**PENALTY — If, after one warning, a player continues to use illegal equipment, the individual shall be ejected from the game.**

- b. Check the condition of the field and inspect all playing lines and markers for proper location and adequate visibility and direct the host institution to correct problems if possible or be prepared to make a ground rule to address the situation.

*Note: Once a game has started, if it is discovered by or brought to the attention of the umpire that the pitching distance or base distances are incorrect, the error shall be corrected at the start of the next full inning, with no penalty, and the game shall continue from that point.*

- c. Have two balls to replenish the supply of game balls as needed. Such balls shall be put in play when:
  - 1) A ball has been hit out of the playing field.
  - 2) A ball has been rejected because it is discolored, scuffed or otherwise unsuitable for play.
  - 3) The game should not be delayed to retrieve a particular ball that may have been fouled away from the playing area.

### **Pre-game Meeting — SECTION 14.7.**

Five minutes before the scheduled starting time, the plate umpire shall conduct the pre-game meeting with the representatives of the opposing teams. During this meeting, the plate umpire shall:

- a. Receive from the home team and visiting team their respective batting orders on a lineup card. The umpire shall review each team's lineup card with its coach to be sure it is complete and shall provide one last opportunity for changes without the changes being charged as substitutions. Once returned to the umpire, each team's lineup is official. In the event of a subsequent change, the plate umpire shall report the substitution to the opposing team, official scorer and public-address announcer.

## **SECTION 14 — Umpires**

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*Notes:*

1. *A player arriving late may be added to the lineup card.*
2. *All players listed in the starting lineup must be in uniform, in the dugout area and available to play at the start of the game.*
- b. Review ground rules with both teams. A local ground rule may be adopted where unusual conditions prevail if agreeable with the visiting team. Where the teams do not agree the umpires shall determine ground rules.
- c. Review special game rules (e.g., tiebreaker, conference or tournament rules).
- d. Review certain areas of the playing rules that may cause confusion.

**Procedures at End of Game — SECTION 14.8.**

At the completion of the game, the plate umpire shall return the game balls to the appropriate games management staff or coach and report any flagrant conduct or irregularity associated with the game. The umpires shall give the teams reasonable time for a possible appeal play or protest. The umpires shall leave the field together in as polite, businesslike and inconspicuous a manner as possible.

**Umpire's Judgment — SECTION 14.9.**

- a. Any umpire's decision that involves judgment may, under certain circumstances, be reviewed but is never subject to protest. There will be no protest on such judgments as whether a batted ball was fair or foul, a runner was safe or out, a pitched ball was a ball or strike; or on any play involving accuracy of judgment. Decisions rendered by any umpire should be reversed when the umpire is convinced the decision is in violation of one of these rules. In case the head coach or captain of either team does seek reversal of a decision based solely on a point of rules, the umpire whose decision is in question will, if in doubt, confer with his or her associate(s) before taking any action but under no circumstances will any player or person other than the coach of either team, have any grounds to protest any decision and seek its reversal on a claim that it is in conflict with these rules. **Exception:** On a decision regarding a checked swing, when asked by the catcher, the plate umpire must seek a decision from the appropriate base umpire. Such a request may be made only when the plate umpire has called the pitch a ball.
- b. Under no circumstances will any umpire seek to reverse a judgment decision made by an associate(s), unless asked to do so.
- c. The umpires may rectify any situation in which the reversal of an

## **SECTION 14 — Umpires**

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umpire's decision or a delayed call by an umpire places a batter-runner, a runner or the defensive team in jeopardy. This correction is not possible after one legal or illegal pitch has been thrown or after the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory.

### **Suspension of Play — SECTION 14.10.**

- a. An umpire may temporarily suspend play in the following situations:
- 1) When, in his/her judgment, conditions justify such action.
  - 2) When he/she leaves his/her position to brush the plate or to perform other duties not directly connected with the calling of plays.
  - 3) When a batter or pitcher steps out of position for a legitimate reason.
  - 4) If a fair batted ball hits the umpire before passing an infielder (See Rule 9-16).
- b. An umpire shall not temporarily suspend play in the following situations:
- 1) While any play is in progress, including when a thrown ball hits an umpire.
  - 2) After the pitcher has started her delivery.
  - 3) In case of injury until all plays in progress have been completed or each runner has been held at her base. **Exception:** When necessary to protect an injured player, the umpire may suspend play immediately.
  - 4) At the request of players or coaches until all action in progress has been completed.

