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NFSA Official Rules



National Fastpitch Softball Association

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National Fastpitch Softball Association
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NFSA Official Rules

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SOFTBALL PLAYING RULES

RULE 1. DEFINITIONS

ALTERED BAT: An altered bat is any bat that has been physically changed in any way, except for the tape on the handle.

APPEAL PLAY: An appeal play is a play on which an umpire may not make a decision until requested by a manager, coach or player. The appeal may not be made after any one of the following has occurred:

1. A legal or illegal pitch.
2. The pitcher and all infielders have left fair territory.
3. The umpires have left the field of play.

BASE ON BALLS: A base on balls permits a batter to gain first base without liability to be put out and is awarded to a batter by the umpire when four pitches are judged to be out of the strike zone.

BASE LINE: A base line is an imaginary direct line between the bases.

BASE PATH: A base path is a direct line between a base and the runner's position at the time a defensive player is attempting (or about to attempt) to tag a runner.

BATTED BALL: A batted ball is any ball that hits the bat or is hit by the bat and lands either in fair or foul territory. No intent to hit the ball is necessary.

BATTER'S BOX: The batters box is the area in which the batter is positioned while at bat. The lines are considered as being within the batters box.

BATTER-RUNNER: A batter that has just put the ball in play becomes a base runner.

BATTING ORDER: The batting order is the official listing of offensive player by first and last name, in the order in which members of that team must come to bat. Uniform number and defensive position must be listed on the Lineup card.

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

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

BUNT: When a batter taps the pitched ball and attempts to put the ball in play. NOTE: If a batter presents her bat for a bunt and does not pull it back prior to the ball reaching her, a strike will be called.

CATCH: A catch is a legally caught ball, which occurs when the fielder catches a batted, pitched or thrown ball with the hand(s) or glove.

- A. In establishing a valid catch, the fielder shall hold the ball long enough to prove complete control of it and/or that the release of the ball is voluntary and intentional. If a player drops the ball after reaching into the glove to remove it or while in the act of throwing, it is a valid catch.
- B. If the ball is merely held in the fielder's arm(s) or prevented from dropping to the ground by some part of the fielder's body, equipment or clothing, the catch is not completed until the ball is in the grasp of the fielder's hand(s) or glove.
- C. The fielder's feet must be within the field of play, touching the "out of play" line or in the air after leaving live ball territory in order to have a valid catch. A player who is "out of play" and returns must have both feet touching the playable area or one foot touching and the other in the air, before the catch is legal.
- D. It is not a catch, if a fielder (while gaining control), collides with another player, umpire, or a fence, or falls to the ground and drops the ball as a result of the collision or falling to the ground.
- E. A ball that strikes anything other than a defensive player while it is in flight is ruled the same as if it struck the ground.

F. An illegally caught ball occurs when a fielder catches a batted or thrown ball with anything other than the hand(s) or glove in its proper place. Should the catcher catch any fly ball with the mask, the batter is not out.

CATCHER'S BOX: The area defined by lines, which are considered within the catcher's box. The catcher's body and equipment are considered within the box unless touching the ground outside the box. The catcher must remain in the box until the pitch is released.

CHARGED CONFERENCE: A charged conference takes place anytime a coach gets permission to suspend play to talk to the players.

COURTESY RUNNER: A courtesy runner is any player who runs for a runner without a charged substitution.

CROW HOP (Leaping): When a pitcher's plant-foot leaves contact with the ground before the ball leaves her hand during a pitch. Need to enforce.

DEAD BALL: The term used for a ball that:

1. Touches any object or player out-of-play,
2. Is lodged in umpire's gear or in an offensive player's clothing,
3. The umpire has ruled dead. A dead ball line is considered in play.

DEFENSIVE TEAM: The defensive team is the team in the field.

DISLODGED BASE: A dislodged base is a base displaced from its proper position.

DISQUALIFIED PLAYER: A player removed from the game for a rule violation. A team may continue to play shorthanded if no substitutes are available. Any disqualified player discovered in the game will constitute a forfeit.

DOUBLE PLAY: A double play is a play by the defense in which two offensive players are legally put out as a result of continuous action.

DUGOUT: An out-of-play area designated for player, coaches, batboys and official representatives of the team only. There shall be no smoking in this area.

EJECTED PLAYER: A player or coach removed from the game by the umpire, usually for an unsportsmanlike act or conduct. A flagrant act will require the player or coach to leave the grounds for the remainder of the game. A team may NOT continue to play shorthanded. If no substitutes are available the game is a forfeit. Any ejected player or coach discovered participating in the game would constitute a forfeit.

EXTRA PLAYER: An extra player is optional, but it allows a team to play up to eleven players on offense and nine on defense. NOTE: If eleven players are used they must remain in the same batting order throughout the entire game.

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

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

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

FAKE TAG: A form of obstruction by a fielder who neither has the ball nor is about to receive the ball, and which impedes the progress of a runner either advancing or returning to a base, The runner does not have to stop or slide. Merely slowing down when a fake tag is attempted would constitute obstruction.

FIELDER: A fielder is any player of the team in the field.

FLY BALL: A fly ball is any ball batted into the air.

FORCE OUT: A force out is an out which may be made only when a runner loses the right to the base that the runner is occupying because the batter becomes a batter-runner, and before the batter-runner or a succeeding runner has been put out. If the forced runner, after touching the next base, retreats for any reason towards the base last occupied, the force play is reinstated and the runner may again be put out if the defense tags the runner or the base to which the runner is forced.

FOUL BALL: A foul ball is a batted ball that:

- A. Settles or is touched in or over foul territory between home and first base or between home and third base.
- B. Bounds or rolls past first or third base in or over foul territory.
- C. While over foul territory touches the person, attached equipment or clothing of a player or an umpire, or any object foreign to the natural ground.
- D. While over foul territory, a runner interferes with a defensive player attempting to field a batted ball.
- E. First hits the ground or is first touched over foul territory beyond first or third base. A caught fly ball is not a foul ball.
- F. Touches the batter or the bat in the batter's hand(s) a second time while the batter is within the batter's box.
- G. Goes directly from the bat, not higher than the batters head, to any part of the catcher's body or equipment and is caught by another fielder.

FOUL TIP: When the batted ball is glanced off the bat and into the catcher's glove.

HESITATION: When a base runner advances toward a base and then retreats back to previous base while the pitcher has possession of the ball in the pitcher's circle and the pitcher does not attempt to make a play on the base runner.

HIT BY PITCH: When the pitched ball hits the batter and the batter is not swinging at the ball or a strike is not called. Dead ball results with the batter advancing to first base

HOME TEAM: The home team shall be designated by mutual agreement or by a flip of a coin.

ILLEGAL BAT: Any bat that has been altered from its original condition (other than grip tape on the handle).

ILLEGALLY BATTED BALL: An illegally batted ball occurs when the batter hits the ball fair or foul and:

- A. When, at the time the bat makes contact with the ball, the entire foot is completely outside the lines of the batter's box and on the ground.
- B. When, at the time the bat makes contact with the ball, any part of the foot is touching home plate
- C. An illegal or altered bat is used.
- D. When, at the time the bat makes contact with the ball, the batter's entire foot had stepped back out of the batter's box and returned to hit the ball while inside the box.

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

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

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

INELIGIBLE PLAYER: A player who does not meet the requirements of NFSA Code. The determination of eligibility is not the responsibility of the umpire. The use of an ineligible player will constitute a forfeit if properly protested.

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

INFIELD FLY: A batted pop fly in the Infield with 1 or less outs when a base runner occupies at least 1st and 2nd base.
Result: the batter is out.

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

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

LEAPING: Any act, by the pitcher, which causes the pitcher to become airborne on the initial move and push from the pitchers plate. This is an illegal act.

LEGAL TAG:

- A. Runner. A legal tag occurs when the ball tags a runner or batter-runner that is not touching a base while it is securely held in a fielder's hand(s) or glove. The ball is not considered as having been securely held if it is juggled or dropped by the fielder after tagging the runner, unless the runner deliberately knocks the ball from the hand(s) or glove of the fielder.

- B. Base. Once the defensive player has control of the ball in her hand(s) or glove, she may touch the base with any part of her body to be a legal touch. (e.g. the defensive player could touch the base with her foot, with her open hand, sit on the base, etc.) This would apply in force out or appeal situations.

LINE DRIVE: A line drive is a fly ball that is batted sharply and directly into the playing field. A line drive will never be considered an infield fly.

LIVE BALL: Any and all times that the ball is in play or until the umpire calls "time" or "dead ball".

OBSTRUCTION: Obstruction is the act of:

- A. A defensive player or team member who hinders or prevents a batter from striking at or hitting a pitched ball.
- B. A fielder, who is not:
 - 1. In possession of the ball.
 - 2. In the act of fielding a batted ball.
 - 3. About to receive a thrown ball, and impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner that is legally running bases. Contact is not necessary to impede the progress of the runner.

OFFENSIVE TEAM: The offensive team is the team at bat.

ON-DECK BATTERS: The on-deck batter is the offensive player whose name follows the name of the batter in the batting order.

OUTFIELD: The outfield is that portion of the field in fair territory, which is normally covered by outfielders.

OVER-SLIDE: An over slide is the act of an offensive player when, as a runner, over slides a base the player is attempting to reach. It is usually caused when the player's momentum causes the player to lose contact with the base that then causes the player to be in jeopardy. The base runner may over slide first base without being in jeopardy.

OVERTHROW: An overthrow occurs when a thrown ball from a fielder goes beyond the boundary lines of the playing field (dead ball territory) or becomes a blocked ball.

PASSED BALL: A passed ball is a legally delivered pitch that should have been held or controlled by the catcher with ordinary effort, but wasn't.

PIVOT FOOT: The pivot foot is that foot which must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate prior to pushing off.

PLAY BALL: Play ball is the term used by the plate umpire to indicate that play shall start and shall not be declared until all defense players are in fair territory except the catcher, who must be in the catcher's box, and all runners are properly on base.

PROTESTS: There are three types of protests
A. Misinterpretation of the playing rule.
B. Illegal player.
C. Ineligible player.

QUICK PITCH: A quick pitch is a pitch by the pitcher with the obvious attempt to catch the batter off balance. This would be before the batter takes a desired position in the batter's box or while the batter is still off balance as a result of the previous pitch.

RUNNER: A runner is an offensive player who has reached the base and has not yet been put out.

SACRIFICE FLY: A sacrifice fly is scored when, with fewer than two outs, the batter scores a runner with a fly ball or line drive that is:
A. Caught,
B. Dropped by any fielder and, in the scorer's judgment, the runner could have scored after the catch had the fly ball or line drive been caught.

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

STEALING: Stealing is the act of a runner attempting to advance, during a pitch, to the next base. Runners can advance once the pitched ball leaves the pitcher's hand.

STRIKE ZONE: When a batter assumes a natural batting stance adjacent to home plate, the strike zone is that space over any part of home plate between the batter's armpits and the top of the knees.

SUBSTITUTE: A substitute is any member on a team's roster who is not listed in the lineup as a starting player; or a starting player who re-enters the game. If a substitute enters the game without reporting, and after a pitch has been thrown (legal or illegal), the player will be disqualified when discovered. If a substitute is illegal for any reason, the player will be subject to the penalty for that violation.

TRAPPED BALL: A trapped ball is:
A. A batted fly ball or line drive, which hits the ground or a fence prior to being caught.
B. A thrown ball to any base for a force out which is caught with the glove over the ball on the ground rather than under the ball.
C. A pitched ball which touches the ground on a strike prior to the catcher catching it.

TIME: Time is the term used by the umpire to order the suspension of play.

TRIPLE PLAY: A triple play is a play by the defense in which three offensive players are legally put out as a result of continuous action.

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

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

RULE 2: EQUIPMENT

Section 1. Equipment to be used while playing in official National Fastpitch Softball Association events must be standard approved equipment.

Section 2. THE OFFICIAL BAT:

- A. Shall be made of wood or metal.
- B. Shall not be more than 2 ¼ inches (6.0cm) in diameter at its largest part.
- C. Shall have a safety grip of cork, tape or composite material.
- D. Shall be marked OFFICIAL SOFTBALL by the manufacturer.

Section 3. THE OFFICIAL SOFTBALL:

- A. Shall be White with white thread or Optic Yellow with red thread.
- B. Shall be 12 inches with a COR of .47 or under for 12, 14, 16, and 18U.
- C. Shall be 11 inches with a COR of .47 or under for 10U.
- D. Shall be 11 inches SOFT-TOUCH for 8U

Section 4. MASKS, BODY PROTECTORS, SHIN GUARDS AND HELMETS:

- A. Catchers must wear a mask with throat protector, helmet with ear flaps, shin guards which offer protection to the knee caps and body protector. An extended wire protector may be worn in lieu of an attached throat protector. Any player warming up a pitcher, must wear a mask with throat protection and helmet with ear protection.
- B. (8u Only) Catchers must wear full catchers gear. Soccer style kneepads, shin guards are allowed. The knee and shin must be covered completely.
- C. All offensive players must wear double ear flap NOCSAE-approved batting helmets. This includes on-deck batter, base runners, and players acting as coaches in the coach's box.

Section 5. UNIFORM.

All players on a team shall properly wear uniforms that are alike in color, trim and style. If because of the blood rule a change is required and the uniform part does not match, the player will not be penalized. All protective equipment should be worn properly. If a player is requested by the umpire to remove jewelry, illegal shoes or illegal parts of the uniform and they refuse, the player will not be allowed to play.

A. HEADWEAR

Ball caps, visors and headbands are optional for players. If worn, they can be mixed, but must be worn properly. If one type or more than one type is worn, they all must be of the same color. Handkerchiefs do not qualify as headbands and cannot be worn around the head or neck. Plastic visors are not allowed.

B. PANTS/SLIDING PANTS

All players' pants may be long, short, or mixed in style, as long as they are alike in color. Players may wear a solid colored pair of sliding pants. It is not mandatory that all players wear sliding pants, but if more than one player wears them, they must be alike in color and style. No player may wear ragged, frayed or slit legs on exposed sliding pants.

C. UNDERSHIRTS

Players may wear a solid-colored undershirt (it may be white). It is not mandatory that all players wear an undershirt, but if more than one player wears them, they must be alike in color and style. No player may wear ragged, frayed or slit sleeves on exposed undershirts.

D. NUMBERS

A whole number of contrasting color, players on the same team may not wear identical numbers.

E. CASTS/PROSTHESES

All casts and splints must be padded. Prostheses may be worn. Braces with exposed hard surfaces must be padded. Any of this equipment judged by the umpire to be potentially dangerous is illegal. Any decision by the umpire should be based on whether or not a device worn or used by an individual with a disability changes the fundamental nature of the game or poses a significant risk to the safety of other players.

F. JEWELRY

No jewelry is allowed on the players (except medical alert bracelets).

G. SHOES

Shoes and socks must be worn and plastic cleats are recommended. (Metal cleats are not allowed).

EXCEPTION: No metal spikes or hard plastic or polyurethane spikes similar to metal sole and heel plates are allowed.

H. GLOVES/MITTS

May be worn by any player. The pitcher's glove shall be of one solid color other white, gray, or optic yellow, or if multi-colored white, gray or optic yellow shall not be included in the colors.

Section 6. ALL EQUIPMENT

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the NFSA reserves the right to withhold or withdraw approval of any equipment which, in the NFSA's sole determination, significantly changes the character of the game, affects the safety of participants or spectators, or renders a player's performance more a product of the player's equipment rather than the player's individual skill.

RULE 3: THE PLAYING FIELD

Section 1. The playing field is the area within which the ball may be legally played and fielded. There shall be a clear and unobstructed area between the foul lines and within the radius of the prescribed fence distances from home plate.

OFFICIAL DISTANCE TABLE

Division	Bases	Pitching	Min. Fence	Recommended	Max. Fence
G8,10-U	60'	35'	150'	200'	225'
G12 thru 16-U	60'	40'	175'	200'	225'
G18-U	60'	43'	175'	200'	225'

Section 2. Leagues, or opposing teams, may agree upon ground or special rules establishing the limits of the playing field. Any obstruction in fair ground less than the prescribed fence distances from home plate should be clearly marked for the umpire's information. If using a baseball field, the mound should be removed and the backstop distance must meet those prescribed (minimum of 25 feet [7.62m] or a maximum of 30 feet [9.14m] from home plate). If the base distances or the pitching distance is found to be at the wrong dimensions during the course of the game, correct the error, with no penalty, and continue playing the game. Every effort should be made by the umpire to obtain the correct dimensions.

Section 3. For the layout of the diamond, refer to drawing showing official dimensions for a softball diamond. This section serves as an example for laying out a diamond with 60-foot bases and a 40-foot pitching distance. To determine the position of home plate, draw a line in the direction desired to layout the diamond. Drive a stake at the corner of home plate nearest the catcher. Fasten a cord to this stake and tie knots, or otherwise mark the cord, at 40 feet (14.02m), 60 feet (18.29m), 84 feet 10 1/4 inches (25.86m), and at 120 feet (36.58m). Place the cord (without stretching) along the direction line and place a stake at the 40-foot (14.02m) marker. This will be the front line at the middle of the pitcher's plate. Along the same line, drive a stake at the 84-foot 10 1/4-inch (25.68m) marker. This will be the center of second base. Place the 120-foot (36.58m) marker at the center of second base and, taking hold of the cord at the 60-foot (18.29m) marker, walk to the right of the direction line until the cord is taut and drive a stake at the 60-foot (18.29m) marker. This will be the outside corner of first base and the cord will now form the lines to first and second bases. Again, holding the cord at the 60-foot (18.29m) marker, walk across the field and, in like manner, mark the outside corner of third base. Home plate, first base, and third base are wholly inside the diamond. To check the diamond, place the home plate end of the cord at the first base stake and the 120-foot (36.58m) marker at third base. The 60-foot (18.29m) marker should now check at home plate and the middle of second base.

- A. The three-foot (0.91m) line is drawn parallel to and three feet (0.91m) from the baseline, starting at a point halfway between home plate and first base.
- B. The batter's on deck circle is a five-foot (1.52m) circle (2 1/2-foot [0.76m] radius) placed adjacent to the end of the player's bench or dugout area closest to home plate.
- C. The batter's box, one on each side of home plate shall measure three feet (0.91m) by seven feet (2.13m). The inside lines of the batter's box shall be six inches (15.24cm) from home plate. The front line of the box shall be four feet (1.22m) in front of a line drawn through the center of home plate. The lines are considered as being within the batter's box.
- D. The catcher's box shall be 10 feet (3.05m) in length from the rear outside corners of the batters' boxes and shall be eight feet, five inches, (2.57m) wide.
- E. Each coach's box is behind a line 15 feet (4.57m) long drawn outside the diamond. The line is parallel to and eight feet (2.44m) from the first and third base line, extended from the bases toward home plate.
- F. The pitcher's plate shall be of rubber or wood, 24 inches (60.96cm) long and six inches (15.24cm) wide. The top of the plate shall be level with the ground. The front of the pitcher's plate shall be the prescribed pitching distances from the back point of home plate. It shall be permanently attached to the ground at distances indicated in Rule 2, Section 1. There shall be a 16-foot (4.88m) circle, eight feet (2.44m) in radius, drawn from the center of the pitcher's plate. The lines drawn around the pitcher's plate are considered inside the circle.
- G. Home plate shall be made of rubber or other suitable material. It shall be a five-sided figure, 17 inches (43.18cm) wide across the edge facing the pitcher's plate. The sides shall be parallel to the Sidelines of the batter's box and shall be 8 1/2 inches (21.59cm) long. The sides of the point facing the catcher shall be 12 inches (30.48cm) long.
- H. The bases, other than home plate, shall be 15 inches (38.10cm) square, shall be made of canvas or other suitable material and not more than five inches (12.70cm) in thickness. The bases should be properly fastened in position.

- I. The double base is approved for use at first base. This base is 15 by 30 inches and made of canvas or other suitable material. Half the base is white (over fair territory) and half is orange or green (over foul territory), it should not be more than five inches (12.70cm) in thickness. When using the double base at first, the following rules should be enforced:
 - a. A batted ball hitting the white portion is declared fair and a batted ball hitting the colored portion is declared foul.
 - b. Whenever a play is being made on the batter-runner, the defense must use the white portion and the batter-runner the colored portion. The batter-runner is out when there is a play being made at first base and the batter-runner touches only the white portion, providing the defense appeals prior to the batter-runner returning to first base. Once the runner returns to the white, no appeal can be made.
 - c. On any force out attempt from the foul side of first base, or an errant throw pulling the defense into foul ground, the defense and the batter-runner can use either the white or colored portion.
 - d. This includes overthrows.
 - e. 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 colored portion. Should the batter-runner return, the runner must return to the white portion.
 - f. When tagging up on a fly ball, the white portion must be used.
 - g. On an attempted pick-off play, the runner must return to the white portion.
- J. 8-U, 10-U, 12-U, 14-U, 16-U and 18-U the double first base shall be used in this division of play.
- K. (8U Only) A line bisecting the pitching circle will be drawn starting on the first base side of the circle and ending on the third base side of the circle.
- L. (8U Only) A line will be drawn indicating the halfway mark between first and second base, second and third base, and third base and home plate.

RULE 4: PLAYERS, COACHES, and SUBSTITUTES

Section 1. PLAYERS:

- A. Player eligibility in each age group is determined by their age as of December 31st.
- B. 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.
 - 1. Lineup sheets are to be completed and submitted to the official scorer and umpire at the start of each game. A starting player shall be official when the lineup is inspected and approved by the plate umpire and team manager at the pre-game meeting. The lineup shall contain the first and last name, position and uniform number of each player. If a wrong number is on the lineup sheet. Correct it and continue playing with no penalty. Their last name, first name and uniform number should list all available substitutes in the designated place.
 - 2. Eligible roster members may be added to the available substitute list at any time during the game.
- C. A team shall consist of players in the following positions:
 - 1. Fast Pitch. Nine players: pitcher (F-1), catcher (F-2), first baseman (F-3), second baseman (F-4), third baseman (F-5), shortstop (F-6), left fielder (F-7), center fielder (F-8) and right fielder (F-9).
 - 2. Extra Players: Two (2) extra players are allowed to bat in the lineup and are interchangeable on defense without being charged a substitution.
 - 3. 8U Only: Ten players will be used on defense, with the 10th player positioned in the outfield. With the exception of the catcher, no defensive may be closer than 30 feet from the batter until the ball has been hit. The player pitcher must stand in the back half of the pitching circle until the ball is hit. The four outfielders will remain behind the base lines until the ball is hit. "Hit ball" means fair or foul.
EFFECT: Violation of this rule will allow the offensive coach to take the resulting play OR advance the batter to first base.
- D. SHORT-HANDED RULE.
 - 1. To start a game:
 - a. A game may begin or finish with one less than required to start.
 - b. The vacant position must be listed last in the batting order
 - c. An out will be taken when the vacant position in the batting order appears.
 - 2. To continue a game once started with a full team listed on batting order:
 - a. If a team begins play with the required number of players as listed, that team may continue a game with one less player than is currently in the lineup whenever a player leaves the game for any reason other than ejection. Under no circumstances shall a team be permitted to bat less than eight
 - b. If playing shorthanded and a substitute arrives, she must be inserted immediately into the vacant spot. If she refuses to enter for any reason, that player becomes ineligible the remainder of the game.
 - c. If the player leaving the game is a runner or batter, the runner or batter shall be declared out
 - d. When the player who has left the game is scheduled to bat, an out shall be declared for each turn at bat. An inning or the game can end with an automatic out.
EXCEPTION: If extra player(s) are used an out will be taken only when there are eight players left in the lineup.
 - e. The player who has left the game cannot return to the lineup.
EXCEPTION: A player who has left the game under the blood rule may return even after missing a turn at bat.
EFFECT: Failure to have the required number of eligible players to start or continue a game will result in forfeiture.

Section 2. EXTRA PLAYER:

- A. Extra players (EP) are optional, but if used, they must be made known prior to the start of the game and be listed on the scoring sheet in the regular batting order.
- B. The EP's must remain in the same position in the batting order for the entire game.
- C. If EP's are used in the starting lineup, 10 or 11 must bat and any 9 of those 10 or 11 may play defense, Defensive positions may be changed, but the batting order must remain the same.
- D. The EP's may be substituted for at any time. The substitute must be a player who has not yet been in the game. The starting EP's may re-enter.

Section 3. RE-ENTRY:

- A. Any of the starting players, including an EP may be substituted or replaced and re-entered once, provided players occupy the same batting positions whenever in the lineup.
- B. Substitutes may re-enter once. No player may re-enter a second time. The starting player and her substitute may not be in the line-up at the same time.
- C. If any player re-enters the game a second time or a player re-enters the game in a position in the batting order other than their original starting position, this is considered an illegal re-entry.
EFFECT - Section A-C: Violation of the re-entry rule is considered an illegal player. The illegal player shall be disqualified.