### **Umpire's Responsibility for a Protest — SECTION 14.11.**

All protests must be made to the plate umpire. When a coach claims that an umpire's decision violates AFA rules, the plate umpire must: (a) allow the coach the right to file a protest; (b) announce to each coach, to the official scorer that the game is being played under protest; and (c) note and record the game situation at the time of protest.

### **Umpire's Responsibility for an Appeal — SECTION 14.12.**

Only the defensive team may make an appeal to the umpires. Once the appeal is made to the umpire whose responsibility it was to watch the base and base runner, that umpire will step forward and make the proper call.

### **Umpire's Responsibility for Ejections and/or Suspensions — SECTION 14.13.**

The umpire has the authority to remove a player and/or other team personnel from further participation in a game (which is ejection) for just cause.

## Appendix A

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AFA uses the official bat rule of the NCAA. The text of the NCAA official bat rule used by the AFA is set forth in this appendix. The AFA gratefully acknowledges the NCAA's generosity in affording the AFA permission to adopt and reprint the rule herein.

### **The Official Bat:**

- a. The barrel, taper and handle shall be one piece or multi-piece permanently assembled.
- b. If it is a multi-piece permanently assembled model, the connection shall be sufficiently stiff to resemble its initial manufactured condition and not have excessive wobble.
- c. Shall be metal, plastic, graphite, carbon, magnesium, fiberglass, ceramic, titanium or any other composite material.
- d. Shall not have exposed rivets, pins, rough or sharp edges or any form of exterior fastener that would present a hazard. Bats shall be free of damage (rattles, dents, burrs, wobble and cracks) and not be altered from their certification specifications.
- e. Bats shall bear the permanent ASA 2004 certification seal and be on the current NCAA Approved Softball Bat List as maintained on the NCAA and the SUP ([www.sup.arbitersports.com](http://www.sup.arbitersports.com)) websites indicating compliance with the bat performance standard per the appropriate ASTM testing protocol.
- f. Shall not be more than 34 inches long nor exceed 38 ounces in weight.
- g. Shall not be more than 2¼ inches in diameter at its largest part. A tolerance of 1/32 inch is permitted to allow for expansion.
- h. Shall consist of five functional parts: knob, handle, taper, barrel and end cap.
- i. There must be a direct line from the center of the knob to the center of the end cap or end cap area.
- j. The bat shall have a knob of at least ¼ inch protruding at no more than a 90-degree angle from the handle. It may be molded, lathed, welded or adjustable, but must be permanently fastened. A "flare" or "cone" grip attached to the bat will be considered altered. The knob may be taped or marked for identification as long as there is no violation of this section. The knob may be solid or hollowed out to house an embedded metric sensor. If a sensor is used, it shall (1) RULE 3 / EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS 27 not affect performance; (2) be secured by a locking mechanism and a back-up mechanism to keep it in place; and (3) have a distinguishing "off line" mode to prevent data from being accessed during a game.

## Appendix A

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- k. The handle is the area between the knob and taper that is covered by the grip. It must be tubular and shall have a grip of cork, tape (no smooth or plastic tape) or composition material (commercially manufactured bat grip). The grip shall not be less than 10 inches long and shall not extend more than 15 inches from the knob. It may not exceed two layers. If taped, it must be a continuous spiral but need not be a solid layer. Resin, pine tar or spray substances placed on the grip to enhance the grip are permissible on the grip only.
- l. The taper is the transition area that connects the narrower handle to the wider barrel portion of the bat. Its length and material can vary, and the taper has the fewest rule specifications. Like the barrel, it must be free of rattles, dents, burrs and cracks.
- m. The barrel is between the taper and end cap and is the intended contact area for the pitch. The bat barrel shall be round and smooth to 0.050 inches in diameter, and the shell color(s) shall contrast with the color of the ball.
- n. The end cap is a rubber, vinyl, plastic or other approved material inserted firmly, secured and permanently affixed at the barrel end of the bat so that it cannot be removed by anyone other than the manufacturer, without replacing, damaging or destroying it. A bat made of one-piece construction need not have an end cap.
- o. Shall be marked OFFICIAL SOFTBALL by the manufacturer. If the words OFFICIAL SOFTBALL cannot be read due to wear and tear on the bat, the bat should be declared legal if it is legal in all other aspects.

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