Section 4. SUBSTITUTES:

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

- A. The manager or team representative of the team making the substitution shall immediately notify the plate umpire at the time the substitute enters. The plate umpire shall then report the change to the scorer.
- B. If a substitute enters the game without reporting, and after a pitch has been thrown (legal or illegal), or after a play has been made, the player will be disqualified when discovered. The use of an illegal substitute is handled as a protest by the offended team while the player is in the game. If the team manager or player in violation informs the umpire prior to the offended team's protest, there is no violation regardless of how long the player or players were legally in the game. All action prior to the discovery is legal. If the team in violation has no substitutes to replace the player disqualified, it is treated the same as the shorthanded rule - the player disqualified is also called out, and the next batter bats.
EXCEPTION:
 - 1. If an unreported substitute on offense bats and reaches base safely, and then is discovered and protested before a pitch to the next batter, or if at the end of the game and before the umpire leaves the field, all runners (including the batter) will return to the base occupied on the batted ball, and the unreported substitute is disqualified. All outs that occur on this play will stand.
 - 2. If the substitute is an illegal player for any reason, she will be subject to the penalty for that violation.
- C. Any player may be removed from the game during any dead ball. If an accident to a batter-runner or runner prevents them from proceeding to an awarded base, and the ball is dead, the batter-runner may be substituted for. The substitute will be allowed to proceed to any awarded base(s). The substitute must legally touch any awarded or missed base(s) not previously touched. This is not a courtesy runner, but a legal substitute.

Section 5. ILLEGAL PLAYERS:

An illegal player is a player who takes a position in the lineup, either on offense or defense, who does not have a legal right to that position. A player will not violate the illegal player rule until one pitch, legal or illegal, has been thrown. The use of an illegal player is handled as a protest by the offended team while the player is in the game. Once the umpire has been informed, in all cases the illegal player shall be disqualified, and can be legally replaced either by a substitute or a starter who re-enters the game. Illegal players include:

- A. **ILLEGAL PITCHER.**
An illegal pitcher is a player who returns to pitch after being removed from the pitching position by the umpire because of excessive charged defensive conferences.
EFFECT: Once discovered, the illegal pitcher shall be disqualified and all play stands,
- B. **ILLEGAL RUNNER**
An illegal runner occurs when:
 - 1. Placing an offensive player in the line-up as a runner for another offensive player; **EXCEPTION:** Pitcher and Catcher only.
 - 2. Not reporting a courtesy runner or using an ineligible/illegal courtesy Runner.
- C. **ILLEGAL RE-ENTRY.**
An illegal re-entry occurs when:
 - 1. A starting player returns to the game a second time after being substituted for twice.
 - 2. A starting player returns to the game, but is not in her original position in the batting order.
 - 3. A substitute returns to the game after being replaced twice.**EFFECT - Section 5 B-C Any action that occurs while the illegal player is in the game is governed as follows:**

- a. OFFENSE: If the illegal player is discovered by the defense:
 1. While the illegal player is at bat, she is disqualified, and her replacement shall assume the ball and strike count. Any advance of runners while the illegal player is at bat shall be legal.
 2. After the illegal player has completed a turn at bat and before the next legal or illegal pitch, before the defensive team has left the field, and before the umpires have left the game, the illegal player is called out, disqualified, and any advance of runners as a result of the illegal player becoming a batter-runner is nullified. Any additional outs that were recorded on the play will stand.
 3. After the illegal player has completed a turn at bat and after the next legal or illegal pitch, or after the defense has left the field, the illegal player is disqualified. If she is still on base her replacement will take that base. Any advance of runners as a result of the illegal player becoming a batter-runner is legal.
 4. If the player is in the game illegally as a runner, the player is disqualified and replaced on the base. Any advance of the runner(s) is legal.
- b. DEFENSE: If the illegal player is discovered by the offense:
 1. After the illegal player makes a play and before the next legal or illegal pitch, before the defense has left the field, and before the umpires have left the game, the illegal player is disqualified, and the offensive team has the option of:
 - a. Taking the result of the play, or
 - b. Having the last batter return and assume the ball and strike count the batter had prior to the discovery of the illegal player. Each runner would return to the base occupied prior to the play.
 2. After a legal or illegal pitch to the next batter, the illegal player is disqualified and all play stands.

Section 6. COACH:

- A. A coach is a person who is responsible for the team's actions on the field and he represents the team in communications with the umpire and opposing team. A player may be designated as a coach in the event the coach is absent or that player is acting as a player/coach.
 - B. Coaches must be neatly attired or dressed in team uniform in accordance with the color code of the team. If a coach wears a hat/cap, it must be approved headwear.
 - C. A base coach is an eligible team member, head coach or assistance coach of the team at bat who occupies the coach's box at first or third, to direct the batter or runner.
 1. One coach can have in her possession in the coach's box, a score book (electronic or paper), pen , pencil, or electronic marker and an indicator all of which shall be used for scorekeeping or record keeping purposes only.
 2. A base coach shall be obligated to stay within the confines of these boxes with both feet. A coach may leave the coach's box to signal the runner to slide, advance or return to a base or move out of a fielder's way as long as the coach does not interfere with the play.
 3. Base coaches may not use language that will reflect negatively upon players, umpires or spectators.
 4. A base coach may address only their team member.
 5. No communication equipment is allowed between dugout and coaches, players, and spectators.
- EFFECT: (B & C) Disqualification or ejection from the game after a warning.**
- I. (8U Only) The following coaching positions will be allowed:
 - a. Positioning Coach positioned in the outfield.
 - b. Offensive coach pitcher mound.
 - c. Offensive coach first and third base.
 - d. Defensive coach outside of both dugouts toward playing field.

Section 7. DISQUALIFIED OR EJECTED PLAYER OR COACH:

- A. A player or coach who has been ejected from the game is restricted to the bench. A disqualified player may serve as a base coach. If the act is determined to be flagrant, the player or coach must leave the grounds. Any disqualified or ejected player discovered participating in the game would constitute a forfeit.
- B. Any arguing on the judgment of balls and strikes will constitute a team warning. Any repeat offense shall result in the ejection of that team member.

- C. If a player is disqualified a team can play shorthanded, however if a player is ejected and the team does not have enough players to continue, the game is forfeited.

Section 8. BLOOD RULE:

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

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

RULE 5. GAME FORMAT

Section 1. HOME TEAM:

The team designated as home team shall bat last in the inning.

Section 2. FITNESS OF THE GROUND:

Solely the plate umpire shall decide the fitness of the ground for a game.

Section 3. REGULATION GAME:

- A. A regulation game shall consist of seven innings. A full seven innings need not be played if the team second at bat scores more runs in five and one-half innings and/or before the third out in the last of the sixth inning or the run ahead rule is applied.
EXCEPTION: 8U will play one hour and five minutes or seven innings with a maximum of six runs per inning.
- B. A game that is tied at the end of seven innings, or 1 hr. 5 min. for 8U, shall be continued by playing additional innings until one side has scored more runs than the other at the end of a complete inning, or until the team second at bat has scored more runs in their half of the inning before the third out is made.
- C. A game called by the umpire shall be regulation if five or more complete innings have been played, or the team second at bat has scored more runs in four or more innings than the other team has scored in five or more innings. The umpire is empowered to call a game at any time because of darkness, rain, fire, panic or other cause that place the patrons or players in peril.
- D. Games that are not considered regulation shall be resumed at the exact point where they were stopped.
- E. A regulation tie game shall be declared if the score is equal when the game is called at the end of five or more complete innings, or if the team second at bat has equaled the score of the first team at bat in the incomplete inning.
- F. Games that are regulation tie games shall be resumed at the exact point where they were stopped.

Section 4. FORFEITED GAMES:

The umpire in favor of the team not at fault shall declare a forfeited game in the following cases:

- A. Any team member and/or spectator physically attack an umpire.
- B. If a team fails to appear on the field, or, being on the field, refuses to begin a game for which it is scheduled or assigned within a time set for forfeitures by the organization that the team represents.
- C. If one side refuses to continue to play after the game has begun, unless the game has been suspended or terminated by the umpire.
- D. If one side fails to resume playing within two minutes after the umpire has declared "play ball" after play was been suspended by the umpire.
- E. If a team employs tactics noticeably designed to delay or to hasten the game.
- F. If, after warning by the umpire, anyone of the rules of the game is willfully violated.
- G. If the order for the ejection of a player, manager or coach is not obeyed within one minute.
- H. If the ejection of a player or players from the game results in fewer than the required number of players to continue the game.
- I. If an ejected player is discovered participating again.
- J. If a team is playing one player short and another player becomes injured or ill, leaving the team with two less players than the required number.
- K. Once a game has been forfeited, the forfeit cannot be changed.

Section 5. SCORING OF RUNS:

- A. One run shall be scored each time a runner touches first, second, third bases and home plate.
- B. No run shall be scored if the third out of the inning is the result of:
 - 1. A batter-runner being called out prior to reaching first base or any other runner forced out due to the batter becoming a batter-runner.
 - 2. A runner being put out by a tag or live ball appeal play prior to the lead runner touching home plate.
 - 3. A preceding runner is declared out on an appeal play.NOTE: An appeal can be made after the third out in order to nullify a run.

Section 6. GAME WINNER:

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

- A. The score of a called regulation shall be the score at the end of the last complete inning unless the team second at bat has scored an equal number or more runs than the first team at bat in the incomplete inning. In this case, the score shall be that of the incomplete inning.

- B. The score of a regulation tie game shall be the tie score when the game was terminated.
- C. The score of a forfeited game shall be seven to zero in favor of the team not at fault.

Section 7. CONFERENCE:

- A. Offensive Conference. There shall be only one charged conference between the manager and/or other team representative(s) and the batter, another team representative, and/or runner(s) in an inning. The umpire shall not permit any such conferences in excess of one in an inning. **EFFECT: Ejection of the manager or coach who insists on another charged conference.**
- B. Defensive Conference. There shall be only three charged conference(s) between the manager or other team representative from the dugout with any defensive player(s) in a seven inning game. For every inning beyond seven, there shall be one charged conference per inning between the manager or other team representative from the dugout with any defense player(s).
EFFECT: The fourth, and each additional, charged conference in a seven inning game, or for any charged conference in excess of one per inning in an extra Inning game, shall result in the removal of the pitcher from the pitcher position for the remainder of the game. The removed pitcher can play another position on defense but cannot pitch again.

Section 8. HOME RUN RULE:

Any fair fly ball touched by a defensive player that goes over the fence in fair territory should be declared a four-base award. A home run will be awarded for any ball hit over the fence in fair territory.

Section 9. RUN AHEAD RULE:

- A. A run ahead rule must be used at all National Tournaments; 12 after three innings, 8 after four innings or 6 after five innings.
- B. Complete innings must be played unless the home team scores the run ahead limit while at bat. When the visiting team reaches the limit in the top half of the inning, the home team must have their opportunity to bat in the bottom half of the inning.

Section 10. TIEBREAKER RULE:

If, after the completion of seven (7) innings of play, the score is tied, the following tiebreaker rule will be played to determine a winning team.

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

Section 11. DUGOUT CONDUCT:

Coaches, players, substitutes, or other bench personnel shall not be outside the designated bench dugout area except when the rule allows or justified by the umpire.

EFFECT: The first offense is a team warning. Any repeat offense shall result in ejection of that team member.

RULE 6. PITCHING REGULATIONS

Section 1. PRELIMINARIES:

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

- A. Both feet must be on the ground within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate. The shoulders shall be in line with first and third bases. The pitcher shall take a position with both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate.
- B. While on the pitching plate, the pitcher shall take the signal or appear to be taking a signal with the hands separated. The ball must remain in either the glove or pitching hand.
- C. The pitcher shall hold the ball in both hands for not less than one second and not more than 10 seconds before releasing it. Both feet must remain in contact with the pitching plate at all times prior to the forward step.
- D. The pitcher shall not be considered in the pitching position unless the catcher is in position to receive the pitch.
- E. The pitcher may not take the pitching position on the pitcher's plate without having the ball in her possession.

Section 2. STARTING THE PITCH:

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

Section 3. LEGAL DELIVERY:

- A. The pitcher must not make any motion to pitch without immediately delivering the ball to the batter.
- B. The pitcher must not use a pitching motion in which, after having the ball in both hands in the pitching position, the pitcher removes one hand from the ball, and returns the ball to both hands in front of the body.
- C. The pitcher must not make a stop or reversal of the forward motion after separating the hands.
- D. The pitcher must not make two revolutions of the arm on the windmill pitch. A pitcher may drop the arm to the side and to the rear before starting the windmill motion.
- E. The delivery must be an underhanded motion with the hand below the hip and the wrist not farther from the body than the elbow.
- F. The release of the ball and follow through of the hand and wrist must be forward and past the straight line of the body.
- G. In the act of delivering the ball, the pitcher must take one step with the non-pivot foot simultaneous with the release of the ball. The step must be forward and toward the batter within the 24-inch length of the pitcher's plate toward the batter, or if the pivot foot turns or slides in order to push off the pitcher's plate, provided contact is maintained with the plate.
Raising the foot off the pitching plate and returning it to the plate creates a rocking motion and is an illegal act.
- H. Pushing off with the pivot foot from a place other than the pitcher's plate is illegal. This includes a "crow hop".
- I. The pivot foot must remain in contact with or push off and drag away from the pitching plate prior to the front foot touching the ground, as long as the pivot foot remains in contact with the ground.
- J. The pitcher must not make another revolution after releasing the ball.
- K. The pitcher shall not deliberately drop, roll or bounce the ball in order to prevent the batter from hitting it.
- L. The pitcher has 20 seconds to release the next pitch after receiving the ball or after the umpire indicates, "play ball."
- M. Pitcher can ask the umpire for a different ball at any given time before the start of her pitch. During wet conditions, a coach can towel dry the balls for the pitcher.

Section 4. INTENTIONAL WALK:

If the pitcher desires to walk a batter intentionally, pitches do not have to be delivered to the batter. The pitcher simply notifies the home plate umpire and the intentional walk is granted.

Section 5. DEFENSIVE POSITIONING:

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

Section 6. FOREIGN SUBSTANCE:

Any defensive player shall not at any time during the game be allowed to use any foreign substance upon the ball. Under the supervision and control of the umpire, powdered resin may be used to dry the hands. Applying resin into the glove and then placing the ball in the glove is an illegal act. Resin must be on the ground behind the pitcher's plate. A pitcher who licks her fingers must wipe the fingers off before bringing them in contact with the ball. The pitcher shall not wear tape on the fingers, a sweatband, bracelet, or similar type item on the wrist or forearm of the pitching arm. Batting gloves may not be worn on the pitching hand.

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

Section 7. CATCHER:

- A. The catcher must remain within the lines of the catcher's box until the pitch is released.
- B. The catcher shall return the ball directly to the pitcher after each pitch, except after a strikeout, a putout or an attempted putout made by the catcher.

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

Section 8. THROWING TO A BASE:

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

EFFECT - Section 1-8:

- A. Any infraction of Sections 1-8 is an illegal pitch.
- B. The umpire shall give a delayed dead ball signal.
- C. If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely, and if all other runners have advanced at least one base on the batted ball, the illegal pitch is nullified. All action as a result of the batted ball stands. No option is given. When a runner passes a base, she is considered to have touched a base.
- D. Otherwise the manager has the option to take the result of the play, or the Illegal pitch is enforced by awarding a ball to the batter (if ball four award first base) and advancing all runners one base.
- E. If an Illegal pitch hits the batter out of the strike zone, the batter is awarded first base and all runners are awarded one base.

Section 9. WARM-UP PITCHES:

At the beginning of each half inning, or when a pitcher relieves another, not more than one minute may be used to deliver not more than five pitches. Play shall be suspended during this time. For excessive warm-up pitches, a pitcher shall be penalized by awarding a ball to the batter for each pitch in excess of five. This does not apply if the umpire delays the start of play due to substitution, conference, injuries, etc. A pitcher returning to pitch in the same half inning will not receive warm-up pitches. There is no limitation as to the number of times a player can return to the pitching position if the player has not left the batting order or has not been removed from the pitcher's position by the umpire.

Section 10. Pitching (Special Note):

- A. No player, manager or coach shall call time, employ any other word or phrase, or commit any act while the ball is alive and in play for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit an illegal pitch. A warning shall be issued to the offending team, and a repeat of this type act by any member of the team warned shall result in the offender being ejected from the game.

EFFECT — Section 10: The ball is dead, and all subsequent action on that pitch is canceled.

Section 11. DROPPED BALL:

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

Section 12. 8U PITCHING RULES:

- A. The manager of the team at bat will appoint a member of his/her coaching staff to pitch to his/her batters. A team will not be allowed to change a coach pitcher until the inning is over.
- B. The coach pitcher may pitch from anywhere within the 16 foot circle as long as his/her foot is on or in front of the halfway line.

- C. The coach pitcher must always keep at least one foot within the 16 foot pitching circle when the ball is released.
EFFECT: Section 12 B, C- Dead ball, add one pitch to count. If after 4th pitch, batter will be declared out.
- D. The coach pitcher is allowed to coach or talk to the batter, but must not leave the circle, before the pitch.
EFFECT: Removal of the coach pitcher.
- E. The coach pitcher will try to avoid interfering with the play after the ball has been hit, by moving to foul ball territory away from the play. If, in the judgment of the umpire, the coach pitcher intentionally interferes with the play:
1. The ball is declared dead.
 2. The batter is awarded first base.
 3. All other base runners will advance one base, only if forced by the award of first base to the batter.
 4. The batting team is given an out.
 5. No teams will be allowed to score because of coach pitchers intentional interference, should a run be forced home, then that runner will be the out mentioned in 4 above.
 6. Unintentional interference:
 - a. Dead ball.
 - b. No out will be charged.
 - c. Forced run may score.
- F. A play will be considered dead once the player pitcher has control of the ball within the 16 foot circle, unless making a play. Should the ball be hit directly back to the player pitcher on the ground, and the player pitcher chooses to hold the ball in the circle rather than make a play, all runners will be allowed to advance one base, from position at time ball goes dead, or in the judgment of the umpire, all play has come to a complete halt, dead ball will be declared.
- G. The player pitcher will give the ball to the coach pitcher at the end of each play.

RULE 7. BATTER-RUNNER AND RUNNER

Section 1. THE BATTER BECOMES A BATTER-RUNNER.

- A. As soon as she legally hits a fair ball
- B. When the catcher fails to catch the third strike before the ball touches the ground when there are fewer than two outs and first base is unoccupied at the time of the pitch, or anytime there are two outs. This is called the third strike rule. **EXCEPTION: 10U**
- C. When “ball four” has been called by the umpire, the batter-runner is awarded first base.
EFFECT: The ball is in play unless it has been blocked.
- D. When the catcher obstructs, hinders or prevents the batter from striking or hitting a pitched ball.
EFFECT:
1. The umpire shall give a delayed dead ball signal.
 2. If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base safely, and if all other runners have advanced at least one base on the batted ball, catcher obstruction is canceled. All action as a result of the batted ball stands. No option is given. Once a runner has passed a base, the runner is considered to have reached that base (whether missing the base or not) and no option is given.
 3. Otherwise the manager has the option to take the result of the play, or have the obstruction enforced by awarding the batter first base and advancing all other runners only if forced.
 4. The catcher or any other fielder shall not:
 - a. Step on, or in front of home plate without the ball, or
 - b. On a swing or attempted bunt, touch the batter or her bat with a runner on third base trying to score by means of a squeeze play or a steal. The batter shall also be awarded first base on the obstruction and the ball is dead.
- E. When a fair-batted ball strikes the person, attached equipment, or clothing of an umpire or a runner. If the runner is hit with a fair-batted ball while touching a base, the runner is not out.
EFFECT:
1. If, after touching a fielder (including the pitcher), the ball is in play.
 2. If, after passing a fielder other than the pitcher, and no other infielder had a chance to make an out, the ball is in play.
 3. If before passing a fielder without being touched, the ball is dead. If the runner is hit by the ball while off base and before it has passed an infielder, excluding the pitcher, or if it passes an infielder and another fielder has an opportunity to make an out, the runner is out and the batter-runner is entitled to first base without liability to be put out. Any runner not forced by the batter-runner must return to the base reached prior to the interference. When a fair ball touches a runner who is in contact with a base, the ball remains dead or live depending on the position of the fielder closest to the base.
 4. If the fair-batted ball hits an umpire before passing a fielder other than a pitcher, the ball is dead and the batter-runner is entitled to first base without liability to be put out.
- F. When a pitched ball not swung at or called a strike touches any part of the batter’s person or clothing. It does not matter if the ball strikes the ground before hitting the batter. The batter’s hands are not to be considered a part of the bat.
EFFECT:
1. The ball is dead. The batter is entitled to one base without liability to be put out.
EXCEPTION: If no attempt is made to avoid being hit, the batter will not be awarded first base unless it is ball four.
 2. If the batter is hit on the hands while swinging at a pitch and hits the ball fair or foul, the ball is dead and a strike called. If it is strike three, the batter is out.

Section 2. BATTER-RUNNER IS OUT.

- A. When the catcher drops the third strike and is legally put out prior to reaching first base with less than two outs and first base is not occupied at the time of the pitch. **EXCEPTION: 10U.**
- B. When after hitting the ball the batter-runner is legally put out prior to reaching first base.
- C. When a fly ball is hit and a fielder catches the ball before it touches the ground, any object or person other than a defensive player.
EFFECT - Section 2 A-C: The ball is in play.
- D. When the batter-runner fails to advance to first base and enters the team area after a batted fair ball, a base on balls, a hit batter, a dropped third strike or catcher obstruction. **Effect: the ball is dead, the batter-runner is out and runners can advance at their own risk.**
- E. When she runs outside the three-foot (0.91m) lane and, in the judgment of the umpire, interferes with the fielder taking the throw at first base; however, the batter-runner may run outside the three-foot lane to avoid a fielder attempting to field a batted ball.

- F. When the batter-runner 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. If this interference, in the umpires' judgment, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play, the runner closest to home plate shall be called out. A batter-runner being hit with a thrown ball does not necessarily constitute interference.
- G. When the batter-runner interferes with a play at home plate in an attempt to prevent an obvious out at home plate. The runner is also out.
- H. When the batter-runner steps back toward home plate to avoid or delay a tag by a fielder.
EFFECT - Section 2 E-H: The ball is dead and runner(s) must return to the last base legally touched at the time of the interference.
- I. When an infield fly is declared.
- J. When an infielder intentionally drops a fair fly ball, including a line drive or a bunt, which can be caught with ordinary effort with first and second; first and third; or first, second and third bases occupied with fewer than two outs. A trapped ball shall not be considered as having been intentionally dropped.
EFFECT: The ball is dead, and each runner must return to the last base touched at the time of the pitch. If an infield fly is ruled, it has precedence over an intentionally dropped ball.
- K. 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 the play on the batter-runner.
EFFECT: Batter-runner is out; the interfering runner shall also be called out.
- L. If, when using the double base, and there is a play on the batter-runner, the batter-runner touches only the white portion and the defense appeals prior to the batter-runner returning to first base. This is treated the same as missing the base.
EXCEPTION:
1. If the ball is thrown from the foul side of the first base line, or
2. When an errant or missed throw pulls the defensive player into foul ground.
- M. If, when using the double base, and there is a force play by an infielder on the batter-runner, who touches only the white portion and collides with the fielder about to catch a thrown ball while on the white.
EFFECT: Interference is ruled, the ball is dead, the batter-runner is out, and all other runners are returned to the base last occupied at the time of interference.
- N. If a spectator reaches into the field of play and interferes with a fielder's opportunity to catch a fly ball, the batter is out and runner(s) must return to the last base legally touched.

Section 3. TOUCHING BASES IN LEGAL ORDER

- A. When a runner must return to a base while the ball is in play or dead, the runner must touch the base(s) in reverse order.
EXCEPTION: On a foul ball.
- B. When a runner or batter-runner acquires the right to a base by touching it before being put out, the runner or batter-runner is entitled to hold the base until legally touching the next base in order or is forced to vacate it for a succeeding runner. When a runner passes a base she is considered to have touched the base. This also applies to awarded bases.
- C. When a runner dislodges a base from its proper position, neither the runner nor the succeeding runner(s) in the same series of play are compelled to follow a base out of position.
EFFECT - Section 3D-C: The ball is in play and runners may advance or return with liability to be put out.
- D. A runner shall not run bases in reverse order either to confuse the fielders or to make a travesty of the game.
EFFECT: The ball is dead and the runner is out.
- E. 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.
EXCEPTION: 8U Only. The rear runner will be sent back to the base she was running from.
- F. Failure of a PRECEDING runner to touch a base or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball, and who is declared out, does not affect the status of a SUCCEEDING runner who touches bases in proper order. If the failure to touch a base in regular order or to legally tag up on a caught fly ball is the third out of the inning, no SUCCEEDING runner may score a run.
- G. No runner may return to touch a missed base or one left too soon after a following runner has scored or once she leaves the field of play.
- H. Bases left too soon on a caught fly ball must be retouched prior to advancing to awarded bases.
- I. Awarded bases must be touched in legal order.

- J. (8U Only) Runners who are already over half way to a base may continue to the next base, if less than half way they must return to the last base touched, when the ball is declared dead.

Section 4. RUNNERS ARE ENTITLED TO ADVANCE WITH LIABILITY TO BE PUT OUT.

- A. When the ball leaves the pitchers hand on the delivery.
EXCEPTION: (8U only) stealing is not allowed.
- B. On a thrown ball or a fair-batted ball that is not blocked.
- C. On a thrown ball that hits an umpire.
- D. When a legally caught fly ball is first touched by any defensive player.
- E. If a fair ball strikes an umpire or a runner after having passed an infielder other than the pitcher, and provided no other infielder had a chance to make an out or when a fair batted ball has been touched by an infielder, including the pitcher.
EFFECT: Section 4 A-E: The ball is in play.
- F. (10-Under Fast Pitch 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.
1. 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.
 2. 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.
 3. 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.
 4. A batter, who receives a base on balls, cannot advance past first base. If the batter-runner advances further, once the ball becomes dead, return the batter-runner to first base.
 5. Awarded bases will apply to all runners
 6. Runners can only score on:
 - a) A batted ball,
 - b) A base on balls or hit batter with the bases full, or on an awarded base when the ball goes out of play.
 - c) A pick-off attempt by the catcher at third base, the runner may advance to home with liability to be put out.
- G. When a fair ball becomes lodged in a defensive player's uniform or equipment.

Section 5. A RUNNER FORFEITS HER EXEMPTION FROM LIABILITY TO BE PUT OUT.

- A. 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.
- B. If, after overrunning first base, the runner attempts to continue to second base.
- C. If, after dislodging a base, a runner attempts to continue to the next base.

Section 6. RUNNERS ARE ENTITLED TO ADVANCE WITHOUT LIABILITY TO BE PUT OUT.

- A. When forced to vacate a base because the batter was awarded a base on balls.
EFFECT: The ball remains in play unless it is blocked. Any runner affected is entitled to one base and may advance farther at their own risk if the ball is in play.
- B. 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, impedes the progress of a runner or batter-runner that is legally running bases. Obstructed runners are still required to touch all bases in proper order, or they could be called out on a proper appeal by the defensive team. Should an act of interference occur following any obstruction, enforcement of the interference would have precedence.
1. If the obstructed runner is put out prior to reaching the base which would have been reached had there not been obstruction, a dead ball is called and the obstructed runner and each other runner affected by the obstruction will always be awarded the base or bases which would have been reached, in the umpires judgment, had there not been obstruction. An obstructed runner may not be called out between the two bases where obstructed unless properly appealed for missing a base, leaving a base before a fly ball was first touched, for an act of interference, or if passing another runner.
 2. If the obstructed runner is put out after passing the base that would have been reached had there not been obstruction, the obstructed runner will be called out. The ball remains alive.

- 3 When a runner, while advancing or returning to a base, is obstructed by a fielder who neither has the ball nor is attempting to field a batted or thrown ball, or a fielder who fakes a tag without the ball, the obstructed runner and each other runners affected by the obstruction, will always be awarded the base or bases which would have been reached, in the umpire's judgment, had there been no obstruction. If the umpire feels there is justification, a defensive player making a fake tag could be ejected from the game.
4. Catcher obstruction on the batter is covered under Rule 7, Section 1D.
EFFECT: When any obstruction occurs (including a rundown), the umpire will signal a delayed dead ball. The ball will remain live.
- C. When a wild pitch or passed ball lodges in or goes under, over or through the backstop.
EFFECT: The ball is dead and all runners are awarded one base only. The batter is awarded first base only on the fourth ball.
- D. When forced to vacate a base because the batter was awarded first base.
- E. When a pitcher makes an illegal pitch, providing the offensive coach does not take the result of the play.
- F. When a fielder intentionally contacts or catches a fair batted, a thrown, or a pitched ball with her cap, helmet, mask, protector, pocket, detached glove, or any part of the uniform which is detached from its proper place on their person.
EFFECT: The batter and runners would be entitled to three bases from the time of the pitch if a batted ball, two bases from the time of the throw if a thrown ball, or one base from the time of the pitch if a pitched ball and in all games where stealing is permitted, they may advance farther at their own risk. If the illegal catch or touch is made on a fair hit ball, which, in the judgment of the umpire, would have cleared the fence in flight, the batter-runner shall be awarded a four base award.
- G. When the ball is in play and is overthrown (beyond the boundary lines) or is blocked.
EFFECT: All runners will be awarded two bases, and the award will be governed by the positions of the runners when the ball left the fielders hand. Runners may return to touch a missed base or base left too soon. If two runners are between the same bases, the award is based on the position of the lead runner.
EXCEPTION:
1. When a fielder loses possession of the ball, such as on an attempted tag, and the ball enters the dead ball area or becomes blocked, each runner is awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the ball entered the dead ball area or became blocked.
 2. When the ball becomes dead, no runner may return to touch a missed base or a base left too soon if she has advanced, touched, and remains a base beyond the missed base or the base left too soon. A runner shall not be declared out if a fielder deliberately carries or throws the ball into dead ball territory to prevent that runner from returning to a missed base or a base left too soon.
 3. If the ball becomes blocked due to offensive equipment not involved in the game, the ball is ruled dead and runners are returned to the last base touched at the time of the blocked ball. If the blocked ball prevented the defense from making an out, the runner being played on is called out.
 4. If an awarded base is in error, after one pitch is thrown (legal or illegal), the error cannot be corrected.
 5. (8U only) on the first play after the ball is hit, if an overthrown ball goes to the fence in foul territory the ball becomes dead. One base is awarded to all base runners from their position at the time of the throw. On any batted fly ball caught for an out the first play is complete. Any throw would be a second play. Making an attempt on any runner as a result of chasing them back to or from a base or holding a runner to a base is considered a first play. Throwing the ball to the pitcher in the 16 foot circle to stop all play is not considered part of this overthrow rule. In this instance the ball remains live and runners may advance with liability to be put out.
- H. When a fair-batted fly ball strikes the foul pole above the fence level or leaves the playing field in fair territory without touching the ground or going through the fence. It shall entitle the batter-runner to a home run. Unless it passes out of the grounds at a distance less than the prescribed fence distances from home plate, in which case the batter-runner would be entitled to only two bases.
- I. When a fair ball bounces over or rolls under or through a fence or any designated boundary of the playing field. Also, when it deflects off of a defensive player and goes out of play in foul territory, deflects off a runner or umpire and goes out of play after having passed an infielder excluding the pitcher and provided no other fielder had a chance to make an out.
EFFECT: The ball is dead, and all runners are awarded two bases from the time of the pitch.

- J. When a live ball is unintentionally carried by a fielder from playable territory into dead ball territory. A fielder carrying a live ball into the dugout or team area to tag a player is considered to have unintentionally carried it there.
EFFECT: The ball is dead and each runner is awarded one base from the last base touched at the time the fielder entered dead ball territory.
- K. If, in the judgment of the umpire, a fielder intentionally carries, 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 touched at the time the fielder entered or the ball was kicked, pushed or thrown into dead ball territory.
- L. When there is a spectator interference with any thrown or fair-batted ball, the ball is dead at the moment of interference.
- M. When a ball gets lodged in either, (a) umpire's gear or clothing or (b) an offensive players clothing.
EFFECT: Section 6 L-M: The ball is dead and the umpire should award the runners the bases in her judgment they would have received.

Section 7. A RUNNER MUST RETURN TO HER BASE.

- A. When a batted ball is foul.
- B. When an illegally batted ball is declared by the umpire.
- C. When a batter, batter-runner or runner is called out for interference. Each other runner shall return to the last base, which in the umpire's judgment, was legally touched by the runner at the time of the interference.
- D. When any part of the batter's person or clothing is touched by a pitched ball that is swung at and missed.
- E. When a batter is hit by a pitched ball, unless forced.
EFFECT - Section 7 A-E:
 1. **The ball is dead.**
 2. **Each runner must return to her base without liability to be put out, except when forced to go to the next base because the batter became a batter-runner.**
 3. **Runners need not touch the intervening bases in returning to base.**
- F. When the plate umpire or any part of the plate umpire's clothing interferes with the catcher's attempt to throw out a runner stealing, or an attempted pick off play.
EFFECT: This is a delayed ball at the time of the interference. If the runner is ruled out, the ball remains live. If the runner is not out, return her to the base occupied at the start of the pitch. It is not umpire interference if, on a passed ball or wild pitch, the umpire gets hit by a thrown ball from the catcher. The ball is live.
- C. When an intentionally dropped ball is ruled.

Section 8. THE RUNNER IS OUT.

- A. When running to any base in regular or reverse order and the runner runs more than three feet from the base path to avoid being touched by the ball in the hand(s) of a fielder. Base runner cannot run out of the base path to avoid a tag. This will result in the base runner being called out.
- B. When the ball is in play and the runner is not in contact with a base. The runner is legally touched with the ball in the hand(s) of a fielder.
- C. When, on a force play, a fielder contacts the base while holding the ball, touches the ball to the base or tags the runner before the runner reaches the base.
- D. When the runner physically passes a preceding runner before that runner has been put out. If this were the third out of the inning, any runs scoring prior to the out for passing a preceding runner would count.
- E. When anyone other than another runner physically assists the runner while the ball is in play.
EFFECT: Section 8 A-E: The ball is in play and the runner is out.
- F. When the runner leaves a base to advance to another base before a caught fly ball has touched a fielder, provided the ball is returned to an infielder and properly appealed.
- G. When the runner fails to touch the intervening base or bases in regular or reverse order and the ball is returned to an infielder and properly appealed. If the batter-runner is put out at first base, or any other runner forced to advance because the batter became a batter-runner, this is a force out. If a base runner misses a base, the base runner is out (not an appeal play).
- H. When the batter-runner legally overruns first base, attempts to run to second base and is legally touched while off the base.

- I. When running or sliding for home plate and the runner fails to touch it and a fielder properly appeals to the umpire for the decision.
- EFFECT- Section 8 F-I:**
1. **These are appeal plays, and the defensive team loses the privilege of putting the runner out if: (a) the appeal is not made before the next legal or illegal pitch, (b) the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout area, or (c) on the last play of the game the umpires have left the field of play.**
 2. **(Live Ball Appeal) if properly appealed during a live ball, the runner is out (POE - 1B)**
 3. **(Dead Ball Appeal) Once the ball has been returned to the infield and time has been called, any infielder (including the pitcher or catcher), with or without possession of the ball, may make a verbal appeal on a caught fly ball. The administering umpire should acknowledge the appeal and then make a decision on the play. No runner may leave a base during this period, as the ball remains dead until the next pitch.**
 - a. **If the ball goes out of play, the dead ball appeal cannot be made until completion of all legal advancement of all base runners.**
 - b. **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.**
 - c. **If “play ball” has been declared by the umpire and the pitcher then requests an appeal, the umpire would again call “time” and allow the appeal process.**
- J. When the runner interferes:
1. With a fielder attempting to field a batted fair ball, or
 2. With a fielder attempting to field a fly ball over foul territory, or
 3. With a fielder attempting to throw the ball, or
 4. Intentionally with a thrown ball.
 - a. If this interference, in the judgment of the umpire, is an obvious attempt to prevent a double play and occurs before the runner is put out, the immediate succeeding runner shall also be called out
 - b. If a ball ricochets off one defensive player and any player has the opportunity to make an out, the runner will be ruled out.
 5. A base runner cannot interfere with a defensive player making a play on the ball. This will result in the batter being out and all base runners will return to the previous base before the interference occurred.
- K. When the runner is struck with a fair untouched batted ball while not in contact with a base and before it passes an infielder, excluding the pitcher, or if it passes an Infielder and any fielder has an opportunity to make an out. If the batted ball hits a base runner before a defensive player touches the ball, the base runner is out.
- L. When the runner intentionally kicks a fair ball that an infielder has missed.
NOTE: Section 8 J-L: When runners are called out for interference, the batter-runner is awarded first base and credited with a fielder’s choice.
EXCEPTION: If interference occurs by the runner on a foul fly ball, the runner is out, the ball is dead, a strike is called, and the batter remains at bat.
- M. When the coach near third base runs in the direction of home plate on or near the baseline while a fielder is attempting to make a play on a batted or thrown ball and thereby draws a throw to home plate. The runner closest to home shall be declared out.
- N. When member(s) of the offensive team stand or collect around a base to which a runner is advancing, thereby confusing the fielders and adding to the difficulty of making the play. Members of a team include batboy and any other person authorized to sit on the team’s bench.
- O. When a coach intentionally interferes with a thrown ball while in the coaches’ box, or interferes with the defensive team’s opportunity to make a play on another runner. The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out.
- P. When, after being declared out or after scoring, a runner intentionally interferes with a defensive player’s opportunity to make a play on another runner. The runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out. A runner continuing to run and drawing a throw may be considered a form of interference. This does not apply to the batter-runner running on the dropped third strike rule.

- Q. When a defensive player has the ball, or is about to catch a thrown ball, and the runner remains on her feet and crashes into the defensive player. If the act is determined to be flagrant, the offender shall be ejected. An errant throw drawing the defense into the path of the runner is not interference. Base runner must attempt to slide or avoid contact with the defensive player at home plate if there is a defensive play made. This is for the safety of the girls. Any non-sliding aggressive act will result in the base runner being called out.
EFFECT: - Section 8 J-Q: 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.
- R. When the runner fails to keep contact with the base to which the runner is entitled until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.
EFFECT: - Section 8 R: The ball is dead, "no pitch" is declared when applicable, and the runner is out.
 EXCEPTION: (8U only) a dead ball will be called and the umpire will issue a warning to the offensive coach for the first offense, second offense the runner will be called out. Only one warning will be issued per team per game.
- S. LOOK BACK RULE.
1. When a runner is legitimately off a base after a pitch or as a result of a batter completing a turn at bat, and while the pitcher has the ball within an eight-foot (2.44m) radius of the pitcher's plate, the runner may stop once, but then must immediately return to the base or attempt to advance to the next base.
 2. Once the runner stops at a base for any reason, she will be declared out if she leaves the base.
 3. Responsibilities of batter-runner after completing a turn at bat, and while the pitcher has the ball within an eight foot (2.44m) radius of the pitcher's plate. This includes a base on balls or a dropped third strike (Exception 10-U fast pitch).
 - a. A batter-runner who rounds first base toward second base may stop, but then must immediately return to first or attempt to advance non-stop to second base. If a base runner attempts to advance to the next base while the pitcher has possession of the ball in the pitcher's circle, she must continue to the next base. Any attempt to retreat back to the previous base (without the pitcher attempting to make a play on the base runner) the base runner will be called out. This is called "hesitation".
 - b. A batter-runner who over-runs first base toward right field, turns left and immediately stops, must then return non-stop to first or attempt to advance non-stop to second base.
 - c. A batter-runner who over-runs first base toward right field, turns left and moves directly toward second base and stops is committed to second and must attempt to advance non-stop to second base.
 - d. A batter-runner who over-runs first base toward right field, turns left and moves back toward the infield in any direction except directly toward second base is committed to first and must return to first base.
 - e. A batter-runner who overruns first base toward right field, and turns right, is committed to first base and must return to first base.
EFFECT - Section 8-S (1-3): The ball is dead. "No pitch" is declared when applicable, and the runner is out. If two runners or more runners are off their bases, when one is called out, the ball is dead and other runners are returned to the last base touched. Only one runner may be called out.
 EXCEPTION: The runner will not be declared out if a play is made on another runner, (a fake throw is considered a play), the pitcher no longer has possession of the ball within the eight foot (2.44m) radius, or the pitcher releases the ball on a pitch to the batter.
- T. When she abandons a base and enters her team area or leaves the field of play.
- U. When she positions herself behind and not in contact with a base to get a running start on any fly ball. The ball remains alive.
- V. Whenever a runner on base leaves the game under the shorthanded rule. (Rule 4, Section 1 D).
- W. Prior to a pitch (legal or illegal) to the next batter, if the runner was discovered having used an illegal bat, she shall be declared out. If the bat was altered, she shall also be disqualified. In either case, if the altered/illegal bat is discovered prior to the next pitch, any runners put out prior to the discovery shall remain out.

Section 9. RUNNER IS NOT OUT:

- A. When a runner runs behind or in front of the fielder and outside the base path in order to avoid interfering with a fielder attempting to field the ball.
- B. When a runner does not run in a direct line to a base, provided the fielder in the direct line does not have the ball in possession.
- C. 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 an out.

- D. When a runner is hit with a fair, untouched batted ball that has passed an infielder, excluding the pitcher, and, in the judgment of the umpire, no other fielder had a chance to make an out.
- E. When a runner is hit with a fair untouched batted ball over foul territory that, in the judgment of the umpire, no fielder had a chance to make an out.
- F. When a runner is hit by a fair-batted ball after it touches, or is touched by, any fielder, including the pitcher, and the runner could not avoid contact with the ball.
- G. When a runner is touched while off a base:
 - 1. With a ball not securely held by a fielder.
 - 2. With a hand or glove of a defensive player and the ball is in the other hand.
- H. 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 on their way to the bench or dugout area, or after the last play of the game, the umpires have left the field of play.
- I. When a batter runner overruns first base after touching it and returns directly to the base.
- J. When the runner is not given sufficient time to return to a base. The runner will not be called out for being off base before the pitcher releases the ball. The umpire will call "No pitch".
- K. When she has legally started to advance. The runner 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
- L. When the runner stays on the base until a fly ball touches a fielder and then attempts to advance.
- M. When a runner is hit by a batted ball, while touching the base, unless the runner intentionally interferes with the ball or a fielder making a play.
- N. When the runner slides into a base and dislodges it from its proper position. The base is considered to have followed the runner.

EFFECT: A runner reaching a base safely will not be out for being off that base if it becomes dislodged. The runner may return without liability to be put out when the base has been replaced. A runner forfeits this exemption if they attempt to advance beyond the dislodged base before it is again in proper position.
- O. When a fielder makes a play (a pitch by the pitcher is not considered making a play) on a batter, batter-runner or runner while using an illegal glove and it is discovered before:
 - 1. The next pitch (legal or illegal);
 - 2. The pitcher and all infielders have left fair territory and the catcher has left her normal fielding position on the way to the dugout or
 - 3. The umpires have left the field.

The manager of the offended team is given two options:

 - a. The manager may have the entire play nullified with each runner returning to her original base and the batter batting over again, assuming the ball and strike count prior to the pitch that was hit or on a steal attempt.
 - b. The manager may take the result of the play and disregard the illegal act.
- P. When a runner legally returns to a base left too soon or missed prior to an appeal being made, or is returning to a base during a dead ball.

Section 10. COURTESY RUNNERS

- A. The team at bat may use a courtesy runner for the pitcher and/or the catcher at any time. The same runner may not be used for both positions during the entire game. Neither the pitcher nor the catcher will be required to leave the game under such circumstances. The same courtesy runner may not run for both the pitcher and the catcher in the same half inning or any time during the game. Courtesy runners are allowed for pitchers and catchers only. The courtesy runner must be used as soon as the pitcher or catcher gets on base; before the next pitch is pitched to the next batter (legal or illegal).
- B. The pitcher and catcher are identified as the last players who physically played that position on defense. In the top of the first inning only, the pitcher and catcher are identified as those players listed on the lineup as pitcher and catcher.
- C. Players who are eligible to serve as courtesy runners:
 - 1. Any available substitute.
 - 2. When no substitutes are available; the last batted out. If the last batted out is in the on-deck circle she is ineligible and therefore a courtesy runner cannot be used.
- D. A player may not be a substitute for any player in the half inning that she ran as a courtesy runner.

EXCEPTION: If an injury or disqualification occurs and no substitutes are available, the courtesy runner must be used as a substitute, and take the place of the injured player. Should the courtesy runner be on base, and is entered as a substitute, the pitcher or catcher for whom the courtesy runner is running, must run in her place.

- E. Once the courtesy runner is designated for that half-inning, the pitcher or catcher for who she is running may not return to run while that courtesy runner is on base. A courtesy runner cannot run for a courtesy runner.
EXCEPTION: Should an injury or disqualification occur to any offensive player, and no substitutes are available, the courtesy runner must take the place of the injured player. In this case, the courtesy runner enters as a substitute and the pitcher or catcher for whom the courtesy runner is running, must run in her place.
- F. A courtesy runner must be reported to the plate umpire. If a courtesy runner fails to report or violates the courtesy runner rule, she is considered to be an illegal runner and shall be disqualified.

RULE 8. BATTING

Section 1. ON-DECK BATTER.

- A. The on-deck batter is the offensive player whose name follows the name of the batter in the batting order.
- B. The on-deck batter may take a position within the lines of the on-deck circle nearest the offensive team bench.
- C. The on-deck batter may loosen up with no more than two official softball bats, an approved warm-up bat, or a combination not to exceed two. The Equipment Standards Committee following a one-year period observed by members of this committee must approve any detachable piece placed on the bat.
- D. The on-deck batter may leave the on-deck circle:
 1. When the on-deck batter becomes the batter.
 2. To direct runners advancing from third to home plate.
- E. The on-deck batter may not interfere with the defensive players' opportunity to make an out.
 1. If it involves a runner, the runner closest to home plate at the time of the interference shall be declared out.
 2. If it is with the defensive fielder fielding a fly ball, the batter is out.

Section 2. BATTING ORDER.

- A. The batting order of each team showing the player's first and last name, uniform number and position must be on the lineup card and must be delivered before the game by the manager or captain to the plate umpire.
- B. The batting order delivered to the umpire must be followed throughout the game, unless a player is replaced by a substitute who must take the place of the removed player in the batting order.
- C. (8U only) all players present must bat. In the event a girl has to leave, she will be skipped in the lineup. If a girl shows up late, she will be added at the bottom of the lineup.
- D. The first batter in each inning shall be the batter whose name follows that of the last player who completed a turn at bat in the preceding inning.

EFFECT - Section 2 B-C: 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 as 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 on their way to the bench or dugout.

1. If the error is discovered while the incorrect batter is at bat the correct batter must take the batter's position and legally assume any ball and strikes. Any runs scored or bases run while the incorrect batter was at bat shall be legal. The offensive team may correct a wrong batter at the plate with no penalty.
2. If the error is discovered after the incorrect batter has completed a turn at bat and before a legal or illegal pitch has been made to the following batter or before the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout area:
 - a. The player who should have batted is out
 - b. Any advance or score made as a result of the improper batter becoming a batter-runner shall be nullified. Any out that is made prior to discovering this infraction, remains out.
 - c. The next batter is the player whose name follows that of the player called out for failing to bat. If the next player was the one called out, go to the next person in the line-up.
 - 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 by ordinary play.
3. If the error is discovered after the first legal or illegal pitch to the next batter, or after the pitcher and all infielders have clearly vacated their normal fielding positions and have left fair territory on their way to the bench or dugout area, the turn at bat of the incorrect batter is legal, all runs scored and bases run are legal and the next batter in order shall be the one whose name follows that of the incorrect batter. No one is called out for failure to bat 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.
4. No runner shall be removed from the base occupied except the batter-runner who has been taken off the base by the umpire as in (2) above to bat in the proper place. The correct batter merely misses the turn at bat with no penalty. The batter following the correct batter in the batting order becomes the legal batter.

- E. When the third out in an inning is made before the batter has completed her turn at bat, this player shall be the first batter in the next inning and the ball and strike count shall be canceled.

Section 3. BATTING POSITION:

- A. Prior to the pitch, the batter must have both feet completely within the lines of the batter's box. The batter may touch the lines, but no part of the foot may be outside the lines prior to the pitch.
- B. The batter must take the batter's position within 10 seconds after being directed by the umpire.
EFFECT: The umpire will call a strike. No pitch has to be thrown and the ball is dead.
- C. After entering the batter's box, the batter must remain in the box with at least one foot between pitches and while taking signals and practice swings.
EXCEPTIONS: The batter can leave the box:
1. If the ball is hit fair or foul.
 2. On the swing, slap or check swing.
 3. If forced out of the box by a pitch.
 4. On a wild pitch or passed ball.
 5. If there is an attempted play.
 6. If time out has been called.
 7. If the pitcher leaves the eight-foot circle or the catcher leaves the catcher's box.
 8. On a three ball pitch that is a strike that the batter thinks is a ball.
- EFFECT: If the batter leaves the batter's box and delays play, and none of these exceptions apply, the umpire may warn the batter or call a strike. Any number of warnings and called strikes can be made with each batter. No pitch has to be thrown and the ball is dead.**
- D. The batter shall not step directly in front of the catcher to the other batter's box while the pitcher is taking the signal or anytime thereafter prior to the release of the pitch, unless "time" has been granted by the umpire.
EFFECT: The ball is dead, the batter is out and the runners may not advance.

Section 4. A STRIKE IS CALLED BY THE UMPIRE.

- A. For each legally pitched ball entering the strike zone.
EFFECT: The ball is in play and the runners may advance with liability to be put out.
- B. For each legally pitched ball swung at and missed by the batter.
EFFECT: The ball is in play and the runners may advance with liability to be put out.
- C. For each foul tip.
EFFECT: The ball is in play and runners may advance with liability to be put out. The batter is out if it is the third strike.
- D. For each foul ball when the batter has fewer than two strikes.
- E. For each pitched ball swung at and missed which touches any part of the batter.
- F. When any part of the batter's person or clothing is hit with a batted ball when the batter is in the batter's box and has fewer than two strikes.
- G. When a delivered ball by the pitcher hit the batter while the ball is in the strike zone.
- H. If the batter does not take the batter's position within 10 seconds after being directed by the umpire.
- I. When, between pitches, the batter leaves the batter's box illegally or does not return to the box after a warning.
- J. During a bunt if the batter does not pull the bat back on a delivered pitch (legal or illegal).
EFFECT - Section 4 D-H: The ball is dead and each runner must return to her base without liability to be put out.

Section 5. A BALL IS CALLED BY THE UMPIRE:

- A. For each legally pitched ball which does not enter the strike zone, touches the ground before reaching home plate or touches home plate, and the batter does not swing.
EFFECT: The ball is in play and runners are entitled to advance with liability to be put out.
- B. For each illegally pitched ball not swung at.
EFFECT: The ball is dead and runners are entitled to advance one base without liability to be put out.
EXCEPTION: Unless the offensive manager elects to take the result of the play.
- C. When the catcher fails to return the ball directly to the pitcher as required.
- D. For each excessive warm-up pitch.
EFFECT: Section 5 CD: The ball is dead and runners may not advance.

Section 6. THE BATTER IS OUT.

- A. When the third strike is swung at and the pitched ball touches any part of the batter's person.
- B. When a batter enters the batter's box with or is discovered using an altered bat. The batter is also disqualified from the game.
- C. When the batter enters the batter's box with or is discovered using an illegal bat.
EFFECT: (B and C): if a previous batter has used the same altered or illegal bat, and a pitch has been thrown, the batter is out.
- D. When an entire foot is touching the ground completely outside the lines of the batter's box when the ball makes contact with the bat, and remains in fair territory (fair or foul).
- E. When any part of a foot is touching home plate when the ball makes contact with the bat.
- F. When a batter leaves the box to gain a running start, but has returned to the box when she makes contact with the ball.
EXCEPTION: Section 6 D-F. If no contact is made with the pitched ball, there is no penalty.
- G. When the batter bunts foul after the second strike. If the ball is caught in the air, it remains live and in play.
EXCEPTION: (8U only) bunting is not allowed.
- H. When members of the team at bat other than runners interfere with a player attempting to field a fair or foul fly ball.
- I. When the batter hits a fair ball with the bat a second time in fair territory.
EXCEPTION: If the batter is standing in the batter's box and contact is made while the bat is in the batter's hands, a foul ball is ruled even if the ball is hit a second time over fair territory. If the batter drops the bat and the ball rolls against the bat in fair territory, and, in the umpires judgment, there was no intention to interfere with the course of the ball, the batter is not out and the ball is live and in play.
EFFECT Section 6 A-I: The ball is dead and each runner must return to the base legally held at the time of the pitch.
- J. When a called or swinging third strike is caught by the catcher.
- K. When the batter has three strikes if there are fewer than two outs and first base is occupied at the time of the pitch.
- L. The batter shall not:
 1. Hinder the catcher from catching or throwing the ball by stepping out of the batter's box.
 2. Intentionally hinder the catcher while standing within the batter's box.
 3. Intentionally interfere with a thrown ball, in or out of the batter's box.
 4. Interfere with a play at home plate.**EFFECT: The ball is dead, the batter is out and each runner must return to the last base that, in the judgment of the umpire, was touched at the time of the interference.**
EXCEPTION: If no play is being made and the batter accidentally interferes with the catcher's return throw to the pitcher and a runner(s) advances safely, the umpire should call time and return the runner(s) to the base occupied at the time of the accidental interference.
- M. (8U only) the batter will have up to 5 pitches to hit a fair ball. Should the batter fail to hit a fair ball at the end of 5 pitches, the batter will then be called out. Should the batter foul off the 5th pitch, she will be allowed a 6th pitch, in the event the batter fouls off the 6th pitch, she will then be given a 7th pitch. If after the 7th pitch the batter has still failed to hit a fair ball the batter will be called out. Three swinging pitches is an out if the 3rd swing is missed (a swinging strike).

RULE9. PROTESTS

Section 1.

Protest will not be received or considered if they are based solely on a decision involving the accuracy of judgment on the part of an umpire. Examples of protests that will not be considered are:

- A. Whether a batted ball was fair or foul.
- B. Whether a runner was safe or out.
- C. Whether a pitched ball was a ball or a strike.
- D. Whether a pitched ball was legal or illegal
- E. Whether a runner did or did not touch a base
- F. Whether a runner did or did not leave a base too soon on a caught fly ball.
- G. Whether a fly ball was or was not caught legally.
- H. Whether it was or was not an infield fly.
- I. Whether there was or was not interference or obstruction.
- J. Whether the field is or is not fit to continue to resume play.
- K. Whether there is or is not sufficient light to continue play.
- L. Whether a player or live ball did or did not enter a dead ball area or touch some object or person in a dead ball area.
- M. Whether a batted ball did or did not clear the fence in flight.
- N. Whether a batted ball was or was not touched by a fielder before clearing the fence in flight.
- O. Any other Matter involving only the accuracy of the umpire's judgment.

Section 2. PROTESTS.

There are three types of protests:

- A. Misinterpretation of a playing rule - must be made before the next pitch or, before all infielders have left fair territory, or if on the last play of the game, before the umpires leave the playing field.
- B. Illegal player - must be made while they are in the game and before the umpires leave the playing field.
NOTE :(A-B) An umpire cannot reverse a decision after a pitch (legal or illegal) to the next batter.
- C. Ineligible player - can be made any time. Eligibility is the decision of the protest committee.

Section 3. Protest may involve both a matter of judgment and the interpretation 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 or whether the play at second base was made before the runner on third crossed the plate are solely matters of judgment and are not protest-able. It is a misinterpretation of playing rule and a proper subject for protest however, if the umpire fails to allow the run to score.

Section 4. The manager, acting manager or captain of the protesting team shall immediately notify the plate umpire that the game is being played under protest. The plate umpire shall immediately notify the opposing manager and official scorekeeper. To aid in the correct determination of the issue, all interested parties shall take notice of the information, detail and conditions surrounding the decision to protest.

Section 5. The official written protest must be filed within a reasonable time. In the absence of a league or tournament rule establishing the time limit for filing a protest, a protest should be considered if filed within a reasonable time, depending upon the nature of the call and the difficulty of obtaining the information relevant to the protest.

Section 6 The written protest should contain the following information.

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

Section 7. The decision rendered on a protested game must result in one of the following.

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

RULE 10. SCORING

Section 1. THE OFFICIAL SCORER SHALL KEEP RECORDS OF EACH GAME AS OUTLINED IN THE FOLLOWING RULES.

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

Section 2. THE BOX SCORE:

- A. Each player's name and the position or positions played shall be listed in the order in which the player batted or would have batted had the player not been removed or had the game not ended before the player's turn at bat
- B. Each player's batting and fielding record must be tabulated.
 1. The first column will show the number of times at bat by each player, but a time at bat will not be charged against the player when:
 - a. The player hits a sacrifice fly that scores a runner.
 - b. The player is awarded a base on balls.
 - c. The player hits a sacrifice bunt.
 - d. The player is hit by a pitched ball.
 - e. The player hits a sacrifice slap hit.

NOTE: A slap hit is defined as a fake bunt followed by a controlled swing and resulting in the runner(s) advancing, as in the case of a sacrifice bunt.
 - f. The third out occurs and the batter is not entitled to run to first base.
 2. The second column will show the number of runs scored by each player.
 3. The third column will show the number of base hits made by each player. A base hit is a batted ball that permits the batter to reach base safely:
 - a. On a fair ball, which settles on the ground, clears the fence or strikes the fence before being touched by a fielder.
 - b. On a fair ball which is hit with such force or such slowness or which takes such an unnatural bounce that it is impossible to field with ordinary effort in time to retire the runner.
 - c. When a fair ball, which has not been touched by a fielder, becomes dead because of touching the person or clothing of an umpire.
 - d. When a fielder unsuccessfully attempts to retire a preceding runner and in the scorer's judgment, the batter-runner would not have been retired at first base by perfect fielding.
 4. The fourth column will show the number of opponents put out by each player.
 - a. A putout is credited to a fielder each time she:
 - (1) Catches a fly ball or line drive.
 - (2) Catches a thrown ball that retires a batter-runner or runner.
 - (3) Touches a runner with ball when the runner is off the base to which the runner is entitled.
 - (4) Is nearest the ball when a runner is declared out for being struck by a fair-batted ball or for interference with a fielder, or when a runner is called out.
 - (5) Is the nearest fielder to an unreported substitute who is declared out.
 - b. A putout is credited to the catcher:
 - (1) When a third strike is called.
 - (2) When the batter fails to bat in correct order.
 - (3) When the batter interferes with the catcher.
 5. The fifth column shall show the number of assists made by each player. An assist shall be credited:
 - a. To each player who handles the ball in any series of plays which results in the putout of a runner or batter-runner. Only one assist shall be given to any player who handles the ball on any putout. The player who makes the putout in a rundown or similar type play shall be credited with both an assist and a putout.
 - b. To each player who handles or throws the ball in such a manner that a putout would have resulted except for an error on a teammate.
 - c. To each player who, by deflecting a batted ball, aids in a putout.
 - d. To each player who handles the ball on a play which results in a runner or batter-runner being called out for interference or for running out of the baseline.

6. The sixth column will show the number of errors made by each player. Errors are recorded:
 - a. For each player who commits a misplay which prolongs the turn at bat of the batter or the life of a present runner.
 - b. For the fielder who fails to touch a base after receiving a thrown ball to retire a runner on a force out, or when a runner is compelled to return to a base, and provided the thrown ball could be caught by the fielder with ordinary effort.
 - c. For the catcher if a batter is awarded first base because of catcher obstruction.
 - d. For the fielder who fails to complete a double play because of a dropped ball.
 - e. For a fielder if a runner advances a base because of said fielder's failure to catch, stop or try to stop a ball accurately thrown to a base, provided there was occasion for the throw. When more than one player could receive the throw, the scorer must determine which player gets the error.

Section 3. A BASE HIT shall not be scored:

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

Section 4. A RUN BATTED IN is a run scored because of:

- A. A safe hit.
- B. A sacrifice bunt, a sacrifice slap hit or a sacrifice fly.
- C. An infield putout or fielders choice.
- D. A runner forced home because of obstruction, a hit batter or a base on balls.
- E. A home run and all runs scored as a result
- F. When the batter ends a game with a safe hit which drives in as many runs as are necessary to put a team in the lead, the batter shall be credited with only as many bases on the hit as are advanced by the runner who scores the winning run, and then only if the batter runs out the hit for as many bases as are advanced by the runner who scores the winning run.
- G. When the batter ends a game with a home run hit out of the playing field, any runners on base are entitled to score.

Section 5. A PITCHER SHALL BE CREDITED WITH A WIN.

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

Section 6. Regardless of the number of innings the pitcher has pitched, a pitcher shall be charged with a loss if she is replaced when the pitcher's team is behind in the score and fails to tie the score or gain the lead thereafter,

Section 7. THE SUMMARY shall list the following items in this order:

- A. The score by innings and the final score.
- B. The runs batted in and by whom.
- C. Two-base hits and by whom.
- D. Three-base hits and by whom.
- E. Home runs and by whom
- F. Sacrifice flies and by whom.
- G. Double plays and players participating in them.
- H. Triple plays and players participating in them.
- I. Number of bases on balls charged to each player.
- J. Number of strikeouts by each pitcher.
- K. Number of hits and runs allowed by each pitcher.
- L. The name of the winning pitcher.
- M. The name of the losing pitcher.

- N. The time of the game.
- O. The names of the umpires and scorers.
- P. Stolen bases by and by whom. This includes a batter advancing to second base on an awarded base on balls.
- Q. Sacrifice bunts and by whom.
- R. The names of batters hit by a pitched ball and the names of the pitchers who hit them.
- S. The number of wild pitches charged to each pitcher.
- T. The number of passed balls charged to each catcher.

Section 8. A stolen base is credited to a runner whenever she advances one base unaided by a hit, putout, force out, fielder's choice, passed ball, wild pitch, an error, illegal pitch or obstruction.

Section 9. All records of a forfeited game will be included in the official records except that of a pitcher's won-lost record.

Section 10. Tie Breaker Rule. In scoring, the run scored by the player starting as a runner at second base shall be charged to the defensive team and not to the pitcher. Depending on the judgment of the official scorekeeper, a run scored by any other player will be charged to the pitcher's ERA.

RULE 11. UMPIRES

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

Section 1. POWER AND DUTIES.

The umpires are the representative of the league or organization by which they have been assigned to a particular game and, as such, are authorized and required to enforce each section of these rules. They have the power to order a player, coach, captain or manager to carry out or to omit any act which, in their judgment is necessary to give force and effect to one or all of these rules, and to inflict penalties as herein prescribed. The plate umpire shall have the authority to make decisions on any situations not specifically covered in the rules. The following is the general information for umpires.

- A. The umpire shall not be a member of either team (i.e., player, coach, manager, parent, officer, scorer or sponsor).
- B. The umpire should be sure of the date, time, and place of the game and should arrive at the playing field 20 to 30 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 entering the field to check the bats and ends when leaving the field following the completion of the game.
- C. The male and female umpire shall wear a light gray, short-sleeve shirt, dark navy blue or black socks, gray pants and a blue cap with white with black trim NFSA letters on the front. The ball bag, jacket and/or sweater (all with approved logo) must also be dark navy blue, and shoes and belt must be black for both male and female umpires. A T-shirt is optional to wear under the gray shirt; however, if one is worn, it must be white. The plate umpire in fast pitch must wear a black mask, with black or tan padding and a black throat protector. (An extended wire protector may be worn in lieu of a throat protector on the mask.)
- D. The umpires should introduce themselves to the captains, managers and scorers. The umpires should inspect the playing field boundaries and equipment and clarify all ground rules for the representatives of both teams.
- F. Each umpire will have the power to make decisions on violations committed during playing time or during suspension of play
- G. No umpire has the authority to set aside or question decisions made by another umpire within the limits of the respective duties as outlined in these rules.
- H. An umpire may consult the other umpire(s) at any time; 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 will be designated as the PLATE UMPIRE, while the umpire whose primary responsibility is the rendering of base decisions will be designated as the BASE UMPIRE.
- J. The plate umpire and base umpire will have equal authority to:
 - 1. Call a runner out for leaving a base too soon.
 - 2. Call TIME for suspension of play.
 - 3. Eject or disqualify a player, coach, manager or other team member from the game for violation of rules of flagrant misconduct.
 - 4. Call all illegal pitches.
 - 5. Forfeit any game.
- K. The umpire will declare the batter or runner out; without waiting for an appeal for such decision, in all cases where such player is retired in accordance with these rules. Unless appealed to, the umpire will not call a player out for failure to touch a base, for leaving a base too soon on a caught fly ball, for batting out of order, or for making an attempt to go to second after reaching first base, as provided in these rules.
- L. The umpire will not penalize a team for any infraction of a rule when imposing the penalty would be an advantage to the offending team.

Section 2. THE PLATE UMPIRE SHOULD.

- A. Take a position behind the catcher. The plate umpire will have full charge of and be responsible for the proper conduct of the game.
- B. Call balls and strikes, unless requesting the help of another umpire.
- C. By agreement and in cooperation with the base umpire makes decisions on plays, fair or foul balls and legally or illegally caught balls. On plays that would 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.
- D. Determine and declare whether:
 - 1. A batter bunts or chops a ball.
 - 2. A batted ball touches the person or clothing of the batter.

- 3. A fly ball is an infield or an outfield fly.
- E. Render base decisions as indicated in the Umpire's Manual.
- F. Assume all duties when assigned as a single umpire to a game.

Section 3. THE BASE UMPIRE SHOULD.

- A. Take such positions on the playing field as outlined in the Umpire's Manual.
- B. Assist the plate umpire in every way to enforce the rules of the game.

Section 4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF A SINGLE UMPIRE.

If only one umpire is assigned, the duties and jurisdictions will extend to all points. The umpire's starting position for each pitch should be from behind home plate. On each batted ball or play that develops, the umpire must move out from behind the plate and into the infield to obtain the best position for any play that develops.

Section 5. CHANGE OF UMPIRES.

Teams may not request a change of umpires during a game unless an umpire is incapacitated by injury or illness.

Section 6. UMPIRE'S JUDGMENT.

- A. There will be no appeal on any decision of any umpire on the grounds that the umpire was not correct in the conclusion as to whether a batted ball was fair or foul, a runner safe or out, a pitched ball is a ball or strike, or on any play involving accuracy of judgment. No decision rendered by any umpire will be reversed except when the umpire is convinced it is in violation of one of these rules. In case the manager, acting manager or captain of either team does seek reversal of a decision based solely on a point of rules, the umpire whose decision is in question will, in doubt, confer with the umpire's before taking any action; but under no circumstances will any player or person, other than the manager, acting manager or captain of either team, have any legal right to protest any decision and seek its reversal on a claim that it is in conflict with these rules.
- B. Under no circumstances will any umpire seek to reverse a decision made by an associate, nor will any umpire criticize or interfere with the duties of other associate(s) unless asked to do so.
- C. The plate umpire may rectify any situation in which the reversal of an umpire's decision or a delayed call by an umpire places a batter-runner, a runner or the defensive team in jeopardy. This correction is not possible after one 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 on their way to the bench or dugout area, or after the last play of the game, the umpires have left the field of play.

Section 7. SIGNALS

- A. Safe. Body upright, eyes on the ball, and arms extended straight out with the palms down. A verbal call of "safe" is made as the arms are snapped to this position from the upper chest.
- B. Safe Sell. The same as the safe call but as the arms are extended straight out with the palms down a step should be taken towards the play.
- C. Out. Body upright, eyes on the ball and right arm extended straight up as an extension of the shoulder. As we come to the HAMMER position, the elbow is bent at a 90-degree angle and the fist closed with the fingers facing the right ear. The left arm should be brought to the midsection of the body. A verbal call of "out" is made as the right arm is extended high into the air and continued as the arm drops into the HAMMER position.
- D. Out Sell. Come to upright position and take a step with left foot directly at the play. Your head should remain in position looking at the play as the upper torso turns perpendicularly from the play. Raise right arm with an open hand behind your head into a throwing position as you shuffle your right foot behind the left. Plant right foot and transfer weight, bringing right arm over the top of your head with a closed fist, and make a vigorous "out" call. Finish call by transferring your weight to the left foot while bringing the right foot forward and parallel to the left.
- E. Strike. Body upright, eyes on the pitcher and right arm extended straight up as an extension of the shoulder. As we come to the HAMMER position, the elbow is bent at a 90-degree angle and the fist is closed with the fingers facing the right ear. The left arm should be brought to the midsection of the body. A verbal call of "strike" is made as the right arm is extended high into the air and continued as the arm drops into the HAMMER position.
- F. Fair Ball. Body upright, eyes on the ball and point toward fair territory with the arm toward the infield. There is no verbal call on a fair ball, and if the umpire is wearing a mask, it should be in the left hand.

- G. Foul Ball. On all foul balls, the ball is dead and the dead ball signal should be given. For balls touched close to the foul line over foul territory, the arm should be extended straight out toward foul territory away from the playing field. If caught, follow with a verbal “out” call and the “out’ signal. If not caught, follow with a “dead ball” signal and a verbal “foul ball” call.
- H. Time Out/Dead Ball/No Pitch/Foul Ball. Body upright and both arms extended high into the air with the palms of the hands open and facing away from the umpire’s body. A verbal call of “time out”, “dead ball” or “no pitch” is made at the same time the arms are going up.
- I. Play Ball. Body upright, eyes on the pitcher and the umpire make a motion toward the pitcher. On a right handed batter use the right hand. On a left-handed batter use the left hand. A verbal call of “play” or “play ball” is made as the umpire motions toward the pitcher.
- J. Hold Up Play. Body upright and raise either hand with the palm facing the pitcher. On a right-banded batter use the right hand. On a left-handed batter use the left h and. “No pitch” shall be declared lithe pitcher pitches while the umpire has a hand in this position.
- K. Delayed Dead Ball. Body upright, the left arm is extended straight out to the side of the body as an extension of the shoulder and the left hand is in a fist. This position is held long enough for the players to see that the umpire has observed the act that caused this call.
- L. Infield Fly. Body upright, eyes on the ball and right n extended high into the air with a closed fist. Make a verbal call of “Infield Fly”. If the batted ball is near a foul line, call “Infield Fly if Fair.”
- M. Trapped Ball; Same as safe signal. The umpire makes a verbal call of “safe.”
- N. Foul Tip; Body upright and eyes on the ball. The fingers of both hands are touched together and then the umpire gives the strike signal with no verbal call. This indicates that the bat tipped the ball and was caught by the catcher.
- O. Count Body upright Have eye contact with the pitcher. Both hands are extended above the head. Consecutive fingers are used to indicate the ball and strike count on the batter. Use the fingers of the left band for balls and the fingers of the right hand for strikes. A verbal description of the count on the batter is given while the hands are overhead. Balls are always mentioned first and strikes second.
- P. Double; Body upright. Raise the right hand high above the head indicating with two fingers the number of bases awarded. A verbal call of “two bases” is made while the hand remains overhead.
- Q. Home Run. Body upright Raise the right hand high above the head with a closed fist Make a counter-clockwise circling motion with the raised fist. A verbal call of “home run” is made at the same time the fist is overhead.
- R. Four-Base Award. Body upright; Raise the right hand high above the head with four fingers shown. A verbal call of “four base award” is made at the same time the hand is overhead.

Section 8. SUSPENSION OF PLAY.

- A. Umpires may suspend play when, in their judgment, conditions justify such action.
- B. Play will be suspended whenever the plate umpire leaves the umpires position to brush the plate or to perform other duties not directly connected with the calling of plays.
- C. The umpire will suspend play whenever a batter or pitcher steps out of’ position for a legitimate reason.
- D. An umpire will suspend play if a fair-batted ball hits the umpire prior to passing an infielder.
EFFECT: The batter-runner is awarded a base hit. No runners are advanced unless forces to advance.
- E. An umpire will not call time while any play is in progress, including when a thrown ball hits an umpire.
- F. An umpire will not call time alter the pitcher has started here delivery.
- G. In case of injury, time will not be called until all plays in progress have been completed or each runner has been held at her base.
- H. Umpires will not suspend play at the request of players, coaches or managers until all action in progress has been completed.

Section 9. VIOLATION AND PENALTIES.

- A. Players, coaches, managers or other team members will not make disparaging or insulting remarks to or about opposing players, officials or spectators or commit other acts that could be considered unsportsmanlike conduct.
- B. There will be no more than two coaches for each team, to give words, signals, assistance, and direction to the members of their team while at bat. One should be stationed near first base and the other near third base. Each coach must remain in her coach’s box.
- C. The penalty for violations by a player is prompt ejection of the offender from the game. For the first offense, a coach or manger may be warned, but for the second offense the coach or manger is ejected from the game. The offender may remain on the bench. If the act is flagrant or if continued unsportsmanlike conduct comes from the ejected player on the bench, the offender should go directly to the dressing room or leave the grounds for the remainder of the game Failure to do so Will warrant a forfeiture of the game.

RULE 12. USE OF NFSA PLAYING RULES

The NFSA Softball Playing Rules shall apply to NFSA Championship Play. Provided, however, in accordance with article 204(B) of the NFSA Code, NFSA State/Metro Associations as well as other organizations may adopt or use all or any part of the NFSA Softball Playing Rules, as they deem appropriate for use in Non-Championship Play. The use of all or any part of such rules is strictly a local matter and such rules may be altered, as league officials deem appropriate or necessary to conduct Non-Championship Play.